

# EXPRESS WOLVERTON

ISSUE ONE

CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY IN WOLVERTON

DECEMBER 2022



**EXPRESS** is a new paper that aims to connect and showcase the creative talent in and from Wolverton. Initiated by the Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group, we aim to share new opportunities for creativity and Public Art in Wolverton, as well as celebrating the creative and diverse culture that is already here.

#### EXPRESS?

We've taken inspiration for the title of this new venture from *The Wolverton Express*, a weekly newspaper first published in 1901. In 1903, the name was changed to the *Wolverton Express and Bucks Weekly News*, a title it held until 1951. Then it was simply the *Wolverton Express* until it became the *Milton Keynes Express* in 1967.

If you're interested to find out more about the history of Wolverton before 1970 visit: [www.wolvertonpast.blogspot.com](http://www.wolvertonpast.blogspot.com)

The masthead for this issue of EXPRESS comes courtesy of Milton Keynes Museum.

Many of the typefaces now held at the Museum were gifted from *Muscatt & Tompkins Ltd* of 5 & 9 Stratford Road. They carried out a range of general printing including headed notepaper, Christmas cards, dance tickets and notepads. Demands for their services were limited as orders were usually for small quantities for local people.

The Museum's Columbian hand press, came from High Wycombe and takes pride of place in the Print Room. Beside it is the similar but much smaller Albion Hand press, bearing the date 1845, that was used in Olney and a proofing Press from McCorquodale's is the most modern member of the Collection.

To find out more about the collections at MK Museum visit: [www.mkmuseum.org](http://www.mkmuseum.org)



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Public Art in Milton Keynes is about inviting the vision, creativity and skills of artists, to engage people with place.



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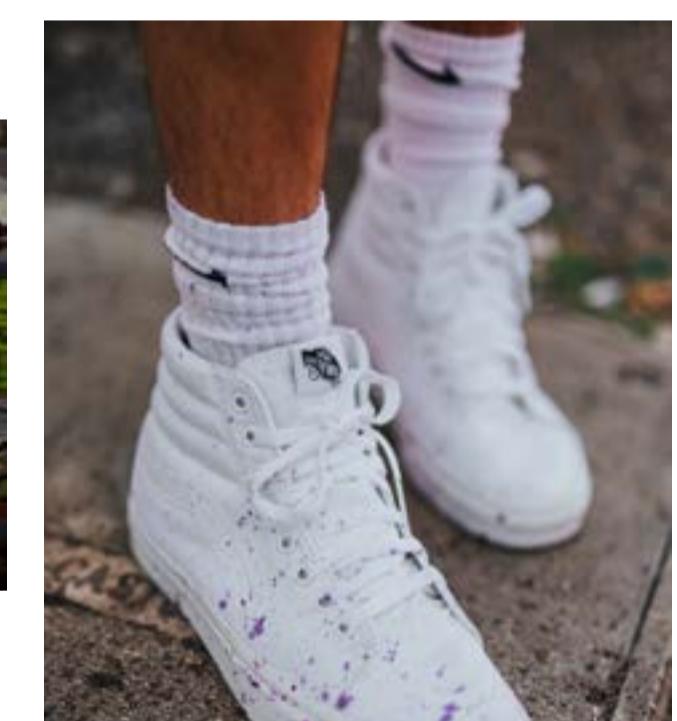


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OPEN CALL – SIGN UP!  
A live directory of the creative talent, people and skills in the Wolverton area. A new platform to inform creatives on upcoming project briefs and connect other like-minded creatives together.



# Over the last 50 years, Milton Keynes has developed an excellent reputation for commissioning public art. The city now boasts over 250 artworks!

# I like it... what is it?



Opposite: *Alphonso* (2021) by Sarah Staton. Located in Newton Leys, which straddles the boundaries of Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire, *Alphonso* takes its inspiration from multiple strands of local heritage, sited on a mound beside a lake and surrounded by a new housing development, which was originally a brickworks.

*Alphonso* forms part of Milton Keynes City Council's ongoing Public Art commissioning programme — since the town's inception in the 1960s, more than 250 artworks have been created, all of them within the public realm. *Alphonso* is the most recent addition to this ongoing commitment to the Council's ambitious and strategic public art commissioning initiative. *Alphonso* is a triangular, three-sided structure built from wood-fired brick and incorporates a bespoke hand-painted tiled wall, depicting the local area, its wildlife and history. It is sited on Little Callow Mound, Willow Lake, Newton Leys and includes a decorative archway and seating area, which overlooks Willow Lake and the environment around it. Photograph by Chris Henley

Below: *Concrete Cows* (1978) by Liz Leyh. Liz was an 'artist-in-residence' in the early days of Milton Keynes and part of her role was to lead community participation in art. The Cows were one of a number of pieces created during her stay. Other examples of her work here include *The Owl and The Pussy Cat* at Netherfield and the snowmen at MK Museum. The Cows were originally constructed at Stacey Hill Farm near Wolverton, where she had set up her studio. The base armatures were metal, with chicken wire used to create the general shape, then stuffed with newspaper.

Icons of the new city, there are actually two sets of *Concrete Cows*. The set who call Bancroft Park home are the replica second set created by Bill Billings due to the original set being quite delicate. The original herd can be found in their new home at MK Museum in Wolverton.



Culture was as important to our city's founders as the roads – it was an intrinsic part of the original city 'Masterplan' and was seen as a tool for community development, social cohesion, building aspiration and successful place-making.

Public art was an important part of the city, people worked hand-in-hand with artists, creating artworks that would define the city's identity – including our most famous bovine ambassadors – the *Concrete Cows*, who now reside at MK Museum. Art and creativity brought people together, encouraging participation and ownership of the city's public realm.

The tradition started in those early days continues today, public art is part of Milton Keynes' DNA and the city now boasts over 250 artworks within the public realm.

#### WHAT IS PUBLIC ART?

In Milton Keynes we define public art very broadly, it could be signage, sculpture, furniture, landscape art, an artist in residence or one of many more creative outputs. Overall, we see public art as inviting the vision, creativity and skills of artists, to engage people freely with place, in a well-considered way.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Through working with artists, we seek to bring people together to consider place, how it is used, what it is like now and potentially how it can be improved or changed by creative activity or artwork. Through this process we hope communities can share ideas and feel ownership of their area and the resulting artwork.

Milton Keynes City Council secures funding through the planning process to continue to add to the art around the city and to help deliver the City's ambition in its Creative and Cultural Strategy.

Find out more about the latest Public Art projects and opportunities in Milton Keynes as well as the Creative and Cultural Strategy visit: [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/culturemk](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/culturemk)

# More than trains and a Tesco

Wolverton already hosts a wide range of public art across its streets, parks and gardens, here's just a few we've highlighted – so go and explore!



WOLVERTON BANDSTAND, 2016

Andrew Small

This artwork references the traditional bandstand and its community cohesive function. The sun disk element will be seen from all aspects of the park, it acts as a hub or rendezvous from which lines can be drawn out to local key sites. The centre of a metaphorical compass that radiates out to the surrounding areas.



RECYCLED WOLVERTON

Julia Manheim

A series of terrazzo markers set into the paving, designed by artist Julia Manheim, guide you along the route. Inset into the markers are texts and donated unwanted household items, such as buttons, toothbrushes and broken toys. They were then embedded into terrazzo markers set into the pavement.



REACHING FORWARD, 2012

Martin Heron

Atop a straight pole set at an angle, a figure composed of ribbons of metal sprints forward. On the upper side of his outstretched left arm a row of seven cyclists ride assorted types of bicycle, a nod to the heritage of the site where there was once a velodrome. A companion figure is located opposite, on the other side of the canal bridge.



THE PHOENIX, 2003

Tim Ward

Commissioned by Wolverton Society for Arts & Heritage to celebrate the Wolverton Regeneration Project with the aid of a grant from Milton Keynes Community Foundation. It is mounted on top of one of the station columns, rescued when the original station was sadly demolished in 1989.



MEET THE ANSESTERS, 2007

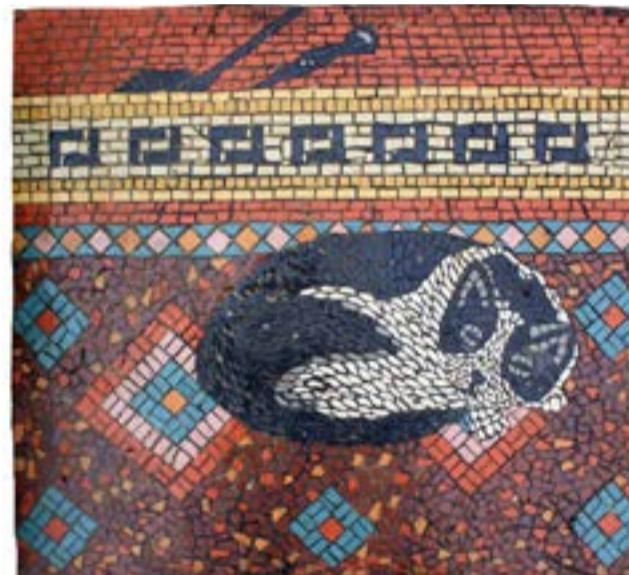
Bill Billings and Paul Smith with students of Radcliffe School

Two new people took up residence in the Secret Garden in 2007. On the site of the living room of one of the original houses that occupied the site, now sit an old couple watching the television.

Wolverton already has lots of art in the public realm, many created by the talent living and working in the area. Some have been here for a long time and others are more recent additions, but they all add value to the look and feel of Wolverton. Everyone has a view; art is subjective and what one person loves will not work for another.

We see these artworks every day, many would miss them if they disappeared. It is this rich talent, ambition and creativity that the Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group wish to continue through the next phase of change in Wolverton.

For more free arts and heritage trails in Wolverton (and across Milton Keynes) visit: [www.mktrails.org/wolverton](http://www.mktrails.org/wolverton)



CAT ON THE MAT MOSAIC, 2004-05

Cathy Ebbels and Jill Kitchen

The 'Cat on the Mat' mosaic is one of 5 situated in the formal part of the *Secret Garden* in the footprint of the two 'villas' that originally stood here. They were created by different groups of local people under the guidance of mosaic artists Cathy Ebbels and Jill Kitchen.

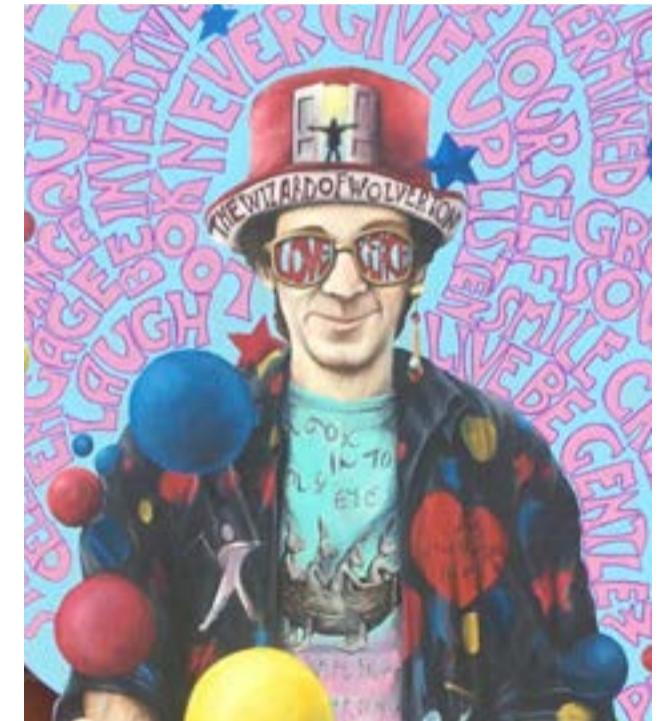
The three large mosaics are each located in the appropriate room for what they are depicting – the mangle in the scullery, the scale and rhubarb crumble ingredients in the kitchen and the cat on a mat in front of the living room fire. The Cat mosaic was made by members of the Senior Citizens' Coffee morning group.



