



Friends, Families and Travellers

Nov 2007

Annual General Meeting

Our 2006/7 Annual General Meeting was held on 1 September at our office in Community Base. The Annual Report is now available on our website. Please do take a few

minutes to read our report to see the wide variety of work that we are doing. The past year has been a very busy one for FFT with a lot of new initiatives being undertaken but, as

always, the focus of the coming year will need to be on identifying and securing additional sources of funding to enable us to continue our work on behalf of all Gypsies and Travellers.

Choosing Health

In the current debate about the National Health Service and the Government's agenda to widen choice for patients the fact that Gypsies and Travellers often have little or no choice regarding their own healthcare can get overlooked. The basic services of healthcare, dentistry or social care that most of us take for granted are simply not accessible to travelling communities for a whole variety of reasons. These may be about the frequent evictions that they experience, the difficulty of registering with a GP or dentist or simply a lack of knowledge of the options available to them. Because of the understandable distrust that the travelling communities have of

statutory agencies it is often difficult for mainstream health and social care professionals to reach out to the community, even where they have the best of intentions. Our health and social care outreach service in Brighton & Hove and East Sussex provides a necessary bridge between the statutory agencies and the travelling communities and serves as a best practice model of service delivery that we would like to see rolled out to other areas of the country.

Because travelling communities find it so difficult to access mainstream healthcare there is also evidence that many people are resorting to Accident and

Emergency departments of hospitals in order to receive treatment. Not only is this often inappropriate in meeting the needs of the patient but it also puts undue pressure on overstretched and under resourced accident and emergency services. In partnership with Brighton University we are about to undertake a research study on the use of A&E services by Gypsies and Travellers and we hope to make recommendations that will not only lead to better services for the travelling communities but may also provide lessons that can be applied towards improving the healthcare of other disadvantaged minority groups.

FFT People

*Abbie Kirkby
Caseworker*

*Sarah Mann
Project Officer*

During the summer we welcomed two new faces to FFT. Sarah Mann joined us in August as our new Traveller Advice Project Officer. She will be arranging a series of awareness raising seminars for voluntary and community organisations across the South East. The first of these is in Eastbourne on 22 November 2007 and the second at Pulborough on 6 December 2007. For more information contact Sarah at sarah@gypsy-traveller.org.

We were also pleased to welcome Abbie Kirkby, our new caseworker, who staffs our telephone helpline and receives calls from Gypsies and Travellers from all over the country. Much of the work, unsurprisingly, relates to site issues – lack of sites, pending evictions etc – but she also deals with many cases of harassment, discrimination and racism against Gypsies and

Travellers. If you are a Gypsy or Traveller and need Abbie's help with any problem, contact her on 01273 234777 and she will do her best to sort it out.

Those of you who know our colleague, Tammy Furey, will probably have heard the good news of the arrival of Tammy and Shaun's baby daughter Megan. We send our congratulations and good wishes to all three. Whilst Tammy is away on maternity leave Clare Bingham will be covering her post.

A big thank you to Martina Hluskova, from Slovakia, who has been volunteering with FFT to help our work with Roma families living in the Hastings area of Sussex. Martina has had to return to Slovakia for family reasons but will keep in touch and hopes to return to England next year.

It is great to know that there are people out there

like Martina, prepared to use their particular skills on a voluntary basis on behalf of Gypsies and Travellers.

Volunteering

As a small organisation there is a limit to the number of volunteers that we can take on but we are always keen to hear from people who may be able to help us in our work. If you live in the Sussex area and would be interested in helping us on a voluntary basis please contact our Director, Chris Whitwell at chris@gypsy-traveller.org and he will be pleased to talk with you.

Romany Routes Festival

FFT staff and volunteers gave information, sold publications, gathered signatures and took new memberships at our stall at the Romany Routes Festival at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton on 15th & 16th September 2007



Sussex Traveller Health & Social Care Project Update



We recently organised a seminar at the Government Office of the South East in Guildford on health and social care issues for Gypsies and Travellers. The event was well attended by a mixture of health and social care professionals keen to learn more about Gypsy and Traveller culture.

We also facilitated

some work with Roma families in Hastings, alongside the Cultural Diversity Network, which culminated in the Roma 'Bring a Dish' Day. The day was a wonderful celebration of Gypsy and Roma culture, with Roma food and flamenco dancing. This was a great opportunity for us to engage with European Roma families and to highlight their service

entitlements.

Our colleague Patricia Knight put together a fabulous exhibition of photographs for the Hastings Festival. The pictures were taken by Gypsy Travellers themselves and were put up as part of a festival celebrating the local community.

