



**CONSTITUTION
OF
SURREY GYPSY TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES FORUM**

ADOPTED 23rd JUNE 2010

AS AMENDED 11TH NOVEMBER 2011

Charity Commission correspondent:

SURREY GYPSY TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES FORUM



CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of the Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum is as follows:

1 NAME

- 1.1 The name of the association is the Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum (henceforth “the Forum”).

2 AIMS

- 2.1 The Forum is established to create opportunities for Gypsy and Traveller communities and public agencies to talk to each other in achieving its objectives.

3 POWERS

- 3.1 In furtherance of the said object, but not further or otherwise, the Forum shall have the following powers:
- (a) to employ and pay any person or persons not being a member of the Managing Committee to supervise, organise, promote and carry on the work of the Forum on such terms as shall be determined;
 - (b) to undertake, execute, manage or assist any charitable trusts which may lawfully be undertaken, executed, managed or assisted by the Forum;
 - (c) to purchase, hire or otherwise acquire any property and any rights necessary for the promotion of the aims of the Forum and to construct, maintain and alter any buildings necessary for the work of the Forum;
 - (d) to make regulations for any property which may be so acquired;
 - (e) subject to such consents as may be required by law, to sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the Forum;
 - (f) subject to such consents as may be required by law, to borrow or raise money to pursue the aims of the Forum and to accept gifts on such terms, if any, as shall be deemed necessary;

- (g) to raise funds, invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscription or otherwise, provided that at all times the Forum shall not undertake permanent trading activities in raising funds to pursue the aims;
- (h) to finance or help finance by way of loan or gift, projects whose aims are the relief of poverty and the promotion of education and health care in Surrey;
- (i) to finance the participation of Gypsies and Travellers in Forum general meetings and AGMs by way of payment of amounts as agreed by the Managing Committee;
- (j) to co-operate and collaborate with voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in similar charitable fields;
- (k) to open and operate such bank and other accounts as the trustees consider necessary and to invest the moneys of the Forum not immediately required to pursue the aims in such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit, subject nevertheless to such conditions (if any) as may be imposed or required by law;
- (l) to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Managing Committee may think fit (i.e. Education, Health & Welfare, Property & Planning, Community Safety, etc.);
- (m) to do all such other lawful things as are necessary to pursue the aims of the Forum.

4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Full membership of the Forum shall be open to :

- (a) Gypsies and Travellers who resort to or live in Surrey of 16 years and over who are interested in furthering the work and the aims of the Forum;
- (b) Officers from statutory organisations and departments which are interested in furthering the said work and the aims of the Forum and whom have paid the annual Forum subscription as laid down from time to time by the Managing Committee and
- (c) Local and national voluntary or other non-profit distributing organisations, whether corporate or unincorporated, which are interested in furthering the said work and the aims of the Forum and which have paid the annual Forum subscription as laid down from time to time by the Managing Committee.

- 4.2 Each member organisation under Clause 4.1(b) may appoint one individual person to represent it and vote on its behalf at General Meetings of the Forum. Other members of such organisations are welcome to attend such General Meetings but may not vote.
- 4.3 Honorary members may be appointed at the discretion of the Managing Committee. Honorary members shall not be entitled to vote nor required to pay an annual subscription.
- 4.4 The Managing Committee shall have the right:
- (a) to approve or reject applications for membership; and
 - (b) to terminate the membership of any individual or organisation at its absolute discretion, provided that the individual member concerned or the individual representing such organisation (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Managing Committee before a final decision is made.
- 4.5 All decisions of the Managing Committee regarding membership may be subject to endorsement, debate or reversal by the Forum in General Meeting by the membership.

5 OFFICERS

- 5.1 At Annual General Meetings (referred to in Clause 10), the Forum shall elect two joint Chairs, one of them shall be a Gypsy / Traveller and the other from a statutory organisation. It shall also elect a Secretary, a Treasurer and such other officers as the Forum shall from time to time decide. Such elected officers (“the Officers”) must be members of the Forum and their number may not exceed eight people. At least one of the Officers must be a Gypsy or Traveller and four are to be from public agencies.
- 5.2 The Officers shall hold office until the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting of the Forum next after their election, but shall then retire. They may be re-elected at any Annual General Meeting.
- 5.3 The Officers shall be members of the Managing Committee (see Clause 6).
- 5.4 At the first Annual General Meeting all the Managing Committee shall retire from office, and at every subsequent Annual General Meeting one third of the Managing Committee shall be subject to retirement by rotation or, if their number is not divisible by three, the number nearest to one third shall retire from office.
- 5.5 The Managing Committee members to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or re-

appointment, but as between persons who became or were last re-appointed Managing Committee Members on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) shall be determined by lot.

