

Far Holme adoption Status November 2025

Far Holme got very difficult years ago.

- The original plans and Section 106 contributions were agreed, including plans for a play area, and the Parks Trust were going to manage the open space, with a maintenance contribution from the S106 agreement.
- The developer built a play area, in accordance with plans the Council had approved, but it was totally unsuitable for the space and attracted a LOT of anti-social behaviour.
- In 2013 the residents succeeded in getting a change of plans agreed to remove the play area and re-landscape the area, including a small pond.

The problem has been the money. And there are some problems with the plans approved. And some with items not maintained or not planted to the plans.

The Money

The S106 was agreed as normal when the plans were approved. The total amount cannot be increased. But when the decision was made to remove the play area, that meant the S106 had to pay for the play area, the removal of it, the pond, tank and drainage channels... and there's nothing left.

The pond, tank and drainage channels are statutory requirements to avoid flooding, so they take priority, and the maintenance money was used to install them, so there's nothing left for landscaping remedials or maintenance fees. The Parks Trust declined to adopt the pond area, because they were not happy with the design, and because there was no maintenance money.

There are three options in such cases

- adopt it as it stands, and charge whatever remedials really have to be done to Council tax
- the developer keep it and charge residents a maintenance fee for ever more. There is no covenant or contractual agreement allowing the developer to charge the residents maintenance.
- leave it with no clear arrangement. In too many cases in MK the developer has simply walked off and left it leaving the residents with a big problem and the Council no power or responsibility for sorting it.

The Council decided to adopt it as it stood apart from the completion of the work on the pond area.

Current Responsibility

Far Holme public area is in three parcels at present:

- the pond, tank and drainage channels and landscaping above and between them, where work is still, slowly, progressing. The council will eventually adopt them and own the land.
- the landscaping apart from those areas - where the council has taken over the responsibility, and will eventually own the land.
- the "public highway" - the Council has already adopted it.

and the homes have already gone to the home owners.

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blue indicates roads adopted by MK City Council

other colours indicate grass, trees and shrubs adopted by MK City Council

the white area in the middle, together with the pond and the drainage and supply channels are still with Crest Nicholson.

Pond etc.

The pond has been assessed by both MK City Council and the Parks Trust and is too small and the wrong shape and depth to form the sort of wildlife pond residents hoped for. The reeds would keep growing back and the planned plants would not flourish. There's no money to change it, so it will stay as it is. In its current form it's watertight. There is some landscaping work to be done still around the drainage channels and then the Council will adopt it and the developer will pass over the land.

There have been queries about the drainage path and type of valve. It's been built to plan, so the Council has no choice but to adopt it. If there are problems and it causes flooding the Council will have to deal with it.

They have access to maintain the valve for the tank and it's a passive valve so needs little maintenance.

Landscaping

Residents raised a number of issues with the landscaping as the council has taken it over.

1. **The hedge is very close to the hairpin bend** at the north end making sightlines dangerous and blocking the inspection port for the drainage channel.
We have negotiated that this will be removed shortly.

2. **The oak trees.** They are to the original plans and again there is no money for the trees to be removed and replaced with anything more suitable. The Council has been advised that the trees will only cause a problem if they grow close to their full maximum size, and that a. many trees of this type never grow that big, and b. it will take 300 years.

If they do grow to a point that either digs up the highway or damages residents property, then the Council will take action and is insured, but it's a long, long way off. We're trying to get advice on the growth pattern of the roots and likely speed of growth of the canopy.

3. The hedge opposite nos 5-9 Far Holme. This is higher than the rest of the hedge preventing views across the pond. The Council say it's a different species, that will not flourish at a lower height, and they see no reason to replace it. Views are not protected.

4. The path and crossing point. The Council have confirmed that there is no technical reason why a path cannot be created along the route proposed. But the council couldn't put this in, or the railing or hedge, even if they wanted to until they own the land.

There would then be an assessment by highways about whether the route to school was safe. There is a safe route via the pavement - but the children use a direct route from the southern cut through from Tyhurst. That involves a dangerous crossing where sightlines are very poor.

Highways assessments and ratings are based on two factors: accident reports, and public complaints. There've been no reported accidents.

The other pressure is lots of complaints from residents and from the school about near misses. Complaints from parents are probably unlikely because the children won't admit that they took the forbidden route! So if you see children crossing and a near miss happening, **please report it to the council - every time - and to us, with the report number you are given, so we can keep an overall log.** If there are enough over a period of time, we will try and get highways to act. But it won't be soon. In the meantime, the council cannot at present, and sees no reason to in future, either make the path or put in a hedge or railing.

There is another way forward, once the council own the land. The Parish Council could propose a Parish Partnership project to create the path and put the crossing point and railing or hedge in. It would be expensive. **We suggest residents keep the log of near misses, and then we'll see if the council or the Parish Council are willing.**

5. The shrubs around the two cut-throughs from Tyhurst. These are badly maintained and were blocking the paths and pushing over the adjacent residents fences. They will be coppiced, ie reduced to 30cm or so above the ground, every 5 years or when they block the path. That should keep them off the fences too. **We've persuaded MK City Council to coppice them this winter.**

Finally..

We'll let you know when the adoption and land transfer is completed. Please report any accidents or near misses at the crossing in the meantime, and copy us in. We'll let you have any more detail about the expected growth of the trees if we can get any.