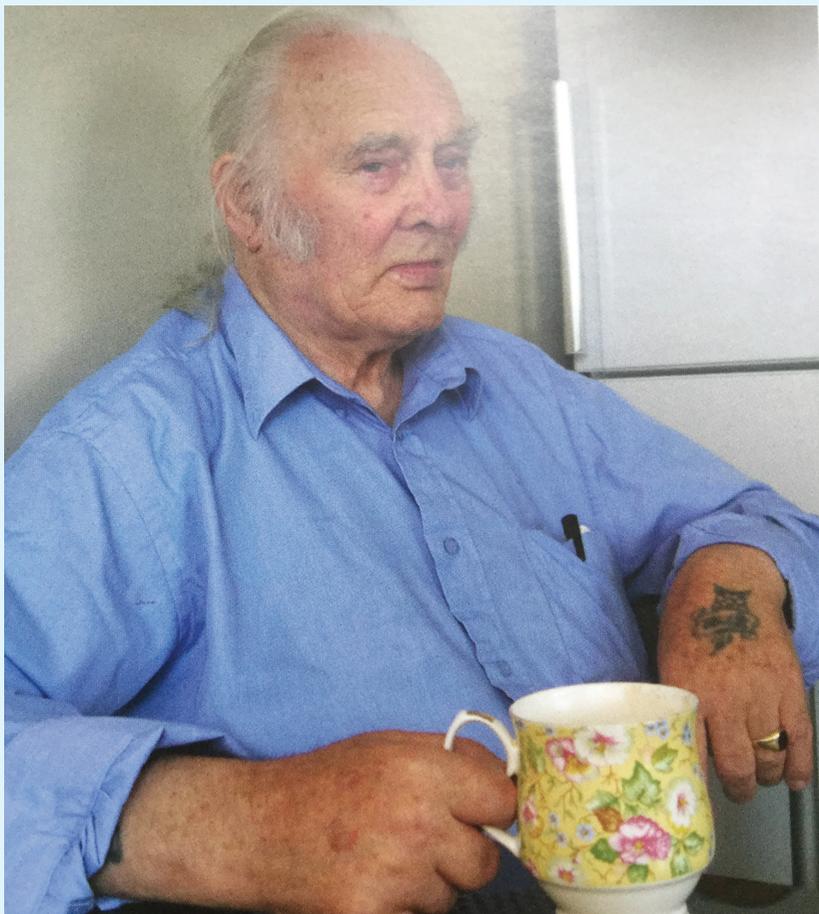


National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups

Annual Review

March 2016-2017



Peter Mercer MBE:
22nd January 1934 ~ 17th January 2017



Chair's report:

Please Note: We have slightly altered the timing of this review report so that it records mid March 2016 to mid March 2017.

The year has been a challenging one and the office has worked hard to keep up to date with events.

First of all we were very sorry to lose our life time president Peter Mercer MBE in January; the Roma flag across his coffin was given to Ruth, Peter's wife with much pride. It is true to say that he did more than anyone in this country for that flag and his people.



We were also saddened by the loss of Gordon Boswell

Roger has continued to work on local and borough plans and the problematic "Gypsy status" and definition is often discussed on the consultation group e mail as presently many families may be affected by it.

We were pleased that Roxanne from the Open Society Foundation could come and see us at the office and it has been good that both Adrian and Siobhan have been able to attend meetings in Brussels. We are continuing to develop as a group, as well as assisting others to develop. Unfortunately we have lost some groups along the way due to funding issues but we have also three other groups that

are developing that have applied to join the Federation.

We believe in networking and would like to thank Thomas Acton from ACERT for assisting on the Gypsy law Training day and all the groups and community groups that attended. We will try and continue to obtain funds so that we can have a yearly update. It may be that the issue of [G] "gypsy status" can be successfully challenged.

We joined the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network in December and we hope that we can continue working within Europe so that they can understand the specific problems of the indigenous communities as well as the Roma and we can all learn from best practice. Despite the worries there are also good things happening, the Christmas window pictured on the back of this report, (which we also used for our Christmas card) came about by local people supporting Romany Gypsy families in their village through their planning enforcement and with the support of the local church. It was a delight to read in time for Christmas. Another year is upon us and we continue to work hard.

Chair Johanna Price



Planning Work to date.

