

# **Living Archive Milton Keynes' Business Plan 2019-2022**

#### **The Aims of Living Archive Milton Keynes:**

- To collect and archive the stories of Milton Keynes past and present life
- To share those stories in creative and educational ways
- To encourage artists in all fields of creativity to use our archive as a source of inspiration for their artistic expression
- To increase community cohesion and pride of place.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

- 1. To maintain, develop and use the archive
- To engage with Milton Keynes communities
- 3. To build audiences for the archive
- 4. To build partnerships with other Milton Keynes organisations
- 5. To ensure sustainable viability of our organisation

- Living Archive MK is an independent charity which has been collecting documents, sound and video recordings about Milton Keynes life stories and experiences for the past 35 years.
- Living Archive MK has hundreds of stories recorded and transcribed, and thousands of photographs and original documents digitised. The originals are archived and in storage.
- Living Archive MK 'gives back' these stories to the community. The recordings and digital archive are a permanent resource for multi-media projects: musical dramas, concerts, films, documentaries, art and history displays, books and broadcasts all held by, and for, the communities of Milton Kevnes and district
- Living Archive MK is a precious resource for local schools, clubs, museums and societies, and for academic researchers, local and family history enthusiasts, enabling users to discover the story of our evolving communities, adding so much to the melting pot of national and international history.
- **Living Archive MK aids social cohesion** in the ever-growing new city and metropolitan borough of Milton Keynes. This work is on-going. The continuing stories of the people of Milton Keynes will be collected from, and for, Milton Keynes' future generations of residents and visitors.







# **Living Archive Milton Keynes' Business Plan 2019-2022**

This Business Plan sets out the achievements, values and context of LAMK and the planned actions of the LAMK Board of Trustees over the next three years to embed, sustain and develop these objectives.

#### 1 Achievements

- 1.1 Living Archive Milton Keynes has a national reputation for its unique approach to documenting and supporting cultural, community and economic development in Milton Keynes.
- 1.2 LAMK grew out of the challenge posed over 50 years ago by the building of Britain's biggest 'New Town' development to promote a sense of community spirit, pride and belonging for its original residents and new arrivals.
- 1.3 LAMK has built up an extensive archive of primary source material that includes around 2,000 hours of audio and video oral testimony; tens of thousands of photographic images; diaries and letters; and scores of videos, cine films, CDs, DVDs and films.
- 1.4 LAMK initiated creative activities and entertainments for both old and new communities of Milton Keynes based on their life stories. It involved local people in its founding idea that 'Everybody has a story to tell'. It collected these stories as the

inspiration for high quality artistic and creative activities, as a shared experience for all the community.

- collaborative working. In partnership with communities and organisations in Milton Keynes over the last 35 years LAMK has produced: plays, books, songs, banners, textiles, radio documentaries, videos, films, sculptures, dance, CD-ROMs, DVDs, teaching packs for schools, audio-visual performances, local trails, web pages and exhibitions. Thousands of people of all ages, backgrounds, talents and capabilities have had the opportunity to contribute, participate and collaborate in and to learn, observe and enjoy a wide range of arts and educational activities of high quality.
- 1.6 LAMK has made life-long learning a key part of its work with communities, promoting new skills and discovering latent talents.
- 1.7 LAMK has delivered a unique method of training people in IT skills, called 'IT for a purpose'. This engages learners in researching their personal and local histories and using IT







- software to record, archive and present their findings. They learn new skills almost without realising it because they are personally involved in their research.
- 1.8 LAMK consolidated a sense of pride of place with its unique collection of citizens' memories and achievements in its MK50 project celebrating the new city's first half-century in 2017
- 1.9 LAMK carries out evaluations of each of its projects, gathering opinions of participants and attendees at events, using that information to improve our future work.

