

Eco-conscious 'modern living' development comes to CMK

CMK is home to plenty of exciting and innovative development projects, with the latest being an £80m build-to-rent scheme that will replace the former HMRC offices in Bowback House at Witan Gate. Demolition of the old building has begun, making way for construction of the new 14-storey apartment complex to start in May.

The complex, once built, will consist of 306 residential apartments. Around one in ten of these apartments will be classed as 'affordable', meaning the price of rent aligns with household income rather than market value. The forward-thinking development also pairs with the city's green agenda as it will exceed current energy efficiency requirements by being gas-free, using solar panels and air source heat pumps.

Over the next few months, residents can expect to see lots of activity on the site as builders begin construction. It should be complete by Summer 2024, and blend in with the surrounding area. This is because, according to the planning agent Montagu Evans, the apartment complex will be built with CMK's architecture in mind. The planning statement explains: "The development has been carefully designed to optimise the density of development, whilst ensuring that the design respects the current and emerging character of CMK."

Rob Greaves, Director of developers HG Living, explains the motivations behind the scheme: "There is currently a genuine need for high quality and affordable housing in the Milton Keynes area, and this scheme will help to address that gap with the creation of sustainable homes and excellent facilities which will provide opportunities for more people to live and work in the area."

He adds: "We are confident this development will bring many benefits to the local area, and we are looking forward to working alongside our partners to make this vision a reality."

It is expected that construction of the modern living development will create around 750 jobs, and



The Town Council agrees that it will be of great value to CMK. Councillor Andrew Thomas, Chair of the Town Council's Planning Committee, says: "It's exciting to see strides being taken towards another dynamic building giving presence to this important gateway into CMK."

"The Town Council looks forward to working with the developers to explore how else it can benefit the community. We will, of course, keep you updated with the scheme as it progresses!"



MINI MAKEOVER FOR THE HUB



The Hub is one of the most popular destinations in the city, drawing in thousands of visitors each month. And, after fifteen years of use, the space (the centre of The Hub) will be getting a much-needed makeover. There are plans to refurbish Mortimer Square and turn it into a better-used and more attractive place to visit.

The Hub's landowner has a vision for improving the look and feel of the area. They are currently applying for planning permission to replace the restaurants' current outdoor seating areas with uniform structures for al-fresco dining. The Town Council supports these changes, aside from the use of black paint for the porte cocheres. We would prefer to see a lighter colour used, such as blue or beige, to blend in with the apartments above. We hope that the conversation on the colour palette can be resolved soon, with the works expected to be complete by the end of the year.

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2022/23 Parish Taxes

This year's parish taxes, or 'precept', won't be increasing in 2022/23 as Town Councillors have agreed that it isn't necessary.

Councillor David Stabler says: "This is, of course, good news for all residents. However, the Town Council will continue to work on your behalf, developing new projects during the forthcoming year."

Your Town Council's precept remains one of the lowest of the urban and town parishes within Milton Keynes.

E-scooter and bicycle use in CMK

The Town Council has submitted an eight-point plan to MK Council regarding the clarification of e-scooter and bicycle use in CMK, as more needs to be done to ensure safe and legal use in the busy city centre. For example, we believe e-scooters should have designated parking bays, blanket speed limits, and there should be clear signage informing e-scooter users and cyclists that they cannot ride on footpaths.

The safety-conscious plan has been designed with residents in mind and will be discussed by stakeholder groups shortly. The Town Council anticipates that the plan will encourage policy changes and an implementation strategy, and we hope to provide an update in the next newsletter.



Your Town Council working for CMK

Town Councillors have been working closely with Milton Keynes Council and developers to enhance new developments and improve the offer for residents. Rebecca Kurth is Chair of CMK Town Council: "I am very

proud of the work that councillors have done to produce a better offer for residents, and I thank developers and MK Council for being prepared to engage with the Town Council to the benefit of all."

Theatre car park

In the last issue we covered the plight of the MK Theatre car park, and, since then, MK Council has decided that the site should be redeveloped. MK Council had initially favoured

a standard mixed-use scheme, however, this is something the Town Council did not agree with.

As a result, we had several productive discussions with MK Council, which have in turn shaped a new idea for the site.

A formal council document, which outlines planning guidance to prospective

bidders, now includes the importance of entertainment and arts activities for any future development on the site.

