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Celebrating our city at 50

Preparation is taking place across Milton Keynes for exciting events of all shapes and sizes to celebrate the city's 50th Anniversary in 2017.

The MK50 Project Board is coordinating an exciting programme of headline events, tours and trails, arts and heritage activity and community events to celebrate the past, present and future of our amazing MK.

The full programme of MK50 events and activities will be promoted at www.MK50.co.uk, www.facebook.com/culturemk and www.Twitter.com/culturemk - and here's a taster of the programme as it's developing....

Birthday weekend and Spring

- **From 7 – 22 January** a major exhibition will take over Middleton Hall to tell the story of how MK turned from farm land and villages into a bustling city of nearly 270,000 people.
- Over the Birthday Weekend on **20 - 23 January** arts, heritage and sporting venues will open their doors and hold celebratory events for all to enjoy.
- On MK's actual birthday on **23 January** schools across MK will hold MK50 themed assemblies. A set of Educational Resources are currently being created for teachers to use throughout the year. There will be a formal birthday event, which also kicks off a year-long sporting programme.
- On **1 May** the MK Marathon will take runners around key Milton Keynes landmarks – and runners will receive a special medal featuring the MK50 logo.

Summer

- Heritage re-enactments will come to Campbell Park on **17 and 18 June** as part of a History Festival.
- The whole city will Party Like its 1967 over the weekend of **23 and 24 June** – residents are invited to plan their own parties. An events toolkit will be published in November 2016 to help you plan.

- From **17 June – 1 July** MK will host the International New Town Conference bringing guests from across the world to our city.
- On **15 and 16 July** Willen Hospice's Midnight Moo will be a special golden themed Moo for 2017 walking the redways of MK.

Autumn and Winter

- In **October** two large-scale city centre productions are planned:
 - The Stables is producing an outdoor spectacle inspired by the concept of Future Cities, working with national live arts company, Walk The Plank.
 - A collective of MK artists are creating Home Sweet Home, a project where communities can get involved to create a performance and light piece.
- MK Gallery is leading on City Club, which will present an ambitious programme of new art, performances, family activities, events and talks inspired by the original cultural plans for MK, led by and delivered in partnership with the city's arts and heritage organisations.
- Milton Keynes City Orchestra will be bringing the best International soloists to MK as their contribution to the year-long celebration.

Throughout the year

There will be lots of opportunities for residents and visitors to explore the best of MK throughout 2017:

- **50 Walks for MK50** in partnership with The Parks Trust exploring urban and rural routes.
- Building on the successful 'Free Things' initiatives run by National Trust and Arts Council England, there will be **50 Free Things To Do in MK**.
- Sporting and active challenges will take place across the year, including opportunities to try new things and a **50 Week Active Challenge**.
- A writer in residence has created ten short stories about Central Milton Keynes' public art and in January an audio trail app will launch for smartphones.

Organisations across Milton Keynes including businesses, schools, the MK Islamic Arts Heritage and Culture Group, The Parks Trust, Festive Road and many more are making plans to add to the list.

In January 2017 a souvenir guide will be delivered to every MK home, giving more information about the year ahead and the highlights to look out for.

Liz Gifford Cabinet Member for Community Facilities enthused: *“MK Council is co-ordinating what is looking like being a fantastic year – we are seeing organisations and businesses across the city coming together to develop exciting events and activities to celebrate this major milestone for Milton Keynes. Events are being planned that will tell the story of the city over the last 50 years, but will also look to the city’s future, with something for everyone.”*

Need help in setting up your event? Visit www.MK50.co.uk/get-involved for details of how to get involved or email culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk to register for a community event toolkit which explains how to set up a street party or similar event.

Grants are available that celebrate events in our parks, arranged by MK Council, the MK Community Foundation and The Parks Trust. For more information visit: <https://www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk/funding-for-your-project>. Groups can apply for micro grants (up to £200), small grants (up to £1,500) and community grants (up to £5,000).

Ends

Editors Notes:

The MK50 Project Board is made up of representatives from Milton Keynes Council, The Parks Trust, MKCCM, MK Gallery, Bletchley Park and leisure providers 1Life and Hertsmere Leisure.