



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 18th July 2016

Jo Cox MP Memorial Service

A ceremony in memory of Jo Cox MP took place in the courtyard of The Guildhall on the morning of 20th June. A horrifying attack like this strikes not only at an individual, but at our freedom. I would like to thank the Mayor, Councilor Christopher Malpas for leading the ceremony as well as my other colleagues for paying tribute to this determined and passionate MP.

Voluntary and Community Sector

The Council is proud to say that Service Level Agreements are being developed with each of the 29 organisations that are being funded this year through the Partnership Grant; this includes developing performance monitoring against the outcomes that will be delivered by each of the organisations.

Councillor King reports of the links that are being made through the community centres with Health services, including Nene Clinical Commissioning and also First for Well Being, to explore opportunities to deliver services from community centres.

The Council helped deliver the Day 5 of the Women's Cycle Tour, which started outside the Guildhall on Sunday 19th June and supported the Royal British Legion to deliver the Armed Forces Day on the Market Square and Parade in the town centre on 25th June.

In June we saw the 'Landmark: Photos of Northampton' open at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery. This open exhibition showcases photographs taken by local photographers of some of Northamptonshire's most iconic buildings. 'Beauty and the Beach' opened mid-July and explores the style, design and inspiration of women's swimwear during the 1940s, 50s and 60s. A display to mark the section of The Women's Tour from Kettering to Northampton went on show at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery in June.

Councillor Hallam reports that the final draft of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is now out for consultation. The 'Order' covers a range of Anti-Social Behaviour, namely alcohol, illegal drugs, psychoactive substances, urinating/defecating in a public place, begging, busking, dog fouling and dogs being kept on leads in certain public areas. Subject to the consultation results, it is anticipated that the PSPO will be in place by November 2016 at the latest.

Shoe Industry

Northamptonshire's heritage is inextricably bound to the shoe trade, and the Council strongly believes that much more can be made of this. Therefore, we took the initiative and on 27th June organised lunch amid the fantastic shoe collection at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, to bring together leading figures in the local footwear industry: Horace Batten Bootmakers, Joseph Cheaney Shoes, Church & Co, Edward Green Shoes, Jeffrey-West & Co, Crockett & Jones, Loake Brothers, R E Tricker, Sargent Shoes and Geo J Cox. The University of Northampton has announced a collaboration with Northampton Borough Council to turn the former Vulcan Works in Guildhall Road into a centre for leatherworking excellence. This was an excellent timing for a discussion about how we can all capitalise on the cultural opportunity this presents.

Chinese Delegation Visit

On 6th June, together with some of my colleagues, I welcomed to our town the Chinese delegation from Deyang. This is a mostly industrial city and the high-tech industry contributing to its healthy economy. Although Deyang is primarily based on industry, it is remarkably clean with the local government vigilant. Delegation included representatives from the Foreign and Overseas Affairs Office of Deyang, High-Tech Industry Development Zone Administrative Committee, Municipal Bureau of Commerce and Municipal Investment Promotion Bureau. We walked down Guildhall Road and introduced them to some of our incredible and notable places and plans, such as the Museum and Gallery with 9 Guildhall Road and the idea of enhancing the town centre's cultural offer, Boutique Hotel, Royal and Derngate, Vulkan Works plans, Project Angel, The University and St Johns Student Accommodation, Train station and Innovation entre, Cosworth, the Sixfields opportunity, Saints Stadium and others. During a tour through the town they were able to see some of our major development sites, regeneration projects and job creation plans as well as potential opportunities for investment.

Market Square

Together with the Deputy Leader, I have visited some of the other markets nearby to explore ideas, possibilities and opportunities to improve our Market Square. We have stopped at the markets in Nuneaton and Wellesbourne. I am delighted to say that this Council will put its best effort into rejuvenating Market Square, developing it into an even more stimulating space at the heart of the town. This is part of the ongoing work to regenerate the town centre and support local businesses. Market Square is important to our town and this Cabinet, as well as the Council, would like to refurbish it into a vibrant and welcoming public space that Northampton people can be proud of. In order for this positive change to happen, a number of ideas, proposals and options will be considered and we will continue working in conjunction with Market traders.

Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

The initial interviews have been held for the role of Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning. This role is vital for regeneration and growth of Northampton. We do not believe we have found a candidate who would match the high standard criteria so far; therefore, we will advertise the position again. Nevertheless, I am pleased to advise you that Steven Boyes has agreed to stay with us until Christmas, which will give us additional time to find a replacement.

Parking

The free parking offer, which this Council introduced, continues to attract visitors to the Council's multi-storey car parks with May's figures for 2 hour free parking showing a 18% increase in comparison with May 2015 figures. The two hour free parking figures for April & May 2016 has seen 158,785 customers take advantage of the offer.

The Saturday free parking for April & May reached 75,617 which was 6.1% more than in 2015.

Councillor Mary Markham
Leader of the Council