



Northampton's Application for Grant of City Status

December 2021

wholehearted support for Northampton's city status



Northampton is an exemplary case for city status. At the heart of England, and the largest town in Europe, Northampton is bursting at the seams with community, culture and passion. From our rich heritage and history, to our ever-advancing technological achievements, Northampton has independent spirit and ambition

Northampton is steeped in history, as far back as the Bronze Age, and through every period has made its mark. A fond favourite to King John, and a strong contender for the country's capital, Northampton has remained at the heart – and in our hearts – throughout time. We stand up for what we believe in, and we use each of our 225,000 voices for change. Now, we honour the tenacity of our ancestors, and propel Northampton forward. As home to thousands of businesses as ambitious as the next, recognising Northampton as a city will bolster the aspirations of many, and will be a catalyst for changemakers to once again, push the boundaries of possibility.

Northampton's community spirit is unmatched, banding together in times of need.. During the pandemic, an overwhelming number of community groups and volunteers came forward to help those in need and they continue to support each other. There is a true sense of diversity and unity in Northampton, and our community is at the heart of everything we do.. This bid is a celebration of the people of Northampton, what they have achieved, and everything that is still to come.

The overwhelming support we have received demonstrates we have the hearts of the county backing our bid. We therefore respectfully submit this application to Her Majesty The Queen, to consider Northampton for the honour of city status, as part of her Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Leader, West Northamptonshire Council

Northampton City Credential 1:

Bronze Age Settlement, Medieval Battleground and A Home to Changemakers.

Northampton has a deep and long-standing history. There is a record of human existence as far back as the Bronze Age, with archaeological evidence of a Neolithic encampment dated to approximately 3500 BC. Following the Norman Conquest, it continued to prosper, and in 1215 King John appointed a mayor, a structure which still exists today.

Northampton continued to be at the heart of England. In 1460 it was a key battleground in the War of the Roses and later at the forefront of the English Civil War. Northampton has been home to trailblazers and changemakers, out of the box thinkers. In the 20th Century Margaret Bondfield was the third female MP and the first female cabinet member. While in the 19th Century Charles Bradlaugh was the founder of the National Secular Society.

Northampton City Credential 2:

A Place for Businesses to thrive

Northampton currently houses 11,345 businesses which provide 153,000 jobs to the community. In 2014 Northampton was voted by Experian as the best place to start business. The town houses many Transport & Storage and Construction businesses including Travis Perkins and Wrefords Transport, which reflects Northampton's mainstay role at the heart of the country's connectivity.

Business within Northampton is at the center of environmental innovation. Cosworth, established in 1958, is currently operating at the forefront of transport technology with its work in hybrid solutions. While smaller enterprises such as the Good Loaf are leaders in community innovation providing employment to vulnerable local women to enable them to break the cycle of poverty.

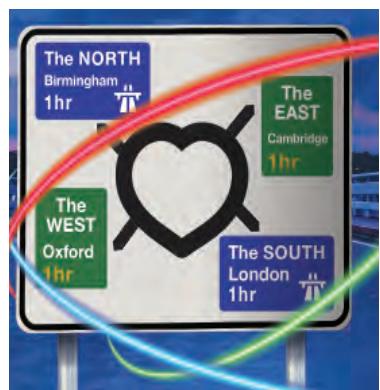
Northampton City Credential 3:

Northampton City Attribute 2: At the Centre of Regional and National travel: 30% of the population can visit within 1 hour.

Northampton has the first-class transport provisions and connections expected of a city. There is direct and frequent travel regionally and nationally with the ability to reach international airports within an hour. Today Northampton is at the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc to bring new infrastructure developments.

As someone born and bred in Northampton with long family history here, I couldn't be prouder to support our bid for city status. ,

Cllr Gareth Eales
Leader of the Labour Group
West Northamptonshire Council



Northampton City Credential 4:

Northampton City Attribute 3: University Town with a £330 million state of the art campus.

Northampton is home to the University of Northampton, an institution with historic origins which in 2005 was revived for the students of today. It is now home to over 12,000 students.

In 2018 the University placed itself at the heart Northampton's future investing £330 million into a state-of-the-art campus located in Northampton's Waterside Enterprise Zone which is just 15 minutes from the town centre. The facilities include a Sports Pavilion, a 20,000 sqm Learning Hub and a new low carbon Energy Centre.



Northampton City Credential 5:

Home of the shoe industry past present and future

Since the 15th Century Northampton has been the home of shoemaking. In the 1790s, Northampton was producing 10-12,000 pairs of boots per week for the British Army. By 1841, there were nearly 2000 shoemakers. Today industry combines tradition with innovation. It is home to historic companies like Crockett & Jones and Churches who produce the shoes for James Bond, and brands which push the design envelope, Jeffrey West. Companies have struck worldwide trade deals, spreading the good word of the town and the highest-quality shoes across the globe.



Northampton City Credential 6:

Home of the Saints, the Steelbacks and the Cobblers

Northampton has a historic connection to sport, being home to three major teams which each have regional, national, and international significance. Northampton Town FC, The Cobblers, have for decades been a continual presence in league football. Northampton Saints are one of the most successful Rugby Union Clubs in the country, with 21 players in the hall of fame, and 3 currently playing for England. Northamptonshire County Cricket Club, the Steelbacks, have over 140 years of history, winning the T20 in 2013. Notable players including Monty Panesar and Kapil Dev.



Northampton City Credential 7:

Biggest Town in Europe: Home to 225,000 people

Northampton is Europe's biggest town and like any thriving city it is constantly growing. In 1900 it was home to just 87,000 people. Today it has tripled and there are 225,000 people. 20% of Northampton's population are from an Ethnic Minority while annually the community gathers together for celebrations of all cultures.



At the of national history

Northampton has a long history, growing rapidly from the original Danish settlement in the 9th century. Following the Norman Conquest, Northampton was recognised on a national level as the seat of royalty, government and conflict. It has been a defiant parliamentarian stronghold and the home to several 19th, 20th and 21st century changemakers. Northampton has evolved into a thriving national and regional hub rooted in history but forward-looking.



Rich in Heritage

There is evidence of settlement dating back to the Bronze Age, with archaeological evidence of a Neolithic encampment in Briar Hill dated to approximately 3500 BC. Today Hunsbury Hill is a surviving example of the many hillforts that populated the country in the Iron Age. Northampton, then Hamm Tunn, is first referenced in 914 as a Danish settlement later relinquished to Edward the Elder. Under his rule, Northampton became the centre of one of the new shires and grew rapidly as a nationally significant trading centre. The town's prosperity can be highlighted by the imposition of special taxes demanded by Henry II from 1158 to 1214.

Northampton continued to thrive with the construction of Northampton Castle in 1084. Today, remains can be found outside Northampton Train Station. During the Middle Ages, Northampton was at the heart of Medieval England. Its central location made it a strategic destination for governance, royalty and eventually conflict. King Henry I was the first monarch to reside in Northampton Castle, an act which was followed by the 8 subsequent sovereigns. In 1205 King John moved the Treasury to Northampton hosting 5 Parliaments and over 20 royal councils within the Castle walls. The town became a prominent destination within Medieval England. It played host to the trial of Thomas Becket, the Assize of Northampton and the imposition of poll tax. In 1460 Northampton sat at the heart of the War of the Roses with the Battle of Northampton. Fought in the grounds of Delapre Abbey it was the first battle where artillery was used in England.

During the English Civil War, 1642-1651, the people of Northampton were decidedly pro-parliament. In 1642 the town became the main Parliamentarian garrison for the South-West Midlands. On the way to the Battle of Naseby, Oliver Cromwell marched through the town reaffirming its instrumental position in the dissolution of the monarchy. After the Great Fire of Northampton, 1675, Charles II demonstrated his support of Northampton by donating several tonnes of timber and halved the taxes for seven years to help the reconstruction of the town. Today Northampton is one of just three towns to honour the Restoration of the monarchy with Oak Apple Day. Like in 1675, Northampton donated 100 tonnes of timber from Delapre Abbey to Windsor Castle in 1992 to help rebuild after the fire. It was utilised to reconstruct the State Dining Room floor and has been admired by many international dignitaries.

I wholeheartedly support Northampton's bid to gain City status. Northampton has been at the centre of English history for 2000 years, from being a key administrative centre with strong Royal connections in Medieval England to a thriving and prosperous economy, famous amongst other things for its shoemakers.

A successful bid would be the perfect catalyst to attract inward investment, drive regeneration and build a great future for Northampton.

James Saunders Watson
Esq Lord-Lieutenant of
Northamptonshire



At the of national history

Royal Connections

Since Queen Victoria the royal family has visited Northampton nine times, with James Saunders-Watson currently serving as Northamptonshire's Lord Lieutenant. In 1863 a cast-iron fountain to commemorate the marriage of King Edward VII and Alexandra of Denmark was gifted to Northampton, which now resides in the newly reopened Northampton Museum. In 1982, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip opened the Express Lift Tower which today plays a significant role in international space innovation. Subsequently Prince Charles and Princess Diana were frequent visitors to the town, in 1989 year she was awarded the Freedom of the Borough. Today she is commemorated with a memorial plaque located at the Guildhall within the town centre.

Market Town

At the heart of Northampton's proposed city centre is the second largest outdoor market in the country. One of the oldest market towns, King Richard I granted a market charter in 1189 located on the site of the historic All-Saint's Church. In 1235 it was relocated after Henry III imposed a trading ban to the market square where it still resides today. The market square survived The Great Fire in 1675, with many residents fleeing through Welsh House at the top of the square, which still stands today. The square has been hugely successful and popular for centuries and has hosted several events throughout its history. During World War Two, the square was home to Weapons Weeks, which were instrumental in fundraising for spitfires, warships and tanks. In more modern times, the square has hosted several events, such as Christmas fairs, Diwali celebrations, Armed Forces Day and Pride.

