



# MK MANDALAS

## FOR THE PLATINUM JUBILEE PAGEANT

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### ACTIVITY RESOURCE PACK

This pack is designed to inspire you to get creative. It will help you generate design ideas for silk flags that celebrate Milton Keynes and will feature in The Platinum Jubilee Pageant which will take place in London, in front of Her Majesty The Queen.

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# ABOUT THE STABLES

The Stables presents world class music and events at its venue in Wavendon, Milton Keynes. In 2010, we founded IF: Milton Keynes International Festival which takes place every two years, creating unique and memorable experiences across central Milton Keynes in public parks, shopping centres, car parks and other community settings.

In 2021, we worked with communities across Milton Keynes to create the MK Mandalas flags. This flag-making project was developed by Kinetika and the 30 MK Mandalas flags were presented during the Festival around The Milton Keynes Rose.

We have now been invited to create an additional 20 flags which will form part of the Platinum Jubilee Pageant on Sunday 5 June in front of Her Majesty The Queen.

We would like to invite you to help us create them, taking inspiration from the original 30 MK Mandalas flags, The Milton Keynes Rose and themes which form part of the Milton Keynes bid for City Status.

The City Status award is a national civic honour launched to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. Milton Keynes Council brought together over 50 people and organisations to develop its bid. The decision will be announced over the Platinum Jubilee weekend.

Read more about the MK Mandalas and the MK Rose on page 6 and visit our website: <https://ifmiltonkeynes.org/gallery-of-mk-mandalas>

The Stables: <https://stables.org/>



# CELEBRATE MILTON KEYNES



Celebrate Milton Keynes is a programme of creative activities which we have developed to celebrate Milton Keynes and The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Taking place in Middleton Hall, centre:mk, it will feature:

## DESIGNERS & MAKERS

Free flag making workshops

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

Free dance and movement 'taster' workshops

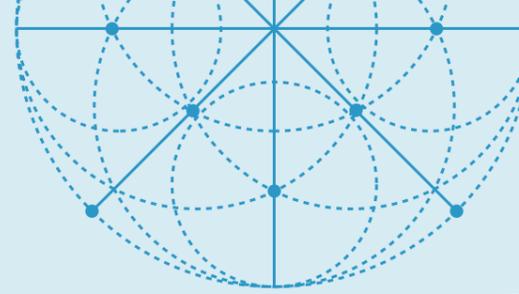
## WAVING THE FLAG FOR MK

A display of MK Mandalas flags and more information about the City Status bid

Individuals can drop in to the sessions, and groups of 8 or more can pre-book sessions with our artists. There is plenty of space in Middleton Hall to ensure we can give everyone the time and space required to develop their designs - this Pack can help you to prepare your ideas.

Each flag is 120cm x 120cm. Within the square there is a circle, within this will be your mandala design.

Once you have completed your design, it will be sent to the Kinetika Design Studio where the team of artists will use the process of batik and silk painting to transform them into beautiful silk artworks.



We are keen to see designs which are inspired by the following themes:

## DIVERSITY

Milton Keynes is home to great diversity, which in turn has created a strong and sustainable community. Some 140 languages are spoken in Milton Keynes' schools and 30 religions are observed. A welcome is extended to an ever-increasing number of people of different faiths and places from across the globe, enriching the spiritual and cultural life of the area, with successive communities quickly able to offer their own distinctive contributions.

## VOLUNTEERING

The citizens of Milton Keynes have a notable reputation for their willingness to volunteer, their charitable giving and their care for others. An estimated 84,500 people are volunteers - a number higher per head than in any UK city.



## THANKING KEY WORKERS

There are many people who do jobs that are essential to the day-to-day functioning of our society, and nurture our communities, such as NHS and Care Workers, Emergency Services, Teachers and Support Staff, Cleaners and Refuse Collectors, Delivery Drivers and Post Office Staff, Shop Workers and Volunteers.



## YOUNG PEOPLE

Milton Keynes has a younger age profile than the UK average (27% of residents are 19 or under) and its young citizens have an important voice in shaping the future of their home.



## GREEN AND BLUE SPACES

Milton Keynes is classed as a 'New Town' in 1967 and is often referred to as a unique 'City in a Forest' with 40% green space and more biodiversity now than was found in the agricultural land it replaced. Part of Milton Keynes' unique character comes from the integration of green spaces and parklands with its blue counterpart of rivers, waterways, lakes and canal.