### 2 Values - Organisation

- 2.1. Living Archive MK builds and maintains its high reputation by being innovative, flexible, entrepreneurial and facilitating. Its pioneering work at LAMK has made a vital and unique contribution to the cultural, community and economic development of Milton Keynes.
- 2.2 LAMK delivers high quality services and creates high quality products whilst capturing and retaining a community archive of the past and present of people and places in and around the Milton Keynes area.
- 2.3 LAMK delivers highly skilled Project
  Management especially within financial
  restraints having developed successful
  management models for programmes such as

- exhibitions, IT training, archiving and website creation and maintenance.
- 2.4 LAMK has developed a wide range of in-house skills and experience through its projects and built the resources to innovate and create new ones.
- 2.5 LAMK delivers 'competitive professionalism' it offers cost-effective high quality, on-time, on-budget, entrepreneurial expertise.
- 2.6 LAMK offers flexibility to project commissioners in whatever is required but robustly adheres to its aims.
- 2.7 LAMK manages all its projects to ensure its staff, volunteers and the community are engaged in producing archives and productions, while facilitating and empowering people to produce something creative and of high quality.

### 3 Values - Community

- 3.1 LAMK values the sense of community in Milton Keynes, past and present.
- 3.2 LAMK endeavours to ensure inclusivity for all, building social cohesion and strengthening community identity in all we do.
- 3.3 LAMK works in partnership to support other organisations.







- 3.4 LAMK is actively engaged in providing the community with training, advice and specialist support such as in filming, budget management, staff employment and funding applications.
- 3.5 LAMK works to help people realise their potential and develop skills to enhance their employability; teaching IT to those new to it; nurturing volunteers.
- 3.6 LAMK seeks to give people confidence and a sense of self-worth (especially older or unemployed people) by offering mentoring at the appropriate level and by giving people pride in what they do.
- 3.7 LAMK encourages and enables people to engage through its productions, projects and activities, facilitating and empowering them to produce something creative and enduring with confidence.

#### 4 Context - Funding

4.1 LAMK's reputation for innovative and high quality work involving the community has brought a wide range of funding. In the past, LAMK was core-funded for its arts work by the regional arts body (East Midlands Arts, then Buckinghamshire Arts and later Southern Arts) and by the local authority, as well as gaining individual grants from other bodies to carry out its role.

- 4.2 Changing priorities and government austerity has brought cuts to arts and heritage organisations and local authorities, so that during 2014-15 all regular core-funding was withdrawn.
- 4.3 LAMK has developed a new funding strategy over the last few years to replace sufficient of the lost funding in order to continue its core activities. LAMK now seeks project funding from grant-giving bodies and offers its services to other public and private organisations.
- 4.4 LAMK also achieves a modest income from the sales of the books, DVDs and CDs it has published, and from licensing the use of photographs from its archive.
- 4.5 Recent successful fully funded projects have been the borough-wide Heritage Open Days every September and the on-going exhibitions in Milton Keynes Central Library, 'Discover Milton Keynes'. These often tour local libraries too
- 4.6 There is still a demand for LAMK to contribute to local cultural events and programmes but there is less funding available to support this.
- 4.7 LAMK has reduced its core staff to a part-time Director role, part-time Finance and Admin role and part-time Archivist/Volunteer Organiser role in response to the withdrawal of funding, so that it can maintain its core functions at minimal cost, while retaining the capacity to operate at a higher level as funding is secured.







4.8 Thanks to prudent and careful management the organisation is currently in the healthy position (February 2019) of having sufficient income to cover our core running costs until April 2020 and is confident that with additional successful project funding applications this healthy position can be maintained.

#### 5 Context - Current Activities

- 5.1 LAMK's current focus is predominantly on creating arts, local history and culture projects with emphasis on the archiving and deployment of the primary source material in our archive or accumulated through researching the projects: cataloguing it, digitising it, making it more accessible and exploiting its commercial potential.
- 5.2 The Living Archive Band continues to provide make a key output of the resources collected by LAMK, showcasing the music produced over the years and providing outlets for LAMK books and CDs. The Band recently performed in audio-visual shows commemorating the centenary of the Great War (2018) an effective format using audio extracts from MK people's interviews to introduce the songs they inspired, accompanied by contemporary images. The Band also performs with local community choirs, using LAMK's recent *Milton Keynes Song Book* as the source. This Song Book is now in every school in Milton Keynes.