Changemakers

At the heart of Northampton is an independent spirit. The community has been home to several influential pioneers whose work has held international significance. In 1880 Charles Bradlaugh was elected as MP of Northampton and became a staunch campaigner for atheist rights. In 1888 his campaign resulted in a revolutionary revision of the Oaths Act which removed the required religious oath.

The Northampton spirit was upheld by the Margaret Bondfield, the third female MP, first woman to become a member of cabinet and the first woman to chair the General Council of the Trade Union Congress. Bondfield was a trailblazer whose work paved the way for the female politicians of today. She is memorialised in the Guildhall Courtyard along with Francis Crick the co-founder of DNA. Along with James Watson, his efforts won him the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1962. His work is at the heart of medical innovation today. These changemakers have worked and lived in Northampton while their legacy mirrors the ambitions of the town.



I am delighted to support Northampton's bid for city status, a move which has the potential to really put Northampton. Our local area has witnessed a great deal of change in the past year with the move to two unitary councils - I am excited that we have the opportunity to bring our communities together in a local effort to showcase everything that is great about Northampton, and Northamptonshire. A successful city status bid would be a huge honour for our area, and would be a real testament to our wonderful residents, businesses, towns and communities.

**Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive,
West Northamptonshire Council**

At the of Innovation



Northampton has been home to Cosworth since 1964. During that time, we have developed key relationships within the town, especially with the council, to drive our business growth. Through this, we have received funding for innovative projects, like our Advanced Manufacturing Centre, and helped to position Northampton as a place from which engineering and technology can be nurtured, as part of our joint efforts to support STEM and STEAM initiatives. We are proud to be based in Northampton and fully support the town's bid for city status.

Hal Reisiger, CEO Cosworth



Northampton is at the heart of national and international innovation of the past, present and future. Throughout the 20th century, Northampton had the biggest and brightest names within the automotive industry call the town and surrounding county home.

'Northampton Lighthouse'

The Queen opened the Northampton Lift Tower in 1982, its original purpose to test elevators. Immortalised by Terry Wogan after one of his listeners dubbed it the 'Northampton Lighthouse', it was granted Grade II listed building status in 1997 and has always been at the heart of innovation. Standing at a height of 127.5 metres, its distinctive features make it an irreplaceable resource for various projects. In 2018 Airbus utilised the building to test the Space Harpoon, which is currently used to remove thousands of tons of debris from Earth's orbit. The tower is the tallest drainage installation testing centre, which has aided in the evolution of the construction of skyscrapers. It has also been used to test climbing equipment and has been the site of many a charity abseil.

Automotive home

Northampton's centre is just 15 miles from Silverstone, the home of the British Grand Prix since 1948. Silverstone hosted the 1950 F1 World Championships, the oldest F1 race of its kind, and is the third longest track within the F1 calendar. This historic track has placed Northampton at the heart of innovation and Northamptonshire at the centre of British Motor Racing. Silverstone itself generated a peak revenue of £53.9 million for the 2018 financial year. Both Mercedes and Aston Martin are based at the circuit, with Mercedes building its own engines in nearby Brixworth.

Based out of Silverstone, the Lunaz Group is known for its petrol-to-electric conversion of classic luxury cars. This innovative approach preserves classic car heritage by reducing their significant environmental impact. In 2020 David Beckham invested in the company, explaining that the Lunaz Group is at the heart of sustainable motoring.

Engineering legend Cosworth, whose engines have been used in F1 across the globe, have been based in Northampton since 1964. In the 20th century, Cosworth was at the heart of international automotive innovation as it developed the DVF engine which led to 155 Formula 1 victories from 1967 to 1983. In 2015 it invested £20 million into a Northampton-based factory, the Advanced Manufacturing Centre. Within three years the Northampton-based centre helped the company reach record revenue levels. Today Cosworth is a leader of hybrid engine innovation, placing the nation at the heart of F1's sustainable evolution.

At the of culture

Northampton has over 500 listed buildings, 21 conservation areas and 7 scheduled monuments. It is rooted in history, providing residents and visitors with one-of-a-kind experiences while being at the forefront of arts protection and innovation. Northampton has always been at the heart of culture and continues to provide residents and visitors with premium experiences.



The Cultural Quarter

In 2013 the Northampton Cultural Quarter was formed which brings together some of the town's most popular attractions, with a variety of nearby restaurants and bars. This innovative district demonstrates a continued support of the cultural arts and the town's focus on the future. The area includes the newly refurbished Northampton Museum and Art Gallery and the one-of-a-kind 78 Derngate Charles Rennie Mackintosh Museum.

The Northampton Museum and Art Gallery recently underwent a £6.7 million expansion which combined the existing heritage structures with innovative architectural design. The project saw the museum double in size, with a beautiful new extension connecting the museum to the Old Gaol Block, creating a new Temporary Exhibitions Gallery, schools' activity space and stunning Shoe Gallery. The Museum famously possesses an extensive shoe collection which in 2013 was designated by the Arts Council England as having local, national and international significance.

78 Derngate is a unique cultural destination which brings together heritage and architecture with an innovative modernist interior design. Originally built in 1815, local businessman Wenman Joseph Bassett-Lowke commissioned Charles Rennie Mackintosh to remodel the interior. It is the only Mackintosh-designed home in England and is one of the first examples of the Art Deco Style seen in Britain. In 2020, 78 Derngate was declared Visit England's 'Hidden Gem of 2019 of the East Midlands', which recognises its unique and outstanding visitor experience. In 2021 the attraction began building a £400,000 expansion to extend the current gallery space, create a new 'learning garden' and to add a new tearoom.

Delapré Abbey

Delapré Abbey lies within a registered battleground and is a grade II listed manor house and park. It is at the heart of Northampton's history and is a popular tourist attraction, located just outside the proposed city centre. Founded in 1145 as a nunnery, the abbey became a stopping point on Eleanor of Castile's funeral procession from Harby to Westminster in 1290.

‘ Delapré Abbey is fully supportive of the City status bid. Northampton and its people are ready to embrace the opportunities that City status can deliver. Siting within the Heritage and Cultural offer we are particularly interested in how becoming a City can create a new progressive narrative and interpretation of Northampton’s rich heritage, that will bring new stories and spaces within the City. The attention and investment that City status would deliver would allow Northampton’s Culture and Heritage to take centre stage.

**Richard Clinton Chief Executive
Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust**



At the of culture

King Edward I commemorated the journey by commissioning the construction of a dozen Eleanor Crosses. Today, Northampton's cross is one of just three that remain. From 1550 to 1943 the Abbey remained a private residence, during which a variety of additions were made, creating a unique amalgamation of architectural styles. The restored Abbey first opened to the public in 2018, welcoming approximately 350,000 visitors since opening. It is a destination with significant potential and there are plans to save the derelict 19th century stables, turning them into a wellbeing hub.



The Show Must Go On

Northampton is home to several historic theatres. The Royal & Derngate theatre complex is located within the Cultural Quarter and is made up of the Royal, the Derngate and the Northampton Filmhouse. The Royal Theatre first opened in 1884 as a repertory theatre, and in 1999 this combined with the newer Derngate Theatre, a popular stop for touring productions. The theatre has been the launching pad for several critically acclaimed productions. The Worst Witch was first shown in 2018 which went on to win an Olivier for Best Family Show in 2020. Our Lady of Kibeho opened in 2019 and in 2020 was nominated for an Olivier in Outstanding Achievement in Affiliate Theatre.

The Deco is an Art Deco theatre and cinema located within the centre of Northampton. Dating back to the 1930s, it helped launch the careers of several trailblazing international musical artists including the Beatles in 1963, and the Rolling Stones in 1965. The Deco has evolved into a multi-purpose venue which is at the heart of the community, focusing on providing opportunities for local artists.

It's an important time for Northampton as we emerge from the Covid pandemic and a bid for City status really has the opportunity to galvanise the town, increase collaboration amongst partners, and ensure that we are bold and ambitious in our future plans. Northampton has long punched above its weight, with culture playing an important role in its national profile and local regeneration. Achieving city status could elevate this even further.

Jo Gordan, Royal and Derngate



At the heart and sole of Shoemaking



Northampton is a centre of excellence for footwear production. Industry leaders preserve traditional manufacturing techniques for the consumer of today, putting Northampton at the heart of the national and international footwear industry.

Shoes of the Past

Shoes have been produced in Northampton since the 13th century. In 1213 King John purchased a pair of boots from a local shoemaker. In 1401 Northampton's first shoemaking guild was founded to maintain high quality shoe production. Northampton was solidified as a centre for shoemaking excellence when 600 pairs of boots and 4,000 pairs of shoes were commissioned by Oliver Cromwell for the Parliamentarian Army.

During the Industrial Revolution Northampton was a leader in the footwear industry. Factories were producing at least 10,000 pairs a week while design choices put them at the heart of innovation. Northampton shoe factories adopted the Goodyear Welt, a revolutionary stitching method from 1871 which allowed soles to be easily replaced. This established Northampton's industry as the world's largest producer of Goodyear-welted footwear.

During World War One Northampton, alongside the wider county, made 50 million of the 70 million shoes produced for the British Forces. Throughout history Northampton has been a community of shoemakers at the heart of the nation, becoming international leaders in shoemaking excellence.

