

CMK Town Council halves council tax for residents

CMK Town Council has significantly reduced its council tax bill for residents, more than halving the amount payable. Two years ago, those living in a 'Band D' property (as determined by Milton Keynes City Council) paid £77.97 annually to CMK Town Council as part of their overall council tax. This is known as the parish precept. Today, following two years of reductions, the amount stands at just £34.92 for the entire year.

The decision to lower the precept was made in light of the growing number of properties in CMK. This increase in housing means the amount of money the Parish generates has risen, allowing us to reduce the precept for each of the growing number of properties. This is despite rising expenses and commitments, which include supporting local organisations such as the CMK Green Gym, Citizens Advice, and UnityMK. The influx of new residential properties (and additional council tax payers) has helped offset these costs.

David Stabler, Chair of CMK Town Council, said: "We're pleased to be in a position to again reduce

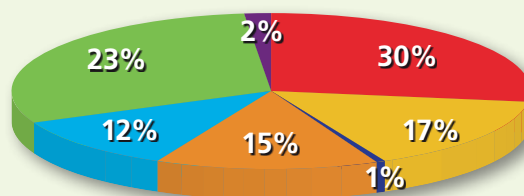
the precept paid by our residents, due to the annual increase in properties being built, which means the cost of CMKTC operations is spread between more dwellings. The council tax contribution is our sole source of income, and it enables us to support both residents and essential organisations in CMK. Although your payment has been reduced, we remain committed to working hard for residents and representing your interests on the issues that matter most."

CMK Town Council now ranks among the lowest 10% of parish councils in Milton Keynes in terms of precept rates per property.

How we spent your council tax

This chart shows how CMK Town Council's element of your council tax bill was spent in 2024-2025. Your volunteer councillors will continue to strive to deliver value for money while seeking to improve CMK for both residents and visitors.

- Statutory costs
- General admin
- Councillors expenses
- Communications
- Planning
- Community support
- Partner organisations



Major landscaping boost for CMK's residential areas

The Town Council is proud to announce a new initiative to enhance the landscaping in CMK's residential neighbourhoods. Over the next four years, the Town Council will contribute £35,000 per year to the City Council to support significant improvements to green spaces within residential areas throughout the parish.

This funding commitment marks the beginning of a focused effort to rejuvenate and refresh the planted areas

that have long been overlooked.

The work will begin in the coming months, starting in the South Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Streets, where many residents have voiced concerns about tired planting and neglected beds. From there, the project will gradually extend to other residential streets across CMK.

The funding will also support a coordinated approach to restoring key landscaping features – such as raised

planters, green corridors and underpass beds which have become overgrown or degraded over time. The goal is to reinvigorate these spaces in line with the original design vision for CMK, using the 'right plant in the right place' approach for long-term sustainability and visual appeal.

This enhanced investment complements the Town Council's ongoing support for the CMK Green Gym, a volunteer-led group that helps to maintain planters and open spaces.

As the landscaping project unfolds, we hope that there will be a visible difference to our green spaces – with cleaner beds, new planting, restored tree pits and the removal of redundant or derelict infrastructure.

We'll keep you updated as the work progresses.



◀ CMK Green Gym maintaining planters in CMK

THE PLANNING SPOTLIGHT

Is an upgrade on the cards for Santander House?



At the time of writing, the City Council is still yet to determine the outcome of Santander's plans to repurpose Santander House, which used to house their offices before they moved into Unity Place.

Santander is seeking to upgrade the existing office space, rather than trying to convert it into apartments or get it demolished. The Town Council is supportive of

this scheme, which will create a more attractive building that can be let out to other companies - all while retaining and enhancing the building's original distinctive features.

Plans to build 12-storey flats next to canal are refused

Plans to build the first phase of a new housing development in Campbell Park, called Campbell Park Northside, were refused by the City Council's planning committee in April. Developers Urban Splash, Glenbrook and Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) want to build a new 'community' along the northern flank of the park, and sought permission to build nearly 400 flats on a parcel of land by the canal as part of the first phase.

The developers wanted to build apartment blocks between six and twelve storeys high, but the scheme has faced fierce opposition due to its impact on the Grade II listed Campbell Park and the effect the high buildings would have on neighbouring housing estates. The Town Council has historically opposed the scheme for several reasons, including the lack of affordable housing and there being no clear rationale to have buildings above eight storeys in the park.

Town Councillor Philip Murphy was among those who spoke against the scheme at the recent planning committee. He said: "We're pleased that the City Council's planning committee has refused this scheme, which would've had a detrimental impact on Campbell Park and the surrounding area. This isn't the end, as the developers may now submit an appeal or a new planning application, but whatever happens, we will continue to advocate for our residents and what's best for our community."



