



PRESS RELEASE

28 February, 2024

EAST ANGLIAN CHARITY TO STEP AWAY FROM LAND OWNERSHIP IN BID TO FOCUS ON ITS CORE YOUTH COMMITMENT

LONG established East Anglian charity, The Kerrison Trust, is seeking a buyer for its land and properties, as it reinforces its focus on supporting young people across Norfolk and Suffolk.

Throughout the last 150 years, the organisation has financially helped many hundreds of individuals and charities as part of its central mission in the region.

During that time, the Trust had found itself serving as custodian to a small number of properties and an area of land in Thorndon, which it will now sell to enable the continued focus on assisting young people in need.

The charity, which originated with the setting up in 1856 of one of the earliest Reform Schools, and is located south of Eye in Suffolk, is set to appoint agents to help with seeking a commercial buyer.

Shortlisted agents are due to visit the site in the coming days.

In recent years the Trust has disposed of some commercial properties which had fallen under the ownership of Kerrison, and it has carried out a significant amount of upgrading to the leased residential properties.

Tenants of the 16 residential properties have been advised of the intentions and are being supported in understanding the likely process for an onward sale.

A spokesman for the Trustee Board explained the intention behind the decision to sell.

He said: “The core objective of The Kerrison Trust is to help young people in need of care and support, living in Norfolk and Suffolk.

This is something the Trust has done to great effect, making over £362,000 of grants to individuals and organisations over the last six years, and it’s a source of support and aid which is never more important than in this period of increased strain for many families and communities.”

He continued: “The Trust has relied on its property holdings to provide the principal source of funding for its activities, with the rental income from its residential properties enabling it to make grants to many worthwhile causes.

“However, with the increasing costs of repairs and upgrading, we have now concluded that the purposes of the Trust would be best served by selling the whole of the estate of land and properties at Thorndon.

“This will enable it to centrally focus on assisting young people in need.”

It is not yet known whether a purchaser might choose to maintain the tenancies of all occupied properties, or whether the buyer may require the buildings and land to be fully vacant.

The Trust will be making every effort to keep all tenants abreast of the progress and will, as appropriate, seek to keep the local community informed on the sale.

The spokesman added: “We are acutely aware of how sensitive those in and around the Thorndon community will feel about this decision, and, whilst our principal focus must be on the Trust’s tenants, our intention going forward is to keep people abreast of developments.

“We know that right now our work in helping young people in Norfolk and Suffolk is so very important, and it is right that this should be our priority, given this was the ultimate purpose of our Trust.”

Organisations and individuals are able to access The Kerrison Trust in order to request grant funding for particular projects or needs.

In recent years, The Kerrison Trust has funded such organisations as The Greenlight Trust, 4YP, Future Female Society, and UEA.

For more information about the charity, go to <https://www.kerrison.org.uk/who-we-are>

To enquire about the scope for purchase, in the first instance, please contact Crispin Muir, cmuir@lsk.co.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Kerrison Trust was established over 150 years ago with an ethos that remains firmly in place today: to help young people living in Norfolk and Suffolk, who have little or no support, to navigate life’s turbulent times.

Its story begins with the founding in 1856 of one of the earliest Reform Schools in the village of Thorndon, a few miles south of Eye in Suffolk. Lady Caroline Kerrison (the Trust’s founder), an artist

and one of the few females to be accepted by the Photographic Society, was responsible for the design of the Kerrison Reformatory, as the school later became known.

Reform Schools were originally conceived as an alternative to prison for juveniles convicted of a crime – an 11-year-old was sentenced to 21 days imprisonment and two years at Kerrison for stealing brass weights; a harsh sentence to say the least – and to support destitute youngsters.

Today, the charity's small but dedicated teams provides grants to many individuals and organisations throughout Suffolk.

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