- 5.3 Milton Keynes Through the Lens and the Wolverton on Film series are highly popular films based on LAMK archive's resource of old film and video footage shot in the last 70 years in Milton Keynes. They have regular public screenings in community venues around Milton Keynes.
- 5.4 Although LAMK is no longer able to oversee the Bletchley Community Heritage Initiative (through lack of public funding) its coordinator continues to help volunteers working to research and showcase local history.
- 5.5 LAMK has been funded regularly by the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake most recently for *MK50*, a celebration of Milton Keynes' first 50 years told through people's stories. These projects contribute new material to the archive and deploy their findings through displays, books, websites, drama and concerts.
- 5.6 In addition local groups involved in heritage projects call on our expertise to help them deliver their oral history and community engagement elements, for example the Parks Trust with their Linford Manor project and the City Discovery Centre and Interaction MK with their *Bradwell Abbey and me* project.
- 5.7 LAMK manages the Heritage Open Days weekend on behalf of MK Heritage Association and it has been incredibly successful as a result, numbers of open venues increasing from 15 a few years ago to over 70 last year.







- 5.8 LAMK developed and still continues to manage MK Council's *Discover Milton Keynes* displays, including the contribution of original material. LAMK has also project-managed HLF funded projects on behalf of Milton Keynes Heritage Association and other local organisations.
- 5.9 Since its foundation in 1984 Living Archive Milton Keynes has accumulated and now maintains a massive resource of primary source material from the city area, consisting of a vast and largely uncatalogued archive of items of great value to the communities of Milton Keynes:
  - Around 2,000 hours of oral testimony going back to the 1890s
  - Old film and video footage
  - Tens of thousands of photographic images (including 45,000 negatives of the nowdefunct Bletchley Gazette)
  - A wealth of documents researched for numerous musical documentaries about local people's history over 25 years
  - 42 modern 'docu-drama' films created by young MK citizens
  - Contemporary videos and CDs of music and scenes from local people and communities al over the city

The LAMK archive awaiting digitisation had been stored in Bletchley thanks to the STACcess project, but in December 2018 this facility closed and LAMK's archive moved to storage at MK Museum. Thanks to the work of a large band of committed volunteers, work

continues in the aim of fully digitising and making accessible the LAMK archive - and to develop and deliver original artistic outcomes, which have been the organisations key priorities over the last few years.

### 6 Planning the future

- 6.1 In Milton Keynes the heritage landscape is changing, and LAMK is planning to be part of that change.
- 6.2 LAMK is partnered with the other cultural organisations in MK so it is positioned for future developments. It is part of Heritage MK, a consortium of the five key heritage organisations in the city, and also a member of the City Archive project whose archives are so important in telling Milton Keynes' story; this group is seeking, in 2019, to begin centralising MK's heritage in MK Central Library.
- the current site of Milton Keynes Museum at Stacey Hill are still developing. LAMK is based on the museum site. Plans are also in progress for Community Archive provision in Milton Keynes. While the loss of funding in 2015 was responsible for our move to the Museum site, it has provided us with an excellent opportunity to contribute what is an essential component of this future facility for Milton Keynes the story of its people told by its people.

LAMK has a key part to play in both the new Museum and the City Archive as important







- providers of interpretation and contemporary collections.
- 6.4 With all these developments in sight, LAMK continues to explore how it can work more closely with MK Museum.

### 7 Mission and Reality

- 7.1 LAMK's future plans set out to be very responsive to the changing shape of heritage provision in Milton Keynes.
- 7.2 Staff and Board members are committed to work to deliver LAMK's core aims of collecting, archiving, sharing and celebrating the unique history of Milton Keynes and its people in a way that is creative, relevant, cohesive and sustainable.
- 7.3 LAMK recognises that the changes in funding and all the new developments in Milton Keynes place it at a crucial point in its history. The organisation remains committed to its mission and continues to deliver its objectives within the limits of available funding.
- 7.4 The Trustees of LAMK are considering carefully what the future of the Trust should be, particularly future directions and future opportunities, particularly through working in partnership with other Milton Keynes organisations.

