



EFFINGHAM VILLAGE RECREATION TRUST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING for FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-21

8 FEBRUARY 2022
by Zoom

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Good evening and welcome to this Annual General Meeting of EVRT. Thank you to those who have registered to attend and who have come along this evening.

From the Trust side we have here tonight, firstly the three Managing Trustees – myself, Chris Hogger, as current Hon. Chairman of the Trust, Paula Moss as Hon. Secretary and Charles Thorne as Hon. Treasurer, and secondly Phillipa Chisnell the KGV Manager.

You should all have been able to access, from our website, tonight's Agenda and Meeting Protocol together with the draft Minutes of the previous AGM and the Accounts for 2020-21.

This AGM is occurring much later than would be the case in a normal year - generally our AGMs take place each June following finalization of the accounts for the year ending in the preceding March. The preparation of the Accounts for 2020-21 was much delayed this year and so, in consequence, has been this AGM. The Accounts were finalized in January and have been submitted to the Charity Commission within the official deadline.

The Accounts are accompanied by the Report of the Trustees for 2020-21. Although it is signed by me, I did not write a single word of it. I signed it because it is a formal requirement that it be signed by the current Chairman. It had already been prepared by the former Trustees at the time we present ones took office, which was in November 2021. We have added just one sentence about the continuing matter of looking into future governance. Other than that, the description of that year as given in the Report is as the former Trustees had known it to be and we, having had no involvement in that year, had no reason to edit that description.

That report is there for you to read yourselves, and perhaps the best I can do tonight is to add a little more perspective to some of the matters documented there, relying partly upon the fact of my having been the Trust's Financial Administrator for part of that year and partly upon my previous experience as an EVRT Trustee.

In the year being considered there were two lockdowns due to Covid, requiring the shut-down of the building. When it re-opened it was subject to stringent and often varying constraints imposed by Government. Trustees and staff became heavily involved in risk assessments and safety procedures in trying to resume some semblance of normal functioning for the various user groups, and so to maintain some continuing income from them.



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It is hard to say whether in some instances it would have been less stressful simply to have kept the building locked down for longer than legally required – but that might not have been feasible for the Licencees.

My impression is that the Trustees and staff took a real body blow in having to handle the Covid pandemic, and that they did as well on that front as anyone could have done.

A second major body blow was the traveller incursion in September 2020. There are at least two ways to handle such an incursion. One is to engage commercial bailiffs and pay a large sum in the expectation of obtaining a swift resolution. This is what was done for this latest incursion. It cost £3000 to evict a relatively small number of caravans from the KGV fields, but took longer than hoped to achieve. By contrast the 2017 incursion had a much larger number of caravans. They were evicted by a court order costing only £250, and more swiftly than was the case in 2020. BUT - that was when the courts had not been afflicted by Covid. In 2020 the courts were paralysed and I believe that the Trustees made the right decision, expensive as it was.

Subsequently the Trustees brought in stronger security measures, but vulnerabilities to incursion still remain and can probably never be totally eliminated.

With these events behind them the Trustees revived their long-held intent to incorporate the Trust in the belief that the ensuing reduction in Trustee liability would enable more sustainable governance in the future. I personally have never regarded personal liability as a significant deterrent to trusteeship, until the potential for a S106 rebuild of the KGV Hall appeared on the horizon. That project, if it materialized, would indeed create serious liabilities for individuals in an unincorporated trust.

However, the former Trustees decided not to proceed further and withdrew not only from the governance quest but from the Trust itself. And that is why we three new Trustees are here tonight.

We have undertaken our own research and consultations on the governance question, and at the moment this is a continuing process about which I will say no more for the present.

As done in the Trustees' Report, I too will tonight convey my appreciation of the high diligence and capability of my fellow Trustees and especially of our valued KGV staff. I also express our gratitude to Effingham Parish Council for its continuing financial contributions to the Trust.

Christopher J. Hogger,
Hon. Chairman.