

DANCING WITH GIANTS!



CMK will be the stage for some amazing giant puppets this summer and, thanks to local arts company Festive Road, you too can join in the fun! On Sunday 20th July the 'walking' Giants will line up near The Hub, on Midsummer Boulevard, from 10 am as the free activities begin. The programme includes some wonderful street performers brought in by MK Festival Fringe as well as Samba warm up sessions and a chance to join in dance sessions with Folk Dance Remixed – Maypole dancing as you've never seen it before!

Come along with friends and family to enjoy the atmosphere of a street festival. This is a friendly parade without trucks or loud sound systems so the event is suitable for all.

In the weeks leading up to the event you can also help make the gentle giants as most of them will be made locally, by schools and community groups. The giant-making workshops are funded by MK Community Foundation among others. If you would like to help, just email the MK Festival Fringe to find out more via Jessica@mkfestivalfringe.com

Festive Road will also be holding giant puppet making sessions at MK Gallery and they are also looking for volunteers to join a promotional 'Flash mob' drumming session in Midsummer Place at 2pm on 12th July. Please spread the word, dress to impress and if you have a musical instrument bring it along too.

ANOTHER FIRST FOR CMK

Last year we invited residents to tell us how they would like to see CMK develop and grow as part of a major neighbourhood planning project called the CMK Alliance Plan 2026. Along with help from community representatives and business leaders your Town Council has led the drive to create the most ambitious 'Business Neighbourhood Plan' in the country. The 120-page document gives a clear guide to developers on what sort of plans are most suitable for CMK and the Campbell Park grid square over the next 15 years.

The good news is that the Plan has now passed another milestone and been approved by an independent examiner. The next step is for two referendums, held later this year, to make sure that the business community and residents support the principle of developing CMK along the lines of the original 'grid-city', with a greater mix of commercial and community uses. If the answer is 'Yes', it will join other key planning policies against which all future planning applications to build new homes, shops, leisure facilities and so on will be judged.

Got your skates on yet?

Did you know that you have an ice rink on your doorstep? A new rink has been opened on the old Waitrose site in the Food Centre and it is well worth a visit. It is run by volunteers and is non-profit making.

Can't skate? A bit nervous, or want to improve? No worries; there are 6 week courses for beginners and improvers. The six week courses for juniors (age 5-15) run on Saturday and Sunday between 9.30 and 10.45 while the adults-only class is at 19.30 on Monday evenings. The courses consist of 30-minute lessons and skaters learn in groups of the same ability.

The six-week courses cost £60, including skate hire, and you can carry on skating in the public session following your lesson. If you'd like to volunteer or find out more go to www.mkice.org

YOUR PARISH NEEDS YOU!

Do you live within 3 miles of CMK/Campbell Park grid squares and are you interested in volunteering to solve local problems and improve your neighbourhood?

If so, we occasionally have Town Councillor vacancies and are now compiling a list of possible candidates. There would be no obligation so please feel free to advise us of your interest.

Please email Paul Cranfield, our parish clerk, via clerk@centralmk-tc.gov.uk for more information or if you would like to add your name to the list.



YOUR NEW TOWN COUNCILLOR

The Town Council is pleased to introduce a new Councillor, Hilarie Bowman, who has lived in Milton Keynes since 1976. She decided to move to this exciting new city to help play a part in its social development.

Hilarie has worked in education throughout her career, most recently in after-school education. Now retired, she is involved with many voluntary groups, including the Adelphi Street Neighbourhood Watch, for whom she is the co-ordinator and U3A (the University of the Third Age), where she is a group leader. Hilarie attended a number of Town Council meetings last year, both to tell us about problem parking in Adelphi Street and, as she says, "out of sheer curiosity!"

Hilarie says, "I am pleased to be part of the Town Council representing residents in the parish. I am particularly interested in residents' management groups and neighbourhood watch schemes and hope to be working with them more closely, to provide a better environment for us all."



Brighter outlook for Midsummer Boulevard?

Around 80 people, including members of the public, business representatives, Milton Keynes Council, parish councillors and many others spent three days discussing possible improvements for Midsummer Boulevard East (the stretch between Saxon Gate and Marlborough Gate).

The aim of the workshop was to come up with ideas to make the city centre a more appealing place for residents, shoppers and visitors and to improve connections between facilities and attractions.

The workshop, jointly sponsored by MK Council and your Town Council, produced a high degree of consensus on the way forward and some ambitious yet practical ideas.

