



Friends, Families and Travellers

June-Aug
2010

ConDem's Coalition Policies on Gypsies and Travellers

Since the General Election in May brought the ConDem coalition to power the political landscape has already radically shifted for Gypsies and Travellers. Chris Whitwell, Director of FFT, looks at post-election changes to Government policy and initiatives, and the effect of potential future legislation.

Now that the dust has settled after the General Election we are beginning to see something of the direction in which the new Coalition Government is taking us – and some of the signs are extremely worrying for those concerned with bringing about an equal, fair and just society. For Gypsies and Travellers one of the most immediate concerns has been the scrapping of the £30 million grant earmarked for local authorities to enable them to bring forward new sites and refurbish existing ones. This, coupled with moves to criminalise trespass and to curb the submission of retrospective planning applications could have a profound impact on the 25,000 or members of the travelling communities who still have no authorised site on which to place their home but who face a continual process of eviction after eviction.

There are other dark clouds on the horizon and, just perhaps, one small ray of sunshine to give some hope for the future.

First, the clouds though. The whole 'localism' agenda being pedalled by the Coalition may well serve to prevent the implementation of developments that, although unpopular locally, may be strategically necessary in the wider interests of society. In the past regional planning bodies have provided something of a strategic overview to ensure that each local area is meeting its responsibilities in terms of land allocations. This will no longer be the case and it is difficult to see how in future the system will deliver those unpopular but necessary land use decisions.

These fundamental issues of the need for a strategic overview are also being played out in the fields of healthcare and education.. The ideology of the 'Big Society' may well have benefits for the better off majority but it could well leave those who have no effective voice - the poor, the marginalised and the 'chronically excluded' – even further behind, with

fewer choices and poorer life outcomes.

And the small ray of sunshine? The move away from local authority Gypsy site provision might just spark off an interest in other, and better, ways of developing and providing sites to meet the current shortfall. There is growing interest in the idea of Community Land Trusts where land is held by the Gypsy/Traveller group themselves on a cooperative basis. There is also the intriguing possibility of self build options with part of the development costs of land being met by the 'sweat equity' of the Travellers themselves. Such options could deliver smaller, privately owned sites, more suited to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers than large Council run sites.

And in these difficult times, let's face it, we have to hang onto something to be optimistic about!





Friends Families and Travellers

Health and Wellbeing Project Contacts

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about national health
policy initiatives:*

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News from the Health Team

I thought since we now have a change of Government and are faced with the prospect of ongoing and harsh budget cuts, that it is important to think about how this might impact on the health inequalities faced by many Gypsies and Travellers.

Something that is much talked about at FFT is the concept of 'Chronic Exclusion', by this we mean that there are certain groups of people who for a whole multitude of reasons do not enjoy the same rights and choices as the majority of us.

The Labour Government did much to improve the health of the nation, which is something that we have all benefited from on the whole. However, what it has failed to do is to redress the growing divide between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. In other words the gap is getting bigger.

This theme was reaffirmed by the recent findings of the newly released National Audit Office report on health inequalities (Tackling Inequalities in Life Expectancy in Areas with the Worst Health and Deprivation, 2 July 2010). It

has come as no surprise to third sector organisations working in the inequalities field. It is not only in health outcomes that the equalities gap continues to widen but in various other areas, all of which contribute of course to our health and wellbeing.

We believe that the attempts of successive Governments to implement initiatives aimed at achieving greater equality, widening choice and participation, and empowering communities have tended to work reasonably well for the majority but have left certain groups totally untouched. It is essential that when we talk about better community engagement, that we recognise that this should be inclusive of all communities, not just those who are in the fortunate position of being organised enough, wealthy enough and well enough to engage with NHS mechanisms. As a result these people – the 'Chronically Excluded' - can become even more marginalised and excluded, even more disempowered with less

personal choice and poorer life outcomes.

However, many of these chronically excluded people are already linked into specialist services who outreach and support their often multiple and complex needs. If the Government is serious about a fully inclusive health service, we need to support these people to have a voice and become involved.

