

TRUSTEE VACANCIES

Former Girls' Charity School and adjoining cottage, Church Street, Edmonton

HELP SECURE A FUTURE FOR THESE HISTORIC BUILDINGS



Three volunteers are sought to act as trustees of two charities associated with the Charity School Buildings in Edmonton, to support the next steps in securing a future and new use for these buildings. The appointments are intended to be temporary (for a period up to approximately 12 months) and will be crucial in making key decisions about the site including a transfer of ownership.

The three trustees will be appointed to both charities to replace the present trustee and bring both bodies to a quorum. They will undertake the following tasks;

- to take formal legal responsibility for the operation of the Girls' Sunday School Foundation, and for the management of its assets (which essentially consist only of the buildings and their fixtures and fittings);
- to work with the key stakeholder group to support identification of a future use for the buildings;
- to give legal effect to any transfer of ownership/disposal of the buildings to an appropriate charity/group which is decided on; and
- to take formal responsibility for winding up the Girls' Special Instruction Foundation.

The buildings are fully insured and trustee indemnity insurance is in place to provide the trustees with protection against personal liability. A Charity Commission Qualified Surveyors Report has recently been completed. The land is vested in the Official Custodian for Charities and currently in the process of being registered. The stakeholder group will aim to provide funding for any necessary legal and other professional support. The trustees will need to meet the Charity Commission's requirements as "fit and proper" people.

If you may be interested in becoming a trustee please send an email to;
gssfedmonton@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

A charitable foundation was established in 1778 and moved into a newly constructed school building in 1784. The school was rebuilt on its current site in 1793. The adjoining cottage was also purchased at and converted into a house for the school mistress. The Foundation provided education to girls from the local area through to 1904, when it was closed as a Public Elementary School following the 1902 Education Act.

In 1913 the Foundation was split into two charities

- The **Girls Sunday School Foundation**, an unregistered charity, became the owner of the buildings and was given the objective of using them to provide religious and other education to members of “the poorer classes”, which it continued to do so through a Sunday School alongside other community uses. In 1978 a nursery school occupied the premises and by the mid 1980’s was back in a variety of community uses. In more recent years the condition of the building had deteriorated and it wasn’t in any active use at all. In spring 2020 Live-in Guardians moved into the building and completed remedial repairs to enable guardian occupancy. The Charity’s formal objectives no longer reflect local needs, and it has no funds either to perform charitable activities or to undertake the very extensive work required on the buildings.
- The **Girls Special Instruction Foundation**, a charity registered with the Charity Commission, acquired the then surplus financial assets of the original Foundation, with the remit of applying them for providing special educational facilities for girls in the Urban District of Edmonton. [It currently holds a small amount of cash and investments, but these are matched by accumulated expenses.]

Both charities were in practiced managed together and one individual is the sole trustee of both of them. Three trustees are required for valid decisions to be taken by the charities and the present trustee is leaving Edmonton and wishes to retire.

The buildings are Grade II listed and within the Church Street Conservation Area. In 2012 an Options Appraisal was undertaken by Enfield Council to help identify a new use for the buildings and over 2020 an enhancement of this appraisal is being led by the London Historic Buildings Trust to review and update the report. Uses that can respond to local need and deliver community benefit are currently being examined with an aim to identify a viable and socially impactful project.

This work is being funded with the help of a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Architectural Heritage Fund and is guided by a key stakeholder group; the sole current trustee of the charities, Enfield Council, the Enfield Society, the Diocese of London, Historic England and the London Historic Buildings Trust. It is the working assumption of the trustee and the other stakeholders that the future of the buildings will be best served by transferring them away from the Sunday School Foundation to another body which is not subject to the restrictive objectives of the charity, which would then be wound up. It is suggested that the Special Instruction Foundation has no continuing function and should also be wound up.