

# A statement on behalf of Effingham Village Recreation Trust (EVRT)

Date 10th July 2025

The Trustee of the charity Effingham Village Recreation Trust (EVRT) is deeply concerned to learn of recent allegations circulating online that misrepresent EVRT's intentions and actions. We wish to address these concerns directly, clarify our position, and reassure the community.

## 1. Our Mission & Obligations

Since its inception, EVRT's vision has been to maximize the use of the trust's assets to benefit all members of our community equally. These assets include the King George V Fields, the KGV Hall, and all the other buildings and facilities on the Fields. This is fully consistent with the charitable objects set out in EVRT's governing document, which requires the KGV Fields and its buildings to be retained for use as a public recreation ground and village hall. The Trustee is totally committed to our mission to create a fully inclusive sports and recreation facility on the KGV that supports the health and wellbeing of every member of our community and all user groups and clubs that operate from our site.

Currently the trust is focussed upon securing major grant funding to significantly improve accessibility of the KGV Fields and implement a programme that will ensure our community facility is fully inclusive. When complete it will provide opportunities for users to enjoy a more diverse range of sport, recreation and wellbeing activities. We are working closely with individuals, user groups and a broad range of community organisations to bring this project to completion. More can be found about this project here: <https://www.effinghamkgv.co.uk/>

The Trustee is legally bound both to advance the charity's objects and to act with integrity and fairness to all community groups and other charities. We take such obligations very seriously. That responsibility underpins every decision we make. For this reason, EVRT will not be engaging in social media exchanges that disparage or misrepresent the actions or intentions of any charity or organisation. We will however address points of fact on our licensing objectives with 1<sup>st</sup> Effingham Scout Group. (1ES)

## 2. Clarifying Licence Intentions

EVRT, as is required by the Charity Commission and recommended by The National Scouting Organisation, has proposed a licence for scout usage of the Milestone Hut which serves as the HQ for 1ES. This licence

- Guarantees free use of the Milestone Hut to the Scouts, for scouting activities, for as long as they remain a functioning scout group, operating in a manner that doesn't undermine EVRT's charitable objects. (Any such issue raised by EVRT would be subject to independent, objective verification & mediation. EVRT could not impose its view on a breach with 1ES.)
- Guarantees that EVRT will maintain, at its own cost, the facility to be fit for purpose as a scout HQ for as long as it is required by 1ES.
- Guarantees an automatic right for 1ES to renew its licence every six years. This is the maximum period allowed for a licence by the Charity Commission, but we have included a legally binding clause that 1ES can trigger if it wishes to continue to use the facility for a further six years. There is no limit on the number of occasions this clause can be invoked.
- There is a clause that prevents 1ES from hiring out the facility for commercial profit. This is a legal requirement. Charity Law explicitly states that a trust must not allow a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to pursue commercial interests on its site for which there is no benefit to the charity. EVRT is duty bound both by this legislation and that by rules governing recreation grounds and fields in trust, which prohibits exclusive use of any building on the KGV Fields by any single user or group. Allowing 1ES to have exclusive access to the Milestone Hut would be contrary to EVRT's legal obligation to retain the building for public use.

EVRT believes the license, as it currently stands, protects the scouts' long-standing presence and connection with the KGV and our village communities, while safeguarding the inclusive ethos and public purpose required by the charity's governance document. It would be a breach of the trustee's duty to allow any one group to monopolise or monetise an asset of the trust, as well as contrary to EVRT's legal and moral obligations under charity law.

### **3. EVRT Vision for Community Benefit**

Ultimately, EVRT only exists to ensure that all groups, including but not exclusively the scouts, benefit from trust assets. Our concern is not with any individual group, but with the principle that the KGV and all its facilities remain open for community use, under fair licence agreements and protected from exclusivity or commercial misuse.

### **Summary**

EVRT has acted consistently with charity law, planning obligations, and the trustee's ethical and legal responsibilities. The charity does not wish to enter court proceedings against 1ES, and the Trustee hopes that 1ES will accept our offer of mediation to enable a fair licence to be agreed. We respectfully remind 1ES that the offer of mediation to settle the disagreement was made by EVRT on March 28th, 2025. We hope to receive a positive response to this offer without further delay.