

Her Majesty The Queen's lasting legacy in CMK



2022 has been a momentous year for Milton Keynes. Just a few months ago, Milton Keynes was chosen by Britain's longest-reigning monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, as one of the few places to receive formal city status as part of HM's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. This means that the letters patent awarded to Milton Keynes, which officially confirms city status, is among the last documents in the world to have the Queen's royal seal.

This is especially significant given the late monarch's notable connection to Milton Keynes, as she visited many times throughout her reign. As such, we thought it would be fitting to look back at the Queen's visits to CMK, which have made an

everlasting impact on our city.

Although the Queen had visited Milton Keynes and its surrounding towns many times prior, Her Majesty's first visit to CMK was in June 1979 to look at some notable developments in the up-and-coming new town. The Queen, alongside her husband Prince Philip, was greeted by cheering crowds upon arriving at the new centre:mk - formerly known as the Shopping Building. Thousands of people lined the arcades to welcome the Royals, who took their time shaking hands and speaking to excited locals. Following the visit, Queen's Court was named in her honour and it remains a key part of CMK to this day.

That same year, the Queen crossed Silbury Boulevard to open Milton Keynes Council's Civic Offices. Fast forward just over a decade, in March 1992, The Queen returned to the city centre to open the Church of Christ the Cornerstone, which was the first ecumenical metro centre church in the United Kingdom. Her Majesty then returned to CMK for one final time in November 2007, during her 40th anniversary year, to open The Hub. The Queen, again joined by Prince Philip, was greeted

in the traditional MK fashion by joyous crowds and lots of entertainment. A plaque was unveiled by Her Majesty the Queen to mark the opening of The Hub and it is still on show today.

Councillor Andy Thomas remembers meeting the Queen upon the opening of the Shopping Building. 'It was a bright sunny June day as those to be presented to her late majesty all stood in a line in Queen's Court waiting for the Queen to arrive. Although such visits are choreographed down to the minute, when one meets the Queen it is by contrast very relaxed. She was very charming and showed great interest in the Shopping Building and Milton Keynes, For such an occasion we had a quite long conversation about civil engineering and 'all that infrastructure'.

These images of the Queen's visits are just a handful available from the Living Archive, an organisation which preserves the unique history and heritage of MK.



Community space officially opens at the Almere

A new community space full of public art, aptly called the City of Trees, has opened at The Almere on Avebury Boulevard. This new vibrant space aims to bring people together and whilst it holds up to 80 people, it can be divided into two rooms or used as one large open space with its own entrance, kitchen and toilet facilities.

The main focus of the space is the artwork that surrounds the room; the City of Trees was designed by local artists Fionnuala Boyd and Les Evans, who wanted to capture exactly how "local people love



and value MK's trees and green spaces".

Married and working together for over six decades, Boyd and Evans' paintings are surreal and figurative. They draw inspiration from photographs of local trees

before painting them, and have exhibited their work in countless galleries across the country.

The artwork and community space sits on the ground floor of The Almere, which is one of the newer developments in CMK. It is made up of two high-rise buildings, complete with nearly 300 apartments, alongside co-working, communal and event spaces.

During the planning stages of the development, The Town Council raised the importance of the apartment complex having a benefit for the wider community, and thus the community space was born. Councillor Andy Thomas, Chair of the Planning Committee, said: "The Town Council is pleased to see the final pieces of The Almere come together, as the development and community space have been a long time in the works. The community space and its artwork truly encapsulates all that MK has to offer and I hope it can be enjoyed by all in the years to come!"

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Lime e-bikes arrive in MK

Over the last few months, bright orange electric bikes have been cropping up throughout CMK. This is because Lime, one of the companies behind the popular e-scooter trial, has launched e-bikes here in the city. Just like when hiring an e-scooter, people can reserve an e-bike on the Lime app and use the pedal assist bikes as an environmentally-friendly travel method.

