



Lynn Art Culture Heritage

To: Cllr Brian Long, Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds – BCKLWN
Mr Ray Assirati, Mr Rob Delafield
Ms Hilary McGrady, Ms Caroline Pons – National Trust

1st November 2018

Dear all

St George's Guildhall King's Lynn

We welcome the foundation of a charitable trust to undertake a major regeneration of and ongoing investment in St George's Guildhall complex, with the intention of creating a heritage and cultural asset of national and international significance.

We see this benevolent act as being very much in the same spirit of ambition and generosity as was demonstrated by Alexander Penrose and Lady Ruth Fermoy in the 1940s and 50s and that resulted in the formation of the King's Lynn Festival and the creation of an arts centre at the Guildhall in 1951.

Built in 1410, St George's Guildhall was first recorded as being used as a theatre in 1442. According to the Theatres Trust, it has been used as a theatre for more than half of its 608-year history. It is the oldest theatre in the UK by over 200 years.

Research undertaken by Professor Matthew Woodcock of UEA supports the theory that William Shakespeare performed at the Guildhall in 1592, making St George's Guildhall the only existing theatre in the world that can claim that Shakespeare performed there.

The grade 1 listed St George's Guildhall is the largest and oldest medieval guildhall in England, but there is no doubt that its theatrical credentials provide the greatest opportunity to develop the complex into a venue of national and international significance.

A major investment in the interior of the Guildhall, allowing greater access and comfort for audiences and improved facilities for performers, will allow development of the performing arts beyond anything that has been possible in the past. This will allow a schedule of performance to be created with artists of international standing and attracting audiences from near and far to discover the wider cultural heritage of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

The announcement of the 1st King's Lynn Shakespeare Festival, scheduled for the Guildhall in April 2019 and featuring one of the most famous screen and stage actors in the world, is an indication of what may be possible in future.

It is our hope that an agreement can be reached between the charitable trust, the Borough Council and the National Trust, that will satisfy the requirements of the whole community and secure the future of the Guildhall for future generations to enjoy, carrying on a theatrical tradition that goes back over 600 years.



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The collective experience of the undersigned is available to support this process in any way possible and we look forward to being involved in this exciting project at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Dr Robert G W Anderson	FSA, FRSE, FRSC, President & CEO Science History Institute, former Director British Museum
Amanda Arterton	West Norfolk G & S Society, Professional Actor, Business Woman.
Nicholas Balaam	Chair King's Lynn Preservation Trust, Heritage Management Consultant.
Cllr Lesley Bambridge	Vice Chair St Margaret's with St Nicholas Forum.
Ian Barton	Chair King's Lynn Community Cinema Club.
Esther Boehm	Chair West Norfolk Artists' Association, Sculptor.
Rod Duncan	Former Chair King's Lynn Arts Centre Trust
Prof Brian Falconbridge	PPRPS, Past President of the RBS, Sculptor.
Tim FitzHigham	FRSA FRGS, Actor, Explorer, Comedian, Theatre Producer
Chris Fox	Chair King's Lynn Players.
Alison Gifford	Chair King's Lynn Civic Society
Michael Hankinson	International Music Director and Composer.
Christine James	Chair King's Lynn Society of Arts & Sciences.
Dr Julian Litten	Retired Snr Curator V&A, Chair St Margaret's with St Nicholas' Ward Forum
Dr Martin Little	Retired Lecturer, Funding Specialist.
Tim Mann	Professional Artist, Director of Blackfield Creatives CIC
Prof Roland Metcalf	Salford University Visiting Fellow of Performance
Adrian Parker	Friends of St Nicholas Chapel, Retired Planning Consultant.
Anne Roberts	Artist, Greyfriar's Art Space.
Ivor Rowlands	Company Director, King's Lynn Town Guide, West Norfolk Tourism Forum.
Veronica Sekules	Director of GroundWork Gallery, Author and Art Historian.
Richard C F Waite	RIBA Dip Arch (Leics) AABC, Chartered Architect, Director

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