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ISSUE 208 | DECEMBER 2020
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**Six-year-old
runs 5k
for charity**

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Editor's Comment

**TWENTY twenty has been a tough year for many of us, especially those who have lost loved ones or suffered health problems caused by COVID-19.**

Many businesses have also taken a battering with the pandemic bringing about the suspension of Culcheth Life for several months earlier in the year.

Without advertising incomes it is just not possible to print a free community magazine.

Now in our second lockdown we have managed to keep going

thanks to the support of our loyal advertisers and supporters and I would like to take this opportunity to thank those for their ongoing words of encouragement as we re-evaluate and future proof our business.

We will endeavour to keep on publishing Culcheth Life in the new year and hopefully as we approach

the end of a second lockdown with news of a vaccine on the horizon there does appear to be some light at the end of the tunnel.

The Government is hopeful we can start to return to a more normal life by next Easter so hopefully the green shoots of recovery are in sight.

Let's make sure we enjoy the Christmas and New Year the best we can and look forward to a much better 2021.

Stars over Bethlehem

CULCHETH Methodist Church is planning a Christmas display for Advent in the wake of the Poppy display created by local scouts for Remembrance Day.

The church community is inviting everyone to contribute a star to the display in the church windows - perhaps to remember someone they have lost, think of someone they're missing because of Covid restrictions, or just because they would like to!

Paper or card decorated stars can be put through the letterbox at the church on Ellesmere Rd, and they will be added to the display. They can be left blank or a name can be added - they will all be added to a display of "Stars over Bethlehem" which will build up through December.

The plans for Christmas services are going to be very different this year, but there will be opportunities

to join together with others, even if only virtually. The details of the plans will be published nearer the time, on the Culcheth Memories and Chat facebook page, leighandhindley.org.uk website, and on the notice

sheet posted on the church door each week. The weekly "dial in" service on Sunday mornings continues to be popular, and will continue as long as there is a need for it. The details are displayed on the Church door.

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Six-year-old girl runs 5k and raises over £1k in memory of granddad

A six-year-old Culcheth girl organised a 5k run in the village to say thank you to nurses and carers at Warrington Hospital who helped with end of life care for her granddad.

Theia Kerr came up with the idea to raise money for Warrington & Halton NHS Charity as a thank you for staff who helped with her granddad's end of life care in April.

With other members of her family including proud mum Rachael, she organised a 5k run

around Culcheth, going past all of her friends houses who joined her, socially distanced, for the last leg.

She has so far raised over £1200 in memory of Keith Blundell and the amount just keeps going up.

She did the 5k in around 50mins, stopping for photos and to

say hello to Twiss Green classmates along the way.

Proud mum Rachael said: "She wanted to raise money to say thank you to the wonderful carers and nurses that looked after her granddad."

Donations can be made online here www.justgiving.com/fundraising/theia-kerr6



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Residents urged to respond to "new" HS2 Design Refinement Consultation

CAMPAIGNERS are urging residents to respond to the "new" HS2 Design Refinement Consultation which could strengthen the argument to cancel the controversial Golborne Link.

The consultation deadline is fast approaching on December 11 and Frank Allen Chair of CADRAG (Culcheth and District Rail Action Group) is appealing to residents to make their views known.

The "new" consultation involves changes to HS2 at Crewe, Manchester Airport, Manchester Piccadilly, and in Scotland and residents near the HS2 route should have had leaflets on this in October.

Mr Allen said: "This is separate from the recently-announced

changes to the route (including a bridge for Wigshaw Lane) and safeguarding areas in our villages, which can be found by searching for 2020 version of the Risley to Bamfurlong Mapbook MA05 (also Broomedge to Glazebrook Mapbook MA04). It is important that those near the route check out the other changes including safeguard areas and compounds as shown in MA05 and MA04. Hopefully the library will re-open in December, a copy of these

documents will be in there as well as online.

"The change at Crewe, which adds new connections between HS2 and the West Coast Main Line there, strengthens the argument to cancel the HS2 Golborne Link (Golborne Spur).

