

Press Release

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New homes in Wisbech for people facing homelessness

A disused building in Wisbech is being brought back to life so YMCA Trinity Group can support local people in need of a safe, secure place to stay.

The building in Kirkgate Street, which is owned by Fenland District Council and has been empty since 2019, is being leased to social enterprise Cornerstone Place which will carry out work to convert the building into nine self-contained apartments.

Work is expected to start in April and will be completed by the end of 2022.

Once finished, residents will be supported by YMCA Trinity Group – a local charity that helps young people to realise their full potential on their journey to independence. The charity offers supported and emergency housing for people across eight residential sites and 15 houses, with over 400 rooms available throughout the region.

Jonathan Martin, Chief Executive of YMCA Trinity Group, said: “Each and every one of us at YMCA Trinity Group is thrilled to be opening new accommodation in Wisbech.

“It’s been a long-term goal for us to establish a provision locally, and we’re excited to be working with Fenland District Council and Cornerstone Place to rejuvenate a property and give it a new life serving local people. We hope this will be the first of many collaborations with Fenland District Council.”

Cllr Sam Hoy, Fenland District Council’s Portfolio Holder for Housing, said: “In Cornerstone Place and YMCA Trinity Group, we have found the right partners to enable this derelict property to return to supporting some of the most vulnerable in the local community. This is a long-term commitment by the Council to repurpose this property to help address local homelessness challenges.”

As a social enterprise property developer, Cornerstone Place brings development and funding expertise which will make the project become a reality.

Unlike private developers their unique Shared Upsides model supports their charity partners financially as well as providing considerable development

experience. It's a model that is being embraced by charities and Local Authorities across the country.

David Ball, Co-Founder and Director of Cornerstone Place said: "This project fits our impact-driven model perfectly. Our aim is to support charities and Local Authorities to develop land and buildings into homes for people who would otherwise be on the streets. This project will provide 3,285 homeless bed nights per year for many years to come, and every one of those nights means that someone has a roof over their head in safety whereas otherwise they might be at risk."

Each year, YMCA Trinity Group supports around 10,000 young and vulnerable people, and communities across Peterborough, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Its primary aim is to enable every young person to grow and develop, running initiatives that tackle issues such as youth engagement, youth offending, mental health, access to employment, domestic violence, and crisis support.

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For interviews or more information, please speak to Tom Evans on tom@athene-communications.co.uk / 01733 207340.

Notes to Editors:

- Founded in 1844, YMCA in England is made up of 113 member YMCAs working to ensure that young people have opportunities to thrive and contribute positively to their communities.
- YMCA operates in over 530 different communities in England impacting upon the lives of over 600,000 people every year.
- YMCAs provide almost 10,000 beds for young people every night. YMCA is the largest voluntary sector provider of safe, supported accommodation for young men and women.
- YMCA enables nearly 43,000 people every year to engage in education, skills and training to enable them to improve their opportunities in the job market.
- YMCA is the largest voluntary sector provider of health and wellbeing services promoting physical activity.
- YMCA Trinity Group have provided mental health services to over 1890 children and young people in 109 schools over the last 5 years; and have trained over 7000 adults in over 688 schools
- For further information please visit <https://ymcatrinitygroup.org.uk/>
- Cornerstone Place is a social enterprise property developer with a unique "Shared Upsides" model which supports homelessness charities and Registered Providers. www.cornerstoneplace.co.uk