The Health Team continue to outreach and support many Gypsies and Travellers across Sussex, an essential part of our work! However, we also need to ensure that we do not let the good work that has been achieved by FFT, other Traveller organisations and by the many Gypsy and Traveller activists, lose momentum. We are always keen to hear from any Gypsies and Travellers who would like to become involved in their Local Involvement Networks (LINKS). Please contact FFT if you are interested.

Zoe Matthews

News from the Young People's Project

*For more information
about Young People's
Projects:
clare@gypsy-
traveller.org*

An Awards for All grant of £9,936 is enabling us to have a fun and full packed holiday activity programme until April 2011. The funding is covering a series of 6 weekly dress making courses starting in mid October for 12 young people, motor safety and maintenance for 24 young people with off road

obstacle courses in partnership with young drive, an animal project looking at the different ways young people can work with animals, swimming lessons, and accredited courses in kayaking, canoeing, archery and team building exercises including raft building, high wire and

obstacle courses. We have also recently received some funding from Mid Sussex Well Being grant to run a pilot football team with the Brighton & Hove Albion's. This is intended to start at the beginning of September until the October half term on a weekly basis.

Case Work Update

Abbie Kirkby reports the on the case work she and Michelle Buck have been handling at FFT in recent months.

As far as the national casework goes, we have opened 39 new cases since April. 16 of these cases are with Romany Gypsies, 19 have been with Irish Travellers and 4 with New Travellers.

A lot of these cases are in the South East (21), and

with 6 cases in the Midlands, 4 in the South West as well as cases in the East of England and the North East and North West. Some of the issues that we have been dealing with are problems with the Police, problems on sites or accessing them, planning issues, housing issues, accessing grants and education.

In addition to the recently opened cases we are also working on cases from

before April – some cases are quite complex and involve a lot of work over a long period. We are always happy to deal with any queries you have or to help you if you need any assistance with a particular problem you may be facing – please contact us on our national advice line 01273 234777.

For more information about the national helpline:

www.gypsy-traveller.org

abbie@gypsy-traveller.org

michelle@gypsy-traveller.org

Tel: 01273 234777

Helpline open:

Weekdays 9-5pm

(except Wednesdays)

Health Community Development Worker's Update

Jazka and Lisa report on their work in the community and give an update on the training they have delivered and what is in the pipeline

Through our work in the Health Promotion Team at FFT over the past 2 years it has become clear that Gypsies and Travellers have real problems accessing healthcare. In particular people living by the roadside and with no proof of address or ID find it very hard to register with GP Surgeries, get second appointments or be referred to other health care services like Occupational Therapists and Community Support Workers. Many people we support have told us stories of being refused short-term GP registration, of not being given proper support to ask for referrals and not understanding information about medications and treatments. Travellers have also experienced

prejudice and discrimination from NHS staff and there seems to be a general misunderstanding of Gypsy Traveller culture amongst health workers.

We have carried out lots of awareness training with NHS healthcare teams over the past 2 years and are now focusing our effort on GP Surgeries. Over the next 3 months we will be putting together a research and recommendations report on GP healthcare in Sussex. The report will give good and bad examples of access to GP surgeries with anonymous case studies of people's experiences. The report will also make recommendations to Primary Care Trusts and GP Surgeries on how to ensure Gypsies and Travellers have equal access to healthcare and also include Best Practise examples of GP Surgeries and outreach services that work well across Sussex. If you have had a good or bad experience with your GP

Surgery including reception staff, nurses and information about your surgery or have been unable to register with your local GP Surgery then get in touch with Jazka Atterbury at FFT in Brighton.

We are also developing a series of resources for Travellers on Wellbeing and emotional health topics – such as bad nerves, baby blues, eating problems etc. We will be producing leaflets, a CD and also a book, all on Wellbeing. We are doing this in partnership with community members and Wellbeing practitioners.

We are also continuing our work in our 2 local prisons. With the FFT Reaching Communities team, we are co-organising, with Travellers from within the prison, an event for Gypsy and Traveller History month in HMP Ford. This is to raise awareness of Gypsy Traveller culture within the prison and also provide a day of celebration for

For more information about Health Development work:

Lisa Bruton

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Jazka Atterbury

jazka@gypsy-traveller.org

Traveller inmates. In HMP Lewes, we will be taking part in a research survey on the BME inmates within the prison and use this information to improve their Wellbeing services.



Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month 2010- What a Month!

Gypsy Roma Traveller History 2010 (GRTHM) was the best ever! With events celebrating Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture taking place throughout the country in the month of June.

'My Big Fat Gypsy Fair' 12th and 13th June at Milton Country Park in Cambridge.

Candy Sheridan, FFT's Eastern Regions Community Development Worker, and the East of England's regional co-ordinator for Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) describes the event she organized for this year's GRTHM which celebrates Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture every June.



As the regional co-ordinator for the East of England for the last 3 years for Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month this year I decided to move away from putting photos up in Council offices and do something bigger, better



The fair was opened by Patrick McCarthy an Irish Traveller facing eviction from Smithy Fen (Cambridge),...and the Chairman of South Cambridge District Council and the local district councillor and it was blessed by the Gypsy church by Billy West, and this was followed by a song from singing Sarah!

Everyone loved the event as it was peaceful...self policed...and run by an Irish Traveller!

My Big Fat Gypsy Fair will take place again in October in Milton Country Park in Cambridge, over the weekend of 23 and 24 October, so see you there!

So having negotiated to bring Milton Country Park a Gypsy Fair, the staff were amazing...they had faith in me and the community...I had negotiated for no police and no beer tent/sales.

(Ormiston) did flower workshops for children...Eastern final of Travellers got Talent...

To see a short film of the Fair see the notice board of the FFT website www.gypsy-traveller.org.

The result was a very special 1960's type of a Gypsy Camp.3, 500 people over 2 days...fields of vintage trailers, horses, a market...photo exhibition by Joseph Jones, the AGM of the Gypsy Council on the Saturday...Gypsy Council stall of books (Thomas Acton)...Jacqueline Bolton



PHOTOS BY CHRIS THOMAS - miltoncontact.co.uk

A tribute to Michael Gavin - activist, father and friend

I would like to pay tribute to Michael Gavin, a local Irish Traveller Activist who recently died after a long and brave battle against cancer, aged just 48 yrs old. I was lucky enough to know Michael for ten years, having met him when our daughters met at Primary school. Michael was a good friend and mentor to me. He educated me about the history and present day situation of Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies, and opened my eyes to a whole new world that I had previously been largely unaware of. I worked with Michael for over two years helping out with the grass roots group he had founded called 'Gypsies and Irish Travellers' and we used to travel to the Gypsy Traveller Advisory Group together where I had the unique opportunity to see him in action raising the Sussex Police's awareness about Gypsy and Traveller issues.

Geoff Foster Equality & Diversity Liaison Officer at Sussex Police said of Michael:
 "He challenged us and educated us but at all times he did it in a constructive, supportive and professional manner."

I witnessed Michael having to be surprisingly insistent that equality is not something you have to earn, or that only some members of society can expect, and that Gypsies and Travellers should also be afforded equal rights because they too are members of the diverse communities we live in.

Michael's widow Michelle continues to support and work with all Gypsies and Travellers in her capacity as full-time Caseworker at Friends, Families and Travellers.

Michael, you were a dear friend, God Bless You and may you rest in peace.

Liz MacPherson



Sussex Gypsy Traveller Advisory Group (GTAG) celebrates GRTHM

GTAG is an independent police advisory group in Sussex whose objective is to reduce tensions between the police and Gypsies and Travellers. They celebrated GRTHM by putting on a day of celebration and music at Brighthelm Community Centre on June 12th.

Michael Gavin was a founding member of GTAG whose presence was sadly missed by all



Photo by Geoff Foster – Equality & Diversity Liaison Officer – Sussex Police



Clearwater Gypsies celebrate GRTHM in Arundel



Greg Yates and family celebrated GRTHM with a wonderful warm welcome to their exhibition of Romany crafts and memorabilia at Arundel in Sussex.

Greg is also a Trustee of FFT.

