

Correspondence Between WPCBS and the Freeholder of The King's Arms

This document sets out:

- The full text of the two letters WPCBS has sent to Mr Gerry Solomons.
- Summaries ("gists") of his two replies, published in this form to avoid legal risks while ensuring transparency.

Our First Letter – 28 July 2025

28th July 2025

Dear Mr Solomons,

The purpose of this letter directly to you is to seek confirmation from you as to your long-term intentions for the Kings Arms.

As you know, in July 2024 we successfully registered the Kings Arms as an Asset of Community Value, recognising not only the building's heritage, but its critical role in the life of the village. At that time, through communication with David Wood, you said you did not object to the ACV as it was your clear intention to maintain the Kings Arms as a pub.

Following your marketing of the Kings Arms, we held an open meeting to listen to our residents and gathered their views about keeping the pub open. The response was completely overwhelming. Time and again, we heard the same message: The Kings Arms matters. People spoke with affection and passion about what the pub means to them—happy memories, shared celebrations and the simple joy of having a warm and welcoming place to gather. Crucially, we were encouraged to know that you, too, want to see the pub brought back to life.

As a result, in December 2024 we set up a Community Benefit Society committed to exploring every possible avenue that could help reopen the Kings Arms—whether through a long-term lease, a sale to the right buyer, or community purchase.

Since then, we've achieved a great deal. The village has generously supported us by donating money to commission an independent valuation and to pull together a comprehensive, practical business plan to help us understand the commercial value of The Kings Arms. We have drawn on our personal and professional networks to help promote the opportunity and generate interest. Alongside your agent, we've worked to spread the word and make connections in Rutland and beyond.

We are given to understand that you may have received several offers which, from the professional and independent valuation we commissioned, may have been fair and

realistic for a similar country pub with a Reasonable Economic Operator. We could certainly never justify paying over the odds to anyone funding a community bid.

We appreciate that you are, of course, entitled to set the asking price you believe is appropriate. However, given the valuation we commissioned suggests a considerably lower figure, we are struggling to understand what outcome you hope to achieve. It would be helpful to hear your perspective on this.

In the meantime, the building remains empty and increasingly at risk of deterioration. We are concerned that a much-loved village asset could be lost by default — not through lack of interest, but because reasonable offers have been dismissed. As time passes, the risk of dilapidation grows, potentially increasing the cost of reopening. Given the building's Grade II listed status, we believe it is essential that appropriate steps are taken to preserve its condition and protect its long-term future.

We are writing now to express our sincere hope that you will consider any offers again—with fresh eyes and in the spirit of collaboration. We understand the commercial realities of running a village pub, but The Kings Arms is not just a commercial property; it's at the centre of Wing life. Its absence is deeply felt. For the first time in over 400 years, our community is without a pub and that absence has changed something fundamental—Wing has always had a place to come together, and the loss of our pub is not just physical, but emotional, too.

That's why we're asking—on behalf of the entire village—for your support and commitment in helping The Kings Arms reopen. We are ready and willing to support a new owner or tenant in every way we can: through promotion, introductions, local goodwill, and hands-on help if needed. We also believe passionately that with the right steward—someone who sees the opportunity and the legacy—our pub can really flourish. This not only benefits Wing—but it will help restore something precious to Rutland, too.

We, therefore, in writing this letter seek your reconfirmation that you intend for the Kings Arms to reopen as a pub in the nearest future and that in the meantime you develop and implement a maintenance plan to fulfil Grade 2 listing requirements.

We look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely,

David Wood – Chairman
On behalf of Wing Community Pub Community Benefit Society

Gist of Mr Solomons' First Reply

Mr Solomons expressed the view that our proposals were not commercially realistic. He stated that, in his opinion, the pub would need to generate a much higher weekly turnover to be viable and doubted whether the community could sustain such trade. He referred to the challenges facing village pubs nationally, suggested most ACV-listed community-run pubs fail, and noted that he had explored sale and lease options without receiving a "realistic" proposal. He confirmed the property would continue to be marketed.

Our Second Letter – 30 July 2025

30th July 2025

Dear Mr Solomons,

Thank you for your reply to our recent letter, and for taking the time to share your views on the future of the King's Arms.

We understand that selling a property like this is a complex decision, and that any potential buyer must demonstrate both capability and a viable plan. We also appreciate that you have explored both sale and lease options, and remain committed to securing a sustainable future for the building.

However, the key reason we wrote to you was to ask a straightforward question which, with respect, your response did not address: why are fair offers not being accepted?

We have reason to believe, from conversations with local stakeholders, that several potential buyers – including ourselves – have either made offers or were prepared to do so in line with the professional valuation we commissioned earlier this year. That valuation, carried out by David Broschomb MRICS FAVLP, a specialist in licensed property, assessed the freehold value of the King's Arms at between £395,000 and £550,000. The lower end of that range applies to the property in its current state – empty and not trading – which, as you know, is the case at present.

We fully accept your right to set whatever asking price you feel is appropriate. But given that the current advertised price is more than twice what we are advised the property is worth in its current condition, we are struggling to understand the rationale. If you feel the property is worth more than the valuation suggests, we would welcome any information that might explain that view.

Our concern, as we said in our original letter, is that the property continues to sit empty, with no active plan for reopening and a real risk of deterioration over time. This is not only a loss to the community but, as a Grade II listed building, carries a broader heritage implication.

We are very happy to continue this dialogue, and would welcome the chance to understand your position more clearly – particularly in terms of your valuation expectations and the outcomes you hope to achieve. It is in all our interests that the building is brought back into productive use, and we remain committed to working constructively with you or with any future tenant or owner to help make that happen.

With kind regards,

David Wood

On behalf of Wing Community Pub Community Benefit Society

Gist of Mr Solomons' Second Reply

Mr Solomons said he did not accept the valuations we had referred to, confirmed he is exploring various possible uses for the property, and stated that he will let us know his chosen plans once they are finalised. He added that the property continues to be marketed both as a leasehold and freehold opportunity.