

Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 29th JUNE 2023 AT 19:30 IN THE PARISH COUNCIL ROOM AT ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT

Cllr R Harris (Chair)

Cllr J Fryatt

Cllr D Hiles

Cllr J Richardson

Cllr P Turner

Cllr L Buck

Cllr P Snelling

Cllr P Kember

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Adam Hardy (Parish Clerk), Cllr B Standley (East Sussex County Council), Cllr J Hulbert (Wealden District Council), Cllr M Lunn (Wealden District Council) & four members of the public.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

- a) Public forum.
 - Staff from BT Openreach briefed the Council on the rollout of fibre optic across the parish. 830 properties have signed up and around 25% of these are already connected. Support was requested from the Parish regarding the upcoming installation of fibre optic on Church Road. This would be challenging due to the volume of parked vehicles and traffic management would be required.

Cllr Turner asked when residents would know that they are connected. The representative from Openreach confirmed that households would be written to. Cllr Buck confirmed she would enquire further and feedback to the Council. **Cllr Buck** to investigate notice of connection.

b) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s 85).

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr A Martin

It was **RESOLVED** that their reasons be accepted.

Apologies had also been tendered by Cllr G Taylor (East Sussex County Council).

c) Declarations of personal, prejudicial, and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda, and updates to members' register of interests.

None

d) District and County Councillor reports.

• Cllr B Standley (East Sussex County Council)

A report had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

- Cllr Standley confirmed that the County Council had supported Wealden District Council in the recent water crisis calling for an emergency meeting with South East Water. It is felt in County that one of the main causes for this is there has been no investment in infrastructure.
- Cllr Standley was pleased to confirm the additional funding received for Highways repairs across the County. County is continuing to encourage residents to report any issues through the new online service.
- Cllr Harris asked if Cllr Standley could enquire what the policy was from East Sussex Highways on Visibility splays at junctions as the Parish Council recently had to cut some on Health & Safety grounds. Cllr Standley to feedback at the next Parish Council meeting.
- Clerk asked if Cllr Standley could intervene with East Sussex Highways regarding a request for the 30m section of B2100 to be resurfaced when the A267 is repaired.
 Clerk to send correspondence to Cllr Standley.
- Cllr Kember asked what the cause was of the overspend in Children's Services at East Sussex County Council. Cllr Standley replied that it was a demand-led service and there is a national demand across the country
- Cllr J Hulbert (Wealden District Council)
 - Cllr Hulbert confirmed that since being elected she has attended multiple training courses with Wealden District Council.
 - Cllr Hulbert reported that she recently attended an Extraordinary Meeting of Wealden District Council in which the recent water outage and the ongoing situation with South East Water were discussed. The Council wanted to ensure South East Water was held to account for the terrible way in which residents and businesses were left with no water and little or no information. It was very moving to see how the Council came together and the motion was passed unanimously. South East Water will be held to account and residents and the Parish Council will be kept informed.
 - Cllr Hulbert reported that in the next few months, it is hoped to hold several Community Forums in the parishes. Cllr Hulbert will be taking this opportunity to introduce herself to residents and hear concerns.
 - Cllr Hulbert reminded those present to please contact her for assistance with any concerns or situations in her Ward.
- Cllr M Lunn (Wealden District Council)

A report had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

- Cllr Lunn reported that he was going to visit a resident of Cottage Hill with regard to what has been happening at the Cottage Hill water retention tank.
- Cllr Lunn reported that he expected the first comments from Wealden Planning on the proposed development at Court Farm towards the end of July. He will let the Council know as soon as he can. During this time Cllr Lunn reported that any enforcement concerns against Court Farm Farmhouse would be held up.
- Cllr Kember asked if the development of the new Local Plan was waiting for the Levelling Up Bill to pass through parliament. Cllr Lunn understood the new Local plan was proceeding as it was not yet confirmed that the Levelling up Bill will come into effect.

e) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th May 2023 for approval as a true record.

Clerk reported that these minutes were adopted at the 17th May 2023 Extraordinary meeting and have been placed on the agenda in error.

f) Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th May 2023 for approval as a true record.

It was **RESOLVED** that these were a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

g) Clerk's update on action items from previous meetings.

 Clerk confirmed that responses to both Court Farm planning applications had been submitted.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT END OF MAY 2023, REVIEW EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET TO DATE AND NOTE OR AUTHORISE PAYMENTS.

i Budget, other financial reports, and actions arising

The bank reconciliation up until the 31st May 2023 was presented for all of the Council's bank accounts.

