

The Judges Lodgings, Lancaster

First, the good news. The Council of the Regional Furniture Society has, on behalf of the membership, promised that should the Friends of the Judges Lodgings' Group win their bid to run the museum as a charitable trust the Society will give a grant of £5,000. I understand this will be funded by some of the proceeds of a generous legacy to the Society. On behalf of the Lancaster Judges Lodgings' Group, I would like to thank the council and you all for this very generous gift. In addition to the financial side, it has given us a tremendous boost that so many people in the Society care about the fate of the Judges Lodgings and its important Gillow collection.

Due to protests from people in the UK and abroad, and signatures of 5,000 people on the web, articles in the *Antique Dealers Gazette*, *Apollo*, *The Guardian*, *Historic House*, and other periodicals, protests from the RFS, FHS, and numerous letters including letters from MPs and I believe members of the House of Lords, written to Jo Turton, Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council (LCC) in Preston who run the Judges Lodgings and the

other museums threatened with closure on 31 March 2016. All the museums were given a reprieve until the end of September 2016. Representatives of the LCC met the Judges Lodgings Group on 26 June, and we had a frank discussion of the situation. We are now completing a detailed bid setting out our plans to take over the running of the museum, with the improvements we want to make, and ideas to bring in more visitors etc. The deadline for the bid is 2 August, and the Judges Lodgings Group will find out if they have been successful on 8 September. On the 1 October 2016, the organisation chosen will take over the running of the Museum. At our meeting with LCC in June the officials were beginning to realise how unrealistic this timetable was! Therefore we await news and I will inform the Society when we receive it.

Thank you, once again, for your generous support.

Susan Stuart

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