"The Golborne Link is a proposed HS2 line to link the HS2 near Lymm to the existing West Coast Main Line North of Golborne. It will pass close to Culcheth, on the village side of the Risley landfill site, then west, close to Glaziers Lane, affecting the Linear Park before crossing the Chat Moss railway line then going under a new Wilton Lane overbridge and under the A580.

"This will affect local jobs, amenities and the environment. It will also affect anyone travelling to the East of our area," added Mr Allen.

CADRAG (Culcheth and District Rail Action Group) has long argued that the Golborne Link is very expensive (widely expected to cost over £3bn), will damage the community, jobs, and the environment, and that using the West Coast Main Line between Crewe and Golborne instead would offer greater benefits, much less damage to communities, and much better value for money.

Culcheth and Glazebrook Parish

Council work with CADRAG to oppose the Golborne link because of the damage it will do to homes, businesses, environment and traffic.

Mr Allen added: "We are told we will benefit from a 20 minute saving in our journeys to London but it is not clear what is happening to our journeys North from Bank Quay if the Golborne Link remains. Will we have to change trains at Preston?"

"If you do not agree with the proposals to build the Golborne Link, it would be really useful if you could respond to the Consultation pointing out that it is no longer required because of the proposed changes at Crewe."

You can respond online at <https://ipsos.uk/designrefinement2b> (there is a link from the .gov webpage) or by email to designrefinement2b@ipsos-MORI.com

"There are several questions asked in the Consultation. Please answer Question 1a which is about the connections at Crewe," added Mr Allen.

Please make your own comments on the Golborne Link. If you respond by email, please include your name and address and copy your email to your MP (for Culcheth, Glazebrook and Croft) the address is charlotte.nichols.mp@parliament.uk



Firefighters tackle large unattended bonfire in field



FIREFIGHTERS were called out to tackle a large unattended bonfire in a field at Croft, on the evening of November 7.

One fire crew from Penketh was called out shortly after 5.30pm to tackle a fire in a field in the Main Lane area of the village.

On arrival, the crew found a large quantity of wood well alight.

The fire was not being supervised.

Firefighters extinguished the fire with an extended hose reel jet and were in attendance for more than 40 minutes.

Croft WI planning Zoom meetings

THE monthly meetings of Croft WI are still in abeyance, with no signs of restarting in the near future, due to the ongoing Covid19 restrictions.

However, members are communicating via their monthly Newsletter and enjoying listening to various speakers by joining Cheshire Federation WI Zoom meetings.

Croft WI is planning to start their own Zoom meetings soon so they can stay in touch virtually.

Unfortunately, Cheshire Federation WI meetings are only available to WI members. For further details on joining the WI please contact president Anne Lamming (766828) or secretary Gail Grimshaw (766781).

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Leanne is walking through the lockdown – to help others

A BIRCHWOOD woman is making use of the lockdown to do a sponsored walk supporting Papyrus – the charity for the prevention of young suicide.

Leanne Jones is 32 and from Birchwood and normally works in a tanning salon.

But because the salon has had to close during the lockdown she is on furlough – and decided to put the free time to good use.

She plans to walk 200 miles – either with her dog or with friends who join her on a one-to-one basis from time to time to enjoy a chat and get some exercise.

So far, Leanne has raised £320.

She said: "I am passionate about helping others and making people feel good so I hope I can do this with the money I raise and the time I spend with the people joining me to help complete my target. I will be taking photos and videos along the way and keeping my mile progress updated."

Leanne said she was supporting Papyrus because she knew people who had struggled with their mental health during the first and current

lockdowns.

"I have faced a lot of hard times myself and I live on my own, so I know how it can feel to be lonely and need people to talk to, so I always offer my time to anyone who needs it."

"The walking not only raises money for the charity, but it also gets the people taking part with me out for a chat and exercise."

Anyone who wants to support Leanne can do so at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/leanne-jones67



Scouts produced their own Remembrance Day display



SCOUTS from the local Culcheth (19th Warrington) troop teamed up with Culcheth Methodist Church and produced a large and colourful Remembrance Day display.