CANAL MURAL, C.1985

Bill Billings

Originally designed by Bill Billings to brighten the canal after the IWA's National festival in 1985, it represents Wolverton's past as a centre of railway history and its future as part of the Milton Keynes conurbation.



THE WIZARD OF WOLVERTON (LES JEFFREY), 2022

Timothy Layden

Les Jeffrey, a much-loved Wolverton character sadly died in 2021, he taught countless people to juggle and has been remembered in an artwork on the west wall of The Old Bath House.



CLARENCE GILL, 2020

Mural by Timothy B Layden and Luke McDonnell

A tribute to the late Wolverton resident Clarence Gill is part of 'The Outdoor Space' at The Bath House "a celebration of Milton Keynes, its resilient and diverse community and our human need to connect and be creative." The space features of number of other artworks including those by Cathy Ebbels, Jill Kitchen and Sara Myers.

# Ideas

After an initial open meeting a Steering Group was formed and its aims and objectives were set. These aims shaped the discussions that followed and have led to these initial project ideas.

## OVERVIEW

'Love Wolverton' is the name given to the redevelopment scheme of the Agora site. As part of this major change in Wolverton we have established the *Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group*, who are helping to plan and steer a programme of activity, events and projects. There will be funding arising from the redevelopment of the Agora, some of which will be ringfenced for public art. Following an open meeting where people shared their ideas and aspirations for Wolverton, we have drafted a public art plan to help inform how the funding is utilised.

## AIM

To celebrate the creative talent of Wolverton through the redevelopment of the Agora and the creation of temporary and permanent public artworks.

Please let us know what you think and of course, if you have any ideas of your own!  
[culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

The above aims and objectives will inform a range of opportunities and ideas for public art projects which can take place at any stage of the development, as and when funding is secured.

'The Public Art Plan' is not a list of how or what the public art should be but an approach to creating space to discuss and consider ideas. What is right for now and what might work in the future? time and reflection will guide decisions. A constant work in progress. The projects should help lead people through a time of change, the differences and similarities, regeneration and everything in between.

## CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND PROCESS

An open meeting was held on the 26 April 2022 to explore the idea of public art as part of the new development. Wolverton has a large creative community and it is important that the public art plan is developed in collaboration with the community.

Key points from the meeting have informed this plan, including:

- Celebrate and utilise local talent
- Engage young people and build community ownership.
- Joined up approach – cohesion and cohesive
- Diversity needs to be reflected
- Ensure the new residents can get involved

At the meeting, participants were invited to share words that described Wolverton in 2022 and their aspirations for the future of the area, some of these were: Community Spirit, Diverse, Youth, Creative, Together, Welcoming, Inspiring, Loved, Vibrant, Authentic, Joined up, Aspirational.

## OBJECTIVES

- To celebrate the creative talent of Wolverton.
- To provide opportunities that draw upon and utilise local skills, knowledge and ideas in creative outcomes and outputs.
- To integrate artworks within the overall development which connects people with place.
- To ensure the diversity of the community is represented.
- To empower young people to inform and influence creative projects.
- To ensure that the new residents can engage and understand the creative projects.
- Connecting new residents with the existing community through creative projects.
- Supporting the process of change through art projects.

## Potential projects and themes:

1. Skills Register
2. Creative Communications
3. Youth Led Project
4. Written words
5. Gatherings
6. Street Names and Signs
7. Feature Artwork(s)
  - Larger Commission

The projects and themes listed are potential streams of public art to be explored in Wolverton. These are further detailed below with opportunities to expand on these in discussions with the local community. They are in order of priority for delivery but they are not exclusive to each other, there are overlaps in opportunities which may lead to projects being combined.

## 1. Skills Register

To develop a register and online resource of the creative talent and skills in the Wolverton area. The register will be used by the Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group to inform project briefs and will remain for the community to access for future projects after the Love Wolverton scheme has completed.

### OPPORTUNITY

- To hold a creative event for the community of Wolverton, inviting a snapshot of creative talent to demonstrate their work, share their ideas and hold talks and workshops. The aim of the event will be to promote and launch the development of the register.
- Connect with the Community Improvement District (CID)
- To develop a social enterprise which showcases and supports the production of local products and creativity.
- To create a shop front or space in the Square – may connect with other partner ambitions/shared space.

### CONSIDERATIONS

- The content of the register – what questions are needed?
- What platform?
- How the register is hosted for the long-term ambition and legacy
- GDPR compliance
- How is it kept up to date and relevant – annual review?
- How it is promoted – marketing
- How people become listed on the register – self listing?

## 2. Creative Communications

The history of printing in Wolverton suggests an opportunity to re-establish a printed and creative communications tool to openly share ideas and updates. These being McCorquodale's Printing Works was based in Wolverton (primarily thought to employ the daughters of the men working in the Railway Works). Secondly, *The People's Press*, set up by Roger Kitchen as part of the Living Archive, providing residents the opportunity to publish and share their stories and experiences and of course, *The Wolverton Express* (renamed Milton Keynes Express in 1974).

This new publication, printed and regular intervals, could act as a mechanism for cultural conversations and possible connections.

A dedicated space to share the public art ambitions but also promoting the existing activity of creatives in the area, opportunities to be involved in upcoming projects, space for the skills register, profiles/interviews with creatives, space for sharing newly commissioned works too by writers, poets, illustrators, designers and photographers.

### OPPORTUNITY

- To create regular information updates
- To invite content from the wider creative community
- To reflect heritage in a contemporary way
- Potential for both physical and digital interface
- Collaboration with MK Museum and their print room/display

### CONSIDERATIONS

- Interaction with Wolverton Greenleys Town Council regular newsletters
- Print run and distribution



*Homebaked* by Jeanne van Heeswijk (2010–ongoing)  
Liverpool Biennial commissioned artist Jeanne van Heeswijk to engage with people from Anfield and Breckfield to rethink the future of their neighbourhood. A co-operative bakery and Community Land Trust developed, building a new idea of community, work and social space, and with it a new community resilience.



*Rabbits Road Press* by OOMK project by Sofia Niazi, Heiba Lamara and Rose Nordin (2016–ongoing)  
The project emerged from an artist residency at Old Manor Park Library (commissioned by Create London) in 2016 and has been operating independently as an artist-run space since Summer 2020.

### 3. Youth Led Project

Future Wolverton invited Offset Projects to engage young people in the area in a conversation about the idea of a youth led space. Key finding from this work could be used to harness the ideas and aspirations of young people further and engage them in helping to develop and deliver a youth led public art project.

#### OPPORTUNITY

- With the support of Offset Projects, we could explore:
- Inviting and supporting young people representation on the Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group
- Provide some funding to enable a group of young people to develop, lead a public art commission/project/activity in Wolverton. Potentially the Written Words project. (Could build upon the Fuelled by Youth programme)
- Explore and understand the possibilities and practicalities of leadership in relation to their skill sets.
- Engaging young people in the public art communications plan so it is developed and considers bespoke and targeted communications with young people from all backgrounds.

#### CONSIDERATIONS

- Time and resources required to ensure the input of young people is meaningful and integral to future ideas.
- Engaging Offset Projects to support young people/mentor them as active participants in the steering group or commissioning group.
- How we keep momentum with the young people when the funding is in the future.



Wealdstone Youth Group (part of Wealdstone Project)  
by Spacemakers (2018)

Wealdstone Youth Workshop is a public design project, in collaboration with a group of 18 and 19 year olds of Wealdstone, north-west London, to design and make furniture for use in the forthcoming Wealdstone Square.

### 4. Written Words

To invite a wordsmith to develop a bespoke poem, story, or piece of text through their engagement with the community - gathering words, text, comments and stories that explore the identity of Wolverton and the passing of the Agora.

#### OPPORTUNITY

- To engrave the text into the paving/granite that marks out the footprint of the old Agora building in the new development
- To provide the text to all artists who work on other projects as background information
- To create signs/posters that place the text into the public realm – both temporary and permanent installations
- To be overlaid onto time-lapse photos of demolition and construction

#### CONSIDERATIONS

- The best time period to undertake the work
- How the text will be used now and long term



Talking to Somebody about the Jewellery Quarter  
by Ian McMillan (2015)  
Part of the redevelopment proposal for Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter  
conceived by BPN Architects together with artist David Patten and  
Landscape Architects Capita. Photograph by Birmingham Phil.

### 5. Gatherings

The word Agora means gathering place or assembly, although the ambitions of the original Agora may not have run smoothly the aspiration to enable and facilitate gathering, sharing, meeting and being social are important to make healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities. Taking the concept of gathering as a starting point for commissioning could lead to many outputs and outcomes for the public realm.

#### OPPORTUNITY

- Programme a series of happening that give people the opportunity to gather and share ideas and creativity – this could be linked with the skills register and social enterprise idea.
- Youth led space – a place to gather and meet.
- Identify the places and spaces that already exist, what makes them a place to gather and what might make them better?
- Creating space to gather in, around, nearby.
- Bring the existing community together with the new residents.

#### CONSIDERATIONS

- The groups that already gather and why?
- Scale and impact – small to large interventions.
- Differing needs of groups, ages, accessibility.

### 6. Street names and signs

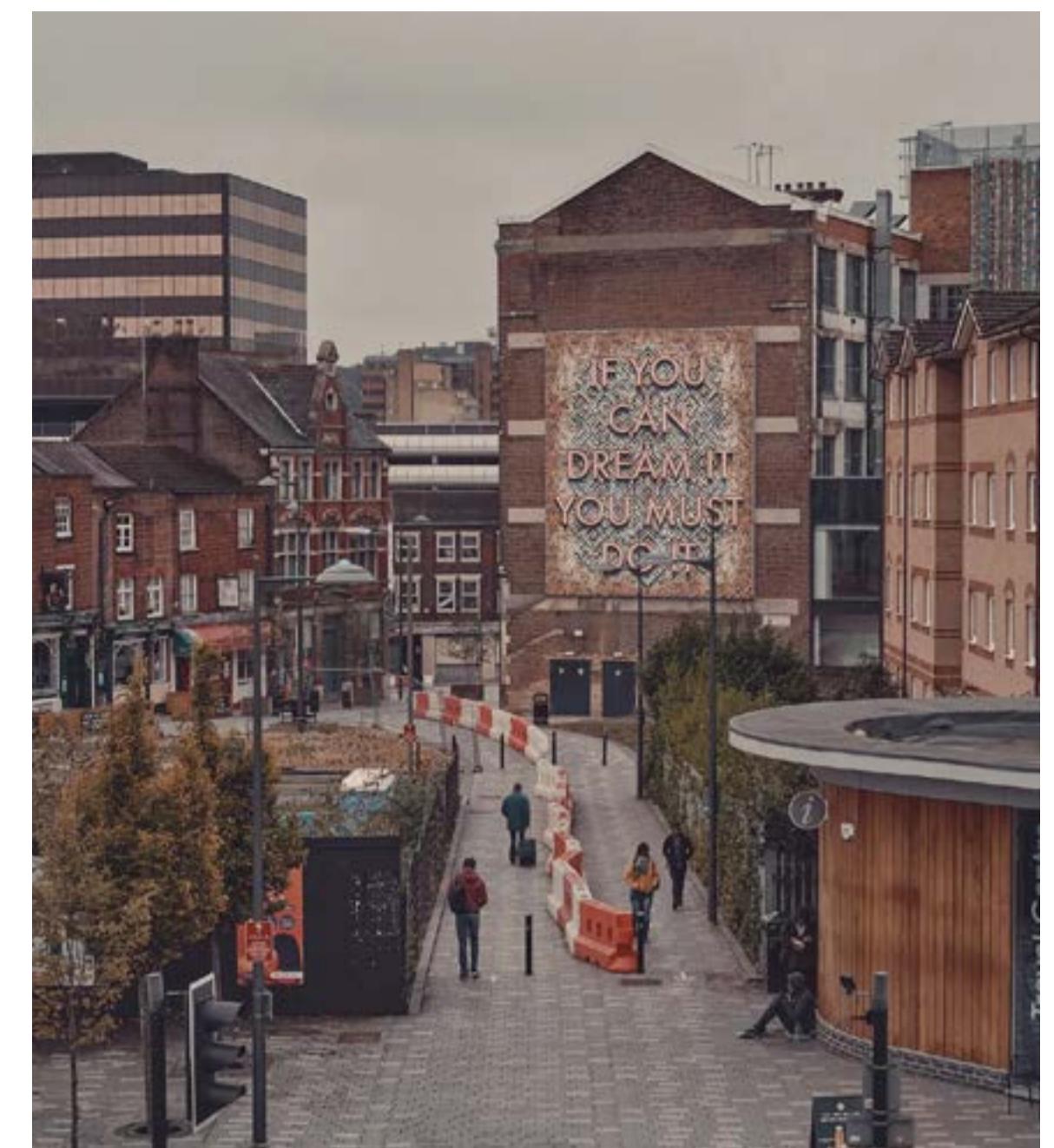
To commission artist designed signs or visuals that give the new streets character and distinctiveness – making places different and interesting.

