

Friends, Families and Travellers

April 2007 -
June 2007

Travellers Advice Project

Our Seminar for housing Associations and local authority housing departments went very well, with over forty delegates

attending. Our next seminar will be held on the 31st May, on the subject of health and social care, targeted at

Primary Care Trusts and health agencies such as Mind, Sane, Cruse and so forth.

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Sign the 10 Downing Street Petition Now!

Please sign this new petition to support Gypsies and Travellers rights on local authority caravan sites.

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/travsecure/>

What does it say?

We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to introduce security of tenure on local authority Gypsy/Traveller sites. At present there is no proper security of tenure for Gypsies and Travellers on these sites. However local authority tenants in houses or flats and non-Traveller residents of mobile home parks have security of tenure. In November 2004 the government said they would change the law. They still haven't done so.

What does it mean?

Council tenants (i.e. of

flats and houses) who might be evicted have a right to go to court and have their say in answer to the council's reasons for evicting them. The judge hears evidence from the council and from the tenant (and any witnesses either wants to call) and then the judge decides who s/he believes and also whether s/he feels it is reasonable to grant a possession order and evict them. Very similar security of tenure is available to residents of mobile homes parks. The Mobile Homes Act specifically excludes local authority Gypsy sites from its protection.

Give us an example:

In May 2004 the European Court of Human Rights heard a case brought against the United Kingdom by Mr Connors.

Mr Connors had been evicted from a local authority site in Leeds. He had hotly contested the council's reasons for evicting him but had not been enabled to put forward any defence. The European Court of Human Rights held that this lack of procedural safeguards meant that Mr Connors human rights had been breached. He was awarded compensation. In November 2004 the government said they would change the law to ensure this didn't happen. Much campaigning and pressure later and... they still haven't changed the law, hence this e-petition.

Who created the petition?

Chris Johnson from the Community Law Partnership, Ruskin Chambers, Birmingham.



Travellers Advice Project cont

Please contact us for more details if you are interested in participating in this important event.

In March we will be facilitating a workshop at the Association of British Credit Unions Ltd conference and AGM, to look at ways in which Credit Unions can work more with Gypsies and Travellers.

Planning Aid South are holding two seminars on planning issues facing Gypsies and Travellers. The first one will be for Gypsies and Travellers, in

May in Winchester, the second one for Councils in June at the Government Office for the South East in Guildford.

The Department for Communities and Local Government will be publishing their new guidances in March (so we are told!). There is one on Site Design, and one on Site Management, the draft looks good and will be useful, for example, in pushing local authorities to better manage sites they may have neglected.

The Department for Communities and Local Government held another consultation meeting with Gypsies and Travellers in the South East at the FFT offices in January. Accommodation Needs Assessments and the site design and management guidances, amongst other issues, were discussed. If you are a Gypsy or Traveller living in the South East and would like to attend the next meeting it will be on Monday 21 May 10.30 a.m - 3 p.m at FFT.

The Task Force

Buy the Sticks and Stones DVD

Made by East Sussex Traveller Education Service in consortium with Brighton & Hove. Funded by Brighton & Hove Children's Trust. Copies available for £25 from:

*East Sussex Traveller Education Service,
PO BOX 4, County Hall,
Lewes. BN7 1SG*

Porrajmos – the Gypsy Holocaust

At the end of January FFT participated in a small exhibition at Brighton Library, organised by the East Sussex Traveller Education Service (TES), to commemorate Holocaust Week and to remind people about the persecution of Gypsies by the Nazi regime during the period of the Holocaust. Many people are unaware of the extent of the suffering of Gypsies at the hands of the Nazis but from 1933 onwards many Gypsies were sent to concentration camps where they were forced to do penal labour and/or undergo sterilisation. Of the 16,000 plus Gypsies in Germany in 1938 only

around 2,000 survived. In Europe as a whole the number of Gypsies who died during the war has been estimated at half a million. In the aftermath of the war, the horrors of the genocide of the Jewish people caused the equal horror of the attempted genocide of the entire Gypsy population to be rather overlooked. No one from the Gypsy community was called to give evidence at the Nuremburg trials and it was not until the 1990s that the first international Conference on the Gypsy Holocaust took place in Vienna.

At the exhibition a powerful DVD, 'Sticks and Stones'

produced by the East Sussex TES was shown. This film lasting around 20 minutes describes the experiences of young Gypsies and Travellers who have been bullied or subjected to racist insults. It served as a reminder of how name calling, even when intended as a 'joke', can develop into physical abuse and violence. The DVD is available from the East Sussex Education Service at County Hall, Lewes, East Sussex at a price of £25 and should be compulsory viewing for anyone who provides services for Gypsies and Travellers.