Planning work has concentrated on providing input and comment to Local Plans and comment on government initiatives insofar as these initiatives affect the interests of Gypsies and Travellers. We have also sought to comment on Local Authorities' assessments of need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches (GTAA's) although the lack of any requirement for formal consultation on these assessments has limited our ability to contribute.

Whilst concentrating on Local Plan documents coming forward in the East Midlands and West Midlands, we have continued to provide basic coverage across the whole of England (excluding London Boroughs).

We also play a role in disseminating information about new consultations on Local Plan documents, through joint working with other organisations, law firms and planning consultants throughout the country. This continues to be a most successful alliance. By working jointly our influence is magnified and it is less likely that opportunities to influence policy will be missed.

In the year covered by this report we have

carefully scrutinised over 200 planning policy documents and found it necessary to make representations in 74 cases. Our influence has been significant. In almost every case where we have provided an input to planning policy documents, we have secured beneficial changes, either through the planning authority responding positively to our comments or though the process of review by independent Inspectors as in case study 2 below.

At national level, we continue to seek to influence planning policy by responding to government consultations on proposed changes to legislation and national guidance.

This year saw the government making significant and worrying changes to Government policy as it affects Gypsies and Travellers. In particular, changes to national guidance in "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites"; changes to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers to exclude those who have ceased to travel; and measures in the Housing Bill to change the way the need for Traveller sites is assessed, have all necessitated comment.

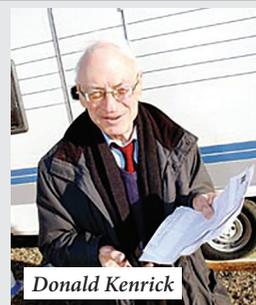
It is regrettably the case that, notwithstanding

Continued...

We have lost many active campaigners and would like to give thanks to the great Lord Avebury and Donald Kenrick.



Lord Avebury



Donald Kenrick

Planning Work to date.



the concerns we raised, together with many other organisations, the changes have been introduced all will undoubtedly work against the interests of Gypsies and Travellers. In particular, there has been a trend for Councils to readdress the need for Gypsy pitches by

undertaking reviews of their GTAAs with the clear intension of reducing the assessed need in light of the new definition. Where possible we have challenged this process as in case study 1 below.

CASE STUDY 1

An East Midlands Council carried out an in house review of its GTAA which purported to demonstrate that it no longer had any need to provide pitches for the next 15 years. We challenged this assessment, and made it clear that we would oppose these findings at every opportunity. We argued that in-house assessments were generally unsatisfactory as Councils lacked the independence and expertise to undertake such assessments. Having considered our representations, the Council has now confirmed that it is to appoint specialist consultants to produce a revised GTAA.

CASE STUDY 2

A West Midlands Council submitted its Local Plan for examination before an independent Inspector. We had commented that the policy relating to provision of Traveller sites was unfair in that it required that Traveller sites “will be subject to the same criteria as other types of development”. In our written representations we pointed out that this would make it virtually impossible for Gypsies and Travellers to secure planning permissions.

In response to our representations, at the Local Plan examination hearing, the Council asked the Inspector to agree to a modification to the Local Plan, deleting this contentious element of its policy. This was agreed and we thus found it unnecessary to attend the hearing. (Roger Yarwood RTPI)

Research into 5 year supply November 2016

We were pleased to welcome back planner Alice de la Rue to undertake this report



This report contains the research findings of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Friends, Families and Travellers into the progress made by local planning authorities to meet the requirements of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015) to provide a supply of sites for pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. It also complements more detailed research by the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit which considered the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in London.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out the requirement for local planning authorities to “identify and maintain a five year supply of specific, deliverable sites, sufficient to provide 5 years’ worth of sites against their locally set targets”.

The research provides a snapshot into the progress made in the South East (by Friends, Families and Travellers) and the East and West Midlands (by National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups) in identifying this supply of land.

Summary

The main findings by Friends, Families and Travellers in the South East were:

- Only 10 local authorities out of 66 had identified a full 5 year supply of specific deliverable sites
- 5 local authorities had no identified need for sites
- Up to 2033, a total of 1745 additional pitches are needed in the South East of England

Research into 5 year supply

The main findings by the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit (presented separately in the document ‘Planning for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in London’ www.lgtu.org.uk) were:

- Since 2012, less than one third of London Boroughs have completed a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Only half of those Boroughs that have adopted a Local Plan post March 2012 have set a pitch target
- A very small number of Boroughs (5 in total) have gone on to identify a supply of land in order to achieve the pitch target. In all but one case this has been through extensions to existing sites rather than new sites.

