



Introducing our LGBTQ+ Heritage Project Info Pack

This info pack was created for our December history club and gives an overview of some of our key findings from our research so far.



Our MK LGBTQ+ Heritage Project began in June 2024 and has already unearthed an incredible amount of information from online and in person archives, plus interviews and discussions at our monthly history clubs/heritage walks.

The main outputs of this project will be an exhibition running in September 2025, an e-book documenting our findings, 2 films and a map of historic LGBTQ+ places and spaces across the city.

Due to the wealth of information we found, we applied for extra funding to run an education project, which will result in an activities and resources pack for schools in MK, based on our findings.

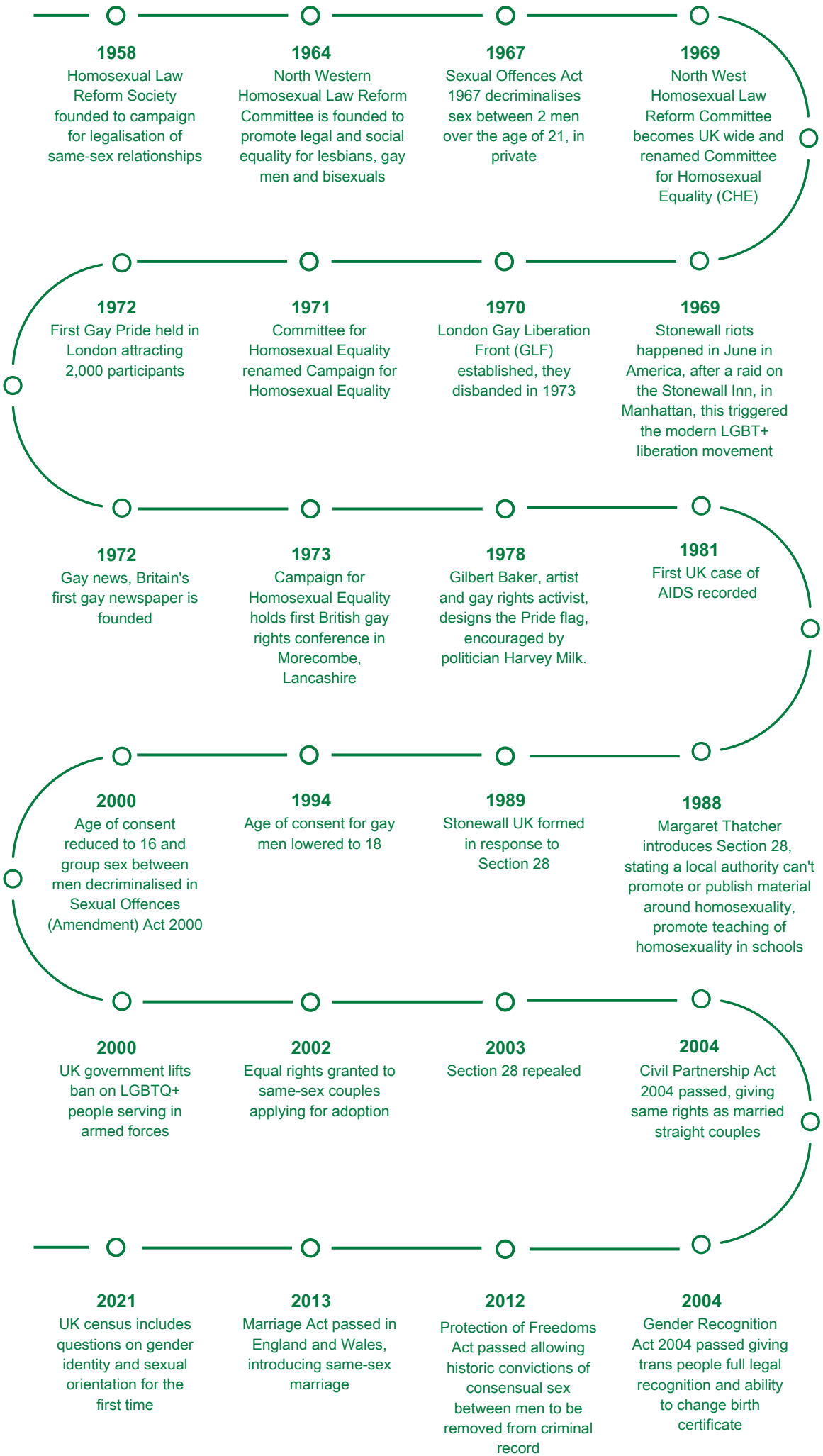


Our main heritage project is funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund.

