

The Making of Milton Keynes

In 1967, the Government identified 34 square miles of land that would be turned into Milton Keynes. This land joined up the existing towns of Bletchley, Wolverton and Stony Stratford. Designed to house overspill from the ever growing London, the target population of Milton Keynes was 250,000.

Why was this a good location? What other major cities are close to MK?

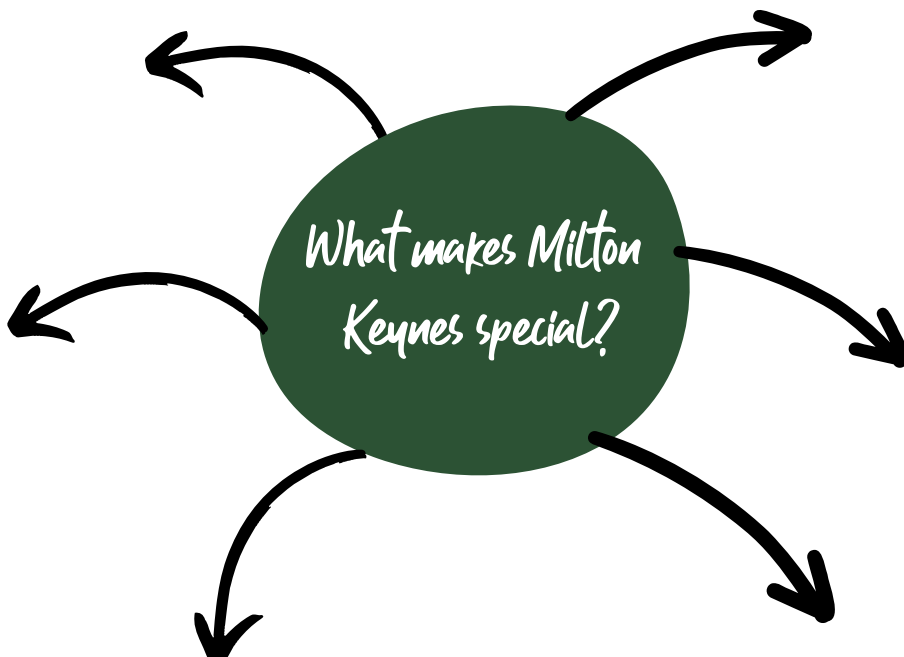


How many people do you think live in Milton Keynes today? Where could you find out this information?

The Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) was established to plan and design the new city. They wanted it to be a green city with at least 25% of the land being greenspace and parks.



Milton Keynes has a unique design. Think about other towns and cities you have visited, how is Milton Keynes different?



In most towns and cities, parkland is owned by the local authority but the Milton Keynes' founders were pioneers and decided to do things differently. Their vision was to create a new town where the parks and landscapes would be protected forever by a charity that was separate from local government. Doing so would ensure that, as the new town grew, its green spaces would never be compromised or have to fight for funding.

That all became a reality when The Parks Trust was set up in 1992. The new charity was given 4,500 acres of land, that's about the same size as 3,400 football pitches! They were given this land for 999 years. To fund their work, The Parks Trust was also given lots of property such as office blocks and industrial units valued at £20m. Some of these properties can be rented out to make money to pay for the work that the Trust does. As housing estates are built, new areas of land are handed over to The Parks Trust to look after.



Questions

1. When was The Parks Trust set up and why?
2. How much land was given to The Parks Trust when it was set up?
3. How many parks do they look after today?
4. Is the number of parks likely to go up or down in the next 10 years? Explain why.
5. How do The Parks Trust fund the work that they do?
6. Which is your favourite Parks Trust park and why?

You might want to visit www.theparkstrust.com to see which parks are close to you.

Milton Keynes was planned so that the environment is integrated into every part of life. If you live in Milton Keynes, it is likely that you will live within a short walk of a green space, park, or play area. The green network is essential for travelling by bike, on foot, or by scooter, and residents never need cross a grid road to walk across the urban area.

Neil Higson, one of the Landscape Architects who designed Milton Keynes, suggested that there should be 3 elements to the parkland.

Strings

A linked network of fully accessible routes through the parks such as footpaths as cycleways.

Beads

Points of activity in the park – such as picnic areas, play parks, cafes, and sports pavilions.

Settings

The largest area comprising of woodland, farmland, grazing land, and open grassland.

Task: Sketch a map in the box showing a route that includes a string, a bead, and a setting.

You might want to use a route that you regularly take for inspiration.



Key Features of our Unique City

Read the description and see if you can match it to the correct picture and location name.

Great Linford Manor Park

This park is located in the centre of the city. This area was awarded Grade II status by Historic England in August 2020 due to its innovative architectural design. It is one of the largest parks to be created in England during the 20th and 21st Century. It includes public art, a cricket pitch, an amphitheatre, an offroad cycle track and sometimes even grazing sheep!



Campbell Park

This park is a cathedral made of bark and leaves. Based on the outline of Norwich Cathedral, it was designed in 1986 by landscape architect Neil Higson. Different species of trees represent the different sections of the Cathedral. Hornbeam and tall-growing lime for the nave, evergreens for the central tower and spires and flowering cherry and apples in the chapels. In springtime colourful bulbs represent the sun shining through stained glass windows onto the ground. This park is used for funeral services and wedding blessings.



The Tree Cathedral

This site has had many different roles over the years: as a village, the pleasure gardens of a large manor house and a space for public enjoyment. This park has also seen significant change through time as the canal and railway both pass through here. This park has undergone a major restoration in recent years and is now an open public space to be enjoyed.



This park is part of the balancing lakes system. It is a man made feature. When there is lots of rainfall the rivers and brooks get very full some of the water is channelled off into this area to help prevent flooding across Milton Keynes. As well as having an important role in flood prevention this area is a leisure site with lots of activities including watersports, restaurants and play parks.



**What is your opinion of the design of Milton Keynes?
Do you think it is a good place to live? Why?**