



## Report of the Leader of the Council

### Northampton Borough Council

27<sup>th</sup> October 2014

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October I welcomed Penny Mordaunt MP, Minister for Local Growth and to Northampton to see the exciting developments on Guildhall Road, Project Angel and the Vulcan Works. When these projects are completed they will bring thousands of extra people into the Town Centre, enhance the Cultural Quarter and create a new home for our creative industries.

On 14<sup>th</sup> October The Mayor and I welcomed The Mayor of Shangrao City in China and a delegation of visitors to The Guildhall to learn more about the Northampton Alive projects and the Enterprise Zone. The Mayor and business leaders are looking at investment opportunities in Europe and were keen to visit Northampton during their visit. It was great to welcome visitors from China to Northampton to see the great things happening in our town and to show them the fantastic opportunities for investment we have in the Enterprise Zone which has already helped to bring investment and create new jobs in our town. I look forward to working with The Mayor of Shangrao City and visitors from the Chinese delegation in the future and hope they choose to invest here.

Work has started on an exciting new Town Centre development that will bring a major new hotel and restaurant into the town centre. The £8 million Northampton Alive project will see a new 108 bedroom Premier Inn and restaurant contrasted in the former Albion Place temporary car park. The development will also create around 50 new jobs as we continue to stimulate the local economy. As the Enterprise Zone develops we are seeing more demand for hotel space from business people looking to stay a few nights in our town. We have a thriving Cultural Quarter, three professional sports teams and increasing numbers of business people coming into Northampton. With so many reasons to visit we need accommodation, and the new hotel and restaurant in the heart of our Cultural Quarter will be a real attraction to anyone looking to stay in Northampton.

In September I was pleased to announce that this Administration will be bringing back the Becketts Park fireworks display that was cancelled by the previous Lib Dem Administration. The event promises to be a great family night out that will bring thousands of people into the heart of our town. We are grateful to the University of Northampton and Heart for their support.

We have had a great year in Northampton with some fantastic events that have brought the crowds into the Town Centre and made it an exciting and vibrant place to visit. We also announced an exciting schedule of events that will take place in our town over the Christmas period. The countdown to Christmas starts with the annual Christmas Lights Switch On at the Market Square on 20<sup>th</sup> November, and there will be live bands, choirs singing Christmas carols and plenty of colourful entertainment. One of the highlights of the switch on evening will be the launch of a German Christmas Market, which will set up at the bottom end of Abington Street to sell traditional food, drinks, gifts and crafts until 21<sup>st</sup> December. Shoppers will also be able to enjoy the year round free parking offer.

The St Crispin's Street Fair will return to the Town Centre from 25th to 28th October, and this year will include an extra day.

2014 has been a year of celebration and commemoration here in Northampton. As well as being 100 years since the start of the First World War, it is also 825 years since our town was granted its charter by Richard I, and 850 years since the trial of Thomas a Becket at Northampton Castle. There has been a series of events and services to mark these important local anniversaries.

Children from two primary schools in Northampton planted oak trees in Bradlaugh Fields on 3rd October to celebrate the 825<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Northampton receiving its Royal Charter. 25 oak trees were planted by the students of Parklands and Vernon Terrace Primary to mark when Northampton was granted its first town charter by King Richard I in 1189.

A series of events and services took place in Northampton's churches during October to commemorate the 850th anniversary of the trial of Thomas a Becket at Northampton Castle in 1164. A civic service in honour of Becket was held at All Saints' Church on 5th October, and a display about Becket, including his relic, was on display at the Cathedral of our Lady Immaculate and St Thomas of Canterbury from 5th to 12th October. On 7th October there was an Ecumenical Vespers at St Peters Church Marefair with the Bishop of Northampton presiding and from 8th to 11th October The Masque theatre presented the play 'Becket' each evening at The Guildhall. On 10th October there was a Celebration of Mass by the Bishop of Northampton at the Cathedral of our Lady Immaculate and St Thomas of Canterbury, and on 12th October at The Church of the Holy Sepulchre there was a Eucharist followed by a procession and I was pleased to unveil a commemorative plaque at the site of the North Gate.

On 3rd October officially opened the 'Echoes of Northampton Castle' exhibition at Hazelrigg House, which explores the long history of Northampton Northampton Castle including its role in the trial of Thomas a Becket. The exhibition is open from Monday to Saturday until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015, and admission is free.

This year also marks the third anniversary of the Lava and Ignite tragedy. I was disappointed that the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute the owners. Having received primacy of investigation from the Police earlier this month, the Borough Council is now seeking legal advice regarding the company's status and the viability of pursuing them for prosecution.

## **Community Safety**

Community Safety Partnership Weeks of Action have been held in Semilong and Blackthorn. The key focus for the weeks has been community engagement with a range of approaches being undertaken including door knocking and a partnership stand in key locations. Both weeks have seen high levels of engagement with a range of agencies taking part.

Residents have been warned about bogus callers claiming to be from the Borough Council offering assistance in making a personal injury claims. The Borough Council is

aware of a handful of residents who have been called by these bogus callers and have taken action to warn the public.

**Councillor David Mackintosh**  
Leader of the Council