

12th March 2026

Our ref: C5

The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Urgent Support Required for the Future of Preston Guild Hall

Preston's Business Improvement District (BID) is writing to express its full support for the Blog Preston campaign and to urge your Department to provide vital national backing for the future of Preston's historic Guild Hall.

Closed since 2019 due to structural issues relating to RAAC, the Guild Hall remains a crucial cultural and economic asset for our city. Since opening in 1969, the Guild Hall has been a central pillar of Preston's cultural identity. It has hosted world-renowned performers such as Led Zeppelin, Elton John, The Jacksons and Blondie, while also serving as an essential venue for community groups, amateur productions and business events. Its prolonged closure has left a significant gap in the city's cultural, social and economic life.

Preston City Council has commissioned a feasibility study to explore whether the current venue can be refurbished or whether a new, purpose-built cultural facility is required. While the Council is committed to re-establishing a major arts and cultural hub, it is clear that national support is essential if Preston is to realise a venue capable of meeting regional demand. The case for targeted investment is compelling. Lancashire continues to face significant disparities in national arts funding, receiving around £7 per capita annually, compared with £35 in Liverpool and £38 in Manchester. This inequity highlights the urgent need for greater cultural investment to ensure Preston can compete fairly with neighbouring cities and continue to grow as a regional destination.

Local businesses are united behind the drive to secure a modern, fit-for-purpose Guild Hall. A state-of-the-art venue would attract major national and international acts, stimulate economic activity and provide a major boost to sectors already under pressure, particularly hospitality and leisure.

C/O North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

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Beyond the economic benefits, a revitalised Guild Hall would strengthen community life, attract visitors, and safeguard Preston's future as a vibrant cultural city. Our business community is committed to supporting this vision, but we cannot deliver it without decisive national assistance. We therefore respectfully ask that your Department champions Preston's case and works closely with local partners to bring forward a modern, sustainable arts and entertainment venue for the city.

Thank you for considering this important matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and provide any additional information that may assist your decision-making.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Boydell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

John Boydell

Chair – Preston Business Improvement District