# 8 Planning from 2019 onwards through Projects

- 8.1 Project working is at the heart of LAMK's business. A large part of LAMK's work is delivered through projects, some of which are built on long-term relationships with other Milton Keynes organisations; others are developed by LAMK in order to engage with new audiences and communities within Milton Keynes. LAMK is also looking towards several larger projects for the future in order to establish its participation in major developments taking place within the Heritage sector in Milton Keynes.
- 8.2 There are several projects which continue from year to year and form a firm basis for LAMK's activities and partnerships across Milton Keynes. These currently include managing and programming Discover Milton Keynes and managing the Heritage Open Days programme for MK Council
- 8.3 Shorter term projects enable LAMK to continue building its archive and develop new areas of engagement with Milton Keynes' past and its present day communities. For many of these we will seek HLF funding, but there are other local and national sources of funding too.
- 3.4 There are many potential opportunities for new projects, including some important future developments within Milton Keynes where LAMK can play an important role in project







management, collecting and delivering archival resources and addressing social goals too. For example, we are continuing our search for funding for the Lifelines' project that offers the opportunity for the isolated elderly to record their life story and re-connect with their community

8.5 LAMK also seeks to ensure income for sustainable activities through the commercialisation of its resources, and often within projects it is able to increase its income in a variety of ways including books and CD sales, screening of films and band performances.

# 9 Planning a sustainable future

# Planning for the future is a major objective for LAMK trustees.

- 9.1 LAMK Trustees and Staff are fully committed to delivering its vision through working towards its strategic objectives.
- 9.2 The current economic climate creates challenges which threaten the sustainability and viability of the organisation to deliver this vision at a level commensurate with LAMK's archival resources, professional skills and enthusiasm.
- 9.3 LAMK Trustees are working to ensure financial resources are available to maintain current activities and staffing levels. This largely means continuing to undertake new HLF projects to collect new material, undertaking project management on behalf of other organisations such as MK Council, working in partnership on other heritage and arts projects with other organisations and supplementing our income with sales of our products.
- 9.4 This level of activity and success can be enhanced when external funding for larger projects is secured. Each enhances LAMK's opportunities to further develop and deploy its archival resources and to engage with new audiences in MK and beyond.







- Larger projects being developed and researched at present include:
- (a) HLF 'Resilient Heritage' grant to support stafdevelopment and sustainability
- (b) HLF 'Our Heritage' grant to fund an Mk music history project
- (c) Opportunities arising through forthcoming anniversaries in 2019, e.g. the 40th Anniversary in 2019 of the Shopping Building (the centre:MK); and the 20th Anniversary of the opening of MK Theatre when Living Archive produced the theatre's first drama on stage.
- 9.5 A major prospect for LAMK is to work in close partnership with or as part of Milton Keynes Museum to enhance the delivery of the Museum's redevelopment aims ahead of its reopening in 2019 and to sustain LAMK's vision within a new structure.
- 9.6 The Trustees of LAMK are aware that the current economic climate has the potential to render the organisation inoperable. However their commitment to its vision will ensure that, if the organisation was unable to continue, their primary objective would be to ensure the survival of LAMK's resources and skill-base.







# **10 LAMK – SWOT Analysis**

A vast archive of audio and video recordings, photographs and documents relating to the living history of Milton Keynes and district	<ul> <li>i. Much of the archive remains to be digitized.</li> <li>ii. The archive still has not been fully commercially exploited</li> <li>iii. The archive is still not very well known</li> <li>iv. Lack of trained volunteers to carry out the various digitizing operations</li> <li>v. Lack of staff resources to properly manage the volunteers</li> <li>vi. Onerous storage needs, including appropriate facility, insurance and rent</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>i. Projects to add to the archive</li> <li>ii. Projects to digitize the archive, especially the film and video archive</li> <li>iii. More commercial exploitation of the archive to provide an income stream</li> <li>iiv Working with MK Museum to use the archive to enhance exhibits and the visitor experience</li> <li>v. Working with partners to develop exhibitions and educational materials</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>i. Lack of financial resources limit LAMK's ability to develop and deploy its archive</li> <li>ii. Copyright and ownership issues limit raising income from licensing use of material and preventing unlicensed use.</li> <li>iii. The sheer volume of work and lack of space threaten to diminish the archive we have – e.g. by disposing of artefacts.</li> </ul>
A proven track record - of (a) high quality project management of arts and heritage projects and (b) IT training courses with a purpose - which are both cost- effective and efficient LAMK achieves a lot with little income!	<ul> <li>i. A small and very stretched permanent staff limits the number of projects that can be undertaken at any one time</li> <li>ii. Relatively small financial rewards for managing each project.</li> <li>iii. A perceived lack of capacity for simultaneous projects</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>i. Ability to increase the hours of current staff if demand increases</li> <li>ii. Developing partnerships with local small heritage groups and with non-heritage groups who want to do heritage based projects and lack project management experience and resources</li> </ul>	i. Not having enough work to keep core staff in post