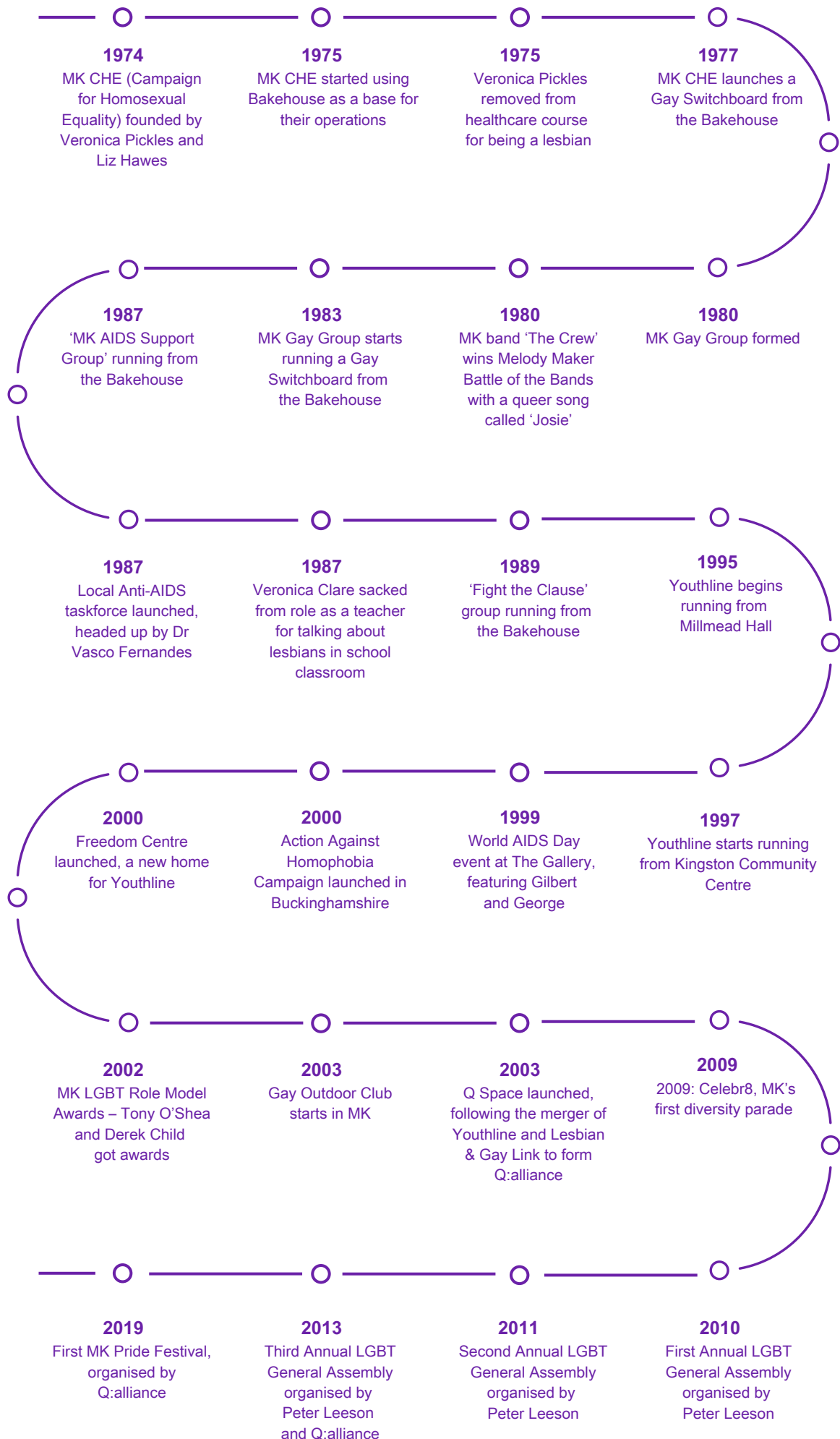


Our education project is funded by Milton Keynes Community Foundation.