It was **RESOLVED** that the budget was correct and accepted by the Council as the correct position of the Council's accounts.

ii Approval of payments.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments:

PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS FOR FEBRUARY 2023 to be added to Rialtas All payments from Unity Trust account by online payment unless otherwise stated

| Regular Payments | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--|--|--|--|--|
| Invoice/payer details | Ledger Cost code code | | Ledger entry description - Max 30 characters | Amount - VAT included where applicable | | | |
| Xtraspace (Go Cardless) | 4110 | 101 | Document storage - June 23 | £91.00 | | | |
| Rotherfield Sports Club | 4340 | 302 | Grounds Maintenance - June 23 | £368.75 | | | |
| BT Business Broadband | 4409 | 302 | CCTV Broadband - June 23 | £47.10 | | | |
| Cloudy Group Ltd | 4110 | 101 | Rialtas Hosting - June 23 | £76.56 | | | |
| Rotherfield Village Hall | 4125 | 101 | Hall Hire Invoice: 4032 | £32.00 | | | |
| Veolia | 4391 | 303 | Village Hall Bin | £73.20 | | | |
| Phil Ireland | 4252 | 203 | Street Sweeping - May 23 | £205.42 | | | |
| Phil Ireland | 4364 | 302 | Litter Picking - May 23 | £102.71 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4389 | 302 | Court Meadow (1) | £35.00 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4380 | 303 | St Denys' Burial Ground (1) | £353.00 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4341 | 303 | Children's Play Area (1) | £46.50 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4341 | 303 | Recreation Ground & Village Hall (1) | £317.00 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4389 | 302 | Court Meadow (2) | £35.00 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4257 | 203 | Highways (1) | £55.00 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4257 | 203 | Highways (2) | £274.00 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4255 | 203 | Land near Old Railway Bridge | £46.50 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4257 | 203 | Highways (3) | £224.00 | | | |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4381 | 303 | Hornshurst Burial Ground (1) | £58.50 | | | |

Clerk: Adam J Hardy, 3 Trinity Mews, Mill Crescent, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2QU Tel: 07969512099. Email: Clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

Parish Council Website: www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk Twitter @rotherfieldpc and on Facebook

| Tollwood Garden Services | | | | | |
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| Follwood Garden Services | Tollwood Garden Services | 4389 | 202 | Court Meadow (3) | £35.00 |
| Follwood Garden Services | Tollwood Garden Services | 4341 | 303 | Children's Play Area (2) | £46 50 |
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| Phil Ireland | | 4125 | 101 | | £33.60 |
| Phil Ireland | | 4252 | 203 | Street Sweeping - June 23 | £657.33 |
| Tollwood Garden Services | Phil Ireland | 4364 | 302 | | £328.67 |
| Tollwood Garden Services | Tollwood Garden Services | 4258 | 203 | | £110.00 |
| Tollwood Garden Services | Tollwood Garden Services | 4393 | 303 | | £103.00 |
| Tollwood Garden Services | Tollwood Garden Services | 4389 | 302 | Court Meadow (1) | £35.00 |
| Tollwood Garden Services | Tollwood Garden Services | 4341 | | Rec Ground & Village Hall (1) | £352.00 |
| Tollwood Garden Services | Tollwood Garden Services | 4257 | | Highways (1) | £274.00 |
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| Coronation Cupcakes | 4159 | 101 | Coronation Cupcakes | £350.00 |
|--|----------------|---------|--|------------|
| • | | | • | |
| Wealden Citizens Advice | 4150 | 101 | Grant | £375.00 |
| Rialtas | 4120 | 101 | Year End Process 22/23 | £906.00 |
| The Computer Studio | 4110 | 101 | Microsoft 365 Licences | £1,355.52 |
| The Computer Studio | 4110 | 101 | New Office Printer and Ink Bottles | £497.00 |
| Neil Page | 4113 | 101 | RMI Fire Doors & Proofing | £1,992.00 |
| Satswana Limited | 4120 | 101 | Data Protection Services | £180.00 |
| Wealden District Council | 4256 | 203 | Dog Bins Emptying Jan - Mar 23 | £440.00 |
| Wealden District Council | 4363 | 302 | Dog Bins Emptying Jan - Mar 23 | £220.00 |
| Hacker Home Improvements | 4254 | 203 | Repairs to bus shelter (Forstal) | £70.00 |
| Mulberry & Co | 4120 | 101 | Internal Audit End of Year 2022-2023 | £153.00 |
| Beverley Johnstone | 4110 | 101 | Annual Parish Meeting Refreshments | £85.35 |
| Mrs M Harris | 4110 | 101 | Painting for Graham Watson-Smith | £125.00 |
| B C Richardson | 4110 | 101 | Painting for Norman Wickenden | £65.00 |
| lan Adams Signs of Styles | 4100 | 101 | Annual Parish Assembly Signs | £235.00 |
| TN6 Electrical | 4113 | 101 | Replacement of Old Emergency Light Units | £255.00 |
| | | | Total _ | £10,399.87 |
| Llovds payment | card - co | llected | by DD on or around 9th of the month | |
| Andy's Technology for the | | | • | 000.00 |
| Bewildered | 4110 | 101 | PA Assistance Extraordinary PCM | £60.00 |
| | | | - | £60.00 |
| | | Cost | = | |
| Surgery payments | Ledger code | centre | Ledger entry description - Max 30 characters | Amount |
| Sussex Primary Care | 4399 | 305 | Surgery Costs - June 2023 | £629.08 |
| Phil Ireland | 4405 | 305 | Surgery Window Cleaning | £14.00 |
| Tollwood Garden Services | 4405 | 305 | Surgery Tidying | £110.00 |
| | | | - | £753.08 |
| | | | <u>=</u> _ | 2.00.00 |
| Staff Costs - includes Tax, NI, pension and expenses | | | Total figure reported separately | £4,989.71 |