A national and international reputation for our documentary arts approach	<ul> <li>i. The skills and experience have not been passed on to a new generation</li> <li>ii. No capture of experience of those involved in developing this work</li> <li>iii. Lack of self-promotion</li> <li>iv. Lack of effective and continuing PR</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>i. Capture the experience of those involved in developing documentary arts processes and projects</li> <li>ii. Produce educational materials from our experience</li> <li>iii. Organize training courses locally and nationally in documentary arts techniques</li> </ul>	i. The lack of local people who are interested in continuing to develop this style of work  ii. The financial risk involved in publishing and/or organizing conferences etc. without knowing about sales
A large portfolio of original works - plays, books, films, and music - from projects over the last 40 years	<ul><li>i. Modern relevance - how marketable today?</li><li>ii. Lack of policy over licensing plays and songs for performance</li></ul>	i. Partnership with drama groups over performing revivals of plays	<ul><li>i. Lack of interest in these productions?</li><li>ii. Lack of position on licensing, copyright</li></ul>
Devising innovations - new projects and training courses – both for learners hitherto alienated by their educational experiences and for volunteers in heritage work	<ul> <li>i. Our current capacity is limited in terms of people to devise new ambitious projects</li> <li>ii. Uncertainty about long-term sustainability to see projects through</li> </ul>	<ul><li>i. The sky is the limit!</li><li>ii. Seeking support from funders for work with the older learner</li><li>iii. Seeking funding for the Film and TV archive</li></ul>	i. Lack of demand and resources to sustain development of activities

An inclusive, encouraging, empowering and supportive approach - getting people to share their stories; valuing contributions - helping people gain self- confidence; and breaking down barriers	i. Are we the 'go-to' people when others in MK are planning projects?  ii. Our PR is poor – we do not blow our own trumpet enough	i. Approaching local organisations to seek partnerships where we can offer collection and publishing (in various formats) skills for their HLF and other projects	i. Competition from other local organisations ii. Lack of attention to PR
Encouraging community cohesion with a collective pride of place – providing the bond between residents and new settlers	i. No impact in the minds of people in the Council etc. to see LAMK as a potential organisation to improve community cohesion	i. To make policy-makers and funders aware of our work in this area	i. Lack of local funding for this work?
Its people – committed, capable, hard-working, experienced, collaborative team-workers, sensitive to the issues, moving with the times, passionate about MK, its communities and history	i. Getting volunteers with requisite skills for all the tasks – especially trustees and new social media ii Having staff capacity to properly manage and recruit volunteers	i. Campaign to recruit new skilled volunteers through greater publicity  ii. Seeking funding for volunteer management	i. Limited funding making it more difficult to attract and retain good people.
Sound financial management of projects	i. Lack of focus on maximising income from products of projects	i. Developing marketing strategies and market-based pricing	i. Loss of potential income

# **Realising the Strategic Objectives 2019-2022**

[i] To re-engage with our roots; explore and embed opportunities for creativity

#### By the end of March 2020 we will have:

- 1. Explored funding opportunities for closer engagement with creative practitioners (eg artist residencies) which exploit materials in the archive
- 2. Engaged with artists for some 'quick win' outputs to increase exposure as part our Discover Milton Keynes work
- 3. Explored opportunities to present signature LAMK documentary plays, audio-visual shows or films where funding exists to support this.
- Built arts activity into Music HLF project

#### By the end of March 2021 we will have:

Explored opportunities for creating LAMK
 associated groups, eg drama groups, to ensure
 that later projects don't have a standing start.
 This will have involved gradually building

- community 'buy-in' and support
- 2. Devised at least one project that involves closer engagement with creative practitioners (eg artist residencies) which exploit materials in the archive
- 3. Have begun to apply for Arts Council Grants ir order to raise profile of LAMK as an arts organisation
- 4. Explored Artswork funding to facilitate creative projects with schools
- 5. Staged a new low-budget documentary musical based on MK50 Pioneer Tales (under Poppy Hollman's direction)

#### By the end of March 2022 we will have:

- Worked towards applying for Arts Council Portfolio Organisation status
- Successfully obtained funding for the History of LAMK, including an updated audio-visual version of The Story So Far, suitable for touring, based on LAMK's own history.







