

LONDON GYPSY AND TRAVELLER UNIT



Annual Report 2014



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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Launch of photo club exhibition at the 'Rich Mix' Tower Hamlets

Chair's Introduction

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am again pleased to introduce the 2014 LGTU Annual Report. Stephen Cottle and I are now in our second year as co-chairs and, although it is challenging, we both find the position immensely rewarding as we see the organisation evolving 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 are introducing new ideas which promise to take the organisation to new heights of excellence. It has been challenging for them both as they have also had to attend to their prior duties and as always the constant search for funding is an ongoing challenge. Throughout these challenging times we have been very fortunate to have a consistent, dedicated and growing board of trustees to provide stability to the organisation.



Staff presentation to Trustees on their work on the Scrap Metal Act

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. Please read on.

Anthea Wormington
CoChair

CEO's Report

We are pleased to have this opportunity to reflect on the many achievements and challenges at the end of an extremely busy year. Staff have delivered some exciting new projects, as well as ensuring that we continue to provide the continuity of our long term commitment to responding to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in a flexible way through all areas of our work. Over the past year we have prioritised investing in our staff team and organisational development. We have used our monthly staff meetings and away days to allow more time for information sharing between departments and have explored our vision for the future. Through these discussions, staff recognised the need to refresh and update the organisation with a new and updated name and logo which we plan to launch in 2015 - so watch this space! We have introduced 'Lamplight', a new data management system which is enabling us to record and monitor our work more effectively. One of our biggest challenges at present is to bring in the necessary funds to deliver our vision for the next 12 months.

We are grateful to members of the Gypsy and Traveller community who continue to inspire and influence the development of LGTU through their roles as staff members, trustees, volunteers and activists.

Debby Kennett and Lorraine Sweeney

Community Development And Campaigning

Eleanor Street Site Tower Hamlets

For the past 10 years, Eleanor Street residents have been living with the insecurity and disruption of the relocation of their site due to the Crossrail scheme. The lengthy and stressful process of building the new site and moving residents onto their new pitches is due to be completed early 2015. The past year has been fraught with difficulties ranging from issues with the design, delays, power cuts and the impact of the noise and dust as a result of the 24 hour a day building works. Everyone will be very relieved when the whole process is over and they can properly settle into life on their new site at Old Willow Close.

Home loss legal challenge

Eleanor Street residents are involved in a legal challenge against the Government on the issue of statutory Home Loss Payments. Under the law, anyone affected by the compulsory purchase of their home are entitled to a Home Loss Payment, except for those living on caravan sites who are excluded from this entitlement simply because they live in caravans. With the support and representation of Chris Johnson from Community Law Partnership and Alex Offer from Garden Court Chambers, Eleanor Street representatives attended the High Court in February, where the judge granted permission for the final



Eleanor Street Representatives at the High Court

Judicial Review hearing which took place in November. We are still keenly waiting for the judgement. If the case is successful then this will mean a change in the law for all Gypsies and Travellers who are affected by this inequality.

Eleanor Street photoclub exhibition

In July we held the launch of the exhibition '**Cranes, Trains, Plots and Shots**' at the Rich Mix arts and cultural centre which featured some of the beautiful photographs taken by the children involved in photoclub. We were delighted to celebrate their achievements with Eleanor Street families and other supporters.



Launch of photoclub exhibition at the 'Rich Mix'

Camden Travellers Association

This year, Traveller representatives in Camden made significant strides forward through the setting up the new Camden Travellers Association. The idea came together after a series of frustrating meetings with Camden council officers, where little progress was being made in addressing their long standing concerns. They decided to set up the group in order to change the dynamic of the meetings and take more control over the agenda, enabling Camden Travellers to more effectively hold the council to account on their commitments. We are committed to continuing to support the Camden Travellers Association over this coming year.



Camden Travellers Association logo

Computer Skills and Literacy Training

Over the past year we have been inspired by the women's achievements at the twice weekly class in literacy and computer skills. Interest in the training has grown, and we now have women travelling from a number of boroughs including Hackney, Enfield, Haringey and Newham. Many start attending because they are affected by the 'benefit cap' or because of pressure from the job centre, but they quickly get a taste for learning new skills and this is reflected in their enthusiasm, commitment and fast progress. The atmosphere of support we provide, has enabled the women to grow in self confidence as they work on CV's, apply for jobs, and make tangible progress with improving their literacy and computer skills. We are grateful to the Linden's Children's centre for the use of their IT suit and for all their support. We plan to increase our delivery of this training in other boroughs and are also seeking opportunities for work experience.



IT Training

Health focus group

We were approached by NHS England (London Team) to help facilitate a focus group for Gypsies and Travellers. This was one of 20 focus groups taking place as part of research into the delivery of health care by GPs. In September, 10 community members participated in an interesting and lively discussion on a range of issues such as access to GP appointments and continuity of health care. This research will inform the recommendations by NHS England on changes to GP services.

