

# St Neots



A new perspective for developing businesses







# St Neots

Support for success


# a town to enjoy

creative thinking



St Neots is the biggest and fastest growing town in Cambridgeshire, a county which is central to the economic success of Britain.

Originally known for manufacturing, with nearly a quarter of the working age population of the town employed in the sector, St Neots is evolving into a creative capital.



Planned housing developments will see the population of the historic town reaching 40,000 in the next decade. An additional school, more shops, business and community facilities will be built to accompany the social and economic growth.

Historically referred to as the 'crossroads to East Anglia,' St Neots is superbly located for both businesses and residents to prosper:

- Less than an hour's commute to London
- Direct and frequent trains to London King's Cross
- A1 gateway to industrial and commercial centres
- Three international airports within 90 minutes drive
- Easy access to the ports of East Anglia



## Fact:

20% of all houses in Huntingdonshire can be found in St Neots

Employment growth within St Neots has significantly outpaced the region and England as a whole.



St Neots is the largest town in Cambridgeshire with a population of just under 28,000. Over 200 listed buildings, an 800 year old market square, 130 ft high church tower, business parks, industrial estates and the remarkable £2 million Creativexchange are a recipe for success.

The creative industries have been identified by the government as a key sector for a successful economy. The Creativexchange, a unique, purpose built workspace to support the growth of creative businesses, is part of the forward thinking in St Neots, which is also home to technology-based industries in specifically designed light industrial buildings.

St Neots is pivotal to its surrounding villages, acting as the service centre for retail, employment, local administration and business.

The town centre offers an eclectic mix of national/regional retail and independent businesses.

Local businesses and employers benefit from the support of St Neots Town Centre Initiative, Huntingdonshire District Council and strong business networks.

After a hard day's work, the famed River Great Ouse offers an array of leisure and recreational opportunities.

“ With excellent communications and fantastic growth potential, St Neots is definitely a town on the way up. ”

*Alan Huckle, Director, Barretts of St Neots Ltd  
(Century old Department Store)*



## Fact:

Employing 23% more people in St Neots than ten years ago, creative industries are a huge growth sector and account for 7% of the world's GDP.

# Get Connected, Feel Alive

At the 'crossroads to East Anglia' lies St Neots, with an historic town centre and a beautiful riverside setting



## Faster connections

St Neots exploits its road, rail and air links to provide a home for 21st century creative and technology industries in a traditional market town. The A1, with recent major upgrades, supplies a modern road link to London and Edinburgh, while the A14/A428 gives access to Birmingham in the west and the east coast port of Felixstowe.

The East Coast Main Line passes through St Neots, bringing London's King's Cross terminus within 40 minutes journey time - handy for catching the Eurostar in next door St Pancras. The journey to Edinburgh is just 4½ hours.

If your business (or leisure) interests are further afield, Luton, Stansted and Birmingham international airports are easily reached - and are home to low-cost airlines with services to all parts of Europe, as well as mainstream carriers to the rest of the world.

## A town to enjoy

St Neots offers an eclectic retail mix. The 170 commercial and retail units constituting the town centre provide a superb offering to residents and those making a living in the town. The strength of the retail offering is highlighted with 97.5% of St Neots' visitors coming to the town to shop. The town centre reflects St Neots as a whole with its vibrancy. Recent retail assessments have recorded that the town centre is strong, has improving retail yields, provides a 'healthy' convenience offer and has a 'busy' feel. As ever, the retail offering in St Neots is evolving and 9,000 sq metres of floor space is planned to cater for new and expanding businesses.

The recently renovated Market Square and High Street are the historic and beating heart of St Neots. 14,000 car journeys are made along the High Street each day, whilst the Market Square dates from the 12th century and is one of the largest in England. Popular general and farmers' markets are often joined by successful Italian and French themed markets which draw large numbers of spending customers to the town.



St Neots is a thriving town with very good logistics and a strong manufacturing base that works together as a business community.