Shoemaking today

Northampton is internationally recognised for producing high quality shoes. Today, 11 companies reside in the town with a further ten in the wider Northamptonshire. Northampton is home to several heritage shoe brands including Tricker's, Church's, Crockett & Jones, JL & Co, Edward Green & Co, and Crown Shoes.

Crockett and Jones have produced custom shoes for James Bond movies and the Prince of Wales. In 1982 Spring Line Limited was formed, the only manufacturer in Britain producing bespoke hand-crafted wooden lasts, which help form the shape of the shoe. The company provides lasts not only to Northampton's shoe brands, but several internationally renowned fashion labels including Vivienne Westwood and Paul Smith. JuJu, formed in 1986, produced the culturally iconic Jelly shoe, pioneering the production of injection footwear.

Northampton's footwear industry continues to be at the forefront. Owned by Prada, Church's manufactures 5,000 pairs of shoes a week, 70 per cent of which are exported, placing it at the heart of international footwear. In 2005, the film Kinky Boots placed Northampton shoes on the map and in 2012 it was turned into a Broadway Musical still shown today. Northampton shoes are examples of shoemaking excellence, preserving heritage production whilst continuing to innovate.

Tricker's fully support for the bid for Northampton to gain city status. The globally respected footwear industry is an exceptionally important part of our town and this is a great opportunity to build on our fantastic history and assets and attract future inward investment to regenerate the whole area.

Martin Mason – Managing Director and Member of Northampton Forward



At the of our Sport & Leisure

Northampton is the only town in England to host three professional sports teams: Northampton Town Football Club, Northamptonshire County Cricket and Northampton Saints. Together they place Northampton at the heart of regional, national and international sport, capable of welcoming over 450,000 visitors to Northampton combined across their respective sporting seasons.



Heart of Football

Founded in 1897, Northampton Town Football Club has seen the rise of two game-changing players. Herbert Chapman, during the 1904-05 season, became Northampton's first-ever player/manager which launched his historic career. Today Chapman is regarded as one of football's greatest managers. In 1911 Walter Tull, the third person of mixed heritage to play in the top division of football, transferred to Northampton Town. He made 111 appearances for the club before enlisting for WW1, where he became one of the first Black Officers in the Army and the first to lead White soldiers into battle.

In 2015, the club was bought by American entrepreneur Kelvin Thomas. This incredible season saw Northampton secure promotion to League 1, where they currently play today, and finish as the champions of League 2. In 2021 the Cobblers hosted a national football tournament for ethnic minority communities promoting 'multi-cultural togetherness.' Northampton Town is at the heart of the national football community outreach and ensures the legacy of their international changemakers is never forgotten.

Heart of Rugby

Northampton Saints are one of the oldest Rugby Clubs in England established in 1880 they have for over two hundred years called Franklin Gardens home.

The Saints have won six major titles, becoming European Champions in 2000, English Champions in 2014 and more recently winning the inaugural Premiership Rugby Cup in 2019. The team is one half of 'The East Midlands Derby' the fiercest rivalry in English Rugby Union. To date the Saints have had 38 international players called up for the England Rugby World Cup squad. Notable alumni include Ben Cohen and Dylan Hartley, whilst Northampton's own Courtney Lawes currently plays for England.

Like their footballing counterparts, The Saints work closely with the community, giving back to those who have tirelessly supported them. Wheelchair rugby, educational programmes, and fitness classes "Shape Up with Saints" demonstrating how they put themselves at the heart of the community prioritising their health and wellbeing.

‘ Northampton is a great place to live, work and visit. We believe that achieving city status would help attract more investment for the area and improve opportunities and life chances for residents and communities. Northampton Saints whole heartedly support the bid. ’

Mark Darbon, Chief Executive at Northampton Saints



At the of our Sport & Leisure

First-class cricket

Cricket in Northampton dates to 1741, and Northamptonshire County Cricket Club was founded in 1878. The County Cricket Ground was constructed in the late 1880's, hosting the first game in 1886. It is one of 18 first class Cricket clubs within the country.

Diversity has always been at the heart of the Steelbacks, whilst simultaneously preserving home-grown talent. This mixture and balance of players was instrumental in restoring the club's status as a top side, winning the Gillette Cup Final at Lord's in 1976. The 21st Century has seen the Steelbacks in the thick of cricketing action. The captain and the academy's own Alex Wakely led the club to Twenty20 championship glory in 2013, and later in 2016.

There are Women's teams competing in the Indoor Cricket League and the East Midlands Cricket League. The Steelbacks host 5 Disability Cricket teams for people of all ages and provide an established coaching program. Northamptonshire Cricket sits at the Heart of the County and continues to be at the forefront of national cricket.



Award-winning green spaces

Northampton has 1,880 acres of parkland, equaling 5.52 square metres per 10 residents. In October 2021, four parks in and around the proposed city centre retained their prestigious Green Flag Status recognising them as leaders in the management of sustainable green spaces. They are: Delapre Park, Abington Park, Bradlaugh Fields and Daventry Country Park have all been recognised.



The Racecourse

The Racecourse is, historically at the heart of the amateur sports community. These include football, cricket, rugby, tennis, and bowls. There are over 27 Sunday league football teams and there is a well-attended weekly Parkrun. In 2012 an adventure park was opened which included a climbing frame, zip wire and a five-person buddy swing. The park has thousands of estimated weekly visitors.



The People's Park

Abington Park is the 'People's Park' it is home to Abington Manor, known today as Abington Museum, and the Church of St Peter & St Paul. The Manor became the home of William Shakespeare's granddaughter Elizabeth Bernard. Today Abington Museum is a prominent feature of the park, housing displays on the social history of Northamptonshire and The Museum of Leathercraft. The park is a popular destination for residents with a play area, café, bandstand and fitness trail.



At the of our Sport & Leisure

Becket's Park

Named after Thomas Becket, the park is linked to the adjacent Becket's Well, the purported drinking site of Becket before his escape from trial at Northampton Castle. The park lines the banks of the River Nene and possesses a canal lock connecting the Nene to the Grand Union Canal. Across the river sits the new University of Northampton campus which consolidated the University's sites and brought its main out-of-town campus into the heart of the town. Linked with a modern footbridge the park is a popular student destination, placing this historic park at the heart of future generations.



Prime Retail Destination

Northampton's Retail sector provides 6,500 jobs and makes up 4.7% of jobs in Northampton. The town centre offers a good mix of high street favorites and independent stores with an estimated retail floorspace of 1.3 million sq ft. This includes the popular Grosvenor Centre which houses many high street chains and St Giles Street which won the Great British High Street Award in 2015. Northampton has become an example of social enterprise excellence within retail, with aspirations of an innovative future.



In 2021, Northampton Forward, an informal partnership of stakeholders tasked with the regeneration and growth within Northampton, secured a Towns Fund deal of £24.9 million. It is intended to establish Northampton as a thriving centre for residents, visitors and businesses as it has the potential to become a centre of high-quality employment. Abington Street sits at the heart of Northampton and recent funding has enabled the redevelopment of BHS and Marks & Spencer. They will become mixed-use sites capitalising on Northampton's lack of high-quality office stock.



At the of Community



From its Bronze Age roots to its Parliamentarian garrison, people have always been at the heart of Northampton. It has been a home to changemakers, independent thinkers and importantly a community which continually help one another.

We're All in this Together

Northampton has a diverse and welcoming community; ethnic minorities make up 20 per cent of the population. There is a proud history of religious diversity; the first recorded Muslims in England were in Northampton, and it held one of the largest medieval Jewish communities in the country. Today Northampton's faith communities play a vital role in the community and voluntary sector and are crucial in the provision of local services, often in areas of long-term disadvantage.

In 2020 the Siri Guru Singh Sabha Northampton and the Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club (SCCYC) completed the Northampton Sikh Gurdwara. The new development included a gym, museum, and foodbank. The SCCYC continually served the community in 2020, and they were labelled 'Lockdown Legends'. They launched a pop-up food bank providing food, toiletries and parcels for vulnerable families, and every Friday members of the community provide curries. Located in the proposed city centre, Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire provides volunteering support and opportunities for the entire county. In Northampton there are over 150 voluntary organisations. West Northamptonshire Council provides grants for the sector to help these organisations remain at the heart of their community.

Let's Celebrate

West Northamptonshire Council's Community Safety and Engagement Team works with voluntary and community sectors on engagement, events and development. The team supports community groups through a forum network which includes disability, ethnicity and faith, LGBTQ, women, and pensioners and young people. The team helps forums and community groups with event management. Northampton's community consistently comes together to celebrate a variety of events.

Diwali

For over 20 years the Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation (IHWO) has hosted Diwali in the town centre. The event features a parade displaying lights, elaborate 3D puppets, lanterns and bhangra music. The parade is walked by hundreds of people including primary school children, local councillors and retirement communities. It is a popular event watched by thousands. In 2021 the IHWO was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.



At the of Community



‘ Marburg and Northampton have been, for many years, linked by an official town twinning. It is upheld by many private friendships that have emerged over the years as well as the formal visits between representatives of both towns. In the now 32 years of our partnership a wonderful friendship has developed, which is reflected in collaborative projects and joint events, such as the MaNo music festival. ’

Dr. Thomas Spies
Lord Mayor of Marburg



Pride

Pride events have taken place in Northampton since 2004. Organised by Northampton's LGBTQ+ and Allies Forum and the Northampton Pride Committee, the event promotes equality, respect, and community engagement. It features a parade with musical performances attracting people from across the county.

Carnival

Northampton carnival is a multicultural event which can be traced back to 1914, and continues to grow and develop, attracting thousands of participants and audience members along the parade route. The event is split into two parts – the carnival parade of floats and troupes, and then stalls and stage performances. Every year there is a theme for the parade, which provides opportunities for creative interpretations that make the parade a spectacular sight.

Governance and Administration

Northampton sits at the heart of the county. It is home to Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Records Office and West Northamptonshire Council. Located in One Angel Square, West Northamptonshire Council was launched in April 2021 as a unitary authority replacing Daventry District, South Northamptonshire, Northampton Borough and part of Northamptonshire County Council. Northampton Town Council resides within the historic Guildhall, and the mayoralty is the oldest in the country, established for over 900 years. Northampton appointed its first Bangladeshi Mayor, Rufia Ashraf, in April 2021.

International Partners

For over 30 years Northampton has been twinned with both Poitiers, France and Marburg, Germany. The partnership supports continental exchange programmes and an annual TwinFest. This popular festival has performances from each locality, a partnership which provides an international platform for local Northampton artists.

In 2009 Northamptonshire became a sister city for Indianapolis, the only county to be partnered with the US city. This relationship is founded upon motorsport connections but has branched into a mutual celebration of culture and community. There have been international exchanges to promote business connections and this relationship continues to thrive.

‘ On behalf of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana, I am pleased to offer my support regarding Northampton's bid to be awarded city status. For the past 12 years, Indianapolis has been a proud Sister City of Northamptonshire who plays a unique and integral part in the fabric of the global racing and automotive industries. These industries are vital to preserve the financial sector and the major automotive trade of Northamptonshire. ’

Joseph H. Hogsett
**Mayor
City of Indianapolis**

At the of The People

Northampton is Europe's biggest town and has the hallmarks of a city.
In 1086 Northampton had an estimated population of 1,500, placing it within the top 20 per cent of settlements within England. Today Northampton is very different and has witnessed significant growth, from a population of 87,000 in 1900 to over 225,000 today, making it the UK's biggest town. Northampton is home to 11,130 businesses and is one of the most entrepreneurial places in the UK, with high employment – currently 78 per cent of the population is employed totalling 136,000.



Open for business

Northampton's central location has established it as a hub for business. In 1973 Carlsberg opened its only UK-based factory, now annually producing 525 million bottles of beer. While Northampton's roots are in manufacturing, today it is at the heart of distribution. The transport and storage sector accounts for 22.8 per cent of businesses.

In 2019, 1,800 new businesses were formed as Northampton performs exceptionally with business start-ups. The town has the foundations of a city, with business-focused regeneration to establish Northampton as a national leader. Upcoming projects have a total gross development value of over £400 million. These include Four Waterside which will provide 60,000 sqft of grade A office space, 90 homes and a new hotel to provide high-quality accommodation for potential tourists. These projects will respect the past while creating a thriving future for the community. Northampton's Old Black Lion and St Peter's Church are to form a new community hub within an area of high deprivation. Northampton has all the hallmarks of a city and this drive for regeneration will ensure it becomes a thriving diverse home for its people, present and future.

Aspirational Education

Northampton has some of the best educational institutions in the country. There are 26 schools and colleges in and around the town centre, with 85% having an Ofsted rating of Good or above. Education facilities in Northampton promote aspirational education providing post-16 students access to skills-training establishing social mobility. This is supported by several local businesses with Cosworth operating several active apprenticeship programmes to provide young people with high-level quality skills in high performance engineering.

Northampton is home to Northampton University with over 12,000 students. In 2018, the University invested £330 million to create a modern state of the art campus within Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone. The facilities include a state-of-the-art Paramedic learning centre where students receive first-class training in stimulated environments. The University of Northampton has been internationally recognised for its commitment to social innovation and entrepreneurship. In 2013, they were the first UK university to be a designated 'Changemaker Campus' by Ashoka U.

‘On behalf of the University of Northampton the application has my full support. ’

Nick Petford, Vice Chancellor of the University of Northampton and Deputy Lieutenant for Northamptonshire



At the of Connectivity



Connectivity is at the heart of Northampton's past, present and future growth. Cities have thrived when they are strategically located to enable businesses to prosper. Northampton provides efficient regional, national, and international links, connecting residents and businesses with major population centres. Having these connections is a key feature of cities.

Well-connected for business and living

I fully support and endorse Northampton's bid for city status. As the county town of Northamptonshire, one of only two historic counties in the United Kingdom without a city, Northampton undoubtedly has all the hallmarks of a city in the very heart of the country. It has a university, excellent schools, it is home to three major sporting teams, and has a historic selection of cultural destinations. It is a rapidly growing town with significance and deserves the elevated status that becoming a city would bring.

Andrea Leadsom, MP

Northampton was one of the first locations linked by the M1 motorway, enabling connectivity since its opening in 1959. It now has three junctions enabling easy access from Northampton to London (south), Birmingham (north-west) and Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester (North). Northampton benefits from key arterial routes including the A45, leading eastwards towards Cambridge, with easy access to the A14, M6 and M40.

Over 30 per cent of the UK's population can travel to Northampton within an hour. Being at the heart of the nation provides businesses and residents with a significant advantage, perfectly placing Northampton at the heart of the nation's future growth.

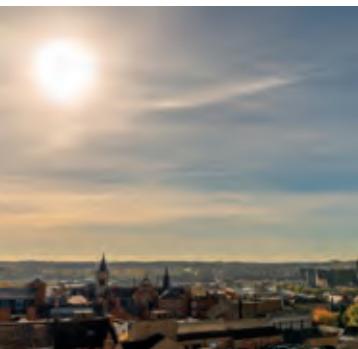
Northampton is home to a Park and Ride, located at Sixfields, which connects visitors to the town centre, and during the Grand Prix connects the town to Silverstone, the heart of Formula 1 racing. There are approximately 158 cycle routes including the Norbital route, which links residential areas with areas of employment and education.

Northampton is working towards completing its goal of carbon neutrality by 2030 and helping the country work towards wider climate targets.

In 2021, the first phase of Network Rail's eco-friendly railway depot was completed which, once phase two is complete, will become the first net-zero carbon 'maintenance delivery unity' on a railway network.

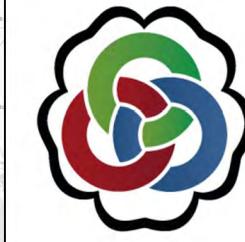
A focus for our future economy

Northampton is at the geographical centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. It currently supports over two million jobs, is one of the fastest growing economies within England and annually brings in £110 billion to the UK economy. The arc is an internationally recognised opportunity and a key component of the nation's future plans, which include building upon the current infrastructure. Northampton is perfectly positioned to be at the heart of these proposed infrastructure developments, ensuring it continues to thrive for residents, businesses, and visitors.



Northampton Related Development Area

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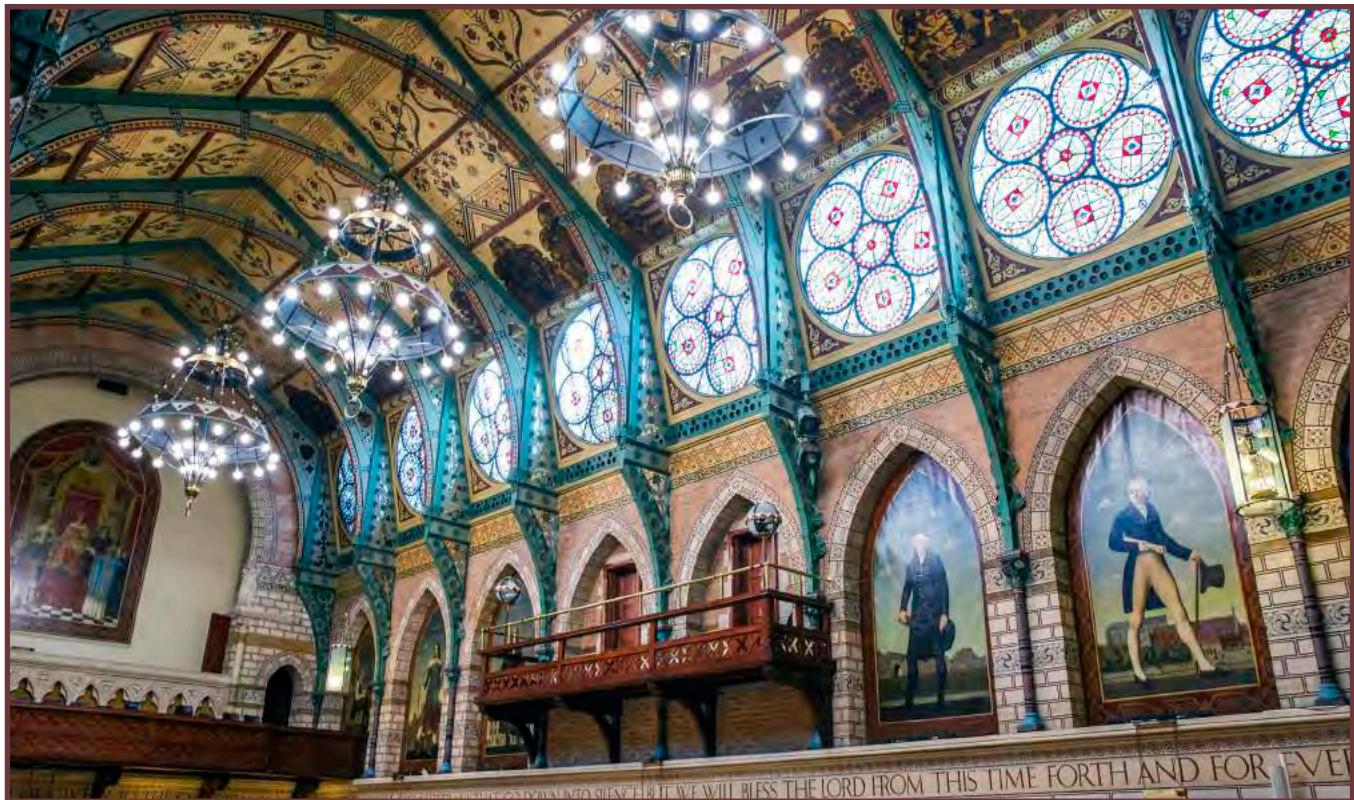
**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

The Guildhall

Northampton
A city at heart



Northampton's stunning Guildhall, a wonderful example of Victorian gothic architecture and perhaps the town's most recognisable building, remains at the centre of civic life today.



