



EXPLORE THE SECRETS OF OUR PARK LIFE

Over the past year many of us have been making the most of our green spaces and Campbell Park is a popular place for residents to exercise and unwind in. But how well do you know the park? And do you know it was recently Listed as a park of national importance?

The Town Council has teamed up with The Parks Trust for a free Zoom talk, *The Secret Life of Campbell Park*, on Monday 26th April.

"It will shine a light on some of the interesting things you could see on your walks this month, and as summer progresses," said Town Councillor Gill Kirkup.

"One of the Trust's experts will give a presentation about the landscape and there will be a chance to ask questions and find out more."

The event will begin at 7pm. To book email Michael Green at *resident.support@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk* and you'll be sent a link to the live event.



Saxon Court helps in the fight against the virus

Saxon Court is currently giving thousands of people the needle – though not one of them is upset about it; the landmark site is functioning as an integral part of the fight back against Coronavirus, having been temporarily turned into the main vaccination hub for Milton Keynes. Mixed-use developers First Base and investors Patron Capital acquired the heritage building on the corner of Saxon Gate and Avebury Boulevard for redevelopment last year.

"We are proud to be supporting Milton Keynes Council and the NHS as they undertake this significant and important task," said First Base project director Steve Eccles, "Saxon Court sits at the heart of Milton Keynes and we are pleased that the building will be part of the city's recovery and renewal."

It isn't the first time the site has been at the forefront during the pandemic; it had already supported some of the most vulnerable people in the area by delivering thousands of food and essential supply parcels via the Food Bank Xtra.

As previously announced, Saxon Court is set to be turned into a mixed-use district with a huge £190m redevelopment.

Residents and members of the public can interact with a Virtual Public Exhibition to

view the emerging plans. The virtual Saxon Court atrium incorporates 10 exhibition boards which details and illustrates the redevelopment plans as well as celebrating the building's history.

It should be available online until at least the end of April.

"Our objective is to retain and enhance the identity of Saxon Court, while embracing everything that makes the city great into its new design, and it is vital that we continue to involve the people of Milton Keynes every step of the way," Steve added.

The plans for Saxon Court include new homes and spaces to socialise, as well as flexible workspaces, local independent food, drink, leisure and retail spaces.

A new 27-storey building will provide space for 287 apartments for rent, with the four-storey building on the site of the current Saxon Court being developed for commercial use.

Why not view the virtual exhibition and have your say on the proposals by visiting saxoncourtmk.com



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2021/22 Precept

This year's parish precept (a small part of your overall Council Tax Bill) will not be increased. Town Councillors agreed that on this occasion, it would not be necessary to seek an increase. However the Town Council will continue to work to develop new projects during the forthcoming year.

The Town Council's precept remains among the lowest of the urban and town parishes within the borough of Milton Keynes.

Notice of Parish Election

Elections for the CMK Town Council were due to be held in 2020. Restrictions created by the pandemic meant the CMK Town Council elections were cancelled in 2020. Your CMK Town Councillor election is now scheduled to be held on Thursday 6 May this year.

Nominations for CMK Town Councillor candidacy are open until April 8. If you are interested in standing, please contact the clerk (clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk). Details of candidates standing will be available on our website and from MK Council in due course.

We would urge as many residents as possible to use their democratic right to vote.

Remember to fill it in! Census day is Sunday, March 21.

The census takes place every 10 years and is organised by the Office for National Statistics. Information gathered helps to form a comprehensive picture of the country, and each area, and the data is essential for the planning and provision of public services.

This year for the first time the census will be 'digital-first,' although paper forms will still be available if required.

All residents should receive an information pack in the post and more information is available at census.gov.uk

Bus Shelter MK moves to pastures new



As we went to press, clearance of the former site of homeless charity The Bus Shelter MK in Colgrain Street, Campbell Park, was imminent.

When the pandemic hit, covid regulations meant the charity had to move to a temporary home at the YHA in Bradwell Village. More recently it has settled into a new permanent base in Stantonbury.

Chair Pam Williams said the charity's time in our parish was the ideal starting point: "Being in the heart of CMK, surrounded by the beauty of Campbell Park, was the perfect place for us to start our innovative charity," she reflected.

"It had been much harder and took longer to make the original site usable than we expected and our first night it was bitterly cold with snow on the ground. One of our first guests arrived in a

desperate state, having been sleeping in a skip and narrowly avoiding being gathered up into a refuse lorry. He was deeply embarrassed that his clothes were so dirty but after a few nights of safe sleep and good food he looked 10 years younger than when he first arrived.

Pam added: "We soon learned what we needed to do to change the haunted look of someone sleeping on the streets into a relaxed, happy face, where a casual visitor would not be able to tell the difference between a Bus Shelter MK guest and one of our wonderful volunteers."

During its time in Campbell Park, The Bus Shelter MK provided a temporary home and detailed, one-to-one support for 55 people.

The bus has now been retired and guests are housed in a new covid-secure pod at the new site.

centre:mk prepares for beautiful new arrival

Harrods is opening a new store dedicated to beauty later this spring in place of the old House of Fraser department store.

It is the second beauty-only space launched by the renowned store. Visitors will be able to experiment with make-up at interactive Playtables and enjoy coffee or a drink at the Champagne Bar.

Harrods' director of beauty Annalise

Fard said: "Harrods can offer customers iconic brands straight from our Knightsbridge Beauty Halls, as well as an exciting array of entirely new brands and products that are exclusive to H beauty. Following the huge success of the first H beauty store in Essex last year, we are so excited to be opening at the



centre:mk in the spring."

Kevin Duffy, shopping centre director added: "H Beauty's approach, line-up of brands and commitment to delivering a unique experience for visitors will be a significant addition to centre:mk with appeal across the region."

Too many offices turning into flats?

A few years ago the government brought in new laws to help ease the housing crisis. ‘Permitted Development Rights’, or PDR, allowed owners to convert empty office buildings into flats without going through the normal planning process. However, the fast-track system has produced mixed results. Some conversions have been well designed but others have not. With no minimum space standards, people have ended up living in poor, cramped conditions, overlooking railway tracks or stuck in industrial estates.

Varied results can also be seen in CMK. Here, a number of offices, built to meet the requirements of the time, became outdated and some remained empty for years. Since the legislation also authorised adding two floors on top of the building, without the need for a further planning application, owners were understandably attracted to PDR. Most of the resulting dwellings in CMK are 1-bed flats, and many are sold on to private landlords.

But CMK is not a traditional town centre, and whilst the legislation may work elsewhere, it creates particular challenges here.

The main issue is unplanned, piecemeal development.

A balanced town centre needs all sorts of housing with decent amenities. “But how many 1-bed flats does CMK need? And is Station Square a good place to introduce hundreds of flats?” asks Councillor Andrew Thomas, chair of the Town Council’s planning committee. He adds, “Whilst some developers have engaged with the Town Council to improve the look of the building, the legislation means that neither the Town Council nor Milton Keynes Council has any significant influence on the applications.”

Whereas new, purpose-built developments (such as Aubrey Place, E3 West and Campbell Wharf) go through a thorough process, ‘off the cuff’ conversions avoid the scrutiny of the planning system.

Moreover, unlike planned residential development, office conversions make no financial contribution towards affordable housing, or public services such as transport, community or cultural life. Nationally, the Local Government Association calculates that over 13,500 affordable homes have been “lost” due



to PDR conversions.

Although the Town Council worked hard to produce a sustainable, long-term development plan for CMK (the Neighbourhood Plan), too many office conversions could upset the balance.

Fortunately, MKC shares our concerns. It has recently taken steps to limit such conversions in the business end of town, with restrictions starting this July.

Say “Hi” to Michael!

The Town Council is pleased to welcome Michael Green as part of its team. Michael joined in February on a part-time basis for an initial six-month period. His role is to develop a stronger connection between the Town Council and its residents.

While this is clearly challenging, face to face, in the current climate, Michael has begun by developing a greater presence on social media and will be looking at ways in which the Town Council can reach out remotely to engage its

residents while Covid 19 restrictions remain in place.

Look out for the Town Council on Facebook: @cmktowncouncil and Twitter: @CMKTownCouncil and get engaged.



Ken Baker

Ken Baker, a long-time resident of Milton Keynes, talented architect and former CMK Town Councillor, passed away in January in his adopted hometown of Lewes at the age of 79. He was one of the team who designed the unique layout and form of the city centre for the Milton Keynes Development Corporation in the 1970’s.

Ken was well known and respected throughout the architectural community for the innovative contributions he made to the design of CMK.

Ken served as a parish councillor for CMK from 2008. He was elected as Chair for a period of three years, during which time the small parish council became a town council.

“He also served on the Town Council’s planning committee for a number of years, adding his great insight and creativity to the assessment of many



new developments,” says Dr Rebecca Kurth, chair of the Town Council. She adds, “As a vociferous campaigner for the protection of the original design principles of CMK, he helped develop the CMK Neighbourhood Plan, which won a prestigious national award. It remains a key document referenced by all developers looking to build in the city centre.”

A unique and at times anarchic voice within the Town Council, Ken’s contributions to CMK cannot be underestimated.



Gremlins in the works at new museum

As the pandemic continues, arts and leisure events are still being cancelled or postponed. But when times return to normal Milton Keynes will be home to an exciting new museum.

Lloyds Court will soon be home to the National Film & Sci Fi Museum.

It is brilliant news for the town, and particularly Lloyds Court, which can now look to a more settled future.

A decade ago, the area was looking shabby and down at heel. With tenants moving out, the owners were keen to do away with Lloyds Court in favour of a much bigger building. The new build would have eaten up side streets, trees and parking bays. MK Council was in support. But as it was arguably the most historic building in CMK, the Town Council raised firm objections.

In 1976, it was the first and only building in the town centre, designed by the renowned architects of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation. With its Modernist design, colonnades, open courtyards and use of finest granite, it set the pattern for many other innovative buildings in CMK. Lloyds Bank were so impressed they signed up, and have stayed loyal to their namesake building ever since.

Faced with growing calls to respect MK's heritage, MK Council had a change of heart, and the demolition plans were scrapped. In 2013, new owner Palatium Investment Management began a sympathetic regeneration of the building, and its future now looks bright.

On the first floor of Lloyds Court, there are the occasional Gremlins in the works, but they are nothing to worry about – they are part of the museum which will celebrate icons of the big screen!

Jason Joiner, the man behind the successful Collectormania events in MK, is driving this new venture.

Despite delivering Comic Con events across Europe, MK is his home, and he wanted to enrich the locality with a museum offering wide appeal.

Jason has amassed a huge collection of unique film and television props, costumes and rarities from big screen hits including Harry Potter and Star Wars. The museum will display many items for the first time, allowing fans to get close to things they will only have seen at the cinema. It will also ensure that rare items are preserved.

"I could have taken this anywhere, but I never wanted to consider anywhere other than Milton Keynes," Jason said, "MK is a special place with so much to offer – and the Lloyds Court space itself is perfect. The building is a product of its time from the 70s and the architecture is incredible – it is the perfect fit for a sci-fi museum," he said.



Jason Joiner and 'friend'

CMK Town Councillor Linda Inoki is thrilled the building has been repurposed and that the new owners have worked with their architects to sympathetically restore the space.

"Despite a very difficult market, the new owners are finding new tenants," said Linda Inoki, "Happily, CMK's most historic building stands proudly once more at the junction of Secklow Gate and Silbury Boulevard, 'guarded' by its famous statue of the black horse."

Lockdown has given Jason and his team the space and time to ready the project for when restrictions lift.

"We all need a little escapism, and the National Film and Sci-Fi Museum will offer that in plentiful supply," he promised.

For the latest information check the official Facebook page: [NFSMuseum](#)

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