Scrap Metal Dealers Act

In our last Annual report we featured our work on the new Scrap Metal Dealers Act (Oct 2013). We have continued to gather evidence on the impact of this new law by supporting community members to navigate their way through the new licensing system, as well as by researching and recording the widely varying practice of councils on issuing licenses. Over the past year we have worked collaboratively with other Gypsy and Traveller organisations and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (GRT APPG), to communicate our serious concerns about the impact of this law on scrap metal collectors within the Gypsy and Traveller community. As part of our campaign for an early review of this legislation, we have been involved in a number of significant meetings with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Home Office Minister, the Met Police and the Local Government Association. Tracie Giles gave a presentation at the national GRT conference (organised by the Travellers Aid Trust) which enabled us to make some stronger links nationally and to get the broader picture of how the SMDA is affecting Gypsies and Travellers outside of London. Over the coming months we will continue to monitor the implementation of SMDA and gather evidence on its impact of the Act on the Gypsy and Traveller community.

We STILL Count

In September the Government produced a consultation on some disastrous changes to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in planning law, which proposed that families who are settled on sites and in houses will no longer be included when councils assess the need for more pitches in their area. This will mean that the majority of Gypsies and Travellers will be excluded from accommodation needs assessments as councils will only have to include Traveller families who can prove they are travelling.

We organised a community meeting to discuss the impact of these proposed changes and plan a response. Community members came up with some exciting campaign ideas to spread the word and inform Gypsies and Travellers nationally about what this could mean for their future.



We STILL Count Campaign Postcard

Our 'We STILL Count' campaign consisted of three main elements: a short film of Travellers explaining to their own community the possible impact of this new policy; a Facebook page to share the film and other information, as well as acting as a forum for people to make comments; a postcard with a standard response which people could sign and send back to the Government.

We also organised an oral hearing with officers from the Department of Communities and Local government (DCLG), where community members spoke directly about the detrimental impact of this policy change. On the 19th November we held a rally of community delegates outside the DCLG and handed in hundreds of the signed postcards.

The use of film and social media proved to be a successful way of spreading information and raising awareness amongst the Gypsy and Traveller community nationally. We received positive feedback from other Gypsy and Traveller organisations who used our campaign resources, and we had many



Demonstration outside the DCLG

requests for postcards from across the country. The rally and postcard hand in at the DCLG prompted some positive media coverage. We were proud of the whole campaign which was led by community activists at every stage – many thanks to all involved. We are now awaiting the DCLG's response to the consultation and what the next steps will be to let the government know that We STILL Count!



Demonstration outside the DCLG

Planning And Policy Work

This year in our planning policy work we continued to monitor the implementation of the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, responding to public consultations and supporting Gypsy and Traveller representation.

Our work spans from local to national level, seeking to challenge the lack of site delivery and providing valuable evidence from local Traveller communities.

At local level, we have been significantly involved in a number of borough local plans and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTANAs). We gave evidence and supported Traveller representation at the Merton Examination in Public and have continued discussions with other boroughs including Camden, Lewisham, Newham and Haringey. Community members have been particularly involved in the Hackney and London Legacy Development Corporation Local Plans by attending meetings with planning officers, contributing to GTANAs and putting forward proposals for sites. Hackney's Examination in Public was a great example of partnership working on this issue with a range of powerful representations. Hackney Travellers, LGTU staff, Just Space Network, a local councilor and Hackney resident, all put forward arguments to the Planning Inspector about the need to identify land for sites.



Representation at Hackney's EiP



Hackney Travellers accommodation needs assessment Meeting

At London wide level we continued our engagement in the London Plan consultations and Examination in Public. At national level we responded to the Government's proposed changes to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and guidance, and launched our successful campaign 'We STILL Count' (as previously described).

London Forum and Housing Committee Investigation

This year the London Gypsy and Traveller Forum celebrated 10 years of existence, which was marked at its meeting in May through a refresh of the purpose and terms of reference.

One of the main objectives of the Forum's work this year was to feed in the London Assembly Housing Committee investigation into Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs and site provision. The Forum



London Assembly housing committee Site visit to Bridale Close in Southwark

contributed to setting the agenda of this investigation, organising site visits and submitting a collective response to the Call for Evidence. The Housing Committee meeting on 16th October was very well attended by Gypsy and Traveller activists, who represented the issues facing their communities and took part in the debate with council officers and London Assembly Members. The investigation has resulted in a letter to the London Mayor making recommendations on how best to meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community and asking the Mayor to consider including pitch targets in the London Plan. This was also a great opportunity to raise the profile of these issues and gain support from Assembly Members.