The e-bikes allow you to cycle on redways and minor roads throughout CMK and across the rest of the city. However, there are restrictions on where the e-bikes can be parked. These no-parking zones include all of CMK and the Grand Union Canal, and are clearly marked on the Lime app. Those who leave the e-bikes in the no-parking zones run the risk of being fined.

The top speed on the e-bikes is 14.9mph, although the speed is capped at 10mph in designated slow zones - including CMK. GPS technology allows Lime to enforce these restrictions in real-time, meaning the bikes will automatically slow down when reaching the city centre. There are said to be over 100,000 Lime e-scooter users in the city already, so no doubt the e-bikes will prove popular.

It costs £1 to unlock the e-bikes, and is then 20p per minute afterwards. You can download the Lime app on your smartphone.



Iconic CMK sculptures to be given tidy up

The picturesque Fred Roche Gardens, along Silbury Boulevard, is home to three sculptures created by world-renowned artist Bernard Schottlander. But sadly, the sculptures have fallen into disrepair after being left unloved for many years.

CMK Green Gym, who help to maintain the gardens, and the MK Public Arts Trust raised these concerns with Milton Keynes City Council and we are pleased to say that the City Council has agreed to renovate the iconic sculptures and their surroundings. The funds for this work will be coming from arts contributions made by developers across CMK.

Chair of CMK Town Council, David Stabler, said: "These sculptures form part of the artistic heritage of Milton Keynes and we are grateful that the funding has been found to extend their life and enhance their appeal to the public."



Credit: Public Arts Trust MK

Another build-to-rent scheme opens

Enigma Square, an eight-storey luxury build-to-rent development, has welcomed its first residents. The newly-built apartment complex is located along North Row, just opposite the new YMCA. It is made up of 261 units ranging from studios up to three-bedroom apartments which all come fully furnished.

Just like many of the new developments in the city centre, there are lots of amenities for tenants to make use of including a residents' lounge, social games lounge, 24-hour gym, and a private dining room that can be booked for parties and get-togethers.

It also boasts a co-working space for tenants to use alongside a meeting room, integrated meeting booths and 6,000 sq ft of outdoor space including a courtyard and a terrace.

Enigma Square is the second development by Grainger plc, who built the successful build-to-rent scheme Solstice Apartments. Helen Gordon, Chief Executive of Grainger, said: "We are redefining the way that people rent homes and at Enigma Square we look forward to creating a brilliant new community that combines the flexibility of renting, with high quality homes and professional services to give our residents the best experience possible."

Genesis House upgrade

There are plans to upgrade and refurbish Genesis House, which is a five-storey office building on Midsummer Boulevard. Genesis House was originally built in the early 1980s, so the exterior is beginning to look dated and in need of a revamp.

A planning application has been lodged to transform the outside of the building from its bronze tinted windows and dark brickwork to vertical modern glass complete with coloured and patterned panels. There are also proposals to increase the office block by two storeys to create even more workspace, which can be let out to businesses on a floor-by-floor basis.

If approved, Genesis House would transform into a 48,000 sq ft space centered around a new spacious reception area and coworking lounge.

The Town Council is supportive of this planning application, and we will keep you updated with the scheme when things progress.



Enhanced safety in CMK thanks to parish grant

You may be aware that CMK Town Council provides parish grants to community initiatives that benefit local residents. In the last newsletter, we revealed how the Town Council part-funded a defibrillator for the YMCA, and we are pleased to say another defibrillator has since been installed in the area.

Milton Keynes College runs Sports Central, which is a busy sports hub on Elder Gate, and they were successful in applying for parish funding to install a defibrillator on the site which draws in hundreds of visitors each day. They also requested funds for bleed-control kits, which include tourniquets, bandages and gels. These kits can be used in any major or traumatic injury, such as stabbings or car accidents, and could provide life-saving help before paramedics arrive. The defibrillator and bleed kits are in a secure box on the front of the building, meaning they can be accessed 24/7 by anybody that gets an access code from 999 call handlers.

