



## - Community Landing Sites -

### - How you can help Devon Air Ambulance reach your community at night -

#### **Background:**

Devon Air Ambulance (DAA) now operates until 2am every day and our vision is to provide our service 24 hours a day.

Operating and landing in towns and villages during the hours of darkness is different to how we operate in daylight. To support 'night' operations, DAA are working with communities to create a network of **Community Landing Sites** which are open spaces with either existing or newly installed floodlighting that we can operate remotely. The development of these sites is part-funded and managed by local communities. Using sites like this when it's dark means we can land in the heart of a community and reach patients much quicker and safer than if we had to land in a 'dark field'.

There are currently 122 active Community Landing Sites in towns and villages throughout Devon. Have you got a site in your community...?

#### **What makes a good night landing site?**

A night landing site could be a green, sports pitch, playing field, playground or farmer's field. The site needs to be a flat area of 50m x 50m, to provide maximum operational benefit and safety, have pedestrian access on/off the site and vehicle parking nearby. Whilst tall trees or power lines within the site might be a hazard, if they are on the periphery they may not cause a problem.

Floodlighting is an essential component of a community landing site as it illuminates the site during landing and take-off as well as helping the safe carry and loading of a patient into the helicopter. Where there are no existing lights in place or suitable infrastructure to which we can mount the lights, we are asking communities to install a 10m high steel column with a set of two 150-watt LED lights. This lighting system would be powered by mains electricity supply (240v).

All lighting systems need to incorporate a GSM control switch, which will enable the lights to be turned on/off remotely, meaning no-one needs to be on hand.

#### **Community Grants:**

DAA provides grants to help communities set up their landing site. So far, we have helped fund new floodlighting, access improvements like paths and gateways and new power supplies (i.e. from Western Power) at community landing sites.

Grants can cover a significant proportion of your project costs, but please note – **DAA grants will be coming to an end in early 2020, so please don't delay if you want to access this funding to help your community.**

## **Developing a Community Landing site...**

...is not difficult to do, but like other community projects its better starting sooner rather than later as your project might involve several different partners and will involve engaging the wider community in aspects like raising funds. The good news is that community funds have consistently been raised very quickly, reflecting the significant support for these projects (and the Air Ambulance more generally) by local people, businesses and grant funders.

There is also a 'well-trodden' path experienced by scores of other communities (through which DAA provides support throughout) - we will identify your site, help establish costs and set out the DAA grant, get local sign-up and help with permissions, advise on fundraising and work with contractors.

## **Addressing any concerns...**

Some people may be worried about potential disturbance from their landing site - we will talk to local people to allay any fears, but in simple terms we would stress that these are emergency sites and used only to help patients with life-changing or life-threatening conditions. We obviously hope these are rare occurrences.

The lighting system is operated remotely by Devon Air Ambulance and lights are angled to illuminate the landing area. The lights will only be used as and when needed. Helicopters do make a noise during landing and take-off although by using surveyed sites we can land the aircraft and get to a patient more quickly and will therefore also make less noise in the process.

## **Managing a landing site:**

We will stay in touch with your community once a site is operational and a simple system is in place for you to close the site temporarily if there is an event being held (e.g. with tents / marquees) or the site has groundworks (e.g. drainage) being carried out.

In our experience the costs of running each landing are low and we will talk through aspects like electricity costs (typically under £10/yr), maintenance / monitoring and insurance (in many cases the lighting is insured through Parish Councils at no additional costs) in greater detail with you.

## **Community Benefits:**

The only way Devon Air Ambulance can reach your community 'in darkness' is by having a Community Landing Site, through which:

- ✓ we can reach local residents until 2am every day (our vision is to provide a 24hr service)
- ✓ we can convey patients to the most appropriate hospital for their needs not necessarily the nearest (i.e. transfer to specialist treatment centres)
- ✓ our highly skilled medical teams can deliver enhanced pre-hospital clinical care to those people facing more complex medical conditions or trauma
- ✓ people living nearby, or those involved in collisions on the nearby roads, can be brought there for treatment / onward transfer

## **To contact Devon Air Ambulance:**

To find out more please contact Toby Russell, Community Landing Sites Development Officer, on: [t.russell@daat.org](mailto:t.russell@daat.org) or 07943 207673