

HEALTH

'End of an era' for hospital group

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A decades-old fundraising group has presented its final donation to a hospital before it disbands.

Medical equipment doesn't come cheap but the Friends of Stamford Hospital have raised more than £500,000 to help out during the past 60 years.

The group launched in 1963 with the aim of improving the hospital services and environment for patients, staff and visitors.

Its final donation was an ultrasound probe to be used for patients with possible prostate issues.

Other significant purchases have included a £35,000 hysteroscope used to look at the womb, a £27,600 ophthalmology system for eye care, chairs and a trolley for the MRI unit (£10,287), a bladder scanner (£9,538), an MRI audio system (£8,407) and an ultrasound scanner (£7,539).

The group held its final meeting last summer after struggling to attract new volunteers.

Chairperson Kay Hircock said: "For a small local charity, over £500,000 is an exceptional amount to raise which has been spent wisely and with much deliberation."

"The profile of Friends groups in Stamford, Peterborough and Hinchbrook, which rely on volunteers, has diminished over time and it seems appropriate now to hand over to the Hospitals Charity."

"We come to the end of an era which has seen healthcare develop in ways unthought of in 1963. Our good wishes for the future go to all the staff at the hospital trust."

The volunteers have been thanked for their work.

Charlotte Williams, deputy chief executive of the North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We are immensely grateful to the Friends of Stamford Hospital past and present — for their incredible support and dedication over six decades."

"We know from the vast



number of items of equipment purchased, and donations made in other areas, that the lives of so many patients, staff and visitors have been touched by their kindness and on behalf of the trust, an enormous thank you."

People can continue to support Stamford Hospital via the Hospitals Charity — where they can donate to a specific department or medical speciality — via www.nwangliaft.nhs.uk/north-west-anglia-hospitals-charity



The Friends of Stamford Hospital are thanked for 60 years of fundraising as they made their final presentation.

FIRE

Family of five left with nothing after 'nightmare' arson attack

A mother and her four children are homeless following an arson attack that killed their cats.

Letitia Bennett's home on Glen Crescent in Stamford is uninhabitable after a blaze on September 4 destroyed much of what she owned.

It was the second incident in the space of a week, as the previous Saturday a fire was started on the same street at the home of her neighbour Stephen Brant, while he and his family were away.

At the time, police arrested a 28-year-old man, who has been released on bail while investigations continue.

The mother and her children have since been placed in emergency accommodation, as everything was scorched and left covered in soot.

She explained they had to throw away most of their clothes due to the stench — but while all of that is replaceable, her two young cats, Midnight and Mocha, who were each around a year old, are not. They died as a result of the blaze.

"The house exploded from the inside. By the time I had finished the school run and got there, they were pulling my cats out of the building," she said.



The blaze at Letitia Bennett's home killed her cats, Midnight and Mocha (inset)

"They tried doing CPR — but it was just too late."

"My eldest daughter has autism, and she really loved those cats, so she's really struggling without them."

Letitia has spent about £2,000 replacing clothes, buying toiletries and essentials, and has used all of her savings.

"I am now at the point where I cannot afford daily living," she said.

"I have only bought one T-shirt for myself, as I wanted to make sure my children had what they needed first."

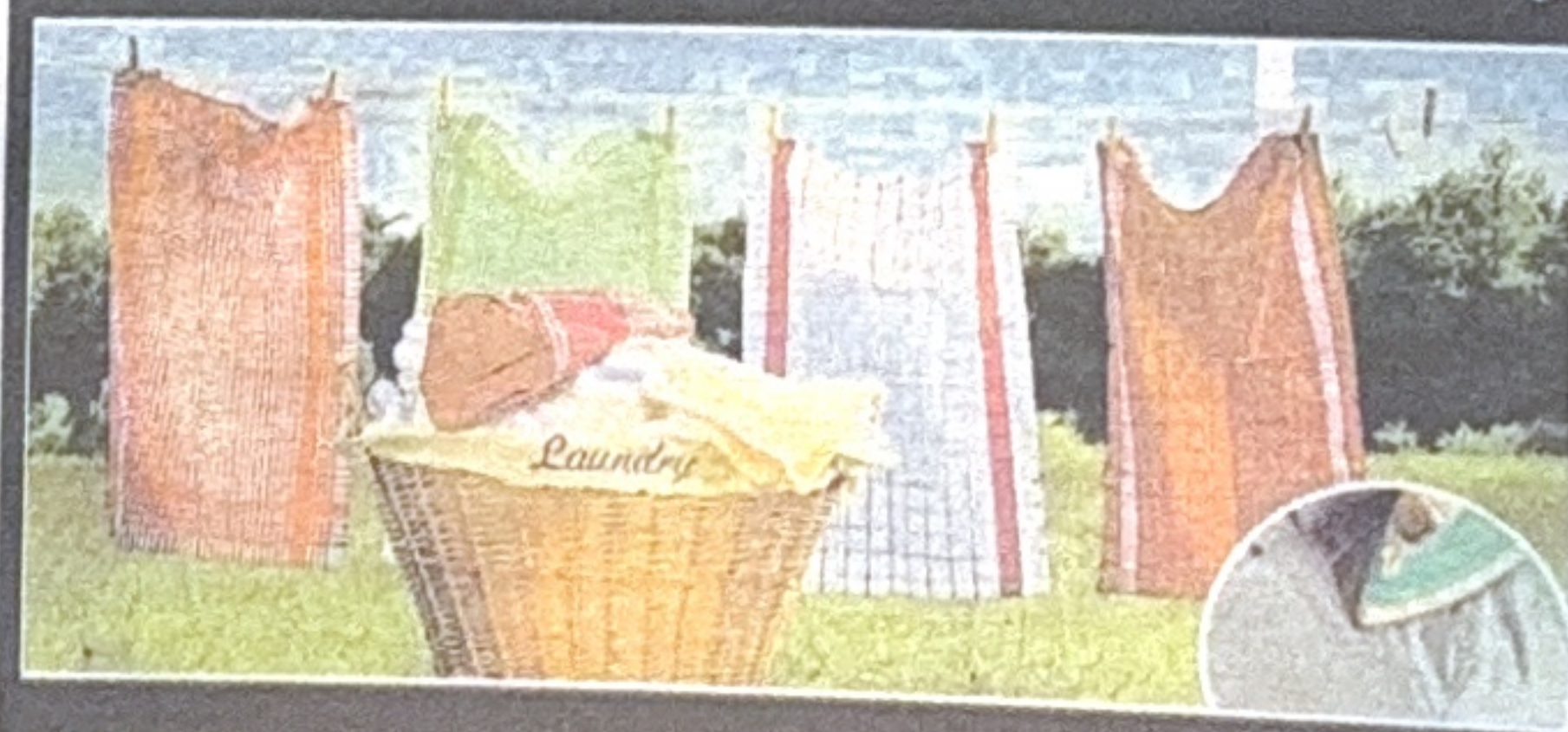
She has set up a GoFundMe page to try to get her life back on track.

"It's been difficult being bounced around. My eldest has autism, and my youngest son has ADHD, and they're obviously not coping with the constant moving from one place to another," Letitia said.

"We're trying to keep it as stable as we can — but it's rough. It's been a nightmare."

Lincolnshire Police has been approached for an update on the investigation.

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