Editorial: Traveller Self Build – The Way Forward?

It seems as though Housing Associations are not falling over themselves in the rush to apply for grant money to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers and, if the Government is serious about wanting to tackle the problem of lack of sites, a more creative solution may have to be considered. There is, in any event, something inherently wrong with any approach that does not involve the 'client' – the Gypsies and Travellers who are going to occupy the site – from the very outset of the planning process. It just reinforces the 'us' and 'them' mentality that has

always bedevilled policies and attitudes towards Gypsies and Travellers. We at FFT believe that Government should be facilitating mechanisms to enable Gypsy and Traveller groups to obtain funding to bring forward and develop their own sites, either in partnership with Housing Associations or in their own right. The concept is not a new one. People have been building houses as a way of meeting their own accommodation needs for decades and many successful self-build schemes have been cited as models of good practice, particularly in the

way that the process itself has proved to be a life-changing and empowering experience for the participants. Why cannot the same approach be applied to Traveller sites? There is a huge and acknowledged under-provision of Traveller sites, money is finally being made available to develop sites, and Gypsies and Travellers are rightly demanding equal participation in the decisions that affect their lives. It just needs somebody in a position of influence to have the vision to bring all these factors together.

Chris Witwell

Traditional Site Survey

The convergence of the needs assessment process with the implementation The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which offers opportunities to safeguard and develop the Traditional Site Network which have sustained nomadic dwelling for millennia. (See 'Green Lanes as an accommodation resource for nomadic people' at www.gypsy-traveller.org)

It is from within the context of Traditional Site Loss that the present

crisis in accommodation can best be understood. To raise awareness of the role of cultural solutions to the present crisis, a survey of Traditional Site Loss has been initiated.

The information we are collecting is as follows

- Location by County.
- OS Map reference (4 digits, longitude and latitude).
- Brief description of site (e.g. green lane, deep verge, common or no-mans-land.
- Approximate date of

closure.

- Brief description of method of denial

We do not seek to gather information on active sites at the present time we understand that this may expose them to the risk of closure or over usage without the appropriate protocols and safeguards in place.

We encourage readers to pass this information on to enable other Travellers to contribute their own experiences to the survey process

Send your contribution to our Traditional Sites Survey to the FFT office–

*FFT,
1113 Queens Road,
Brighton
BN1 3XG*



GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS! MAKE THE PLANNING SYSTEM WORK FOR YOU!

10.30 am to 3pm
5th June 2007



Planning Aid provides free advice and support to those who cannot afford to pay planning consultants' fees.

Call the Planning Aid helpline on:
0870 240 7552

VICTORIA HALL, HARTLEY WINTNEY, ANDOVER

Need help with the planning system or applications for sites?

- Planning Aid Community Planners and Caseworkers,
- Marc Willers, Barrister
- Friends, Families and Travellers

**Activities for children
Free lunch**

**For more information and directions, ring
Dagmar Hutt: 01865 798673**

Land for Sale

3 1/2 acres of land for sale in village of Cathorpe, Bourne, Lincs, asking price £650,000. Has mains water, electricity, drains and phone line. Also has planning permission to convert an existing 16th century dovecote to a 4 bedroom house. Contact Jennifer White: jennifer@shelvey.com

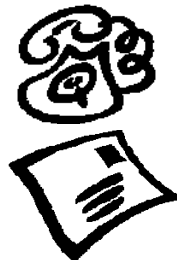
Pride Not Prejudice Conference,

18th May, Peterborough. This year's conference will focus on Gypsy & Traveller youth and policing. Booking forms and information can be found on our website www.gypsy-traveller.org

Shelter Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Law Training

London 18-19 July:
Fees: Standard £320 (+£56 VAT), discount £270 (+£47.25 VAT)
Birmingham 30-31st May 2007
Manchester 13-14th September 2007
Fees: Standard £305 (+£53.38 VAT), discount £255 (+£44.63 VAT)

The course covers security of tenure on official sites, planning law, evictions from unauthorised encampments, homelessness law, etc. www.shelter.org.uk/training
Tel: 0207 490 6720



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.

Membership subscriptions**Final Call**

This is a reminder that membership subscriptions for 2007/8 are now overdue. If you haven't yet renewed your membership please do so as soon as possible, sending a cheque for £10.00 (£5.00 unwaged) in respect of individual membership or £25.00 for organisations to –

Suzanna King
Friends, Families and Travellers
Community Base
113, Queens Road
Brighton
BN1 3XG

If you have already renewed why not persuade a friend to sign up and help us to continue our work of helping Gypsies and Travellers to tackle the harassment, discrimination and social exclusion that they face on a daily basis.