Town Centre

Northampton
A city at heart



The centre of Northampton boasts an eclectic mix of fine architecture, housing fantastic independent stores alongside high street favourites, and its blossoming Cultural Quarter.

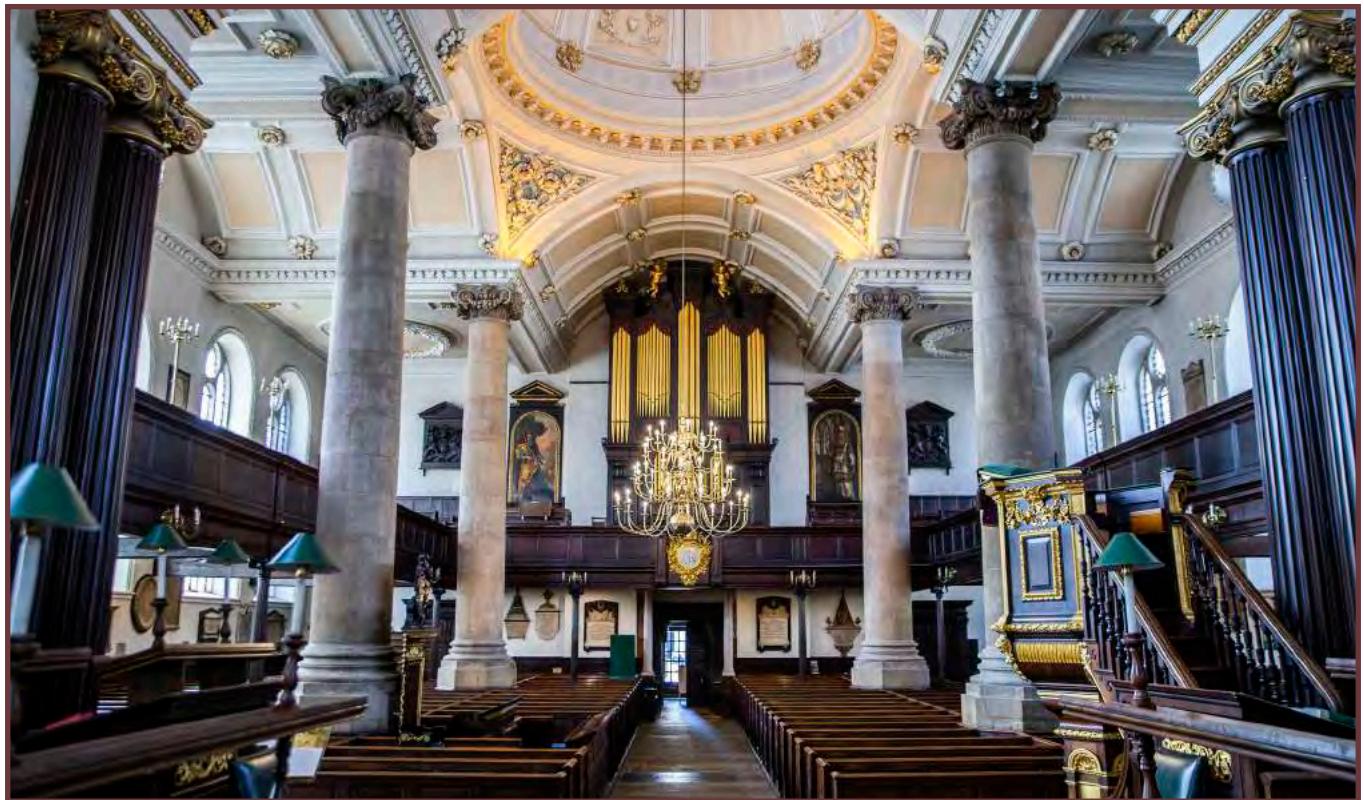


All Saints' Church

Northampton
A city at heart



When the original All Saints Church burned down in Northampton's 1675 great fire, King Charles II donated 1,000 tonnes of timber to its beautiful replacement (an act still celebrated annually).

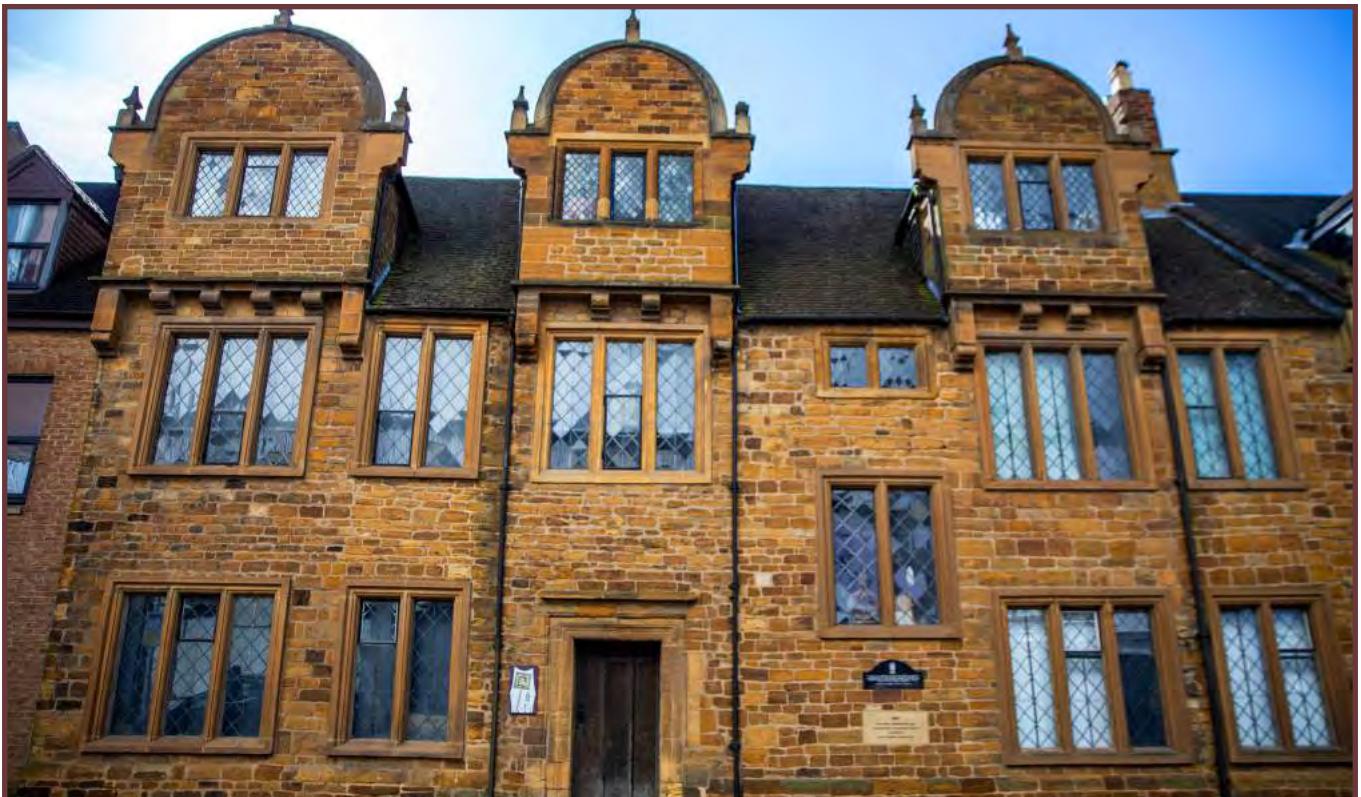


Hazelrigg House

Northampton
A city at heart



Hazelrigg House is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Northampton and now plays host to Looking Glass Theatre, an organisation providing community access to the arts.