#### OPPORTUNITY

- Inform the street names
- Visual identity and agreed palette/style

#### CONSIDERATIONS

- Ability to influence street infrastructure
- How this is maintained or affected if elements are damaged and replaced
- MKCC official street naming process (inc. statutory consultee process)



*Beacon* by Mark Titchner (2018)  
A striking illuminated work for the gable end wall of The Hat Factory Arts Centre which has become a visible beacon and recognisable icon for Luton.  
Photograph by Tom Jamieson

### 7. Feature artwork(s)

#### – Larger commission

To create a focal point within the area that acts as a marker of time and place and also connects the new with the existing communities.

#### OPPORTUNITY

- Large scale project.
- Engages artist to connect people with place.
- Brings the new residents together with the existing community.

#### CONSIDERATIONS

- Positioning within the development
- Requirements for plinths or utility connections that may need to be provided by main contractor

#### Budget and timescales

The Love Wolverton Public Art is funded through S106 and additional developer contributions. This collaborative approach demonstrates a commitment to creating exciting projects and interesting spaces within this distinctive development. The public art budget will be managed by Milton Keynes City Council and monitored by the Steering Group. Further match funding may be sought as the project progresses to broaden impact and commissioning opportunities.

Project delivery budgets will need to include all associated costs in delivering the commissions including artist fees, materials, equipment, licenses, permissions, installation, project management, ongoing care and maintenance. The budget table indicates the anticipated income and current suggested allocations for the commissioning themes.

#### Funding stream

Value S106 (wider Wolverton)	£3,600
Developer additional contributions	£30,000
S106 Agora development	£150,000

S106 contributions will need to be requested and secured through Milton Keynes City Council's process, until this is approved they are not available for spend.

The S106 relating to the Agora redevelopment is outlined in the legal agreement as payable to MKC upon occupation.

#### Project timeline

The outcomes of the Public Art Plan are to coincide and complement the developments timeline which is currently in its demolition phase and will commence construction in Spring 2023. The development is then expected to be occupied from Autumn 2024 where much of the public arts projects we envisage will have been realised and/or on-going as part of the long-term benefits that will serve the local community.

#### Project Management

The Love Wolverton public art project plan will be managed by Milton Keynes City Council with support from the steering group and TOWN.

#### Steering Group

Members of the community have volunteered to be part of a steering group to help develop and deliver the public art plan. They will help inform the projects, select artists and monitor progress.

#### Project Evaluation

This process is significant across each phase, and it is important that the artists in each theme collaborate fully with an evaluator. It is recommended that this takes place at the outset of each phase and is not undertaken once the project is completed.

#### Planning

The planning requirements are yet to be determined as it will be based on what projects are taken forward. Where planning is required an 8-12 week decision period will be included in the delivery programme.

Devised and written by: Milton Keynes Council, TOWN and the Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group.

#### Activities Mandate

The Agora development is required by way of a S106 agreement to provide funding for Public Art. There is no further requirement to actually deliver arts projects beyond the supply of this funding, however Milton Keynes City Council and TOWN recognise the power of arts activities to engage the community in both celebrating the delivery of the regeneration project and creating longer-term wider-reaching benefits for the town.

# Open\_Plan

**Open\_Plan** was commissioned in 2021 by Future Wolverton to gather and understand the views of young people, stakeholders and communities in relation to youth leadership and ownership of local public space. This article revisits the project in a short interview with Bella Emrys – a member of the **Open\_Plan** Team, former Radcliffe student, and Offset Board member.

Interview by Victoria Gibb and Tara Page, Offset Co-Founders

## TELL US ABOUT OPEN\_PLAN AND WHAT THE PROJECT WAS ABOUT?

*Open\_Plan* was a project where a group of young people worked together to explore and research the potential for a dedicated youth space in Wolverton – what it could look like and what is most beneficial for the community around it? We did surveys, we spoke with people who had experience in those areas and we gave our own personal opinions. That was all compiled into a report, with the hope that would be used further down the line for the Agora development.

## WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROJECT?

I hadn't been involved in anything like that before – it was quite new to me. It felt really nice, I felt part of a team and part of a community. I hadn't before been engaged in the community of MK or Wolverton. It was nice to work with others with a similar thought process and aspirations of doing things with the community – we were learning our own experiences of the community and it wasn't like we came into the project with hard set ideas.

## HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR CITIES LIKE MK TO HAVE WELL DESIGNED PUBLIC SPACES THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

I think it's important – it's a crucial part of having a healthy community. Young people are a huge part of communities and they are the future. It's so important they're supported and represented – it can help them with their personal growth and help them be part of the community. It can

help older people to understand young people's perspectives and remind them there are other ways of doing things. For young people – you're at a stage where you could go off in different ways, by supporting them to be part of something, you're then helping them to stay engaged in society and community.

## WHAT ARE THOSE NEEDS?

A space which provides both support where necessary, if young people need support from services and community but also the independence to lead and do what they want to do in space, to explore creatively. Young people need a space where they can feel seen and heard and supported but also where they have the ownership of the space, they are leading with the space. Make it feel like it's theirs.

## WHAT PART COULD OR SHOULD YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY IN SHAPING FUTURE COMMUNITY SPACES AND PROJECTS?

It's really important that they play a leading role in the development of future community spaces. The best way for spaces to provide well for young people is to have youth representation throughout the whole process of the creation of them. From the very beginning, what we did with *Open\_Plan* – speaking with young people about what they want before it's even been made, to the day to day running of it. It helps them to feel like it's their space and provides the right things for them. Older people can understand some of the needs of young people but they are changing and we're living in a new time. The only people that really

understand what young people need is young people themselves, so why not engage them in the whole process?

## HOW EASY DO YOU FEEL IT IS TO ACCESS THESE TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES?

My personal experience was that I only heard about *Open\_Plan* because I had a teacher who was quite up to date with community projects going on. Since then, I haven't heard about anything else, aside from projects that I'm already involved in. In MK it's not that easy to hear about projects like this, although on social media I'm sure if you're looking for it. I think it could be improved.

## IF YOU WERE TO PULL OUT THREE KEY MESSAGES FROM THE OPEN\_PLAN REPORT WHAT MIGHT THEY BE?

It would be that young people in MK do want a space. We do want somewhere which we can call a community youth space and to call ours. Youth leadership needs to be taken more seriously – a large proportion of young people involved in *Open\_Plan* and surveys as part of it, expressed that they wanted to lead and play a more crucial role, more than just participating. Projects like this involving young people in community and the development of the city is beneficial for everyone, not just young people – it helps to build a better community, build those values and connections – something which is great for everyone and not just young people.

READ THE OPEN\_PLAN REPORT AT [OFFSETPROJECTS.ORG.UK/OPENPLAN](http://OFFSETPROJECTS.ORG.UK/OPENPLAN)



# More than just a coffee

**Black Sheep Collective** provide a range of opportunities for artists, children young people, students, members of the community.



**THE LOUNGE**  
Thursday's 4–6pm  
Free Weekly drop in session  
for young people 12–18 years  
Bar Bar Black Sheep

Supported by Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council



Black Sheep Collective CIC (BSC) based in Wolverton, create situations, spaces and times where the Arts, Artists and Audiences collectively discover, establish and organise Place-making, Meaning-making and even, 'Trouble-making' paradigms and frameworks, in an ever unfolding and complex World. We co-conspire, align and connect with Social, Cultural and Private Organisations around the World. Together, (re)focusing on what makes us all 'essentially-different' and (re)imagining these thresholds as unique and nuanced sites of power; capacities for change, putting People and Planet, before Profit.

**BAR BAR BLACK SHEEP**  
Bar Bar Black Sheep is our flagship Social Enterprise. Located in the heart of Wolverton that started with an extensive crowdfunding campaign in 2016. The space provides not only socially responsible coffee and beverages, but hosts a range of community sessions, arts/creative workshops, groups and classes. The coffee shop uses responsibly sourced products and donates all surplus to local community groups, projects and initiatives, with extensive opportunities for artists and members of the community whether you want to facilitate workshops, show case art work, perform music/spoken word or participate in the programme of weekly groups and activities.



Above: *City of Trees*, 2022  
Opposite: *Peacekeeper*, 1983

Residents of Milton Keynes for almost thirty years, artists Fionnuala Boyd and Les Evans began working together in 1968. The Milton Keynes Development Corporation understood the importance of all art forms in helping to create successful communities, and becoming a place where people want to live, work and play; therefore, the arts have been built into the fabric of Milton Keynes.

The Development Corporation placed artists in communities, so early on in their careers Boyd & Evans became involved in delivering this vision. In 1981 Boyd

& Evans accepted an invitation from the Development Corporation to move to Milton Keynes and to be Artists in Residence. Having already completed a commission in 1980 for Woughton Leisure Centre, they were commissioned to produce further art for the New Town.

Their first commission involved them cycling around Milton Keynes so they could explore the quickly expanding New Town. These first large pieces of art remain in Central Library in the City Centre. Now with an international reputation, Boyd & Evans are just

completing another commission for the large new entrance of Milton Keynes University Hospital. Their practice incorporates traditional drawing and painting techniques, colour and black and white photography and more recently, digital imaging. Sometimes painting is dominant, sometimes photography, their subjects ranging from the personal to the epic.

# An interview with Boyd & Evans

Like the Royal Train, the residency of Boyd and Evans in Wolverton is one of our best kept open secrets. And for good reasons. As 'Artists in Residence' of Milton Keynes in the early 1980s, the couple were often seen as 'civic property' with the expectation that their studio was open for public tours. And this expectation was reinforced by the Development Corporation's focus on 'community art' rather than the creation of major public art works for the new city.



*With a new exhibition planned at MK Gallery in 2023, it was a great moment to have a conversation with them, not just about their relationship with MK, but their 25 years in Wolverton.*

**HOW DID YOU END UP IN MILTON KEYNES?**  
We had just returned from a year in America, and had no money. Then the Arts Council offered us a commission for Woughton Leisure Centre (which later became *Situation Comedy*, 1981 see overleaf). We weren't living in MK at the time so spent some time cycling around the place to understand more about it, but we actually produced the piece in our studio in Leicestershire. We were brought up in Welwyn Garden City and a council estate in St Albans, so we both already had an interest and understanding of New Towns. We were always struck by the sense



Above: *Situation Comedy* (Mural), 1981  
Opposite: *Building a City*, 1981

of ambition and aspiration that people working creating these new places had and that they wanted to do the very best for the people who were coming to live in the place.