Our subscription form can be found on the back page of this newsletter and on our website



If you think you might be entitled to assistance from Adult Social Care in East Sussex, then please contact Avril on 077205 18139 or your nearest Adult Social Care branch.

Sussex Traveller Health Project

I wanted to congratulate our Specialist Traveller Health Advisor, Sally, on completing the first part of her Post Graduate Teaching Certificate, the final year is based on practical work and then we are hoping to run some courses for Gypsies and Travellers in East Sussex around health themes. Watch this space....

I would also like to thank Avril, our Outreach Worker for her hard work over the last year with the Adult Social Care Work in East Sussex. As a result of Avril's outreach work, over 25 referrals have been made resulting in 18 assessments and 9 people are now receiving a service that they would probably not have accessed before.

We are pleased to be able to start a new Health Support Group in West Sussex and are currently scoping the area for appropriate venues. If you are interested, and live in West Sussex, then contact Sally Burnett on 07917 105663. Sally will be working with an Outreach Worker from a Gypsy background.

Avril and I attended the UK Public Health Action Conference in Edinburgh, where we hosted a stand. It was a great opportunity to network with other Gypsy/Traveller organisations. We were able to attend plenary sessions on recent public health initiatives by both statutory and voluntary organisations. We managed to pin down

members of the Health Care Commission who said that they would request that Gypsies and Travellers are specially mentioned with PCT's Equality Impact Assessment. We managed a nice healthy walk up to Edinburgh Castle, and became swept up in a slightly breathless Scottish dance!

Comments and views are always welcome so if you would like to contact me please phone me on 01273 234796.

Zoe Matthews
Health Improvement
Manager

Sussex Traveller Health Project's Easter Egg hunt as part of Healthy Options activities



Traveller Law Reform Project

We have appointed a Policy Development Worker for the Project, Richard Solly, who some of you may know from the work he did at the Churches Commission for Racial Justice on Gypsy and Traveller issues. Richard started in post in February, and is based at the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit.

The All Party Parliamentary Group Security of Tenure meeting at the House of Lords was well-attended.

The general theme was that there was no justification for not having security of tenure; that the government had deliberately sought to curb Gypsies and Travellers' right and ability to travel, but would not give them security to enable them to remain in one place. The government's approach was viewed as hypocritical. Attendees at the meeting pledged to lobby their local authorities to introduce tenancy agreements on

their Gypsy and Traveller sites, as Oxfordfordshire County Council have done. A delegation will also see the minister about this issue. A further forum is planned for the summer to feed back on progress being made. An example of a Good Practice tenancy agreement for local authority sites can be found at www.gypsy-traveller.org/pdfs/newtenancyagreement.pdf

*Richard Solly can be reached on:
0208 986 2996,*

London Gypsy and Traveller Unit, 6 Westgate Street, London E8 3RN.

info@travellerslaw.org.uk
www.travellerslaw.org.uk

Teach the Teachers

The Community Education and Capacity Building Project (CECBP) Known as: Teach the Teachers!

Well didn't that year go fast? No sooner were we starting 'Teach the Teachers' than we are ending it! Thank you to everyone who became involved in the project and gave their time and energy. The CD ROM is currently in production and will be available, for free, from the office, in May.

The CD ROM is a learning resource for those who have had little or no experience of the Gypsy Traveller culture. The CD is especially valuable for teachers, youth workers and health workers who are working with Young Gypsy Travellers for the first time. Let the young Gypsy Travellers teach the Teachers!

So what now? We are launching an exciting project that will build on the work of Teach the Teachers. The new project will train Young

Gypsy Travellers to deliver awareness raising training to adults across the country.

****How can you get involved?***

Email the project at: tammy@gypsy-traveller.org

Or write to the project at FFT's office:
FFT, Community Base,
113 Queens Road,
Brighton, BN1 3XG

Tammy Furey
Project Manager

Friends, Families and Travellers

Community Base
113 Queens Rd.
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 3XG

PHONE:
01273 234 777

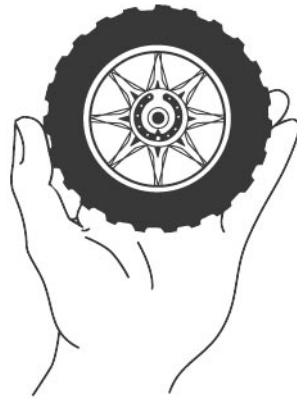
FAX:
01273 234 778

E-MAIL:
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.