

INTERVIEW: DAVID & EVE

Q1b. Have you always lived in Milton Keynes? (When did you arrive? What was your first impression? What reasons prompted your move?)

DAVID:

We know that we came to Milton Keynes in 1986. And prior to that we lived in St Neots in Cambridgeshire for ten years, and prior to that we are at university separately.

INTERVIEWER: What prompted your move?

EVE: My job - I got a headteacher-ship at Lord Grey School.

Q2. What do you feel has changed the most in Milton Keynes?

DAVID:

I think one of the things we were reflecting on it the other day, one of the big changes in land use is that the housing is nowhere near as distinctive on the new developments as it was in the very early days of the development Corporation. There is no doubt because the development Corporation had huge amounts of money they could make Greenleys different from Fullers Slade different from Hodge Lea, different from Galley Hill. And all those early developments were very, very site-specific. And now when you drive through the Western expansion area you could be anywhere in the country I think that's one change I suppose the at the changes significant increase in vehicular traffic actually there aren't traffic jams in Milton Keynes, but there are a heck of a lot more cars actually.

EVE: Cars are everywhere.

DAVID:

Exactly! Just because car ownership is the norm now which it wasn't 30 odd years ago. I think on the upside is actually wonderful to have theatre, and I think a mixture of old and new. It is great living in Stony Stratford it's 10 minutes away from six real ale pubs, and it's 10 minutes away from the city centre to get to the railway station or to the theatre or to the newly refurbished Gallery. That's a kind of wonderful mixture.

EVE:

The city centre has changed, because when we came there was the shopping centre but the original shopping centre, while the original shopping centre for the grid-square has been replaced with intu. When the church was built that was a brilliant step forward because it was the first building that wasn't an office or shop, it was a building with cultural things happened there have quite a lot of concerts things there it was a place where you could have, get people together for other purposes as well as being a religious centre. So, we did go to new concerts in there. As well as their normal everyday services of course from that we then acquired the new Theatre and as DAVID mentioned the gallery, and escape [centre], so the city centre is much more of the centre now when we first came we went to thing at the OU. And it was rather thinly attended, and people were all asked where they lived or where they were from and everybody talked about the grid-square oh I live on you know Netherfield or I live on Simpson or Springfield or whatever. And actually, that has sort of drifted now, it used to be people identify primarily with the grid-square or primarily with the locality, and now this is partly an international change now that people are now around the Internet will go on holiday flights across the world. But I think people do think more about MK more as a whole place with the centre rather than... Then those pluses and minuses there, because it's a bit of a minus, is that some of

the areas haven't got as much local focus as they did have, but on the other hand it means people are thinking more about this is the whole and giving it an identity.

DAVID:

I think the other change on the people front is it's a much more noticeably diverse ethnic community of Milton Keynes now that it was. Ethnically diverse. We did something as part of the IF festival this year there was an Australian company who did the film. And it was fascinating it was snippets of lots of different social groups came along at just did this spot and it was a very ethnically diverse to fill which I don't think it would have been in 1986, and that's great actually.

Q3. What, if any, qualities make Milton Keynes unique?

EVE:

Well, I think you still have, despite what you [DAVID] said about the housing in new areas. You still have a sense of the place that is built around the whole. That will over time get overridden inevitably, but it still is quite strong, and when you think about other places that you visit where they've grown in lines or lumps here and there, we actually do still have a sense of... Because the Western expansion area was still planned to happen at some point although it's not happening quite the way the Development Corporation envisaged, it's still part of the planning for the place. It does still have that sense of place. The road network reflects that, the parks reflect that. I mean I think the parks and the greenery are the other thing. When I was involved in providing the leadership for the latest iteration of the local plan that was one of things we talked about quite a lot 'how you make sure our planning system is still going to protect our parks as far as possible'. So, I think that keeping the parks and the fact that most people do live near some kind of park or green area they can walk to. And the diversity. If you go around the city and look, you need to go around the city on a double-decker bus really and look across, and you do see lakes and the different types of planting. I don't think anywhere else has

got the kind of parks like we've got. There as good as London really. It has the wide-open spaces where you can walk and not see anybody.

