



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

8th December 2014

On 20th November we launched this year's exciting line-up of festive events in the Town Centre, which this year includes the return of the German Market and Christmas lights extending up Wellingborough Road. We have also extended free parking to help attract even more visitors into our town over the Christmas period and help support traders and the local economy.

This year we were pleased to bring back the much loved Becket's Park fireworks display, which was cancelled by the previous administration in 2007. This year's event attracted around 18,000 visitors into the town, providing a great family night out and a boost to our local economy and traders.

Our Cultural Quarter is seeing further development as work has begun on a major new hotel at Albion Place. The development will not only improve the offer of the Cultural Quarter to making it easier to visit and stay, but will also improve the look and feel of the area and create new jobs in the Town Centre.

The second phase of construction is about to begin at Castle Station with the construction of a new multi-storey car park. When completed the new facility will make it easier and more pleasant for people to travel in and out of Northampton, and provide a fitting gateway for our town.

We also announced in October that the old Greyfriars building will be demolished by the end of March next year, freeing up this important Town Centre site for retail, leisure and transport development.

During the month of November, the Borough Council organised a series of events to mark the 825th anniversary of Northampton's Royal Charter. The Royal Charter was significant for Northampton and marked the first time local people were given the power to govern the town.

On 15th November a civic service and procession took place including mayors, councillors, Freeman, Honorary Aldermen, police, fire service, sporting clubs and the military. As part of the ceremony seven former borough councillors were made Honorary Alderman.

On 18th November at a ceremony at The Guildhall the Borough Council honoured Keith Barwell OBE, Brian Binley MP and Alderman John Dickie officially recognising each individual's contribution to the town by awarding them the Freedom of the Borough.

The Borough Council has also announced plans for a new heritage trail that will take in the life and work of many famous figures from Northampton's rich heritage, including Diana, Princess of Wales, Thomas a Becket, Simon de Senlis, Francis Crick, Lt Col Edgar Mobbs, 2Lt Walter Tull and Sir Malcom Arnold MBE. Northamptonians from all walks of life have played a part in shaping the history of our country, and in some cases even changed the world. It is only right that we draw attention to these remarkable individuals at a time when we are celebrating and commemorating so many important events and anniversaries. We want to make it as easy as possible for people to discover our rich history, and this is a project that will bring the past to life for everyone.

The Mayor led a procession of councillors and town dignitaries from The Guildhall to All Saints' Church as part of this year's Remembrance Day Parade and Service on 9th November. A shorter ceremony including the two minutes' silence was held at 11am on 11th November in the memorial garden at All Saints.

On 11th November I was honoured to accept an invitation from French President François Hollande to attend a special ceremony in Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. The ceremony marked the opening of a new monument that recognises the international allies who fought and lost their lives alongside French soldiers in the First World War.

Notre-Dame-de-Lorette International memorial is sited alongside France's largest military cemetery. Almost a century ago, brave soldiers from Northampton were fighting side by side with French forces in key battles during the First World War. At the First Battle of Ypres the Northamptonshire Regiment fought alongside French and Belgian allies at the western front. Throughout the War soldiers from Northampton continued to fight beside our allies, and it was a huge honour to represent our town at this historic event.

I am also honoured to have become a patron of The Hope Centre, who do such a fantastic job supporting homeless and vulnerable people in our town.

In November local business Greencore, which has been trading successfully in Northampton for 40 years, announced a new £30 million development which would open up another 300 jobs in 2016. Although committed to recruiting from the local job market, the firm reportedly said it may have to extend its recruitment initiatives further afield as there is virtually full employment in Northampton. Looking to recruit in Hungary is, we understand, just one of the initiatives the firm is considering. Public services are already under enormous pressure in Northampton and bringing additional people from Hungary is not the answer. We already have problems in Northampton with access to healthcare, schools and other public services, and this would just add to that. We have been in touch with Greencore to offer help for them to recruit locally, and will do all we can to assist them.

Community Safety

There has been a decrease in crime of 3.6% compared with October last year, and Serious Acquisitive Crime continues on its downward trend with a decrease of 11.4%. Burglaries are continuing to fall with a 13.5% reduction and Vehicle Crime has fallen by 12.1%.

As of the end of October, three Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Weeks of Action have taken place. There has been direct engagement with over 900 people either through door knocking or the CSP stand. Over 70 properties have received target hardening.

Councillor David Mackintosh
Leader of the Council