



FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR CMK COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Have you got a project, event or activity that could make a difference?

Our small grants programme offers up to £500 to support local projects that benefit residents. Funding can help bring people together, get a new residents' group off the ground, support a community event or activity, or improve local play areas and landscaping.

The scheme has already supported a range of projects across CMK, including new signage and a noticeboard at Centrecom, a defibrillator for the YMCA and new lockers for homelessness charity UnityMK.

If your group has something in mind, we'd like to hear from you. Take a look at the grants policy and application details at cmktowncouncil.gov.uk.

Recognising a remarkable contribution to Milton Keynes

As reported in our Spring issue, David Stabler recently stepped down as Chair of CMK Town Council after more than 55 years of service to Milton Keynes.

David's contribution to the city stretches back to its early days. He worked as an architect and project manager for the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, has long been a supporter of the arts in the city and went on to serve his community as both a town and parish councillor.

Speaking about his time on the Town Council, David told us: "One of the most important things the Town Council does is influence planning applications. Residents do not always see that work, but we have helped secure changes to several major developments, including Campbell

Park Northside ensuring that the development respects the skyline and adjacent park."

"Beyond architecture and planning, I'm immensely proud of our social investments, supporting UnityMK and YMCA, as well as investment in landscaping and improving residential areas across CMK. If we want residents to take pride in CMK, the

Town Council must lead by example in maintaining its beauty."

We couldn't let him go without a proper send-off. Town Councillors joined

David for a farewell lunch, where he was presented with a Community Service Award in recognition of his remarkable contribution to our city.

David has played an important part in the life of CMK and the wider city over many decades. We thank him for everything he has given and wish him all the very best for the future.



New digital exhibition brings CMK's architecture to life

A new digital exhibition has launched at SEE:MK, the public viewing space on the 14th floor of Hotel La Tour.

The space was created as part of the hotel's community contribution and includes panoramic views across the city alongside a series of screens designed for digital exhibitions. Although still something of a hidden gem, a new collaboration between CMK Town Council, Hotel

La Tour and local visual artist Sabre Majid is now putting the space to use in a new way.

The *Luxury of Space: Architecture in Central Milton Keynes* celebrates the distinctive architecture, landscapes and design of CMK through film and photography.

The exhibition explores the city's new town heritage, from its boulevards and buildings to the sculptures and parkland that have helped define the city centre over the past 50 years. It also looks at the original ambition to create a 'city of trees' and how that legacy continues to shape the city today.

One of the featured exhibits, *Between Spaces*, created by Sabre Majid and co-director Beatrice Ni Bhroin, captures the boulevards and buildings that form the backdrop to everyday life in CMK. Another celebrates the listed elements of CMK, linking the contemporary with archive material. The third piece takes viewers on an artistic journey across CMK.

The exhibition premiered to an invited audience on Thursday 10 September and is open every day from 10am to 5pm until 11 November.

Why not head up to the 14th floor, take in one of the best views across Milton Keynes and discover a different perspective on the city's architecture and design?



Inspectors put CMK growth plans under the spotlight

In the previous newsletter, we reported that the public examination of the MK City Plan was due to take place later this year. The City Plan is the key planning document that will guide how Milton Keynes grows and develops up to 2050.

The first part of the examination has now taken place, with hearings held over three weeks and closing on Thursday 8 October. A significant part of one day was devoted specifically to issues affecting CMK.

The examination has now been adjourned until January 2027, when it will reconvene to consider the impact of changes requested following the first round of evidence.

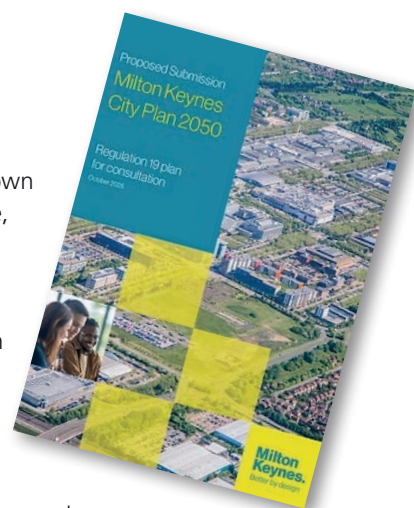
During the hearings, the Inspectors raised a number of detailed questions with Milton Keynes City Council about the Plan. We were pleased to see that several reflected concerns raised by the Town Council in our own submission.

These included the proposed target of 16,000 new homes in CMK, the allocation of sites for more than one use and whether the proposed building heights are realistic given developments that have already been granted planning permission.

Andy Thomas, Chair of the Town Council's Planning Committee, attended the examination alongside the Town Council's planning advisers, DLP. We also submitted further written statements setting out our position in more detail.

Town Councillor Andy Thomas said: "The MK City Plan 2050 will shape CMK for years to come, so it is important that the detail is right. We're pleased the Inspectors are looking closely at the issues we've raised, particularly around housing numbers, land use and building heights. We'll continue to make the case for a plan that supports growth while getting the best outcome for CMK and its residents."

Our written statements are available on our website at cmktowncouncil.gov.uk. We will continue to follow the examination closely and keep residents updated when hearings resume in the new year.