Old Black Lion



Lift Tower



Market Square

Northampton
A city at heart

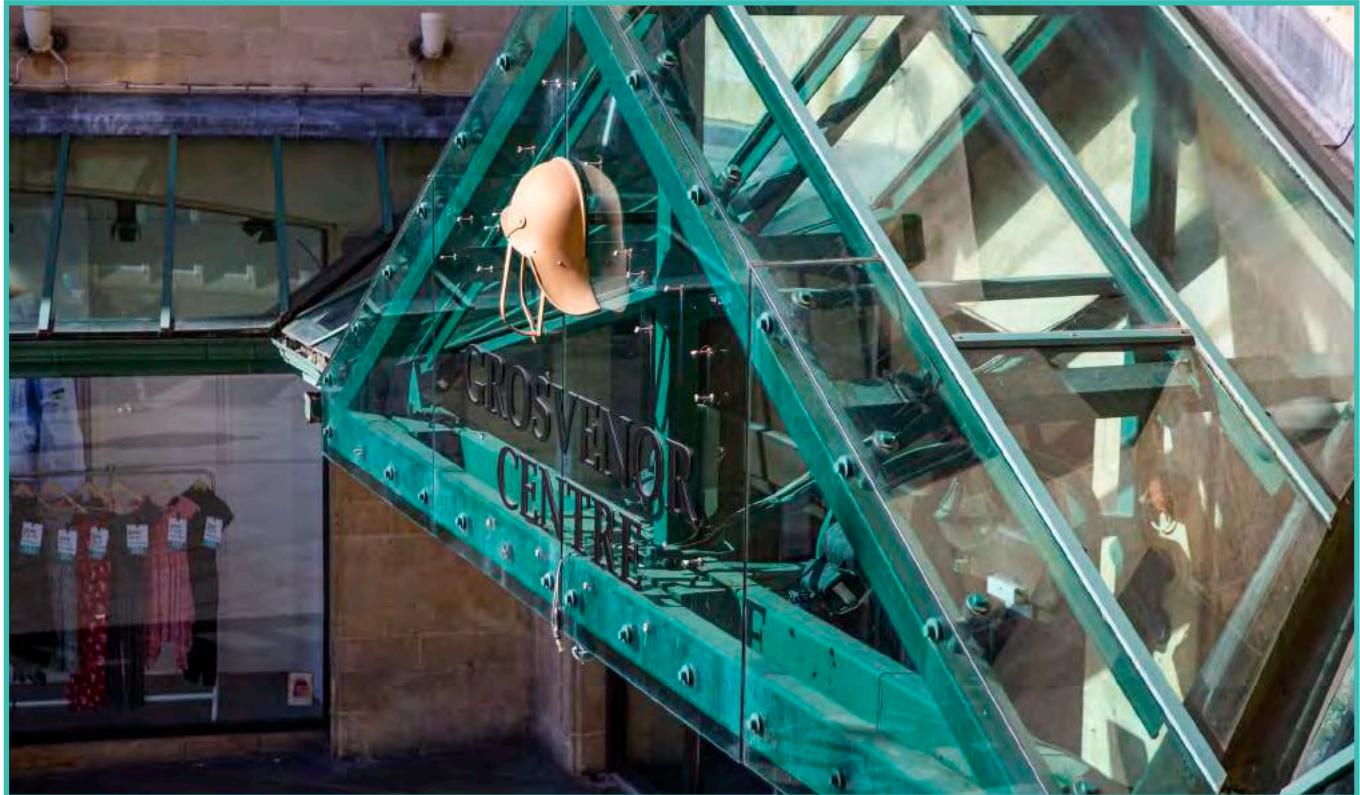


Northampton has been able to hold markets since King Richard I granted it's charter in 1189, and Market Square remains the key civic space which is currently being prepared for an £8m revamp.



Grosvenor Centre

Northampton
A city at heart



Northampton has been able to hold markets since King Richard I granted it's charter in 1189, and Market Square remains the key civic space which is currently being prepared for an £8m revamp.



Abington Street



One of Northampton's primary shopping streets, soon to be refurbished as part of ambitious plans.

Fish Street



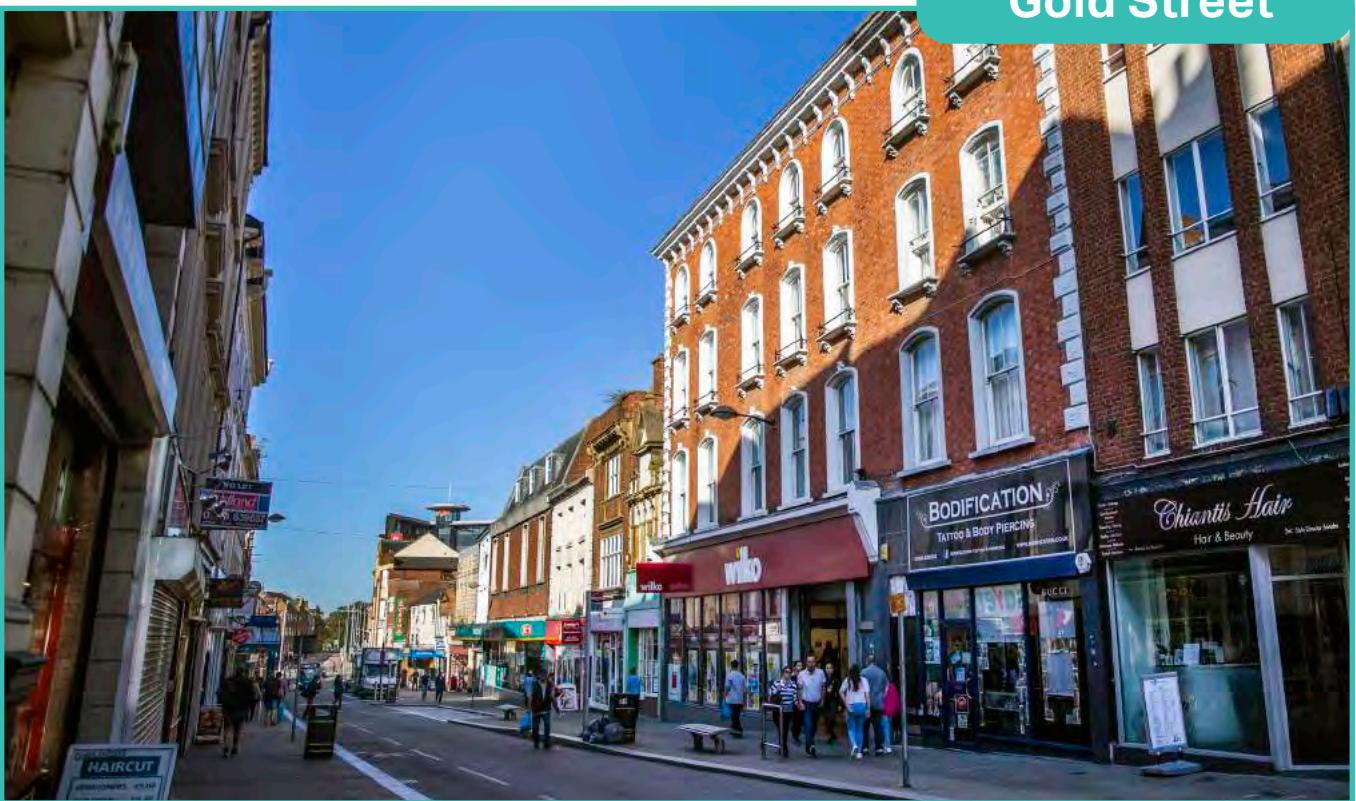
A wonderful little lane offering a taste of the continent at the heart of the UK.

Bridge Street



The primary destination for many seeking a night out on the town.

Gold Street



From home to Northampton's medieval Jewish community
to popular shopping thoroughfare.

Sol Central



Strictly star Kristina Rihanoff and Northampton's England Rugby hero Ben Cohen MBE chose this flourishing leisure hub as home to their Soo Yoga venture.

Train Station



This new, modern railway station opened in 2015 on part of the former site of Northampton's castle.

Bus Station



Strictly start Kristina Rihanoff and Northampton's England Rugby hero Ben Cohen MBE chose this flourishing leisure hub as home to their Soo Yoga venture.

The Ridings Arcade

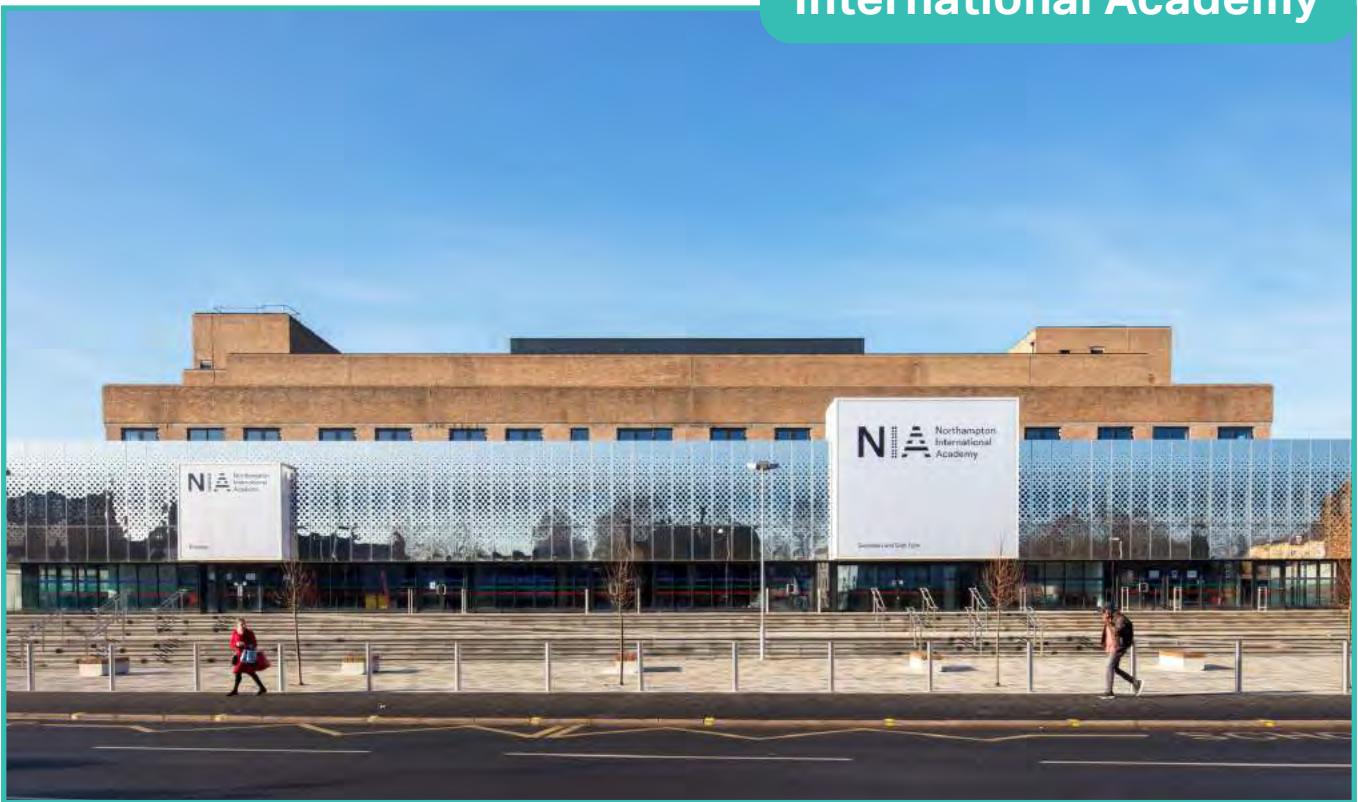




One Angel Square



International Academy



Abington Park



Abington Park is the grounds for the former Abington Manor, once home to Shakespeare's granddaughter Elizabeth Barnard and now a museum.

