

Advertisement Feature

# Soapbox to whizz past the Studios



**After this year's Milton Keynes' Soapbox Derby, discover a sunny spot to put your feet up at Witan Studios...**

SUMMER at Witan Studios was a scorcher last year, and we're hoping to reach the same dizzy highs of 30+ in 2019. The courtyard and garden are the perfect place to enjoy an iced coffee, get overly competitive at our table tennis table or just sit back and enjoy your evergreen surroundings.

The friendly WiFi cow is there to keep you company, and Fourth & Fifth Café can even bring you brunch in a shady spot outside or in one of their black and yellow booths for something a little more private.

If you'd like to venture into the city, the Studios are a stone's throw from The Hub, and only a ten-minute walk from Campbell Park. To help you get there, there's secure parking, cycle storage, alongside a bike rental scheme available to all Studio members which can be enjoyed throughout the spring and summer months - and all year round, if you're brave enough!

There's shower and changing facilities with lockable storage too, so however you want to get about you'll start the day fresh and

feeling good. This also works for those who want to run beside the entries to this year's Milton Keynes' Soapbox Derby!

Teams are set to race past our neighbours on Midsummer Boulevard in Central Milton Keynes on Saturday June 8 at 10am. The derby will be split into Junior, Senior and Business & Company races along a 200-metre course, filled with fun and challenging obstacles and surrounded by cheering spectators.

The MK Soapbox Derby 2019 is created in partnership with Milton Keynes Council, Ringway, MyMiltonKeynes and the Studios' own MK21, digital marketing agency.

Born and bred in Milton Keynes, MK21 has just celebrated the first anniversary in their shiny new workspace and have gone from strength to strength in placing themselves at the forefront of digital marketing in the city.

Making people content with content, the MK21 team have been an innovative addition to the Studios, securing creative national contracts along the way.

**CURIOUS? BE BOLD... Contact our dedicated Community Manager, Heather, to find out how we can help you make an impact.**

**Call 01908 880 833 / 07377 362476 or email [heather.manning@ceg.co.uk](mailto:heather.manning@ceg.co.uk) Visit [witanstudios.co.uk](http://witanstudios.co.uk) for more information.**

WITAN STUDIOS



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# Railway bridge row is on the fast track to disaster

WELL, last month's column has certainly put the cat among the pigeons. Readers will recall that I wrote about the Milton Keynes Development Partnership's Caldecotte Site C Development Brief showing an aerial plan view but no elevation of what they described as "a bridge (that) could be constructed on the existing line of Brickhill Street, subject to more detailed technical work and planning permission. Feasibility work undertaken by the council suggests that this would not require the safeguarding of any land within Caldecotte Site C."

A copy of that "feasibility work" had been requested under Freedom of Information legislation but at the time of writing that column, with no result.

Guess what? It is now in and it says: "No feasibility work for a bridge over the railway was carried out or commissioned by the council - the layout included in figure 1.3 being provided by the developer's consultant as part of their planning and design work supporting the preparation of a potential future planning submission".

That is rather worrying, I hope you will agree, especially as the plan also had a council-source notice on it. So could the actual source of this pretend bridge plan be the same major housing developer with its fingers in almost every housing development in Milton Keynes? I know and I am keeping it to myself for the moment but I think you can probably guess the answer.

Change

The second consultation has now closed on Caldecotte Site C but is going ahead on South Caldecotte with the content of the document approved for consultation at the Delegated Decisions meeting on March 12. They, Milton Keynes Council, have now outrageously changed the document to remove the terminological inexactitude regarding the feasibility study.

Is such a fundamental change even legal on an official, formally approved council planning document? I believe we should be told and we now await the council legal department's ruling on it.

South Caldecotte, readers will recall, is the employment area due to be flooded with Magna Park-style mega warehouses unless, of course, a major bridge over the railway has to take up valuable building land.

Have we now reached the position where Milton Keynes, far from being planned by its planning department, is now entirely at the whim of those developers who stand to have the most financial benefit?

This seems to be the case because back in 2015 residents were invited to a presentation at Bow Brickhill by Network Rail, at which it showed proposals for a bridge over the railway connecting a rerouted V10 Brickhill Street over the railway line. Both the drawings showed substantial land take would be required from both Caldecotte C and South Caldecotte.

In fact, Milton Keynes Council planning officers wrote to Network Rail in June 2015 to ask how much land would be required and were sent the drawings which clearly showed major land take.

Attempt

Why was this information not included in Plan:MK? Why was the need for this land take not included in the development briefs for both Caldecotte Site C and South Caldecotte? Is the appearance of the pretend bridge an attempt to

get out of the hole created because the council had forgotten that eventually, when traffic comes to a grinding halt in that corner of Milton Keynes once the East West Rail line is complete, someone will need to build a bridge?

If you are thinking that there may be an option to

build the bridge on the eastern side of Brickhill Street, you would be right. Land was reserved by the far-sighted Milton Keynes Development Corporation in Tilbrook on the east side of Brickhill Street and they even created a bund of soil and hardcore to facilitate it running along the north side of the railway there.

The idea was to acquire the two houses at the bottom of Station Road to facilitate the bridge's landing point. This explains the large triangle of land once owned by Milton Keynes Council and The Parks Trust between the industrial units, Bradbourne Drive and Brickhill Street. However, those kings of unjoined up thinking at the council, by selling the land to Red Bull, have neatly closed that option.

And if you think that it is now all a total disaster, we have not even begun to consider the situation at the Woburn Sands level crossing yet...

Cheerio.

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