

## **London Gypsy and Traveller Forum**

**10<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

**Esmee Fairbairn, King's Place, York Way**

### **MINUTES**

**Attending:** Betty O'Leary, Charlene McCarthy, Cilia Downs, Rose McCarthy, Patrick O'Donnell, Rose Palmer, Brenda Downes, Anthony Howarth, Anthony Ward, John Coyle, Jennette Arnold, Caroline Russell, Andrew Lowther, Sue Mutter, Amy Rogers, Ciaran McDonagh, Lisa Maughan, Sinead Maughan, Lesley Mongan, Martina Mongan, Lisa Buttigieg, Marian Mahoney, Mary Maughan, Geraldine Lindsey, Lorraine Sweeney, Clemmie James, Debby Kennett, Ilinca Diaconescu, Mike Doherty, Mena Mongan, Maria Maughan, John McDonagh, Gill Brown, Erin Hopkins, David Landau, Tracie Giles, Peter Maughan, Sarah Clark

**Chair: Tracie Giles, LGTU**

#### **1. Welcome and introductions**

#### **2. Short Film - 'We are Londoners Too – are you our Mayor?' Introduced by Tracie Giles**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3ROkbbkWGh0>

This short film presents the Gypsy and Traveller rally at City Hall organised in 2010 in response to the Mayor of London's removal of pitch targets from the London Plan. A large group of Gypsy and Traveller activists and supporters including London Assembly Members marched around City Hall and gave speeches, raising awareness of the impacts of this policy.

#### **3. Presentation of the Gypsy and Traveller Manifesto – Ilinca Diaconescu, LGTU**

[http://prezi.com/fqlp8-obuu5v/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/fqlp8-obuu5v/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)

[The London Gypsy and Traveller Manifesto](#) was produced through four meetings of the London Gypsy and Traveller Forum in 2015, bringing together the experiences of community members across London as well as research and evidence on four different topics: accommodation, employment, health and education. Through presentations of best practice

and discussions of the Forum, the Manifesto makes a number of recommendations to the Mayor of London and the GLA.

#### **4. Invitation to the representatives of the candidates to give a short response to the Gypsy and Traveller Manifesto**

We invited Mayoral and London Assembly candidates from the four main political parties to attend the meeting and respond to the concerns and recommendations from the Forum.

##### **Jennette Arnold, Labour**

- Advised to match manifesto against promises made by candidates
- Sadiq Khan pledges to be a Mayor for ALL Londoners
- Plans to use GLA and local authority land for housing
- After election use manifesto and London Plan process to argue for our demands

##### **Caroline Russell, Green Party**

- Housing is the biggest crisis in London and Gypsies and Travellers are part of this; this should be one of the strongest campaigning points
- Would promote negotiated stopping model proposed by Leeds GATE, particularly on land temporarily vacant before development
- Need to use powers of the London Assembly: scrutiny, reports, evidence; ensure Committees commission the right reports
- If elected on Assembly will bring in people's voices

**Caroline Pidgeon, Liberal Democrats** – written statement read out by Clemmie

#### **5. Open to the floor - questions and comments to the panel**

- Report from Equality and Human Rights Commission puts blame on racism and discrimination for inequalities suffered by Gypsies and Travellers. What are the parties doing to address racism and discriminatory attitudes among their elected members?
  - Politicians needs to lead by good practice and stand up to discrimination and opposition to Gypsy and Traveller sites
  - Need to challenge ignorance behind racism
- Need educational and cultural awareness resources in schools. Traveller Education hasn't had any support in recent years.
- There are issues regarding the insecurity of negotiated stopping

- In some boroughs the departments dealing with Gypsies and Travellers are completely inappropriate, for example crime reduction, pest control, environmental health

## 6. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes from the December 2015 meeting were agreed.

## 7. Gypsies and Travellers Voting in the London elections

- Short Film – ‘Have your voice heard’ introduced by Tracie Giles

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7srcXv\\_LO0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7srcXv_LO0)

A short film encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to vote in the 2012 Mayoral election.

- Group discussion – Clemmie James
  - Why is it important for the Gypsy and Traveller community to vote?
  - How to get more Gypsy and Travellers to vote and/or share some successful examples of how this has happened in the past.
- **ACTION: LGTU to produce short film to explain why voting is important and mobilise the community.**

This can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5kk0MWKUJY>

The film was published and disseminated in advance of the elections through our Facebook and Twitter pages.

## 8. The Housing and Planning Bill Update

- Invitation to join the ‘Kill the Housing Bill’ Demo - Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March