ULSTER SPORTS LEGACY

HONORING THE PAST – INSPIRING THE FUTURE

STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE

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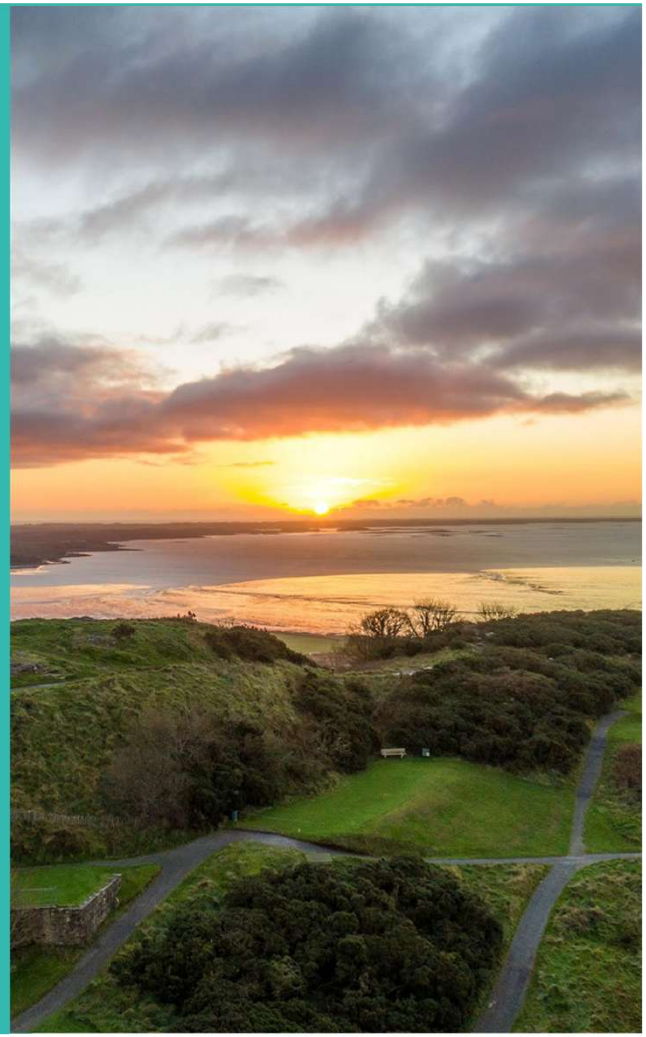


Photo: Sunrise over Scrabo Tower, County Down.

What is the Ulster Sports Legacy proposal?

USL is a multi-dimensional approach to promoting & celebrating the influence, impact and lasting legacy of sport in Ulster.

LAYER 1

Community & Curation

Building the strategic community & identifying the stories to celebrate

- Develop strategic partnership network
- Stakeholder mapping & engagement
- Ambassador appointments
- Collections Strategy - identify, locate, document, care
- Interpretation Strategy - key themes and stories

LAYER 2

A Virtual Museum

Building extensive online content

- Develop dedicated digital strategy & channels
- Identify content and relevant platforms
- Deliver social media strategy
- Develop and deliver engaging online exhibitions

LAYER 3

Events, Exhibitions & Discovery

Engaging with stories & physical collections

- Launch Sporting Memories events & clubs
- Develop Sports Legacy Trail
- Deliver temporary, pop-up and/or travelling exhibitions
- Deliver immersive digital/physical exhibitions
- Encourage further collections discovery & research

LAYER 4

Physical Hall of Fame

Maximising local, national and international impact

- Develop and deliver physical visitor attraction(s) in association with partners
- Identify capital and revenue funding sources
- Assess potential sites as available
- RIBA design and feasibility studies

Executive Summary

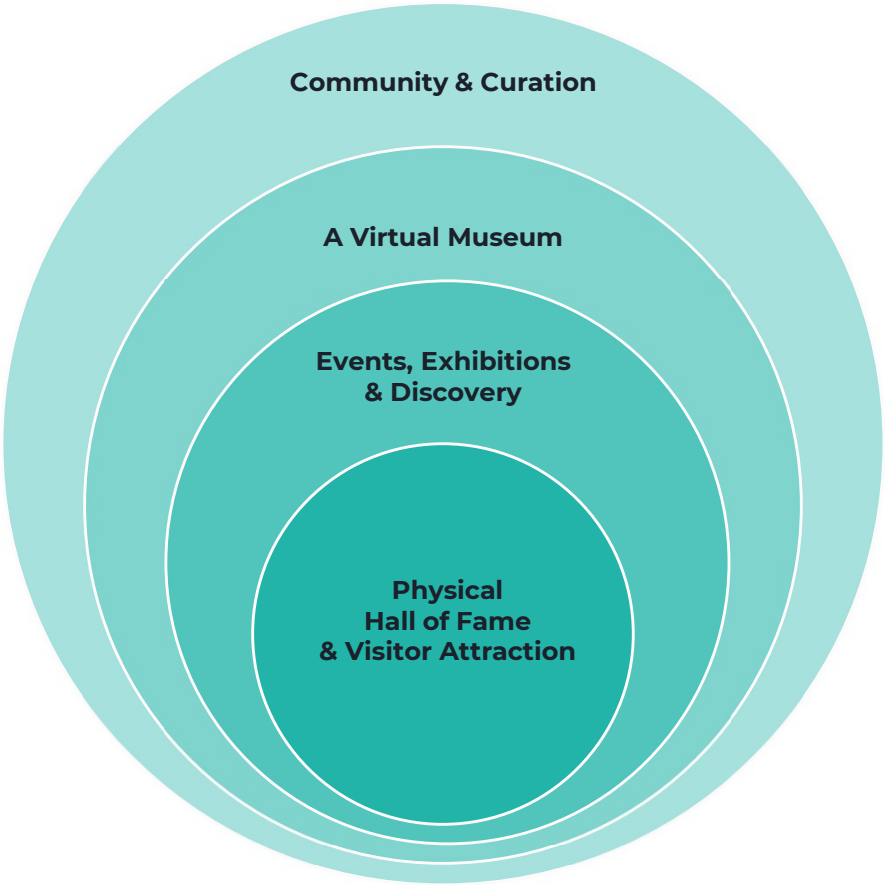
This Strategic Outline Case aims to set out a compelling argument for a major legacy project to promote and celebrate Ulster's sporting heritage and ongoing success.

A project that has the power to bring communities together, inspire pride and drive ambition, promote the Ulster brand worldwide and positively impact our population's mental and physical wellbeing.

Ulster Sports Legacy (USL) proposes a multi-dimensional, movement-based approach capable of aligning with local, regional and national priorities, available funding and operational resources in such a way that allows the movement to adapt and develop according to its context – delivering significant outcomes and impact at each stage and encouraging increasing support as the movement gathers momentum.