- 5.6 If the Forum at a meeting which a Managing Committee member retires by rotation does not fill the vacancy, the retiring Member shall, if willing to act, be deemed to have been re-appointed unless at the meeting it is resolved not to fill the vacancy or unless a resolution on the re-appointment of the Managing Committee Member is put to the meeting and lost.

6 MANAGING COMMITTEE (Membership)

- 6.1 Subject as set out below, the policy and general management of the affairs of the Forum shall be directed by a Managing Committee (“the Managing Committee”) which shall meet not less than four times a year and, when complete, shall consist of not less than five nor more than 12 members. Every effort will be made to maintain a balanced number of Gypsy or Travellers in the Managing Committee.
- 6.2 The members of the Managing Committee shall be the Officers elected under Clause 5 and, in addition, other members of the Forum who shall be elected at Annual General Meetings of the Forum in accordance with Clause 10 below. Initially, there shall be eight members of the Managing Committee (plus any co-opted members), but this may be increased at any Annual General Meeting.
- 6.3 Membership of the Managing Committee shall be for two years from the date of election, but members may be re-elected.
- 6.4 In addition, the Managing Committee may, by unanimous vote of those present at any of its meetings, co-opt up to four further members of the Forum to serve on the Managing Committee, provided that such co-opted members may be removed at any time by majority vote at a General Meeting, and such shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the Managing Committee.
- 6.5 Further, if the post of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer or that of any other elected officer shall at any time fall vacant, the Managing Committee may, by unanimous vote of those present at any of its meetings, appoint temporary acting officers for the said post, and the same provisions shall apply as those to the appointment of co-opted members under Clause 6.4.
- 6.6 To better meet the interests of The Forum in pursuing the needs of Gypsy and Traveller Communities in Surrey, the members of the Managing Group are expected to attend 75% of the meetings of the

Managing Group which take place during one year and 50% of those of The Forum.

7 **MANAGING COMMITTEE** (Regulation of meetings)

- 7.1 A meeting of the Managing Committee may be called on 21 days' notice (or less if circumstances unavoidably so dictate) by any member of it by requesting the Secretary of the Forum to convene a meeting. The Secretary shall fix a time, place and date at his or her discretion, but it shall be as convenient as possible to the majority of members. The Secretary shall, unless there are exceptional circumstances, give seven days' notice of any meeting to members of the Managing Committee and shall circulate in advance an agenda setting out matters for discussion.
- 7.2 The Managing Committee may at any meeting, fix the time, date and place of its next meeting, and notice shall be given to all members of the Managing Committee.
- 7.3 The Chair at any meeting of the Managing Committee shall be the Chair of the Forum or, in his or her absence, such person as shall be elected by the members of the Managing Committee present at that meeting.
- 7.4 Minutes of each meeting of the Managing Committee shall be taken by a person nominated by the meeting who shall be responsible for ensuring that draft minutes are circulated to all members of the Forum with the next papers so generally circulated, unless the Managing Committee decides that earlier circulation is desirable. The minutes shall contain a record of all proceedings and resolutions and shall be tabled for approval at the next meeting of the Managing Committee.
- 7.5 The quorum at a meeting of the Managing Committee shall be one third (*or four people*) of the total Managing Committee members.
- 7.6 The Managing Committee shall aim to achieve a unanimous consensus as regards all matters to be decided at its meetings, failing which any questions arising shall be decided by a simple majority¹ of those members present and entitled to vote, except that no matters shall be approved unless at least one third management committee members vote in its favour. In the event of a tied vote, the proposal shall be defeated. There shall be no provision for voting by proxy.
- 7.7 The Managing Committee may appoint such special or standing committees as may be deemed necessary by it, and shall determine their terms of reference, powers, duration, procedure and composition. All acts and proceedings of such special or standing committees shall be reported back to the Managing Committee as soon as possible.

¹ Simple majority means that Forum members have each one vote.

- 7.8 Should a conflict of interest arise, the Managing Committee member is expected to declare this to the Committee and exclude her/ himself from the decision making process on the matter at discussion.