In the East and West Midlands, the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups found the following:

- 1675 pitches are needed to 2034 across the two regions

- Out of 70 local planning authorities across the two regions, 15 have identified a full 5 year supply of specific deliverable sites
- 10 local planning authorities had not yet identified a 5 year pitch requirement figure

The headline findings show that there has been insufficient progress in meeting the requirements of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and in meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Some local planning authorities have made significant progress but do not yet have a full supply, which is not explicitly shown in the data presented in the report, and best practice shows that identifying and maintaining a supply of specific deliverable sites is by no means an impossible task, to the benefit of all communities. The lack of accommodation provision has a huge impact on the health, education and wellbeing of Gypsies and Travellers, maintaining the chronic exclusion and vulnerability that the communities face.

Siobhan Spencer MBE was appointed to the UK Governments Holocaust Commission Education Advisory Group.

Update: *In summary, the UKHMF is seeking a prominent location in Central London with significant existing footfall so as to draw in and inspire the largest possible number of visitors. The site will support several features and activities, the number and extent of which will depend on the size of the space available. Sites capable of accommodating 5-10,000 sqm of built space for UKHMF over no more than three contiguous floors will be considered. This could include being part of a larger mixed-use development. In order to achieve the maximum benefits for the public, the UKHMF needs to allocate as much of its funds as possible to educational purposes rather than to land and construction and so the site must be highly cost effective.*

Roma- Gypsy communities will be consulted in relation to any learning information in the new centre. A meeting is due to be scheduled in April.

NFGLG would still like to see the Holocaust in relation to all victims taught in schools, especially in relation to Jews and Roma who were classed as non-human (as opposed to sub-human.)

Update on NFGLG group network

Irish Community Care

We have been in regular contact with ICC and Roger has put in representations in relation to the East and West Cheshire regions.

York Travellers Trust

The forthcoming Public enquiry for Hull will be attended on the 25th April 2017. by Roger Yarwood who is working with planner Michael Hargreaves, who has also assisted the trust.

Update on Gypsy and Traveller law and Funded by the Law Society Charity

Held 9th March 2017 at the Friends Meeting House 28 booked into this course with 25 attending. The evaluation has been excellent on all counts from venue to trainers who were, Chris Johnson from the Community Law Partnership, (we were pleased to see that on the same day his firm won best legal aid firm in the 5 to 15 employer category Timothy Jones Barrister from No5 Chambers Birmingham Marc Willers QC from Garden Court chambers

We are hoping to obtain funding for a further workshop in light of recent challenges especially in relation to the definition of Gypsy/ Traveller issue

When the RSPCA Inspector Calls

A specific workshop held December 2016 in relation to RSPCA action was also funded by the Law Society Charity. We held this workshop in relation to animal law in Leeds in conjunction with Leeds Gate and with Jonathan Cairns from O' Garra's solicitor's based in Leeds.



In December 2016, NFGLG became a member of the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network

History, Heritage and Networking

The Holocaust history exhibition at the National Symposium II, (Taliesin Arts Centre on the 20th January 2017.) Loaned to the Romani Cultural Arts Company, this exhibition remained in Swansea for the week of the Holocaust Commemoration ceremonies.



Cenotaph 2016: Groups with Romany Traveller History Society, Gloria Buckley MBE, Janet Keet Black with Peter Torak MBE Roma policeman from Peterborough. Muzelley McCreedy (DGLG).

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I would like to thank our colleagues at the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups for developing, and allowing us to utilise, the Holocaust Exhibition stands within our work.

ICC has had the privilege to present the stands as part of a Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, History Month event that we put on in 2015 to launch our Community Report

“Traveller Experience of life in the Ellesmere Port area of West Cheshire: Snapshot Baseline Report Conducted 2014-15”.

Over 50 agencies, from Local Authority departments including public health, Gypsy and Traveller liaison managers, education and community engagement, along with CCG leads, Police, contracted services and key Third Sector agencies attended the event.