At the centre remains the ambition for development of a major Sports Hall of Fame & Visitor Attraction, but the project is significantly more than this alone and is not centrally reliant upon it.

The process of curating, interpreting and sharingUlster's sporting artefacts, memorabilia, film footage and oral histories has the power to deliver real impact, accompanied by an extensive learning and participation programme and a variety of inspiring virtual activities.



The proposed multi-dimensional approach comprises:

01

Layer 1: Community & Curation

– building the strategic community & identifying the stories to celebrate

02

Layer 2: A Virtual Museum

– building extensive online content

03

Layer 3: Events, Exhibitions & Discovery

– engaging with stories and physical collections

04

Layer 4: Physical Hall of Fame & Visitor Attraction

- maximising local, national and international impact

A new Community Interest Company (Ulster Sports Legacy CIC) has been established with Lady Mary Peters, Dr Nigel Carr and Amanda Jones as directors.

Partners already engaging strategically with the initiative include Ulster University, the National Museum of Ireland, Sporting Memories Network and Studio Ulster. Conversations with several additional potential partners continues and an official public launch is planned for September 2026.

Seed-funding now requires to be secured to develop and deliver the initiative's digital communication ambitions and its fundraising Case for Support – and to continue developing the stakeholder pathway that sees the project develop.

The initiative is centrally and consistently focused on delivering projects with real social impact, working with engaged partners to do so and on a financially sustainable basis.

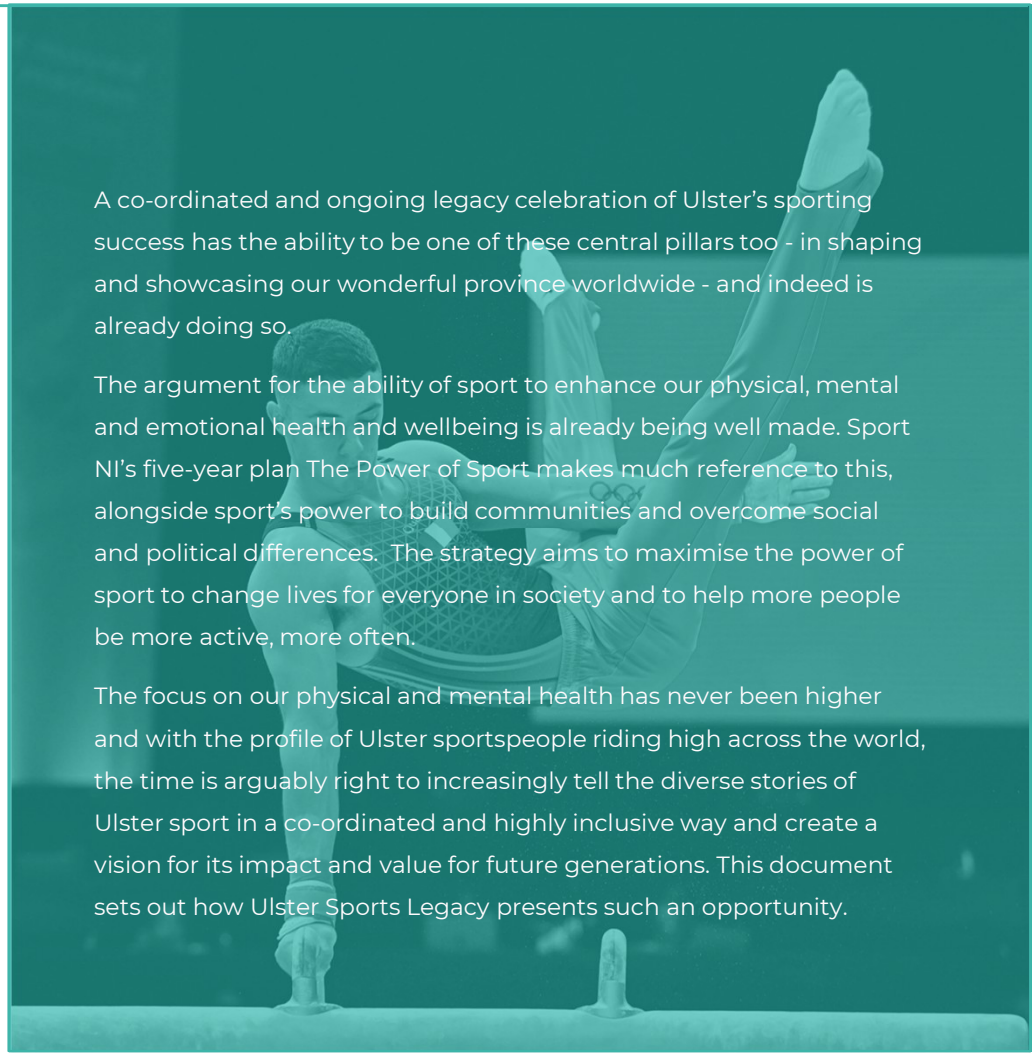
Photo: Lady Mary Peters.

The Legacy Argument

Nations world-wide are so often defined by their economy, their culture and their sporting prowess. Think of Australia, South Africa and the USA amongst many others. Nations with an interesting, engaging and successful sports culture are most likely to have a greater profile internationally.

Across the world sport also builds bridges. It is a powerful tool in reconciliation and in reaching mutual understanding. Sporting success drives a population's psychological capital in terms of hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism - inspiring yet greater success and achievement in all walks of life.

A revitalised Northern Ireland and its Republic of Ireland border counties are enjoying a tourism boom, based substantially on its beautiful landscapes, culture and renowned hospitality and through a currently flourishing film industry – that is truly showcasing these attributes to the world.



A co-ordinated and ongoing legacy celebration of Ulster's sporting success has the ability to be one of these central pillars too - in shaping and showcasing our wonderful province worldwide - and indeed is already doing so.

The argument for the ability of sport to enhance our physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing is already being well made. Sport NI's five-year plan The Power of Sport makes much reference to this, alongside sport's power to build communities and overcome social and political differences. The strategy aims to maximise the power of sport to change lives for everyone in society and to help more people be more active, more often.

The focus on our physical and mental health has never been higher and with the profile of Ulster sportspeople riding high across the world, the time is arguably right to increasingly tell the diverse stories of Ulster sport in a co-ordinated and highly inclusive way and create a vision for its impact and value for future generations. This document sets out how Ulster Sports Legacy presents such an opportunity.

Photo September 27, 2023, Antwerp, Belgium: Olympic Gold Medallist Rhy McClenaghan practices on the pommel horse during men's podium training held at the Sportpaleis in Antwerp, Belgium.

