

LONDON GYPSY AND TRAVELLER UNIT



Annual Report 2015



Statement Of Purpose

The London Gypsy and Traveller Unit is both a community development and a regional strategic organisation. We seek to support Travellers and Gypsies living in London: to have greater control over their lives; to influence decisions affecting their lives; to improve their quality of life and the opportunities available to them; and to challenge the discrimination they routinely experience. We work with Gypsies and Travellers to use this detailed local and regional experience to contribute to national policy.

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Open day to celebrate Gypsy, Roma Traveller History Month

Chair's Introduction

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am pleased to introduce our 2015 Annual Report. Stephen Cottle and I are now in our third year as co-chairs. The year, as always, has had its challenges but these have been far eclipsed by the rewards. We have seen the organisation evolving and managing to keep up with the current political changes. We are proud of the thriving and energetic organisation we represent.

As joint chief executives, Debby Kennett and Lorraine Sweeney have introduced new ideas which promise to take the organisation to new heights of excellence. However the constant search for funding, as always, has been an ongoing struggle but we have managed to stay on top of this. Throughout all of this we

have had a dedicated growing board of trustees to provide the necessary stability and strategic direction.



During the year the staff, as always, have continued to keep the trustees informed, and up to date, with interesting presentations demonstrating the breadth of their work. As ever the changes in legislation have presented our staff with ongoing challenges proving more and more that the work and level of commitment of all LGTU staff is so invaluable to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whom they strive to help empower. Thank you for reading this.

Anthea Wormington
Co-chair

Organisational Development

Aiming to develop a more effective and sustainable organisation

CEO's Report

Over this past year we have taken time with staff and trustees to reflect on LGTU's strategic vision and priorities for the next 3 years. In this challenging political and funding climate, it is crucial that we are clearly communicating our purpose as an organisation. We have continued to explore how we do this more effectively and have sought feedback and advice on our ideas to refresh our brand with a new name and logo. As a result of our discussions, we have chosen the four broad themes of Homes, Jobs, Young voices and Equality to reflect our priorities and communicate our vision. We are encouraged to be going into the New Year with more clarity on the changes we want to put in place in 2016.

With much sadness we would like to give special tribute to one of our trustees, Johnny Power, who passed away in June this year. Johnny was a loyal supporter of LGTU for the past 30 years. He was one of our most committed campaigners and fought hard for more sites to be built in Camden. Johnny was always present at a protest or community meeting. He will be greatly missed in our work.

We are particularly grateful to all those who supported our 2015 funding appeal which helped us significantly through a period of financial uncertainty. We would also like to thank our board of trustees, our highly committed staff team and members of the Traveller community for their faithful support throughout the ups and downs of the last year. We look forward to this year's challenge of taking the next steps to fulfilling our vision for LGTU.

Debby Kennett and Lorraine Sweeney



Johnny Power protesting at DCLG November 2014

Office Open Days

In our aim to be more outward looking, we opened up our office to the many passersby from Broadway Market on a busy Saturday in June, as part of our Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History month celebrations. With the help of community members, we transformed our office into an exhibition space and encouraged people to come in with the offer of tasty food. We were pleased to reach people who knew very little about the Gypsy and Traveller community and engage more with our neighbours and local businesses. To follow on from this successful day we held a 'garage sale' in September, again to reach out to the local area creating a buzz with lively drumming workshops!



Organisational Goals

2016

- ❖ Complete renewal process for Pqasso quality mark
- ❖ Refurbish offices
- ❖ Strengthen board of trustees

Homes

Campaigning for Sites

We were pleased to celebrate some success with our **WeSTILLcount** campaign. This was in response to the Government's proposed changes to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in Planning Policy to only include those who can prove they are travelling thus excluding the majority of families settled on sites or in housing. Through the use of a short film, Facebook page and post card campaign, we mobilised community members to have their say in the government's consultation.



In March we were delighted to hear that **we counted!**

The Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, was prevented from pushing through the policy change before the end of parliament by Liberal Democrat MPs who were persuaded by the strength of feeling and number of consultation responses. Each postcard was lodged as a consultation response and 62% of all consultation responses came from Gypsies and Travellers or support organisations

In August, we were greatly disappointed to hear that the Government had pushed through the changes to the planning policy, including the change to the definition, despite the opposition. In response, we embarked on a second phase of our weSTILLcount campaign.

Our main focus this time was the Government's new Housing and Planning Bill. By using more short films and social media, we continued to inform the Traveller community on all the recent developments, inviting them to have their say. Community members have used Facebook posts to express their views which we then collated and submitted as part of LGTU's evidence to the Public Bill Committee which was quoted by Labour MP Teresa Pearce during the committee debate. We are now involved in a wider collaboration of organisations who have formed the 'Kill the Housing Bill' campaign.

Young women in our training programme also took action to have their voices heard..

Travelling does not define us. Being a Traveller is not just about Travelling it is also about our beliefs. I do not want this law to go through. I don't want in the future for me and my children to go through the hassle me and my family are going through now

You're breaking your promises- you promised us sites and you're now not providing sites and taking away our rights

When I'm married I want my children to have the same lifestyle I have but if the law comes in they wont. The law doesn't make sense because I am a Traveller if I travel around or don't travel. I'm still a Traveller up or down, I'll always be a Traveller, it's my culture

Supporting Residents on Council Sites

In **Tower Hamlets**, Old Willow Close was finally finished after 11 years of disruption and uncertainty for Eleanor Street families. We are continuing to support residents in their communications with Crossrail and the council on the outstanding issues relating to the completion of the pitches. Residents actively engaged in the council's consultation on a new site allocation policy which brought an end to the uncertainty around the allocation of the remaining pitches. All 19 families are now looking forward to getting on with their lives in their new homes.

In **Newham** we have been supporting residents of Parkway Crescent to push the council to take action on the rundown state of their amenity blocks. This year they achieved a full refurbishment of the amenity block on each pitch including the installation of gas central heating.

Campaigning for culturally suitable homes

Planning Policy Work

This year we undertook an evaluation of the planning policy project, to reflect on our achievements, the challenges we faced and examples of best practice. An important success was the strong Traveller representation at the Hackney and London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) local plan examinations. As a result, the planning inspector recognised the importance of community involvement and made recommendations for more robust engagement. Securing the designation of land for a Traveller Site in Hackney was a significant achievement. We will continue to work closely with Hackney Traveller representatives over the coming months to push for the delivery of this site and welcome the involvement from London Assembly member Jeanette Arnold on this issue.

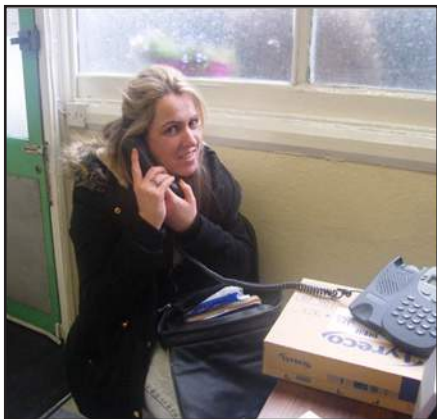
Our focus on Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments was also significant as we developed a model of partnership working to ensure that housed Travellers are reached. The planning evaluation report will be published in early 2016.



Traveller representatives from Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham giving evidence at the LLDC examination in public

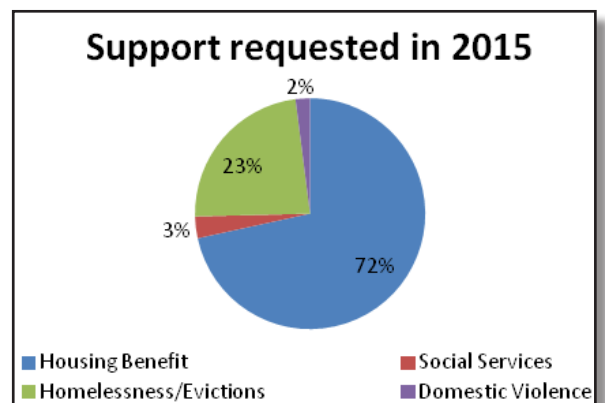
Accommodation, Advocacy and Advice Service

The growing housing crisis in London is having a continued impact on Gypsies and Travellers mainly due to the lack of social housing, soaring private rents and lack of available pitches on sites. 23% of the work by the advice team has been concerned with eviction and homelessness and a further 72% relates to support with Housing Benefit. It is becoming increasingly difficult for those on a low income to find affordable properties and families are being forced to move. This is having a devastating impact on Traveller families who rely heavily on their family support network. Families



are facing isolation, disruption to children's education, a loss of continuity in health care and the fear of experiencing racism when moving to a new area.

In response, we continue to liaise with housing officers, the benefit cap



teams, DWP, Job Centres, Social Services and other agencies. Our priority is to support our service users to maintain their tenancy and manage their affairs. It is encouraging to see a steady increase in the numbers of community members who have gained the confidence to deal directly with agencies with minimal support. Over the next year we aim to develop our office based drop-in space where community members can independently access information, use computers or make phone calls. We will continue to advise people on taking steps into training and employment offering support throughout the transition from benefits to work.

Goals 2016 - Homes

- ❖ Establish community drop-in space for independent use
- ❖ Oppose the Governments changes to planning policy and housing law through the 'We Still Count' campaign

Jobs

Step Forward Project

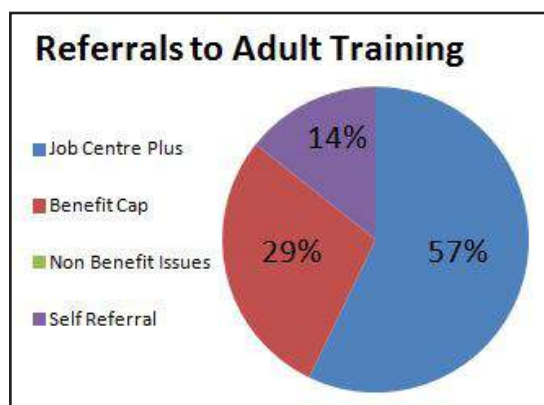
We have had another successful year of **adult training** in literacy and IT skills at the Linden Centre in Hackney which is attended by Traveller women from NE London boroughs. We have developed an informal and student led approach to our training which is based on 'learning by doing'. Many of our students

have had negative past experiences of formal education but respond well to a supportive and relaxed environment where they can learn from one another.

Through this indirect approach, students find it easier to understand the reason why they need certain skills and as they feel comfortable and supported, they become more motivated to learn.

Each week we have guided conversations about personal development and pathways into work and through this enthusiasm emerged for trying out new creative

skills. In response we held a series of creative learning taster workshops to generate ideas for self employment which were a great success. The women are eager to learn and develop their skills and creative flair with hopes for entrepreneurial futures.



The majority of **referrals** came through the Job Centre Plus (57%) and the Benefit Cap Team (29%). Advisors from both agencies recognise that the women they refer to us are at a huge disadvantage in the job market due their lack of computer and literacy skills. The other 14% were self referrals from women who found out through word of mouth or responded to our course promotion.

This year we were very pleased to secure funding to deliver our model of training for adults in **Tower Hamlets**. Weekly sessions will be delivered at the Merchant Street community Centre starting in January 2016

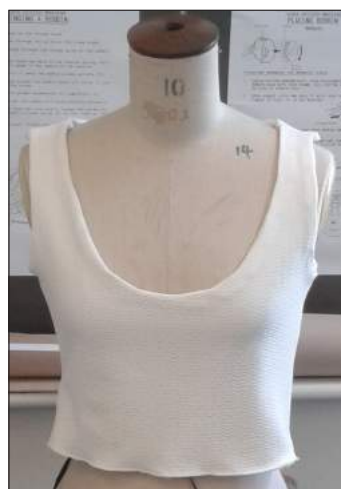
Scrap Metal Dealers Act

We have continued to monitor the impact of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act (SMDA) on the Gypsy and Traveller community and councils' implementation of it. The new complex licensing system along with a dramatic drop in the price of scrap metal has had a huge impact on scrap metal dealers within the Traveller community. We were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the Home Office in November and welcome the Government's commitment to an early review of the Act in 2016, two years earlier than the original timescale of 2018. We raised our concerns about the differential costs of licences in each borough, the over complex application processes and a significant decline in the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers dealing in scrap metal. In 2016 we will work with other agencies to provide evidence to the Home Office to inform their review. We will continue to push for regional licenses and a less complex application process.

Creating pathways into training, employment and supporting traditional trades

Young People's Training

The **young women** completed a six weeks vocational taster course in fashion design at Hackney Community College. This entailed knowledge of garment construction, specialist sewing techniques, operating sewing machinery and the cutting process. The young women grew in confidence as the course progressed and were all very proud of their achievements as they displayed their final garments.



Numeracy and literacy is an integral part of the young peoples' training programme. Along with gaining new practical skills, five young women sat their City and Guilds Maths and English exams. Two passed Level 2 English (equivalent to GCSE grade A-C) and three passed level 1 English and Maths (equivalent to GCSE grade D-G).



The **young men** had the opportunity to attend a 6 week 'Rejuvenate Metal' workshop delivered in partnership with Action Dog. The workshop entailed an induction to machinery use, including the use of high powered metal cutters where they learnt how to: measure and cut sheet metal; drilling holes in metal boxes and putting rivets into the corners; attaching hinges and how to weld the joints and grind them down to make a smooth finish using an angle grinder. One of the young men did extremely well on the training and gained an ASDAN Youth Activity Award 1 accreditation in metal work. He was congratulated by his tutor for *'showing great conviction, attention to detail and a hint of perfectionism and professionalism.'*

Goals 2016 - Jobs

- ❖ To support self-employment through harnessing existing skills
- ❖ Establish adult training and self employment support in Tower Hamlets
- ❖ To provide evidence to the Home Office to inform their review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act

Young Voices

It has been a tough year for the youth department with reduced funding and being seriously understaffed. However, thanks to the dedication of our youth work team and committed volunteers, we have continued to deliver a variety of exciting activities in our weekly youth groups and training programmes as well as a fun packed summer programme.

We are in the process of reviewing our youth programme and exploring new ways of delivery in order to have a wider reach. The parents and young people who have taken part in our consultation so far have given some very interesting feedback and come up with exciting new ideas. We are looking to complete the review by March 2016 and implement some changes later in the year.

Social Justice Project

We delivered a 10 week project around the theme of 'social justice' in all our groups and training programmes in order to encourage the young people to think about their own rights and future of their community. By exploring a range of topics the young people gained a greater understanding of politics and democracy. Topics included: the role of their local council and how decisions are made; voting and why it is important; how to have a voice; engaging in social action and giving back to the community.

The projects got off to a slow start but once the young people started to fully grasp an understanding of the issues they were motivated and fully participated in the workshops with some amazing results.



**Young women's training group question
Councillor Sade - the Speaker of Hackney council**

The **young women** impressed the 'Speaker of Hackney', Councillor Sade with their thoughtful questions about her role and the workings of the council. This prompted some discussions about getting more involved in the Youth Parliament. A visit to see the film 'Suffragette' inspired a lively debate about the importance of women using their vote.

The **Hackney Girls** got stuck into a series of debating workshops keen to voice their opinions on topics such as 'We shouldn't have to wear school uniform'; 'Policemen should carry guns' and 'Girls and boys should go to the same schools'.



Preparing for the great debate

The **Haringey Group** visited a local church to offer their services such as helping to tidy up. They explored the range of ways in which they could offer help or services where they live and what it means to give something back to the community.

Creating a safe place where young people believe in themselves and make informed choices

Jack Petchey Achievement Awards

Three young people won Jack Petchey Achievement Awards this year.



Peter (aged 12) from Hackney Boys' group *'for taking an active and supportive role in organising the boy's football team.'*



Lesley (aged 18) from our young people's training programme *'for being a great role model and inspiration to her peers showing that you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it.'*



John (aged 11) from Haringey Group *'for the most improved behaviour.'*

All the winners were awarded £200 to spend on youth group activities. Over this coming year the young people will have the opportunity to nominate their peers for the 2016 award

Summer Programme



Trip to Ragged School Museum

Young people had the opportunity to showcase their varied talents in the 'Kids got talent' show, where there were performances of singing, dancing, rapping and even a puppet show. They all did amazingly well and provided us with an afternoon of great entertainment.

In August over 60 young people aged 8 to 15 registered onto our fun packed 2 weeks summer programme. A particular highlight was a visit to Parkside Farm in Enfield where they spent the day picking an assortment of fruits. The next day they made tasty smoothies from the fruits they picked

Other activities ranged from: cooking; fashion design workshop; 'Save a Life' first aid course; trip to cinema; ice skating; Minibeast Mania at Lee Valley Park; 'Wedding Rush!' games sessions and a lively drumming workshop.



Minibeast Mania at Lee Valley Park

Goals 2016 - Youth

- ❖ To complete the consultation with young people and parents and deliver changes that will widen our reach
- ❖ To increase young people's participation in youth forums and equip them to champion issues that affect their lives

Equality

Strengthening the voice of London's Gypsies and Travellers to gain recognition, inclusion and equality

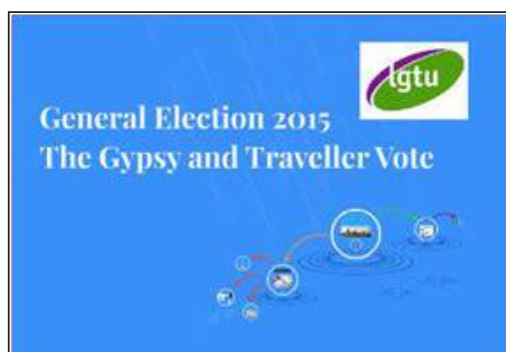
London Gypsy and Traveller Forum

In the run-up to the 2016 Mayoral election we sought to strengthen the strategic role of the London Gypsy and Traveller Forum in influencing the Mayor and London assembly. The aim of the Forum meetings this year was to develop a manifesto with demands and recommendations to the Mayoral and London Assembly candidates which address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers across four key policy areas: accommodation, employment, health and education.