Becket's Park



Sixfields

Northampton
A city at heart



Sixfields is home to Northampton Town Football Club (known affectionately as the Cobblers) surrounded by an impressive dining, leisure and shopping.



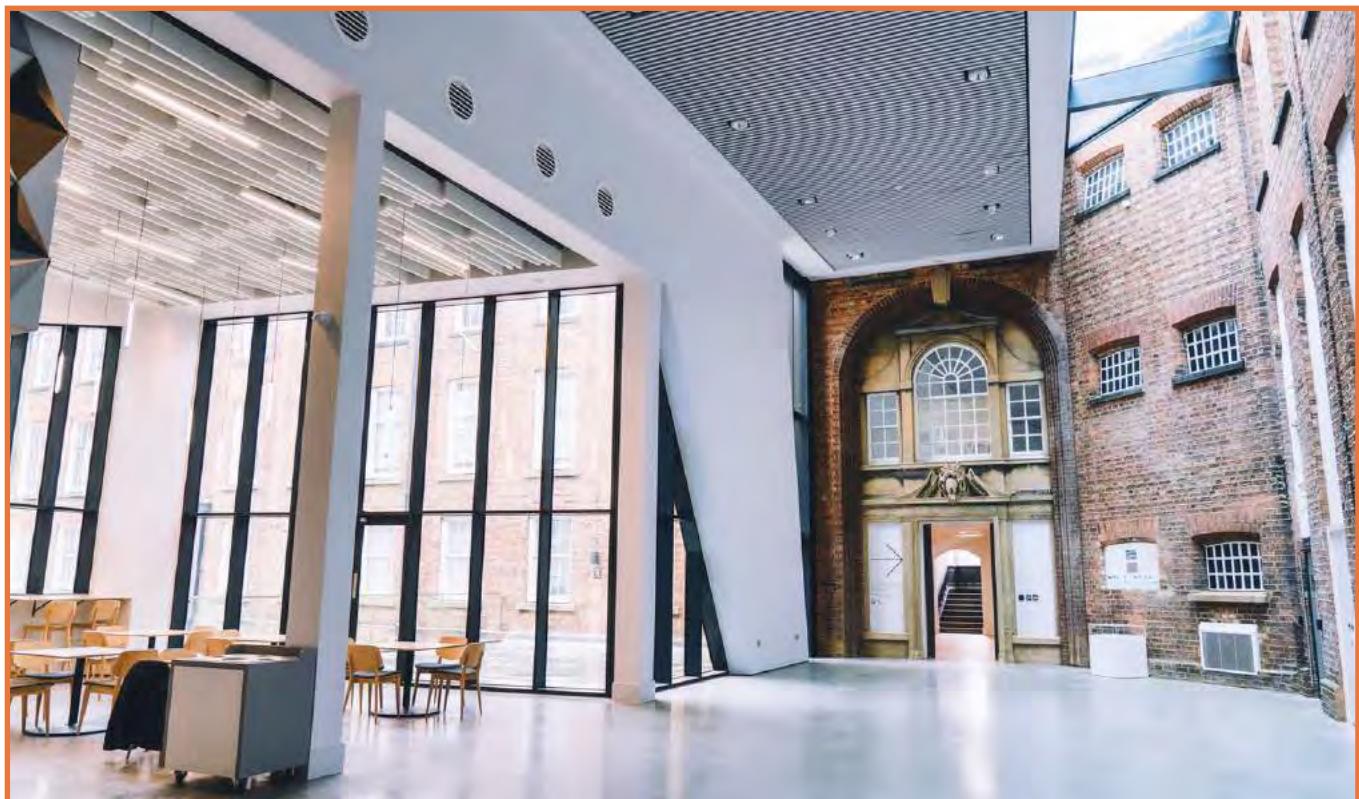
Franklin's Gardens

Northampton
A city at heart



Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

Northampton