Parliamentary work

The Traveller Law Reform Project formally came to an end in January 2014, however Gill Brown continued to provide secretariat support for the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller All Party Parliamentary Group (GRT APPG) in a voluntary capacity for several months. This was greatly appreciated by Gypsy and Traveller organisations and the APPG members. We are also grateful to the Tudor Trust who recognised the importance of the parliamentary work at this time, and has provided some further interim funding while the long term funding is secured and new management arrangements are agreed.

British and Irish Parliamentary Assembly Committee

In June, LGTU was invited to give evidence to the Committee on social and environmental affairs who were undertaking an enquiry into the needs of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Ireland and the UK. We also facilitated a visit to Eleanor Street site in Tower Hamlets where committee members met with site residents and Traveller representatives from other London boroughs. Members listened to the concerns voiced by community members on their needs in relation to accommodation, health, education and employment.

*British and Irish Parliamentary
Assembly Committee site visit*



Media

We continue to proactively seek positive media coverage and foster good relationships with journalists where we can. In November, a piece in the Hackney Gazette on the Government's consultation on Planning policy and our protest outside the DCLG, led to further coverage of our 'We STILL Count' campaign in other national press. London Live TV also featured the campaign and interviewed Debby Kennett and Lisa Buttigieg on their lunch time News programme. Despite being currently under resourced in this area, we recognise the importance of developing our media work and will continue to fundraise for it over the coming year.

Accommodation Advocacy And Advice Service

We are seeing a growing accommodation crisis for Gypsies and Travellers due to many pressures on families at this time which include: the lack of available pitches, soaring private rents, increased demand for social housing and scarcity of temporary accommodation. The Benefit cap (£500 per week for a family) has really begun to hit home this year and we are seeing the impact on our service users, particularly those families who are living in the private rented properties. Many families are struggling to manage with rents rising to £350-400 a week, and although Discretionary Housing Payments have helped to make up the deficit, this is only a short term solution. We are seeing more and more families facing eviction from their homes and many have been moved to outer London Boroughs far away from their relatives, schools, doctors and support networks. Our advice workers regularly advocate on the key issue of culturally suitable accommodation particularly for families placed in hostel or emergency accommodation. The team has continued to respond to these issues by supporting our service users into training and self employment where possible, and offering support throughout the transition from benefits to work.

Involvement of Social Services can be a frightening experience for a family and our advice team receive regular requests from both families and Social Workers to attend joint visits or review meetings. Staff take an important role in supporting a family to understand procedures as well as offering insights to the social workers and increasing cultural awareness.

Youth Programme

Group Work

Our youth groups have continued to meet weekly and have enjoyed a variety of different activities over the year, gaining new knowledge, skills and confidence as well as having great fun!

The **Hackney Girls Group** worked hard creating a 'Social Educational Toolkit' in the form of a board game to challenge the myths and stereotypes about Gypsies and Travellers. The idea came from the young people in response to the Channel 4 series 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' which they felt portrayed a false impression of their community with little regard to



Hackney Girls Group 'Wedding Rush! launch

the reality of their lives. In partnership with Universal Board Games (UBG), the young people developed their game by gathering facts from families, books and the internet. They had great fun at a games night session where they played games from around the world to inspire them and give them an idea of what they wanted their board game to look like. They designed and redesigned the game until they were happy with the end product, which they called 'Wedding Rush!'



Hackney Girls Group wedding rush launch

One of our **highlights** of the year was the 'Wedding Rush!' launch event hosted by the girls themselves and supported by the young people's music group. A lively short film promoting the game was shown; the girls talked about the project and also entertained us with some beautiful singing. The girls thoroughly enjoyed working on project and learned a lot of about their own cultural heritage. We aim to promote the use of the game more widely, in order to challenge the myths and stereotypes and create dialogue and greater understanding between young Travellers and their peers in the settled community.

The **Hackney Boys Group** worked on a number of creative projects this year. The boys customised T-shirts using a combination of freehand art, images from the internet and pictures they have taken themselves, to create their own original and innovative designs. They were so pleased with the results that they have all expressed a desire to possibly market them!



T-Shirt Project

The group also worked on a photography project using a range of old and new cameras to experiment with images in a creative way. The aim was to trigger an interest in photography and develop the young people's skills in this area.



Photography Project

The **Haringey Group** is a mixed group of boys and girls. The priority this year has been to consolidate the youth work in Haringey by building stronger partnerships, widening contact with Traveller families and raising young peoples awareness of services that exist in the borough. The group focused on building a 3D site model in order to explore their cultural heritage in creative way. This idea of replicating real life objects that are central to their lives provides an exciting and stimulating challenge. The project also gave a chance to the group to participate in kite making and flying which is a wonderful sport and one that captured and held the young peoples attention throughout the sessions. They also took part in the **Music Project** which was a joint venture with young people from Hackney and Tower Hamlets which was a great success. The group worked on developing performance skills and confidence in their musical ability. They all shone at their first public performance which was the launch of the Traveller board game 'Wedding Rush!'. The group celebrated their achievements in a fun trip to Madame Tussauds!



