

# LONDON GYPSY AND TRAVELLER UNIT



Annual Report 2012



# Statement Of Purpose

The London Gypsy and Traveller Unit is both a community development organisation 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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## Chair's Introduction



**LGTU AGM 2012 Ann Tayler Centre**

On behalf of the Trustee Board, I am pleased to introduce the 2012 LGTU Annual Report. My second year as Chair of the Board has seen new trustees join as well the ongoing commitment of longstanding members, creating depth to discussions and good interaction between members. We have welcomed presentations by staff at these meetings to ensure we are kept abreast of the valuable work being undertaken by LGTU and providing insight to new trustees into the workings of the organisation.

The continuing difficult economic backdrop has brought challenges for London's voluntary sector in finding funding to sustain existing projects

and develop new work. The economic challenges also bring with it increasing demand for the sort of services that LGTU provides, seen for example in the accommodation and advice support. Despite being under financial pressure, LGTU fundraising has kept pace with a reduced budget and we are in a better financial position for the year ahead. This year has also seen LGTU lead on campaigns for positive and fair media coverage of Gypsies and Travellers, continue to fight for site provision that reflects need in London; promote voter registration and get the youth groups heard on Radio One. We hope you enjoy reading about this in greater detail. ❖



# CEO's Report

This is the year we have worked towards and gained the **PQASSO** quality assurance mark, level 1. It was a challenge to resist being distracted by the demands of our project workload, but a healthy organisational structure is necessary for LGTU to deliver its services and policy work. We found the process very useful in enabling us to update and rationalise organisational procedures and LGTU's fundraising potential will be enhanced. We have also strengthened the LGTU management team by promoting Debby Kennett to the new

post of Community Development Co-ordinator. Administrative systems have suffered with the cuts made in the last few years though the willingness of staff to multi-task has helped cover the gaps. However we look forward to putting more resources into admin next year.

***Lisa and Christine  
delivering complaint  
letter to Channel 4***



## Planning

The CEO has the lead role in policy, closely linked to the community development work, as our priority is to support Traveller involvement in policy development. Last year we reported LGTU support of Traveller participation in oral hearings on two, apparently competing, new government planning policies. We thought the probable amalgamation would change what was in the Traveller policy but in March this year the National Planning policy framework became law and included a separate planning policy for Traveller sites in full. Local authorities were given a year to ensure their local plans were fully compliant with

the new policy, and because of the unexpected detail requiring them to collect evidence of Travellers' needs and to identify land for sites, there has been a flurry of activity in local consultation. Because of the very tight timescale we are making written responses based on all the consultation that previously took place for the London Plan. There were further alterations to the London plan and LGTU, including Travellers Tracie Giles and Johnny Power, spoke at the Examination in Public pressing for the new planning guidance to place greater responsibilities on the London mayor to be proactive and strategic in ensuring Traveller sites were built.



***Hackney Resident signs petition protesting Traveller  
Families Eviction Order***

## National Policy

The Traveller Law Reform Project, which is currently managed by LGTU, has carried on delivering secretariat support for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma (APPG), and in September received funding to continue their role in responding to local plan consultations. In London this has been in partnership with LGTU, and outside London, the Eastern and South eastern regions are being covered. Following the review last year and the departure of the development worker supporting the APPG, (now covered by a temporary appointment) this partnership is in an interim phase in relation to the parliamentary work.

Liaison with government departments has become more established and Gypsy and Traveller organisations including LGTU are now involved in regular meetings with the Departments of Community and Local Government and of Education, which has been a very positive development.❖

# Community Development And Campaigning



*Protesting outside Channel 4 Headquarters*

## Big Fat Protest

We were shocked by the appearance of the billboard ads in February for the new series of 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding', portraying scantily dressed young girls and an aggressive looking boy with the slogan "Bigger Fatter, Gypsier". As a staff team we felt we had to take some action. We produced a 'mock up' (featuring our very own Geraldine) to demonstrate that It would not be acceptable to stereotype other ethnic groups in this way. This was circulated to supporters asking them to complain to the Advertising Standards Agency.

We then organised a protest with Gypsies and Travellers starting in Hackney under one of the billboards by our office (see front cover), and then onto Channel 4's head office.

At the same time as the demonstrations, both

the Hackney Gazette and the Guardian featured Christine Cawley, Irish Traveller and LGTU trustee, asking if Channel 4 realised the effect of its actions. Within hours the phones were ringing and did not stop for four days. Our demonstration and letters of complaint featured heavily and LGTU Traveller staff members, Tracie Giles and Helena Kiely were interviewed on many national radio stations and in the press. This meant more than simple publicity – it meant that for once Gypsies and Travellers were driving the news and creating proper debate. The ASA declined to consider 100s of complaints but the climate had changed and later in the year solicitors were successful in appealing the ASA decision and securing a ruling that using a young girl in such a provocative pose was inappropriate. Not far enough but a good result.

*"These posters are insulting and degrading. It makes me sick to my stomach to use children like this. It's a wrong portrayal of our community and my children are hiding in school because of it"*  
(Hackney Traveller)

**Would you be comfortable with this Advert?**



**Why Does Channel 4 think this is ok?**





## Media

The campaign described opposite illustrates how our work with the media can support and amplify campaigns and other areas of our work, and is essential in ensuring Traveller voices are heard. This year saw a very different portrayal of young Travellers on Radio One - see the youth section

on page six. We have continued to respond to requests from local media about the evictions of the unauthorised camp in Hackney in an attempt to try and get the family's story across and to highlight the reasons they remain in the area despite living in such difficult circumstances.

## London Mayoral Election

This year's London Mayoral election was an opportunity for Gypsies and Travellers to use their

vote to make a difference and let the politicians know that their vote counts. We produced a DVD called "Make your voice heard on May 3rd" giving information on the Mayoral candidates and on how they would use their powers to get sites built if they were elected as Mayor. The DVD also gave information on how to register to vote. Ken Livingstone agreed to meet with the Traveller community and on February 29th Gypsies and Travellers from all over London came together to ask him questions. He made commitments to use his powers should he be elected to progress the provision of Traveller sites across London. The result of the election has meant he could not fulfil this commitment, but many Travellers voted for the first time and more Assembly members are aware of their Traveller constituents.



*Meeting with Ken Livingstone*



## Eleanor Street Site

The long awaited new site at Eleanor Street is now very close. The contractors responsible for building the site were appointed this year and residents are involved in final consultations leading up to the move in 2013. The partnership between the Hackney Play Bus and Eleanor Street Residents' Group has strengthened with the continuation of the weekly sessions on site and a blacksmithing taster course for teenagers. Marian Mahoney, secretary of the residents group, spoke at a seminar on site residents' associations organised by FFT and shared her experience of representing her community and developing the Eleanor Street Residents' Group.



*Consultation meeting with Crossrail and contractors*

## London and other Boroughs

LGTU continues to co-ordinate the quarterly London Gypsy and Traveller Forum meetings where we keep abreast of a wide range of London issues and share information from across the boroughs. The continuing lack of sites, the effects of the loss

of so many Traveller education teams and more alterations to the London plan are regular agenda items. A briefing on the freedom of Information Act was particularly interesting.

We have been working with Travellers on the

following issues: site provision and planning issues in Camden, where there is an issue of finding land for a site they have funding for; in Lewisham where another attempt to proceed on building a site was yet again abandoned; in Newham mainly in relation to the Olympic legacy; and in Hackney

where, as member of the Hackney Traveller equality group (previously strategy group), we participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Traveller action plan, and where we continue to raise the question of site provision.

## Unauthorised Camps



*Traveller families on Stoke Newington common*

We have continued to support families living on unauthorised camps to gain more stopping time and recognition of their needs. Hackney Council took unprecedented action earlier this year by applying for a High Court Injunction to ban named Travellers from open land in the Borough. This case, which will be heard in the High Court in January, could have national implications for Travellers. We have been working closely with the Community Law Partnership who is representing the family. Local Hackney residents have given very welcome support to these families by lobbying the Council and mounting a petition. ❖

## Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month

### Newham

As part of this year's history month celebrations residents of Parkway Crescent took part in putting together an exhibition called "Travellers' Olympic Move" which tells the story of their move from Clays Lane to Parkway Crescent. Many of the photos were taken by children from the site as well as by the photographer Geoff Crawford. John Biggs (London Assembly member) unveiled the exhibition at the launch which was attended by local residents and representatives from local schools and churches. Residents on the site, over 3 days, also hosted visits from the local school and nursery - a total of 230 children visited.



*Unveiling the 'Travellers' Olympic Move' exhibition*



*Lisa Smith and John Biggs at launch of 'Travellers' Olympic Move' exhibition*

### Hackney

The well established Hackney GRTH month partnership which includes Education, Libraries, the Museum, Hackney Homes and LGTU, put on a wide range of activities, including exhibitions, films, book reading, children's activities and a poster competition.

