



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

PARISHES

Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes: great parish collaboration

Milton Keynes has always been a place of co-operation. Partnerships between public bodies, business and communities created our pioneering 'new city' fifty years ago and help its people thrive today.

We were actually the first unitary authority to become fully parished, with two new parish councils created just this year to serve MK's growing communities, bringing the total to 48. (We're expecting to grow from a population of 270,000 today to 500,000 – eventually becoming bigger than Edinburgh, Cardiff or Liverpool.)

We believe strongly in putting the power back in the hands of local communities, and work with our parish and town council partners to make sure the right services are being delivered in the right way, to the right people, at the right level.

In recent years we've:

- Transferred 28 popular local facilities to parish councils for them to develop, including a swimming pool, a library, community centres, depots and meeting places.
- Given parish councils £100,000 to help them keep our environment clean, funding amongst other things an innovative green chemical-free weed killing machine.
- Identified parish councils who wanted an expanded role in the delivery of local services, whether that's by influencing their delivery, topping up services or entirely taking them over. A good example of this is landscaping, where five councils have already picked up the care of green space in their parish, to be followed by eleven more – which will mean parishes care for around 30% of all green space in MK.
- Set up a Parish Advisory Group of parish councillors from across MK, a ward councillor from each main political party (often a parish councillor themselves) three officers and a cabinet member. At meetings, the group discuss and make decisions that affect parish and town councils.

- Helped parishes navigate services and build the right relationships within our unitary authority by appointing specific officers responsible for parish liaison and answering day to day queries. They attend a Parish Quarterly Forum and parish, clerk and area meetings.
- Jointly developed a Draft Framework to aid closer working and help us agree the best custodian of a service or an asset.
- Held a MK Association of Local Councils conference attended by more than 200 parish councillors.

The *National Association of Local Councils* described us as ‘a beacon of good practice’ for parish collaboration, and we’re proud to be supporting parishes as they use their unique perspective to shape and create better communities.

For further information contact:

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