NATIONAL LGBTQ+ HISTORY TIMELINE



LOCAL LGBTQ+ HISTORY TIMELINE



LGBTQ+ Community Groups

MK CHE (Campaign for Homosexual Equality)

MK CHE (Campaign for Homosexual Equality) was founded in September 1974 by Veronica Pickles and Liz Hawes. The organisation was entirely voluntary and started with a telephone counselling and advice service and weekly meet ups at The Cannon, a pub in Newport Pagnall. By 1975 MK CHE had started using The Bakehouse as the base for their operations and by 1977 they had started running a Switchboard helpline from here. MK CHE focussed on friendship and support and ran a befriending service, known as CHE Friend. The group was mixed gender. Membership dropped throughout the 70s and the group had disbanded by 1980.

MK Gay Group

MK Gay Group was formed in 1980, as a separate group with no relation to MK CHE. It is believed John Moore (a gay man working at the Open University) was among the founding members. Many of the group's members worked at the OU and as a result MK Gay Group ran many discos and film nights from here. In February 1983 MK Gay Group started running a Switchboard from the Bakehouse. The Switchboard continued at the Bakehouse throughout the 80s and even ran a dedicated AIDS support line for 2 weeks in January 1987. Members of MK Gay Group also formed subgroups including: an MK Lesbian Group in 1984, an AIDS Support Group in 1987, and a Fight the Clause Group in 1989. In the late 80s the Switchboard moved to Netherfield Mind Premises, where it ran until the mid 90s.

Lesbian and Gay Link

MK Gay and Lesbian Switchboard moved to the Church of Christ on the Cornerstone in the mid 90s. It eventually changed its name to Lesbian and Gay Link in the late 90s, as they had started to offer in person support and sexual health outreach, so the name of 'Switchboard' no longer fitted. By the early 2000s Lesbian and Gay Link had moved to the David Baxter Centre, in CMK, and its work involved the helpline, a drop-in service and a variety of sexual health outreach across Buckinghamshire.

Youthline

Youthline was an organisation set up and run by young people (aged 16-25) with the aim of providing services for themselves and other young people who identified as LGBT. Youthline started in Millmead Hall, in Wolverton, in 1995 with a weekly working group, a telephone helpline and drop in. After receiving a grant of £67,000 in 1996, Youthline moved to Kingston Community Centre in 1997. In 2000 they opened their own centre, the Freedom Centre, in Neath Hill. The Freedom Centre acted as an information centre for the young LGBT community, with free access to gay magazines, leaflets, sexual health advice and the option to speak to a counsellor or youth worker. They also ran events most nights of the week.

Q:alliance

Q:alliance is the current LGBTQ+ charity in MK and was formed by a merger of Youthline and Lesbian and Gay Link in 2003. Q:space, an LGBTQ+ centre in Witan Court, was launched in November 2003 as part of Project Alliance. The centre had events on every night of the week and provided social spaces, support and sexual health advice to the local LGBTQ+ community. In May 2006 the organisation's name was changed to Q:alliance with the Charity Commission. Q:alliance has grown massively in recent years and now runs 10-15 events and spaces a month for adults, alongside a weekly Q:youth group, Q:hub drop-in and Q Sanctuary for LGBTQ+ youth.

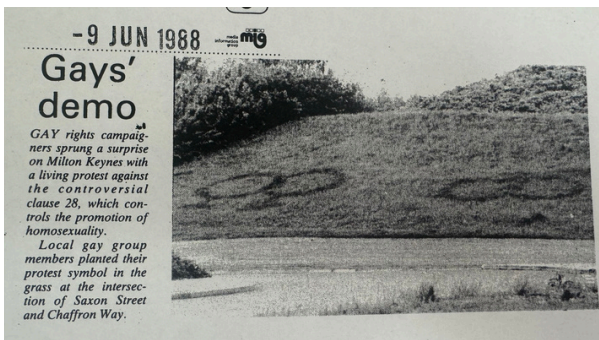
Activism and Local Demos



A lesbian couple, who had bonded over their shared love of activism, spent their first date vandalising an AIDS poster, in Wolverton, in response to the crisis.



In 1988 the same couple, along with others, organised a demo outside Milton Keynes Library in response to the introduction of Clause 28. The demo featured paper chains made by the local community. "We will fight to break our chains."



In response to Section 28, three local gay rights campaigners staged a demo, which included symbols of their protest marked onto the grass at the intersection of Saxon Street and Chaffron Way.



In 1999 local organisations (including Youthline and the HIV prevention team) to organised a World AIDS Day event in MK, that coincided with the opening of MK Gallery. Gilbert and George cut the ribbon for the event.