Ulster's sporting success at world level needs little introduction and celebration of this legacy is arguably long overdue. From Olympic, World and European champions and medallists there is evidence of enormous success – with many community and personal stories to be told and celebrated. Such sporting greats as Lady Mary Peters, George Best, Rory McIlroy, Joey Dunlop, Carl Frampton and Sir Anthony McCoy are already household names to many, not just within their respective sports, not to mention Ulster's gold medallists from Paris '24, Rys McClenaghan, Hannah Scott & Daniel Wiffen - and every citizen aged over 40 likely remembers exactly where they were when NI beat Spain in the 1982 World Cup.

But these stories are only the tip of the iceberg. Ulster Sports Legacy has the power to bring together a critical mass of stories from across a multitude of sports to achieve real impact. The hosting of the 153rd Open Championship at Royal Portrush in 2025 and Rory McIlroy's Grand Slam and Ryder Cup achievements are timely examples.

The success of any heritage project of course relies heavily on the quality and quantity of material available. Again, Ulster scores highly, with a depth and breadth of artefacts, photographs and memorabilia that is ripe for curation and interpretation. Extensive BBC, UTV and RTE film footage and significant print media is also readily available to enhance these collections and tell the stories that can inspire future generations - not just on the sports field but across our province and beyond.

Not only are these stories about sporting success but also of Ulster's influence within sport more generally - the rules, the equipment, the fan experiences, what has brought each sport to what we know and enjoy today.

Through delivering a strategic-level approach across multiple disciplines, Ulster Sports Legacy seeks to promote, celebrate and build on exhibitions and museums already in place – for example, at the Clearer Twist National Stadium, Ravenhill, Tyrone GAA, Holywood Golf Club, Ballymoney Museum and in the original Belfast Celtic grounds at the Park Centre.

Photo (top left): Carl Frampton defeats Scott Quigg to become the WBA and IBF Super-Bantamweight World Champion, 2016.
Photo (top right): Dennis Taylor wins the World Snooker Championship Final, 1985.
Photo (bottom left): Olympic Champion Hannah Scott receives her gold medal, Women's Quadruple Sculls, Paris, 2024
Photo (bottom right): Gareth McAuley scores Northern Ireland's first-ever goal in Euro finals history, Lyon 2016

After defeating Spain 1-0

Proving the Economic Argument

Ulster Sports Legacy's ambition and aims align closely to the priorities of the UK government's Shared Prosperity Fund and Local Growth Fund – **Communities and Place**, **Supporting Local Business** and **People and Skills** and to the expected outcomes of **PEACEPLUS**. This Strategic Outline Case seeks to help identify and mobilise investment into its multi-dimensional approach, including but not limited to:

- Ongoing recruitment of key strategic partners and associated infrastructure
- Identifying, locating and curating the key legacy stories
- Development of extensive digital content, physical events, exhibitions & experiences
- Feasibility study into the viability and appetite for a major Sports Hall of Fame & Visitor Attraction

According to Sport England, sport and physical activity contributes £39bn annually to the UK economy, a significant proportion of which comes from grassroots sport.

The sector boosts the economy in 2 main ways – directly through job creation and indirectly by reducing healthcare costs due to a healthier population and reduction in crime.

Ulster Sports Legacy has the potential to be a true catalyst that inspires participation and interest in a variety of sports across Ulster, as a spectator, as a volunteer and/or as a participant at grassroots or indeed professional level.

Historic England's Heritage Impact Indicators assessment reported that pre-Covid, the aggregate annual impact of England's heritage sector added **£36.6bn** in GVA and **564,000** jobs with heritage employment growth outstripping the rest of the UK economy, growing almost twice as fast between 2011 and 2019.

Ulster Sports Legacy sits primed and ready to assist in the escalation of NI's spending against its allocations from **City** and **Growth Deals** and other funding opportunities to fully unlock this potential.

Proving the Social Argument

Research strongly supports the power of sport to create a sizeable impact on reconciliation, community engagement, a sense of place and mental and physical health.

Collecting and curation of the legacy stories opens up enormous opportunities for volunteering, reminiscence and story-telling both individually and collectively.

The emerging themes will provide a focus on key events and enhance national pride. Sports legacy stories are being created every day - and so Ulster Sports Legacy aims to provide a platform that openly promotes and celebrates sporting success through social media channels, PR and website activity. Working closely with the region's main broadcasters, USL aims to share the narrative worldwide with a continual focus on celebrating success from all parts of the community.

In their 2017 publication, Museums Change Lives, the Museums Association discuss how museums can increase our sense of wellbeing, help us feel proud of where we have come from, inspire, challenge and stimulate us, and make us feel healthier.

Photo: Electric Ireland Women's Challenge Cup Final 2019.
Emma McMaster with the cup after her goal gave Glentoran victory.

ENHANCING HEALTH & WELLBEING

Photo: Northern Ireland supporters, World Cup, Spain 1982

Proving the Social Argument

Enhancing health & wellbeing

- Museums enhance our quality of life and improve our mental and physical health.
- Museums work in partnership with health and wellbeing organisations to support a range of people in society with different needs.
- Meaningful participation and volunteering promotes wellbeing and self-confidence and can broaden the horizons of participants, the museum and the public.

Proving the Social Argument

Creating better places to live & work

- Museums help us to value the places where we live, work and visit, and help us to understand where we come from.
- Museums create a sense of belonging by engaging with communities and encouraging active public participation in decision-making.
- Museums use engagement, learning and collections to generate understanding within and between different groups and communities in society.

Museums generate partnerships with community groups, charities and third-sector organisations to create spaces that are open and accessible to all.

