

King's Lynn St George's Guildhall Complex – a manifesto

Who Are we?

The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk; National Trust; Norfolk Museums Service, and Norfolk Arts Service are working in partnership to deliver a conservation and regeneration project centred around King's Lynn's Grade 1 Listed St George's Guildhall complex.

These partners are working together to deliver a transformative cultural project for King's Lynn and exploring appropriate governance models to deliver a sustainable future for the complex. The partners are working hand-in-hand with the Town Deal Board to deliver a pivotal part of the £25 million vision for the town. The St George's Guildhall project will promote the town's heritage and connection to Shakespeare, boost skills, and support new businesses and creative practice.

What are we doing?

We are working in partnership.

We are protecting and celebrating the heritage of these unique buildings:

- Protecting the historic fabric of listed buildings, notably the Grade 1 Listed St George's Guildhall Theatre
- Safeguarding the future of the oldest working theatre in the UK, an historic space which has hosted all phases of drama since the 15th century, a place where Shakespeare's Touring Company has performed, as well as Shakespeare's comedian and King's Lynn born Robert Armin
- Refurbishing the historic theatre to create an accessible, welcoming, and attractive space that is fit for purpose and open to a wide range of audiences
- Creating inspiring spaces at the heart of the local community, and a beacon for visitors to King's Lynn
- Interpreting the rich story of the complex and the lives of people associated with it; telling the story of English theatre from the Guild period to the present day in an interactive working theatre environment
- Engaging and involving all sections of our local communities and wider audiences in the rich story of these historic buildings, through broad and inclusive programmes of formal and informal learning including youth engagement.

We are supporting enterprise and economic productivity in King's Lynn:

- Creating a financially sustainable operating model for the St George's Guildhall Complex
- Bringing measurable social and economic benefits to King's Lynn and West Norfolk
- Delivering a viable and sustainable plan for the St George's Guildhall Complex bringing commercial and cultural initiatives together under one 'roof', under the direction of a pioneering partnership
- Establishing co-ordinated site management
- Supporting the creative arts sector by collaborating with other organisations
- Delivering an environmentally responsible project, and a reduction in energy use for the complex
- Supporting skills and enterprise development and routes into employment

We are creating a hub for arts and culture:

- Creating a sense of identity and place, drawing on the unique significance of the Guildhall Theatre
- Creating a nationally significant centre for culture and the arts, which serves its local community
- Creating an accessible and flexible space able to house a changing programme of events and activity; hosting professional and community theatre, dance or musical groups, or a venue for films, talks, comedy and poetry
- Modernising and effectively using buildings to provide spaces for interpretation, exhibitions, formal & informal learning, retail, and catering and use by the local community
- Providing a welcoming point of entry and improved street presence

Why are we doing it?

For **heritage**: To bring life back into the historic complex, giving it a sustainable future

- Because we must conserve our heritage assets and make them accessible to a wide range of audiences
- To attract visitors to the town who are interested in heritage, the arts and culture, supporting wider plans to regenerate the town
- Because culture will drive growth; associated spend by visitors to the town benefits retail and hospitality
- To reveal the stories of these unique heritage assets, making them relevant to the lives of local communities and visitors to the area

For **people**: To elevate a sense of local pride

- Celebrating the unique heritage of King's Lynn and raising the profile of the town
- To improve access and participation for all; developing learning and skills, and to give a voice to the local community
- Using culture to support well-being and enterprise
- To boost attainment and achievement in local schools and FE
- To make culture and heritage relevant to the lives of local young people and improving their life chances

For **communities**: To maximise the potential of a currently under-utilised site

- A vibrant and welcoming meeting point for everyone, with good catering on site, a wide range of visitors will be attracted to the complex
- An offer that evolves according to the needs of the local community
- To fill a gap for event and meeting space in the town, and spaces for formal and informal learning and enterprise

Who are we doing it for?

- Our local community - the people of King's Lynn and West Norfolk including those people not currently engaging with culture and heritage
- For existing users and visitors
- For new audiences, including local, regional, national and international audiences
- For professional and amateur creatives and the creative arts sector in the East

- For under-represented audiences – through audience development, youth engagement, community consultation and dynamic programming the project will represent broadest possible community interests
- For local people to engage in well managed co-production, volunteering and community activities promoting individual wellbeing and building social capital