

Planning Minister Visits CMK for UK's First Business Neighbourhood Plan



© Thomas Walker

The Government Minister for Planning, Brandon Lewis MP, visited Milton Keynes recently to mark the launch of the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan referendums, which are being held on Election Day, Thursday 7 May. The visit was attended by local and regional media, including BBC Look East television, along with representatives of the CMK Town Council, local businesses, Milton Keynes Council, and other local organisations.

The CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan has already been through several years of public consultation and revisions. "We've tried hard to get the balance right between the need

for growth and change, and the need to keep CMK special, and true to itself," says Paul Hunt, co-chair of the CMK Alliance and Head of the Branch of John Lewis in the city centre. "It's been refreshing to have a frank dialogue between business and residents. We all agree that CMK has a unique appeal, and we want to build on its strengths while also helping to generate the next wave of growth."

If adopted, the plan will act as a template for future development in CMK, replacing older documents prepared by Milton Keynes Council with a new one prepared by local people.



HOW TO VOTE IN THE REFERENDUM

One significant feature of the plan is that it is the UK's first business neighbourhood plan. This is a type of plan that's specifically designed for a commercial area like CMK. This means that two separate referendums will take place: one for residents, and another for businesses. It will also be open to the whole borough, making it the largest vote on a neighbourhood plan to date.

The referendum will ask whether or not you want Milton Keynes Council to use the CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan when deciding planning applications in CMK. Anyone living in the Borough of Milton Keynes who is registered to vote in local elections is entitled to vote in the residential referendum. The business referendum is open to businesses who are registered on the business voting register on 7 May.

The referendum will be held alongside the national elections, so you will be able to vote simply by going along to a polling station and voting at the same time as casting your local and national votes.

The Town Council encourages all CMK residents to vote in the referendum.



Your Neighbourhood Plan Summary

The document delivered with this newsletter is a summary of the neighbourhood plan. It includes a range of policies, such as supporting a major university in the city centre, building new community and sports facilities, introducing a new shuttle service and creating a civic square in the heart of CMK. Alongside these aims is a core policy of retaining the successful infrastructure design that has been such an asset to CMK for the last fifty years.

The plan itself is a 120-page document which sets out a complete vision for the ongoing development of CMK over the next ten years or more. The attached summary document sets out the core principles of the plan and gives some information on its background, but anyone wishing to view the full plan can do so by going to the referendum page of the Town Council website at www.cmktowncouncil.org/the-cmk-business-neighbourhood-plan.



i

Adelphi Street Parking Permit Scheme Success

In last year's residents parking survey, Adelphi Street responded overwhelmingly to introduce a permit scheme in their area. The scheme has now been introduced, and early indications are that it has been very successful.

MK Gallery Expansion Plans Approved

Milton Keynes Council's planning committee voted recently to approve MK Gallery's plans to construct a new four-storey extension. The expansion, which will deliver a range of new facilities, is due to open in 2017, the year of Milton Keynes' 50th anniversary.

MK Council Budget Cuts Re-Appraised

The proposed Milton Keynes Council budget cuts were rejected at a meeting of the full council on 18 February. A revised budget was later approved, with planned cuts to public transport, the YMCA and the Citizens Advice Bureau reversed, funded by a 2% increase in council tax.

Theatre District Hotel Gets the Go-Ahead

The application to create a new hotel on Avebury Boulevard in the Theatre District was approved by Milton Keynes Council's planning committee last month. The scheme forms part of a wider project to regenerate the run-down Theatre District area.

Report Street Issues with New System

Milton Keynes Council have introduced a new system called 'Report It', to allow residents to quickly and easily report environmental issues, such as graffiti and broken paving. Users must register on the system, after which they can pinpoint problems on an interactive map.

Big Changes at the Leisure Plaza

The home of the MK Lightning ice hockey team, Planet Ice is back up and running as part of the completely rebuilt Leisure Plaza. Costing £6 million to build, it includes a new bar area, café, and even a special birthday party zone. The rink offers a range of lessons for anyone wanting to learn to skate, as well as general skating sessions.



The ice rink is just one part of the huge development that's taken place recently at the Leisure Plaza. A Morrison's superstore, complete with underground car parking, opened at the beginning of this year. Part of the Leisure Plaza site on the north side currently remains undeveloped, and it is anticipated that further development will come forward on this area in the near future.

The ice rink is just one part of the huge development that's taken place recently at the Leisure Plaza. A Morrison's superstore, complete with underground car parking, opened at the beginning of this year. Part of the Leisure Plaza site on the north side currently remains undeveloped, and it is anticipated that further development will come forward on this area in the near future.

Questionnaire Results Highlight Local Needs and Aspirations

The analysis of the results from the residents' questionnaire is now well underway, and clear priorities have begun to emerge.