Like many artists, we did many jobs to make ends-meet. Fionnuala taught Art History in an art school but finding the proposed course was not relevant to some students not studying Fine Art she and they devised a course related to design. We went to each student's digs or flat to discuss how or why anything in them was there – was it designed? We visited new towns with the students to find out why and how decisions had been made. We tried to understand why some succeeded and the different problems they faced.

We already had this feeling for 'the few designing for the many and the many taking over'. We got excited about this town when we were doing research for the Woughton picture, so we asked the MK Arts Officer if there was any way we could stay for a bit longer. She was thinking of creating a residency anyway, and we moved into Stacey Hill Farmhouse initially for a year. We stayed for c.5 years. Jack Trevor Story, writer-in-residence, lived there too.

**HOW DID YOU END UP IN WOLVERTON?**  
The Development Corporation wanted us to live in Milton Keynes, so we went round various of the corporation estates to see if we could find a house that was big enough to live and work in.

The Development Corporation helped us find a studio in Great Linford. It was not a great working space but we were there for 10 years; a beautiful area but the initial 'peppercorn rent' went up and up, until it was more than our mortgage. Combining the studio rent and mortgage made sense. We looked in Wolverton where we had begun our MK life. We imagined one of the barns in some of the back gardens. We looked at a house on Moon Street, initially where the attic had been converted into a dance studio, but in our naivety about house buying, we missed out. Houses in Wolverton were bigger and lighter and much better value than in most other places in MK. People kept saying to us that we should buy the house we are in now. We had known both the previous owners, and when it eventually went onto the market, after several false starts, we finally came to look round and immediately knew



we wanted it. We eventually moved in in July 1997. We did alterations to allow us to have a studio here. And that was 25 years ago!

**WHAT WAS WOLVERTON LIKE WHEN YOU FIRST MOVED HERE?**  
Wolverton was definitely seen as 'down at heel' when we moved here, therefore not nearly as expensive as Stony Stratford, which had similar high ceilinged houses. There was already a community here, aunts, uncles and grandparents. We loved it and got roped into the local arts scene. It was friendly and so close to the train station and London. For us it's been a great place to live and work.

**HAVE YOU EVER DONE ANY ART ABOUT WOLVERTON?**  
No, we haven't done any art about Wolverton, but not consciously, just with other things taking us away. I guess there was a focus on public art in the New City, but not in the older Towns.

**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?**

We have great hopes for the place and are looking forward to having an integrated town again, with The Square reconnected to the main shopping streets. We've known older people, no longer managing their stairs, who longed to stay here, but had to move elsewhere, so the Over 50's housing scheme is to be welcomed.

We have some great restaurants and individual shops again, and we hope there will be more spaces, affordable for shopkeepers and for people who live here now and in the future.

# Creative Company

Wolverton is the creative capital of Milton Keynes right? Well, here's a showcase of photography and introductions of just some of those we've spoken with... enjoy!

What do the oak trees think?

What do the oak trees think, about all this?  
Those great majestic Oaks that have travelled far.  
I want to know.  
Because I am too afraid to ask my ancestors.  
Because I don't know who they were;  
What they did;  
How they thought.  
And I want to know what the wind thinks, about all this.  
The winds that have whistled through these lands for centuries;  
Swept over the seas and sands;  
Twisted in and out of trees and turned to breezes across the moors and mountains.  
And, what would the sea say about this?  
The oceans that made us an island.  
Isolated us.  
Drove us to boats and ships and stealing;  
To thinking we were special?  
Because our Earth is not from around here;  
It has come far from foreign lands;  
Traversed tectonic plates.  
The fate of our feet landing here is not lost on me;  
We could have easily been over there.

*Elsie Roderiques (née Bryant) she/her*  
I'm a poet and social practice artist. My work supports the transition of mainstream culture towards post-capitalist, regenerative, equitable, just systems where all living beings flourish (...and explores the beautiful chaos of mothering twin toddlers.) I hope my writing sparks joy and connection. Recent projects include poetry workshops at MK's Unity Centre; celebrating public space in Hornsey and an online space for care at the start of the pandemic.

Instagram: @eachpeachpearrose  
Email: elsieroderiques@gmail.com

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN FIVE WORDS?  
Systemic, beautiful alternatives, questioning, adventure

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?  
Since I was born and lived on Moon Street! I've moved away many times to all corners of the Earth, but right now I'm here raising my family on Radcliffe Street.

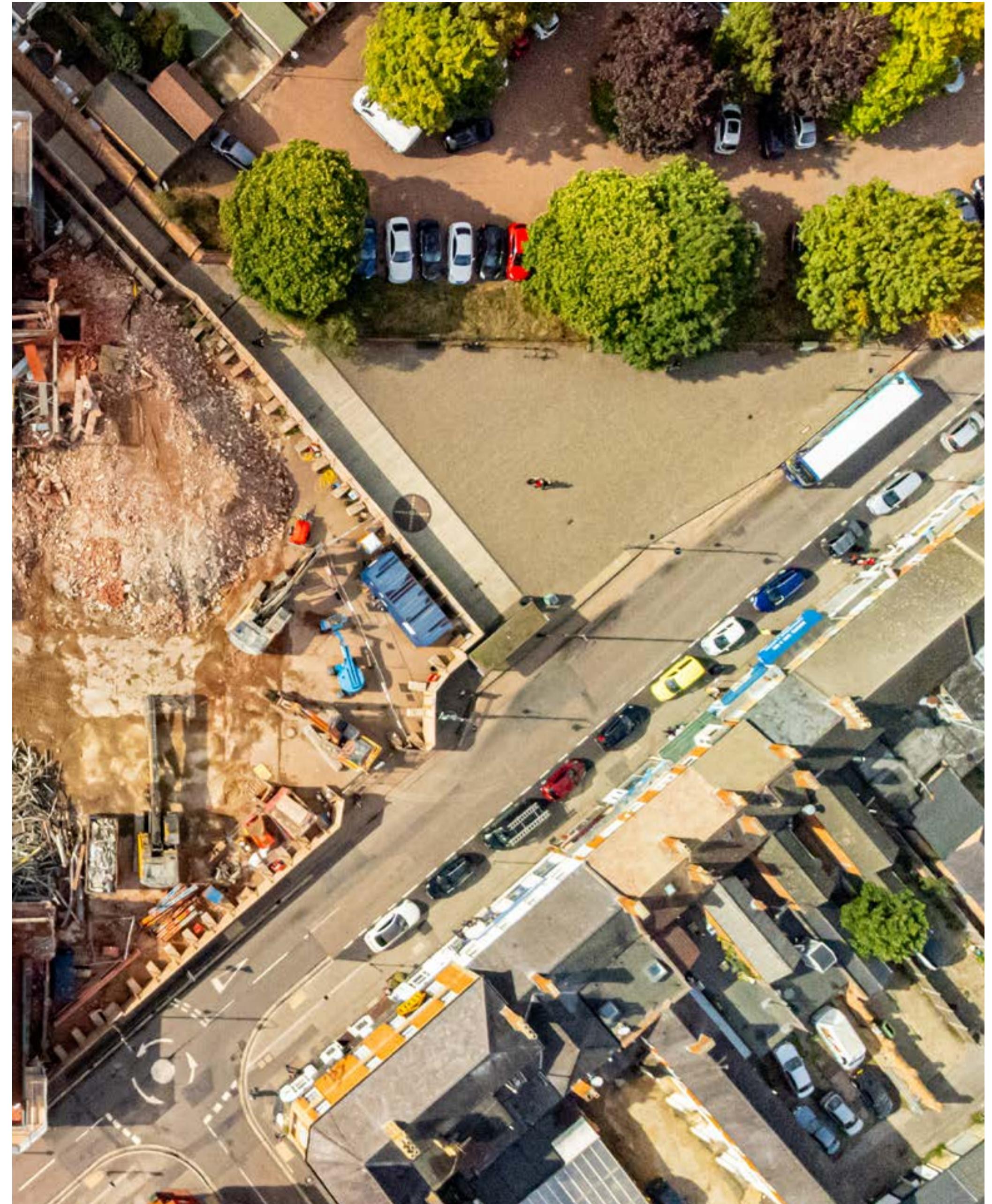
HOW HAS LIVING IN WOLVERTON/MK INFLUENCED YOUR CREATIVE WORK?  
Oof. One of my dear friends who also grew up here always said MK was where culture goes to die. I guess I'd like to prove her wrong! I think this is such a unique place with its own quirks and challenges. There's nowhere quite like it.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?

I hope as much space as possible is given to nature and for people to come together, be and create where we don't have to pay to be there. I hope there's lots of art by and for people, that speaks to the full breadth, depth and diversity of what it means to live and be in Wolverton.

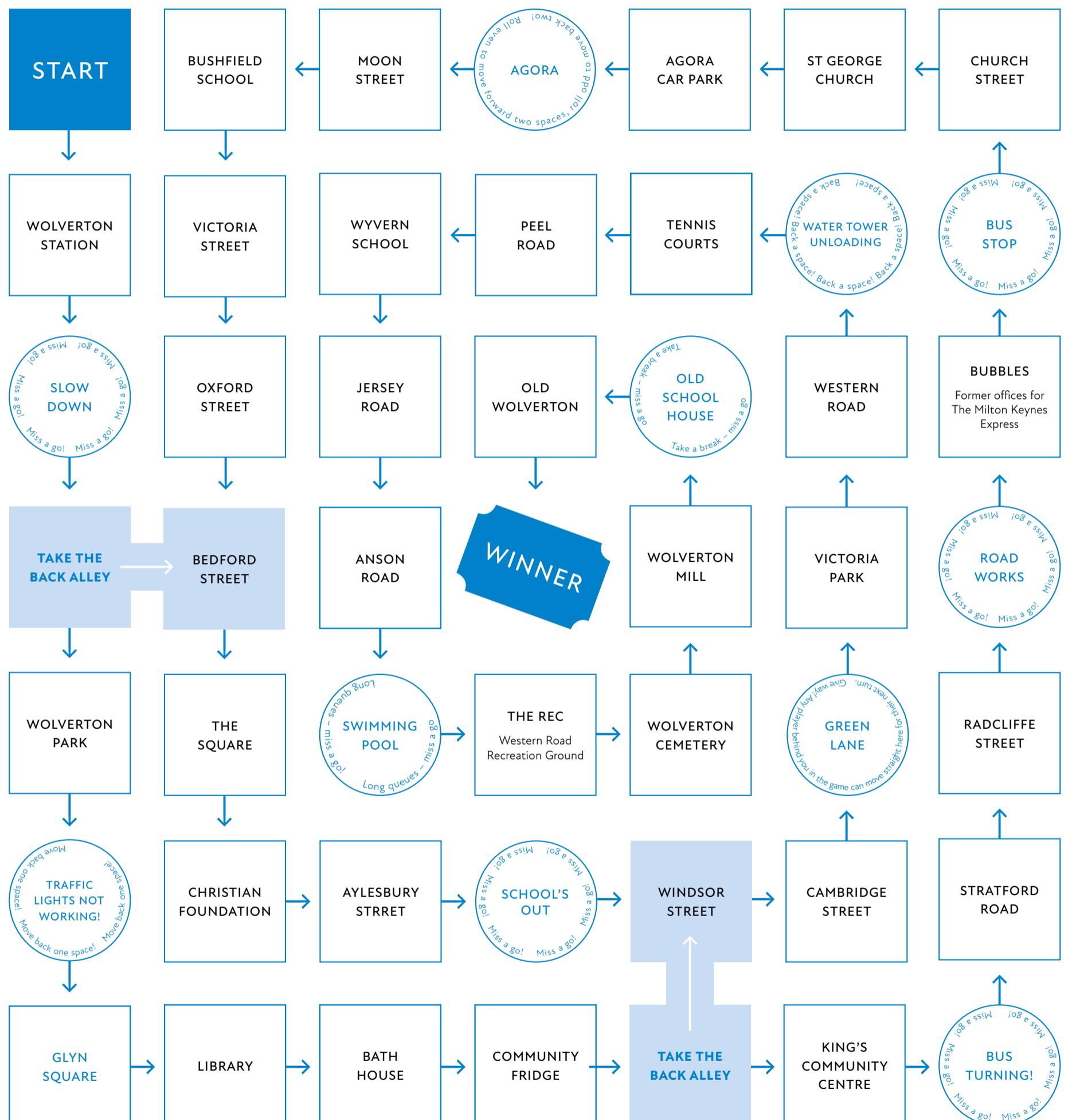
WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN GOES FROM HERE?

