

Letter to Rob Binns, Acting Chairman of Nominet from Sir Michael Lyons and Axel Pawlik
– 12 April 2021

Dear Rob

We are disappointed to learn that the remaining members of the Nominet Board have decided to decline our offer to help in the reshaping of the company. The continuing absence of an unequivocal invitation had begun to erode our confidence in the possibility of a shared agenda of change and, equally important, timetable.

We had been looking forward to working closely together with you and your board colleagues to establish a future direction for Nominet, consistent with the principles upon which it was founded. An aspiration the recent EGM showed was supported by the membership.

In pledging support for Simon Blackler's impressive Public Benefit campaign we did not anticipate that we would find ourselves in this situation. The original, two-part motion would have given the whole membership a chance to express a view on our potential contributions and, as a result, would have provided a strong mandate for our appointment.

We did not anticipate that that our offer of help would be up for decision solely by board members who had energetically opposed the Public Benefit motion. Clearly there were reservations but the overriding priority for the company, now, is to secure the ongoing confidence of its members, as well as other stakeholders, and to begin the process of reform. We take strength from the fact that DCMS seems to endorse this conclusion.

We do not believe that you are currently in a strong enough position to begin recruiting new board members or a new CEO. Both require clarity about future mission and stability. Your recent letter to all members does represent a good start, not least in acknowledging that reform needs to go further than the limited agenda represented by the Boards 7-point plan.

From the very beginning of our discussions, I have consistently underlined my concern to avoid a continuing period of uncertainty or to inherit a divided board, trying to fight the battles of the past. I wish you well with the task you have taken on.

Nominet is an important company providing key services to both companies and households. A key part of our national digital infrastructure, it deserves to have a stable future based on the generous, public benefit principles established by its founders.

Kind regards

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'M. Lyons' and the signature on the right is 'Axel Pawlik'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sir Michael Lyons

Axel Pawlik

cc - Simon Blackler