# MK MANDALAS and the MILTON KEYNES ROSE

The MK Mandalas took their inspiration from The Milton Keynes Rose, the design of which itself was inspired by the concept of mandalas.

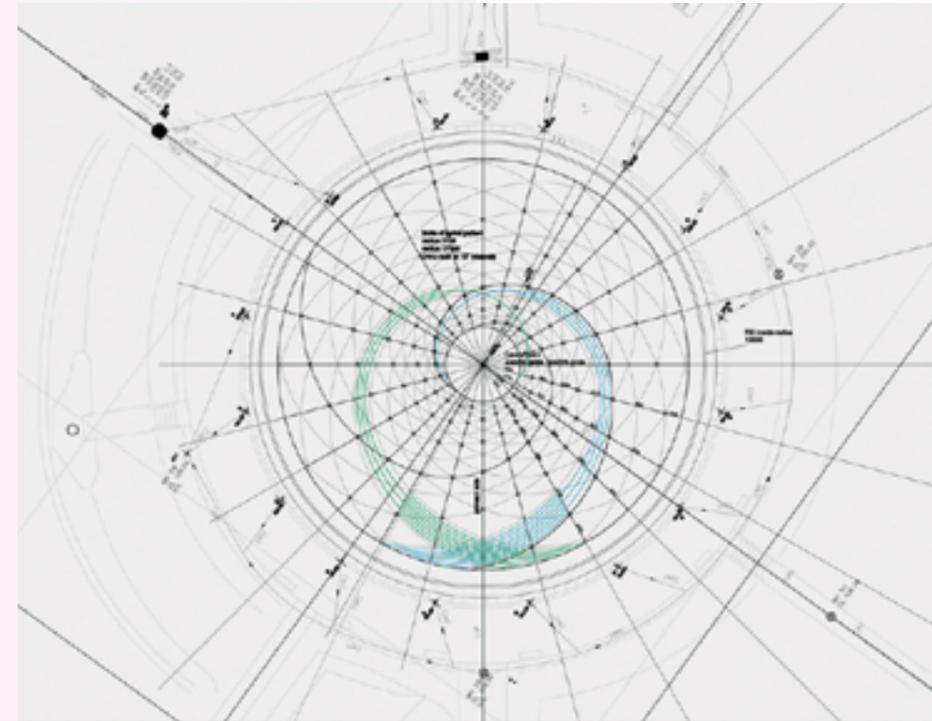
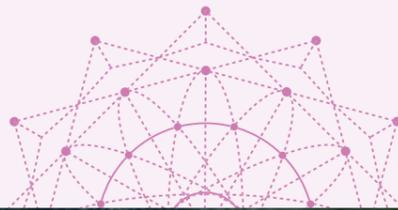
The Milton Keynes Rose was designed by Gordon Young. Located in Campbell Park, it is a public space for Milton Keynes where people can gather to commemorate, celebrate or remember a special person or event throughout the year. The commission given to Gordon Young was to create a public space - a 21st century cenotaph - where people could go, irrelevant of faith, creed or colour.

The Rose is a circular shape and design and is based upon the mathematical beauty of a flower

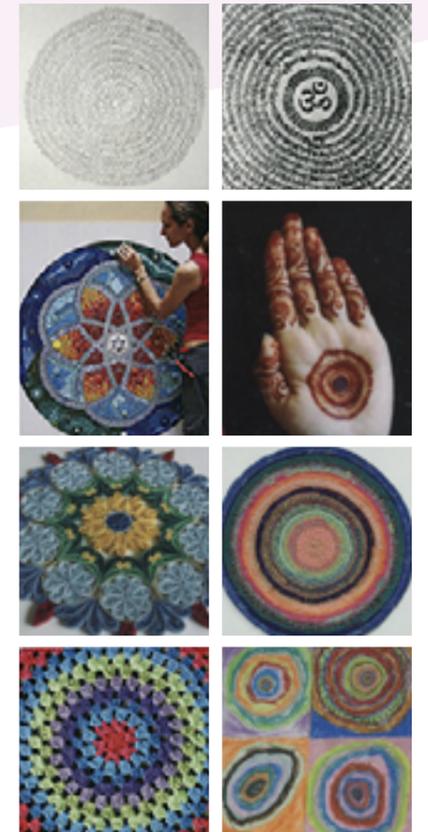
and the maths that inspired round Cathedral 'rose' windows. At its core is the 'Spira Mirabilis' - a geometrical spiral called 'the divine proportion'. It is found in nature and is the geometry behind much of the world's sacred architecture.

The Milton Keynes Rose features a 'calendar' of important days, chosen by the Cenotaph Trust and the people of Milton Keynes through a variety of community workshops. These are represented by 105 pillars arranged in the geometric design of a flower.

The Milton Keynes Rose  
[miltonkeynesrose.org.uk](http://miltonkeynesrose.org.uk)



Below: the technical drawing for Gordon Young's design for The Milton Keynes Rose (Drawing: Sawyerworks Ltd [www.sawyerworks.co.uk](http://www.sawyerworks.co.uk)); right: some research images from his design presentation (courtesy Debbie Brock)



# WHAT IS A MANDALA?

In their most basic form, mandalas are circles contained within a square and arranged into sections organised around a single, central point.

Mandalas are a spiritual and ritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism, representing the Universe. The circular designs symbolise the idea that life is never ending and everything is connected. The mandala also represents spiritual journey within the individual viewer.

The mandala's purpose is to help transform ordinary minds into enlightened ones and to assist with healing.

Mandalas can become a springboard for reflection, moving us from individual to community; from personal to environmental.

Explore the meaning of a mandala: What does it mean for you? What does it mean for your group? How will you reflect this meaning in your mandala?

The process of making is also reflective and thought-provoking. Your reflections and creations will contribute to the design of the new MK Mandala flags.



## BENEFITS OF CREATING MANDALAS

Relaxes the body and mind



Cultivates the feeling of happiness, inner peace and general well-being



Eases stress, anxiety, worry, overwhelming fear and depression



Activates creativity and improves focus



Enhances self-esteem and self-acceptance



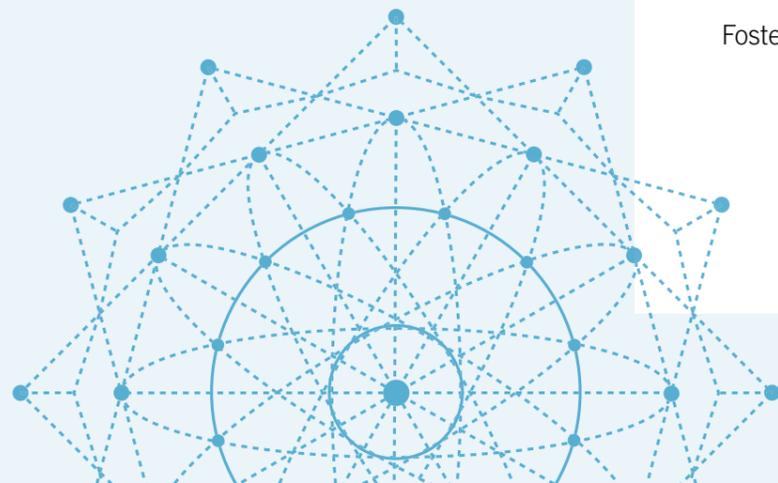
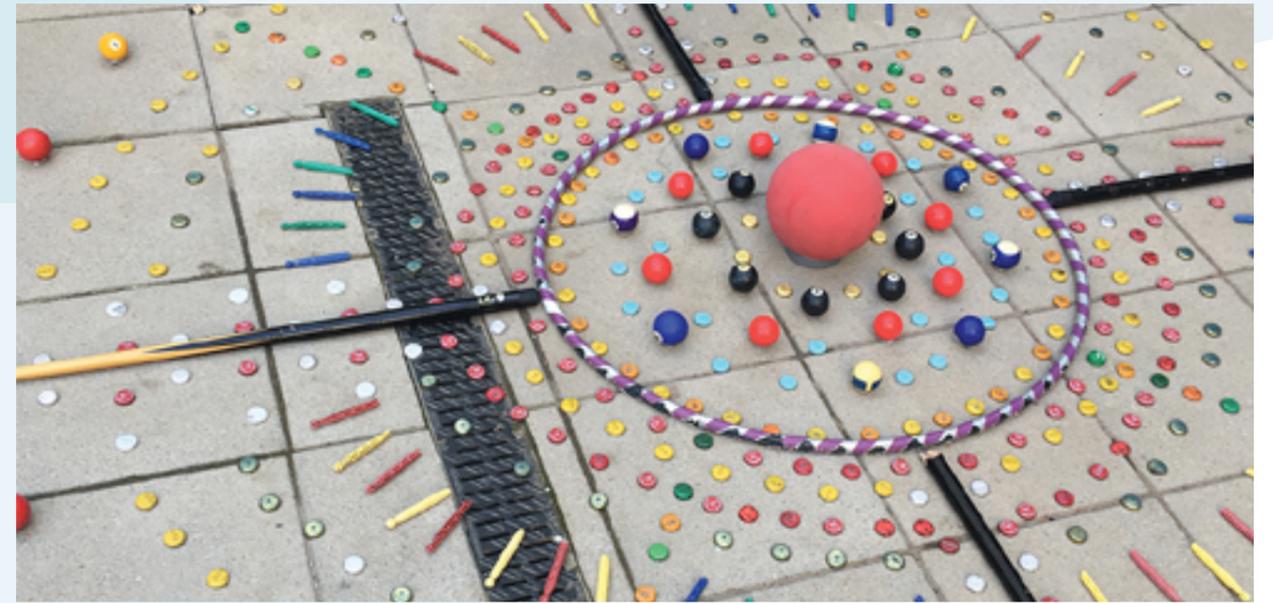
Fosters a sense of connectedness with oneself and others



Improves sleep



It's fun!



# STEP-BY-STEP DESIGN PROCESS

1 Do some thinking and planning in advance

2 Pick a theme that inspires you

3 Think about what can represent your story/theme

and what you would like to see on a flag - for example it might be a building, a landscape, a logo, person, animal, a favourite walk, family member, words or a Milton Keynes landmark

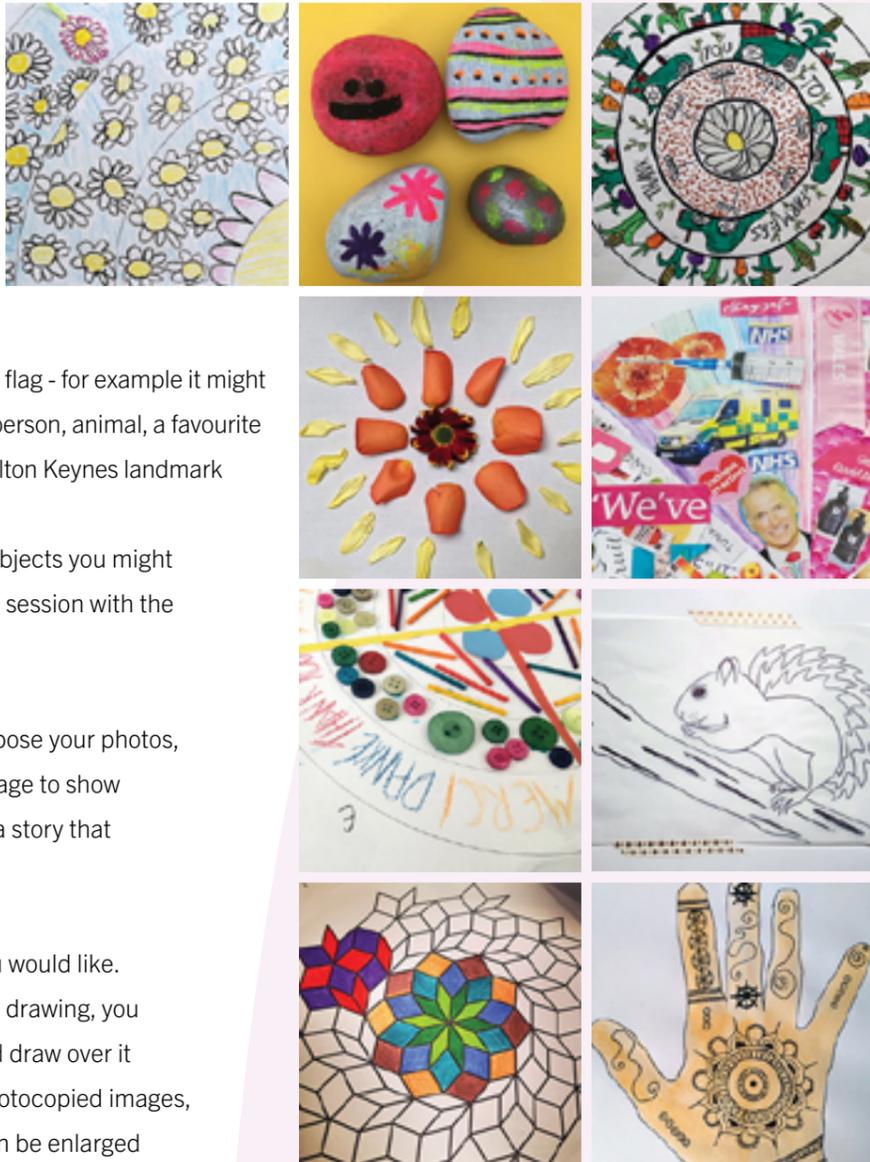
4 Look for images, photos or objects you might want to bring with you to the session with the artists in Middleton Hall

5 Make a quick sketch or compose your photos, tracings, drawings into a collage to show how the images fit together to tell a story that can feature on the flag

6 Draw as many images as you would like. You don't need to be good at drawing, you can trace your favourite image and draw over it with a black pen, You can bring photocopied images, photographs or pictures, which can be enlarged and drawn again for our final designs

7 Describe your images and tell us how they represent the theme - jot down some words that convey your feelings

8 Our artists will help guide you through the process and will photograph ideas to take forward to the next stage in the studio



## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Your designs will go with the artists to the Kinetika Design Studio in Thurrock in Essex, where they will be scaled up and transferred onto silk using hot wax (this is called 'batik'). The artists will then paint in the colours to suit the design and work up the layering of colours to bring out the detail (called 'double waxing').

# ABOUT THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

ALI PRETTY and JEANEFER JEAN-CHARLES

Ali Pretty from Kinetika and Jeanefer Jean-Charles are Co-Artistic Directors of The Thank You Dance for the Platinum Jubilee Pageant

## KINETIKA

Kinetika is an internationally renowned company, specialising in creating large-scale hand-painted silks. For over 20 years the company has been combining world-class design with community projects to produce spectacular outdoor commissions that engage diverse audiences wherever they work.

Founded by artistic director Ali Pretty in 1997 and inspired by her training in carnival arts in Trinidad and India, Kinetika now has an unrivalled reputation for working with local communities on projects that change the way people feel about where they live.

Lisa Meehan has been an artist with Kinetika for the past five years, leading and participating in multiple projects including MK Mandalas 2021 and Silk River. Lisa runs drawing, painting and printmaking workshops.

Kinetika has a global reach - from local community walks in Essex to high streets and city squares across the UK, out to the Great Wall of China, Ethiopia and West Bengal. [kinetika.co.uk](http://kinetika.co.uk)



## JEANEFER JEAN-CHARLES

Jeanefer is a creative director and producer of large-scale performances, opening ceremonies, stadium events, outdoor spectacles, carnivals and parades. She has over 20 years' experience and is globally respected. Her work has appeared in over 21 countries.

Her company, Jeanefer Jean-Charles & Associates is an industry leader and her unique creative approach to large-scale multiple artform events is designed to bring to life the talents, strengths and shared stories of individuals, organisations and cultures, in inspiring and unforgettable ways.

As a leading authority in mass movement and public engagement, Jeanefer continues her life mission of creatively harnessing dance and movement for the empowerment of individuals. She is passionate about ensuring overlooked communities are made visible. [www.jeanefer.com](http://www.jeanefer.com)



# ABOUT THE MILTON KEYNES ARTISTS

## CIARA CALLAGHAN

An artist, researcher and facilitator based in Milton Keynes, Ciara's work is a combination of research and handcraft. She is driven by the active conservation and sharing of heritage skills, typically practiced by females, which are at risk of dying out.

## JANE SHARP

Working in textiles and wood, Jane has been practising as an artist for 30 years. She takes a painterly approach to her textile batiks, which are often very detailed and intricate.

## CATHY EBBELS

Cathy specialises in mosaics and community projects, and has been working for almost 20 years as an artist and teacher. She loves colour and pattern and creating work for outdoor spaces.