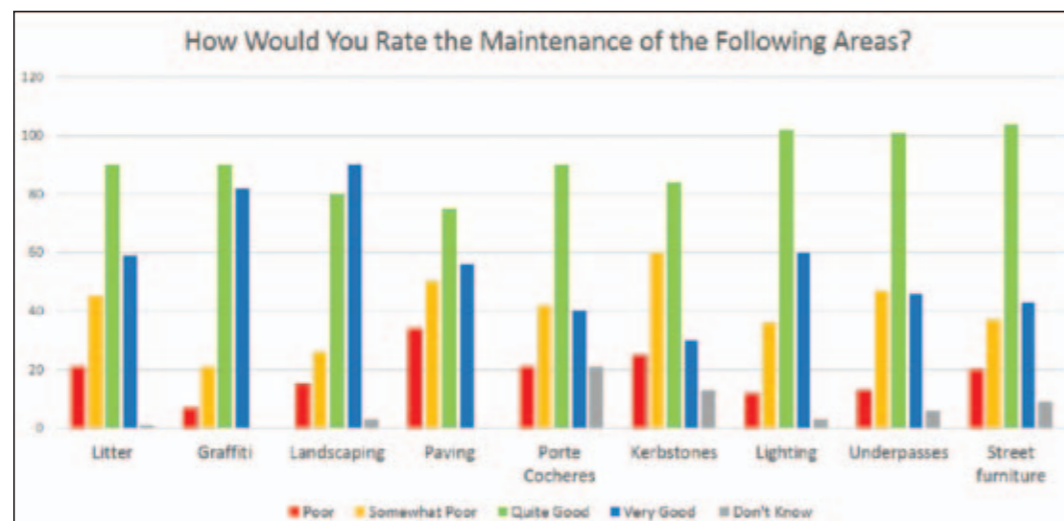
One priority is the poor maintenance of paving, kerbstones, and covered walkways (porte cocheres), which the CMK Street Warden can help to address. We strongly encourage people to contact him with details of any specific issues at 07904 016373 or by emailing him at warden@centralmk-tc.gov.uk. On a positive note, the majority of residents felt that maintenance in CMK overall was quite good.

In terms of smaller items to improve the environment on local streets or blocks, the highest interest was in various kinds of bins – litter bins, salt bins and dog bins. The Town Council

is investigating options for these with a view to improving litter bin provision by the end of the year.

On a larger scale, sports emerged as the area of most interest for a major community facility, with a swimming pool having the highest level of interest. While initial research suggests that a pool would cost upwards of £3 million, which is currently not feasible, the Town Council is looking into collaborating with other local parish councils and organisations on this possibility.

One impressive result from the questionnaire was that all of the areas achieved high resident satisfaction rates, with almost 90% of people saying they were satisfied with living in CMK. More details on these results are available on the Town Council website.



Representatives Gather for First CMK Residents' Forum

This first meeting of the CMK Residents' Forum brought together residents groups from across the parish, along with Town Council representatives and the CMK Street Warden. Discussions covered a wide range of topics, from litter and road gritting to rat problems and planning issues. Many concerns were common to different areas, and the Warden noted specific issues that he would pursue and resolve. Information shared also provided opportunities for groups to learn from the experiences of other parts of CMK.

The Forum is a new initiative by the Town Council that aims to bring together residents associations and organisations

from all the different residential areas across CMK into a single meeting where issues facing all of them can be discussed and addressed. Meetings will sometimes include representatives from the Thames Valley Police and other bodies that can help to tackle any problems raised by local groups.

It is anticipated that the forum will meet quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled for late May or early June. Representatives from more areas around CMK would be very welcome; if you would be interested in representing your street or block at the forum, please contact Rob Harriman at warden@centralmk-tc.gov.uk.



Intu Propose Plans for Midsummer Place

Intu, the owners of the shopping centre formerly known as Midsummer Place, have released their plans for the redevelopment of the areas under the glass arch and around the old oak tree.

The proposed scheme includes a range of new retail and food outlets, along with a new cinema on the upper floor. The design includes elevated walkways and a bridge creating a two-level shopping area.

The plans include a number of controversial features, such as building over Oak Court and removing the oak tree. In addition, proposed new buildings will extend significantly toward Saxon Gate, completely altering the view of the glass structure from the west side.

Finally, the scheme proposes to narrow the public right of way and transport corridor that currently exists through the centre of the space, from 23m down to 15m. The Town Council opposes the loss of this public space, and believes that retaining it is crucial to allowing future public transport systems to be established in CMK.