8 **MANAGING COMMITTEE** (Powers)

- 8.1 All matters of policy and general management of the affairs of the Forum shall be directed by the Managing Committee, except that the approval of the Forum in General Meeting or Annual General Meeting is required for those matters falling within the scope of Clause 9.5 below.
- 8.2 Without limitation to the above mentioned, the Managing Committee shall determine and be responsible for (or delegate its staff in post) for the following:
- a) fund-raising;
 - b) all routine matters of a managing nature;
 - c) publicity;
 - d) exhibitions and the purchase or sale of items;
 - e) organising the General Meetings and speakers (if appropriate); and
 - f) all other financial matters.

9 **GENERAL MEETINGS**

- 9.1 General Meetings of the Forum shall be held from time to time at such time, date and place as shall be determined by the Managing Committee. It is the aim that they take place quarterly.
- 9.2 The Secretary shall give at least seven days' notice to all members of the Forum of a General Meeting to be held. [However, a failure to comply with this shall not invalidate any meeting subsequently held providing that reasonable steps are taken to give such notice.]
- 9.3 All members of the Forum shall be entitled to attend a General Meeting.
- 9.4 The quorum for a General Meeting as regards voting shall be a minimum of 12 persons.
- 9.5 The Managing Committee, having itself approved any relevant matter, shall place before the next General Meeting for debate and approval or rejection (or approval in any amended form as the meeting shall vote) any matters for determination within the following:
- (a) any borrowing by the Forum or investment of funds;

- (b) the employment of full- or part- time staff or payment for services to any member or members of the Forum;
 - (c) expenditure by the Forum in excess of £1000;
 - (d) all matters concerning premises; and
 - (e) the approval of long-term projects.
- 9.6 Where matters decided by the Managing Committee fail to be approved by the General Meeting as provided in Clause 9.5 above, seven clear days' notice shall be given of the matter to be voted upon to all members before the next General Meeting unless this is impracticable or the Managing Committee at its discretion otherwise deems it to be unnecessary.
- 9.7 The Chair at any such General Meeting shall be the Chairman of the Forum or, in his or her absence, such person as shall be elected by the members of the Forum present.
- 9.8 Minutes of each General Meeting shall be taken by a person nominated by the Meeting who shall be responsible for ensuring that draft minutes are circulated to all members of the Forum in due course. The minutes shall contain a record of all proceedings and resolutions. They shall be tabled for approval at the next General Meeting.
- 9.9 All questions arising at any General Meeting, including those set out in Clause 9.5 above, shall be decided by a two-third majority of those members present and entitled to vote, except that no matter shall be approved unless at least seven members vote in its favour. There shall be no provision for voting by proxy.
- 10 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** ("the AGM")
- 10.1 The AGM of the Forum shall be held not later than 30 June at such time and place as the Managing Committee shall determine. The Forum's financial year shall run from 1 April.
- 10.2 At least 21 clear days' notice of an AGM shall be given in writing by the Secretary to all members of the Forum. The Secretary will, at the same time, circulate an agenda. [However, a failure to comply with this shall not invalidate any meeting subsequently held providing that reasonable steps are taken to give such notice.]
- 10.3 The quorum for an AGM shall be eight persons or one-tenth of the total membership, whichever is greater.
- 10.4 At each AGM, the business shall include:

- (a) the election of officers;
 - (b) the election of other members to the Managing Committee and the determination of the number of members to form the Managing Committee;
 - (c) the appointment of an auditor or auditors who shall be an independent person or persons not connected with the Forum;
 - (d) the approval of audited accounts for the previous year;
 - (e) the consideration of an annual report on the Forum's activities for the year, to be prepared by the Managing Committee; and
 - (f) the transaction of such other matters as may from time to time be necessary.
- 10.5 The Chair at the AGM shall be the Chair of the Forum for the year to the date of the AGM, unless determined otherwise by a vote of the members of the Forum present at the AGM.
- 10.6 Minutes of each AGM shall be taken, approved by the Managing Committee at its next meeting, and circulated to all members of the Forum in due course. The minutes shall contain a record of all proceedings and resolutions.
- 10.7 All questions arising at the AGM shall be decided by a simple majority of those members present, except matters falling within the gambit of Clause 9.5 above, which shall require a two-thirds majority, and matters arising under Clause 14.1. The two Chairs shall have a casting vote in the event of a tied vote. There shall be no voting by proxy. Only members who have paid their subscriptions due to the date of the AGM shall be entitled to vote at it, if applicable.

11 NOMINATION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 11.1 All members of the Forum, whether individual or representative and who have been members for at least one year, shall be eligible to serve as Officers or other members of the Managing Committee. Nominations for Officers or other members of the Managing Committee shall be made at the Annual General Meeting. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot of those present at the AGM.