Zoë Matthews
Health Improvement
Manager

Traveller Advice Project Update

Training the Agencies

We are running seminars for advice agencies, such as Citizens Advice, Shelter, Help the Aged, and others in the South East of England to increase their knowledge of, and capacity to work with, Gypsies and Travellers. The first of these seminars will be in Eastbourne on 22 November, and the second in Pulborough, West Sussex, on 6 December. There is a small fee to cover costs. If you would like to book a place on one of these seminars please contact Sarah Mann on 01273 234803 or at sarah@gypsy-traveller.org

Casework

Our caseworkers are working on a number of cases at the moment, including on housing, sites, police complaints, racial discrimination, private site planning, benefits and homelessness.

We ran an information stall at the Romany Roots festival at the Weald and Downland museum on 15 and 16 September. The festival was a great success, with all day music, lots of old wagons, stalls, and horses. Unfortunately it may not run again next year, so if you attended the festival and enjoyed it, please write to the museum and let them know.

Train the Trainers

In this new project funded by the former CRE (Commission for Racial Equality), Gypsy and Traveller young people will deliver training to teachers and other educators about the issues they face in school, such as bullying, lack of appreciation of their culture, etc. We have identified six schools to potentially receive the training. We will be running a youth group for ten weeks in Hastings this autumn/winter with lots of activities for the young people and to plan the training sessions.

Site Design

The consultation period has ended for the draft

guidances on the design of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and on the management of Gypsy and Traveller sites. The Gypsy and Traveller Unit, at Communities and Local Government, tell us that they are going through the comments received, and hope to publish the final versions by the end of this year.

Security of Tenure on Local Authority Gypsy and Traveller Sites

The government announced this summer that they will deal with the Connors v UK judgment (i.e. the necessary change to the law for security of tenure on) in the upcoming Housing and Regeneration Bill.

Government's Single Equality Bill threatens to turn the clock back on ethnic minority rights

Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as ethnic minorities under Britain's race relations law. In recent years, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has helped Gypsies and Irish Travellers in a number of ways, especially through the CRE's regional offices.

At the end of September 2007 the CRE ceased to exist, along with the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission. The work of all three commissions will be taken on by a new organisation, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

In June 2007 the Government published a report called the Discrimination Law Review, making proposals for a new Single Equality Bill which would replace existing equality laws and give the new EHRC a framework for its activities. The Traveller Law Reform Project,

along with many other organisations (including the former CRE), thinks that the proposals are bad and would weaken existing protection for ethnic minorities, including Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

One of the worst proposals is to remove the duty of public bodies to have 'due regard' in all their actions to the need to remove unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. Instead public bodies would simply have to come up with some self-chosen 'priorities' and work on them 'proportionately' - so if a local authority did not want to bother doing anything to address the discrimination faced by Gypsies and Travellers, it would not have to do so.

You can read the Discrimination Law Review at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/frameworkforfairnessconsultation>

There is an 'easyread' version at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/frameworkforfairnesseyread>

You can read TLRP's response to the Discrimination Law Review at http://www.travellerslaw.org.uk/pdfs/single_equality_response.pdf

The consultation period on the DLR ended on 4 September. TLRP will keep in contact with the EHRC as the new Commission's work develops, encouraging it to ensure that the former CRE's work in support of Gypsies and Travellers is built on and developed, not lost. TLRP will work with others to try to ensure that any Single Equality Bill that the Government introduces will guarantee the rights of Gypsies and Travellers.

The Traveller Law Reform Project works on behalf of Friends, Families and Travellers, the Gypsy Council, the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit

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Tel: 07956 450916*

*Email:
info@travellerslaw.org.uk*

*Website:
www.travellerslaw.org.uk*

Housing and Regeneration Bill and Planning Reform Bill presents opportunities for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation

In July, the Government published a 'Green Paper' (a consultation paper) called *Homes for the future: more affordable,*

more sustainable. You can find it at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/homesforfuture>

The Government has said it will introduce a Housing and Regeneration Bill late this year or in 2008. This will merge the Housing

Housing and Regeneration Bill cont.

Corporation, which distributes funds to housing associations to build new social housing, and English Partnerships, which plans housing projects in new growth areas.

It will also implement the recommendations of the Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation and the 2004 European Court of Human Rights ruling on security of tenure for Gypsies and Travellers on council-run sites.

The Planning Reform Bill will establish a new separate planning

system for major infrastructure projects and simplify the planning system for minor home improvements. In many cases formal planning permission will no longer be required. It will also address underperformance of planning authorities and examine ways to address that under-performance.

Both these Bills could have a helpful impact on Gypsies and Travellers. They will present an important opportunity to draw attention to, and address, some of the flaws in the current Gypsy and Traveller accommodation

policies contained in the Housing Act 2004 and ODPM Circular 01/2006. We need to make sure that the targets being set for construction of homes include Gypsy and Traveller site construction.

We also need to make sure that residents on council-run Gypsy and Traveller sites get similar rights to residents in council flats and houses – not just security of tenure but rights of succession and exchange, etc. The Planning Reform Bill might provide a framework for a national network of transit sites.

TLRP, FFT and the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain have produced a commentary on these Bills. It is on the TLRP website at <http://www.travellerslaw.org.uk/news.htm#housinggreenpaper>.

If the published Bills do not contain clauses which would benefit Gypsies and Travellers, it is important that Gypsies and Travellers and their supporters work with sympathetic MPs and Peers to ensure that beneficial amendments are added.



Documents published recently by the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)

Over the last few months, CLG has published several documents in addition to those mentioned earlier. The following list includes the name of each document and where they can be found on the CLG website, and CLG's summary of what they are about.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments - Guidance
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/accommodationassessments>

Guide to Effective Use of Enforcement Powers -

Part 2: Unauthorised Development of Caravan Sites
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/unauthorisedsites>

Amendment to the Temporary Stop Notice Regulations - Summary of Responses
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/temporarystopresponses>

Consultation Revised Planning Guidance For Travelling Showpeople: Summary of Responses
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing>

[g/439373](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/g/439373)

Draft Guidance on the design of sites for Gypsies and Travellers - A Consultation Paper
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/guidancedesignsites>

Draft Guidance on the Management of Gypsies and Traveller Sites - A Consultation Paper
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/guidancemanagementgsites>





Telephone Helpline for Travellers

0845 120 2980
This advice line is
open between
10.00am — 1.00pm
and 2.00pm —
5.00pm, Monday to
Friday.

Travellers can speak
directly to
experienced advisers
on questions of
eviction, planning
matters, issues
involving official
caravan sites and
other matters.

It is run by the
Travellers Advice
Team at the
Community Law
Partnership. The
service is funded by
the Legal Services
Commission.

Noticeboard

Want to rent a trailer or static?

MPR Trailers and Caravans may be able to source a trailer for you to meet your requirements. Write to MPR at 3, Corless Fold, Higher Green Lane, Astley, M29 7QR or ring the manager, Morris Robinson on 07831237408.

Art

We have been approached by Laszlo Barna, a Gypsy fine artist from Hungary, who is keen to exhibit (and sell!) his art work. He has given the following web details if you want more information about his work -

www.artmajeur.com/laszlobarna
www.myartprofile.com/laszlobarna

Holistic pregnancy retreat in Spain with park up facilities

One of our Trustees recently met a midwife living in Southern Spain who runs an holistic retreat for pregnant women. She also said that she may be able to offer secure park ups for women whilst they have their babies. Telephone contact is 0034680566113 and the retreat has a website at www.da-a-luz.co.uk

Did you go to the Romany Routes Festival?

If you enjoyed the Romany Routes Festival at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton on 15th and 16th September 2007, please write in to the museum to express this as we want to ensure that the event takes place again next year. There is no guarantee that it will. The address to write to is

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0EU. This is a great Festival, celebrating the lives and culture of Gypsies and Travellers, and it would be a huge loss if it were discontinued. Don't let this happen – write in with your support today!



Peg making at Romany Routes Festival

A Sad Farewell

If you have seen our Annual Report or read the tributes on our website, you will already have heard about the sad death in the summer of Franqui Wolf, one of our Trustees and a staunch supporter of Gypsies and Travellers over many years.

A further tribute comes from Susan Alexander, former National Coordinator at Friends, Families and Travellers, who led the organisation throughout its formative years. She says –

'Franqui was one of the first people at FFT I met, well over 10 years ago now, and she greeted me with the warmest of smiles and made me feel welcome from the start, as she did to everyone who had the privilege of meeting. Her smile remained a constant through all the ups and downs we faced during our work and it is that image of her that will always remain with me – bless you Franqui!'

Although Franqui was not able to participate so actively in the work of FFT in more recent times, she certainly had a significant formative influence on the guiding principles and ethos of our organisation, and we will always be in her debt.