Local Residents Turn Around Neglected Area of CMK

Anyone who has recently walked around the North 9th and 10th Street flats near the library will have noticed a substantial change in the appearance of the area. This is largely down to the work of the Central Housing Residents Association (CHRA) and its chair, Robert Stones, who have been working hard to completely turn around the appearance of this once run-down corner of CMK.

Comprising of 262 flats built in the late 1970s, the buildings originally provided housing for the engineers and builders working on the construction of CMK. Many of the flats were sold off in the early 1990s, with the area entering a period of neglect over the following years, with the large garden in the centre becoming a hotspot of antisocial behaviour.

"In early 2008 when I moved into 10th Street" says Robert Stones, "we set up a residents association with the assistance of PCSO Jim Lake and MK Council. Over the next five years we worked to clean up the area. However we had over 100 children living here with nowhere to play, so in 2012 we applied for WREN funding with the assistance of the Town Council and received £50k to install play equipment in the garden."

Robert and his team have now started on improving the landscaping in the garden and around the buildings, making considerable progress

in tidying up the area. However they still need assistance, particularly in the areas of design and gardening, and anyone with an interest in helping out is encouraged to get in touch by emailing Robert at robertstones@hotmail.co.uk.



i

Saturday 25 April The Dog Owner's Guide

An introduction to MK's parks for new or prospective dog owners, or those new to the city. Suitable for all healthy dogs and includes informative talks and a short walk. Meet at the Pavilion at 2pm.

Saturday 2 May May Day Festival

Dance around the May Pole and celebrate May Day at the annual fair by the canalside.

Monday 4 May Milton Keynes Marathon

This year's annual MK Marathon will take place on May Day, starting at the Stadium:MK before running up to CMK and around the city. Races start at 10am.

Saturday 9 May Church Charity Concert

There will be a piano and soprano charity concert at the Christ the Cornerstone Church on 9 May at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £12 standard or £10 for concessions. Proceeds will go to the Cosgrove Church.

Friday 29 May – The Great War Remembered

An evening of film and music made by local people to mark a hundred years since World War One. Entry is free but booking is required.

Sunday 14 June Albert French Day

A ceremony commemorating a local volunteer soldier who became one of the youngest victims of the First World War. It will be held at the MK Rose in Campbell Park at 10.30am.

Sunday 28 June Race for Life MK

A women's race across Campbell Park to raise money for Cancer Research UK. There will be 5 and 10 kilometre races starting at 10am. To enter to go www.raceforlife.org.

For more details of these events and others, please see our website at www.cmktowncouncil.org



Dance Around the May Pole in Campbell Park

Campbell Park canalside will come alive on the first Saturday in May with the annual May Day fair. Along with the essential May Pole, there will be a wide range of activities for all the family, including Morris dancers, children's entertainment, stalls and fair rides. In between the activities visitors can feed the ducks and take in the colourful display of narrowboats moored along the canal.

The festivities will kick off at midday with a May Pole dance with audience participation. The fair is free to attend, with no booking required. Free parking can be found nearby along the north side of the park. The entire event is expected to run from 12.00 to 4.45pm on Saturday, 2 May.

Community Activities on Your Doorstep



The Milton Keynes Bridge Club is just one of a wide range of social and community groups that meet regularly at Centrecom, CMK's own community centre on North Row. The weekly bridge club, held every Wednesday at 7.15pm, also holds improvers classes on Monday afternoons. Yoga classes are held every Tuesday at 5.30pm, and Slimming World meets on Thursdays at 9am and 11am. More information on these and other groups meeting in Centrecom can be found on the events section of our website.

Located on North Row between 9th and 10th Streets, Centrecom features a large meeting space suitable for a range of uses, a kitchen, toilets and even a modest collection of books for people to borrow. The centre is available for hire to local groups and community organisations. Centrecom is also used as the venue for the Town Council's monthly meetings, which are open for members of the public to attend.

The Great War Remembered at MK Gallery



Experience the story of the First World War in an evening of original music and film at MK Gallery. Young songwriters, musicians and filmmakers from around Milton Keynes will be presenting inspiring new works that re-tell the story of the 'Great War' from a local perspective.

The project has been led by Living Archive, an organisation dedicated to preserving the local history of Milton Keynes. The event forms part of an initiative to commemorate the war's hundredth anniversary.

This moving evening will begin at 7pm on Friday 29 May. It is free to attend, although booking in advance is recommended.

More details and links can be found on the events section of our website, or alternatively you can email Helen Innes at Living Archive for more information at heleninnes@livingarchive.org.uk.

www.cmktowncouncil.org



CMK LIFE is published by CMK Town Council (CMKTC), which is the parish council elected by residents living in the City Centre and Campbell Park. CMKTC is independent of MK Council and is not affiliated with any political party. Any opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of CMKTC. Contact us on 01908 766176 or visit our website www.cmktowncouncil.org