

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL



Armstrong Hall Trust FAQs

1. Isn't the Town Council responsible for the Armstrong Hall complex?

The Armstrong Hall complex is held in trust by the Armstrong Hall Charity. The sole Trustee is Thornbury Town Council as a corporate body.

There is an important difference between the two roles of the Town Council as a 'local authority' and as a 'corporate body'.

The Town Council as a local authority, has no responsibility, nor authority, over the Armstrong Hall Charity. In fact, the legal advice is that Town Council resource must not be used in any way in the management or running of the Armstrong Hall Charity. The Town Council must comply with all legal advice, and advice has been sought from a nationally respected expert in this area of law.

2. Aren't Town Councillors Trustees?

The operation and management of the Armstrong Hall, in its entirety, is managed by the representatives of the Trust. Town Councillors are automatically representatives of the Trust (not Trustees). However, again, there is an important distinction that in the running of the Armstrong Hall these individuals are acting as representatives of the Trust, and NOT in their roles as councillors representing the Town Council (as a local authority). Town Councillors simultaneously hold these two very separate roles.

All Armstrong Hall Charitable Trust meetings are separate and distinct from Town Council meetings.

3. What involvement do Town Council staff have in the running of the Armstrong Hall?

Town Council have no involvement in the running of the Trust. This is not within their duties and Town Council resource must not be used in the running of the Armstrong Hall Trust.

4. The Town Council used to run the Armstrong Hall, what has changed? Why can't it just go back to that?

Historically, governance of the Armstrong Hall Trust was not as it should have been, in terms of separation of the roles of the Town Council as a corporate body and local authority. Once this came to light, there was no option but for the Town Council to ensure that it amended practice to ensure it was appropriate, and legally compliant, ongoing.

5. Why can't Town Council resources be used in relation to the Armstrong Hall?

The Armstrong Hall is not the responsibility or asset of the Town Council. The Town Council may consider the award of grant funding to the Armstrong Hall on application, as it does for other charities and organisations. The Town Council must always consider value for money and commensurate benefit to the electorate of any spending.

6. The Town Council has a duty to respond to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Why will it not provide information about the Armstrong Hall complex when requested?

The Town Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 only as a local authority, and not in its role as Sole Trustee of a Charity. Charities are not subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Town Council will respond to Freedom of Information Trusts where it holds relevant information. Most of the information sought by residents is not information held by the Town Council, but by the Armstrong Hall Trust.

The Armstrong Hall Trust can be contacted by emailing: armstronghalltrust@gmail.com