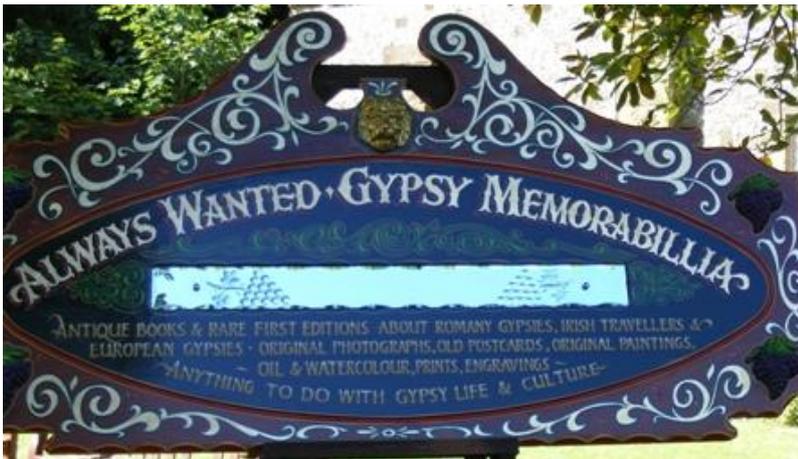
Clearwater Gypsies mission:

“To fulfil the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and to promote conditions for their social inclusion”

www.clearwatergypsies.com

Tel 07770 499589

PHOTOS BY GEMMA CHALLENGER, FFT



All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsy Roma Travellers

On 7th July 2010 the Inaugural meeting /AGM of the All Party Parliamentary Group- serviced by the Policy Officer for the Traveller Law Reform Project (Lucy Beckett), was held in the Palace of Westminster. The Agenda included the election of Officers and discussion of main issues.

Chair-Andrew George MP
Secretary-Lord Eric Avebury
Vice Chair-Baroness

Janet Whitaker
Vice Chair-Caroline Lucas MP
Vice Chair-Lord Tim Boswell

The Group agreed to confirm the Policy Officer – Lucy Beckett-TLRP as the ‘staff’ to act as the Group’s secretariat in a personal and unpaid capacity, to service the Group, be a researcher, and provide briefings for members. The meeting counts as the first AGM of the new

Parliament. The Group elected the name APPG for Gypsy Roma Travellers. Broad themes for future agenda items were agreed.

The APPG GRT is Registered with the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, House of Commons.

The APPG GRT is included on the Approved List
The APPG GRT will be

committed to addressing the social inclusion of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, improving community relations, and tackling accommodation issues. The APPG GRT is also committed to forging cross Party consensus so that all parliamentarians can work together to achieve the aims of the Group.

Meetings will be held on confirmed dates.

Noticeboard

Free Event Giving Legal and Planning Advice For Gypsies and Travellers



Thursday 16th September
3pm to 7pm
Little Chalfont Village Hall,
Cokes Lane, Little Chalfont
HP8 4UD

Talks by Barristers from
Garden Court Chambers
Advice surgery with
professional independent
planner

Activities for children &
Refreshments provided

Book a place, if possible, or
for information and
directions ring Julia on
01865 798673

Land for Sale

8.5 acre derelict industrial
site in countryside close to
Bristol. Water and
electricity on site. Hilltop
position, lovely views.
12,000 sq feet
derelict buildings, some
roads, mainly rough
pasture. Entire site has
planning certificate for
industrial use. 2 miles to
village, schools, shops,
medical centre. Offers
please. Email
michaelineng@aol.com for
details.

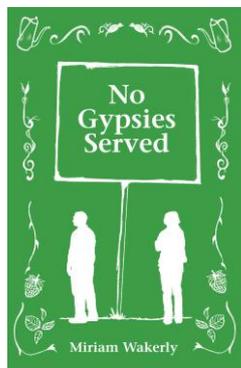
“No Gypsies Served“

Miriam Wakerly has
recently published her
second novel, *No Gypsies
Served*.

