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The October meeting of the Parish Council took place in the Sports Pavilion with Caroline Payne in the Chair and 4 members of the public in attendance. During public participation time, Mr. Peter Howell addressed the Council at length concerning what he considered were problems with Cathedral Meadows, in particular the hedge on the North side and the wild flower area, which in his view were not being managed correctly. Councillor Wade-Martins said that expert advice had now been taken about the wild flower meadow which would be acted upon at the appropriate time and Councillor Don said that as the area was under the Countryside Stewardship scheme, there were rules regarding management that had to be adhered to.

Mrs. Linda Richmond gave a brief report on the latest meeting of the NECPG. The lack of response to the original letter inviting suggestions of questions to be asked had been discussed. There had been some helpful comments and it was hoped to have a suggested set of questions ready to be shown to all relevant groups by the end of November.

ANGLIAN WATER: Councillor Neve recounted the problems he personally had had when trying to get help from Anglian Water for an urgent problem at his home. Only after much persistence was a unit quickly sent out investigate.

PAVILION AND PLAYING FIELD MATTERS: A new litter bin had now been installed at the skate board area. The abandoned car has been removed. The ash tree at the corner of the car park and several oaks at the top of the field would need lopping in the near future. The tree officer would be informed before work was undertaken. The written specification for grass cutting had been agreed and the Clerk will write to all those who had applied previously, inviting them to tender for the work and opportunity will be given for contractors to view all the sites involved.

LAND MANAGEMENT MATTERS: Village Green: Legal advice has been taken regarding some of the wording in the new lease. A letter will be written to Norfolk Property Services seeking a definitive reply on matters concerning boundaries, maintenance and access. Nothing further will be done by the parish council nor will the lease be signed by them until such a reply is received. County Councillor Bill Borrett will be informed of events and residents can be assured that the Council is continuing to seek out the facts. It has been confirmed that the ash trees on the Green are subject to a preservation order as they are in the conservation area.

Cathedral Ruins: The new contractor has been working hard in the area prior to the English Heritage inspection next week. The problem regarding the wording on the brown directional signs will again be raised at that meeting.

Broom Green Pond: Banks have been cut and ditches cleared.

Millennium Wood: Further tree trimming will be required in the New Year, particularly to allow access for grass cutting.

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Rose Garden: The Clerk was asked to write a letter of thanks to Mr. T. Maidstone for his excellent work on this area.

SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL: A letter had been received from Graham Bygrave which did not offer a lot of hope for a new pathway to the rear of the school buildings. There is lack of finance and lack of support from the adjacent landowner.

STREET LIGHTS: A survey of all lights had been completed and no major problems found. The remaining concrete columns are in good order at present

HIGHWAY MATTERS: Councillor Fletcher has approached the Highways Department requesting a specification for hard standing for car parking at the top of Eastgate Street. During recent work on pavements some damage had been sustained to the walls of the cottage opposite the Eastgate Street junction. The residents will be advised to contact the Department.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: The organisers of the Bigger Than A Bus Shelter youth club have regretfully decided to wind up the club. The councillors were unanimous in thanking all the volunteers who had worked so hard to try and make the venture a success.

PCSO REPLACEMENT: Concern was expressed that since the departure of our previous very good PCSO no replacement had been forthcoming. The Clerk will write for information about this. There had again been one or two instances of vandalism in the village.

EASTGATE CENTRE: Roof repairs have been completed, and some money is available for redecoration, although finances remain on a knife edge. The Guides who use the Centre are thriving and if another leader can be found there are enough girls interested to form a second Company.

NORFOLK MINERALS AND WASTE: Councillors are extremely pleased that the MIN21 site has been rejected. Thanks were expressed to the members of the Parish Council Mineral Extraction Group and to Mrs. Linda Richmond for all their work over this matter, attending meetings and keeping everyone informed. Councillor Miss Kettering said that unfortunately the Bintree Woods site was as yet not confirmed as safe as the Forestry Commission had redrawn some of its boundaries and the area would have to go through a further consultation process.

CHILDRENS' PLAY AREA: Councillor Smith asked that consideration be given to improvements and the provision of much more up to date equipment for the area. The question of a possible new site was raised as the present one is far from ideal. The Village Green was suggested and Norfolk Property Services will be approached for its views. Breckland District Council is offering some limited funding for such schemes and the Clerk will write to express the parish council's interest.

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VILLAGE SIGN: This had been inspected by Councillor Lowe, who considers that it is beyond further repair. It was suggested that a replacement should be of metal as opposed to wood, and that a design competition should be held for a new sign. Councillor Wade-Martins undertook to place an article in Elmham News with details of the proposed competition with a definite deadline for entries.

ENDS