I will miss the Agora and the community it was home to for so many years and I hope it/ they will be honoured and remembered. I'm excited about the possibility of the town being united in a different way when the flow around its centre changes.



PHOTOGRAPH BY SIMON BECKETT

# JUST THE TICKET



## How to play

With a dice and some counters, take it turns to follow the arrows through the streets of Wolverton to the winning ticket in the centre!

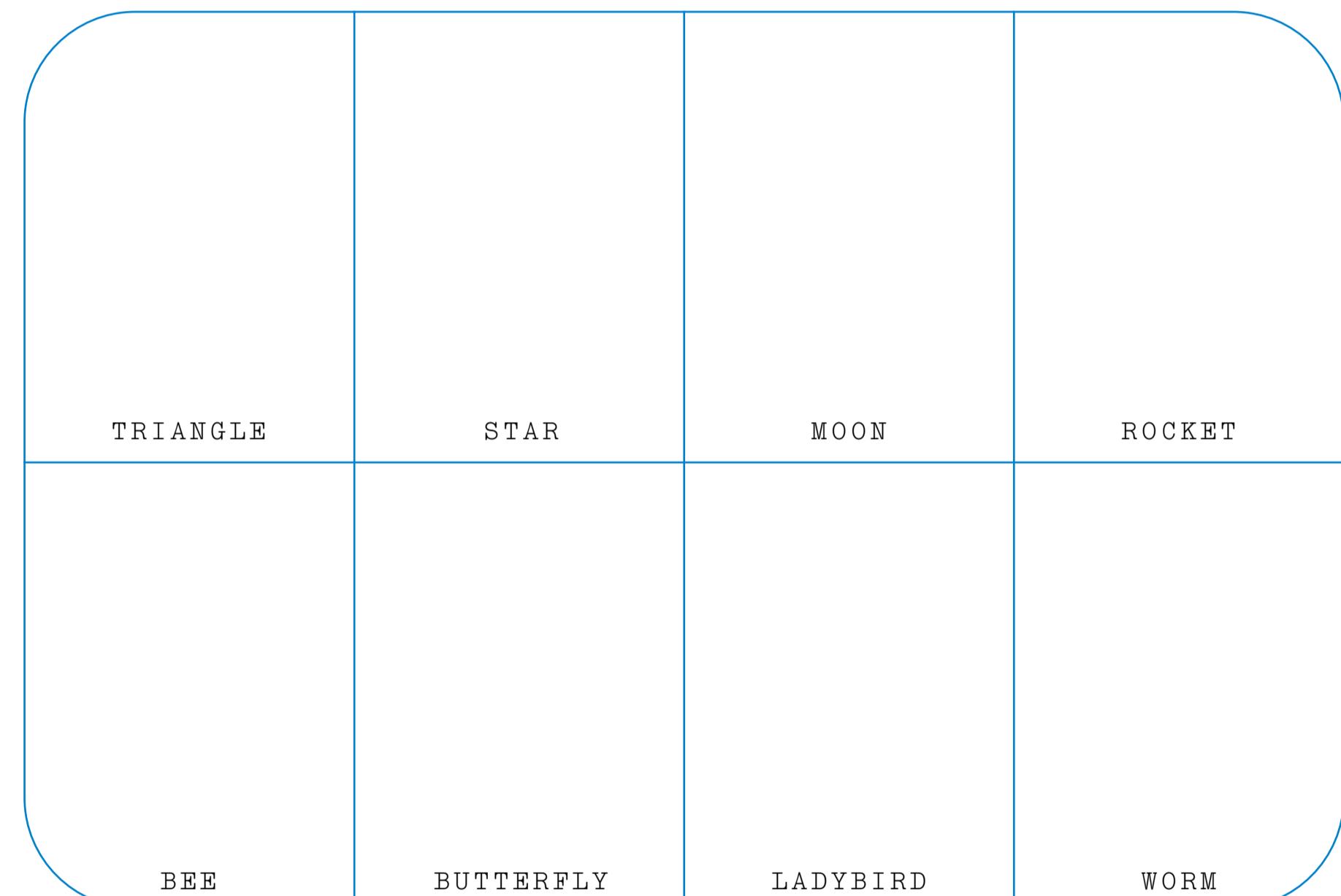
## Note

If you land on '**TAKE THE BACK ALLEY**' squares you can take a short-cut across.

INSPIRED BY 'WOLVERTONOPOLY'  
BY DANNY SEDGWICK

# LANTERNA FESTIVAL

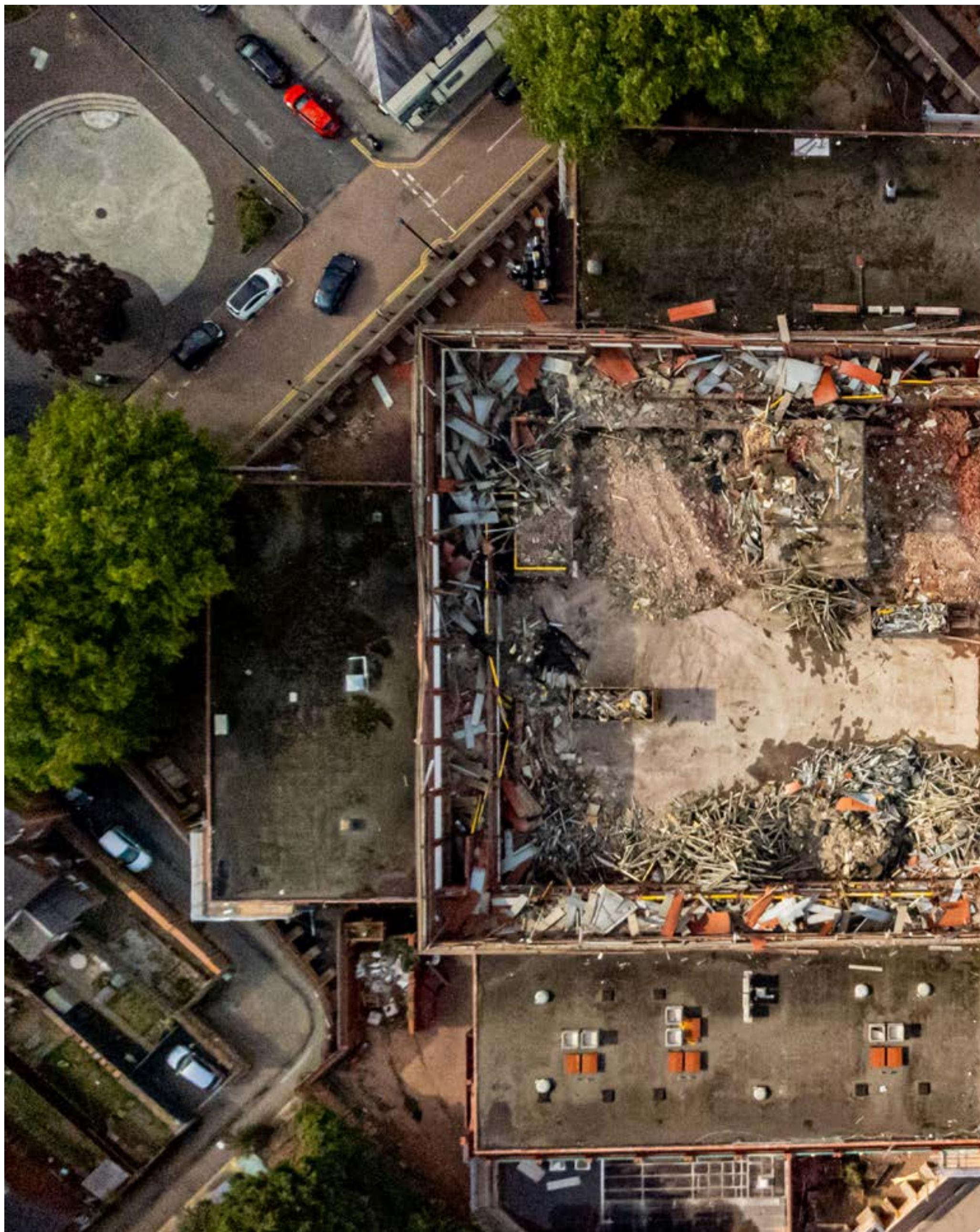
COLOUR ME!



# BINGO

TICK OFF EACH SHAPE LANTERN YOU CAN FIND.

WE'VE LEFT SPACE FOR YOU TO DRAW IN THE ONES YOU SEE!



THE DEMOLITION OF THE AGORA SHOPPING CENTRE (OCTOBER 2022) – COMMISSIONED BY TOWN

**Annabelle Shelton** studied Fine Art at Staffordshire and Birmingham City University. Shelton's studio is in New Bradwell where she pursues her practice in painting. The highlights of her career include a resident artist at the Aberystwyth Art Centre. Selected for the John Moore's Painting Prize. Shelton has shown work with international galleries the Rarity Gallery, Mykonos, Caudwell Snyder San Francisco, Corte Real Portugal and Rebecca Hossack London.

[www.annabelleshelton.co.uk](http://www.annabelleshelton.co.uk)  
Instagram @annabellesheltonartist

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN FIVE WORDS?  
Place, Space, People, Inbetween, metal

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?  
Came here in 1976 my dad was the manager of Able Jacks, Glyn Square – quite a few years on and off.

HOW HAS LIVING IN WOLVERTON/MK INFLUENCED YOUR CREATIVE WORK?

I moved back to Wolverton to raise my family in a community surrounded by many creative people. My park work was influenced by living in MK having many pocket parks that were by design incorporated into the estates. Sadly, they have been neglected and remain like scars on a landscape.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?

Public Art needs consideration and has to be placed sympathetically in its location. Far too many works are plonked on walls or are hidden away in disused courtyards. Art can be laid into the fabrics of the building or embedded into the floorings. Art can be lighting, or screening and not just a monolithic encounter. It would be nice to see something that references the Agora in its Heyday.

WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN GOES FROM HERE?

The Agora was very much part of my life growing up through roller skating, to the café and to the games machines. Not forgetting the 'funk a duck' nights of disco and bands. I think that Wolverton needs more central venues for nightlife and day life with more occupancy, an alternative bar that can host more affordable live events.



Wise Guys are a production agency born out of a passion for filmmaking. "Locally we have a good reputation for a unique way of writing our creative campaigns and a high level of cinematography. We are both Milton Keynes born and raised and have been living in Wolverton for the last 10 years. Our first office was a spare bedroom in Wolverton and we still work and live in Wolverton today. We have made films for Audi, Yamaha, Nintendo, Vauxhall, Siemens, Gü, Panasonic, Seat and others, we have worked on short films and TV shows, most recently the final episode of the iconic Australian soap opera – Neighbours. Importantly though, we still collaborate with local businesses and artists.

[www.wise-guys.co.uk](http://www.wise-guys.co.uk)  
Instagram: @wiseguysfilm

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN 5 WORDS?

Conceptually unique, cinematic and creatively challenging.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?

10 years.

HOW FAR HAS LIVING IN WOLVERTON/MK INFLUENCED YOUR CREATIVE WORK?