*Tony Moscrop, Chairman of Dufaylite Developments Ltd,  
Chairman, Manufacturing Club*



## On the beautiful River Great Ouse with a wealth of attractions and activities for residents, tourists and local businesses

### Get connected

- The A1 road, linking London to Edinburgh passes directly to the west
- Direct access to the A428 one of the region's key roads
- London King's Cross within 40 minutes by train
- For international business or recreational travel London Luton and Stansted are easily accessible
- St Neots' tourist attractions within 45 minutes drive for the residents of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area
- Top-rated broadband connections for businesses and homeworkers with an OFCOM classification of 3

### Feel alive

- A town centre which is 'welcoming', offers 'good service' and is 'easy to get around'
- Regatta, dragon boats and raft races on the River Great Ouse
- Community events - Carnivals, Folk Festivals and Christmas Lights
- Relax on the one-mile stretch of waterfront and parkland at Riverside Park
- Water based recreation at Paxton Pits, soon to be one of England's largest nature reserves
- Cultural visits to St Neots Museum, St Mary's Church and Library

For further information on St Neots please call **Sue Bedlow**

Telephone: 01480 387096 • E-mail: [economic.development@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto:economic.development@huntsdc.gov.uk)

# Space to Grow, Support to Thrive

## Firm foundations for rapid growth

### Well planned expansion

'Growth' is the definitive word for St Neots, already the largest town in Cambridgeshire with 28,000 people. 5,000 more homes are planned, including St Mary's Urban Village, and nearly 12,500 new residents are expected by 2026. Developments will offer housing to satisfy the varied needs of a growing community. Loves Farm, just east of St Neots train station is earmarked for 1,250 homes, and Beauchamp Place will provide a range of residential options from 1 bedroom apartments to 4 bedroom houses. 25 hectares of new employment land will accompany the rapid expansion. New facilities for B1, B2 and B8 use will create opportunities to diversify the local employment base.

### Space to work

Incoming businesses also have the choice of a number of excellent industrial parks, such as the long-established Station Road and Cromwell Road Industrial Estates, the 50-unit Little End Road Industrial Estate and the Howard Road Industrial Estate.

### Committed partners

With 46% of residents working locally a strong team approach is key. St Neots Town Centre Initiative and Huntingdonshire District Council work with public and private organisations to improve the viability and vitality of the town. Holistic Healthcheck and Masterplans govern the economic, environmental and societal growth of the town. Key issues such as shopping provision, identification of new shopping sites and market opportunities are rigorously analysed and developed into innovative Action Plans.

### Bright people

Employers have the advantage of a well-educated and skilled local population, with a higher than average number of residents educated to degree level or above. Excellent location and transport links ensure companies can also recruit from outside the town.



Fast growth is the challenge for St Neots to be sustainable. Fortunately we have developed the good habit of working together as a community.



*John Davies, Chairman, St Neots Town Centre Initiative*



## We know what it takes to grow...

St Neots' dedicated support team provides the help your business needs to start or expand

### Accessible support for you and your business

- Town Centre information via the excellent Priorities magazine
- Marketing and networking opportunities on websites and publications
- Retail and Manufacturing Clubs
- Local business funding information on GRANT.net
- Conferencing facilities at Wyboston Lakes and the Priory Centre

### Active investment in our town

- Town Centre Initiative, working to improve the quality of St Neots for residents and businesses [www.stneots.com](http://www.stneots.com)
- St Mary's Urban Village Masterplan
- A comprehensive town transport strategy to improve accessibility
- Making the most of the river - for leisure and new office locations

### Understanding your customers

- Visitor perception surveys
- Footfall surveys
- Retail analysis

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## Primed for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Success

The fastest growing town in Huntingdonshire, St Neots is fuelled by creative thinking.

### Business spirit

For those looking for creativity in all aspects of business St Neots offers the perfect location. A unique sense of community spirit has been fostered among the 2,000 businesses in the local area, with key stakeholders using innovative techniques deployed with flair. Those in the large and prospering manufacturing base can share good business practice at the ever growing Manufacturing Club. For those wishing to network, offer advice or learn from experts St Neots Town Centre Initiative Retail Club and newly formed 601 Club provide unsurpassed opportunities. A plethora of well planned local festivals and creative use of the River Great Ouse also ensure local traders benefit from visitor footfall.

