Local air ambulance charity launches appeal to help buy new air base

Monday 9 July, 2018

Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) is appealing to the local community to help raise the vital funds needed to buy their new air base.

Their current air base in Filton is one of the oldest in the country, and unfortunately is no longer meeting the needs of the increasingly busy service. Added to this, the entire site is set to be re-developed, and will no longer be able to host the service..

Luckily their current landlords, BAE Systems, is building a new air base in Almondsbury for the charity, which will provide a modern home for the life-saving service and which GWAAC will move into before the end of 2018.

In an exciting move, BAE Systems have given the charity the opportunity to buy the new base once it's completed – at a significantly lower price than it cost them to buy the land and build the facilities – thus providing GWAAC with stability for the foreseeable future.

GWAAC's Lead Doctor, Matt Thomas, explains: "It is so important to my colleagues and I, as well as all of our patients and their families, that we can keep doing the work that we do every day. Our current hangar in Filton dates to before the First World War! It is cold and damp, and no longer fit for purpose. A new home for our helicopter and a more welcoming place to work every day is very exciting, and really means that GWAAC will be here to stay, providing our vital service for every single person across our region. As a charity-funded air ambulance, we rely on the generosity of our supporters, and now we need your help to make this dream a reality."

The GWAAC crew attend on average 5 incidents every single day, providing cutting edge Critical Care at the scene of an accident or medical emergency.

The charity provides the Critical Care and Air Ambulance service to 2.1 million people across the counties of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, North Somerset and surrounding areas. They receive no day-to-day funding from the Government or National Lottery.

The team consists of highly skilled Critical Care Doctors and Specialist Paramedics in Critical Care, who are able to carry out life-saving interventions such as blood transfusions, and administer anaesthetics, at the scene of an incident – in effect bringing the skills you would usually find in an Accident & Emergency department to your garden, the roadside, a park or your home.

Chief Executive Anna Perry says: "The chance to *Buy Our Base* is an amazing, once in a lifetime opportunity for GWAAC. If the charity owns our base, instead of leasing it, it will provide much-needed stability for our operations, enabling our crew to work in an environment which reflects the importance of their work. We're here for you, local people from across our region, and it's thanks to the generosity of our supporters that we are able to provide this life-saving service. Every penny counts, and we're asking the public to support us in the opportunity to Buy Our Base, in any way that you can!"

The new air base will cost GWAAC £2 million to buy, and they are asking you to help them raise £1 million towards this, plus £250,000 to fully kit it out. That is in addition to the £3 million needed by GWAAC each year to stay operational.

To find out more and donate to the Buy Our Base appeal visit: www.buyourbase.co.uk

ENDS

Download the full media pack from Dropbox with images and videos here: https://bit.ly/2u3ftFA

Notes for editors

- In 2018 the charity celebrates ten years since its first flight.
- The GWAAC critical care team consists of a highly trained and experienced Critical Care Paramedic and Doctor, who bring the skill and expertise of an Accident and Emergency

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Department to the patient.
- In 2017 the Critical Care Team attended 1,824 jobs: by helicopter and by one of our critical care cars.
- A total of fifty sites were surveyed and Almondsbury was the only feasible one due to very specific requirements.
- For more information, visit GWAAC's Buy Our Base website: www.buyourbase.co.uk

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