In 2000 local gay rights campaigners held a candlelit vigil outside the Civic Offices in collaboration with Stonewall as part of their campaign to repeal Section 28.



For World AIDS Day in 2010, MK Council collaborated with Brook, STASS and Q:alliance to raise awareness of HIV. Professionals and the public were asked to write their thoughts on HIV on artwork.

Local LGBTQ+ Leaders and Role Models

Alan Turing

Alan Turing was a gay computer scientist and mathematician who worked for the Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park during World War II. Alan Turing, along with other codebreakers, cracked the Enigma code which meant they could decipher German intelligence during the war. Alan Turing was unfairly prosecuted for homosexual acts in 1952 and committed suicide as a result in 1954.

Veronica Pickles

Veronica Pickles set up MK CHE (Campaign for Homosexual Equality) in September 1974, with Liz Hawes. Veronica was the chair for the first few years until it started running as a collective in 1976. Veronica was a midwife and featured heavily in local press in 1975 after she was removed from her health visitors course for being a lesbian. Veronica fought back and even spoke in Parliament. Eventually she was reinstated on her course.

Anita Tedder

Anita Tedder is a lesbian singer, involved with MK CHE in the 70s and the MK Gay Switchboard in the 80s. Anita sang in a local band called 'The Crew', who won the Melody Maker Battle of the Bands competition in 1980 with a queer song, 'Josie'. She found fame again after creating local girl band, 'Zenana', which had a range of queer songs. Zenana recently reformed after almost 40 years.

John Moore

John Moore was a local gay man and political activist who worked at the Open University. It is believed John was among the founding members for MK Gay Group, a separate group who formed in 1980 after MK CHE had disbanded. MK Gay Group ran a Switchboard, befriending service and put on socials (often at the Open University) throughout the 80s.

Jenni Ferrans

Jenni Ferrans has been involved in lesbian, feminist and women's issues in MK since the 80s. Jenni was also involved with the Switchboard and other women's and feminist groups at the Bakehouse. She got into local politics in the early 00s and was involved with the merger of Youthline and Lesbian and Gay Link, that resulted in the formation Q:alliance.

Ben Plumpton & Sally Hayes

Ben Plumpton and Sally Hayes are a lesbian couple who were heavily involved in left wing and feminist activism in the 80s. Ben Plumpton worked at Oakleaf books, Wolverton's radical bookshop, from 1979 to 1985. Both were involved with several of the groups at the Bakehouse Action and Resource Centre, with Sally volunteering on the Gay Switchboard for several years in the late 80s. The couple were involved with several LGBTQ+ demonstrations in MK, in response to the AIDS crisis and Clause 28.

Dr Vasco Fernandes & Dr Jane Hainstock

Vasco Fernandes was the leader of an 'anti-AIDS taskforce' set up by the local health authority in 1987 in response to the AIDS crisis. He appointed Jane Hainstock as 'HIV Prevention Lead' in 1988 and together they fought for better healthcare for patients with HIV. Their focus was around HIV prevention/safer sex and their role involved reporting to the government.

Dani Brumm & Barbara Green

Dani and Barbara were a local lesbian couple who paved the way for other LGBTQ+ families in MK, after they were the first lesbian couple to foster in the whole of Buckinghamshire in 1992.

Debi Morgan

Debi Morgan was the youth worker in MK responsible for setting up Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youthline in the 90s. The group was launched in 1995 from Millmead Hall, in Wolverton, collaborating with local LGBTQ+ young people. Debi supported and nurtured Youthline right up until the merger that formed Q:alliance.

Elliot Willis

Elliot Willis was a young gay man who was involved with Youthline from the start, right up until the time of the merger. Elliot was involved with the working group and went on several IGLYO trips throughout the 90s. Elliot's roles within Youthline included managing the finances in the early days, general communications and publicity for the charity. He created numerous flyers and posters over the years, including the the 'Action Against Homophobia Campaign' posters in 2000.

Tony O'Shea-Poon

Tony O'Shea-Poon has been heavily involved with many LGBTQ+ voluntary organisations in MK since 1995. Tony first got involved with Lesbian and Gay Link's helpline, before becoming employed as a co-ordinator by Youthline in 1999 to expand services. Tony left Youthline to work for Bucks Health Authority in 2001, in a role that involved supporting services and sexual health outreach for Lesbian and Gay Link. Tony received a local LGBTQ+ role model award for his work in 2002. He was involved at the time of the merger and continued working with the local LGBTQ+ community up until 2005.