## EMI FUJISAWA

Specialising in hand weaving with natural materials and natural dyeing, Emi is a Japanese textile and ceramic artist/designer. She brings the Japanese philosophy to her work, especially 'Wabi-Sabi' - a world view centred on the acceptance of transience and finding beauty in imperfection.

## RACHEL WRIGHT

### Project Manager

The Celebrate Milton Keynes and MK Mandalas projects are managed by Rachel, working with The Stables. She is also a practicing artist, and is an animator and film-maker. She is based in Milton Keynes.



# ABOUT MURSHIDABAD SILK

Kinetika is an importer of this heritage-quality hand-woven silk from West Bengal. Sales support Kinetika's charitable work and help the weavers to continue their skilled craft. Murshidabad silk is now their preferred choice when making batik flags due to its ability to hold bright dye colours and the soft but durable texture.

Kinetika is internationally renowned for creating stunning large-scale hand-painted silks, using the process of batik to make beautiful flags, costumes and products for the last 25 years. While developing the Silk River project in India, Kinetika was introduced to a very fine, high

quality 100% hand-woven silk from Murshidabad, a district in West Bengal.

Kinetika were very keen to work with this exquisite silk and through the Crafts Council of West Bengal (CCWB) were able to connect directly with the local weavers who still had the original looms and the required level of skill.



Realising that the weaving skill required for this heritage fabric is in danger of being lost, Kinetika is now working closely with Ajoy, a local silk merchant and CCWB to make it available in the UK to silk painters and lovers who will appreciate how unique it is. The silk is woven in Dangapara, a small village in Murshidabad by 14 families of weavers who are the last generation who have this skill. Kinetika hope that by creating a new demand for this silk, they will encourage this community to continue this ancient tradition.

<https://kinetika.co.uk/about-murshidabad-silk>

# THE PLATINUM JUBILEE PAGEANT

The Platinum Jubilee Pageant, part of an extended Bank Holiday Weekend, will take place on Sunday 5 June 2022 to provide an opportunity for communities and people to celebrate the historic milestone of Her Majesty The Queen being the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee with 70 years of service.

Kinetika and Jeanefer Jean-Charles have been invited to present The Thank You Dance and have invited us to help co-ordinate volunteers to take part as performers. The Thank You Dance is a key part of the Pageant, which will wind through the streets of Westminster in London and along The Mall past Buckingham Palace. It will tell the story of Her Majesty's reign and the changes to society during this unprecedented period. We reflect the country's gratitude to The Queen for 70 years of public service and as well as a Thank You to all those who selflessly contribute to society, looking after our communities and laying the foundation for a better life for generations to come.

We take inspiration from Her Majesty to thank:

- **Key Workers and the essential role they have played throughout the pandemic**



- **Volunteers who have stepped up with kindness to look after their neighbours**
- **Young people who are actively taking responsibility for the future of our planet**

Together we will present a spectacular and visually stunning, animated movement section of performers adorned in silk and drawn from across generations from London, Milton Keynes and Thurrock in Essex.

2,000 representatives from across the UK and the Commonwealth will join the Pageant, with 95 people coming from Milton Keynes.



# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

**We are looking for flag bearers over the age of 18 to represent Milton Keynes.**

Flag bearers will need to commit to attending:

- 4 x 1.5 hour in person rehearsals - there will be 8 sessions to choose from
- 2 x 1 hour online Zoom sessions - there will be 5 to choose from
- 1 mass rehearsal day with the cast in London
- The Pageant in central London and on The Mall on Sunday 5 June
- A performance at the T100 Festival on Saturday 25 June in Thurrock

You will be required to walk for about 2.5 hours along the Pageant route in central London which will move along The Mall and past Buckingham Palace on Sunday 5 June.

Return transport will be arranged for participants from Milton Keynes to London.

There will be a video to help you practice outside of rehearsal times.

Final dates and rehearsal times will be provided once you have confirmed your interest.

Participants will also need to sign and return confidentiality agreements and consent forms prior to the first session and submit details to comply with security checks for the procession accreditation.

If you have access needs or require support with forms or have questions about the demands of the procession, please let us know and we will do our best to provide support.

**If you are interested in being a Flag Bearer, please register your interest during your session in Middleton Hall.**

# Celebrate Milton Keynes

produced by



with



KINETIKA  
DESIGN THAT MOVES



supported by



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



With thanks to MÓTUS Dance, The Milton Keynes Rose and Gordon Young

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