In this year of the Olympics, LGTU were funded to commission a film recording the memories and reflections of some of the Hackney Travellers whose site was relocated to make way for the Olympic Park. This was shown in Hackney Central Library and Rivington Place gallery. ❖



## ***Accommodation Advocacy And Advice Service***

The Accommodation Advocacy and Support Service responds to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers who are experiencing difficulty with accommodation and benefit issues.



***Meeting with Travellers about the Welfare Reform Act and benefit changes***

Our main focus this year has been preparing for the Welfare Reform Act coming in March 2013, which is the biggest change to the welfare state for sixty years. It contains proposals and benefit cuts that threaten the wellbeing of children, women, vulnerable and marginalised families and disabled people. This is on top of the piecemeal changes to welfare and housing provision which has been putting pressure on our services for some time. In order to prepare, staff have attended Housing Benefit capping and Welfare Reform Act conferences, and workshops run by local authorities and government bodies on managing the impact of the cuts on vulnerable families and individuals. Following this, through meetings,

workshops and individual consultation, we have been preparing and informing our services users of these changes.

Next year our main focus is to support our service users into looking for work by offering training in computer skills, CV writing and other additional skills needed to become part of the formal workforce. We will support them through the Jobcentre process and monitor the issues that they might face.

We continue to work in partnership with Social Services from various boroughs who request our services to attend initial visits, attend at case conferences and act as a bridge between themselves and client families. We will continue to work with and identify other agencies to ensure appropriate referrals for our service users. ❖



***Meeting with Travellers about the Welfare Reform Act and benefit changes***

## ***Youth Programme***

2012 has been a very eventful year for our youth groups. Maverick Sabre, a singer/songwriter who is a headlining act on the UK music scene with his debut album entering the UK Album charts at number two, visited both Hackney Boys and Hackney Girls groups in April. Maverick (born Michael Stafford) was born in Hackney and moved to Ireland at the age of four. This was a difficult time for him as he was made to feel like an outsider because of his English accent. He therefore spent much of his time growing up around Travellers, as they accepted



***Hackney girls' group with Maverick Sabre, after his impromptu performance and interview with the young people***



him as a person without making judgement. Maverick wanted to return to his place of birth to meet young Travellers to hear their stories of what it's like living and growing up in Hackney. Contacts that the London Gypsy and Travellers Unit 's media officer has developed with the media enabled the link to be made with Maverick Sabre and with BBC Radio One in conjunction with Rose De Larrabeiti (Producer at Whistledown Productions).

These interviews were conducted and recorded by Rose De Larrabeiti for the individual groups. This culminated in two of the girls and two of the boys being invited to have a studio session with the artist. The results were fantastic and helped provide the backdrop to the BBC Radio One interview that was aired on 4th June 2012 entitled 'The Travelling Man'.



*Hackney boys' group taking time out with Maverick Sabre (3rd from the left) during their interview with the singer/songwriter*

## LondonPlay Go-Kart Grand Prix

Haringey Boys and Hackney Boys groups joined forces during the spring to enter the LondonPlay Go-Kart Grand Prix. It was a fun day out in Highbury Fields Park where youth groups across London could come along to design, build and then race 'soapbox' style go-karts. Each team was given identical materials, basic tools and shared access to all manner of powered tools and then



*Under starter's orders: Hackney and Haringey boys' groups line up at the start of the LondonPlay Go-Kart Grand Prix*



*The podium finish for the victorious Hackney boys' group at the LondonPlay Go-Kart Grand Prix*

had 4 hours to come up with a kart with the potential to outrun the others. Following hard work and great teamwork the final claxon sounded for "down tools". Any joint team spirit disappeared as eight groups lined their karts up ready to go. Hackney Boys ended up winning two out of three races and collected their prizes with a podium topping finish, spraying their opponents and onlookers with fizzy non-alcoholic wine, in true Formula One style.



## One Hackney Festival - Torch Relay

We are all aware that 2012 was a big year in British history for hosting the Summer Olympic Games, particularly for those who live in Hackney, one of the Olympic boroughs, and even more so for Travellers whose site had been relocated to make way for the Olympic Park. It was good for the young Travellers of Hackney to participate and represent their community at the One Hackney Festival – Torch Relay on Saturday 21st July. In the run up each group designed and customised T-shirts and hats to wear at the parade, and

attended dance rehearsals to learn the aptly named 'ackney' routine. The glorious sunshine and great turnout was a fitting welcome to the parade which walked, skipped and danced from Shoreditch to Clissold Park. It was an explosion of colour, with the sounds of music representing all corners of the globe. Some of our young people even got within touching distance of the Olympic Torch as they posed for the official pictures with the Olympic torchbearer in Clissold Park.