The one other thing I will say the way the smaller older villages have been incorporated is also quite successful and I think it's been done more thoughtfully with the local collar around them. But they're linked in with the new developments I think that's a distinctive point for me. I can't think it's been done like that elsewhere. Because Harlow I think has one or two old bits, and Stevenage has the old town but its has been done particularly well here.

DAVID:

The only kind of quality that makes it unique but is sort of paradoxical, but everybody is committed to the place being new and open and dynamic, but then there are so committed to keeping some of the stuff the development Corporation did 50 years ago absolutely as it was and that's a slightly paradoxical position to be. We haven't quite teased that one through, as I was thinking to myself most places don't get created in 50 years if you go to Canterbury or if you go to Liverpool it's three- or 400-years development, not in our case virtually overnight.

Q4. What would make you proud to live in a place? (Do you experience some of these elements in living in Milton Keynes? What could improve your pride in living in Milton Keynes?)

DAVID:

I think a thriving cultural scene. I think actually a football team, I'm not a keen or strong football fan but I do recognise that football provides a base of loyalty to a place which doesn't come through the workplace or church anymore or that type of thing that brought people together. A range of buildings both old and new I think it's great when modern or post-war buildings get listed as much as 17th-century ones. Those of you my three.

EVE:

I think that there are people in the place who want to make things happen. I read in the paper yesterday about the newly promoted ice hockey team have got themselves into the top league or something. The Milton Keynes Lightnings, and we happen to know someone who follows them, and you feel all proud because we've not really got much interest in ice hockey I've only ever seen it done once. But you feel all proud because your place is doing it and I think it's that, that builds on the football thing about different groups of people, different teams, companies or whoever. A place has people in it who want to do stuff and can then build a reputation of the place that's really where the reputation comes is from the people in it and the things they do. And obviously that then goes back to the culture and the arts and all of that. I think also if the place seems to care. Does the place have a collective sense of itself? And does it seem to care collectively, then that becomes a group collective, that then is pride in the human race. I think the other thing that is important is you like to live somewhere because you actually identify with it yourself. That's the thing about Liverpoolians they will take you to the Old Dock which is still the first-ever commercial wet dock was built in Liverpool. It is now buried under a road and a shopping centre but it has been preserved, and you can be taken into it. The bloke who took us into it told us they were proud of it because it was the first one in the world. And it enabled Liverpool to be a premier port, and therefore we had the Beatles and the best football team and the reserves which of course were Everton. And it's just that kind of people able to talk. I think sometimes people sometimes don't realise that if they talk the place down, they talk themselves down because it's that sense of personal identification with the place. I have to live somewhere for a bit to do that. That is one of the challenges for this part of the world the older bits because of course is less heard of now, but people used to talk about how they were here before Milton Keynes and saying I'm from North bucks. That's kind of going as the generations develop there, it was bad, but that's how they felt. So, I think it's about the stories, the people's stories, more probably about how they come to terms with it the change in a place and how they continue to identify with it.

INTERVIEWER: You feel any of these elements in Milton Keynes?

DAVID:

Hahaha! not in any way, shape or form. (Laughter)

Ha. Of course, yes. It is a bit of a combination of luck, of living in old part that is part of the new part if you see what mean. You referred to Newport Pagnell earlier, when we moved to Old Wolverton in 86 and then we moved here in 96 those were still places that had been part of the designated area, so they were old towns but had chosen to become part of the new city. I think both those places, with all the pros and cons of that because of course not everybody loved it. We've been fortunate in that we've lived in parts that have had those elements in part because some of those elements were already there for goodness sake Stony Stratford has enough pubs to have a cultural scene in and not need to go anywhere else really.

EVE: Some people don't.

DAVID: I know. That's the scary thing.

EVE: The world of Stony Stratford and that is everything.

{Laughter - ALL}

EVE:

Also, because we've been here a long time, I think the answer might be different if we had only been here about five years, because now, I find people come from a place where they felt... Is somebody I

know who is meeting in Deanshanger but they lived in Winchester, and I think it took her quite a long time to identify the with being in Deanshanger in the way that she could live there because the place was so different I think it takes time to experience those elements to develop sense of place.

