

A shiny new addition to CMK!

Over the past 18 months, many people have been watching Hotel La Tour gradually take shape on the edge of Campbell Park. What was once known as “the John Lewis car park” has become the tallest skyscraper in MK, with the trendy, mirrored building reaching 14-storeys high.

‘See-MK’, the free viewing platform nestled within the top floor sky bar and restaurant, will offer residents and visitors digital art displays as well as inspiring views of CMK and Campbell Park.

The Town Council played a pivotal role in working with Hotel La Tour to provide this unique, publicly-accessible space and to make art part of the architecture.

“From their original proposal for a taller building clad in black to the final, Minimalist design has been a rewarding journey,” says Planning Committee Vice-Chair Linda Inoki, adding: “This new landmark already looks as if it belongs in Milton Keynes.” Happily, Hotel La Tour was open to collaborative working and absorbed helpful information and ideas from local people - an approach they now recommend to other developers.

Speaking about their investment, Managing Director Mark

Stuart said: “We are incredibly excited to open Hotel La Tour in Milton Keynes. We saw a real gap in the market for a unique and special destination in the town and hope it will become a venue for all occasions. We invest in our employees, who will deliver exceptional hospitality at every level so our guests will return again and again.”



Hotel La Tour’s stainless steel exterior will have a 30-m diameter ‘sun’ on the Campbell Park façade, reflecting the symbolic importance of Midsummer Boulevard. This will be softly illuminated at night, acting as a beacon to CMK. A superb sculpture, Cycloidal Form, (pictured left) by Keith McCarter, will be installed near the hotel, which was facilitated by the MK Public Arts Trust with support from the Town Council.

We are pleased to see our lengthy collaboration with Hotel La Tour coming to life, and hope residents will enjoy visiting ‘See-MK’ when it opens in Spring 2022.



Boost for CMK Green Gym

CMK Green Gym, a volunteer-run organisation dedicated to improving local landscapes, has agreed a three-year sponsorship deal with the Town Council. The group makes a positive impact on the parish; they maintain the picturesque Fred Roche Gardens, and are in the process of finishing work on the gardens in front of North 12th Street.

“We are thrilled to provide the Green Gym with financial stability, as the volunteers are an asset to the parish,” says David Stabler,

Vice-Chair of the Town Council (pictured right with banner).

They will now work with the Town Council to maintain planters along Silbury and Avebury Boulevards in addition to their other ongoing projects. We hope that expanding their activities will encourage more residents to join the group, as it’s a brilliant way to improve physical and mental well-being while benefiting the community. You can find out more on their Facebook page @CMKGreenGym.



Drinking control in CMK

The alcohol-related Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) covering CMK parish has been extended for a further three years. This will not affect anyone drinking responsibly in public, for example over a picnic or celebration. However it is an offence to consume alcohol if you have been ordered not to by a concerned Police Officer or Authorised Officer. It is also against the law to refuse to surrender alcohol in CMK if you are ordered to do so by a Police or Authorised Officer.

These regulations are in place to reduce and deter anti-social behaviour. Anyone breaching the order could be fined £100, or even be prosecuted by MK Council.



Lonely and unloved - what next for Theatre car park?



The multi-storey car park on Marlborough Gate, next to MK Theatre, has been failing to attract enough visitors for some years. It shut down during the pandemic, then in November 2020 MK Council decommissioned it as it couldn't compete with the centre:mk's new car park next to John Lewis.

The site's future has recently been the subject of a public consultation on a Draft Development Brief, which is drawn up to provide prospective developers with planning and design guidance.

Milton Keynes Council states that they have 'high aspirations and expectations that the development of this site can help contribute to a dynamic, exciting, interesting and prosperous city centre'.

However, the Town Council is concerned that the current focus, which is on delivering a mainly residential project, is a lost opportunity. We feel that this location,

which sits within the 'cultural quarter', close to MK Theatre, MK Gallery and 12th Street, calls for something more imaginative.

With the aid of a consultant, the Town Council has developed an alternative vision of a primarily leisure and community-led use for the site. This has been submitted in response to the Draft Development Brief.

"It would be a pity to see this prime site turned into a standard block of flats with only a Pizza Express to liven things up," says Chair of the Town Council Rebecca Kurth, adding: "The alternative vision proposed by the Town Council could present a very real opportunity for broadening the entertainment and cultural offer within MK".

Milton Keynes Council was due to make their decision on the final wording of the brief on 7th December. As usual, we will speak at the meeting, and await the outcome with interest!

How to make the most of 'Electra'

Residents living in Central Milton Keynes can secure discounted tickets aboard Electra, the new electric community boat.

Electra operates out of Campbell Wharf, providing public cruises, private charters, and seasonable events for residents

wishing to cruise along the scenic Grand Union Canal.

Discounted sailings are available for people with an MK9 postcode, as long as they have the discount code from the Town Council. You can get this by calling

01908 766176 or emailing clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk

Once you have the code, you can book your trip on Electra by visiting www.bmkwaterway.org.