Photo: Daniel Wiffen returns from the Paris Olympic Games, Summer 2024

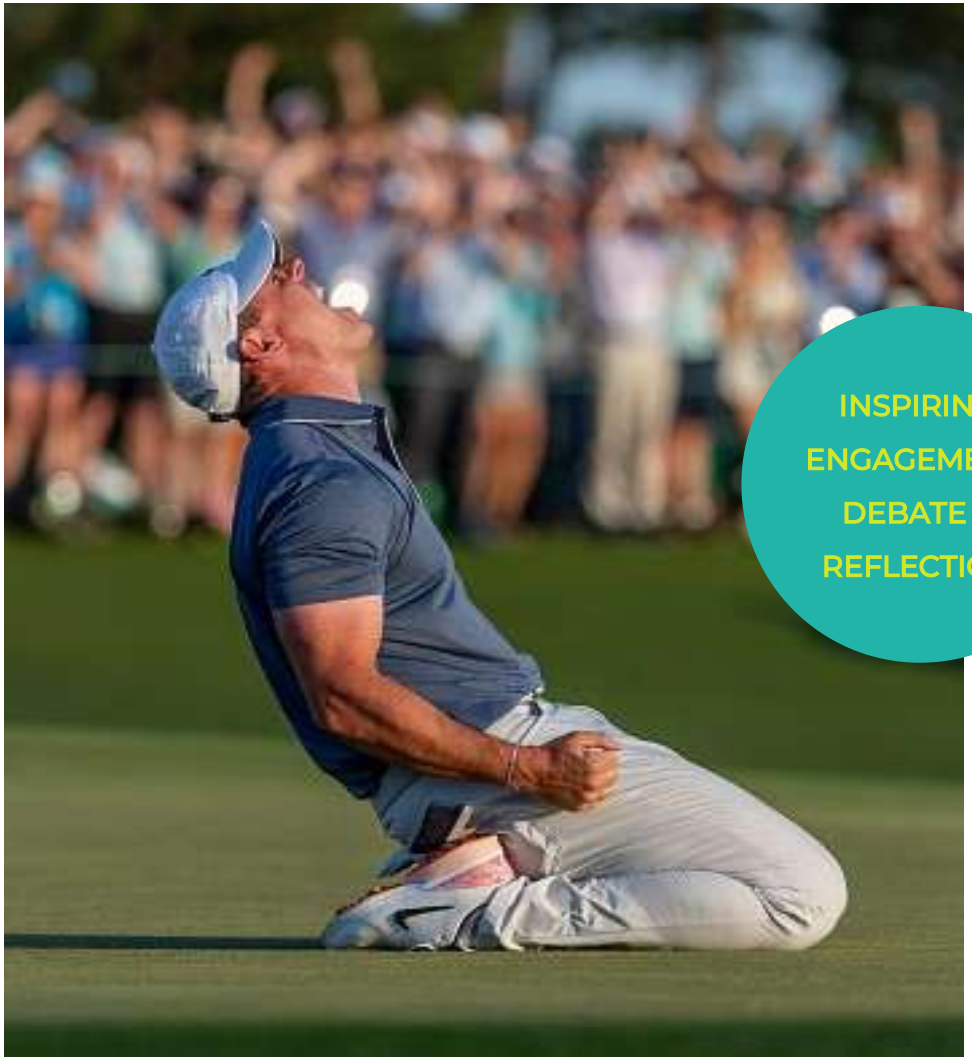


Photo: Rory McIlroy wins The Masters Championship 2025 and in doing so completes the Career Grand Slam

Proving the Social Argument

Inspiring engagement, debate & reflection

Museums work with the public as active and creative participants in the life of the museum – using it as a space for exchanging opinions, experiences, ideas and knowledge.

Museums help us to understand and negotiate the complex world around us, encouraging us to reflect on contemporary challenges such as discrimination, poverty and climate change.

Museums use their research and collections to challenge assumptions, foster debate, and motivate people to contribute to positive change in the world. They are not neutral spaces.

Museums inspire learning and creativity for children and adults and work actively to ensure that a broad and diverse audience can access these opportunities at any stage in life.

The Story So Far

Back in 2005, the Ulster Sports Museum Association was formed to lobby for the creation of a high-quality Ulster Sports Museum which would record and celebrate the achievements of Ulster's sportsmen and sportswomen. The Association was subsequently registered with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland in February 2016 - Registered Charity #102768.

The aim was for the museum to:

- Acknowledge sporting achievements across all sporting disciplines within Ulster.
- Provide for the display of medals, trophies and other memorabilia.
- Be a centre for educational awareness.
- House and archive film, video and sporting images and photographs.
- Inspire the general public to have a general awareness of sport within Ulster.
- Develop an oral archive of sporting memories.

The Association's Charitable Purpose was specifically to advance the education of the public in the heritage, history and development of sport in Ulster, and in particular by:

(a) Providing exhibitions in furtherance of the objects throughout the area of benefit.

(b) Establishing, maintaining & operating a museum open to the public for the permanent exhibition and preservation of sports memorabilia and other items of educational, artistic and/or historic value of significance.

(c) Collecting, collating and archiving documents or other materials of educational, artistic and/or historic value or significance which shall be made available in the public domain and promoting the perusal and use of such material for research purposes.

Photo (top): Claire Taggart, UK Olympic Boccia player.
Photo (bottom): Fans at a Derry GAA senior football game against Monaghan in Celtic Park, Derry, Northern Ireland, May 2023.

Led by Lady Mary Peters as President and with Ronnie Spence and Nigel Carr respectively as Chairs, the Association worked tirelessly for many years promoting the concept, value and need for a Museum dedicated to Ulster's sporting greats.

Aiming to celebrate Ulster's sporting past and inspire its future, the Association engaged experienced museum exhibition designers Hayley Sharpe to undertake an options appraisal on the possible content and location of a permanent museum, with three possible locations being assessed.

The Association also developed a successful temporary exhibition (Ulster's Sporting Heroes) that travelled to towns and cities across Northern Ireland, attracting 120,000 visitors. Visitors had the chance to leave feedback on which sportsperson or sport they would like to see included in a Museum and to provide their own sporting stories.

The Association made presentations to many at senior level across NI including NI Assembly, National Museums NI, the Department for Communities, Belfast City Council, leading sports bodies and representatives of all political parties. Unanimously the response was hugely positive and encouraging.

But despite these responses, no organisation nor group of organisations seemed able or willing to commit funding, resources or infrastructure to move the project forward. Unable to secure the necessary funding or commitment, the Association was eventually disbanded in 2021 and its registration removed from the Charity Commission that July.

This does not however need to be the end of the story. A number of important observations & lessons learnt now make it possible to build on the positive elements and tackle some of the obstacles that were identified.

Ulster Sports Legacy, a multi-dimensional, movement-based approach brings a renewed and refreshed vision.

Observations & Learning

There are many positives to take from the work previously undertaken by the Ulster Sports Museum Association, including:

- The preparedness of some of Ulster's most major sporting champions to take a leadership role (Mary Peters and Nigel Carr).
- The general view from those in authority that a museum dedicated to Ulster's sporting achievements would be a good thing.
- The reaction of the public (almost 10% of the population visited USM's travelling exhibition).
- The positive response from Ulster's sports organisations and clubs that a dedicated museum for all sports would be welcome.
- The existence of rich stories to be told - of many Olympic, World, Commonwealth & European level champions & medallists.
- Good access to relevant artefacts, memorabilia, film footage and oral histories.

Some key learnings arguably include:

- It is enormously difficult to build a successful case for such a major project without existing activity and infrastructure to build from, especially when reliant on volunteer time and effort.
- A focus on securing funding for a dedicated Museum in itself as the 'end result' is very difficult without existing evidence and evaluation of outcomes and impact.
- With the region's major museums already under ongoing financial strain, it is difficult to see where substantial capital investment would come from to deliver the full scale of such a project.
- There was no singular organisation or group of organisations willing to anchor or underwrite the capital or revenue commitments at the time..
- Funding constraints meant that only limited research and evaluation was able to be undertaken by USM into the potential impact of a sports museum, constraining the ability to prepare a robust Business Case.
- The focus of the 'sales pitch' largely appears to have been on the ability of the success stories to inspire young people to become involved in sport and progress to future sporting success – arguably too narrow a narrative in order to secure the scale of funding and commitment required.
- The location of the collections appeared to take the lead and central focus rather than the collections and stories in themselves.
- Ongoing developments in digital skills and social media and IT now provide much wider possibilities to tell the Ulster Sports Legacy story without central dependence on a physical Museum alone.