DAVID:

Yeah and I think we have been very fortunate we moved here because of EVE's work and also fortuitously it was in between one set of parents living in Merseyside and another set of parents living in Kent, so that was okay as well for you are near enough to get to either in the event. I think me serving initially on the Milton Keynes Council for eight years and you being a secondary head in Wolverton and then having involvement in the parks trust we've been fortunate and lucky in being really part of the great and the good of the city. Scary as that is. So that probably gives us a slightly prejudice view about the place might not be shared by everybody.

INTERVIEWER: Does that give a sense of ownership?

DAVID: Yes Maybe

EVE:

I think the interesting question is, the place is made up of, or its built environment is, it's more about how the people in it use them and what they actually do, they have to involve yourself in it. And lots of people do I think it's often underrated actually. I went within my cabinet role at some point to some sports thing or other. And I was astonished at how many individual sportsmen there were right across the city's these are all groups of volunteers getting the kids involved in things, getting other people's kids involved in things, getting to know each other, turning up at the event, organising the event, but

Milton Keynes is very short of football coaches - period. They just can't get enough for the people wanting to do things, it's that spirit that then gives people the pride because they're putting stuff in. People then feel they don't belong in ways because there hasn't been that opportunity, or they have been able to take an opportunity to get involved and then the new place you have an advantage there is no systematic hierarchy that tells you you're not allowed. But equally you might not be able to find it because it is not established there is one thing you go to.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything you think would improve your pride in Milton Keynes?

EVE:

I would like to be able to somehow, and this is partly the politician in me of course, I'd like for us to find a way to actually have the courage to follow things through and finish them once we start them so they do actually happen, so we can get the University. There is no reason why it shouldn't happen now that there be lots of people still mmmmming and arrrrring. There is a need for a bit more collective confidence and a bit more... You said about it early... People wanting to go on the one hand for a place to be brilliant and move forward and also not wanting to change anything. And that actually won't work there is a price to pay for things, so to get a move on some buildings will have to go at some point, or some changes will have to be made. And people need to grow out of that 'anything that anybody tries to do that is the least bit different people really put hard to stop it'. It's really hard work. And sometimes when you, then, the other side is, grasping the nettle and getting on with it because the imperative of change is dealing with some really big problems that have arisen. In other places but been there for a long time have then had projects they been working on the ten years or more. In Hull, there's that big museum that actually opened it was ten years before the capital of culture actually happened, but they were working to have that before the big Maritime Museum and youth centre. And we aren't really able to say right it's going to take us a decade but were gonna do that, that is what the Development Corporation did, of course, we can do this, but it is going to take time and then we'll

work to it. But people don't really realise that their undermining our capacity to do that, so you feel a bit embarrassed sometimes. We'll just say yes, keep going say yes and keep going.

DAVID:

I think also at this point in 2018 its much harder to have those grand 10-15 years' time scale projects because, of course, the context is austerity and Brexit. We've got to mention both of those words in an interview, because that is scuppering any long-term thinking anywhere in the country. I absolutely agree with what EVE has just said. By example of commitment to a long-term is the Globe theatre and Tate modern which took effectively 15 years to get up and running you wouldn't of walked along that bit of the south bank in the late 1980s you must have wondered if it was safe or not. Now it's thriving, and those type of things takes time, and that's what people have to be prepared for. I would like to say two things in terms of what would improve the place one of them is a national problem we've got to do something about the homeless or the rough sleepers whatever you want to call them. You feel sorry for them, but it's not an attraction for the city centre something has to be done about them that actually send national problem probably not as bad as Oxford or Cambridge, but we have got them. I think I have course here I'm declaring an interest as a trustee of the Stables I think we need another music venue and preferably in the city centre. When we came here the bowl was the great attraction with Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen came, REM came. Now you don't have those types of venues anymore because the economic model probably isn't there now, but it irritates me that we have to go to Leeds to see the Manic Street Preachers, all good bands who ought to be in a big city like ours.

INTERVIEWER: Or the globe on tour, they don't come here.

DAVID:

They could use the Fred Roche gardens, the Handlebards came as part of IF [International Festival] they were absolutely brilliant we went to the handlebars one day then we went to the globe on tour the next day. Different but visually exciting Shakespeare's to watch.

EVE:

There are projects because a lot of the homeless do actually need help, just providing somebody to help a lot of them to have somewhere to live that they just can't live in it.

