

From: **Squires, Teresa** <Teresa.Squires@nationaltrust.org.uk>
Date: 1 December 2017 at 16:52
Subject: RE: Question for the AGM
To: Ivor Rowlands <ivorrowlands09@gmail.com>, AGM <AGM@nationaltrust.org.uk>
Cc: Antony Penrose

Dear Ivor,

I was also pleased to meet you recently, as it is so much easier to speak to a real human being rather than a disembodied email. I fully understand the level of commitment you show to the Guildhall, and the frustration you feel with the slow pace of action.

As indicated, we now have a date to meet with the council, in March 2018. We had hoped for earlier, but there were no dates available to co-ordinate the many diaries, and also to work around our financial year end in February.

I would like to reassure you that we will do everything we can to ensure that the building has a solid future and can be a real asset to the people of King's Lynn.

I will look out for you at future events in the town – I had hoped to be at the KL Festival reception at the Guildhall on Wednesday, but unfortunately I was still at a meeting in Suffolk at 5pm.

With best wishes,

Teresa

From: Ivor Rowlands [mailto:ivorrowlands09@gmail.com]
Sent: 15 November 2017 15:59
To: AGM; Squires, Teresa
Cc: Antony Penrose
Subject: Re: Question for the AGM

Dear Teresa

Thank you for making yourself known to me at the Tourism Forum AGM last week. I was so pleased to get the chance to speak to you face to face and I hope you were better able to understand my concerns and suggestions.

I was delighted to hear that you intend assembling some of your colleagues at the Guildhall to review the situation.

As I explained to you when we met, coming from a business background I do struggle with the slow pace of development in the public sector, so I would be grateful if you could give me some idea of when I will hear back from you.

I have copied Antony Penrose on this email, as I know he is keen to be kept in touch with the National Trust's progress on this matter.

Many thanks

Ivor Rowlands

01553 670110
07824 306404

On 9 November 2017 at 14:29, Ivor Rowlands <ivorrowlands09@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear Paul

I do not share your confidence in the Borough Council's ability to come up with a satisfactory solution and do not feel that it was misfortune that led to the failure of the HLF bid. I am also dismayed with the suggestion that my photographs will be useful in future discussions with the Borough Council. They were intended to be used by the National Trust as a wake up call to the reality of what you are facing if you do not get more closely involved.

On a more positive note, I was delighted to get the chance to meet Teresa Squires yesterday. I think I managed to get across in a more appropriate and constructive way what the National Trust should do to help this situation. Teresa has agreed to get a number of your colleagues together to look at the Guildhall in the near future and I look forward to hearing back from her as to when this may happen.

Regards

Ivor

Ivor Rowlands

01553 670110
07824 306404

On 8 November 2017 at 10:12, AGM <AGM@nationaltrust.org.uk> wrote:
Dear Mr Rowlands,

Thank you for the follow up to your original AGM question with further background information about St George's Guildhall and for providing images which can be used in future discussions with the local Borough Council. From reading your correspondence I appreciate your very strong desire to ensure the right thing is done for this special place.

I am aware of the 1951 rescue plan which resulted in the long-term leasing arrangements for the Guildhall so that it could be used as an asset for the people of King's Lynn. I believe the Borough Council has a good track record of delivering historic regeneration in King's Lynn in conjunction with the Heritage Lottery Fund. It was unfortunate that the latest application for a national-level HLF grant for regenerating the Guildhall complex was unsuccessful. However, the National Trust is confident that the Council is working on a new scheme to secure the future of the building. We keep an open dialogue with the Council officers and our own regional NT conservation specialists are available to give advice on the new plans when developed.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

Paul Boniface

The Secretary

From: Ivor Rowlands [mailto:ivorrowlands09@gmail.com]
Sent: 02 November 2017 16:15
To: AGM
Subject: Re: Question for the AGM

Thank you, Paul.

You may be aware of a further exchange of emails with your colleague Sophie Grant today. To help manage my expectations, and to keep my many inquisitors at bay, please can you give me an indication of when I might expect to get a fuller reply.