These included:

- Reducing the huge amount of bus traffic along Midsummer by building a new passenger hub next to Secklow Gate and re-routing
- 'Animating' the southern side of the shopping building
- Redesigning the Boulevard to be more pedestrian-friendly, whilst giving access to vehicles on an 'invitation' basis (for disabled access etc)
- Enhancing and improving the market
- Creating a safe pedestrian/cycle route better connecting Silbury to Midsummer Boulevard when the shopping building is closed
- Providing a series of outdoor 'rooms' for public enjoyment along the Boulevard
- Introducing the latest public transport system along the whole Boulevard, linking the station to the shopping centre and Campbell Park.

The follow-up workshop is being planned for June, after which we will stage a public exhibition to seek your views.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The standard of new development has a real impact on the quality of life for CMK residents as well as the wider community. Here are just a few of the new developments your Town Council is involved in as we try to improve life for present and future residents.

The Point. As noted in the last newsletter, we were disappointed with plans to re-develop the Point, as we felt they were not ambitious enough for such an important site. Last month, MK Council's planning committee listened to our concerns, and took the unusual step of granting permission for the owners, Hammerson, to demolish the Point, but only after a detailed design for its replacement has been approved. The Town Council will have an opportunity to influence the detailed plans, which we hope will create a high quality development in the landmark tradition of the original Point.

New hotel for Wyevale. Plans have been unveiled for the old Wyevale garden centre site (opposite Xscape) to be developed as a hotel and leisure venue. Again, we are working with the developer to try to ensure that the resulting complex will enhance this major gateway into CMK, and consider local residents' concerns, such as access and noise.

New waterside homes for Campbell Park. One of CMK's most scenic sites is the landscape at the end of Campbell Park looking across the canal towards the woods at Newlands (east of Overgate, off Child's Way). MK Council has released guidelines for developing this publicly-owned land. The stated aim is to create top quality housing as well as a leisure marina for visitors and canal boats. Your Town Council has been very firm in our views of how the project should be handled for the greatest public benefit. We are hopeful that landowners



and developers will take heed of several changes to the development brief that we, and others, have asked for to improve access and achieve a suitable scale and position for the development, given its leafy location.

A VERY LOCAL TAX

It's Spring and that means a new tax year has 'blossomed'!

If you haven't noticed before, your council tax bill includes several taxes in addition to the main tax from Milton Keynes Council. It includes a small 'precept' tax, which is money all parishes collect to fund their work. This year, CMK and Campbell Park residents will pay £34 in 'precept tax' on average to support our parish. This compares with an average of £1,388 'council tax' to support the work of Milton Keynes Council.

As with all parishes, CMK Town Council is completely independent of the main Milton Keynes Council and is not allied with any political party. All CMK Town Councillors are unpaid and do not even claim allowances. Most of us live in the parish or not far from it, so we know the area well, and experience the same problems and take the same pride in it as our neighbours. We try hard to make life better for our whole community.

So what do we do? For one thing, we spend a lot of time trying to influence local planning policy and planning applications – this is because many areas in CMK and around Campbell Park are not yet built,

and proposed developments can have a big impact on local residents. That's why we've spent so much time on the new Business Neighbourhood Plan, as well as scrutinising planning applications such as Primark and Campbell Square (which we discovered was not providing enough parking spaces!).

Speaking of parking, we also try to resolve residential parking issues (as at Adelphi Street) and review any proposed parking changes by Milton Keynes Council, such as getting rid of the scratch card system, which we successfully opposed. Unfortunately we've had limited success over parking charges!

Looking ahead, we're planning to solve more landscaping and maintenance problems and help more resident and community groups get involved in local activities. We're always looking for volunteers, so please get in touch if you have a few hours here or there to help your local community.

To park or not to park?

Following the article in our last newsletter highlighting parking problems in and around Adelphi Street, we have been talking to both MK Council and Thames Valley Police. As a result the police have agreed to patrol the area, issuing warning notices and letters where appropriate. Also, MK Council has suggested several options to discourage problem parking including time limits in the public bays fronting Silbury Boulevard or even parking meters. On its own, this could simply lead to more illegal parking on the verges or send the problem elsewhere, so solving the problem will require a package of measures. This may include some yellow lines and making Adelphi Street a Residents Parking zone. The measures may be introduced towards the end of the year. If you have any further views, please contact us as below.

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