ULSTER SPORTS LEGACY

HONORING THE PAST – INSPIRING THE FUTURE

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal

Ulster Sports Legacy proposes a multi-dimensional, strategic movement-based approach, delivered through an extensive partnership network that builds on existing offers and delivers significant outcomes and impact.

This multi-layered approach aims to help align funding expectations more realistically and allows the project to adapt and grow subject to available opportunities. The outcomes achieved within each layer hence inform, and hopefully encourage, further and greater focus and investment as the 'movement' gathers momentum.

The process of identifying, curating and interpreting Ulster's sporting artefacts, memorabilia, film footage and oral histories has the power to deliver real impact in itself, particularly if supported by an impactful virtual presence.

The proposed multi-dimensional approach comprises:

01 **Layer 1: Community & Curation**
– building the strategic community & identifying the stories to celebrate

02 **Layer 2: A Virtual Museum**
– building extensive online content

03 **Layer 3: Events, Exhibitions & Discovery**
– engaging with physical collections

04 **Layer 4: A major physical Hall of Fame & Visitor Attraction**
– maximising local, national and international impact

Layers are envisaged to be inter-woven, not mutually exclusive. Tiers 1 and 2 will understandably need to be delivered first but once the base collection and interpretation is in place, Tier 3 and the planning towards Tier 4 can progress in various forms dependent on funding, likely commitment, and ambition at that time.

A multi-dimensional approach enables momentum to develop and impact to be delivered at every stage - enhancing and strengthening the Business Case to secure further funding for subsequent tiers, making the likelihood of funding more realistic. Tiers of course are not rigid and can expand, speed up and/or overlap should funding opportunities arise. They are also not mutually exclusive, with for example collecting and interpretation continuing throughout.

The approach champions the power of the tiered activities to achieve substantial outcomes in themselves. If the project can reach Tier 3 and establish an operating framework to deliver this successfully, significant scale of impact will already be being achieved locally, nationally and worldwide – without reliance on completion of later tiers.

In many ways, Tiers 3 and 4 become the bonus - to enable larger-scale vision, ambition and impact alongside an increasingly strengthened Business Case – arguably bringing the reality of a physical museum more within reach.

With an infrastructure already in place at Tier 2,, the momentum will already have grown substantially and the case for support well documented and evaluated.

In proposing an IT centric Tier 2, USL acknowledges that the world has changed significantly since the inception of the original Ulster Sports Museum ambition and will change all the more in the years ahead. We will all be expecting something different (and indeed already do) from our museums in the future such as highly engaging online content and the ability for interactive and immersive digital experiences (see Appendix). Radiohead's virtual museum within a computer game setting is a strong example - originally envisaged as a physical museum exhibition (to be possibly hosted by the V&A) the Kid A Mnesia Exhibition is a virtual, semi-interactive art gallery based on the music of Radiohead published by Epic Games and listed as a game on the Playstation store.

Such digital opportunities provide much food for thought. Whilst establishment of a permanent Sports Hall of Fame and Visitor Attraction remains a key aim, achieving this is best progressed through a series of fluid layers, essentially along a road map, each capable of securing specific outcomes and impact.

Sport NI's Corporate Plan 2021-26 identifies 2 particular outcomes, being:

OUTCOME 1:

Adapt & sustain participation and close the participation gap.

OUTCOME 2:

NI athletes to be amongst the best in the world.

The plan rightly promotes the power of sport to provide us with a growth mindset, maximising impact and changing lives. USL therefore brings an ideal opportunity to support these endeavours - through the celebration of previous success, legacy and inspiration - leading jointly to significant future impact.

Ulster Sports Legacy CIC

It is important that emerging plans are carefully and appropriately governed and hence a Community Interest Company has been established with 3 founding Directors **Lady Mary Peters**, **Dr Nigel Carr** and **Amanda Jones.**

The Board is supported by a **Steering Group** comprising representatives from current (and future) strategic partners.

Our Directors

LADY MARY PETERS LG CH DBE

Lady Mary is one of Northern Ireland's most celebrated sporting figures and one of its most respected public ambassadors. Best known for winning the Olympic Gold Medal in the Pentathlon at the Munich Games in 1972, she inspired a generation through her determination, resilience and sporting excellence. Her achievements also include Commonwealth and European medals, numerous international titles and representation of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at three Olympic Games.

Following her competitive career, Lady Mary devoted herself to ensuring that future generations of young sportspeople would have the opportunity to fulfil their own potential. Through the establishment of the Mary Peters Trust in 1975, she has helped thousands of emerging athletes across Northern Ireland by providing financial assistance, mentoring and encouragement. Many of the province's Olympic, Paralympic, Commonwealth and World champions have benefited from the Trust's support during their formative years.

Lady Mary has dedicated more than five decades to public service, championing sport, health, education and community development. She has served on numerous public bodies and charitable organisations and remains one of Northern Ireland's most recognisable and respected advocates for the positive impact that sport can have on individuals and society.

Her exceptional contribution has been recognised through many of the United Kingdom's highest honours, including appointment as Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) and, in 2019, membership of the prestigious Order of the Companions of Honour (CH), one of the nation's rarest distinctions for outstanding achievement and service.

As a Founding Director and Patron of Ulster Sports Legacy, Lady Mary brings unparalleled experience, integrity and inspiration to the organisation. She shares its vision of preserving and celebrating Ulster's remarkable sporting heritage while inspiring future generations to realise their own potential through the enduring power of sport.

Our Directors (cont'd)

NIGEL CARR MBE

Nigel is a former Ireland and British & Irish Lions rugby international, respected broadcaster and longstanding advocate for the power of sport to strengthen communities and improve lives.

Widely regarded as one of Ireland's finest openside flankers, his international playing career was tragically cut short following the 1987 IRA bomb attack that seriously injured him while travelling to an Ireland training session. Despite this life-changing event, Nigel has devoted much of his post-playing career to promoting sport, education and community engagement.