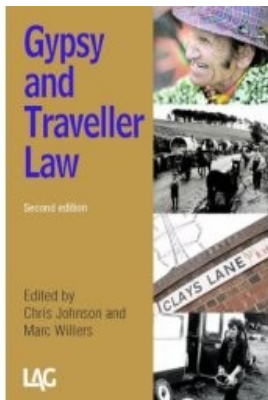
New Publications and Events

Gypsy and Traveller Law – updated second edition now available

'Gypsy and Traveller Law' edited by Chris Johnson and Marc Willers brings together all the areas of law affecting the travelling community and is a key reference work for all people working with Gypsies and Travellers. The book also aims to empower Gypsies and Travellers to secure their rights and challenge injustice.

The new fully updated second edition, recently published by the Legal Action Group, contains much new material including new Government guidance, up-to-date case law and significant human rights law developments.

Copies can be purchased from Legal Action Group, 242 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9UN (telephone 020 7833 2931) at a price of £30.



Teach the Teachers CD now available

This interactive CD ROM was produced as part of the Community Education and Capacity Building Project at FFT, funded by the Commission for Racial Equality. It has been designed as a resource for teachers, youth and health workers who are new to working with young Gypsy Travellers and who wish to know more.

Copies of the CD can be obtained for £2.50 (to cover postage and packing) from Suzanna King at the FFT office (email: suzanna@gypsy-traveller.org).

Two New Films

The South West Alliance of Nomads have made two new films which can be viewed at www.gypsytravellerhelp.org

One film is aimed at Gypsies and Travellers needing further information on planning and one focuses on the needs assessment

Bullying and Racial Abuse – New report from the Children's Society

The report reveals that more than 8/10 young Gypsies, Roma and

travellers had suffered racial abuse. Nearly 2/3 had been bullied or physically attacked.

"This is Who We Are" is available free of charge from www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Providing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Contentious Spaces

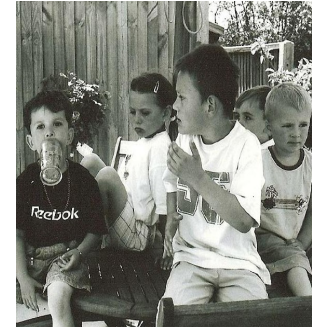
A new report by the Joseph Rowntree Trust looking at the barriers to new site provision and analysing some of the methods for conflict resolution, in the context of the new duties on local authorities. The report is available free at www.jrf.org.uk

Out in the Open

A new report on providing accommodation, promoting understanding and recognising rights of Gypsies and Travellers. This very readable report is comprehensive and well-written. A useful summary of the issues and source of facts and statistics. It can be downloaded free at www.bshf.org

Event

Travelling Towards Inclusion



An event focussing on tackling the social exclusion of young Gypsies and travellers and sharing learning from pioneering programmes of work.

Key to the event will be a focus on solutions and the participation of children and young people from Gypsy and travelling communities.

Cost: £299 statutory and £199 voluntary agencies.

For information and bookings contact Amanda Davies at the Ormiston Children & Families Trust on 01223 418009 or email amanda.davies@ormiston.org

Friends, Families and Travellers

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info@gypsy-traveller.org

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.Gypsy-Traveller.org



Friends, Families & Travellers was

established in response to the passage through Parliament of the 1994 Criminal Justice & Public Order Act. It has since grown into a nationally recognised voluntary organisation which serves the whole spectrum of the Traveller community, both traditional and new, settled or on the road.

The majority of work promoted by FFT is carried out by an Advice and Information Unit based in Brighton and covers evictions,

harassment, planning, employment, benefits, education, health, civil rights, discrimination and legal representation. The Unit is also active in research, monitoring, mediation and policy development at local and national levels.

In 1999, FFT was one of five organisations short listed for the Human Rights Award, part of the UN International Day of Human Rights.

FFT became a company limited by guarantee (non-profit voluntary organisation) no. 3597515 and a registered charity in 2006, no. 111 2326.

FFT is run by a management committee made up of directors elected by the membership.

Management committee meetings are held every six weeks and are open to all members.

If you believe that all members of society should have the right to travel and to stop without constant fear of persecution because of their lifestyle: JOIN FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND TRAVELLERS NOW!

I would like to join Friends, Families and Travellers. I understand that this will enable me to vote at the Annual General Meeting, attend Management Committee Meetings and receive copies of the newsletter.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Waged-£10.00 Unwaged-£5.00 Organisation-£25.00 / or Donation

I do not wish to join FFT, but please accept a donation towards the work you carry out

Please state if you wish to remain anonymous.

I do not wish to join FFT, but would like to receive newsletters (subscription costs as above)

**Please make cheques payable to FFT and return to: FFT, Community Base, 113 Queens Rd., Brighton BN1 3XG.
All membership information held by FFT is confidential and will not be made available to others without your consent.**