The display was at the church on Ellesmere Road and enabled local people to reflect and consider the fallen in wars gone by.

There were also smaller themed displays including the "Poppy Drift" and "Poppy Fountain".

COVID had an impact on the usual annual Remembrance Day parade and service at Newchurch Parish Church. So scouts decided to create

their own version of Remembrance and have been busy cutting out hundreds of poppies to create the display.

Residents could easily visit the display, pay their respects and add their own poppy or cross.

Scout Leader Dave Sanderson said: "We were delighted the Methodist Church actively encouraged us to create the display and also the outcome following so much help from our scout members."

"We do hope people enjoyed the display and paused to 'Remember them' because they gave everything".

Croft Parish Council News



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Covid-19 Update

Although it had been hoped to resume parish council meetings at Croft Memorial Hall, they have had to continue to be held remotely (via Zoom). Members of the public may still 'attend' the meetings via Zoom, the link for which is published beforehand on the parish council website www.croftparishcheshire.org.uk.

This year's Remembrance Sunday events unfortunately had to be cancelled, but the council nevertheless laid wreaths in all the memorial locations.

We would remind you that unfortunately this year's Christmas lights switching-on event has had to be cancelled, but the Christmas tree and lights will still be put up.

'Planning for the Future' White Paper

The government has published its plan for radical changes to the planning system in this white paper, on which it invited comment in a consultation during October. The parish council believes these proposals, if they become law, will take away the rights of local people to have their say on planning developments in the area, and lead to much intrusion of unwanted building.

In association with Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council, a planning consultant was commissioned to produce a comprehensive objection to the white paper. Charlotte Nichols MP has also made representations to the Secretary of State for Housing & the Environment on this.

HS2

HS2 are currently carrying out a 'consultation' on Phase 2b, the western leg which passes close to us, holding a series of live 'webinars'. The government plans to present an Integrated Rail Plan for the North by the end of the year, which looks at how HS2 will integrate with an east-west service known as Northern Powerhouse Rail. More information is available at www.hs2.org.uk. Councillors have been keeping a close eye on this. We are glad to report that HS2 listened to our pleas to keep Wigshaw Lane open, and it will now be realigned on to a bridge over the track.

However, many still feel that this leg – the 'Golborne link' – is unnecessary, expensive, and should be cancelled. Charlotte Nichols MP has a petition 'Say no to the Golborne link' on her website at <https://charlottenicholsmp.com/say-no-to-the-golborne-link/>.

Travellers

Once again travellers set up camp at Silver Lane, renewing calls for deterrence of this and for a permanent travellers' site to be found in the Warrington area. A suggestion was made that Silver Lane should be made single track up to the barrier to deter parking there. A working group of Warrington Borough Council continues to seek a permanent site which would be suitable for travellers.

Flooding

The wet weather has once again brought to the fore the issue of roads in the village being flooded through blocked drains and gullies. The parish council has raised the issue with Warrington Borough Council who have not yet scheduled remedial work. The Parish Council is actively investigating other ways to resolve this matter.

Croft Parish Council would like to wish all our residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Residents may contact Croft Parish Council's Clerk on Email: croftparishcouncil@gmail.com
The Parish Council issues updates and information on Twitter: [@croftparish](https://twitter.com/croftparish)
Web: www.croftparishcheshire.org.uk



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Fundraising unwaveringly £15,000 for the charity



Matthew Bent with Angela Griffiths from the charity

DESPITE many challenges the generosity of customers and colleagues at Bents Garden & Home has never wavered with fundraising for the Centre's charity of the year Once Upon a Smile, continuing throughout the Covid 19 crisis, raising more than £15,000.

Bents invited the team from Once Upon a Smile to visit the Centre for an eighteen-month update, announcing a fantastic total of £15k raised for the charity which provides emotional and practical support for bereaved families.

It also used the opportunity to announce a new virtual fundraising raffle that will run until Monday, November 30, with participants

having the opportunity to win prizes such as a Festive High Tea at Bents, Cream Tea for Two and a Bents Gift Card.

