

## Monitoring the Health of Our Market Towns Pedestrian Flowcount Survey 2010

Every year since 2005 Huntingdonshire District Council has commissioned a footfall study at the end of October/early November for the towns of Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots. The purpose is to measure the number of pedestrians in different locations across each town. Areas chosen as survey points are agreed with the Town Centre Manager/Coordinator from each town and the same points have been used since 2005. The counters stood in each place for 24 minutes on both the Friday and the Saturday. Figures were then extrapolated to produce estimated weekday, weekend and overall weekly average figures. The counters counted pedestrians passing in both directions. The data is used to monitor trends in footfall and as an indicator of the health and vibrancy of our market towns.

The data should be seen in the context of the national picture which, according to data from the Association of Town Centre Management (Springboard High Street Index), shows a UK average fall of 1% in footfall in all towns and cities in the year to October 2010 and a fall of 4% in the year to November 2010.

### Huntingdonshire

The results show an unweighted average **fall** in footfall across all four towns of 2.4%

### Huntingdon

The average weekly count shows a 3.8% **fall** compared to results for 2009. However, the latest count is still higher than recorded in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

The highest results for Huntingdon were outside 4 Chequers Court and outside 20 Chequers Court, both of which counted more than 2.5 times the average total. The lowest numbers of pedestrians counted were at 58 High Street with approximately 13% of the average total and 142-143 High Street with 18% of the average total. The number of pedestrians on the High Street was measured in 11 locations and the results show that footfall continues to be generally higher heading in a western direction from the Chequers Court entrance towards Pizza Express than heading in the eastern direction towards Prima. The High Street areas with the highest footfall counted were outside the 99p Store (formerly Woolworths) and outside The Works bookshop, with the average total counted in these locations being 67% and 81% higher than the average for the town as a whole.

### Ramsey

The weekly count shows a 10.9% **fall** compared to results for 2009. However, last year's count was the highest recorded since annual counts commenced in 2005 and the latest count is still higher than recorded in 2005, 2006 and 2008. It should be noted that Ramsey has a much lower total count than the other towns so there is more volatility in its results.

20 Great Whyte recorded the most pedestrians, with more than 2.6 times the average total. The lowest number of pedestrians passed 79-81 High Street with 26% of the average total and 67 High Street with 32% of the average total.

### St Ives

The weekly count shows a 3.2% **increase** compared to results for 2009. The count is now at its highest since annual counts commenced in 2005. Between 2005 and 2010 the count shows an **overall increase** of 10.8%.

The highest numbers of pedestrians counted in St Ives were outside Boots at 5-6 Sheep Market and outside 9 The Pavement, with around 2.6 times the average total recorded at each of these locations. Lowest results were recorded at Free Church Passage and the Mews, where footfall levels were 25% and 23% of the average total for St Ives respectively.

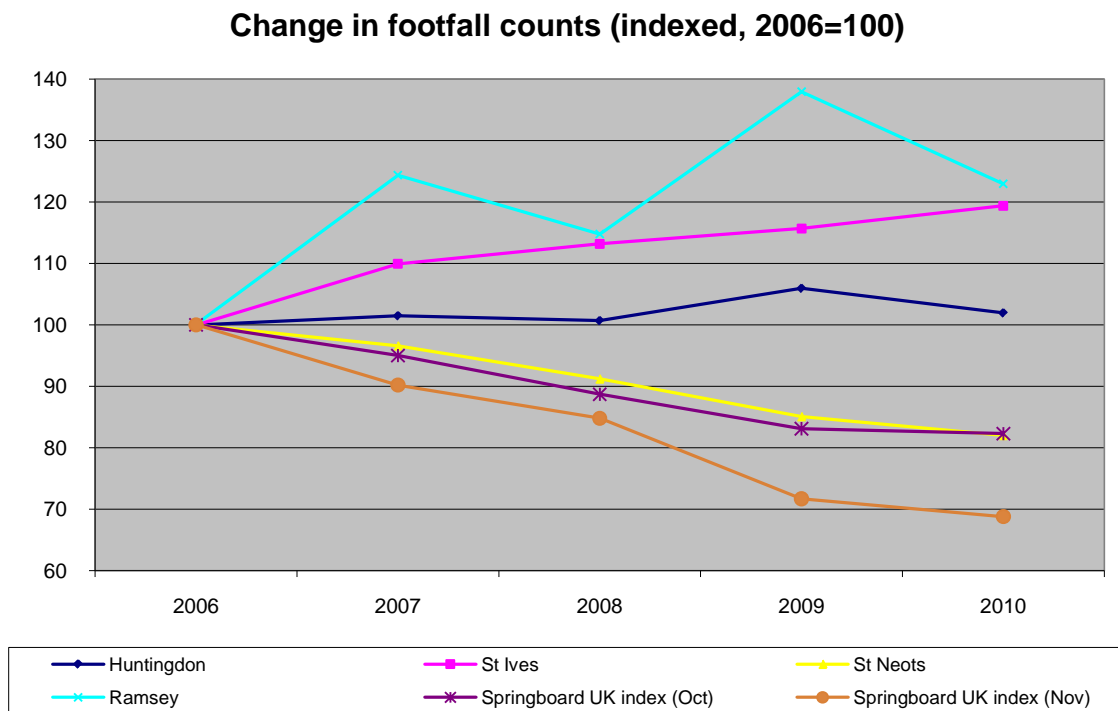
### St Neots

The weekly count shows a 3.6% **fall** compared to results for 2009. Between 2005 and 2010 the count shows an **overall fall** of 13%. The count in St Neots has fallen every year during this period except for 2006 when it gained 6.1% on the 2005 figure.

As last year, the highest numbers of pedestrians were counted where people passed 33 High Street (Boots) and 5 High Street (HSBC bank), with more than 2.5 times the average total recorded at each of these locations. The lowest numbers were again in the same locations as last year, 24 and 8 Market Square with 19% and 11% of the average total footfall respectively.

### Annual changes in footfall counts since 2006:

The graph below shows how footfall counts have changed over recent years. The 2006 footfall levels are used as a baseline since the UK average data is not available before this.



The graph shows that footfall in St Ives has risen every year since 2006. Huntingdon and Ramsey have seen both increases and decreases in footfall during this period but the latest counts for 2010 were higher than was recorded in 2006 in both towns. St Neots has seen year on year decreases in footfall counts since 2006.

However, it should be noted that changes in the Springboard index show that footfall in St Neots has declined at a lower rate than the UK average over this period. Footfall in St Neots is counted on the first or second weekend of November and the 18% reduction in the footfall count for the town since November 2006 is much lower than the 31% reduction in the UK average footfall count recorded over this period.