Thames Valley Alert

Thames Valley Police (TVP) recently gave a presentation to parish councils about the force’s community messaging system, called Thames Valley Alert.

It allows people to receive and exchange information with TVP, Neighbourhood Watch, and other community groups. If you sign up you could help prevent and detect crime; you will receive burglary alerts, be able to identify suspected or wanted criminals, and learn more about the different types of crime in the area.

Speaking about the importance of alerts, local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) David Huckle said: “We believe that by improving the flow of information between a community and its police, we can all make a greater impact in the prevention and detection of crime and antisocial behaviour.”

CMK residents are encouraged to sign up for Thames Valley Alert and receive dedicated local crime updates by visiting www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk.



Clearing graffiti in CMK

Milton Keynes Council is responsible for removing graffiti on public buildings within the parish.

All graffiti complaints that are reported to their website are investigated. The time-lines and subsequent clean-ups vary according to the graffiti’s nature and the actual detail of the report that has been made.

All ‘emergency’ graffiti, including offensive, sexual and racist messaging, will be removed within 24 hours. Other types are removed in due course, which is why unsightly symbols and

name tags can often be seen on local bridges and underpasses for weeks or even months.

However MK Council can only clear graffiti from public land and property, meaning that graffiti on private property is the responsibility of the landowner. This includes vandalised electricity substations along Childs Way and Portway.

Over recent months the amount of graffiti appearing along these two busy roads, which form the gateway to CMK, has increased.

After Town Councillors contacted the power company responsible and instigated discussions, they agreed to step in and complete the clean-up.

If you see any graffiti around CMK, in our underpasses and elsewhere, please help by logging onto Milton Keynes Council’s website with as much information as possible:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/waste-recycling/report-or-request-it



Councillors wanted

Unfortunately two of our councillors have recently resigned for personal reasons.

CMK Town Council sincerely thanks both Amir Chahardehi and Gill Kirkup who have contributed much during their time as councillors.

We are only allowed to have eight councillors representing the parish, so the loss of two people in such a short time means that we are now appealing for residents and city centre employees to consider joining us.

The enclosed letter outlines the sort of people we are looking for. If you are interested in finding out more, why not contact Paul Cranfield, our Clerk, at clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk for more information?

The closing date for expressions of interest is January 7th 2022.

The Almere reaches new heights

The Almere, a build-to-rent apartment complex located along Avebury Boulevard, was topped out in July - just one year after construction started.

It will soon offer 294 homes for rent, with shared amenity spaces and rooftop gardens for residents, alongside a flexible community space. The Town Council has been working with the developer, Packaged Living, to ensure the space can also be used as a '21st-century village hall' for existing residents of CMK.

"It was clear from the outset that this was always going to be an exciting development," says Councillor Andrew Thomas, Chair of the Planning Committee. "Appreciation goes to the Packaged Living team for delivering the scheme as promised. The building, with its ground floor community facility, will be a credit to Central Milton Keynes."

The development's name takes inspiration from the city of Almere in the Netherlands. Sophie Gunn, an architect and the Development Manager at Packaged Living, explained: "We felt that these two cities hold a strong alignment as they are known for quality of life, a sustainable approach to the overall community, and the technological advances which have made the cities desirable locations to live and work - a neighbourhood where residents find balance between the natural spaces and local amenity."

The Almere is expected to open in Spring 2022.



Grant Award for dance company



Photos courtesy of Jane Russell, 'Universe and Me'

MÓTUS, a local dance company, hosted a series of successful public performances in October as part of the 'Universe & Me' Part II. Groups from across MK came together to dance in Middleton Hall, in a performance that was partly funded by the Town Council.

The festival featured work from Gravity & Levity, and their stunning aerial duet against a vertical suspended wall, alongside a vibrant dance and circus piece by the Van Huynh Company.

It was incredibly popular among residents, who commended the dancers for their talent and creativity. Anyone who would like to find out more about MÓTUS, and discover their dancing workshops, can visit www.motusdance.co.uk.

A grant application form and a copy of our grants policy are available from clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk or can be found on the Town Council's website. Please note that the sum available each year is strictly limited and not all requests will be granted.



Congratulations to Tom

CMK Town Council sends warm congratulations to Tom Walker, who got married in November. Tom is our diligent Planning and Consultations officer, and has been with us since he was a student in 2016.



As we are looking for new councillors, we asked Tom to share his thoughts on why he decided to work with a parish council. He said: "I see Milton Keynes as a modern-day marvel of design, and while I do think it should change and grow, I want to see that growth happen in a way that retains and builds on the strengths of its marvellous design. CMK Town Council is a powerful force for ensuring that happens."

"I think Parish Councils have an important role in making sure the decisions that local

authorities like Milton Keynes Council make are accountable to the local people they affect."

He concluded: "Although my career has diversified into a lot of different areas in recent years, I still find my work at the Town Council very rewarding. I love being part of CMK's growth into a major city centre and I'm proud of the input I've had into improving many of CMK's recent major developments. I look forward to doing more of this work with the Town Council in the years to come."

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