

Litter and parking among biggest concerns for CMK residents, survey shows

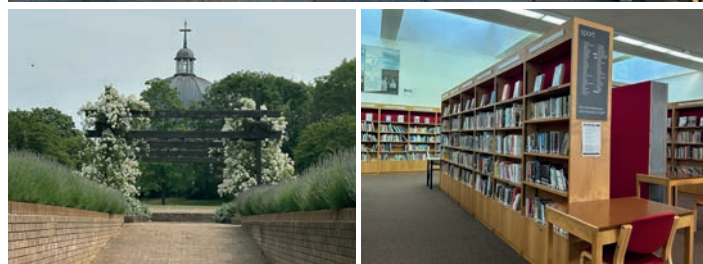
Litter and parking are some of the biggest issues facing CMK residents, according to the Town Council's most recent Residents' Survey. Over 200 households responded to the survey, which was sent to every household in the area earlier this year. We asked various questions about your thoughts and experiences of living in CMK, and what could be done to make it better, to help shape the Town Council's strategy for the next four-year term.

Aside from litter and parking, street noise was a concern for the majority of those living closest to the train station - while it was less of a concern elsewhere. Around two thirds of households said they were happy with landscaping, and over half were happy with the current state of pavements throughout CMK. Most households also said they were happy with the underpasses and sense of security in the area. We're pleased to say that almost 90% of respondents said they were either happy, or very happy, living in CMK.

The survey also considered specific parts of CMK life. Nearly a third of respondents said they travel to work by car, around a quarter work from home, and only 10% use the bus and train. This tells us that those living in CMK still need access to cars and parking - something that we feel isn't being emphasised enough by prospective developers.

When asked which facilities were most used in CMK, Campbell Park came out well ahead followed by other parks such as Fred Roche Gardens. Private gyms were visited regularly, but MK Central Library and the MK Theatre weren't really of interest. Interestingly, residents said that street fairs and an independent music venue would make CMK a better place to live.

The Town Council compared some of the survey's key indicators with the most recent census, conducted in 2021, and the differences between CMK and the rest of the city were striking:



▲ Top: Litter is a big concern - pictured Station Square.
Left: Fred Roche Gardens is a fan favourite.
Right: CMK Library isn't used that often by survey respondents.

- 60% of CMK residents are between 25 and 49-years-old compared to 38% city-wide
- CMK residents rent 80% of the time compared to just 34% across MK

Town Council Chair, David Stabler, said: "The results of this survey shows residents' priorities and is a clear indicator as to what it's like to live in CMK. This feedback is incredibly insightful and will help to guide our focus going forward, to ensure we remain the representative voice of our community."



Tackling anti-social drinking in CMK



Milton Keynes City Council is currently seeking peoples' views on whether an order that puts restrictions on drinking alcohol in CMK should be extended.

There's currently a Public Space Protection Order, also known as PSPO, in place for the entire parish - which gives police and other authorised officers the power to confiscate alcohol and/or issue a fine to those drinking in public that are causing, or

are likely to cause, anti-social behaviour.

Essentially, in areas with PSPOs it's an offence to drink alcohol after being ordered not to by the police or other authorised officers. PSPOs are often issued by local authorities in areas that are more likely to be susceptible to alcohol-related anti-social behaviour, and are a popular deterrent to help make places safer. CMK's PSPO has been in place for several years and forms part

of a wider order covering 14 total parishes. It's currently up for renewal and the City Council is consulting on its plans to extend it across the already existing areas while also adding a further two places to the list. If agreed, the PSPO would be extended for an extra three years up to 2027. If you would like to find out more about PSPOs in Milton Keynes, please visit: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/alcohol-pspo.

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Parish Assembly

The Town Council held its annual meeting for residents, called the Parish Assembly, in May. Parish Assemblies are a great opportunity for people to meet their Town Councillors, ask questions and raise any concerns that they may have. While we only had two residents join us, it was a productive evening and we'll be taking their thoughts and suggested improvements away for consideration. 2025's event will be held in the Spring, and hopefully we'll see a few more faces next time.

Keeping CMK tidy

Earlier this year, the Town Council and MyMiltonKeynes joined forces for a community litter pick and collected dozens of bags of rubbish from Midsummer Boulevard.

These litter picks are now becoming a regular occurrence, with community litter picks happening every couple of months up to the end of the year. A litter pick took place in early July, with the next set for Wednesday 25 September from 10am to 4pm. After this, wrap up warm for a winter litter pick on Monday 18 November from 10am to 4pm. This is the day after the Christmas lights switch-on, where we expect there will be a surge in litter.

If you would like more information on the upcoming litter picks, including location and how to get involved, please email clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk.



No doubt you've noticed that Campbell Park has become a busy events hub once again, with this summer's events schedule getting off to a strong start. Instead of the large-scale music events we've seen in previous years, from Craig David to Rag'n' Bone Man, it seems there's a greater focus on cultural and community festivals this year.

The Parks Trust has shared this year's plans for the park, with India Day MK and the Africa Diaspora Festival drawing hundreds of visitors in early July. Looking ahead to what's in store for the rest of the summer, the events are as follows:

- Sat 3 August - Henry Allen Trust Charity Event
- Sat 10 August - Peace & Justice Ceremony
- Sat 17 August - Mela
- Sat 24 & Sun 25 Aug - Tribute Band Festival
- Sat 31 Aug - Disc Golf Tournament
- Sat 7 Sept - Zimbabwe Community Event
- Sat 14 Sept - Milton Keynes Pride Festival
- Sat 21 Sept - MK Food Festival
- Sat 27 Sept - Cyclo-cross
- Sat 5 Oct - City of Lights
- Fri 11 & Sat 12 Oct - Oktoberfest
- Thu 28 Oct - Sun 3 Nov - Funfair

But... pesky parking problems

As can be seen from the schedule, there are events taking place most weekends during the summer and autumn in Campbell Park. While we're pleased to see such a diverse programme

of events, we're concerned about the potential disruption it'll cause on those living nearby.

The Town Council continues to receive complaints from Campbell Park residents reporting inconsiderate parking due to the sheer number of cars trying to find somewhere to park on event days.

It is already evident that this summer will be no different, so the Town Council has been working with The Parks Trust to mitigate the impact it has on residents. We have met with The Parks Trust, which understands the issue and provides event organisers with clear guidelines on parking - pointing visitors to the multi-storey car park by John Lewis. However, it's clear that this guidance isn't always being followed and inconsiderate parking on verges and clearways continues. The Town Council has raised this with the transport team at Milton Keynes City Council, who have confirmed that traffic enforcement officers will patrol the area on event days going forward. The traffic enforcement officers can issue fines and we hope this presence will deter people from parking poorly. Ultimately, we hope that matters will improve so that visitors can enjoy the events without causing our residents any unnecessary disruption.



CMK in 2050: 11,000 more homes and a new events venue?



Milton Keynes City Council is currently working on the New City Plan - a vision document that shows what the local authority wants the city to look like from 2026 to 2050. This will replace the current Local Plan and form the basis of local planning policy once it's complete.

Unlike the current Local Plan, part of the New City Plan will have a big focus on the development of Central Milton Keynes. The draft Plan was published for a 12 week consultation in mid July, and there will be an emphasis for large-scale development in the local area. The initial indication is that CMK and Campbell Park could be designated for an extra 11,000 homes by 2050 - something which the Town Council finds incredibly concerning. Given that our current population is less than 6,000, the impact of such growth is likely to have a major impact - particularly on infrastructure such as road networks, GP surgeries and schools.

However, it's interesting to see that there is also a 6,000-seat venue in the plans, alongside guidance on where tall buildings (over 15 storeys) would be considered. There are also plans to redesign Station Square to create a more civic space and improve transport links through Midsummer Boulevard.

The Town Council will study the impact of the draft New City Plan on CMK parish and feed in comments accordingly. If you would like to keep up to date with the development of the Plan and provide your comments during the upcoming consultation, you can either contact us at clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk or register for updates via the City Council's website: www.mknewcityplan.commonplace.is. We will keep you updated on the Plan as it relates to CMK.

