

North Herts Council would like to invite the submission of offers for a long leasehold interest in Charnwood House, Paynes Park, Hitchin SG5 1EH.

To submit an offer, please complete this form and return it by email to Hannah.niven@eddisons.com by **16:00** on **19 October 2026**.

All offers will be evaluated, taking into account the community benefit delivered, viability of project, proposed terms of lease and whether the applicant is soundly run. Your proposal is more likely to be successful if you can demonstrate that you:

- will deliver a project that meets a community need of the people of Hitchin and North Hertfordshire, delivering open and inclusive public access
- will protect and enhance the Grade II listed building
- have identified and costed necessary works
- have secured funding or are in discussions with funders
- are making the application on behalf of an organisation with access to relevant skills, experience and expertise; and
- have developed a resilient business plan showing how the ongoing operation of the community venture and maintenance of Charnwood House will be financed.

However, all applications are welcome and will be judged on their merits.

Name of organisation/applicant:	
Address (including postcode):	
Name and position of person to contact:	
Email address for point of contact:	

Your Proposal

Charnwood House is a grade II listed building in need of refurbishment to be brought back into active community use in keeping with the spirit of its gift by a benefactor in the 1930s.

This section of questions aims to understand how you propose to use Charnwood House to improve the wellbeing of the local community and to honour its historical and architectural significance.

Please provide an overview of your vision for Charnwood House, including a summary of your proposed use for the property and any significant works that you would arrange to be carried out.

Max: 300 words

Please explain how your proposed use of Charnwood House will benefit the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the Hitchin and wider North Herts community, referring to any specific community needs your proposal will address.

Max: 200 words

Please explain how your project will sustain and enhance the value and significance of Charnwood House as a heritage building.

Max: 200 words

How will you ensure that your community venture will be welcoming, inclusive and accessible to all sections of the North Herts community?

Max: 200 words

Please provide details of the activities, events, programmes and services which you would offer.

Max: 200 words

Viability

The successful community operation of Charnwood House will require the input of financial resources, skill, experience and commitment, both in terms of the initial refurbishment and of on-going maintenance and operation. The purpose of this section of questions is to understand the viability of your proposal.

Please outline the main steps you would take to deliver your project, and an indicative timescale in which you consider the stages will be achieved.

Max: 250 words

Please outline the alterations you propose to carry out at Charnwood House, an indicative cost of the work and confirm how you intend to fund the works, together with any approval process that will be required to access the funding. If you have carried out any scoping works, commissioned any professional advice or have secured any funding, please provide details.

Max: 300 words

Please outline how you would fund and manage the on-going operation of Charnwood House. If you have a business plan which supports your answer, please provide a copy.

Max: 250 words

What have you identified as the principal risks involved with the refurbishment of Charnwood House and its operation? How would you aim to mitigate these risks?

Max: 300 words

About you

This section of questions aims to understand more about you and why you would be well-placed to refurbish and operate Charnwood House as a community venture.

Please provide details of the entity that you propose will take the lease of Charnwood House, including any charitable, corporate or other status and registered number and explanation of its governance structure. If relevant to your organisation, please provide a copy of its memorandum and articles of association or its constitution.

Max: 150 words

Please provide details of the principal people who will be involved with the refurbishment and running of Charnwood House, outlining why their skills, experience and expertise align to your project and the historic nature of Charnwood House.

Max: 350 words

Please provide details of how long your organisation has been operating and experience you have of managing community facilities, heritage assets or public buildings (if relevant).

Max: 200 words

Please provide details of any local connection to the North Herts Council area.

Max: 150 words

The Lease

Charnwood House will be offered to the successful applicant on the basis of a long-term full repairing lease. The aim of this section is to understand the terms on which you envisage that the lease would be granted to you.

Please outline the terms on which you would anticipate taking a lease of Charnwood House, including the length of lease term, any rent you may pay and the permitted use. You may find it helpful to answer this question by way of completing the draft heads of terms document attached to this form, highlighting the areas where you have made changes.

Max: 300 words

Conditions of application:

1. North Herts Council is not bound to accept any application. Following evaluation of the applications, any preferred proposal will be subject to the Council's appropriate decision-marking and approval process before any lease is entered into.
2. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	What Assessed
Community benefit	The extent of community use, social and cultural impact, public benefit, local engagement, and contribution to the visitor economy
Deliverability and organisational capacity	The ability of the applicant to implement the proposal successfully in the context of its experience, governance and staffing
Financial sustainability	Robustness of business plan, funding arrangements, financial resilience and ability to meet lease obligations
Stewardship of heritage building	Ability to care for, maintain and enhance Charnwood House over the term of the lease
Terms of lease	Attractiveness of lease terms, particularly in the context of securing a long-term future for Charnwood House

The Council has an expectation that the successful applicant will reach a minimum threshold for each of the criteria.

3. Following assessment of the applications, shortlisted applicants may be invited to discuss their proposal with the Executive Member for Enterprise and officers of North Herts Council during the week commencing **02 November 2026**.
4. All applications are subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, identity checks and credit checks.
5. North Herts Council reserves the right to ask for referees.
6. The acceptance of any application shall be subject to the Council's formal decision-making and approval process and, if approved, to completion of a formal lease and any ancillary documents on terms acceptable to the Council.
7. All personal information that you provide is managed in accordance with our privacy policy. Please visit: [Personal Information and Privacy Notice \(UKGDPR\) | North Herts Council](#) where you can find out information about how we handle your information.
8. By submitting this application, you confirm agreement for the Council and the Council's representatives to carry out a credit check on you and/or the applicant organisation.

I declare that I have given accurate information in this form and have read the conditions of application and privacy notice.

Signed:

Dated: