

12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

## Work commences on new airbase for Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) is pleased to announce that construction of the charity's new airbase at North Weald Airfield has begun. The purpose-built facility will replace the current leased EHAAT base at North Weald.

EHAAT CEO Jane Gurney got work underway today at a short 'breaking ground' ceremony which was attended by VIP guests, charity trustees, volunteers, a former airlifted patient and EHAAT's critical care team as well as members of the construction team.

Speaking at the event, Jane Gurney said: "This is such an important milestone in the charity's history, building our own specially-designed airbase will secure the future of our North Weald operations for decades to come. We are grateful to have the opportunity to do this, thanks to our amazing fundraisers who have supported the charity for over 20 years. Building the facility ourselves will result in significant cost savings compared to leasing a new building built to the same specification."

In addition to housing one of EHAAT's two helicopters and two of its rapid response vehicles, the new premises will include areas for training, mentoring, patient liaison and fundraising. There will be space for cross training with other emergency services, which will benefit both EHAAT and the local pre-hospital care community. Part of the new airbase will be a dedicated interactive visitor centre which will allow the charity to welcome and engage with the local community.

Project managed by Castons and designed by Hurley Porte and Duell and Superstructures, the new facility is being built by Barnes Construction.

Mark Hart, Joint MD for Barnes Construction said: "We're looking forward to delivering this important modern facility for Essex & Herts Air Ambulance. Our recent track record and experience in delivering projects within the charity sector means that we can demonstrate our commitment to both the construction, as well as our staff involvement in the various fundraising events that may be taking place in the months ahead."

Work is also underway to extend and improve facilities at EHAAT's other airbase at Earls Colne to future-proof it.

The occasion also saw the launch of the charity's 'Buy a Brick' fundraising initiative which will allow supporters to get involved with the new airbase. Buying a brick is a great way to be part of our new airbase forever. All 4,000 bricks from this fundraiser will be used in the helicopter viewing area which will be accessible from the visitor centre.

More information on the Buy a Brick appeal can be found at [ehaat.org/buy-a-brick](http://ehaat.org/buy-a-brick) or by contacting the fundraising team on 0345 2417 690 or [contactus@ehaat.org](mailto:contactus@ehaat.org)

ENDS



**Photograph:** EHAAT CEO Jane Gurney and Councillor Richard Bassett, Chair of Epping Forest District Council mark the start of work on the new airbase with invited guests and EHAAT staff.

**Also attached:** Soundclip of Jane Gurney discussing the new airbase

**For more information please contact Gavin Sherriff, PR Officer, on 0345 2417 690.**

**Notes to Editor:**

- Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) is a Charity that provides a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) for the critically ill and injured of Essex, Hertfordshire and the surrounding areas.
- The service is provided free of charge but, unlike NHS emergency services, the Charity receives limited direct funding from the Government and none from the National Lottery. It costs in excess of £750,000 every month to keep the service operational and cover all charitable costs, and this would not be possible without the generosity and goodwill of people and businesses of Essex, Hertfordshire and beyond.
- Each of the Charity's HEMS teams consist of two Pilots, a Pre-hospital Care Doctor and a Critical Care Paramedic.
- These teams, made up of highly-skilled individuals, attended 1,526 patients in 2019 and are the backbone of your local life-saving Charity.
- The fleet consists of two Air Ambulances, and four rapid response vehicles (RRVs - cars) The RRVs are crewed by a Pre-hospital Care Doctor and a Critical Care Paramedic and carry the same life-saving equipment as the helicopters.
- During the day, from 7am until 8.00pm, the Critical Care Team provides the service using helicopters based at Earls Colne and North Weald. An RRV is used before sunrise, after sunset or when the helicopter is unable to fly because of poor weather or maintenance.
- Overnight from 7.30pm to 7.30am the service is provided using an RRV based at North Weald.