The novel is a
sequel/prequel to *Gypsies
Stop There*. Both have been
well received by reviewers,
and below you can see
some of the reviews and
find out where you can
purchase the book

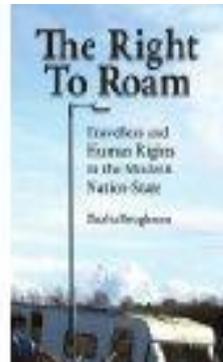
“Wakerly’s books do a
wonderful job in helping to
promote understanding
where there is ignorance
and tolerance where there
is bigotry. I recommend
them heartily.” Sue Cook,
BA, DLitt, Broadcaster and
Writer

“A vivid and imaginative
interrogation of human
relationships in the context
of the relations between
Travellers and English
country people, and a
worthy sequel to *Gypsies
Stop tHere*.” Thomas
Acton, MA, DPhil (Oxon),
FRSA, OBE Professor of
Romani Studies, University
of Greenwich



You can order the book
from Waterstone's or other
bookshops,
www.Amazon.co.uk or
www.strongmanpublishing.com
or order it from your
local library.
<http://miriamwakerly.blogspot.com>

“The Right to Roam” by Duala Roughneen



“The Right to Roam -
Travellers in the Modern
Nation State” examines the
right of nomadic groups to
maintain a way of life that is
contrary to the drive toward
sedentarisation and
modernisation. For
Travellers in Ireland,
restrictions on the freedom
to maintain a travelling
lifestyle have consequences
for members of the
travelling community. “The
Right to Roam - Travellers
in the Nation State”
explores the impact of
recent legislation such as
the Housing (Miscellaneous
Provisions) Act of 2002 on
Travellers in modern Ireland
and whether progress
driven by sedentary society
should be required to
include the needs of
nomadic groups.

Shelter Gypsy and Traveller Law course 14- 15 December 2010, London.

The course content
includes, planning law,
security of tenure on official
sites, evictions from
unauthorized encampments
and homelessness law
relating to Gypsies and
Travellers. For info see
www.shelter.org.uk/training

Stand Up and Be Counted, Make Your Voice Heard!

The next census, taking
place in March 2011, will
be of great historical
importance for Traveller
communities in England
and Wales. For the first
time ever, the census
questionnaire will allow
people to tick their ethnic
identity as a Gypsy or Irish
Traveller.

The census collects
information about the
whole population every ten
years to show what
support and services
different communities
need. The results are
used, for example, to help
plan school places, health
facilities, public transport
and emergency services.
It’s so important that
Gypsies and Irish
Travellers fill it in next
March and tick the box to
mark their identity so that
the community and its
needs will be recognised.

It’s a big chance for
Gypsies and Irish
Travellers to stand up and
be counted.

For more information, look
at this article on the Gypsy
History Month web site:
www.grthm.co.uk/feature-census.php

Or go to the census web
site at www.census.gov.uk
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Friends Families and Travellers

Friends, Families and Travellers

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01273 234 777

FAX:
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E-MAIL:
info@gypsy-traveller.org

Charity no. 111 2326
Company 3597515

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, civil rights, discrimination and legal representation. FFT is also active in community support, research, monitoring, mediation and policy development at local and national levels.

National Contacts

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

Traveller Advice Team (TAT)

0845 120 2980
07768 316755 24hr

Community Legal Advice

0845 345 4 345

Family Rights Group

0800 731 1696

Shelter (homeless)

0808 800 4444

Squatters Advisory Service

020 7359 8814

The Traveller Law Reform Project

www.travellerslaw.org.uk

Travellers Aid Trust

www.travellersaidtrust.org

The Gypsy Council

01708 868986

National Association of Gypsy Women

01325 240033

National Romany Rights

Tel. 01202 893228

Pavee Point

00 353 1 878 0255

Children's Society, South-West

01761 411771

Groundswell

Tel: 020 7737 5500
info@groundswell.org.uk

National Association of Boat Owners

01749 677195

Equality & Human Rights Commission

020 9390000

Planning Aid

01963 230045

Education Otherwise - enquiries@educationotherwise.org

The Travellers' School Charity

Tel 07717 055378

Roma Support Group

020 7511 5721

We're on the Web! Go to: www.Gypsy-Traveller.org for information, useful contacts and more.

If you believe that everyone 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.