Haringey Group visit to Madame Tussauds

Young People's Training

The **young women** have been working towards gaining ASDEN accreditation in Roadwise - a driver awareness course which promotes safe driving for young people as well becoming familiar with the Highway Code in preparation for sitting their theory test. The young women also took part in a health research project on immunisation within the Gypsy and Traveller community, undertaken by University College of London and the University of York. We worked in partnership with Community Service Volunteers Positive futures, on an eight week volunteering programme, to give the young women some work experience as well as help them think about the type of work they would like to do in the future. The opportunities ranged from working with the elderly, helping to providing food for homeless people and working in a charity shop. The young women were all very excited about taking part but at the same time were apprehensive. They were taken aback by the appreciation they received and all came away with such a positive feeling about the contributions they had made.

The **young men** completed an 'upcycling' course in partnership with Action Dog and Peabody Housing Trust. They made bedside cabinets out of recycled materials which were then displayed at Hotelympia 2014, exhibition at Excel London. The young men also gained an ASDEN accreditation in youth activity certificate.



Summer Programme

This year's **Summer Programme** was a great success. We had an enthusiastic team of staff and volunteers who delivered a two week programme of varied activities which included: cooking; pin-hole photography; cricket; ice skating; kite making; dance and music workshops - to name just a few. With a total of 59 young people registered, ranging from age 8 to 15, it was challenging at times to deliver a range of activities to meet the needs of such wide age group. We will review this in our planning for next year. Many of the young people expressed how much they enjoyed the programme and were proud of what they achieved. A big thanks to the staff and volunteers who made it such an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all those involved.



Summer Programme

Finance - Summary Of Income And Expenditure

Here follows a summary of the London Gypsy and Traveller Units' financial activities for the year ended March 2014 taken from our signed-off audited accounts which can be found 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 2014

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	31.3.14 Total funds £	31.3.13 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	2	187	317,353	317,540	367,181
Investment income	3	211	-	211	212
Total incoming resources		398	317,353	317,751	367,393
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Charitable activities					
Direct Costs	4	-	4,039	4,039	197,017
Support Cost		23,879	293,115	316,994	107,658
Governance costs	6	-	11,140	11,140	13,198
Other resources expended		-	6,384	6,384	-
Total resources expended		23,879	314,678	338,557	317,873
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES					
		(23,481)	2,675	(20,806)	49,520
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		53,406	82,736	136,142	86,622
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		29,925	85,411	115,336	136,142

Staff List

Debby Kennett	Joint CEO Community Development Coordinator
Lorraine Sweeney	Joint CEO Youth Coordinator
Clemmie James	Community Development (maternity leave from September)
Emma Milne	Community Development (maternity cover from September)
Tracie Giles	Community Development
Ilinca Diaconescu	Planning Policy
Errol Francis	Youth
Fitzroy Campbell	Youth
Sadia Mirza	Youth until March 2014
Geraldine Lindsay	Accommodation Advice
Celine Gleeson	Accommodation Advice
Lisa Smith	Accommodation Advice
Malcolm Swallow	Finance
Shane Rowles	Resources
Sue Monaghan	Administration



Young men's up-cycling course

Consultants

Richard Lee	Planning Policy
Santa Pedone	Planning Policy

Volunteers

With many thanks to our volunteers this year.

Ngozi Sweeney
Katie Dent
David Knight
Lizzy Kiely
Jane Cosher
Nalder Edwards



Summer Programme

Board Of Trustees

Anthea Wormington (Joint Chair)
Stephen Cottle (Joint Chair)
Paul Smyth
Jane Andrews
Marian Mahoney
Mena Mongan joined July 2014
Alison Harvey joined July 2014
Andy Wilson joined July 2014
John Power joined July 2014
Dermot George joined May 2014
Mark Andrews (Treasurer) joined May 2014
Kathleen Maughan until July 2014
Christine Cawley until July 2014
Bill Forrester until July 2014
Stephen Garvey (Treasurer) until July 2014



Young men's up-cycling course

2014 - 2015 Funders

BBC Children in Need
Hackney Learning Trust
Irish Government Emigrant Support Programme
Jack Petchey
Lloyds TSB Foundation
Oak Foundation
The Henry Smith Charity
Travellers Aid Trust
Trust for London
Tudor trust
Wakefield Tetley Trust

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.



Hackney Boys - Photo Project



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