A city at heart





St Michael's Church

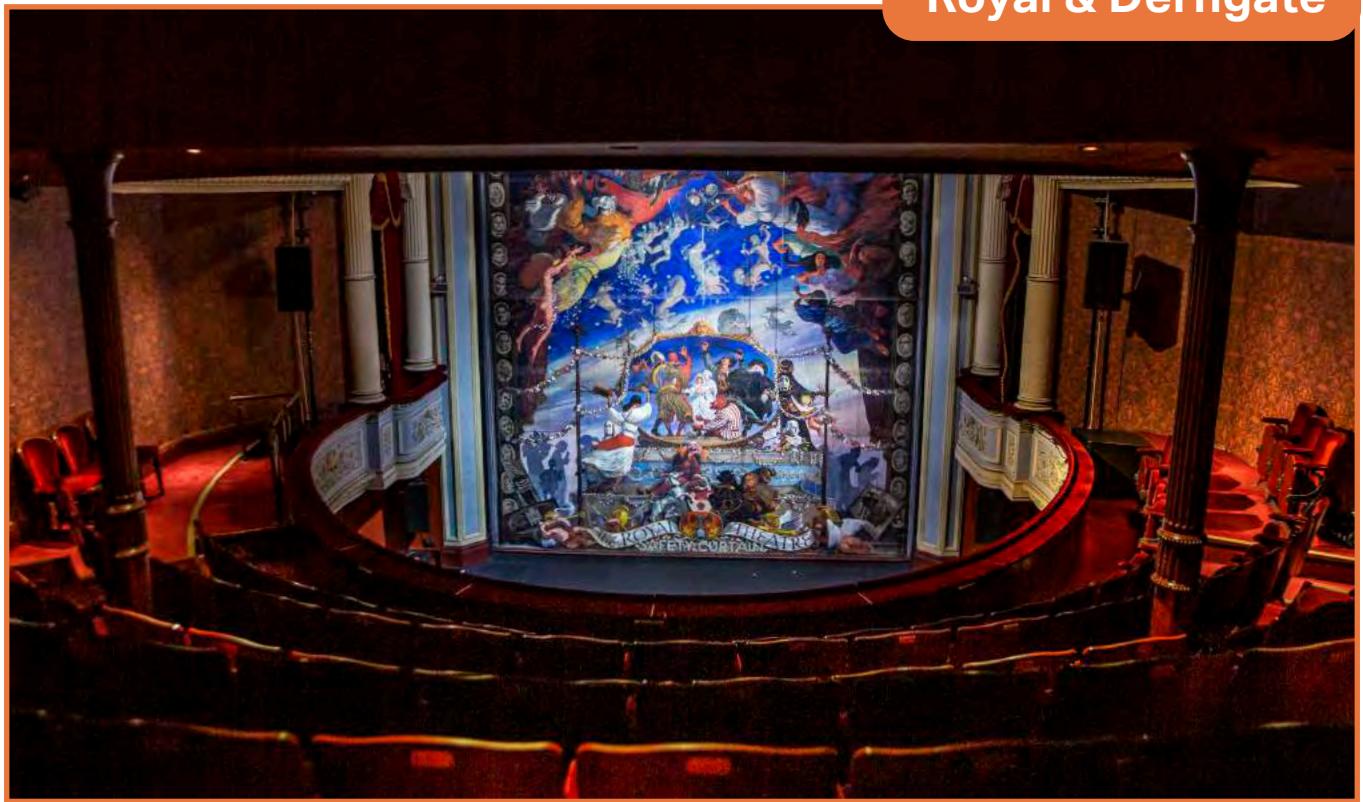
Northampton War Memorial



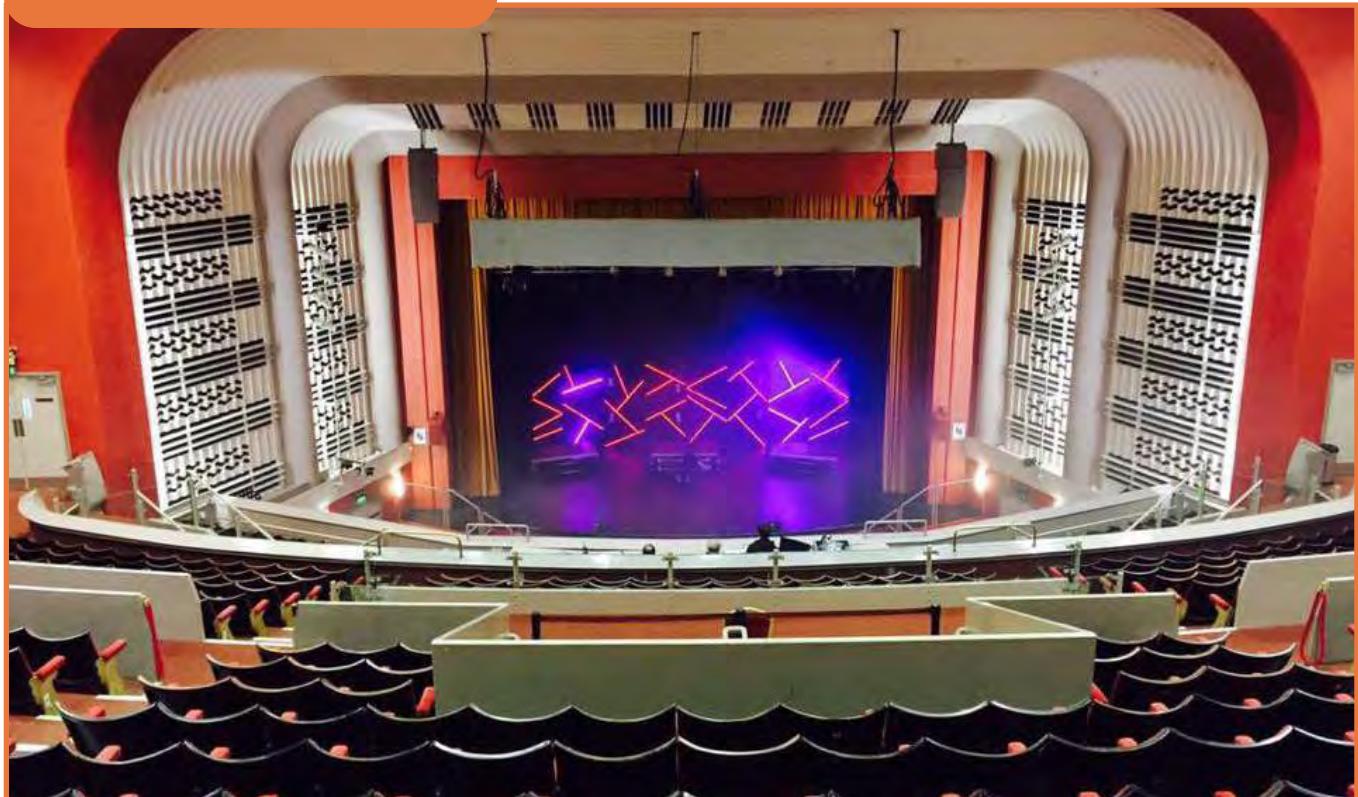
Derngate 78



Royal & Derngate



The Deco Theatre



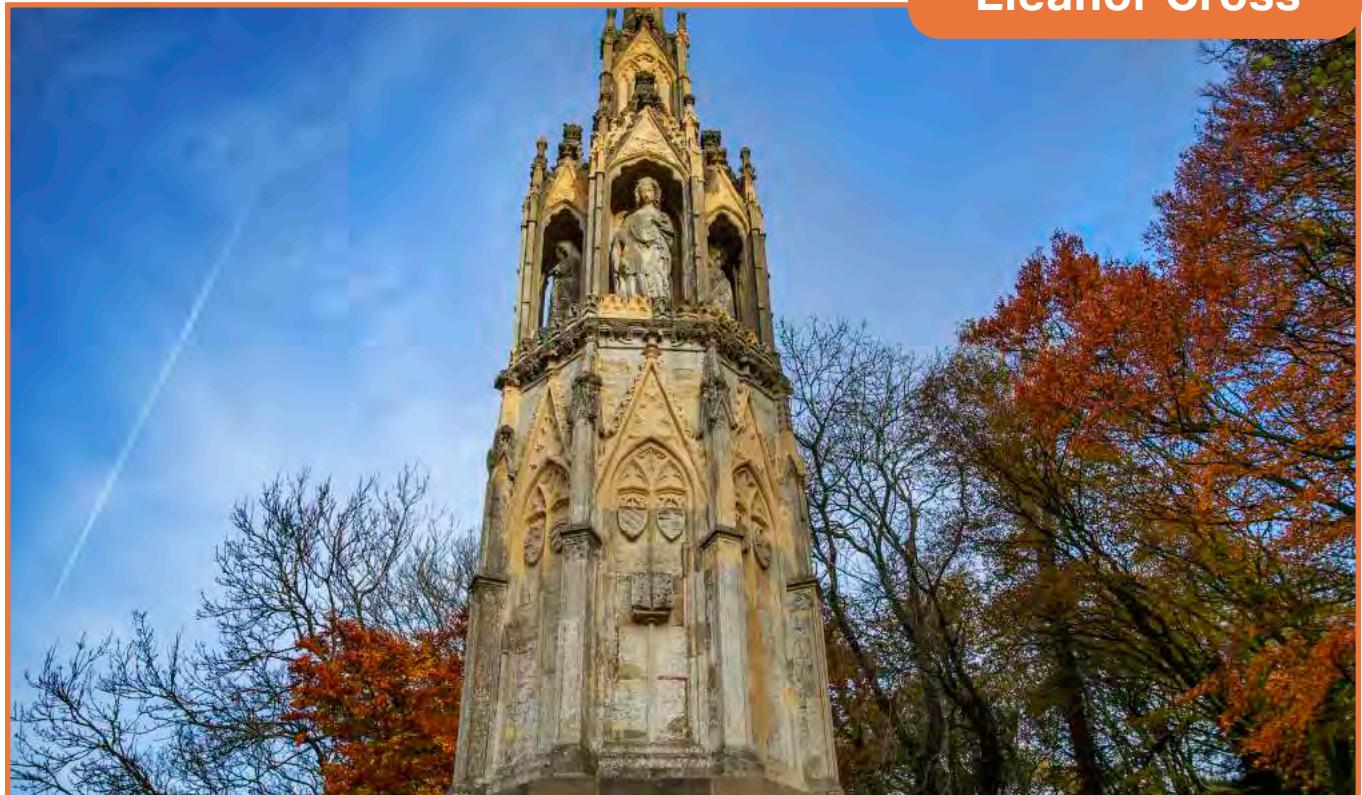
Abington Museum



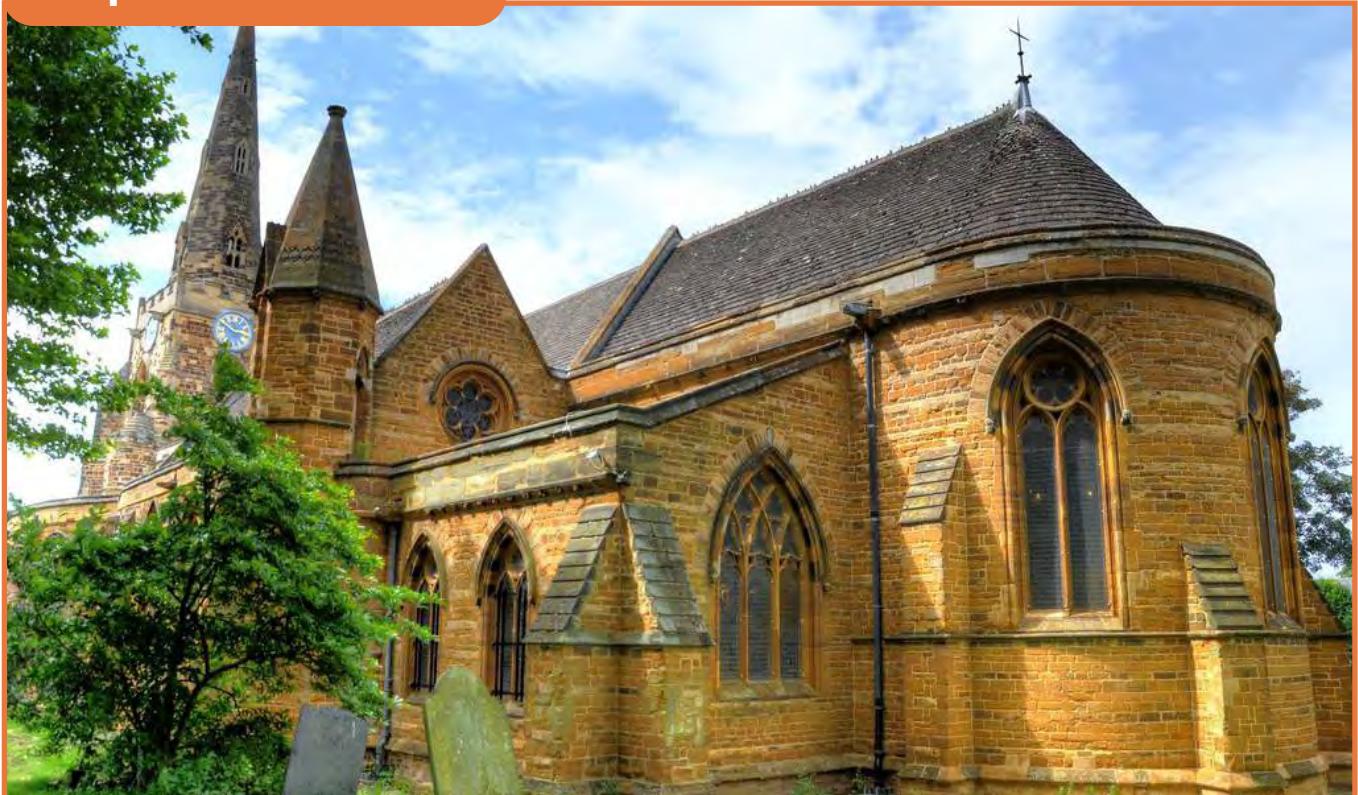
Delapre Abbey



Eleanor Cross



Sepulchre Church



St Giles Church

