Migrants’ memories will be gathered

17/02/2010

Now the story of their migration and settlement in the borough will be told for the first time, thanks to a grant of £36,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

North West Kent Racial Equality Council will create a book, website and exhibition tracing the story of the communities from the first to arrive in Gravesham in the 1960s, their working and social lives, cultural and sporting activities and places of worship. The memories of their earlier lives in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh will also be gathered from members of the older generation.

Commenting for the Heritage Lottery Fund, Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East England, said: “Gravesham is a priority development area for the HLF and this is an excellent example of a project that fills gaps in the social history of a particular local community that has settled in and made a contribution to local life for some 50 years.”

Volunteers will be recruited to help carry out face to face interviews with the early migrants as well as helping with research, and promotion of the project within the local community. Work will also take part with local schools.

The information gathered for the project will be left in the care of Gravesham Library to assist future research. It will also be used to create an exhibition and two community events as well as workshop sessions with up to six local schools. Members of Gravesham Historical Society and staff at Kent County Library Service will also offer support with the research and oral history interviewing.

The special celebration events, one specifically for schools and one for the community at large, will be held at Gravesham Civic Centre to coincide with Black History Month this October.

Gurvinder Sandher, Assistant Director of the North West Kent Racial Equality Council, said: “I am very excited about this project. I believe that there is an important story to tell about the early migrants from the Indian Sub Continent who arrived in Gravesham. They have made such an important contribution to Gravesham over the past four decades economically, socially and culturally, but it is important to learn how their story started when they first arrived.”

Notes to editors

The Heritage Lottery Fund has identified Gravesham as a priority area for support. For more information call 020 7591 6048.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, with over £428 million granted in the South East alone.

Further information

Vicky Wilford, HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937 / vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper on 07889

949173.

Gurvinder Sandher, North West Kent Racial Equality Council Assistant Director on 01472 369 329.