Milton Keynes College have said they are "delighted" to have the life-saving kits installed. Bianca Luttmann from the College added: "The importance of a defibrillator or a bleed control kit in those first few minutes when an accident or incident has occurred is unquestionable, and most of the time is the difference between life and death. We hope to be giving the community further reassurance that if something was to happen the kit is available to be accessed 24/7 and can save a life. Thank you to CMK Town Council for funding this great project!"

The Town Council continues to provide parish grants to projects that benefit local residents. If you know of a CMK-based voluntary initiative, why not take a look at the grants policy and application form online at www.cmktowncouncil.gov.uk. Please note that the grant pot is limited and not all applications will be granted.



Concerns for unsightly Station Square

The Town Council has raised its concerns over the poor condition of Station Square and its infrastructure with Milton Keynes City Council. In a detailed document submitted to the Council there are lots of examples of poorly repaired pavements, damaged granite edges, a lack of signage and pedestrian cues on how to get into the city centre from the train station.



Chair of CMK Town Council, David Stabler, said: "It goes without saying that the Station's entrance is the first experience many visitors will have of the City of Milton Keynes, and the current experience is simply not good enough. Thankfully, Nicholas Hannon, Head of Environment and Waste at Milton Keynes City Council, has acknowledged the issues raised and is developing a series of interventions to address them. We hope that the changes will make Station Square an impressive gateway to our city."

Super secure storage for bikes in CMK

Nearly 200 highly-secure bike parking spaces will be available across the city centre as part of Milton Keynes City Council's £60,000 investment in making it easier and safer to travel via bicycle across CMK.



Work is underway to install the first 87 free Streetpods across the busy centre including at Lloyds Court, MK Gallery, Xscape, Midsummer Place and 12th Street. The Streetpods adhere to the highest level of bicycle security in the UK; the front wheel of the bicycle fits into a secure shell that also has a ring of reinforced solid steel, and the back wheel and frame can be secured through the steel ring using a cyclist's own lock.

They are being installed in response to a consultation carried out whereby residents said they would be more likely to cycle around CMK if they felt their bicycle would be more secure. The Streetpods have the full support of the MK Cycling Forum.

Town Councillor Philip Murphy said: "As a keen cyclist I welcome the additional investment in making CMK's bike storage more secure. I hope that these Streetpods will encourage more people to make greener choices when visiting our city centre, and make it easier for people to cycle to and across CMK knowing their bikes are safe."

The Town Council is interested in finding out residents' thoughts on whether the secure bike storage encourages you to cycle in the centre. You can get in touch with us by emailing clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk.

Greater security for residents

In recent years, the flats along North 9th Street, North 10th Street, and Avebury Boulevard have had issues with their security. Non-residents had been able to easily gain access to the building because the main door access had been compromised.



This led to Milton Keynes City Council working alongside Thames Valley Police as part of an initiative to find the best way to secure the buildings going forward. As part of this initiative, new doors have been installed and residents now have to present their key fob to gain access. The doors are proving to be a great success in creating a more secure environment for residents.

Become a member of MK Hospital

Milton Keynes University Hospital is looking for CMK residents to become members. It is free to sign up, and it gives you the chance to be involved in the local hospital while having a say in the services provided. There is also the opportunity to vote, and stand, for local hospital governors.

Those who are interested can visit www.mkuh.nhs.uk/about-us/governors-and-members to find out more.

Grafton Park going for Green Flag Status

Milton Keynes City Council has announced it will be refurbishing Grafton Park, a patch of land that sits between Lower Second Street and Lower Fourth Street.

The park has been looking rather messy and overgrown, so we are pleased that there are plans to give the area a new lease of life this year. Work is underway to transform the site by cutting back all overgrown vegetation, replanting, cleaning up the pond, and refurbishing the bird tower.

The City Council hopes that these improvements and further enhancements will make the urban park more of a destination by making it more accessible, attractive and will boost biodiversity. There will be activity on the site over the next few months while the works take place, and there is the hope that Grafton Park will obtain Green Flag Status once it is complete.



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