Regards

Ivor

Ivor Rowlands

01553 670110
07824 306404

On 2 November 2017 at 15:37, AGM <AGM@nationaltrust.org.uk> wrote:
Dear Mr Rowlands

Thank you for your email dated 29 October to various addressees at the Trust. I am replying on their behalf.

I see that my colleague Sue May has already explained the Trust's position about the Guildhall. However, I recognise you remain unsatisfied. I will look at this issue further and reply in due course.

Yours sincerely

Paul Boniface
The Secretary

From: Ivor Rowlands [mailto:ivorrowlands09@gmail.com]
Sent: 29 October 2017 10:01
To: AGM; Ghosh, Helen; John Sell; Pons, Caroline; Squires, Teresa; Parker, Tim (Gardens and Countryside Manager)
Cc: Antony Penrose
Subject: Re: Question for the AGM

Dear National Trust

I have hesitated to respond to the email below, because I am dismayed, frustrated and almost lost for words with the National Trust's failure to take this issue on board.

I'd like to remind you of the following claim, from National Trust's own website:

" We're a charity founded in 1895 by three people who saw the importance of our nation's heritage . . . and wanted to preserve them for everyone to enjoy. . . . these values are still at the heart of everything we do. . . for ever, for everyone. . . We restore them, protect them and open them up to everyone. For the Trust, conservation has always gone hand-in-hand with public access. We welcome everyone to explore. . . "

If you are in any doubt as to the historical significance of this building, then I urge you to read the attached notes.

It is shameful that the Trust seeks to revert to an agreement dating back nearly 70 years, holding the Borough Council responsible for a property of such significance. The political and economic environments were very different in 1951, when the Council agreed a 99-year lease on the Guildhall from the Trust. For the Trust to not recognise the changing nature of local government finances in the intervening years is a blatant failure in your principles and a slap in the face to the council-tax payers in the borough.

The secretive, narrow minded and dilatory approach with which both the Trust and Council are pursuing their plans for the building is driving it into the ground. I will send you separately some recent photographs showing just how badly the fabric of the building is deteriorating.

Whatever the legal status of the lease agreement between the National Trust and Borough Council, the Trust has the expertise, experience, resources and people to look after this kind of building. As is abundantly clear from the failure of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid, the Council does not have this expertise.

I urge you to consider the good intentions of those who came to the rescue of the Guildhall all those years ago, and work together with the local community to find a successful outcome for this building that will bring it back into regular and sustainable use.

To put the strength of local feeling towards the Guildhall into context, in a recent online poll run by the Eastern Daily Press, 54% of readers who voted to nominate their choice for Historic England's "100 places", supported St George's Guildhall as Norfolk's preferred candidate for this accolade, beating Norwich Cathedral into second place with just 7%. Quite a remarkable endorsement from a Norwich-based paper.

Whether or not the Trust decides to utilise its resources is in your gift, but please do not hide behind a 70-year-old agreement.

I look forward to your more positive response and would welcome the opportunity to meet you in the Guildhall with some of my associates, where we might discuss a more hopeful outcome.

Yours sincerely

Ivor Rowlands

01553 670110
07824 306404

On 24 October 2017 at 16:52, AGM <AGM@nationaltrust.org.uk> wrote:
Dear Ivor,

Thank you again for submitting a question to this year's AGM. We had far more questions than time available to answer them all. As your question wasn't answered on the day, I am emailing you the response:-

Thank you to Mr Rowland for submitting this question. Firstly, I'd like to reassure you that the Guildhall and its long-term future are a concern for the National Trust.

As many people with an interest in the Guildhall will be aware, the hall and associated buildings that are owned by the Trust are leased on a long-term basis to Kings Lynn Borough Council until 2056 on a full repairing lease, which ensures the building will remain in good condition.

Whilst the lease does not contain any specific requirements around how the building is used and made accessible, both the council and the National Trust have been mindful of the importance of maintaining access, and have sought to find the right balance of how such an important and historic building can be used.