iii Note spending and justification of any payments agreed under delegated powers.

None

3. RECEIVE REPORTS, UPDATES & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE.

Cllr J Richardson reported that there was nothing to raise at this time.

4. TO CONSIDER INFORMATION AND MAKE DECISIONS ON ACTIONS AND EXPENDITURE AS REQUIRED REGARDING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

i. Receive and note Internal End of Year Audit 2022/2023 report.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

The Council **NOTED** the Internal End of Year Audit 2022/2023 report.

Cllr B Johnstone asked that a vote of thanks be recorded for the work of the Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer for his work on the accounts throughout the year.

ii. Receive, adopt and sign Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR) 2022/23.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.

Section 1 of the AGAR 2022/23 was signed by the Chair of the Council.

iii. Receive, adopt and sign Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR) -

Accounting Statements 2022/23.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the

meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement – Accounting

Statements 2022/23.

Section 2 of the AGAR 2022/23 was signed by the Chair of the Council.

iv. Discuss and agree actions regarding parked vehicles and visibility at the New

Road/Mayfield Road junction.

A report related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

Cllr Kitchenham reminded Councillors that this junction had been discussed on previous

occasions and that East Sussex Highways were reluctant to undertake any action.

A suggestion was made that cones could be placed in the vicinity of the junction to deter cars

from parking. The Clerk reminded Councillors that this course of action should not be taken

without the approval of East Sussex Highways.

It was **RESOLVED** to raise this item at the next Strengthening Local Relationships (SLR)

Meeting. **Clerk** to arrange meeting with East Sussex Highways.

Receive and note the accounts of the Smith & Fermor Charity for year ending 31st V. December 2022.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the

meeting.

Cllr Johnstone expressed disappointment that there were residual funds shown and wondered if the Parish Council could advertise the Smith & Fermor Charity to increase the number of applications. Cllr Buck asked if independent social workers as well as those working for Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council were aware of the Charity for this

area. The Clerk confirmed that applications had been received from independent social workers in the past. **Clerk** to write to the Smith & Fermor Charity offering assistance with

advertising the Charity.

The accounts were **NOTED** by the Council.

vi. **Consider a grant application from Family Support Work**

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the

meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to give a grant of £500.00 to Family Support Work.

Clerk to write to Family Support Work confirming the grant and add to the July payment run.

Consider a grant application from Rotherfield Baby and Toddler Group vii.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the

meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to give a grant of £500.00 towards the rent cost of the Rotherfield Baby and

Toddler Group.

Clerk to write to Rotherfield Baby and Toddler Group and add to the July payment run.

viii. Discuss and consider the formation of a Village Design Statement to be drafted by the

Planning & Building Committee.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the

meeting.

Councillors discussed this item and it was AGREED to wait six months to see what progress

Wealden District Council had made with the new Local Plan before considering a Village

Design Statement further.