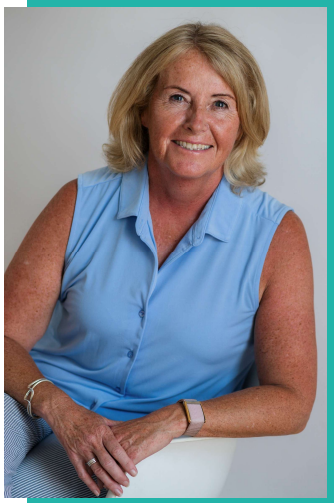
Awarded an MBE for services to sport and community relations, Nigel has also received significant public recognition for his wider contribution to society. He has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Queen's University Belfast in recognition of his achievements and public service and has been inducted into the Irish Rugby Writers' Hall of Fame, reflecting both his sporting excellence and enduring influence on Irish rugby.

Alongside his sporting career, Nigel has enjoyed a distinguished career in economic development. During more than three decades with Invest Northern Ireland, he held a number of senior leadership positions, working with local businesses and international investors to support innovation, inward investment, export growth and economic prosperity. His extensive experience in strategic development, partnership working and stakeholder engagement now brings considerable commercial and governance expertise to Ulster Sports Legacy.

Beyond rugby, Nigel has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to preserving and celebrating Ulster's sporting heritage. As former Chairman of the Ulster Sports Museum Association, he helped champion the vision of a permanent museum dedicated to recognising athletes from every community while inspiring future generations through the stories of sporting achievement.

As a Founding Director and President of Ulster Sports Legacy, Nigel continues this commitment by helping lead a movement that uses sport and sporting heritage to promote health and wellbeing, education, inclusion, volunteering and shared cultural understanding. He remains a passionate advocate for the enduring power of sport to inspire individuals, strengthen communities and create lasting social and economic impact across Northern Ireland.

Our Directors (cont'd)



AMANDA JONES FCA

Amanda is an accomplished senior director with more than 30 years' experience working across the private, public and voluntary sectors. A KPMG alumna and Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, she has built a distinguished career leading organisational transformation, delivering major capital redevelopment programmes, and driving economic growth through strategic regional leadership. She is a passionate advocate for the role of arts, heritage and sport in creating thriving, resilient communities and economies.

Amanda holds a first-class honours degree in Accounting with Computing from Ulster University, a postgraduate diploma in Professional Accounting from Queen's University, and an MSc in Innovation, Leadership & Management from the University of York. As Director of Finance & Planning at National Museums Northern Ireland, Amanda set the financial strategy for the acclaimed redevelopment of the Ulster Museum and during her 16 years as Deputy Chief Executive of Brighton Dome & Festival, developed the £32 million Royal Pavilion Estate Masterplan and the UK government's 5G Testbed.

Amanda currently chairs Coast to Capital, the regional economic development agency, and serves as Chair of The Sussex Archaeological Society (Sussex Past), Trustee and Treasurer of the Council for British Archaeology, and Chair of Good Space, a volunteering for wellbeing programme supporting arts, heritage and sports organisations - having previously served as a Non-Exec Director of the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and chaired its mental health charity Heads On.

During a lengthy and successful equestrian career, Amanda represented Ireland in three-day eventing on multiple occasions, was a senior judge for the British and Irish Pony Societies and BBC Radio Ulster's equestrian correspondent for over a decade.

In founding Ulster Sports Legacy, Amanda continues to champion the power of sport to deliver sizeable, long-lasting social and economic impact.

USL's registered Community Interest Statement sets out its proposed activities and community benefits:.

Activities

Ulster Sports Legacy CIC is established to advance the education of the public in the heritage, history and value of sport in Ulster including celebrating its achievements, encouraging community participation and inspiring future success.

Registered in NI as a Community Interest Company, it aims to deliver against its purpose through the following endeavours:

- Establishing and curating an Ulster Sports Collection comprising memorabilia, artefacts, oral histories, newsreels, documents, or other materials (in whatever medium) of educational and/or historic value or significance - making the collection available to the public and promoting its perusal, enjoyment and study.
- Interpreting the collection through development of a digital museum comprising a dedicated website, extensive social media activity and other digital activities.
- Interpreting the collection through the development and curation of temporary and travelling exhibitions.
- Lobbying and campaigning for creation of a physical museum of sport open to the public for the permanent exhibition and preservation of the collection and other items of educational and/or historic value, interest or significance and subsequent operation of such a museum, subject to funding.
- Engaging in fundraising activity through several channels to secure grants, donations and legacies to enable delivery of the Company's core activities, aims and objectives.

Community benefits

The community will benefit by gaining access to collections and activities that will enhance their understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the history of sport in Ulster and of its sporting success and achievements, including the important role sport plays and will continue to play, for all.

As a result, the activities will:

- enable people to learn about sports heritage, leading to change in their ideas and actions;
- improve people's physical and mental wellbeing;
- empower national pride, confidence and sense of belonging;
- enable Ulster to be a better place to live, work and visit;
- contribute to building cohesive and confident communities and help them to function better;
- contribute to place-making, in both urban and rural areas.
- contribute to a successful economy;
- enable people to develop new skills;
- ensure Ulster's sports collections are identified, recorded and well cared for;
- ensure Ulster's sports collections are made accessible and better explained.

The organisation aims to generate income through the securing of restricted and unrestricted grants and donations and through the operation of its core activities, along with ancillary activities such as retail and catering where appropriate.

As set out in the Company's Articles of Association, any surplus generated will be retained for re-investment in its activities for public benefit.

Conclusion

A legacy celebration of Ulster's sporting success offers enormous potential for significant social and economic benefit in the province. The work undertaken previously by the Ulster Sports Museum Association provides a strong platform from which to re-ignite this ambition.

Through a phased approach, the Ulster Sports Legacy movement proposes a refreshed vision for celebrating our sporting achievements and inspiring success in all walks of life for generations to come.

