

“Experts by Experience” Community Engagement Meeting – York Travellers Trust, York 16th April 2015

Present: 18 attendees (n.b. numbers attending were lower than had been hoped due to a community funeral)

1. Comments made:

Gypsies and Travellers can no longer travel as there is nowhere for them to stop – ASBOs are given to those who do try to stop somewhere. As a solution it was proposed that “Negotiated Stopping” (as in Leeds) needs to be promoted. Basically “Negotiated Stopping” can be translated as a conversation regarding letting people stay in a location for a few days longer.

There is a feeling that “no one’s ever listened to anything we have to say”. As a result you have to “get in someone’s face” to be heard, with the result that you are then categorised as “angry”

Need to overcome the view that “my vote’s not going to count” and that there is no point in voting if it doesn’t change anything

The key question for Councillors should be “what are you going to do for ME?”

The Scrap Metal Act has had a massive negative effect on the travelling communities.

The Benefits Cap (coupled with the existence of large families) has had a disproportionately negative effect where rents on sites are high. York Travellers Trust has taken York City Council to judicial review for rent rises.

There has been some willingness on the part of the Labour Party at least to canvass on sites (e.g. in Leeds and Middlesbrough). This hasn’t happened in the past.

2. Taking the recommendations of “Experts by Experience” forward

A number of methods/issues were raised:

- We need to identify which part of Government to target, who takes overall responsibility?
- Lobbying of politicians (local/national) can work
- GRT organisations (such as York Travellers Trust and Leeds GATE) should look at how they can use “Experts by Experience” in their own areas.
- Community members could attend local hustings to raise the recommendations set out in “Experts by Experience”

- We should make sure that Gypsies and Travellers are digitally included and make use of social media
- Use local successes to draw politicians in – don't just criticise but actively celebrate successes.
- Engage with allies
- Involve EHRC
- Use the EU to put more pressure on the UK government
- And as a final resort...demonstrate/park trailers outside the Houses of Parliament