DAVID:

The people that you're talking about have multiple problems some of which are circumstantial, some of which is alcohol, they are ex-armed forces, some have PTSD, some of them are deliberately avoiding the world. So that a very complicated problem to resolve which is not just the role of the local authorities it's the health and the voluntary sector and everybody. What is noticeable I come out of the railway station I see somebody there camping, and I think what's this saying about this place. It's a national problem, but it has to be dealt with our local level.

EVE:

We have some projects, but more projects are probably needed, greater diversity of projects. And the housing shortage certainly doesn't help because some of the people if they hadn't been made homeless at the beginning of their time is somebody got them back in to somewhere fairly quickly at that point it properly wouldn't have all the problems they've got now.

Q5. In your opinion, what element of Milton Keynes is: The best. The most exciting. The hardest. Lacking. The most culturally significant. The richest in heritage?

INTERVIEWER: Best?

DAVID: The collection of public art.

EVE:

The environment. It's the environment of Milton Keynes with its combination of art and the scenery and the different sorts of architecture because you got these old places that are different and then you've got the earlier states which are all different still, a good proportion of it is interesting to look at. I've tried to use different routes and different grid roads going to the same places to look at different things.

INTERVIEWER: The most exciting element?

EVE:

There are many things I think, the new developments, or the IF festival of things that have not come to Milton Keynes before that come new things, it's a place that brings lots of new things in all the time.

DAVID:

I think it's the mixture of old and new that makes it an exciting place actually you don't sometimes you don't know what's going to come next, it's the novelty factor just a slight way putting it.

EVE:

But the heritage weekend, for example, always brings in those new bits and old bits, there's a mixture of the type of things are happening things to see or whatever always a tremendous variety.

DAVID:

That feeling that this is the first time it's been tried here you still have that experience of it being the frontier town which is how the first generation of people describe themselves as arriving at the frontier town we were in the second wave. But they're still a bit it's an element of oh I didn't know that was here, oo that's coming for the first time that's quite interesting isn't it. That was why the if festival was so interesting this year the feast of fire last year that we hadn't done, albeit stopped by a storm, nevertheless closing Midsummer Boulevard so that hundreds of people could walk down it with torches great.

INTERVIEWER: The hardest?

DAVID:

I think it's ensuring that different communities mix with each other the paradox of the grid-square is that even now people don't go beyond them, you hear these anecdotes that people who live in Springfield and actually go to the city centre. So I think the most difficult bit that development of community or wider community cohesion that it perhaps lacks at present. You don't want a place to have people who feel that they don't belong to it or don't belong to it in its entirety is not just a matter of money actually in a deprived areas versus areas with money. I think actually it's how do you reconcile the rural areas beyond Newport Pagnell and Olney with the fact that the rest of the city is quite urban. That those kinds of mis-matches that we need to reconcile that's the challenge.

EVE:

It's got a relatively strong economy compared with some of the parts of the UK, but there are more people not really getting a share of that than then you would have hoped for in a planned place. But I think it's still a challenge because lots of people who are well off can spend their money anywhere. And they may not spend in Milton Keynes because its so easy get to the places. they need to spend their money here so that the things of then available to everyone because if enough people spend the money here on things to go to.

I was just thinking the children growing up is so critical that they get lots of different experiences and some parents are able to do it relentlessly while other families really struggle, and I think it happens everywhere but we kind of feel we ought to make a better job of it.

INTERVIEWER: Lacking?

EVE:

A University, I think. I'm hoping that the reopened gallery with more exhibitions with a wider appeal will help, but we need more experience that we are a place with brains and a place that can do things. We are not just a retail park, and burger bars, which is kind of the picture people do get and you can see why which affects how the people who live here use the place and affects how to some extent who we attract to live here.

DAVID:

I think a better public transports system. We are lucky we do have buses, so I'm not complaining about Stony Stratford, there is a 6 runs every quarter of an hour and the 301 every hour and other ones as well. But getting across the city by bus is not easy and it ought to be. Not just thinking about all the

stuff to do with climate change. It actually ought to be the default that you go by public transport first and private car second, but that can be virtually impossible to do in the time you need to allow. So, I think a better public transport system that's a bit were missing.

INTERVIEWER: The most culturally significant?

DAVID:

The Stables, Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes Museum, Living Archive. I do actually think the fact that the Stables has also managed to run IF and some other very successful music events every year. So, I am going to save the Stables actually not just because I'm a trustee of it.