Wolverton has shaped our lives massively and working with smaller businesses here honed our skills that we have taken on to our bigger jobs. For example, our job for Milton Keynes Christian Foundation was our first anamorphic project – we learned a lot from working with them. We also used a local poet (Elsie Roderiques) and artist (Manny Ademolu) to write and voice the poem respectively. Secondly, seeing small Wolverton businesses thrive on a daily basis also inspires us to make Wise Guys the best version of itself.

WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN GOES FROM HERE?

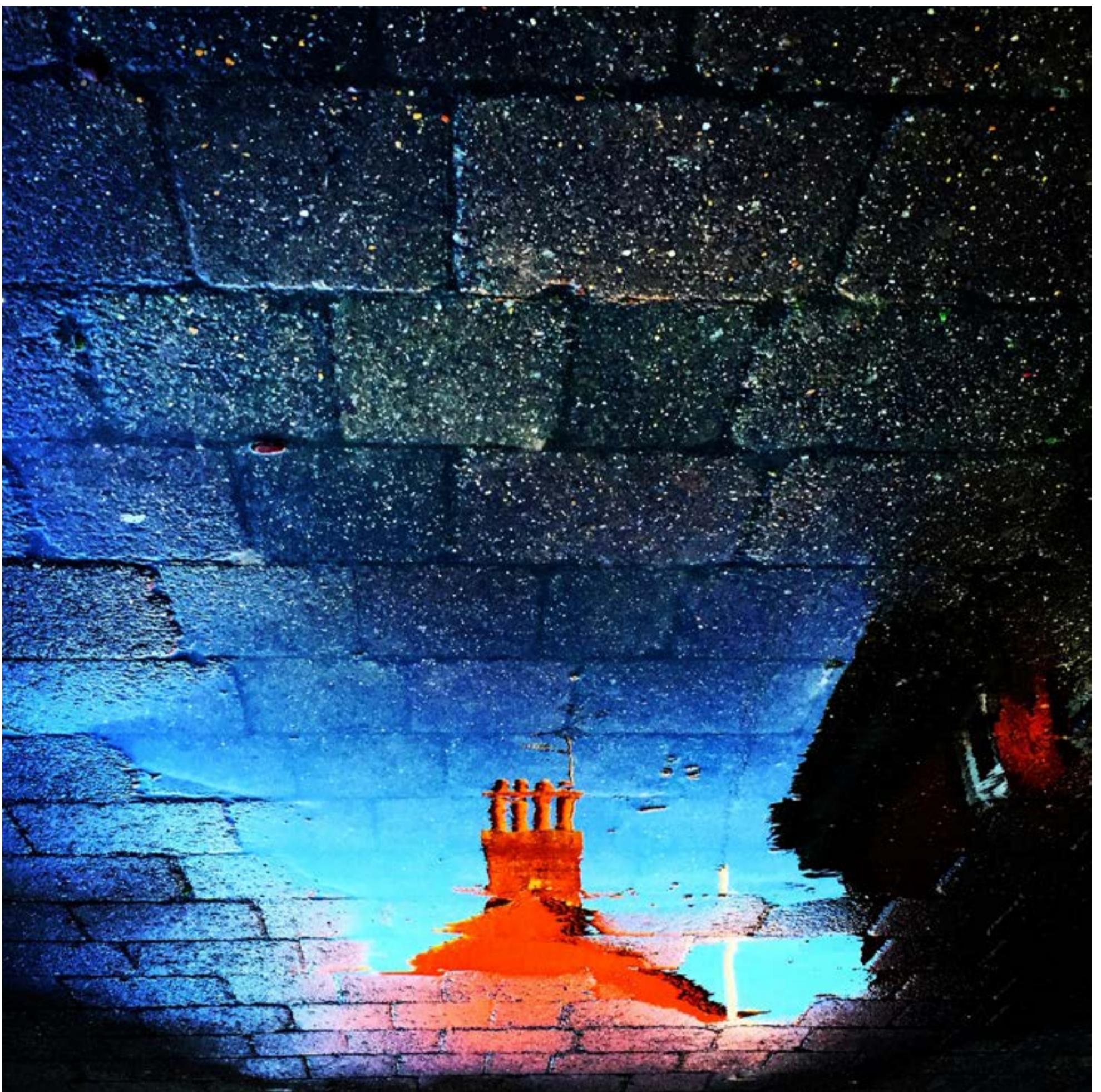
I think iconic as the Agora was, breathing new life into the town is not a bad thing. I think one of the main reasons we love the town is the deep sense of community, cultural diversity and variety of different social enterprises, businesses and

charities. What I think we need to avoid is the slow slide into gentrification that comes with just being 'a commuter town'. Wolverton's diversity of people, artists and businesses is its lifeblood and that should be protected at all costs. If what replaces the Agora honours and nurtures that – then we'll be happy.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?

I think any method of displaying the wonderful work of Wolverton artists would be beneficial. My biggest concern is not how you display it but how you find it. Making it clear how and when work will be commissioned with campaigns and easy to find information will give talented artists who are more reserved (or who simply don't know) the push they need to get their work out there and hopefully inspire a generation of new ones. Our current government is not currently doing enough for the arts, so anything that can be done at a local level to help progress artists of all ages and backgrounds is very welcome.





*Max Harvey & Jason Hall* have been running the Craufurd Arms for nearly ten years now. With the help of a passionate team in the venue, bar and tattoo studio it's become a creative hub of Milton Keynes. The space allows musicians, artists and creatives to have a safe space to work in and show off their talents. Being a grassroots music venue allows the venue to showcase local and National talent, inspiring people with either seeing their first show as a teenager or favourite band of the moment. The venue has worked with many local and National artists for posters, flyers and merchandise designs. The team are currently exploring ways of making the space more accessible as part of a 2023 plan. The Craufurd Arms will continue to work with artists on upcoming projects and keep live music pumping throughout Wolverton.

[www.thecraufurdarms.com](http://www.thecraufurdarms.com)  
Instagram/Facebook: @craufurdarms

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN 5 WORDS?  
Culturally Relevant Live Music Venue

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?  
10 years in May

WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN GOES FROM HERE?  
Hopefully the developers will keep it to local businesses and staving off becoming a commuter town vibe, but also bringing in newcomers to the area uplifting the surroundings.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?  
We'd like to see more art within the vicinity, The Square, local artists, sculptors and points of interest signposted

Photography by @arbrose\_ (Instagram)





*Iain Michael Talbot AKA 'The Salvage Hacker'*  
Local Crafter Makes anything from anything, total junk junkie!

Facebook: [thesalvagehacker](https://www.facebook.com/thesalvagehacker)  
Instagram: [@thesalvagehacker](https://www.instagram.com/thesalvagehacker)

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN FIVE WORDS?  
Every piece tells a story.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?  
Since I was 4 years old, I moved from Scotland.

HOW HAS LIVING IN WOLVERTON/MK INFLUENCED YOUR CREATIVE WORK?

Wolverton's creative energy has been a huge influence, from projects like Madcap or Future Wolverton to the industrial history and landscape of the place. It's got an edgy character, it's a survivor and what has driven me towards using a sustainable model in my work, building quality that lasts and having fun in the process. People make a place and the community of Wolverton's energy and verve punches well above its weight, be it projects like the Wolverton Lantern procession or the ambition of the *Educating Zarina* project, which was epic for its time, it's got everything.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?

I am a real supporter of the Agora redevelopment, and I would love if the redevelopment could capture the community spirit and history through the artists who live here, be it through painted murals, community projects, sculptures or the buildings, parks and benches.

WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN GOES FROM HERE?

Exciting times. The only way is up from here. I see Wolverton as a mini Brixton/Shoreditch and the Agora coming down takes us more in this direction. The town will go back to its roots. Opening up Radcliffe street unblocks its heart and by improving its flow lets it breathe again, this in turn will help the links between the wider community and 'The place', be it at a local coffee shop, bar, restaurant or shared art/workspace. I honestly think it's our future to create.



*Sara Myers* is a classically trained figurative sculptor. BFA London, M.A New York. Experience includes Madame Tussauds, prototypes for Warner Brothers and film. Teaching Art at Undergraduate. Exhibitions: London, UK, New York and Cyprus. Alongside more commercial sculpture projects, her practice is on-going and has become more ideas based – but retains the figure and interest in the human condition.

[www.saramyers.co.uk](http://www.saramyers.co.uk)  
Instagram @saramyerssculpt

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN FIVE WORDS?  
Musings on how we think/feel.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?  
8 years.

HOW HAS LIVING IN WOLVERTON/MK INFLUENCED YOUR CREATIVE WORK?

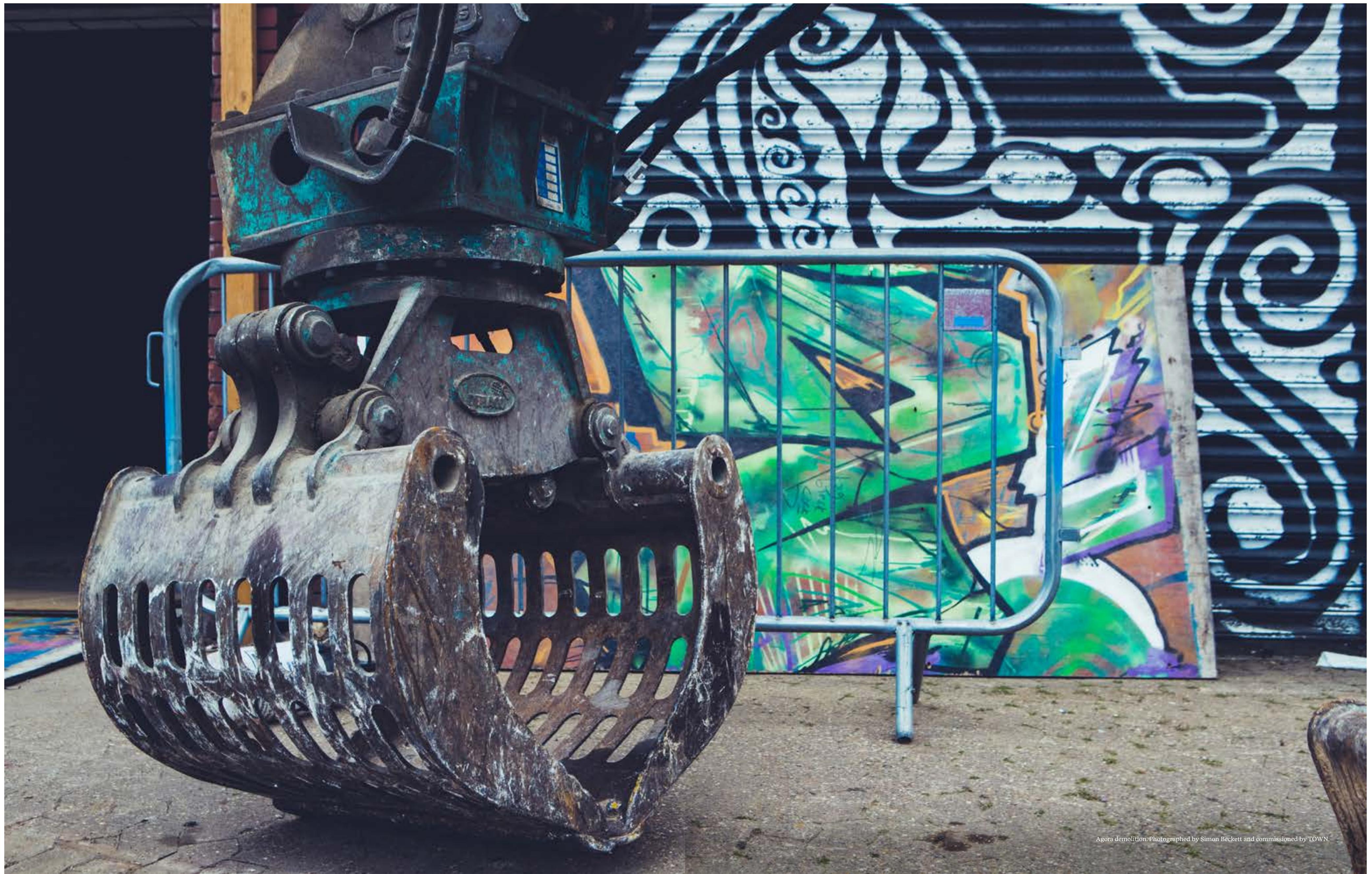
I loved working on the MK50 (open call) sculpture and learning about the original forward thinking vision of MK. Building on the garden city and modernist ideas and trying to create the capacity for evolution, growth and development. Also the talented artists/ designers and supportive friends here in Wolverton's multicultural environment.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?