*Hackney girls and boys' groups line up in Shoreditch Park at the start of the One Hackney Festival - Torch Relay*

## Summer Programme

Our Summer Programme was based at Kingshold Community Centre and was a great success due to the amount of young people attending. It was very encouraging seeing how well the parents responded to bringing their children down for the two week period of fun activities, ranging from: kite making, T-shirt printing, baking, sports, music technology, glider making, street dance and arts and crafts, to name but a few. There were also weekly trips to make the most of the great weather. One of the great features of the programme was the assistance given by some of the older group members. There was a pretty broad age range of those attending, but this was manageable due to the huge range of activities provided.



*Many hands make light work: our Summer Programme in full flow during a cookery lesson*

## Paralympic Day Out



*It's the taking part that counts: Hackney's young Travellers enjoying their day out at the Paralympic Games*

To cap off our eventful summer we were presented with complimentary tickets to attend the Paralympic Games. A group of 20 young Travellers attended on the 31st August and the first event we witnessed was Goalball. This sport requires absolute silence from the spectators as it's for the visually impaired with all participants on each team blindfolded. Our young people did themselves proud with their conduct and really soaked up the neryv atmosphere. We then went to see a Wheelchair Basketball match where the group could now make as much noise as they wanted to along with the raucous crowds. We completed our Paralympic experience with refreshments, whilst taking in some action from the big screens, and a tour around the Olympic Park. A truly inspiring and momentous day for those who attended. ❖

## Finance - Summary Of Income And Expenditure

Here follows a summary of the London Gypsy and Traveller Units' financial activities for the year ended March 2012 taken from our signed-off audited accounts which can be found lodged with the Charity Commission and Companies House.

London Gypsy & Traveller Unit Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account) For the year ended 31 March 2012					
	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2012 £	Restricted Funds 2012 £	Total Funds 2012 £	Last Year Total Funds 2011 £
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds</i>					
Voluntary Income		4,632	260,128	264,760	331,494
Investment Income	6	173	-	173	99
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>4,805</b>	<b>260,128</b>	<b>264,933</b>	<b>331,593</b>
 <i>Costs of charitable activities</i>					
Governance costs		22,670	85,853	108,523	122,526
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>22,670</b>	<b>261,229</b>	<b>283,899</b>	<b>333,126</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	3	<b>(17,865)</b>	<b>(1,101)</b>	<b>(18,966)</b>	<b>(1,533)</b>
<i>Total funds brought forward</i>		37,397	68,192	105,589	107,122
<b>Total Funds carried forward</b>	15	<b>19,531</b>	<b>67,091</b>	<b>86,622</b>	<b>105,589</b>

If you would like further copies of our Annual Report please contact us or go to our website where it can be viewed or downloaded as a PDF. ❖



## Staff List

Frieda Schicker	CEO
Celine Gleeson	Accommodation Advice
Geraldine Lindsay	Accommodation Advice
Gill Brown	Media / Community
Tracie Giles	Community
Debby Kennett	Community Development Coordinator
Lorraine Sweeney	Youth Coordinator
Errol Francis	Youth
Tom Smith	Youth
Lisa Smith	Admin Support
Shane Rowles	Resources
Nalder Edwards	Volunteer Admin
Ilinca Diaconescu	Volunteer Planning/TLRP



*Haringey Group setting up their stall of Halloween themed goodies at Somerfield Grove adventure playground*



*Protesting outside Channel 4 headquarters*

## Board Of Trustees

Laura Croft (Chair)  
 Stephen Garvey (Treasurer)  
 Loughlin Scully  
 Bill Forrester  
 Jane Andrews  
 Marian Mahoney  
 Stephen Cottle  
 Christine Cawley  
 Paul Smyth  
 Anthea Wormington  
 Katy George

## 2012 - 2013 Funders

BBC Children in Need  
 Esmee Fairbairn  
 Hackney Council  
 Hackney Learning Trust  
 Irish Government Emigrant Support Programme  
 Jack Petchey  
 The Henry Smith Charity  
 Oak Foundation  
 Olympic Lottery Distributor  
 Trust for London  
 Tudor trust



*Hackney Boys and Girls Groups take time out from the procession during the One Hackney Festival - Torch Relay*



*It's the taking part that counts: Hackney's young Travellers enjoying their day out at the Paralympic Games*



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