EVE:

I suppose I think a different kind of element rather than the institution, again a lot of this tends to be under the radar, the encouragement to participate, we've got lots in Stony people doing their music and their own performance thing. What I said about sport, I think is also reflected in music groups and also reflected in the dance groups particularly. I think the grassroots participation which the institutions are increasingly linking up with because I think that's the bit that that has been happening in the Stables and the Museum and many more. And it's got a lot more different groups and schools that come to it [the museum]. I think the that bit and of course the City Discovery Centre with its schools I just think that there's a lot of grassroots stuff goes on which is one of Milton Keynes strengths and its institutions using that. That can connect to the University having some more upmarket institutions to pull the whole thing along the gallery in its new phase.

INTERVIEWER: The richest in heritage?

DAVID:

I think we are, going back to the point EVE just made. I think we are unaware of the heritage that we have because some of the organisations are under the radar too much actually because we've got a lot of relatively new as they would be reviewed in historic terms they would be new, and they are very focused on what they do well. The Living Archive is very focused on what it does the City Discovery Centre is very focused on what it does. The Museum is very focused on what it does. And all three very effective but you can't turn round and say maybe there's a richness there in each of them but the richness would be even greater if they came together more as they are doing by the way. I suppose the richness, the cultural richness is the diversity and with the diversity comes the need greater need to publicise what you're doing and what is available because otherwise people won't value what's on their doorstep, they will go to Birmingham or something Canterbury or London and forget that some of that actually on their doorstep.

EVE:

I don't know ... what Living Archive has captured in terms of people's stories is a rich source which because of the place only being 50 years old and having grown so quickly. It's a kind of cultural richness that is not necessarily found everywhere though I think all the stories of the early days are still now coming through. I think when I was talking to Bill at the museum and talking about the difference between the Museum of Bletchley Park. Bletchley Park is a national story that happens to be in Milton Keynes and Milton Keynes Museum is about what is here in the bigger context. So it's the other way round. So I think Living Archive in the Museum and the City Discovery Centre are about what is here what's been here and what we've got but setting in the context of the world in which that happened that is really the other way round where Bletchley is bound to be a national story which adapts to be here.

DAVID:

All because a major brought it in 1938 out of his pocket money, it could have been anywhere. And Cooper and Newton is actually national if you're a fan of Cooper and Newton.

EVE:

but it's also local about Olney and the doing quite a lot of things about Olney as well.

Q6. Has Milton Keynes played a part in helping you gain any achievements which you might not have been successful in if you lived elsewhere? Has it aided any failures?

EVE:

Actually one of the things to say when I was looking for a deputy headship, DAVID was teaching at that stage but actually didn't want to continue with the teaching, I did look for somewhere that I could get a job here also. There might be opportunities for him, and that did turn out to be the case. That was actually because of the place was a combination of traditional Labour in Wolverton they could get elected onto the council and a new place, so there was room because if you go to places where everybody's, you know, you have to wait your turn to be chosen for something. And that then led to you doing other things being able to get jobs and that. So that was the fact that Milton Keynes was as it is in the very early days after while comes more difficult to say because you haven't seen how things are anywhere else so you can't really say. I think Milton Keynes is easier to get involved with things than in some other places where it's all established.

DAVID:

We haven't used Alan Francis's great phrase, when we first moved here we are at Ken Roth gig in Woughton I think, at the Pitts, and we met this guy called Alan Francis who lives in New Bradwell, and he said, this was in 1986, there are only 40 people in Milton Keynes. And that's still quite true.

EVE: 40 people who turn up to everything. And Alan Francis are still turning up to things.

DAVID: ...and he's not wrong, I'd be a bit more than 40, but it's still a relatively small number.

EVE:

It's an opportunity for us, but it's also a downside because it means can then we've failed to involve other people and engage other people.

DAVID:

The question is for the city, if that continues, in a hundred years' time who are the movers and shakers of the city and how do you ensure that they're there, and in is a place that is relatively near London. So people can commute or can live somewhere else not just in near London its near Birmingham, near Luton, Bedford, Oxford. That's a challenge actually the city of the future retaining its own identity but also being part of the national or international economy. That is a story that looks towards its railway station as well.

INTERVIEWER: Did it lead to any failures?

DAVID:

I would say because I worked in London for 20 years 25 years actually, probably there were times I could give more to the city than I did do because I was working somewhere else and running a small charity and still came home early in order to get to have meetings or events. But if you worked here maybe I would have done more, for that would be my only query for myself, but I'm not gonna beat myself up about it.

That's the thing that Stony Stratford nobody says 'do I need permission usually they say if you go to organise it will ask permission afterwards'. That's how Stony open gardens it was an advert in the newspaper. Nobody said shall we have one they just said let's go ahead and do it and afterwards we thought maybe we should have done some large-scale gardening work. Shall we do Stony Shakespeare Walkabout yeah that's a good idea doing it as permission for a road closure anything and just go ahead and do it.

Q7. If you were in charge of advertising Milton Keynes what view/image and/or tag line would you give it?

DAVID: Milton Keynes is not what you think it is.

EVE:

The art of Milton Keynes, and then it could be something specific that you have a positive, starting people from this positive it's art, and it's the art of.

Q8. If Milton Keynes was a person could you describe them and the type of 50th party they might have?

DAVID:

[Laugh] slightly unsure of themselves, a little bit grumpy. Not completely happy with their lot.

EVE:

I suppose in a way the person, the Milton Keynes person, would be quite fortunate but not realise it possibly fully. Because they would be a person, who will be participating in lots of things, taking advantage of the train service and the shopping centre. And probably have a nice place to live, a decent place to live, and they can't be taken for granted how much there is, you have to go to other places sometimes to realise how fortunate you are.

DAVID:

that's tricky. The old grumpy one is a male. And there are some of them. But there are some in the city having prided themselves on being inclusive. The question somebody asked me is, how did Milton Keynes people describe themselves? You know as in Liverpoolians or Southamptonians, are you and Milton Keynesian, are you Keyensian, are you a Miltonian? Milton Keynesite? I would love to say my person was a woman, but I think my grumpy middle-aged man is definitely male. Would like to be smart thinks of himself as smart. Might not be smart in real terms but would think of himself as smart.

EVE:

I was starting to think about... If you're gonna have a man I'm going to have a woman. And this is not typical of Milton Keynes yet, but there are quite a lot may be on the Western expansion area, and you meet them through cultural events there are increasingly women from different ethnic backgrounds who are very much about Milton Keynes have a really good understanding of it. They would be people who would appreciate what they've got. Some of the other people are more grumpy, and more tend to be the white population who been here a long time are more grumpy. And then you point out all we've got this all we've got that, or so-and-so is happening they say we didn't know that. But I

think that happens in most places, most of the people who run Luton down are from Luton. I'm from Luton, and I'm running it down.

DAVID:

it would probably be our pagoda in the back garden and a barbecue from B&Q. That's the where I see them. I always see the really big ones in there.

EVE:

all the people that they know that's been here a really long time would all have a good old moan about something or other that have been changed

DAVID:

I think my cynicism has been fuelled by conversations with people from Galley Hill since Galley Hill was referred to on that [film] as being the first site. There are people from Galley Hill who think they've been left off particularly were very critical that Galley Hill wasn't even on the Milton Keynes map until last year. Fullers Slade was there Stony Stratford was there. The estate was there, but it didn't actually have a label on it, and they used to get very annoyed about it. So, there are some people who have been here from the beginning who are a bit grumpy. They do whinge rather loudly.

EVE:

I went to a Galley Hill residents Association meeting, there was one chap, the woman chairing it was something off the telly, she was completely wild. But the chap who was saying what they were doing about things, it must be really frustrating for him because he was highly rational and positive about this is happening, this that and the other. So something needs to be done about it, so I thought there

something I can do about this, all thank you very much so now I did do it, and I did email him, and we did get couple things sorted out. we got a road sign put back up. Exciting things like that. But there are positive people in amongst those people, but they get stifled. The disadvantage is they get stuck, and you think they must give up eventually. They must think that I've done my two years I'm going to stop because when she saw something, you're onto the next thing to moan about and I don't think he ever got thanked. So, it's unfortunate when an area gets an overbalance population as their owners everywhere. They be somebody complaining about everything on this road when its overbalance that's when it becomes difficult then. Like things I talked about much earlier on in this conversation about the people who get stuck in. There are people who do stuff there is a woman on the Fullers Slade who is involved in an international thing with the Mini, the mini car. She has driven to Italy with a whole load of other people in minis, and she's really enthusiastic about that. We were having a really good conversation about that on the doorstep.

DAVID: The old-style mini.

EVE:

She's great she's in the middle of Fullers Slade. There are loads of people around, but they're not able to affect their area. Since the beginning or for a very long time they seem to be complaining. And partly they're complaining about the other people that have come more recently. The other thing is what the mixture of people is since then, and the number of houses that are owned by somebody who doesn't live there anymore and they are rented out. That means the people keep changing, or they're not the neighbours they can get to know. People keep talking about this everywhere, when we were in Marseille same conversation was going on. About how we used to know everyone in the street but now half of them have moved, and it's all changed and that sort of thing. But the interesting thing is, of course, you still got a place where you have still got the original people who've moved into the house from the day was built whereas in older places you don't have that anymore because they have

died. So you've still got that bit going on here at the moment, and Galley Hill was a nicely designed estate, but it needs some TLC and public policy since then has not helped it. So they are justified in feeling that it's a bit run down. And there are some of them who want to do positive things to help, and they've done some, but it's just a really hard slog.

Q9. Please watch this clip from the BFI archives, 8 mins

(<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-milton-keynes-a-village-city-1973-online>). It shows the early days of Milton Keynes. Does this evoke any memories or thoughts you are comfortable sharing?

EVE:

Ironically what we said earlier this people need to forget that it was developed by a development Corporation, I think people need to take it up for themselves. That's exactly what we were saying.

DAVID:

Yet the thing what was also there which was quite right is that it is not about the infrastructure its about the people. And I think the only question I would have now is about his comment that executives want to come and live here. I don't know whether because there have been a whole lot of social changes that have gone on in parallel with this, much more car ownership, people don't now move for their work they commute much more readily, because they can. I don't know whether we've retained that ability to encourage executives to live here as much as they would have liked to do in that early days sense of it. But that's not just Milton Keynes as problem that's everywhere.

EVE:

What you're talking about there, people get a job in a different location, so they just get a flat or something because they've also got a partner who is working elsewhere. They're working they've got kids in school can't just move. So now it is more people go and work there for two or three years. We've got quite a lot of that. Quite a lot of people working in Milton Keynes don't live here. That was not envisaged then. I don't think. Also, what you do become aware of, as Fred Lloyd Roach said we don't have a crystal ball, the world has changed a lot I think it's remarkable it's retained as much of a sense of having been planned as it has. Given how much change has happened. How many economic ups and downs have there been since they got going in the 70s it's remarkable that the foundations are really solid.

DAVID:

I think the other thing to bear in mind though when this came out Errol Mortimer leny us her husband's doctorate or his Masters. There have been quite a lot thinking in this area of Bucks of development before the Second World War even, so actually plonking Milton Keynes on North Buckinghamshire was not a problem the community was kind of ready for it where actually were because there was already a desire for it. In the 30s post the great crash post the great depression there were discussions about more housing in North Buckinghamshire.

Q 10. Do you think Milton Keynes has a good reputation a. Internally with its residents, b. Externally with the rest of the country? (Why do you think it has this reputation? How does that make you feel? What could improve it?)

EVE:

statistically its actually got a much higher approval rate from its residents than most places. Partly because more people have chosen to be here than in most places. So, although, I mean that's sort of

surveys that get done from time to time. Its reputation outside I find is very varied depending on what people know. People think if they don't really know anything about it that isn't a proper place because it's a new town so will all be concrete and not have any think or no soul. But if people are in a cultural world or a business world where they know something that is going on here, they're quite envious the fact that stronger economically than many places.