In April this year, Bents made the decision to continue fundraising for Once Upon a Smile for a second consecutive year. This is a first for Bents and a decision that has proved popular especially during the Covid crisis, which has

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impacted on fundraising due to lockdown and the cancellation of regular charity events.

Recent fundraising for Once Upon a Smile helped the charity to refocus its support network to reach out to children in their own homes, during the period when Sidley House had to close during lockdown.

Sidley House, the charity's specialist bereavement hub, has now re-opened and is once again welcoming children and families who are benefitting from the specialist services provided

by Once Upon a Smile. Bents' continued fundraising will help fund further improvements and activities to allow bereaved families to express in a fun and safe environment.

For further information about Bents' virtual raffle visit [bentsgardenhome](https://www.bentsgardenhome.co.uk) on Facebook or simply text BENTS to 70085 to enter. Texts will cost one standard rate message and supporters will be given the option to make a £2 donation. Entries will close on 31st October with the raffle being drawn on Monday 30th November.



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Simon Box,
Plant Area Specialist

- Natural food is at its scarcest at this time of year so keep your bird feeders stocked up at all times - look after your feathered friends
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EVER since the Atomic Energy Authority established its Reactor Materials Laboratory in Risley more than half a century ago, Warrington has been a hotbed of talent – with some of the country's sharpest minds choosing to set up home in Culceth and the surrounding area.

For young people growing up in and around Culceth today, that means the opportunity to benefit from a wealth of knowledge from retired professionals and PhDs – knowledge that could lead to a fascinating career in engineering, electronics or scientific research. But exactly how do we link the scientists, metallurgists and engineers of tomorrow – recent graduates or those currently completing their A levels or degree – with time-served professionals offering a lifetime of industry knowledge and expertise?

Professor Bob Eden PhD, inventor, entrepreneur and managing director of Rawwater Engineering Company on Withington Avenue, has come up with the perfect solution and is appealing to retired and semi-retired professionals with skills to share to get in touch.

"So many incredible things are happening in our area," comments Bob. "Take Rawwater for example. We are currently developing a portable 'fire extinguisher-style' spray that uses low-melting-point alloys to seal cracks and leaks in pipelines, fuel systems, storage ponds and all kinds of industrial equipment. We've developed a similar process that can be applied

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help oil companies around the world to forecast whether or not their oilfield reservoirs will sour as a result of microbial lifeforms. Sour oil is much more expensive to refine and can require chemical dosing – and less use of chemicals is clearly better for the environment. My vision is to build a database of

local experts with time to spare who would enjoy developing the skills of young engineers and scientists by sharing their knowledge on our real-world projects."

To register your interest, or for further information, please get in touch with Bob Eden at: info@rawwater.com



Students set sights on UK's top universities

A former Culceth High School pupil is one of a number of students still aiming high despite uncertainty surrounding university and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

By the deadline for early applications, 25 students at Priestley College had applied for places at Oxford, Cambridge and degrees in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science.

Tutor Ian Hughes, who supports Priestley's university hopefuls, said the figures were encouraging and reassuring.

"With so much uncertainty at the moment it is great to see so many young people with big plans for their futures," he said.

"We have students applying for universities all over the country and they are vying for some of the most competitive places, which shows their focus and determination to succeed."

As well as applications for Oxbridge, students' other first choice next destinations include Edinburgh, Bristol, Imperial College, London, as well as other Russell Group universities.

They are looking to study degrees as varied as French & Arabic, Law, Experimental Psychology, History and Natural Sciences.

Applications for these universities and courses have to be submitted early because the competition for places is so fierce.

Daniella Glenn, who hopes to study Law at Cambridge, said submitting applications during uncertain times had been difficult.

"To even consider aiming high and applying for university when we barely know what tomorrow holds has been tough, but it is important to still focus on working towards our goals" said the former Culceth High pupil.

"I have had a lot of support from everyone at college in person, email or video chat. Although it has been harder, we have found ways to overcome the difficulties and still meet the deadlines."

Priestley has a team dedicated to helping raise aspirations of young people so they know the country's finest universities are within their reach.

It works in partnership with

OxNet – an outreach programme run by the University of Oxford – to ensure Year 12s can make competitive applications.

"We still have students coming to Priestley who believe the doors to certain universities are closed

to them, but that is simply not the case," said Ian Hughes.

"Our message is loud and clear: If you have the talent and the aptitude, then nothing is beyond your reach."



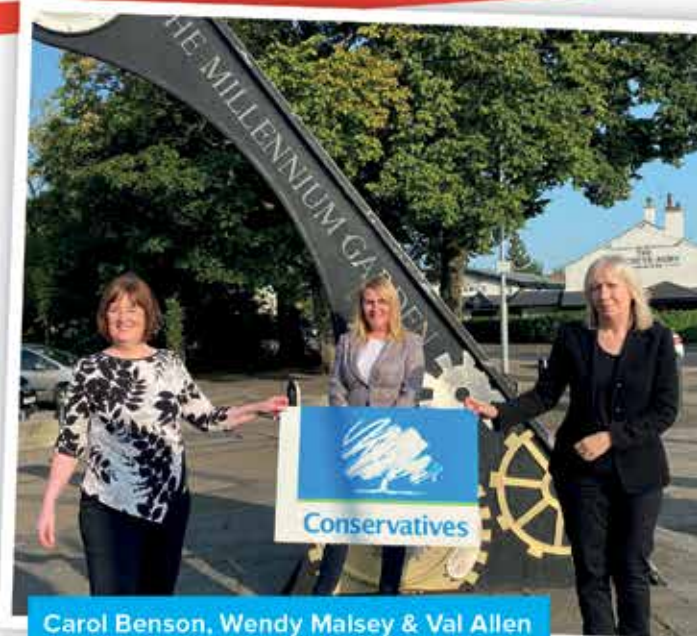
MEET YOUR CONSERVATIVE COUNCIL CANDIDATES

'All Out' Local elections which were due to be held last May will now be held in May 2021 and three exceptional local candidates have been selected to stand in Culcheth, Glazebury & Croft.

Wendy Maisey OBE is recognised as a local community champion and a Warrington business leader. She is an experienced campaigner and was the Parliamentary Candidate for Warrington North in December 2019.

Cllr Val Allen MBE lives in Croft with her family and has been a Parish Councillor since 2010. Val also runs a local business.

Carol Benson has lived in Culcheth most of her life. Her grandchildren are the third generation attending local schools. Community focused and recently retired, she now has time to embrace a Councillor role.



Carol Benson, Wendy Maisey & Val Allen

our plan for Culcheth, Glazebury & Croft

1 Protect our greenbelt. We need more affordable housing but not on our greenbelt. We will hold WBC to account and ensure all available brownfield sites and other sites are used for building new homes.

2 Oppose the Golborne Spur. We have campaigned for years to see this removed from the HS2 proposal. The Government has promised to review this and we will continue to oppose.

3 Cut crime and anti-social behaviour. No one should live in fear of crime. Anti-social behaviour causes much anxiety in our neighbourhoods. Along with the Police, PCSO's and community focused groups we will work hard to drive down crime in our villages.

4 Traffic and congestion. This is a major concern in our villages. Whether walking children to school or cycling, the speeding traffic and HGV's are posing a real threat to the welfare of everyone. As your Councillors, we will prioritise your family's safety and wellbeing.

5 Youth provision. This has been underfunded for many years, several of the youth groups in the area are finding it difficult to continue. As your Councillors, we will continue to work with and support community groups in a joined-up way with the Council, to provide much needed activities and safe places for young people to meet and socialise.



Protect our greenbelt

School donates Harvest Festival collection to Helping Hands

THE children and staff of Twiss Green Primary School have come together to support their local community this year and donated their Harvest Festival collection to local community group Helping Hands.

Wendy Maisey OBE, Branch Founder of Culcheth Glazebury & Croft Helping Hands said: "We were delighted to hear that Twiss Green Primary School were keen to donate their food and essential items to us. We'd like to thank Head Teacher Miss McGann and Mrs Pullen for their generosity and for thinking of Helping Hands. As the country enters a second lockdown we're responding to more calls for help in the area and this donation will go a long way towards us helping the most vulnerable in our community".

