

51 Hawthorn Road
Cherry Willingham
Lincoln LN3 4JU

14 February 2019

PRESS STATEMENT

The Usher Gallery Trust opposes closure of the Usher Gallery

For over 20 years the Usher Gallery Trust has supported Lincoln's public art gallery for the benefit of the community. It raises money to buy works of art of exceptional quality to enhance and enrich the gallery's collection, and supports exhibitions, education and research.

The Trustees are deeply concerned about Lincolnshire County Council's wish to close the Usher Gallery as part of its plans for the Heritage Service. We have every sympathy with the difficult financial position in which local authorities find themselves; nevertheless we believe that closing the County's centre for the visual and decorative arts will have a profound effect on the reputation and status of England's second largest county.

We unanimously oppose the closure of the Usher Gallery because we believe there may be a practical and imaginative alternative to these plans, and we look forward to working with the County Council to create a different future for the gallery. The Trustees are championing a newly revived Usher Gallery which will make its own unique contribution to cultural life in the city, as it has done for over 90 years, side by side with The Collection.

James Ward Usher said *"It has long been my desire and ambition to bequeath a considerable portion of my life's work in art to Lincoln and I hope that it might form the nucleus of an art gallery worthy of the city. I might then, perhaps, indulge and hope that I have left Lincoln a little better than I found it."*

The Trust proposes to continue the journey that James Ward Usher started nearly a century ago. To this end we will be submitting a robust response to the public consultation as to how the regeneration of the Usher Gallery might be achieved. Trustees recognise the challenges the local authority is facing but strongly believe there is a vibrant future for the Usher Gallery.

We urge everyone who is similarly concerned about the future of the Usher Gallery to participate in the public debate about its future.

From the Trustees of The Usher Gallery Trust:

Richard Wood (Chair)	Patrick, Lord Cormack
Hugh Thomson	Peter Moss
Janita Elton	Jenny Whitton
Sibyl Burgess MBE	Phil Bowman
Gavin Street	Nicholas Jones
Cllr Robert Parker	

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact Richard Wood, Chairman of The Usher Gallery Trust on 01522 807044 or Sibyl Burgess, Trustee on 01522 522993

END