Changes on the way for Midsummer Place

There has been a quieter period for major planning applications in CMK as attention turned to the examination of the MK City Plan 2050. However, approved schemes are set to change the look and feel of part of the city centre.

Changes are on the way at Midsummer Place. Gail's Bakery is set to open on the site formerly occupied by the oak tree, while work is now underway to create a much larger Zara store opposite its current unit.

The new Zara will become an anchor store for Midsummer Place and represents a significant investment in the shopping centre.

We'll continue to keep residents updated on planning applications and developments that are shaping the future of CMK.



Town Council raises concerns over planning changes

Changes to the planning system could have a real impact on how residents and parish councils are able to influence planning decisions.

Under the new Planning & Infrastructure Act, local parishes could lose the ability to ask for a planning application to be referred to the City Council's Planning Committee. Instead, the decision to refer would sit with planning officers.

For CMK, that would be a significant change. Over the years, the Town Council has asked for a number of applications to be considered by the Planning Committee where we felt there were important issues that deserved further scrutiny. This has allowed Town Councillors to put the local case directly to decision-makers, including in cases where officers had recommended approval.

Town Councillor Andy Thomas, Chair of the Town Council's Planning Committee, explains: "Planning decisions can have a lasting impact on our communities, so local people should have a meaningful say in how those decisions are made. Removing the ability for parish councils to ask for an application to be considered by the Planning Committee would weaken that local voice."

New life for the former pond at Fred Roche Gardens



A former pond in Fred Roche Gardens has been transformed into a colourful new planting area, thanks to the work of CMK Green Gym volunteers and the Fred Roche Foundation.

The project was funded by CMK Town Council, with MyMiltonKeynes helping to clear the rough grass and prepare the site before volunteers laid out, planted and mulched the new beds.

The planting has been designed to provide colour and interest across the seasons while also creating a valuable habitat for pollinators. At the centre is a Japanese cherry tree, surrounded by magnolias, viburnum, catmint, herbs, flowering perennials and ornamental grasses.



As the planting matures, the area will provide colour from spring through to autumn, with plans to add naturalising wild tulips for an extra burst of colour in spring.

The project is part of CMK Green Gym's wider work to care for and improve green spaces across the city centre.

You can see videos from the project and find out more about volunteering at cmkgreengym.org.uk.

Grafton Park: a hidden gem in CMK



Tucked away beside the Jaipur building, Grafton Park is one of CMK's lesser-known green spaces. Stretching up towards Lower Fourth Street, it offers a peaceful route through the city centre, with lawns, planting, pathways and water features.

The area had become neglected over the years, but since MyMiltonKeynes took over its landscaping, a great deal of work has gone into restoring it. Flower beds have been refreshed, shrubs and hedges brought back into shape, and the paths, ponds and lawns carefully maintained.

The park has also become an important haven for wildlife. Moorhens, ducks, small birds and even a regularly visiting heron can all be spotted, with nesting and sheltered areas created to encourage them.

Sustainability is built into the way the park is cared for too. Green waste is recycled on site, with grass and weeds composted and branches and trimmings turned into mulch to help nourish the planting.

Robert Boiling, Public Realm and Operations Manager at MyMiltonKeynes, said:

"Caring for Grafton Park is a responsibility the team at MyMiltonKeynes values deeply. We've been able to restore its green spaces, refresh the flower beds and create a place that feels clean, open and welcoming."

"Wildlife has become a defining part of the park's character, and seeing it support a growing mix of species year after year is incredibly rewarding."

"Being entrusted with Grafton Park is a privilege. It's a place I'm proud to look after, and it holds a very special place in my heart."



Meet your new Town Councillor

Following the resignation of David Stabler, we are pleased to welcome Edward Smeathers to the Town Council.

Edward has been a regular supporter of the Town Council, attending meetings and taking an active interest in issues affecting CMK.

Edward told us: "I've lived in Milton Keynes for 15 years

and have worked here for several years, currently in energy management. Living in Campbell Park, I felt joining the Town Council is a great way to give something back to the part of Milton Keynes I call home."

Town Councillor Pete Lightfoot, Chair of CMK Town Council, added: "Edward already knows the Town

Council well and has shown a real interest in the issues that matter to our residents. We're delighted to welcome him and I'm sure his enthusiasm and knowledge of CMK will make him a real asset."

We look forward to working with Edward and welcoming his contribution to the Town Council!

CMK Town Council backs City of Culture bid

Milton Keynes has officially submitted its bid to become UK City of Culture 2029, and CMK Town Council has formally joined the Back the Bid campaign.

UK City of Culture is a national programme led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Previous winners include Hull, Coventry and Bradford, with the title bringing a full year of cultural events and activity.

For Milton Keynes, the bid is a chance to put the city on the national stage, create new opportunities for artists, young people and communities, attract investment and visitors and build a lasting cultural legacy.

If successful, 2029 would see a year-long programme of activity across the whole city, including major outdoor events, new and expanded festivals, community projects and opportunities for local people to take part.

Milton Keynes submitted its final bid in August following a summer of community engagement and idea gathering. Shortlisted cities are expected to be announced this autumn, with the winner revealed in early 2027.

CMK Town Council is pleased to be backing the bid and the opportunity it presents to celebrate the creativity, diversity and ambition of our city. Fingers crossed!



/CMKTownCouncil



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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.