12 **FINANCE**

- 12.1 All monies raised by or on behalf of the Forum shall be applied to further the aims of the Forum and for no other purpose, providing that nothing in this clause shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration to any employee of the Forum not being a member of the Managing Committee or the repayment to the Officers or other members of the Managing Committee or of any committee appointed by them of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- 12.2 The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Forum.
- 12.3 The accounts shall be audited at least once a year by the auditor or auditors appointed at the Annual General Meeting.
- 12.4 An audited statement of the accounts for the last financial year shall be submitted by the Managing Committee for approval at the Annual General Meeting.
- 12.5 An account or accounts shall be opened in the name of the Forum with the Lloyds TSB, or with such other bank or building society as the Managing Committee shall from time to time decide. All funds raised or collected on behalf of the Forum shall be paid into such account or accounts. The Managing Committee shall authorise in writing the Treasurer and up to two other members of the Forum to sign cheques or cheque requisitions on behalf of the Forum. All cheques or cheque requisitions must be signed by at least two authorised signatories, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Managing Committee if the amount of the cheque or cheque requisition exceeds £100. Details of the cheques signed shall be provided to the Managing Committee who shall be responsible for supervising the proper application of the Forum's funds and accounts.

13 **TRUST PROPERTY**

- 13.1 The title to all real or personal property which may be acquired by or on behalf of the Forum shall be vested in a corporation lawfully entitled to act as Custodian Trustee or in not less than two individual persons (not being members of the Managing Committee).

14 **ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- 14.1 No alteration shall be made to Clause 2 (Objects), Clause 15 (Dissolution) or this Clause, and no alteration shall be made which would have the effect of causing the Forum to cease to be a charity at law.
- 14.2 Subject to this, the Constitution may be altered as follows.

- (a) Any member may propose an amendment which shall be delivered in writing to the Secretary of the Forum. The proposed amendment must be supported in writing by at least two other members.
- (b) The Secretary shall give to all members at least 14 clear days' written notice before a General Meeting or AGM of the proposed alteration to be voted upon. A voting paper shall at the same time be sent to all members.
- (c) The proposed alteration shall be discussed at the appropriate General Meeting or AGM. Any alteration shall require the assent of not less than two thirds of those members of the Forum voting who may vote either:
 - (i) personally at the appropriate General Meeting or AGM; or
 - (ii) by post, addressed to the Secretary, providing that the Secretary shall receive the vote at least one clear day before the appropriate General Meeting or AGM.

15 **DISSOLUTION**

- 15.1 If the Managing Committee by a simple majority decides at any time that on the ground of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Forum, it shall call a special meeting of all members of the Forum who have the power to vote, of which meeting not less than 21 clear days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given.
- 15.2 If such resolution shall be passed by a three-quarters majority of those voting in person or by post at such meeting, the Managing Committee shall have the power to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the Forum to wind it up. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the Forum as the Managing Committee may determine, and if, insofar as effect cannot be given to this provision, then to some other charitable purpose.

16 **NOTICES**

- 16.1 Any notice, including all notices of meetings, may be served by the Secretary, either personally on the member or on its appointed representative, as the case may be, or by sending it to the member through the post in a prepaid letter, first or second class, addressed to such member at his, her or its last-known address in the United Kingdom. Any letter so sent shall be deemed to have been received within two days following the date of posting (first class) and four days (second class), excluding Sundays.

16.2 Notices to be served upon the Secretary shall be sent to him or her **address here** or such address as is notified to the members from time to time.

This constitution was updated with the new name for the organisation in the management committee meeting of the 11th of November 2011. The new name is Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum.

Full name and address of subscribers **Signatures**

Date:

Full name and address of subscribers **Signatures**

Date:

Full name and address of subscribers **Signatures**

Date:

Full name and address of subscribers **Signatures**

Date:

17 Definition of Gypsy Traveller

Gypsy communities (specifically of the Romany ethnicity) are the largest minority ethnic group in Surrey. As people with non-literary tradition, Gypsies are reported to have been in the UK since the sixteenth century², when they were referred to as “Egyptians”. Due to legislative pressures in the UK Gypsy communities travelling tradition has been curtailed and many now live on permanent sites or under bricks and mortar, although still maintain their cultural identity.

Travellers can be categorised as coming from four different backgrounds: Irish Travellers, Show people and New Age. Irish Travellers is the largest of these groups and are thought to have been in Britain since the nineteenth century.³ Romany Gypsies can also be of Irish origin.

² Okeley, J. (1981) The Traveller Gypsies

³ **Common Ground-** Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers