



Iliffe Media Ltd acquires KM Media Group

Iliffe Media Ltd has acquired the entire shareholding of Kent's independent publisher KM Media Group Ltd.

KM Media Group publishes nine paid-for and four free newspapers including the Kent Messenger Series, the current Regional Press Awards Newspaper of the Year, and the Kentish Gazette, established in 1717.

The group publishes KentOnline.co.uk, with an audience of 2.4m unique monthly browsers.

In addition to print and online, the group operates the kmfm radio network, reaching 164,000 listeners each week, and will soon be broadcasting on television through a joint initiative with the University of Kent.

Its newspapers are among the UK's biggest-selling weekly titles with a long established heritage dating back 300 years.

The deal represents the latest stage in the expansion of Iliffe Media, following the launch of the Cambridge Independent in 2016 and the acquisition of 13 titles from Johnston Press earlier this year.

KM Media Group chairman Geraldine Allinson said the deal with Iliffe would allow KM to continue to evolve and bring about much needed investment to maintain its independence and continue to serve the people of Kent with trusted news and other valued content. It also enables KM to resolve the long standing issues surrounding its closed final salary pension scheme.

Geraldine, who will remain fully involved with KM Media Group, said: "The directors and I believe this deal represents the best possible outcome for our staff and customers.

"Although there is some personal sadness for me and my family that our pension liabilities have led us to this position, in Iliffe we have found a publisher which shares our belief in the importance of local media.

"The Iliffe family have extensive experience and heritage in local media, publishing and printing dating back to 1891, and have very similar values and ethos to us at KM. We believe they will be great custodians of our media portfolio here in Kent."

David Fordham, former CEO of Iliffe News and Media, led the deal process on behalf of Iliffe Media Ltd, and said: "This acquisition represents the latest stage in the continued expansion of Iliffe Media and further demonstrates Edward Iliffe's personal belief and commitment in the future of local media, across all formats."

Fordham has also been appointed as a non-executive director to the board of KM Media Group, with immediate effect.

In February, Iliffe purchased 13 titles from Johnston Press in East Anglia and the East Midlands. It also launched the paid-for Cambridge Independent in September 2016.



Chairman Edward Iliffe said: "We very much look forward to working with the management team at the KM and continuing to evolve KM's trusted brand and highly valued local media, through investing in journalism and producing quality publications, websites and broadcast content that will be engaging to readers, listeners, viewers and advertisers alike."

The full list of titles, licences and broadcast entities involved in the deal are:

Kent Messenger Series
Medway Messenger
Kentish Gazette Series and Faversham News
Sittingbourne Messenger
Sittingbourne News Extra
Kentish Express Series
Folkestone and Hythe Express
Gravesend and Dartford Messenger
East Kent Mercury and Dover Mercury
Kent Business
Messenger Extra
Thanet Extra
Medway Extra
Canterbury Extra
KentOnline network (incorporating KentOnline, Kent Business, My Kent Family, Kent Homes, KentJobs, kmfm.co.uk)
kmfm Ashford
kmfm Canterbury
kmfm Maidstone
kmfm Medway
kmfm Shepway and White Cliffs
kmfm Thanet
kmfm West Kent
kmfm DAB
KMTV (50% share of licence jointly held with University of Kent)

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