Each meeting was structured around one of these themes and included reflections from community members on the prevailing issues, a summary of research and evidence, an introduction into the role of the Mayor and London Assembly in each policy area. Discussions followed which helped understand the needs of the community in a more strategic context and develop a series of policy demands. The outcome of this work will be a short manifesto summarising the key issues and presenting these demands to the main Mayoral candidates in spring 2016 as we seek commitments to implement some of the recommendations.



2015 General Election



The General Election was an opportunity for dialogue with community members about the importance of using their vote and discussing how to influence government policy. To demystify the voting system and the process of electing MPs, we put together a short audio-video presentation, made accessible to the Traveller community through our website and Facebook page. We also showed the presentation throughout April and early May in our office during the advice service and used it in the youth and adult training sessions. This prompted many interesting discussions about voting in the election and also enabled us to support the campaign 'Operation Traveller vote' led by the Traveller Movement

Parliamentary Work

We have been pleased to support the work of the GRT All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) through our role of administering the funds for the continuation of secretariat support (undertaken by Gill Brown). It was particularly important that the parliamentary work continued during 2015 with the need to lobby politicians on concerns about a number of significant changes to policy and legislation. Re-forming a new APPG after the General Election was an important priority. Gypsy and Traveller organisations have recognised the importance of secretariat role and we are collectively grateful to Tudor Trust for enabling the parliamentary work to continue.

Goal 2016 - Equality

- ❖ *Support Gypsy and Traveller engagement in the 2016 London elections.*
- ❖ *Seek dialogue with prospective Mayoral candidates and assembly members and push for the implementation of policy demands*

Finance - Summary Of Income And Expenditure

Here follows a summary of the London Gypsy and Traveller Units' financial activities for the year ended March 2015 taken from our signed-off audited accounts. Our full accounts are lodged with the Charity Commission and Companies House.

London Gypsy and Traveller Unit

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the Year Ended 31 March 2015

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	31.3.15 Total funds £	31.3.14 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	2	8,495	308,242	316,737	317,540
Investment income	3	182	-	182	211
Total incoming resources		8,677	308,242	316,919	317,751
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Charitable activities					
Direct Costs	4	-	8,326	8,326	4,039
Support Cost		406	295,899	296,305	316,994
Governance costs	6	-	13,137	13,137	11,140
Other resources expended		-	7,764	7,764	6,384
Total resources expended		406	325,126	325,532	338,557
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES					
		8,271	(16,884)	(8,613)	(20,806)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		29,925	85,411	115,336	136,142
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		38,196	68,527	106,723	115,336

Staff

Debby Kennett	Joint CEO Community Development Coordinator
Lorraine Sweeney	Joint CEO Youth Coordinator
Clemmie James	Community Development (maternity until September)
Emma Milne	Community Development (maternity cover until September)
Tracie Giles	Community Development
Ilinca Diaconescu	Planning Policy
Errol Francis	Youth until November
Fitzroy Campbell	Youth
Geraldine Lindsay	Accommodation Advice
Celine Gleeson	Accommodation Advice
Lisa Smith	Accommodation Advice
Shane Rowles	Resources
Sue Monaghan	Administration

Financial Services - Malcolm Swallow

IT Services - Steve Rose

Volunteers

With many thanks to our volunteers this year.	Christina Maughan
	Bonnie Smith
	Camille Derel
	Lizzy Kiely
	Nalder Edwards



Banner for the Travellers' Pilgrimage to Rome in October 2015 made by young people on the summer programme



Traveller representatives give evidence at the LLDC examination in public in March 2015

Funders 2015 - 2016

BBC Children in Need
Canary Wharf Group
Garden Court Chambers
Goldsmiths Company Charity
Grocers' Charity
Hackney Learning Trust
Irish Government Emigrant
Support Programme
Jack Petchey
LB Tower Hamlets
Mercers Company
Oak Foundation
The Henry Smith Charity
Trust House Charitable Trust
Trust for London
Tudor trust
Wakefield Tetley Trust



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

OAK
FOUNDATION



Trust for London

Tackling poverty and inequality

The
Henry Smith
Charity
founded in 1628

the
Tudor trust

Board Of Trustees

Anthea Wormington (Co-chair)
Stephen Cottle (Co-chair)
Paul Smyth
Jane Andrews until November 2015
Marian Mahoney
Mena Mongan
Alison Harvey until September 2015
Andy Wilson
John Power until July 2015
Sarah Taylor joined October 2015

THE WAKEFIELD & TETLEY TRUST



The
GOLDSMITHS'
Company

Trusthouse Charitable Foundation



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