

Reference: XXX
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Name: Mike Barry
Address: [Not given]
Date of Birth: [Not given]
Place of Birth: [Not given]
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Interviewed by: Roger Kitchen
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Mike Barry explains that the idea for the Milton Keynes Rose originated around 2007, when he was Mayor of Milton Keynes and County Chairman of the Royal British Legion for Buckinghamshire. Discussions with John Moffoot at Milton Keynes Council highlighted the need for a place of remembrance in the city. However, Mike was clear that this should not be a traditional war memorial. Because Milton Keynes did not exist during the World Wars, and because loss extends beyond military conflict, the vision was for a broader, inclusive space where anyone could quietly remember loved ones—whether lost in war, accidents, or other circumstances.

Early public meetings revealed that many people initially expected a conventional war memorial. Mike and others worked to shift this thinking toward a more open and contemporary concept. The death of Princess Diana reinforced the need for a central space where people could gather to pay respects, something Milton Keynes lacked at the time.

A small steering group formed the Cenotaph Trust in 2007, contributing their own money to establish it. They rejected ideas tied to military symbols, such as repurposed tanks, and instead sought something unique to Milton Keynes. Designer Gordon Young (of GIA) embraced the concept, envisioning a mathematically aligned structure along the city's grid, near Midsummer Boulevard. The Parks Trust partnered by providing land, and after several years of fundraising and planning, the Milton Keynes Rose was completed about three to four years later.

The Rose evolved beyond its original "cenotaph" idea into a flexible commemorative space with individually named pillars, selected by an independent panel. It has become both a personal and collective place of reflection, hosting ceremonies for national events such as the Queen's death, while remaining open to people of all backgrounds.

Mike emphasizes that the Rose is independent from the Council, allowing public suggestions for new pillars and ensuring it belongs to the community. He is proud of its inclusivity and

longevity, seeing it as a lasting legacy of his mayoralty—one that he hopes will continue to grow, potentially adding visitor facilities in the future.