**SURREY GYPSY TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES FORUM (SGTCF)**

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**www.sgtcf.uk**

**Lalage Grundy**

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**Date: / /20**

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Site provision for Gypsies, Travellers & Showmen in Surrey – letter of support**

Since the inception of the Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum (SGTCF) in 1996, the number one topic of concern has been the lack of site provision for growing families living in the county. Successive governments and local authorities have indicated that this continuing situation is intolerable given the documented need for accommodation, but despite some lengthy, expensive ‘need’ assessments, there has been little tangible evidence of new provision.

We strongly support the creation of new sites, including ones placed on larger new housing sites. We suggest that the design of such sites is important both to provide quality housing for the occupants and to ensure a good visual impact. There are examples of new sites at Rose Meadow View, Bristol and Fenn Land, Cambridgeshire. It is important that such sites should be clearly shown as part of the original plan, not added afterwards so that other residents are unaware of them. It is important to require the developer to follow through on providing the accommodation.

We also support new sites being given planning permission on land belonging to Gypsies and Travellers. We further support the extension of sites to include new pitches with appropriate consultation with present site occupants to ensure a satisfactory outcome.

In the past, councils and councillors have been reluctant to agree to such sites, fearing reluctance from voters. Letters of objection usually contain the idea “We think there **should be** provision for Gypsies, but **not here**”, or something similar.

New sites have been successfully and amicably established recently despite initial opposition. We feel that now is a time for councils to shoulder their responsibility to provide accommodation for all sections of the population without prejudice or discrimination.

Feel free to discuss this with us further.

Yours faithfully,

Lalage Grundy

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(Joint chair of Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum)