**Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum**

**Minutes of a committee meeting**

**held by Zoom, 5th July 2021**

**1. Welcome**

Present – John Hockley, Lalage Grundy (Chair), Jean Howey, Chris Raymer, Dee Cooper, Tayla-Jane Cooper

Apologies: Jeremy Harte, Jack Ayres.

The minutes of the last AGM meeting (24th May) were used .

**2. Hate crime.**

Chris Raymer said that there had been issues in Waverley, a neighbour dispute where hate speech and criminal damage had been involved. The police were rung, one person had been arrested. There was a complaint about a police officer with footage from someone’s phone put on Facebook. The police are open-minded.

Jean has been and will be looking on Facebook for Hate Speech. She can contact Ivy Mannings Ivy@gypsy-traveller.org.uk or Chris Raymer Christopher.raymer@surrey.pnn.police.uk for support or information. Anyone can contact both if needed.

**3. Transit sites and the legal status of travelling**

The Merstham transit site has been approved. £1.4 million has been allocated to make it and it should be functional in 12 months’ time.

Lisa Smith lost the case about legal requirement to travel to be recognised for planning purposes. It’s still ongoing.

The Government may have realised they will make a lot of Gypsy /Traveller children homeless if the trespass bill passes into law without amendment. One government strategy appears to be to suggest that Gypsies/Travellers have pulled on to land illegally even though a site nearby had plots available.

**4. Drama**

The Mental Health drama is going ahead. Lalage and Dee have a meeting with Megan booked for Friday 9th July. Plans are to show it Aug/Sept 2021. Is Salvation Place a good place to show it? Dee would like to see the script first and thinks it would be a good idea to watch it online first before showing it to a live audience! She attended a drama online not so long ago and explained the benefits. She spoke about the mental health group Time To Change which has closed; Time To change Surrey is continuing locally.

CBBC drama auditions have said they need a Romany girl, 10–12 yrs old, to act in *Patience*. It’s by Jacqueline Wilson, who wrote Tracy Beaker on CBBC. Dee will email Ivy Mannings, she might have actors.

Tribe Theatre is a drama production company located up in the North, they are looking for GRT actors too.

**5. Request for support from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**

Francesca Hyde from Epsom and Ewell contacted the forum.There have been issues at the Kiln Lane site in Epsom ever since recent staff changes. There’s been a lack of communication between agencies. Joint Action Group meetings are about to start again and should improve the situation.

**6. Gardening and mental health**

Dee put forward a plan for next year about a competition for growing veg/fruit, plants/flowers, hanging baskets. We’ll put this in the agenda about Christmas time to get going in March 2022. It could be advertised in Traveller’s Times.

**7. Training**

John says Andy Hill has got in touch with him, he has 200 police officers for the online Culture Awareness Training. This will need four sessions. Now John is waiting to hear back from him. Andy Hill has also been invited to join the SCC Strategy Group meeting; Chris already attends these meetings.

**8. Tilford Romany Weekend**

Jeremy has been speaking to the museum at Tilford. There’s a new person in charge now who doesn’t have the same commitment to the Romany weekends. They also want to terminate the loan arrangement for the waggon proposing it will either be donated to them or taken away. Watch this space – hopefully we will still be able to continue these weekends in June next year. Dee said we already have a Travelling girl wanting to sing there.

**9. Any other business**

A woman who has lost her lurcher has asked us for help. Jeremy is going to reply.

Nothing’s happened yet about the film with Jake Bowers.

Dee will find out more about Gypsy Skills/Sporting Chances (David). They are offering English and Maths online. It would be good if we had funding for our community.

**10. Date of next meeting**

Monday 4th October 6.30pmm, by Zoom. We are settling now into a pattern of a management committee meeting every three months. We would wait before setting a date for the next forum meeting, and deciding if it should be in person or online.