Councillors were concerned to hear of the possibility that the Rotherfield Protection Group might be producing a neighbourhood plan; something that can only be done by a Parish Council. **Clerk** to write to Rotherfield Protection Group to seek clarification.

ix. Receive and discuss quotations for the resurfacing of the St Cheron Twitten.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Warren Drives quotation for the works at a cost of £2,560.00+VAT. **Clerk** to confirm acceptance of quotation with Warren Drives.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to East Sussex County Council asking for a contribution towards the resurfacing works.

x. Receive and discuss quotation for Memorial Inspections of Hornshurst Burial Ground and St Denys' Old Burial Ground.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the inspection by CTP Consulting Engineers at a cost of £1,950.00+VAT. **Clerk** to write to CTP and accept their quotation.

xi. Receive and discuss quotations for the installation of Coronation benches on Rotherfield Recreation ground.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from SEH Landscapes LTD for the installation at a cost of £1,500.00+VAT. **Clerk** to write to SEH Landscapes LTD to accept the quotation.

xii. Receive and discuss quotation for the replacement of posts boarding the recreation ground.

Documents and reports related to this item had been circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that these works would be carried out by Parish Council volunteers. **Cllr Harris** to arrange for replacement of posts.

xiii. Receive and consider a grant of £10,000.00 to the Rotherfield Memorial Institute Management Committee to engage an architect/architect technician.

Cllr Johnstone outlined the current position of the Rotherfield Memorial Institute Management Committee and how quotes from architects were needed to move any design be it repair or refurbishment forward. No other access to funds were currently available to the Committee to move the project forward. Cllr Turner asked for clarification on the timing of engaging an architect. Cllr Richardson explained that we were in a chicken and egg situation, plans were needed for a business case before we can access additional funding in any form.

Cllr Buck was concerned at the amount of Parish Council funds already spent on bringing the Memorial Institute up to a safe standard. Cllr Johnstone reminded Councillors that the Council had committed to investing in the building when it agreed to take over as Sole Trustee.

The Chair bought the debate to an end and moved the resolution to a vote. It was **RESOLVED** on a vote of 9/1 to make a grant of £10,000.00 to the Rotherfield Memorial Institute to engage an architect.

As part of the debate the Chair shared the following comments submitted by Cllr Martin who was unable to attend the meeting:

A grant of £10,000 for an architect is unnecessary and excessive, all the Institute needs in the short term is rendering warm, dry and safe so it is a suitable home for RSM and a usable space for the community. £10k would go some way to helping with this, a repurposed facility is a long way off, it would seem there is too much personal vision and possibly a conflict of interest.

Cllr Johnstone wished it recorded in the minutes that she strongly objected to these comments and that the Council had made a commitment to the Parish to secure the future of the Rotherfield Memorial Institute when it resolved to take over as Sole Trustee.

xiv. Discuss and appoint a new Councillor with the responsibility for the Speed Indication Device (SID).

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr P Snelling would take on the responsibility for the Speed Indication Device.

Clerk reminded Councillors that the SID Batteries would now be charged in the Memorial Institute during opening hours rather than at Councillors' homes.

xv. Discussion, feedback and actions following the recent Water Outage across the Parish.

Clerk reported that he had arranged for South East Water to attend the 31st August Parish Council Meeting.

Councillors expressed their concern over the lack of communication and the delay from stakeholders in declaring the situation an emergency. Cllr Richardson explained how upsetting the incident had been for those with vulnerable people in the household and the lack of information and updates from South East Water added to this distress. In addition no information had been received from South East Water regarding compensation following the outage.

A local farmer was permitted to address the meeting explaining how distressing it was for farmers who were left on tenterhooks about whether they were going to get any water. During the last outage, farms were assisted by the Fire Brigade but this was not the case this time. Cllr Lunn added that his research showed that South East Water only had 8,000l of water available for all the farms across the outage area. A possible future solution would be to approach South East Water to purchase a bowser that could be filled elsewhere and passed around the community to safeguard livestock.

The Council were concerned to hear that South East Water were blaming increased usage for the outage when it is clear that the infrastructure was under invested and can not cope with the demand.

Cllr Turner expressed concerns that there was a lack of tankers available that could pass through the country roads of the parish.

Councillors were concerned that this incident was never declared an emergency and it was unclear who had the responsibility for doing so. An emergency meeting of Wealden District Council had recently taken place and Gold Command needed to act as soon as one partner declared an emergency.

