

....seeking to end racism and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers whatever their ethnicity, culture or background, whether settled or mobile, and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.



Friends Families and Travellers

Newsletter Autumn 2014

Registered Charity Number 111 2326

Government Launch new planning consultation



The deadline for responses is **23 November.**

We urge as many people as possible to respond.

The government have launched a disastrous new planning consultation which proposes that the definition of Travellers be changed to only include those who travel.

This ignores the fact that it is very difficult to travel these days as there are few transit sites and people are constantly evicted when stopping on the roadside, and that if you live on a council site your licence agreement doesn't allow you to travel for more than a set number of weeks a year, or you will lose your pitch. It also ignores the fact that lots of Gypsy and Traveller families are living in housing due to the huge shortage of pitches.

These proposed changes are a huge attack on Gypsy and Traveller culture and would result in even fewer sites than are currently provided being built and even more people ending up in housing.

The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-and-travellers-proposed-changes-to-planning-policy-and-guidance>.

GRT Professionals: Serving Communities, Challenging Prejudice

GRTPA

The Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association

The GRTPA, launched officially in Westminster on July 17th, 2014, was founded in 2013 by Jim Davies, a Thames Valley Police officer who is an English Romany Gypsy, and Petr Torak, a Czech Roma police officer working in the UK.

Racist discrimination is an ongoing serious problem both by the police against GRT people and within the police against colleagues with those backgrounds. The main aims of the Association are to support police officers from GRT backgrounds in their professional lives and to foster good relations between the police and GRT communities.

Membership is open to anyone who works in the police, regardless of ethnicity.

See the website at <http://www.grtpa.com/>.

SECamb

The South East Coast Ambulance Service
NHS Foundation Trust.

Another great example of an organisation taking action against racism and for inclusion is SECamb, the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

SECamb is an NHS Employers Equality and Diversity Partner. Their Gypsy Traveller Community Team, started as a response to a racist incident, is a dedicated and hardworking team committed to improving health for Gypsies and Travellers, challenging racism, building bridges between communities and educating the public. The SECamb Foundation Trust has been awarded the Gold Standard, the highest possible award, by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion in 2014. Congratulations to all the team.



**HORSDEAN
PERMANENT SITE
PLANNING PERMISSION
GRANTED**

The South Downs National Park Authority has approved Brighton and Hove City Council's application to build a permanent Travellers' site next to the existing transit site at Horsdean.

The site will provide twelve permanent pitches in addition to the 21 transit pitches that are already there. Eileen Maughan and Margaret Murphy were present at the planning hearing meeting; Eileen Maughan spoke 'eloquently and from the heart in an intimidating environment', according to an FFT staff member who was there, and members were 'visibly moved'. All credit to Michelle Gavin from FFT for supporting them in the work of being heard.

**FRANK AND ALBERT'S
CULTURE AND
EXPERIENCE ON A VIGIL**

Albert is currently doing a Community Service Placement from HMP Ford at **Friends, Families and Travellers**, and wanted to raise the importance of Gypsies and Travellers being allowed to attend the vigils of loved ones. We will be following up on this issue at a national level.



Left: Launch of GRTPA at Westminster ▲
Right: SECamb at Epsom Derby

FFT AT GREAT DORSET STEAM FAIR

Sarah Herlem and Lucy Birkinshaw represented **Friends, Families and Travellers** at the Great Dorset Steam Fair on the 27th to the 31st of August this year. They were there in partnership with Citizens' Advice Bureau, Health Watch and Dorset Race Equality Council and ran the 'Connecting Advice in Dorset' stand.



SNIPPETS

We are looking for a volunteer to support the advice and information team at FFT applying for grants, filling in forms for clients, calling agencies, filing and organising paperwork, and answering the telephone. The role would receive training and is an excellent opportunity to learn some of the skills needed to work in an advice agency.

Please email Emma Nuttall, Advice and Policy Manager at emma@gypsy-traveller.org outlining your experience and skills.

No Mad Laws is the campaign by Gypsies, Travellers and their supporters against the government's proposed changes to legal aid and judicial review that will have a serious impact on those without authorised stopping places. They have just put out a Briefing Paper.

Their website is now up and running at www.nomadlaws.co.uk with news, ways to support the campaign and a petition to sign.

'Crystal's vardo' at Oakwood Men's Prison

In its third year 'Crystal's Vardo' took to the road in June to celebrate Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month. We visited Cardiff, Bristol, London, Kent, Surrey, Nottingham and Wolverhampton!



Each performance was a significant and moving experience but the one that the team and I were most apprehensive about was Oakwood Men's Prison in Wolverhampton. But the visit was one of the most uplifting and rewarding experiences I have had. The prison staff were extremely welcoming and the prisoners a fantastic audience, very responsive.

The audience was very culturally diverse, made up of Travellers from the Romany,

Irish Traveller and Roma communities together with other ethnicities and faiths. An amazing discussion opened up and different communities were able to see how much history and even culture they shared.

The Traveller prisoners were given a chance to be proud of their heritage and the non Travellers given an insight into the persecution Travellers have suffered through history.

The prisoners thanked us afterwards; they were very enthusiastic and said they had never had theatre at the prison before.

I hope the play and its message will have a more lasting impact on the prisoners and the staff at Oakwood. We would love to take 'Crystal's Vardo' to more prisons and youth offending units.

~ Suzanna King

Delany and Co. Solicitors specialise in all aspects of Criminal Law.
Call (01992) 631 542 or 07435 972 276.



Friends Families and Travellers

Friends, Families & Travellers is a nationally recognised voluntary organisation which serves the whole spectrum of the Traveller community, both traditional and new, settled or on the road. **FFT** runs a national helpline covering evictions, harassment, planning, employment, benefits, education, health, civilrights, discrimination and legal representation. **FFT** is also active in community support, research, monitoring, mediation and policy development at local and national levels.

Join us by signing up at
www.gypsy-traveller.org/about-fft/join-us/
or fill out the form below.

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

EMAIL ADDRESS

I do not wish to join FFT but wish to make a donation
Please state if you wish to remain anonymous.

I do not wish to join FFT, but would like to receive newsletters

Please make any 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 available to others without your consent

Like us on Facebook



National Contacts

For more contacts please
phone or visit
www.gypsy-traveller.org/contacts.htm

**Community Law
Partnership Traveller Advice
Team** 0121 685 8677

Family Rights Group
0808 801 0366

**Advisory Service for
Squatters** 0203 216 0099

Traveller Movement
0207 607 2002
www.travellermovement.org.uk

Travellers Aid Trust
01554 891 876

Gypsy Council
07963 56 59 52
info@gypsy-association.com

**UK Association of Gypsy
Women** 01325 788 281

Shelter homelessness
helpline 0808 800 4444

Pavee Point
00 353 1 878 0255

Children's Society
Head Office 0207 841 4400

Groundswell 03000 039 600
info@groundswell.org.uk

**National Association of
Boat Owners**
07989 441 674

**Equality and Human
Rights Commission:**
Equality Advisory and
Support Service has
replaced the EHRC Helpline.
The new number is
0808 800 0082
www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

**Education Otherwise
helpline**
0845 478 6345

Travellers' School Charity
07786 466 107

Roma Support Group
07949 089 778
or 0207 511 8245

FFT Community Base 113 Queens Road Brighton East Sussex BN1 3XG
Telephone **01273 234 777** Fax **01273 234 778**
fft@gypsy-traveller.org www.gypsy-traveller.org