Pascal Cosnuau

Pascal Cosnuau has been involved with creating social spaces for the LGBTQ+ community since the early 00s, setting up the LGBT breakfast club and Secklow 100 Tuesday evening meet up 20 years ago. He was also involved with running local Gay Outdoors Club walks.

Sarah Fox

Sarah Fox was a young bisexual woman who got involved with Youthline right at the start. Sarah was involved in the youth forum and the Youthline working group, creating community and support for young LGBTQ+ people in MK. Sarah attended and helped to organise several conferences of IGLYO (International Gay and Lesbian Youth Organisation) around Europe with Youthline.

John Goss

John Goss was a young gay man who got involved with Youthline in 1998. John was already involved in activism whilst at school and had been campaigning against Clause 28, the age of consent and armed forces ban. He was regularly writing to local politicians about LGBTQ+ issues and got involved in politics himself in the early 00s. John volunteered on and off for Youthline for many years and acted as Chair for a period too. John is still involved with Q:alliance today, as a licensed therapist.

Derek Child

Derek Child started volunteering at the Gay Switchboard in the early 90s. Derek had lots experience in the voluntary sector so naturally fell into the position of Chair of Lesbian and Gay Link. Derek received a local LGBTQ+ role model award for his work in 2002. Derek was still Chair at the time of the merger and became the first Chair of Q:alliance.

Gwilym Roberts

Gwilym Roberts was employed as 'Centre Manager' of Q Space when it opened in 2003. Q Space was a home for the local LGBTQ+ community after the merger of Youthline and Lesbian and Gay Link. Within his role, Gwilym ran a variety of services from creating social spaces, to sexual health support, to outreach and education programmes. Gwilym is admired by many for his radical approach to queering the community.

Peter Kingham

Peter Kingham first got involved volunteering with Youthline in the early 00s. Peter has consistently been involved with our local LGBTQ+ community ever since and is Q:alliance's longest standing trustee, with almost 20 years on the board. In 2005 Peter visited 10 Downing Street as part of a LGBT History Month celebration of community leaders. Peter was also involved in Celebr8, in 2009, MK's first diversity parade.

Peter Leeson

Peter Leeson was responsible for organising the LGBT General Assembly in MK in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The General Assembly aimed to bring together organisations that have an interest in LGBTQ+ communities. Peter was treasurer on the board of Q:alliance from 2009 to 2015 and encouraged Q:alliance to get involved with organising the General Assembly in 2012. Peter also featured in a documentary film about people who came out later in life.

TJ Richards

TJ Richards recently stepped down as Chair of Q:alliance after joining the board of trustees in 2017. TJ was involved with organising the first MK Pride Festival in 2019, before Q:alliance and MK Pride Festival became 2 separate organisations. TJ became Chair in 2020, helping Q to survive the Covid pandemic and grow into the organisation we are today.

Jay Virgo

Jay Virgo is Q:alliance's current Communications and Engagement Manager and joined the team 3 years ago. Jay is responsible for running Q:alliance's adult events, social media and the website, and facilitating inclusivity training across MK. In his 3 years with Q, he has transformed adult services from 1 event a month and a handful of service users to 15-20 monthly events and 100+ service users. Jay also runs LGBTQ+ groups on several social media platforms and sits on the board of several other local organisations.

Jennifer Hill

Jennifer Hill is Q:alliance's current CEO and joined the team 2 years ago. Jenn has been involved with Q:alliance since the 2007, when she started volunteering at the youth group, HIV testing centre and assisting with planning Q:meets. Jenn became a paid Youth Support Worker in 2008 and continued working for Q:Youth until 2012. After 11 years away, Jenn rejoined team Q:alliance as CEO and has been leading the team ever since.

Stevie Eglinton-Pacitti

Stevie Eglinton-Pacitti recently stepped up to the position of Chair after joining Q:alliance's board in 2022. Stevie volunteered with Switchboard during their time at university in Brighton and then volunteered as a Youth Worker with Q:Youth in the 10s. They now work for the Open University and run the staff LGBTQ+ group there.

LGBTQ+ Social Groups

- CHE Friend
- MK Gay Group
- Lesbian Feminist Group
- Social Times
- MK Lesbian Group
- Older Lesbians Group
- Gay Outdoor Club
- Lesbian Walking Group
- LGBT Breakfast Club
- Solstice
- Tuesdays at the Talbot
- Q:Space



The Bakehouse

6 Church Street,
Wolverton.

In the 70s, 6 Church Street acted as the Centre for MK CHE, in the 80s MK Gay Group ran from here when it was known as the Bakehouse.



Oakleaf Books

109 Church Street,
Wolverton.

Oakleaf Books was a radical bookshop open from Mar 1979 to Dec 1985. The shop stocked a range of LGBTQ+ books and mags.



Millmead Hall/ North Bucks Sports Hall

Haversham Road,
Wolverton.

In the early 90s Youthline began as a group of young people and youth workers at North Bucks Sports Hall.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Netherfield (Mind Premises)

Farthing Grove,
Netherfield.

MK's Lesbian and Gay Switchboard ran out of a little office in Netherfield up until the mid 90s.



Church of Christ the Cornerstone

300 Saxon Gate,
Central MK.

In the 90s, Lesbian and Gay Link ran their Switchboard here from the City Counselling Centre.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Kingston Community Centre

11 Winchester
Circle, Kingston.

In the late 90s, Youthline ran out of Kingston Community Centre for a couple of years.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Freedom Centre

10 Tower Crescent,
Neath Hill.

In 2000, Youthline received a large grant of funding that allowed them to open up a centre in Neath Hill, known as the Freedom Centre.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Q:Space

Witan Court, Upper
Fourth Street,
Central MK.

In 2003, Q:Space was launched as a centre for local LGBTQ+ people, after Youthline and Link merged.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

The Cannon

50 High Street,
Newport Pagnell.

Back in the 70s, MK CHE used to have weekly meetings from The Cannon and also ran a weekly gay disco.



The Galleon

Old Wolverton Road, Wolverton.

The pub was used by the CHE in the 70s, used to have a monthly gay night in 00s and more recently hosted a drag bingo night.



Open University

Walton Hall,
Kents Hill.

The Open University (OU) hosted discos and film nights for the MK Gay Group back in the 80s.



The Cricketers

247 Oldbrook Boulevard,
Oldbrook.

The Cricketers housed an unofficial weekly gay night in the 90s, after the Youthline working group met here.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Starting Gate

Lloyds Court,
Secklow Gate.

The Starting Gate had a weekly LGBTQ+ night on a Sunday in the late 70s/early 80s, before they moved to the Joint.



The Royal Engineer

1 Stratford Road,
Wolverton.

The Royal Engineer had a monthly gay night in the 80s.



The Joint

Peartree Centre,
Peartree Bridge.

The Joint was an LGBTQ+ friendly punk venue in the 80s that had a weekly gay night.



The Cock Hotel

72-74 High Street,
Stony Stratford.

In the 80s a group of regulars from the Royal Engineer formed a breakaway group and started meeting at The Cock Hotel.



New Bradwell Community Hall

Church Street,
New Bradwell.

A group of lesbians started organising lesbian discos out of a hall in the New Bradwell Community Centre in the 90s.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Brooksward Community Annexe

81 Tower Drive,
Neath Hill.

A room at the school was used for MK Gay Group discos in the 80s and lesbian discos in the 90s.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Caldecotte Canoeing Centre

366 Simpson Road,
Simpson.

The Canoeing Centre was used throughout the 90s for residential and training weekends for Youthline.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

The Square

Grafton Gate East,
Central MK.

The Square used to host a mixed gender LGBTQ+ night on a Tuesday in the 90s.



Rose and Castle

MK Market,
Central MK.

The Rose and Castle ran a gay night in the 90s every Thursday.



Blue Banana

63 Stratford Road,
Wolverton.

In the 90s, the Blue Banana ran a weekly gay night, that was mainly for gay men and MSM.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Golden Flamingos

Leisure Plaza,
1 South Row,
Central MK.

Golden Flamingos was a nightclub in the Leisure Plaza that ran an LGBTQ+ night in the 90s.



The Cuba

81 Newport Road,
New Bradwell.

The Cuba was owned by a gay man for some time in the 90s and was an LGBTQ+ friendly venue.



Bletchley Leisure Centre

Princes Way, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley.

Bletchley Leisure Centre used to run mens only sauna nights, where gay men would meet in the 80s and 90s.



The Navigation

Thrupp Wharf Marina, Station Road, Cosgrove.

The Navigation was home to an unofficial gay night in the 90s.



