

The Town Council accepted the offer of the County Council, to purchase the land for £1.00 plus legal costs, so that finally it could control what happened with the site. Plans were drawn up after discussions with the Highways Department of Northamptonshire County Council and East Northamptonshire Council and approaches were made to commercial organisations who donated various sums of money.

Two new seats were ordered, one of the original seats refurbished, new paving laid to cover the whole area and fresh roses were donated and planted'

Thus on 17th September 1994, a sunny Saturday morning, Town Mayor Cllr Liz Treacy accompanied by Cllr John Chatburn, Chairman of East Northamptonshire Council, declared "Coronation Gardens" formally reopened. A little late, but the gardens still mark both the Coronation and the 40th Anniversary of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and provide a further facility for the town.



Queen Elizabeth II Rose

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## CORONATION GARDENS



Queen Elizabeth's coronation gown—Norman Hartnell

Queen Elizabeth II Rose

# Coronation Gardens

Oundle Road, Thrapston

## “Canary Court”

The site adjacent to the churchyard of St. James' Parish Church of Thrapston had been unsightly and called a “bomb-site” by some since 1933 when house clearance and road widening had removed a row of cottages and a courtyard known as “Canary Court”. This was the point in time when “Titchmarsh Lane” had given way to Oundle Road, as the rural byway was converted into a new major through route to Oundle, effectively by-passing the village of Titchmarsh.

## Time passed ...

From that point until the early 1950's, the area had been fenced off and used by Northamptonshire County Council for the storage of the snowplough. The Highways Department Depot had for many years been opposite, alongside the fish and chip shop; the yard was later used as the base for Keystone Coaches, before they moved to the top of Oundle Road. Prior to that the site along with the public car park, Sackville Street, Nene and Montague Courts and the Clinic, were all part of the grounds of “Thrapston House” in Huntingdon Road, once the offices of the former Thrapston Rural District Council. By 1950 the house and land were in the ownership of Northamptonshire County Council. The site is now beneath the Co-op store and its goods delivery area, though the outer wall of the yard was rebuilt to divide between the store car park and the existing public car park on Oundle Road and Sackville Street.

The Parish Council, as it then was, were left with the responsibility of clearing up the site and ‘civilising’ it before it became a public eyesore.

## The idea for “Coronation Gardens” is born

This is where the Girl Guides came in during 1953; armed with a variety of tools, they planted rose beds with Queen Elizabeth roses and other flower beds. They persuaded the then Parish Council, the Rotary Club and a private individual to donate three seats and named the whole area “Coronation Gardens” in honour of HM Queen Elizabeth II, whose Coronation year it was.

## Time passed - again .....

Over the next 40 years, the Parish and later the Town Council had maintained the area, removing the litter etc., but had never owned the site. Over the years ‘vandals’ ruined one seat, which was repaired, but gradually two of the seats were whittled away and were subsequently removed as a danger to the public. The gravel areas between the seats and the flower beds eroded, and the soil in the flower beds became progressively poorer over time as the nutrients leached away and the whole area became more and more weed ridden. It had reached a point where once again, the sight was becoming an ‘eyesore’.



## Coronation Gardens Revived

In 1993 the High Street was being repaved with granite sets and cast iron street furniture was being introduced to tidy up the plethora of odd signs, thus giving back to the High Street some of its lost character, as befits this ancient market town. (The Liberty of a Market was granted to the town by Royal Charter awarded by King John in 1205AD.)