Could your organisation benefit from a parish grant?

Each year, the Town Council provides parish grants to projects that benefit local residents.

The grants can be used for various initiatives including supporting local events and groups, for landscaping and play areas, and improving community cohesion. 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.

▲ Homelessness charity UnityMK recently received a grant to help purchase lockers

Appeals lodged against decisions to refuse planning applications

As reported in the Spring newsletter, Milton Keynes City Council refused a developer's plans to build a 20-storey apartment block on the site of Bank House along Midsummer Boulevard. The developer, Platform, appealed against this decision to the Planning Inspectorate and a two-day Public Inquiry was held in May. Councillor Andy Thomas, Chair of the Town Council Planning Committee, spoke to the Inquiry making our case for a greater contribution to offset the lack of affordable housing and other contributions to enhance the public realm. While the outcome of the appeal is yet to be advised by the Inspector, the City Council withdrew all of its reasons for refusal leaving the Inspector to determine whether other 'material considerations' weigh in favour of granting permission for the development. We expect that the Planning Inspector will grant planning permission for the development subject to conditions - meaning the 20-storey building could be built after all.

Hot on the heels of the Bank House appeal, we can also confirm that a second developer has lodged an appeal. Earlier this year a developer submitted plans to build a 33-storey apartment block on the Jaipur site, but this was also refused by the City Council. This planning application will now be considered at a Public Inquiry scheduled to take place over eight days in October.

Regarding this second appeal, both the City Council and the Town Council share several concerns with the proposed development - which would be the tallest building in CMK by far. These concerns include no private dedicated parking provision, a lack of affordable housing, poor social and economic benefits, alongside the development being within the area requiring development to be business-led, not residential. The developer is now working on its arguments in support of its appeal. The outcome of this October Inquiry will likely have a profound influence on future very tall development proposals in CMK.



The Town Councillors representing CMK



All seven of our Town Councillors have been re-elected unopposed in May's local elections. The volunteer Town Councillors, who receive no payment, will now serve another four-year term. Councillor Stabler has been re-elected as Chair, with Councillor Kurth serving as Vice Chair.

The Town Council has one vacancy remaining and we encourage anyone who may be interested to contact us to find out more. Becoming a parish councillor is a rewarding experience where you can represent and make a real difference to your community. You can contact us for more information at clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk. We look forward to hearing from you!

▲ Above (left to right) are councillors David Stabler (West ward), Rebecca Kurth (Campbell Park ward), Andrew Thomas ((West ward), Andre Brady (West ward), Pete Lightfoot (Campbell Park ward), Anurag Jain (East ward) and Philip Murphy (East ward).

Town Council and Citizens Advice help CMK residents claim nearly £70,000 in successful benefit awards

CMK residents have claimed nearly £70,000 in successful benefit awards and received vital support with matters ranging from housing to debt - all thanks to free advice sessions part-funded by the Town Council.

Since 2023 The Town Council has partnered with Citizens Advice MK, a local charity, to provide free fortnightly advice sessions for CMK residents. People have been able to talk to an advisor about their concerns relating to daily life, such as troubles with



employment and paying the bills.

In the six months from October to March, over 50 residents attended the centre:mk-based sessions and received support with nearly 200 issues. Most concerns related to welfare benefits, and the Citizens Advice team helped CMK residents claim £68,627 in benefits that they were entitled to but weren't receiving. These sessions also helped local people write off and manage over £14,000 in personal debt, and 14 fuel vouchers were distributed to help people heat their homes.

Town Council Chair, David Stabler, said: "For many people, Citizens Advice is the first port of call in resolving issues that worry them. We're pleased that with funding from the Town Council, Citizens



Advice have helped dozens of local people so far and we encourage others to book a session to take advantage of this vital support."

You can book a session by scanning the QR code and completing a secure booking form.


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Scan here to visit CMK Town Council's website, where you can find out more information on who we are and what we do. You can also download the application form for our 2023-2024 small community grants scheme.





www.cmktowncouncil.gov.uk



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