The Wayfarer

Willen Lakeside Park, Brickhill Street.

The Wayfarer used to have an LGBTQ+ night once a week in the 80s.



Rat + Parrot

21 Savoy Crescent, Central MK.

The Rat + Parrot ran a weekly LGBTQ+ night in the 00s.



David Baxter Centre

402 North Row, Central MK.

In 2001, Lesbian and Gay Link ran their Switchboard from here. In the late 00s Q:alliance also ran from the centre.



The Bird Sanctuary

Watermill Lane, Wolverton.

A well known cruising site off the Wolverton Road used by gay men and MSM.



Brogborough Woods

Bedford Road, Brogborough.

A well known cruising site off Junction 13 of the M1 used by gay men and MSM.



Campbell Park

Silbury Boulevard, Central MK.

A well known cruising site used by gay men and MSM. Campbell Park is now the home to MK Pride Festival and Q's community walk.



Secklow Hundred

316 Midsummer Boulevard,
Central MK.

Secklow Hundred used to host a Tuesday night LGBTQ+ meet up group.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

The Talbot

33 London Road,
Loughton.

After Secklow Hundred closed down, the Tuesday night meet up group started to meet at The Talbot and have done ever since.



The Point

602 Midsummer Boulevard,
Central MK.

Q: youth used to meet at the point in the 00s. There was also a nightclub here that had a weekly gay night.



Wetherspoons

201 Midsummer Boulevard,
Central MK.

The LGBT Breakfast Club meets monthly from the old Wetherspoons in Central MK.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

The Monastery/ The Entertainer

15 Watling Street,
Fenny Stratford.

The Monastery had a weekly gay night in the 90s. It reopened as the Entertainer, an LGBTQ+ pub that closed in the 00s.



Duke of Wellington

61 Wolverton Road,
Stony Stratford.

The Duke of Wellington ran a monthly gay night in the 10s and is now LGBTQ+ owned and has LGBTQ+ nights.



Pink Punters

2 Watling Street,
Fenny Stratford.

In October 2000, Pink Punters opened as MK's first and only LGBTQ+ nightclub.



Craufurd Arms

59 Stratford Road,
Wolverton.

The Craufurd Arms is a current LGBTQ+ friendly music venue and pub, that runs occasional LGBTQ+ club nights.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

YMCA Unit 3

1 North Sixth Street,
Central MK.

The YMCA Unit 3 is currently home to Q:alliance's twice monthly trans and non-binary safe space and has also hosted other events.

MK Central Library

555 Silbury
Boulevard,
Central MK.

Q:hub runs every Tuesday from a private room in MK Library, offering 1:1s for young people.



MK Snap

20 Bourton Low,
Walnut Tree.

MK Snap now hosts Q:alliance's weekly Q:youth group in Milton Keynes, a space for 13-18 year olds, facilitated by youth workers.

Can you help us fill our gaps with photos of these spaces from the eras they existed?

Moorlands Family Centre

6-7 Dodkin,
Beanhill,

Q:alliance runs an weekly LGBTQ+ family space and a weekly 1:1 wellbeing drop-in service from Moorlands Centre.



Midsummer Tap

1 Savoy Crescent,
Central MK.

Q:alliance runs a monthly adult social space from here on a Tuesday evening, once a month.



All Bar One

320 Midsummer
Boulevard,
Central MK.

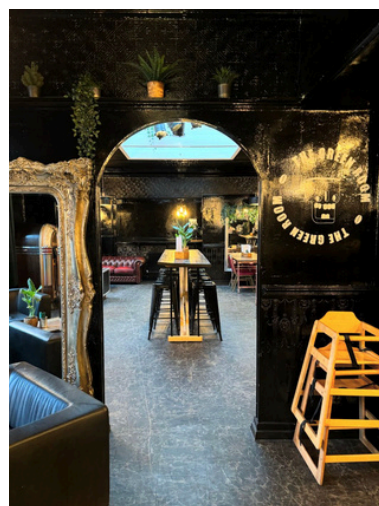
Q:alliance runs their monthly volunteer meet from All Bar One on the last Wednesday of the month.



Revolucion De Cuba

21 Savoy Crescent,
Central MK.

Q:alliance runs a monthly adult social space from here on a Thursday evening, once a month.



The Green Room

Craufurd Arms,
59 Stratford Road,
Wolverton.

Q:offee runs from here on the last Tuesday of the month. The coffee meet is Q's longest running adult space.