Cllr Standley confirmed that the County Council were writing to Ofwat but it is understood an investigation is already underway.

The Council were angry to learn that the school had approached South East Water for compensation due to the large amount of money lost during the school closure to be told that they were required to claim against their business continuity insurance which schools did not have. The Council will support the school in lobbying South East Water for appropriate compensation.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors would send questions to the Clerk that they would like South East Water to answer when they come to the Council on the 31st August.

5. TO NOTE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES PUBLISHED SINCE THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING.

16th May 2033 Planning & Building Committee
 6th June 2023 Planning & Building Committee

• 7th June 2023 Annual Parish Assembly

• 13th June 2023 Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee

6. TO RECEIVE OTHER REPORTS AND CONSIDER ACTIONS ARISING FROM THEM.

- a) Meetings attended on behalf of the Parish Council.
 - Cllr Kitchenham reported that he had attended a meeting with a resident about the condition of the drains at the bottom of Station Road. Actions had been passed to the Clerk for logging with East Sussex Highways.
 - Cllr Fryatt reported that he had attended a meeting of the Uckfield Line Steering Group. He will meet with Sharon at Eridge Station to discuss the recent vandalism that had taken place.
 - Cllr Fryatt reported that he had an informal meeting with Spa Valley Railway regarding noise and pollution concerns. Dialogue is ongoing.
 - Cllr Harris reported that he had attended the monthly Village Hall meeting.

b) Clerk's updates and issues.

- Clerk reported he had been asked by NALC if the Parish Council were planning to pass a
 resolution declaring a Climate Emergency. It was AGREED that this would feature on a
 future Council meeting agenda. Clerk to add an item to the 31st August Parish Council
 Meeting agenda for further discussion.
- Clerk asked if the Earmarked Reserves for the MUGA could be reviewed and whether it was
 planned to proceed with the project. £15,000.00 of the allocated reserves came from CIL
 Monies and there is a requirement that this money is spent within a given time frame or
 the District Council can ask for it to be returned. Clerk to add item to the 11th July
 Recreation & Burial Committee agenda.
- Clerk reported the following holiday dates:

Deputy Clerk: 22nd July – 5th August Clerk: 21st July – 28th July

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council Office would be closed for the period of the 21st July – 28th July. The Chair of the Council would hold the Burial Records and deal with any Interment enquiries during this time.

c) Items for the next Parish Magazine column.

- Coronation Celebrations
- Annual Parish Assembly
- New Councillors Offices & Responsibilities

7. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

- Local Councils Update June 2023
- Local Councils Update July 2023

8. TO RECEIVE INSPECTION BOOK & REPORTS.

The following inspection reports had been received and shared with the Chair:

| • | 15 th May 2023 | Old Burial Ground Inspection Report |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| • | 22 nd May 2023 | Hornshurst Burial Ground Inspection Report |
| | | Playground Inspection Report |
| | | Recreation Ground Inspection Report |
| • | 19 th June 2023 | Hornshurst Burial Ground Inspection Report |
| | | Playground Inspection Report |
| | | Recreation Ground Inspection Report |
| • | 24 th June 2023 | Old Burial Ground Inspection Report |

9. TO RECEIVE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

| • | 11 th July 2023 | Recreation & Burial Committee Meeting |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| • | 18th July 2023 | Planning & Building Committee Meeting – Rotherfield Memorial |
| | | Institute |
| • | 20 th July 2023 | Parish Council Meeting - Rotherfield Memorial Institute |

Rotherfield Memorial Institute Management Committee Meeting to be rescheduled.

All meetings are at 7:30pm in the Parish Council Room at Rotherfield Village Hall unless otherwise stated.

10.REPORT DETAILS OF ITEMS AND ISSUES NOTIFIED TO THE CLERK IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING FOR INVESTIGATION, FURTHER ACTION OR FOR FUTURE AGENDA.

- Cllr Richardson asked if an item could go on the next Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee meeting to discuss some Deer warning signage for the High Cross area of Rotherfield. **Deputy Clerk** to add an item to the 15th August Highways, Lighting & Transport Committee meeting agenda.
- Cllr Kember reported that after speaking with residents on Station Road a large number of the
 vehicles parked on the road are because of the 23-hour parking limit in the Millennium Green
 Car Park managed by Wealden District Council. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would write
 to Wealden District Council seeking an increase in the parking limit so cars could be parked in
 the car park.

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