### Creativexchange

The Creativexchange is an innovative and sustainable building to support creative entrepreneurs in St Neots. The recently constructed and architecturally striking building demonstrates St Neots' commitment to working with the evolving creative industries of the 21st century. Creative industries, manufacturing and retail together form the basis of a successful and sustainable local economy.

Businesses as varied as advertisers, architects, furniture makers and software designers are part of a creative sector which is being pinpointed by government to drive the economy forward. St Neots' fresh outlook now offers companies support for sustained and diversified growth and the chance to create jobs through exploiting intellectual property.



“Creativexchange as a concept is superb and as a place to work is quite stunning. The building looks like it has been dropped into St Neots from the City but due to its central location we are able to establish our presence within the local business community whilst being able to serve a cracking cross section.”

*Mark Davies, Managing Director, Blue Prawn Design & Marketing*



## St Neots...recognising creative industries as key to economic success.

### Creative Industries are vital to new and existing businesses in the 21st Century as they:

- account for 7% of the world's GDP
- employ 2 million workers in the U.K.
- have been identified by government as a key factor in the success of the economy
- are growing as a sector at 10% per annum
- are a huge growth industry
- have resulted in both local secondary schools being awarded Specialist Status for creativity
- employ 23% more people in St Neots than ten years ago
- have extra land allocated in St Neots for future developments

### The Creativexchange offers start-up businesses:

- reception areas
- networking space
- meeting rooms
- studio space
- hot desks
- shared training
- display and marketing opportunities

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## Huntingdonshire's market towns are growing and evolving

Get a new perspective on Huntingdonshire. Read on to find out why your business should be part of the ambitious and exciting development of the region.

Be part of London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough (LSCP) growth area running from North London to the City of Peterborough.

### The statistics speak for themselves:

- 129,000 planned houses in LSCP between 2001-2026
- 11,200 new homes to be built in Huntingdonshire by 2026
- 160,000 residents
- 13,000 new jobs by 2026
- 7,200 business establishments
- Northstowe - a planned new town
- More than 26,000 people will be in new homes by 2026

### More homes, more people, more money, more spending power

- Take advantage of the disposable income of our population, with higher weekly (£523.60) and annual pay (£27,476) than the national average (NOMIS 2008)
- With average property prices 13.8% less than the UK average (April - June 2009), our population has a bit to spare



As Huntingdonshire continues to grow we will ensure that employment, leisure and retail requirements for existing and future residents are met.



*Richard Probyn, Planning Service Manager, HDC*



From national retail to classic craft shops, if you are an established business or upcoming artist, we think you can find what you are looking for. Our beautiful towns offer the following advantages, each with a touch of their own personality:

- Space to grow – surrounded by open space and with a strong growth agenda, all our towns represent a good prospect for businesses who want to grow with us
- Support to thrive – dedicated support for businesses, with the provision of appropriate skills and the necessary investment in infrastructure required for growth
- Get connected – a central location and unsurpassed transport links to centres of national business excellence
- Feel alive – beautiful countryside, life affirming rivers and wonderful opportunities for outdoor recreation and relaxation means life out of work couldn't be better

For more information on Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey see their individual brochures in our New Perspectives series

• email: [economic.development@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto:economic.development@huntsdc.gov.uk) • Telephone: **01480 387096**



## Why locate in St Neots?

- **Space to Grow** – Be part of the town's evolution as a Creative Capital. Position your business to serve the biggest town in Cambridgeshire.
- **Support to Thrive** – From St Neots Town Centre Initiative, Business Networks and Huntingdonshire District Council.
- **Get Connected** – St Neots enjoys great transport links to London and other business centres North, South, East and West.
- **Feel Alive** – Lose yourself in creative pursuits or escape to our tranquil river and beautiful countryside.

## Fact:

In March 2009 'The Independent' newspaper rated Huntingdonshire as the 15th best place to live in the country.



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