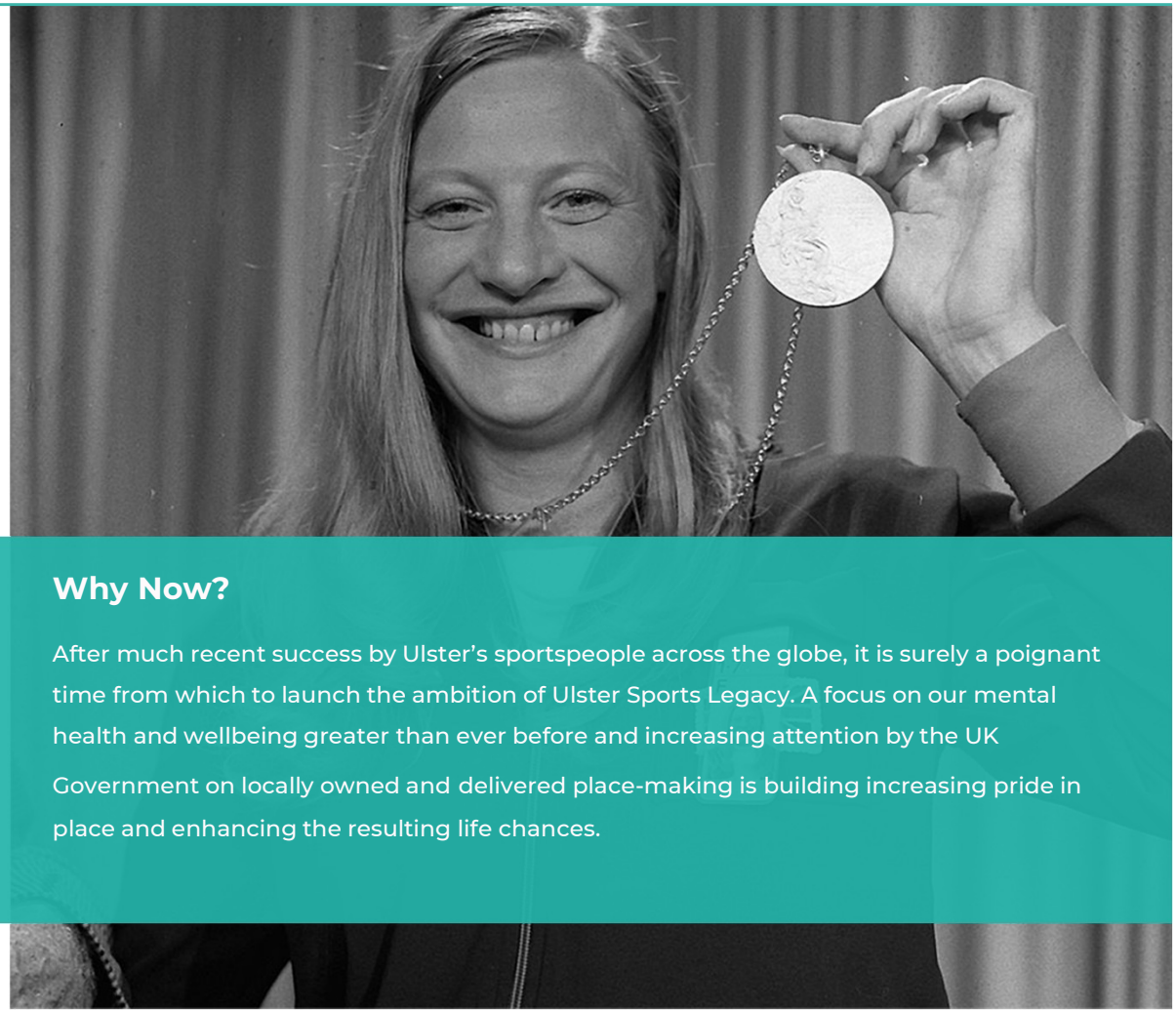


Photo: Lady Mary Peters celebrates after receiving the gold medal for the Pentathlon at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Why Now?

After much recent success by Ulster's sportspeople across the globe, it is surely a poignant time from which to launch the ambition of Ulster Sports Legacy. A focus on our mental health and wellbeing greater than ever before and increasing attention by the UK Government on locally owned and delivered place-making is building increasing pride in place and enhancing the resulting life chances.

Appendix –

Outline of proposed layers

The following pages outline what Ulster Sports Legacy aims to achieve through a layered approach, when and how. These suggestions are by no means exhaustive and are merely prepared in order to supply some outline proposals for discussion. Any specific next steps are a matter for the CIC Board together with strategic partners.

Proposed layers remain flexible and capable of adapting to available funding, aspiration and demand as momentum continues to build.

LAYER 1

Community & Curation

01

Layer 1 builds USL's strategic community and identifies the sports legacy stories to promote and celebrate. The CIC is already making much progress in this regard.

- Ulster University, the National Museum of Ireland, Sporting Memories Network & Studio Ulster have come on board as strategic partners.
- A successful Round Table discussion has been held with local councils, sports bodies & heritage organisations. Attendees heard from Dr Kevin Moore, the founding Director of the National Football Museum, Siobhan Doyle, the curator of GAA: People, Objects & Stories at the National Museum of Ireland & Stephen McMaw, Causeway Coast & Glens Council about the Joey 25 celebrations.
- A PEACEPLUS Changemaker funding bid has been submitted to deliver a series of Sporting Memories Network events in the border counties.
- USL officially partnered the Hall of Fame Award at the recent Belfast Telegraph Sports Awards – the 2026 recipient being Northern Ireland's 1982 World Cup Football Team.
- Formal recruitment of Founding Ambassadors is underway – distinguished sportspeople and respected leaders whose achievements and mindset embody the values that USL seeks to promote and uphold.

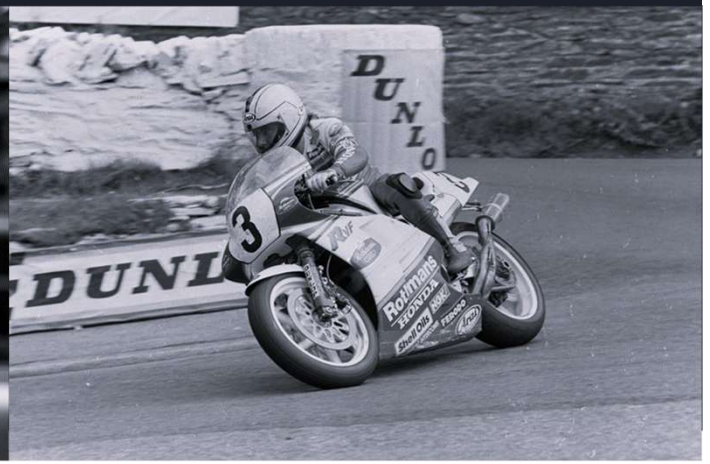


Photo (left): Rebecca Shorten, UK Olympic rower
Photo (right): Joey Dunlop, motorcycle road racing legend

LAYER 1

Community & Curation

01

USL will next develop a fundraising Case for Support to mobilise activities that support its planned social media roll-out and ambitious digital activities. Funding is also required to enable the programme's curatorial and interpretation expertise to build early content within the legacy programme - identifying what collections currently exist and curating these into core themes and stories.

It is centrally important that story development is holistic and highly participatory – with the planned Sporting Memories events and clubs presenting an ideal opportunity to engage with multiple stakeholder and population groups. This phase has the potential to secure much buy-in, impact and outcomes through broad participation in the collecting and curation exercises - particularly through provision of volunteering and engagement opportunities. Development of themes and stories starts with those we know most about already, hence swiftly promoting the work of USL and encouraging others to participate further. Discussions will be undertaken with broadcasters and the print media regarding their preparedness to provide key archive material.

Access to content will start to be 'rolled out' via the website, social media and press/PR activity – using existing channels & infrastructure to provide access to the curated sporting stories. In a phased approach and in order to maximise exposure and reach within limited budgets, roll-out can centre around the annual, existing sporting calendar - focusing on particular sports as and when those sports are naturally highlighted within the year – for example, Tony McCoy's story during the run up to Cheltenham Festival and Joey Dunlop's in the run up to the IOM TT.