We have been pleased to learn that the Kings Lynn Festival has recently moved their offices into the Guildhall and will be looking at opportunities to offer rental of the galleries and encouraging more use of these spaces.

It is a shame that the council's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a major grant to rejuvenate the site was unsuccessful earlier this year and we understand that the council is now re-visiting their plans for the site. We are working with the Council to provide support and advice as those plans move forward.

Finally, I'd like to offer my assurances that we will continue to stay in regular contact with the Council until a clearer future for the Guildhall has been defined.

Kind regards
Sue

Sue May
Governance Project Support Co-ordinator
Tel. 01793 817637

From: Ivor Rowlands [mailto:ivorrowlands09@gmail.com]
Sent: 24 October 2017 13:53
To: AGM
Subject: Re: Question for the AGM

Dear Sue

I was disappointed that my question wasn't raised at the AGM - not even on the "Questions and Answers" section of the AGM webpage.

Please can you let me know when I can expect to get the written reply that you referred to in your email of 5th October?

Many thanks

Ivor Rowlands

01553 670110
07824 306404

On 5 October 2017 at 15:54, AGM <AGM@nationaltrust.org.uk> wrote:
Dear Ivor,

Thank you for getting back to me on this. I will keep your question on the AGM register.

Kind regards
Sue

Sue May
Governance Project Support Co-ordinator
Tel. 01793 817637

From: ivorowlands09@gmail.com [mailto:ivorowlands09@gmail.com]

Sent: 05 October 2017 15:50

To: AGM

Subject: Re: Question for the AGM

Dear Sue

Many thanks for your reply.

Although this is a very specific question I feel it is important that it is brought to the attention of the AGM audience.

I would be happy for the answer to be emailed as soon as available, but wouldn't want this to be instead of being raised on the day.

Regards

Ivor

Ivor Rowlands
[07824 306404](tel:07824306404)
Sent from my LG Mobile

----- Original message-----

From: AGM

Date: Thu, 5 Oct 2017 11:51

To: Ivor Rowlands;

Cc: AGM;

Subject: RE: Question for the AGM

Dear Mr Rowlands,

Thank you for submitting a question to be asked at this year's AGM. I have added it to the register and will forward it to the appropriate person to investigate and provide a response. If time doesn't

allow for your question to be raised on the day, the response will be emailed to you afterwards. However as this is a very specific question I was wondering if you would like the response emailed to you as soon as it is ready rather than waiting until on or after 21st October? Perhaps you could let me know.

I'm sorry you won't be able to join us at the AGM. It sounds like you will be busy in your role as a Town Guide and I hope the weather is good for you that day. You are welcome to catch up with the AGM by watching the live webcast which will also be available after the event at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/annual-general-meeting

Kind regards
Sue

Sue May
Governance Project Support Co-ordinator

 NATIONAL TRUST

Address: Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon, SN2 2NA
Tel. [01793 817637](tel:01793817637)

From: Ivor Rowlands [mailto:ivorrowlands09@gmail.com]
Sent: 02 October 2017 21:12
To: AGM
Subject: Question for the AGM

Dear NT

I would like to submit a question to the AGM, please. . .

"St George's Guildhall in King's Lynn is the largest and oldest guildhall in England. It is mostly closed to the public and NT members, neglected, under-used and in desperate need of maintenance and repair. In the light of the continued and repeated failure of your tenant, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, to update and maintain the buildings for regular use, please can the Trustees explain why this unique heritage asset is not a greater priority for the National Trust and what they intend to do about it?"

I am a long standing member of some 30 or so years, membership number [23494986](#). I am unable to attend the AGM in person as I am on duty as a King's Lynn Town Guide on 21st October and will be showing a group of visitors the outside of St George's Guildhall.

I would be grateful if you could confirm whether or not my question will be raised.

Many thanks.

Ivor Rowlands

[01553 670110](tel:01553670110)
[07824 306404](tel:07824306404)