# [ii] To develop projects to address the health and well-being agenda

#### By the end of March 2020 we will have:

- 1. Secured 3 year funding and begun the *Lifelines* project, ideally with Alzheimer's UK as partners
- 2. Explored the issue of Mental Health and devised a new partnership project, perhaps with Mind BLMK as partners

#### By the end of March 2021 we will have:

- Produced interim exhibition and report after 1st year of *Lifelines*
- 2. Have secured funding and started partnership project around issue of mental health

#### By the end of March 2022 we will have:

- 1. Produced exhibition and report after 2nd year of Lifelines
- 2. Have continued partnership project around issue of mental health

## iiii] To engage with MK's new and diverse communities

#### By the end of March 2020 we will have:

- Stimulated engagement from MK's Polish community – the largest of any ethnic group ir MK; the project will be called 'Moja Historia' ('My Story')
- Explored the stories from 'Refugees Welcome MK'

#### By the end of March 2021 we will have:

- Targeted all MK's Parish Councils for funding towards LAMK's local Community Heritage initiative - Celebrating the Heritage of Everyone in Your Community.
- 2. Completed a project related to refugees in Milton Keynes.

#### By the end of March 2022 we will have:

1. Completed and show-cased the multi-cultural project *Celebrating the Heritage of Everyone in Your Community*'







# [iv] To develop and deploy the archive

#### By the end of March 2020 we will have:

- 1. Continued collecting *MK50 people's stories*
- 2. Celebrated **40 Years of the Shopping Building** with funding from Hermes.
- 3. Added memories from Bradwell Abbey, Great Linford Manor Park and Wolverton Park to the archive.
- Have premiered the second film in the Make No Little Plan series – 1979 to 1992 'Here Comes Maggie'
- 5. Continued to liaise with partners over the City Archives proposal.

#### By the end of March 2021 we will have:

1. Celebrated the music culture of MK from 1960s to present day

#### By the end of March 2022 we will have:

1. Added the history of LAMK to the archive

# v] To maintain and improve the management of LAMK archive material

#### By the end of March 2020 we will have:

- 1. Refined current finding aids and accessibility of the physical archive
- 2. Refined our IT development to facilitate access to digital archive and reduced our backlog.
- Recruited and trained more cataloguing volunteers to upload archive collections to the online catalogue

#### By the end of March 2021 we will have:

- 1. Introduced a revised Entry System
- 2. Recruited and trained the Volunteer Archiving Team as needed
- Re-organised storage of physical archive, processing area & workroom/training room/office to operate as efficiently as possible
- 4. Developed and improved LAMK's finding aids using keywords, search terms and thesauri
- Carried out thorough review of finding aids, accessibility of digital archive and IT options







#### By the end of March 2022 we will have:

- Recruited and trained the Volunteer Archiving Team as needed
- Reviewed storage and operating of the processing area making alterations as necessary
- 3. Reviewed the use of finding aids and accessibility of physical archive
- 4. Implemented IT improvements to improve accessibility of digital archive
- 5. Started to work with MKHA members on 'Arch MK' project, if successful
- [vi] To ensure sustainable viability of the organisation... succession planning

#### By the end of March 2020 we will have:

- 1. Explored succession planning
- 2. Devised and launched a revamped Friends' Scheme
- 3. Explored and prepared an application for HLF Resilience Funding

- Refined digital publicity and marketing
- Marketed our products more widely in specialist newsletters, magazines and online groups
- 6. Revamped the LAMK brochure
- 7. Explored a wider audience for the LAMK newsletter

#### By the end of March 2021 we will have:

- Engaged younger participants and organisations in our work
- 2. Explored Parish Council funding for activities, eq. Writing memories

#### By the end of March 2022 we will have:

1. Explored paid day-time group activities for seniors/retired people









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