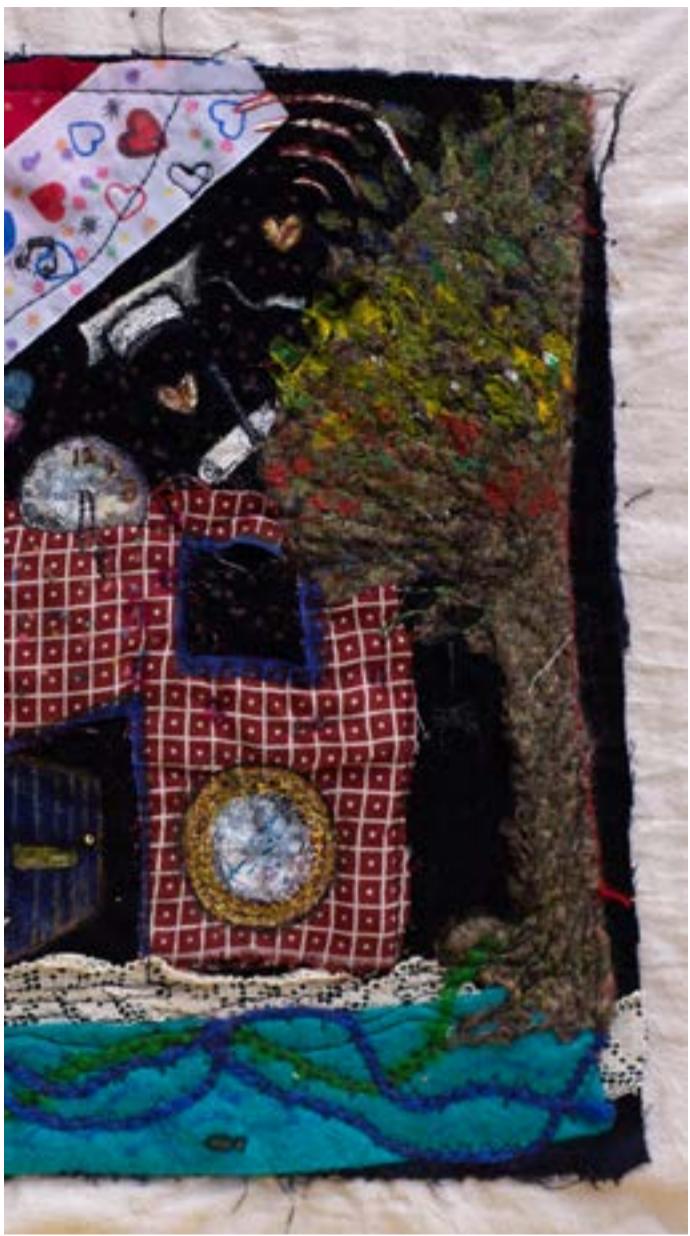
Open call. Open call! Design a brief, leave it open and really see what fantastic MK artists can offer.

WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN GOES FROM HERE?

I'm really excited about the opening up of the town, and the scope for a newer more accessible vibrant centre. I hope that there are more opportunities for new spaces/places (shops, bars, restaurants, businesses) places for youth and embracing the multicultural and various needs of the town.



Agora demolition. Photographed by Simon Beckett and commissioned by TOWN.



**Soraya Hussain** is a dressmaker specialising in historically accurate period clothing, pagan/ceremonial wear, weddings, alterations. I design, print, dye, weave, bead and embroider. Founder of community sewing group *Thread Thread Wine* (2016–2018). I exhibit artworks occasionally. In 2021 I co-ordinated a community-focussed piece entitled *Join Me: Our 2020 Events* (opposite). We created a wall-hanging memorialising the events that we missed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the *Join Me: Our 2020 Events* project:  
[www.spark.adobe.com/page/FezQ9Ra59ajBY](http://www.spark.adobe.com/page/FezQ9Ra59ajBY)

For *Thread Thread Wine*:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/1200757246663528](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1200757246663528)

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN FIVE WORDS?

Textiles, history, community, emotional, decorative

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?

I've either lived in or been connected with Wolverton for 44 years...!

HOW HAS LIVING IN WOLVERTON/MK INFLUENCED YOUR CREATIVE WORK?

A personal interest of mine is helping to create communities and bring people together, especially to celebrate. Wolverton has the tightest, most diverse and supportive community I have encountered – I don't think residents realise how unique it is in MK. I knew that *Thread Thread Wine* would work in Wolverton.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?

If the community feel they have a creative stake in the Redevelopment, they will respond magnificently. There are many talented creatives in Wolverton – and residents have a history of making things happen. The space could be developed with community artworks in mind from the outset and a rolling programme of exhibitions, local artists and crafts people's work would enliven and enrich the town.

WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN GOES FROM HERE?

I hope that between demolishing and rebuilding, there will be time to allow residents to enjoy the space and the views, finding a reason to love and care for their environment even more. And there are two sides – naturally, I think it's important that the community memorialises what's been lost!

Clockwise from top left: *Untitled* by Jessica Jane Eyre (detail), *Tea Break* by Sue Robinson, *Missing the Mountains* by Janet Willoughby, *Untitled* by Julia Roberts, *Untitled* by Clare Callaghan & Amelie Riner and *Untitled* by Helen Cottrell (detail) part of *Join Me: Our 2020 Events* (2020–21).



*Callum Barrell* is a multi-media artist. 'I dabble in painting, film, photography, enamel badge making, screen printing, producing & mixing music. I spent a lot of my time painting in my studio on Jersey Road until I was handed notice from my landlord. Since then I have mainly been making hip-hop instrumental & jungle music due to having no space to make a mess but still have a few little art projects on the go.'

Facebook: [callumbarrellartist](https://www.facebook.com/callumbarrellartist)  
Instagram: [@Nansin\\_thegarage](https://www.instagram.com/Nansin_thegarage)

CAN YOU SUMMARISE YOUR WORK IN FIVE WORDS?  
Symmetrical, Sub-conscious, Expressive,  
Unfinished and Absorbing

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN WOLVERTON?  
Since 2003

HOW HAS LIVING IN WOLVERTON/MK INFLUENCED YOUR  
CREATIVE WORK?

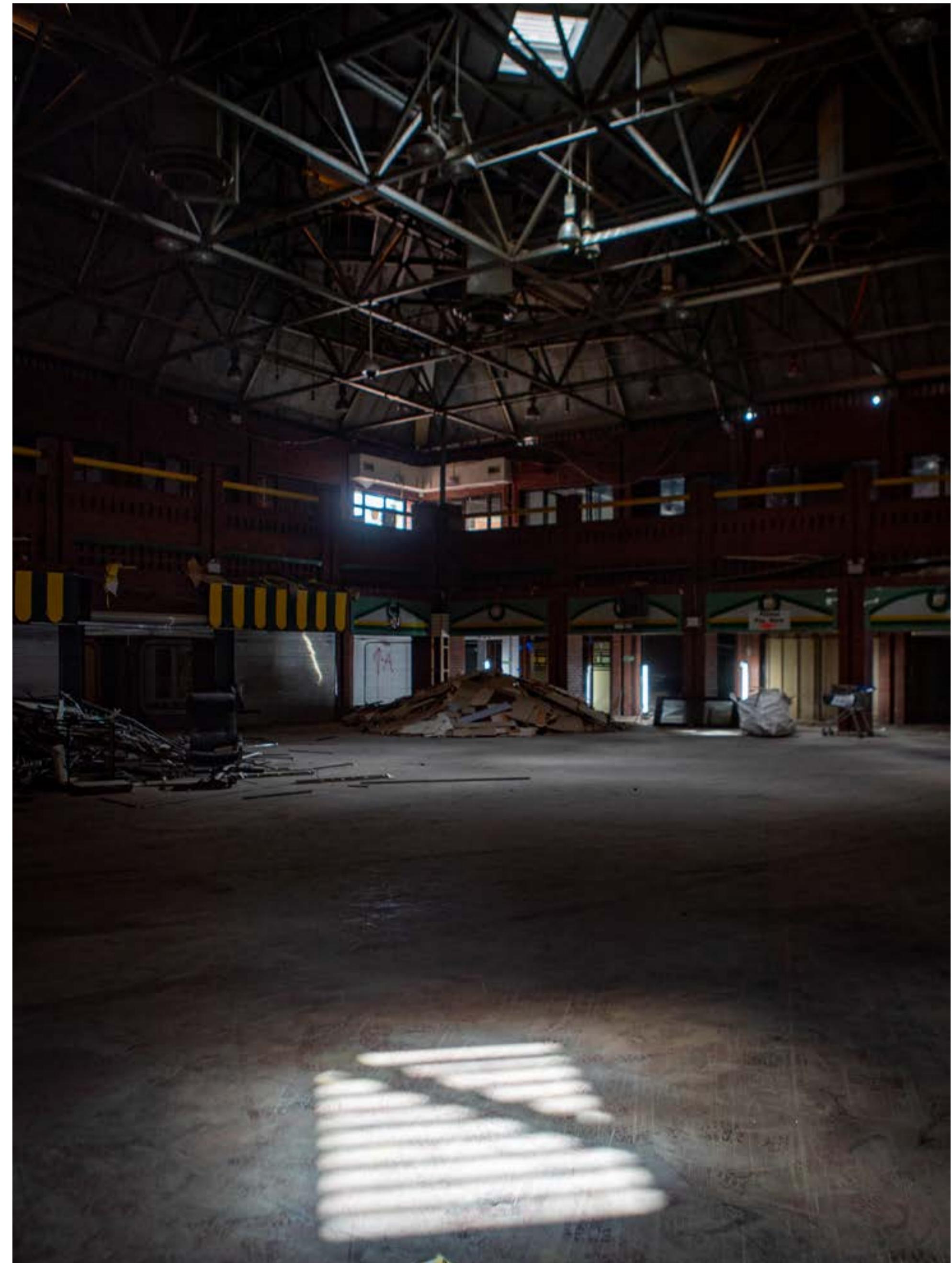
I remember some of my oldest memories in Wolverton was banging on drums in the basement of Madcap with my mate Harvey. Without that I probably never would have played in any bands let alone played any instruments. Having great gigs on our doorsteps was a dream come true. Walking the alleyways and looking at the tags on the garages and the streetlights reflecting off the red brick gave me all the flavours. Most of all the people, so many creative heads to bounce off and learn from.

HOW DO YOU THINK PUBLIC ART CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE  
AGORA REDEVELOPMENT?

Commission some local artists to paint some murals. Give us a section on the development to create a studio where people can host workshops at reasonable/affordable prices. Create a legal wall for artists to express themselves on large scales. Let's not make it too boring, Wolvie is a vibe lets keep it creative!

WITH THE AGORA COMING DOWN, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE TOWN  
GOES FROM HERE?

