



Press Release

Date: 29 March 2023

Use: **immediate**

GSC Honorary Patron **Brian Blessed OBE**

GSC SECURE FUNDING FOR A NEW TOURING VAN

Surrey's award-winning theatre company, Guildford Shakespeare Company, have secured funding for a new vehicle, enabling them to extend the reach of their schools' tours.

Grants from **The Foyle Foundation** and **Garfield Weston Foundation**, together with support from **Guildford Lions** and **Chapters Financial** have meant the charity could purchase a higher specification vehicle that will also act as a crew van.

The company's previous van, which had been donated by Chapters in 2012, and had clocked up some 130,000 miles, was no longer fit for purpose, failing its MOTs with mounting repair bills.

The vehicle is vital for transporting sets, props, costumes, sound and lighting for GSC's three current annual schools' tours. It also plays a key role in the main house productions with regards to logistics. However, GSC were now often having to hire much larger vehicles as the charity's work had also outgrown it.

KERRIE DRISCOLL, Creative Learning Producer: *"The purchase of a new van gave us the option of a crew van enabling us to tour to more schools and venues in one day. The new vehicle will support the expansion of our tours, meaning we can take our work further afield to more socially isolated and less advantaged groups and individuals."*

The vehicle, which is Eco-Friendly will reduce long-term maintenance costs can travel within the Greater London ULEZ, and has been nicknamed VANQUO, in honour of the character Banquo from the play *Macbeth*, which is the first play to have been toured in the vehicle.

MATT PINCHES, Co-Founder: *"We're incredibly grateful to our supporters for this this funding. Without their grants and the vision and generosity of our local supporters Guildford Lions and Chapters Financial, we simply wouldn't be able to make these tours happen, which give so much inspiration and experience to people who otherwise would not have access to it."*

PRESS

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Ends 1/1

Note to Editors

Guildford Shakespeare Company is an award-winning, site-responsive theatre company, established in 2006 by actor-managers Sarah Gobran and Matt Pinches. GSC has a site-responsive approach that places audiences right at the heart of the action, immersing them in the world of the play, enabling us to demystify the legend that theatre is for an elite, educated few but is immediate and accessible to everyone.

2022 saw the company produce its 50th production. Specialising in site-responsive interpretations of Shakespeare and other classics from literature, unique venues have included Guildford Cathedral, Watts Gallery, West Horsley Place and a Flemish Spiegeltent. In 2022 Freddie Fox played the title role in *Hamlet*, receiving wide-spread national acclaim and in 2015, Brian Blessed OBE played the title role in *King Lear*.

Its Education and Outreach creates opportunities for 15,000 people young and old every year through workshops, in-house drama clubs and classes; 11,000 of these are free-to-access social inclusion programmes. GSC's mental health programme for families, has gone on to be used as a case study for Systemic Family Training at Tavistock and also the British Association of Dramatherapy. GSC is a registered charity and one of the largest producers of home-grown theatre in the region. Their buildings are supported by Guildford Borough Council.