LAYER 2

A Virtual Museum

As currently conceived, this phase creates a comprehensive digital strategy – one that centrally includes a virtual museum platform and extensive social media activity and explores the opportunities increasingly being presented by developments in advanced technologies. The ambition being to achieve a scale of impact by this stage that is already significant – irrespective of whether the project secures funding to progress into further stages.

This layer of activity will see a major launch of the Ulster Sports Legacy concept and collection – across website, social media and wider digital platforms and projects.

A learning & participation infrastructure (including a dedicated Head of Learning & Participation) will be recruited and established to roll out an engagement and participation programme across Ulster – accessible by schools, sports clubs, community groups and supporters' clubs, by way of example.

A Volunteer Co-ordinator will be appointed and a comprehensive Volunteering Scheme launched that promotes the opportunities for, and value of, volunteering and motivates and engages the entire community to help with collecting and curating stories and memorabilia.

02

LAYER 2

A Virtual Museum

This phase will see USL's online presence, activity and engagement grow substantially – producing and sharing regular sporting heritage stories in a timely and thematic way and using existing and new platforms including Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube.

It will see the digitisation of much of the collection as it currently exists, for example a 3-D scan of Lady Mary Peter's Olympic Gold Medal and numerous other artefacts and memorabilia.

Through the injection of digital expertise and funding, this phase will consider developing a virtual museum similar to that launched recently by Radiohead (discussed earlier) and delivery of interactive experiences, both in-person and online – for example an experience similar to that provided by Van Gogh Live.

02

LAYER 3

Events, Exhibitions & Discovery

Layer 3 aims to sustain and grow the online, digital activity/presence established at Layer 2 and starts to nurture the interest and appeal for access to the physical collections. - including the development of digital immersive experiences.

This phase will see the further curation and presentation of the physical collections through development of one-off events and temporary, pop-up and travelling exhibitions. Events and exhibitions capable of travelling across Ulster, nationally and internationally - to schools, homes for the elderly, hospitals, universities, sports stadiums, other museums – and indeed the opportunity of travelling to significant national and international sporting events.

Seeking partnership approaches with many national, regional and local museums including National Museums NI, the National Museum of Ireland, the NI Museums' Council and other British and Irish museums, USL will seek to display curated elements of the collection as temporary, travelling exhibitions - such activity will provide the opportunity to measure interest, record visitation and gain feedback. Opportunities also exist in this phase to extend physical exhibitions to a world-wide scale either within existing museums or at major sporting events.

03

LAYER 3

Events, Exhibitions & Discovery

03

The stage will also embrace development of options to enhance public access to the collections through appropriate storage and discovery opportunities – identifying suitable ways and/or locations to make the collection available to the public for study and research. Throughout this 'exhibition & discovery' tier, extensive evaluation and feedback will be undertaken in order to secure sufficient data and knowledge to increasingly strengthen the Case for Support for a dedicated physical Hall of Fame (Layer 4).

Some examples of immersive digital experiences including Les Bassins (Bordeaux), Team Lab exhibitions round the world, Franklin Institute (Philadelphia), FC Barcelona and La Liga (Spain)

LAYER 4

Major Hall of Fame & Visitor Attraction

04

Layer 4 sees establishment of a major Hall of Fame dedicated to Ulster's sporting success. The culmination and flagship of the phased work to date - dependent on securing (a) the required capital funding, (b) a suitable location and (c) the right design concept and properly sustainable operating model.

Preparatory work towards this ambition will be undertaken throughout every layer of the legacy journey – with the aim that by embracing a tiered approach USL will have already been delivering significant outcomes and impact before reaching this stage. One of the key aims throughout Layers 1-4 is hence ensuring the interest, popularity and impact of USL grows to such a significant extent that the case for a permanent home for Ulster's sporting heritage is beyond argument - and major funders are keen to be involved.

As regards these major funding opportunities, sometimes projects simply need to be in the right place at the right time - capable of delivery within funding windows and timescales. With a strong business argument in place by this stage (due to work undertaken throughout the previous 3 layers), Layer 4 aims to ensure USL is well-positioned should and if funding becomes possible and available. Should funding or political appetite allow work to start much earlier on this tier, a flexible and phased approach is able to embrace such opportunities as they present themselves.

This layer will focus on development of a detailed Feasibility Study and Business Case for the Hall of Fame, exploring in detail the possible location(s), design, content & future operating model. Early-stage development funding will need to be secured for this work and be supported by delivery of a major capital fundraising campaign.

LAYER 4

Major Hall of Fame & Visitor Attraction

04

The capital funding pyramid for such ambition would ordinarily expect to include investment from:

- UK Government, Irish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive & Ulster's local authorities
- Heritage & Sports Funders (such as National Lottery Heritage Fund, UK Sport, Sport Ireland)
- Major Trusts & Foundations (such as Garfield Weston and the Clore Foundation)
- High-net worth individuals & patrons
- Commercial sponsors
- The general public through a final stage pro-active fundraising campaign.

In the case of Ulster Sports Legacy, financial input from wider sports' bodies and sporting greats may also be relevant.

The ongoing annual revenue requirements within a properly sustainable operating model will include significant self-generated income from admission fees, rentals, retail & catering opportunities alongside ongoing support from some, if not all, of the above capital sources - such as the public via memberships, and trusts & foundations via programme support funds.

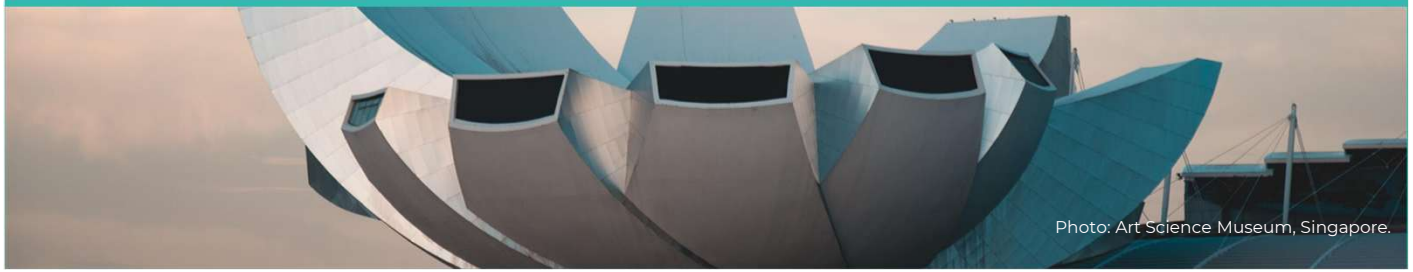


Photo: Art Science Museum, Singapore.

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