Developers and the appeal process

You may have noticed that the appeal against the refusal for a 33-storey building on the site of the old Jaipur restaurant has been successful, following the City Council's decision not to contest it. While the scheme is now subject to several conditions before moving forward, the approval signals the rise of a concerning trend.

Similarly, the redevelopment plans for The Point - which includes the construction of several apartment blocks - were initially rejected and subsequently appealed. The appeal hearing took place in March, and the decision from the Inspector on whether to grant or refuse the scheme is still pending at time of writing.

New chapter ahead for CMK Library as makeover plans unfold

A planning application has been lodged to make significant improvements to the inside of Central Library. Because of the building's Grade II listed status, the proposed changes require planning permission by the City Council.

The proposed changes include repurposing the events space on the ground floor into a classroom for community learning, while the current ground floor reference library would be transformed into a dedicated children's library. The entrance lobby's ceiling, which was previously removed due to water damage, is set to be replaced, and the public toilets are to be refurbished.

On the first floor, the plans include repurposing the 'Discover MK' area to create two small meeting rooms. The current first-floor children's library would be transformed into a new reference library and events space.

At the time of writing, the application is still pending a decision, and further updates will be provided once a ruling is made.

Right: 'The Whisper', Central Library ►



Tackling graffiti in CMK

The Town Council is launching a survey to identify the worst areas in CMK affected by graffiti. This initiative comes as part of a broader effort to work alongside the City Council, which has recently increased its focus on graffiti removal across the city.

As presented at the recent Parishes Forum, the City Council is stepping up its response with faster removal times, the use of protective anti-graffiti coatings, and direct engagement with third-party utility companies like Openreach and Virgin Media. These companies are now expected to respond swiftly - within 24 hours for offensive graffiti - and the City Council will also act where others fail to meet their obligations.

Our local survey will help build a clearer picture of problem hotspots within the parish, allowing targeted action. The results will be shared with the City Council to inform its new graffiti heat map and removal strategy.

If you know of any persistent tagging or vandalism, please email clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk.



Say hello to your new Town Councillor



The Town Council is delighted to introduce Minhi Chun as the newest Town Councillor for East Ward, completing our full team of councillors.

Minhi, or Min as she is known, has called Milton Keynes home for nearly a decade, with CMK playing a central role in her daily life. Min says: "CMK is evolving quickly and I look forward to working with the Town Council to ensure its future growth benefits everyone who lives and works here."

As a trained architect with a keen interest in architectural research, Min places great importance on the experiences and opinions of local residents. She believes that community feedback is essential for improving the area and shaping future developments.

In addition to her role as a Town Councillor, Min serves as a governor at Summerfield School, which educates children from the CMK area. Outside of her professional life, she is also a black belt in Taekwondo and competes in national championships.

We're thrilled to have Min on board and look forward to the positive contributions she will make to our community.



If you've passed through Midsummer Place recently, you may have noticed a striking new display above your head – hundreds of vibrant umbrellas suspended in the air. This eye-catching installation is part of the Milton Keynes Umbrella Project, now the largest of its kind in the UK.

More than just a cheerful visual, the umbrellas represent something powerful:

A colourful project with a powerful message

neurodiversity. Each umbrella is unique – just like the ways people think, feel, learn, and experience the world. The installation celebrates these differences, encouraging greater understanding and acceptance of neurodivergence.

Neurodivergence includes a range of conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, Tourette syndrome, among others. This bold display in the heart of CMK is designed to spark conversation, raise awareness, and reinforce Milton Keynes' commitment to becoming a more inclusive and understanding city.

The International Festival returns!

The International Festival, a unique arts festival produced by The Stables, returns to Milton Keynes this July. Running from 18th to 27th July, the multi-arts celebration will take place across the city – with CMK once again playing host to Festival Central.

Expect to see eye-catching installations throughout CMK, with two headline events kicking off the opening weekend. There'll be a spectacular pyrotechnic and drumming promenade performance through the city centre (Symfeuny by Deabru Beltzak), alongside a striking art installation in Middleton Hall featuring 3,000 white paper doves (Les Colombes by Michael Pendry). Residents will be invited to create their own doves to contribute to the display and to hang them in windows at home, in shops, offices, and community

spaces – creating a city-wide installation.

The ever-popular Spiegeltent returns to Campbell Park too, with a packed programme of comedy, cabaret, and live music. This year's line-up includes comedian Lou Sanders and singers Lucy Spraggan and Roachford.

It's set to be another exciting festival. To find out more and book tickets, visit: ifmiltonkeynes.org



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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.



SCAN ME

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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 City 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.