



Report of the Leader of the Council

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 13th March 2017

Delapré Abbey

On 30th January we held a stakeholder event at Delapré Abbey, which provided an opportunity for an early peak at what has been achieved with the building, as the project draws near to completion. The work that has been done by the main contractor Robert Woodhead and the other professionals involved is stunning, and this was reflected in the fantastic reaction from those who visited, and also in the resulting media coverage.

Restored to its full glory, Delapré Abbey will provide a wonderful visitor attraction for both local people and those travelling from further afield, as well as a very special events and conferencing venue. Significant work is being undertaken to promote the Abbey nationally to visitors, working with the Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust team, and I was very pleased to drop in to see one of the first public events to be held at the Abbey since the restoration; a wedding fair which was held on Sunday 26th February.

Economic Development

I continue to meet regularly with the Town Business Improvement District, and to attend their Board meetings, and have also met with other local businesses individually, including with businesses looking to move to our town. I have also played an active part in SEMLEP, having recently attended both the SEMLEP Board meeting, and the Council Leaders Group of SEMLEP.

Our work to tackle town centre traffic, particularly in the Drapery and Sheep Street, continues and is making progress, with a number of possible measures now emerging and being worked on in more detail.

With tourism set, in my view, to be an increasingly important aspect of our town's economy, I was glad to attend a Tourism Partners Briefing at Holdenby House, describing the development of a new Northamptonshire tourism website, and associated national promotion campaign. With a focus on the history and heritage of Northamptonshire, and themed around the many surprises that the county has to offer, we are keen to play a part in this, and have further discussions arranged.

Enterprise Amey

Whilst we look ahead at future arrangements for Environmental Services under a new contract, we still have some time remaining under the existing contract, and we are determined that the town gets the best possible service during the remaining contract period. For this reason, Cllr. Hallam and I have been engaging in regular meetings with Enterprise Amey's senior personnel, including meeting a week ago with Amey's Managing Director of Environmental Services. We are actively following up the commitments to service and the actions arising from these meetings, and will be meeting with their Managing Director again in the near future.

As the grass cutting season approaches, we are seeking a schedule of when each area of the town will receive grass cutting, which we intend to publish so that residents are clear about when they can expect the next cut in their area to take place.

Other Activity

Amongst the many other things I have recently been pleased to be involved in are:

To attend the Chinese New Year celebrations on the market square, which were well attended despite extremely cold weather, and the atmosphere created by the entertainment and the many market stalls was wonderful.

To visit Phipps Brewery and understand more about the tremendous brewing heritage that our town has, and how we can ensure that the 200 years of brewing on Carlsberg's Bridge Street site can be recognised and celebrated appropriately.

To take a tour of the new St. Crispins Community Centre, along with some of the groups that will be using the centre, and see what a top quality community facility this new centre will be.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader of the Council