The Agora was a weird place but I had a lot of love for it & I'm lucky to have had a part to play in the creative ending of the building, thanks to the guys at *A Word In Edgeways* - big up yaselves! I'm not sure. All I know is where I hope it will go & that's in the direction of more independent shops and restaurants, creative spaces & community values. I will be screwing if I see another wack pizza chain or supermarket opening up in the new development.





# What next from here?

THE WOLVERTON  
COMMUNITY CONVERSATION  
Friday 17 and Saturday 18 February 2023  
Foundation House, The Square, Wolverton  
*Come and join the community conversation about what would make our Town Centre great!*  
Free childcare and lunch provided.  
For more information visit  
[www.futurewolverton.org/cid](http://www.futurewolverton.org/cid)

Community Improvement Districts (CID) build upon the concept of 'Business Improvement Districts (BID), where businesses collaborate to effect change in an area in order to spur regeneration and boost business. The key difference with Community Improvement Districts is that they seek to give local people, and community and charitable organisations, as well as businesses, a say over the strategic direction of local high streets which is vital to creating sustainable town centres for the future.

The belief is that the involvement of the community in shaping their town centres will bring many positive impacts: increasing residents' sense of ownership and responsibility for their high street. It is hoped that community organisations moving onto the high street, and developing their services, could provide diverse and vibrant activities, services and places for people to meet. All of this will strengthen the local economy.

## WHY WAS WOLVERTON CHOSEN TO BE A CID PILOT?

Wolverton was chosen to be a pilot Community Improvement District because of its strong track record of partnership working, and the ambitious plans it has for High Street regeneration.

Since the 1980's local people have been campaigning for the redevelopment of the Agora Centre, and the creation of new shops and homes in the heart of the Town Centre.

This became more of a reality in 2021 when the 'Love Wolverton' planning application for new shops and homes was approved, and with the demolition of the Agora building this year it feels even more real!

With building work due to begin in the Spring of 2023, the new year is the perfect time to think about the wider vision for Wolverton Town centre, and the role and function of the High Street in our community.

## WHO IS LEADING THE WORK?

The work is being led by the Agora Regeneration Working Group.

This group is made up of representatives from key organisations in the Town, including the Town Council, local businesses, Faith groups and the community and voluntary sector.

The group has been meeting for the last few years to act as a 'critical friend' to the developer TOWN and Milton Keynes Council.

The group is now responsible for the development of the CID, with day-to-day project management carried out by Future Wolverton.

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?

The CID development work began in July 2022 and has involved a series of meetings with key stakeholders, local businesses and some initial outreach to the local community<sup>1</sup>.

Representatives from Wolverton have also been taking part in meetings with the other pilot Towns, sharing experiences and learning from one another.

The Working Group have also begun to consider how they should be working together in the future and whether the existing structure

(of a loose grouping of partners) is a suitable governance structure.

This work is being supported by Locality<sup>2</sup>. Locality is the national membership network supporting local community organisations to be strong and successful.

## WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?

The work over the next few months will all be working towards a community consultation event about the future of the Town Centre in February 2023.

This event will bring together the local community, town centre business owners, and all other interested stakeholders to consider what Wolverton Town Centre could be and how we are going to get there!

The results of this consultation will form the basis of the Community Improvement District Action Plan, which will then be taken forward by the Agora Regeneration Working Group.

## HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

If you have ideas and thoughts about Wolverton Town Centre, and how you would like to see if develop and change do get in touch.

You can also come along and have a chat with us at a number of local events that are taking place in the lead up to Christmas – see Future Wolverton's social media for more information.

An invitation will also be delivered to all households in Wolverton to take part in the consultation event in February.

## CASE STUDY

### Theory Into Practice

The Age UK Milton Keynes shop on The Square in Wolverton has been a fixture of Wolverton's High Street since November 1992. In the last six months, falling footfall and lack of sales has led Age UK Milton Keynes to consider the future of the store, which has been threatened with closure.

As well as offering affordable clothing, household goods and children's toys, the shop also provides a vital 'pop in for a chat' service to local older people. There was widespread concern about the effect the shop closure might have on these people, who stay connected to the community and benefit from informal support and advice, through contact with the shop's staff and volunteers.

In discussion with Future Wolverton, Age UK Milton Keynes have indicated their willingness to reimagine their Wolverton shop, as a 'Community Shop' enabling them to retain a retail presence in Wolverton and offer wider community access.

'Meanwhile use' of shop units for this purpose is very common in areas of major regeneration, and there is strong evidence to show it can help support the flow of information, provide a place people can talk about the change going on in their area, and be somewhere which is accessible to all, whether or not they are digitally connected.

Future Wolverton believes that the area could benefit from a 'shop front' to give advice and information about the Agora regeneration scheme, support the development of public art before, during and after the development phase, and enable the involvement of local people in the work of the Community Improvement District.

The plan... Future Wolverton & Age UK Milton Keynes have agreed to work in partnership to refurbish and update the shop on The Square, refitting the shop floor and re-purposing upstairs rooms as flexible spaces for community use and activity.

The lease has been resigned by Age UK Milton Keynes, and since September 2022 trainees from Future Wolverton have been on placement at the shop. The shop will be closed for a week in January 2023 and refitted to successfully

1. A summary of this work can be read online at [www.futurewolverton.org/cid](http://www.futurewolverton.org/cid)

2. Locality is the national membership network supporting local community organisations to be strong and successful. [www.locality.org.uk](http://www.locality.org.uk)

Sign up and/or view the listings at [www.listings-wolverton.org](http://www.listings-wolverton.org)

# LISTINGS

Looking for someone to collaborate with for your next project?

Need to commission someone and want it to be local?

New to Wolverton and want to connect with other creatives?

**LISTINGS** is a live directory of the creative talent, people and skills in the Wolverton area. The idea was the result of a public meeting in April 2022 and led by the Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group\*.

This will become a platform to inform creatives on upcoming project briefs, connect other like-minded creatives together and will remain longer term for the wider community to access after the Love Wolverton scheme has been completed.

For starters we have a growing Google Sheet, where we can share and exchange contact details – just fill in the Google Form.

As the project grows, we hope to add more functionality and build something unique, that will showcase and support the creative talent in Wolverton.

If you would like to help, please get in touch: [listingswolverton@gmail.com](mailto:listingswolverton@gmail.com)

\*Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group is a voluntary group of residents, businesses and local stakeholders chaired by Milton Keynes City Council and joined by TOWN and Still Green Housing Co.

Pulling all of this together has been great fun but it's by no means little work! We're indebted to all those who have contributed their ideas, energy and time into this paper – thank you!

We'd love to continue and produce more issues as a regular place to connect and showcase the creativity that lies within Wolverton, but we need your help.

We're on the look out for budding editors, designers, writers, illustrators, photographers – creatives of all types, shapes and sizes!

Get in touch with ideas, contributions and details of how you'd like to help: [culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk)



TOWN.



## ISSUE 2 ANYONE?

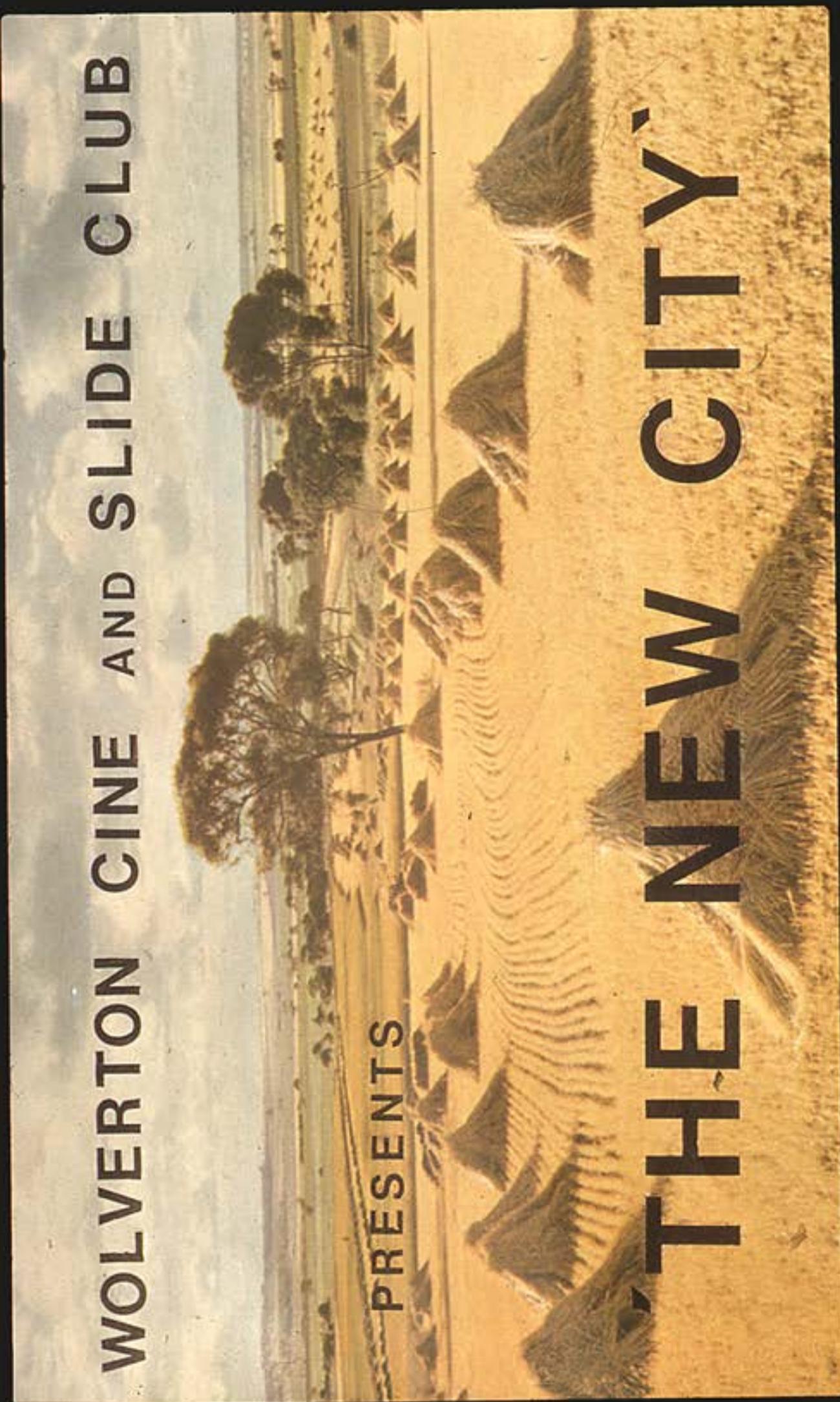
Let's be honest, not all sequels work, but we've got a hunch ours could be better than the first! Can you help? Would you like to contribute? Whatever your experience, age or skillset, attitude is everything! If you are interested, please reach out and let's see how we can work together on future issues of EXPRESS.

## A CREATIVE OPEN CALL

Are you from or live in Wolverton and a creative? We're inviting creatives from all disciplines to sign up and join the LISTINGS page. Visual artists, musicians, writers, poets, illustrators, designers, performers (and all those we've forgotten to mention!).

## GET INVOLVED

The Love Wolverton Public Art Steering Group are helping to shape and inform the future commissions for Public Art in Wolverton. If you have any questions or would like to join the voluntary group of residents and businesses please get in touch with Louise Izod at [culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk)



This image is taken from a set of photographic slides from the late Mr Ronald Sullivan and the late Mr Alan Sanders of Wolverton who were

members of the Wolverton Cine & Slide Club. The set of 216 slides and the accompanying commentary was known as "The Milton Keynes Project". In 1969/1970 it was decided that a photographic record of the towns and villages in the designated area of Milton

Keynes should be started as soon as possible before the construction began.

Image courtesy Living Archive MK (Sullivan Family Collection)

Find out more about the Living Archive MK and their work visit [www.livingarchive.org.uk](http://www.livingarchive.org.uk)