

MILTON PARK

INBusiness

Everyone wants to work



Milton Park aerial view courtesy of MEPC; Philip Campbell, below



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"Oxford University Innovation span out the largest number of companies last year compared with any other technology transfer agency in Europe, 24 or 25. There's also Oxford Sciences Innovation, which is effectively a venture capitalist and has a substantial amount of money for investment in Oxford spinouts, so I forecast that not only will we see more spinouts, we will see more money invested in them. As a result of that, we're going to see greater growth in the life sciences sector."

To help accommodate that expansion, work is under way on the biggest ever speculative development at Milton Park. Three buildings at Park Drive East will add 110,000 sq ft of new office and laboratory space.

Another improvement on the way is the reopening of Backhill Tunnel, an underpass beneath the Didcot to Swindon railway line on the south side of Milton Park, which will create a new cycle and pedestrian access from the A4130. The tunnel linked the former military stores depots with housing at Milton Heights but was closed in the 1960s when the armed forces left.

The underpass project reflects park owner MEPC's efforts to encourage people to consider alternatives to driving. The company runs frequent shuttle buses to Didcot Parkway railway station and has a dedicated travel adviser at Milton Park, who works with businesses to make them aware of all the options available.

● miltonpark.co.uk ● 01235 865555

Researchers join park's community

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biotech firm Syntexin, which

Ipsen acquired in 2013.

Dr Chaddock added: "We began to look at upgrading the Abingdon labs or moving. We decided on a new location but wanted to stay near Oxford because it's an area of innovative entrepreneurial behaviour and academic excellence."

"We looked around and found this place at Milton Park and jumped at it."

"Ipsen tries to create a campus community at the various sites we operate at and we wanted to do exactly the same at this site."

"Having services like the gym, shops, hairdresser, restaurant and post office available to employees – many of whom commute – at lunchtime or after work is fantastic."

"Our staff very quickly began to feel part of the park and got engaged in

charity activities and fun runs. We wanted to become part of a community, rather than just be in a building somewhere."

Connectivity was a key reason to select Milton Park. Ipsen's UK base is an hour away in Slough. Trains from Didcot Parkway to London connect with Eurostar services to Ipsen's global HQ in Paris and the airports at Heathrow, Southampton and Birmingham are useful for staff based at Milton Park who have global roles.

Access to the right workforce is also important and again Oxfordshire scores highly.
Dr Chaddock said: "There is a pool of people working in biotech and pharma, so it's a good community to recruit from and experimentally from a scientific point of view."



Joanne Bunting, MD of The Business Garage, based at Park House, which used to be the officers' mess when the site was an MOD establishment

Looking after businesses – and providing support

There is more to keeping a business on the road than having a great idea and the drive to make it a reality.

Every business needs to keep track of its finances, comply with employment laws, manage staff, market itself and ensure its strategy is up to date.

All these components need regular attention, which is where the Business Garage, based at Milton Park, comes in.

Founded in 2010, the company moved to the business park almost three years ago, setting up home next to the main entrance off the A34 interchange, in part of what was the officers' mess when the site was the RAF Milton depot.

Managing director Joanne Bunting and her colleagues first worked together as the operations team for a successful group of creative businesses.

She said: "We had always joked about how we could provide what we did externally – we decided to take a step and make that happen. It has been successful and we're able to roll out what

we do well to support other companies. "We run hands-on services for businesses and provide advice as well. It's back office, background support, anything that's not a core part of a company's offering."

"If you deliver a product or provide a service, you are very focused on that, but there's a lot of stuff happening to support that business, but you don't necessarily want to do it yourself, such as bookkeeping, cashflow, budget forecasting, HR and admin."

She added: Every business is at a different stage of development, having different problems but we are able to offer advice based on our own experiences of running businesses for 20 years or so. We can go and take a look and put a plan in place to support them and we can offer non-executive director services as well – so it really is a business MOT."

Alongside the core team of 10 people based at Milton Park, the Business Garage can call on more than 20 partners to deliver other services such as marketing and design and provides services externally, or 'deskside' in a company's office.

The move to Milton Park came as the Business Garage itself developed.

Mrs Bunting said: "We didn't initially consider Milton Park, because of the type of buildings – there are a lot of large office blocks – but then we saw the particulars for this and decided it would suit us and we could grow into it. Milton Park were really keen to talk to us as they have the Innovation Centre and lots of businesses here that need our type of support."

"We didn't have any clients on the park when we moved in but now we do. We can do what we do anywhere in the country but it's lovely to be able to go out and see our clients here. We also have a lot of clients within an hour's travelling time or so, who are all very accessible from here."

She added: "The location and services available here were definitely attractive for us when we were looking for new premises. We were already based locally and wanted to stay quite local."

"People can nip to the shop (the Business Garage is next door to Milton Park Stores), go out for a walk at lunchtime, or visit the gym, so people like working here."

● Contact: businessgarage.co.uk
01235 433099

IN NUMBERS

- 2.5m sq ft of space
- 9,000 people work at the business park
- 250 companies have premises at the site
- 17 amenities
- 3 convenience stores
- 3 hybrid buses connecting to Didcot Parkway railway station and the Orchard Centre
- 2 other bus routes serve the park
- 1 Electric car charging point

PARK LIFE

- There are 20 urban gardens at Milton Park, allowing people working there to get some fresh air in their breaks and grow vegetables and other plants
- As well as an indoor fitness centre, Milton Park has an outdoor gym with a range of specially-adapted fitness equipment
- All waste material from tree-pruning and landscaping work on the site is recycled as compost or bark chippings for paths
- A pair of geese return to Milton Park every summer to rear their young
- Milton Park hosts its own Christmas Market