



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 4 September, 2025

Week of activities to commemorate 350-year anniversary of the Great Fire of Northampton

The 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of Northampton will be marked with a special event in Market Square to round off a week-long series of free activities across the town.

The finale of a busy events programme will be held on Saturday, 20 September, with an activity day in Market Square from 11am to 7.30pm, to be followed by a service at All Saints' Church at 7.30pm featuring guests including Rev Richard Coles.

A big screen will show a specially commissioned animation by Northampton Film Festival and The Creative Place. The film is the result of a project involving hundreds of local people answering the question, if Northampton burnt down again tomorrow, what would people save, what would people rebuild first and what would make it feel like our Northampton again?

Local children have contributed drawings to the animation, local animators have shared their skills and market-goers have shared their thoughts through workshops, vox pops and on the ideas wall at The Creative Place. The resulting film will premiere at 1.30pm.

Becky Carrier of Northampton Film Festival said: "The project has been supported by CLICK Arts Foundation and West Northamptonshire Council, and has also included other free opportunities to take part in animation workshops and masterclasses with animation professionals.

"We're looking forward to showcasing everyone's work as we come together as a community to commemorate this huge milestone in our town's proud history."

Throughout the day there will be an extended version of The Creative Place's Makers Market featuring artisan producers and creatives, a bar by V&B, a performance from the Bach choir and displays from Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue.

Live music and DJ sets will be provided from the likes of Inspiration FM, United African Association, CLICK Arts Foundation, Saphron and The Performing Room.

West Northamptonshire Council will also be sharing its vision for the redevelopment of Northampton town centre, echoing the efforts to rebuild the town in the wake of the blaze in 1675.

A five-month event calendar has already seen exhibitions, church services, art installations, interactive trails, films, history tours and cultural celebrations take place to mark 350 years since flames ripped through the streets of Northampton, destroying 700 of the 850 buildings in the town centre and claiming 11 lives.

Art historian James Miller, who has spearheaded the Great Fire anniversary project, said: "The Great Fire of Northampton is a hugely significant moment in our local history and we have been thrilled to see so many people coming together in recent months to mark the 350th anniversary in style.

"From the carnival procession to the fire-themed planting for Northampton in Bloom, and everything in between – this has been the summer of the Great Fire and we're looking forward to a spectacular conclusion this September with a week-long series of free activities giving everyone the chance to get involved.

"This will be an opportunity for the county to come together to celebrate Northamptonshire's extraordinary resilience, civic pride and independent spirit. It is that character that shone through 350 years ago and is still very much in evidence today."

The Great Fire of Northampton is believed to have been caused by sparks from an open fire in a home on St Mary's Street, near the former castle site. The fire quickly spread and engulfed the surrounding buildings. As the flames raged, residents sought refuge in the Market Square, but the situation grew increasingly dire, and the authorities ordered the evacuation of the area, with terrified residents forced to flee.

The fire's destructive path left behind a scene of devastation, with prominent buildings such as All Hallows' Church reduced to ashes.

While the blaze caused immense destruction, it also marked a turning point in the town's architectural development. Following the fire, efforts were made to rebuild and revitalise Northampton, leading to the construction of new buildings and a renewed focus on urban planning.

In a remarkable display of community spirit and determination, local residents and businesses rallied together, raising £25,000 to finance the ambitious reconstruction of the town centre, centred around the bustling Market Square.

As part of the anniversary, a spectacular light show will be beamed onto All Saints' Church every night from Monday, 15 September to Saturday, 20 September, while Fiori Musicali will perform a spine-tingling interpretation of Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks at the church at 7pm on Thursday, 18 September.

Father Oliver Coss, Rector of All Saints' Church, said: "The memory of All Hallows' Church and its destruction in the Great Fire of Northampton serves as a reminder of the resilience of the town and its ability to recover and rebuild, even in the face of catastrophic events.

"The events taking place here at All Saints' and in the Market Square this September will channel that community spirit and shine a light on the history and heritage that gives Northamptonshire such a proud identity."

The Great Fire of Northampton anniversary commemorations have been organised by cultural and historical groups from across the county alongside partners including Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID), Northampton Town Council and West Northamptonshire Council.

For more details, visit www.discovernorthampton.co.uk/GFON350

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FINAL WEEK ITINERARY

Saturday, 13 September: Heritage Open Days: Northampton Town Council's History of the Great Fire – Actors from Mystery Tours will be bringing the story of the Great Fire to life around the Guildhall, and local historian Ruth Thomas will be leading a guided walk for visitors from St Mary's Street through the town centre. Heritage information boards will be displayed while visitors can take part in the Great Fire augmented reality trail by downloading the Explore Northampton app.

Sunday, 14 September: The Deco – '*Northampton Remembers...The Great Fire of 1675*' is a powerful celebration of the town's resilience, community spirit, and history presented by the young people and community groups of Northampton. The show brings together local performers, artists, and residents to honour the lives impacted by the fire and showcase the strength and unity of the community. Free tickets can be booked via www.theoldsavoy.co.uk/

Monday, 15 September: 'Fire Fantastic' at All Saints' Church – A stunning light and sound show projected onto the church's exterior. The show will run on a 10-minute loop from 7pm each night until Sunday, 21 September.

Monday, 15 September: Northampton Museum & Art Gallery – a truly immersive mixed-media experience looking at the events of 1675, telling the story of how the fire ripped through the streets of Northampton. The exhibition will be open all week. Entry is free.

Monday, 15 September: University of Northampton – An exhibition of artefacts loaned by Northamptonshire Archives Service. Drawing on original records from the time, the display reveals how the town rebuilt itself in the aftermath - from court disputes over repairs to artisans finding years of work. The collection will be on display until Wednesday, 17 September.

Thursday, 18 September: All Saints' Church – Fiori Musicali will perform a spine-tingling interpretation of Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks, with Penelope Rapson conducting and the Choir of All Saints' Church supporting. Event starts at 7pm. Tickets from £15 per person. Details: <https://www.discovernorthampton.co.uk/events/fiori-musicali-handel-music-for-the-royal-fireworks/>

Friday, 19 September: Tipping Point – A stunning artwork by internationally renowned Luke Jerrams in Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods, Corby. The show uses immersive light, smoke, and sound to simulate the drama of a forest fire alongside a bespoke soundtrack created by BAFTA and Ivor Novello award-winning composer Dan Jones, which includes the sounds of burning trees, whirring chainsaws, and fleeing animals, plus moving global testimonies from individuals who have experienced wildfires. The work will be unveiled from 8pm to 9:30pm on the evenings of 19, 20 and 21 September.

Saturday, 20 September: Great Fire Anniversary Event – The Market Square will be taken over by Great Fire-themed activities from 11am, including a performance from the Bach Choir singing 'Sing We All'. A specially commissioned animation will tell the story of the fire on a big screen and pose the question, if Northampton burnt down again tomorrow, what would people save, what would people rebuild first and what would make it feel like our Northampton again? There will be live music from local bands and DJs. The history of the fire will be told through graphic storyboards, artefacts and records while displays will feature plans for the future regeneration of Northampton. An extended Northants Makers Market will feature stalls from local artisan producers.

Saturday, 20 September: Service of Rededication at All Saints' Church – A public service charting the course of the Great Fire and its impact on Northampton with four distinct themes, Fire, Thunder, Destruction and Rebuild. Featuring music and notable speakers including Rev Richard Coles, the Bishop of Peterborough and the Bishop of Brixworth.

Notes to editors

- Further interviews are available upon request. To arrange, please call Daniel Owens from Orange Juice Communications on 07909 916668 or email daniel.owens@ojpr.co.uk