DAVID:

Shane Downer at the council organised that linkup between public new towns in Europe and we went to a couple of seminars. Clearly, the place has a really strong intellectual reputation in other countries for being an example to look to for how you plan a community. The idealism of the Development Corporation in terms of we want to create a place where people can have a house and have a job and a good environment in which to grow up it where their children can grow up; I think is incredibly laudable. It could only come through from the 1960s actually because it's the legacy of the optimism of post-war Britain and then, of course, it here the crash of the oil price war in 73 so it was probably ten years too late to be built. It probably would have been better in the early part of the 60s, but that optimism is fantastic and that optimism I think is what many international figures look to. Having said that of course there are other people who you talk to who say where do you come from? Oh that is all cars isn't it, it's all grid rows. There's nobody about, you come out of the railway station, road ahead of you where ever are the people? Or is it just concrete cows, and I think well you have to turn that one on its head and say well if that's all you know then come here and find out a bit better. Within the place? Yeah, the only thing that worries me is people don't always know about the really good things on their doorstep like the city discovery centre like living archive like the museum, they go elsewhere for it.

DAVID:

I'm tempted to say a better local newspaper that seeing as we actually haven't had a newspaper for 2 1/2 years, I don't know whether that's true or not and most people default to social media these days, but I don't do that either. There are probably better ways of now of digitally finding out; destination MK is a pretty good website. But then that's for people who are outside Milton Keynes who want to come inside the place, I guess.

EVE:

one of the things I think the arts and heritage world wants to do is to have some better Internet presence of what there is going on and I think we don't have the screens with newsfeeds on it which you could have in the shopping centre. It's a drip-feed that's how people will get to know about events because it's a drip-feed. You can't take a person who doesn't know anything and put them in front of something, and they now know it doesn't work like that. It's the drip-feed of what developments are happening what organisations are doing what facilities there are, which people won't necessarily know about. If we do get the more up-to-date traffic lights arrangement, the ones actually spot the traffic flow rather than as set to behave in the same way that will make quite a significant difference for rush-hour, the people won't actually know it's happened until it's happened. Or won't ever notice unless somebody tells them that this is something different this been invented.

DAVID:

perhaps in addition to a university we need actually BBC or ITV to actually cover this base properly, we get BBC News Oxford on our television set, so we constantly hear about things in Oxford.

EVE:

Milton Keynes features sometimes though.

DAVID: Yeah one out of a month

EVE: ...and sometimes we're on Anglia. Or look East or BBC look East.

DAVID:

given our presence at the juncture of three different economic regions and halfway point between Oxford and Cambridge, we actually ought to have something. When Channel 4 were looking for a new premise, I thought they should have moved here.

EVE:

I think the juncture is part of its [Milton Keynes] problem as well, it belongs to itself rather than merely belonging to East Anglia or belonging to another region we are in the south-east region. We have to go to Guildford the HQ. I think it actually needs to grow a bit more I think, and it needs to up its game in terms of saying we are a region ourselves, and promoting itself, to these other places. I mean places like Oxford can get a stray dog in the news really. Because they are Oxford.

Q 11. Do you know any stories, jokes, or urban myths about Milton Keynes? Can you share them?

DAVID:

I think the urban myth is that Midsummer Boulevard is on the lay line. I mean John Higgs writes about that in Watling Street. I don't believe the development Corporation were all ex-hippies trying to

recreate a line to Glastonbury or Stonehenge. I think that is a wonderful urban myth, but I'm delighted it's an urban myth that we have.

EVE:

I'm trying to think of any others. I'm sure there are stories out there, but my mind is gone blank. I can't remember anything else.

DAVID: I don't know any jokes about the place.

EVE: No, only the ones everybody says. The one about the yoghurt.

DAVID:

That is the paradox of the Development Corporation's success, on the one hand, there is all this heritage, but on the other hand 1967 was the year zero.

INTERVIEWER:

Thanks

DAVID & EVE

Date: 24/9/2018

Location: In interviewees home, at the dinner table. Stony Stratford

Observation: David sat at the dinner table opposite to the interviewer, whilst Eve sat further back in an armchair. David's sense of humour was evident throughout the interview, usually with a wide smile especially when he was poking fun. Eve was demurer and fiercely but with good humour made her points. Both have strong political backgrounds, and through that and their interest in the arts do a lot in their local community. As the questions were asked each waited politely awaiting their turn to answer, rarely interrupting each other. They worked as a team tackling the questions together either developing points the other made or adding a further information to emphasis the point. The atmosphere of the interview was relaxed by being in the interviewee's home, but still somewhat formal – potentially political experience gave interviewees great interview response skills but is what also gave it a formal/work like atmosphere.

This transcription was taken verbatim, with the removal of repeated words. No further alternations were made in member checks.