Diane Eastburn a long-standing volunteer added: "This comes on top of Croft Primary and Culcheth Primary schools also donating their Harvest Festival goods to Helping Hands. We're overwhelmed by their community spirit and willingness to help others during the Covid-19 crisis".

Helping Hands was founded by Carol Kilgannon, Stephen Murphy and Carole Wilcock at the beginning of 2020 and has been sending out essential hampers throughout the Covid-19 crisis helping people in need throughout Warrington. They're currently running a Christmas Hamper appeal.

To find out more please email carol@helpinghandsoph.co.uk



Picture: Left Diane Eastburn with Right Wendy Maisey OBE



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Campaigners draw up new battle plans to save historic Raven Inn



CAMPAIGNERS have revealed for the first time that they offered to pay over the odds in their bid to buy the Raven Inn at Glazebury as they draw up battle plans in their ongoing campaign to save the historic pub.

With a new planning application submitted to demolish the ancient pub and replace it with a small housing development, The Help save the Raven Inn team are now in a position to reveal some of the attempts that have been made to secure the Raven for the community.

They are also urging as many people as possible to object to this planning application number 2020/37800 via the Warrington Borough Council website, or writing to the council.

The Council has indicated that objections will continue to be accepted, until early next year and campaigners are working to 31st January 2021.

Meanwhile, group spokesperson Peter Sturman has revealed some facts about the group's campaign to try and save the pub.

He says The Raven was purchased, as a fully operational pub, on 03.06.15 for £275K, by the current owners. The Raven ceased trading in September 2018.

Fixtures and fittings were subsequently removed from the pub.

The Raven was put on the market in July 2019.

On 5th August 2019 the 'Help save the Raven' group had the Raven surveyed by an independent Chartered surveyor/valuer who has over 30 years experience in the field.

The Raven, as it stands, was valued at £230K. An offer was made, at this valuation, plus VAT.

This offer was rejected.

Community pubs are normally purchased using, predominantly, community shares.

Peter explained: "The problem we faced, as a group representing that community, was that it was not correct to ask people to finance a purchase above the current market value."

"There are, however, additional avenues for financing such a venture, therefore we increased our offer to £280K + VAT, representing an offer £5K above what the owners actually paid for a fully functioning pub. Sadly, that was also refused. We asked the agent to ensure that this offer 'remained on the table'."

"During the summer two local supporters proposed purchasing the Raven, then leasing it back to the

community (for no financial gain).

"On 17th June, they made an offer of £325K + VAT, for the Raven. This was also rejected.

"It should be noted that this offer was £50K above what the owners paid for a fully functioning pub and £95K above the market value. It should also be noted, it was impressed upon the agent, this offer would not require mortgage lending, so could be completed very quickly.

"This offer also remains 'open'. Peter added: "These revelations drive a coach and horses through the recent planning application, which includes claims such as:

'there has been little interest in the purchase of this building as it would not be economically viable to carry out this work and continue to run it as a business. The lack of investment in this building, and significant costs associated with any purchase has therefore deterred potential occupiers'.

"The fact is, there have been serious, substantial offers to purchase the Raven, to continue as a pub.

"The Raven has been listed as 'under offer' with the agent continually since, at least, the start of December 2019. Indeed it is still so listed. Yet it has not been sold, prior to or to facilitate this current planning application.

"Such a listing, for such a length of time, seems very strange. It is extremely likely to deter any would-be purchasers," added Peter.

In light of all of the information, the campaign group is now calling upon the developer, Mr Bill Jamison, to withdraw his application to demolish the Raven.

They are also encouraging the owners to engage with their former community to realise a substantial profit for themselves and ensure the preservation of the Raven Inn for future generations.

"All we have ever asked is that the owners engage with and seek to negotiate with us and they can commence negotiations at a minimum profit of £50K!" concluded Peter.

The proposal is for the Demolition of existing public house and construction of seven dwellings with car parking, landscaping and associated works.

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