This is a positive move in the Town Council's efforts to ensure that the site does not simply become another flat development with a fast-food outlet at the ground floor. The document, called a Development Brief, has been released to seek expressions of interest and the outcome of this process will be monitored with great interest by the Town Council.



New community space

There will soon be a new community space on the ground floor of The Almere, a private rented scheme that's due to open in the next few months. It will be used for art exhibitions, group meetings, and other events including regular 'artisan days' which will feature small local artisan businesses.

The space will be curated by a joint committee involving the owners and the Town Council. Significant artistic design features have also been developed in collaboration with the Town Council, so we look forward to seeing it come to fruition.



What a sight to SEE:MK!

The newest addition to CMK, four-star Hotel La Tour, is set to open its doors to the public shortly – and so is the highly anticipated viewing platform on the 14th floor.

The unique lookout, aptly called SEE:MK, was developed by Hotel La Tour and the Town Council as a public asset. Currently, a joint curation committee is being formed, which will include community and arts & cultural groups, to oversee the use of the public space going forward.

We are pleased with how the developers of the hotel have welcomed a collaborative approach regarding the use of the space and look forward to seeing it in action this Spring. The image is the view from the 14th floor.



Protected parking for current residents

MK Gateway, the multi-million-pound redevelopment of Saxon Court, has been approved by MK Council. And once the major development has been built, we can expect to see an increase in traffic and parked cars in the area.



The Town Council has been keen to support already-existing residents who are concerned about the future of their car parking spots, so we're pleased that the parking currently enjoyed by South 8th and South 9th Street, which is near to the development, will be protected.

We're working with MK Council to establish a 'protected zone' which means future residents of MK Gateway won't be able to park in that area. Aside from this, improvements to community space within the development have been gained because of Town Council involvement.

Cruising into Spring aboard Electra

As we head into the warmer months, why not enjoy a trip aboard Electra? The electric community boat operates out of Campbell Wharf and is running a new Spring timetable, which includes unique 'food cruises' where you can have afternoon tea, fish and chips, and even a curry while cruising along the canal!

Residents with an MK9 postcode are entitled to discounted trips, 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.



Long-standing councillor steps down



Linda Inoki has stepped down from the role of CMK Town Councillor after 11 years. She worked on the CMK Neighbourhood Plan, played a key role as Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee, and her editorial skills have made the newsletter the success it is.

Also, behind the scenes, she has worked tirelessly to engage with and support local artists. Her

contributions will be dearly missed. Linda departs from the Town Council with our best wishes and grateful thanks for the years of commitment she has given to CMK.

We welcome a new councillor

We are pleased to welcome Peter Lightfoot as a new councillor. Peter contacted us after receiving our public call-out in the previous newsletter and will make a great contribution to the Town Council.



Peter says: "Having lived in Milton Keynes for 30 years, I would like to contribute in some small way to making CMK a better place to live and work, in particular the housing and architecture but also the arts, live music and social scene."

Councillors wanted

However, we still have a vacancy and would like to hear from anybody who would consider joining the Town Council. If you are genuinely passionate about making CMK a better place to live and work, and have a few hours to spare each month, then please get in touch.

Please note that this is a voluntary role. If you want to learn more about becoming a town councillor, please contact the clerk, Paul Cranfield, at clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk. We look forward to hearing from you!

Join us for a community litter pick!

CMK Town Council has partnered with CMK Ward Councillors and neighbouring parish councils for the 'Love Where You Live' campaign, which will see us all take part in frequent litter picks throughout the area.

As Summer approaches, we can expect to see more and more people come to CMK to enjoy our glorious parkland and creative community spaces. With this increase in footfall, unfortunately, we can also expect to see a rise in litter – and that is why these community litter picks are especially important.

Rebecca Kurth, Chair of the Town Council, says: "CMK is a unique and special place that sits at the heart of the borough, so it's vital that we look after it. These litter picks are a simple but effective way for the community to come together and take pride in the area that we live in."



We will be taking part in the latest litter pick, which will be held on Saturday 23rd April from 13:30 to 14:30 at North 9th Street, North 10th Street, and the surrounding green space. Pickers and bin bags will be provided and all you need are good walking shoes. We would love for you to join us and you can register your interest by emailing clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk.

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