ICC have also been able to bring the Boards into enhance the work we do in North West Prisons, such as part of our St Patrick's Day events in Altcourse in 2016, where as part of a musical and information-sharing event, where Irish, Irish Traveller and Gypsy inmates, along with prison staff were able to access and discuss the stands' information and have their awareness raised regarding the history of Gypsy and Traveller communities. It was promoted more widely through the prison radio event too.

It is especially important that ICC were able to share the Communities' history, through such a comprehensive resource, given that the stands continue to remind us of Johnny Delaney's death in 2008. It is local and historically important that this is not lost, as Johnny was a local boy, living in Liverpool, Merseyside and killed down the road in Cheshire, and his story therefore resonates with the local Gypsy and Traveller communities, but needs to be shared within the agencies who are working to support the communities across the North West too. We need to remember that prejudice is not only historical, but also current for the communities we work with and this resource is vital in supporting that message and visually bringing it to us to support in challenging prejudice, stereotyping and racism.

**Thank you again for these opportunities
Win Lawlor**

**Deputy Director/ Irish Traveller Service
Manager**



Tim, Chris and Marc.
Gypsy law update in London

Wednesday December 7th

1pm – 4pm

When the RSPCA Inspector Calls



Jonathan Cairns from O'Garra's Solicitors Leeds

Funded by the Law Society Charity

HELD AT

**Leeds GATE
169, Cross Green
Lane, Cross Green
LS9 0BD**

Tel: 01132402444

Ask for Teresa



Policy Officer Report

Thanks to funding from the Open Society Foundation we are able to carry on the Policy element of the Federation's work, which was under threat when our previous funding ran out.

National

At a national level our Policy Officer, Adrian Jones, continues to co-ordinate the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma Liaison Group in the Department for Communities and Local Government - this group, which meets quarterly, enables the community to raise issues of concern and to set the agenda, rather than being solely reactive. It also gives government departments the opportunity to respond to issues raised by the community. A number of newer NFGLG members have attended the group - for those unable to attend minutes of the meetings are circulated. To help groups to attend we were able to get DCLG to increase their coverage of travel costs to two representatives per group per meeting - this is extremely important as it enables those from small groups with tight funding and located some distance from London to attend. On a very positive note, thanks to the work of the group we have recently been able to win two major concessions from the Government, namely:

- i) Bringing forward the review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act to 2017- this



Breaking down barriers between the Police and young people on the Metz Bridge site, Middlesbrough. Photo courtesy of the Society for the Promotion and Advancement of Romany Culture

Policy Officer Report

is important as we believe that the Act has had a disproportionate (and unjustifiable) impact on small Scrap Metal dealers, many of whom are Gypsies and Travellers

- ii) “Traveller pitch” funding was to be restored to the Affordable Homes programme (from which it had previously been omitted) via an Addendum produced in January 2017. As with the previous Affordable Homes programme this funding will not be “ring fenced” and, as we know from bitter experience, just because it may be possible to bid for funding to develop new sites/provide new pitches doesn’t mean that that will necessarily happen. On a more positive note though, at least funding for new pitches is back in the frame.

In addition to the Liaison Group Adrian administers the Gypsy and Traveller Consultations and Inquiries Group (formerly led by the Community Law Partnership), with updates on consultations sent out at least monthly. Adrian is also now a member (representing NFGLG) of the “National Scrutiny Panel on Hate Crime impacting Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Communities”, has attended meetings with the Home Office regarding the review of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act (see above) and liaised with the Neighbourhoods and Community Cohesion Analysis Team, IDeA Division, Analysis and Data Directorate at DCLG regarding improving the accuracy of the Caravan Count.

Consultations

Adrian has responded to a number of consultations over the past year. These included

1. Tackling the hidden economy: Sanctions

Our response noted, amongst other points, that for Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, lower than average levels of literacy and a focus on self-employment can have a negative impact when it comes to dealing with taxation and related issues. Any information provided needs to be targeted to meet the needs of those with lower levels of literacy so that they can remain within the law.

2. 3rd Universal Periodic Review of the UK 2017

Our submission to the Universal Periodic Review of the UK 2017 concentrated on the UK Government’s performance with regard to 4 key areas: Equality and discrimination; Planning and accommodation; Education and Health

Adrian also worked with other GTR organisations (including FFT) on an e-mail lobby of the House of Lords regarding the Housing and Planning Bill 2015-16, in relation to clause 115 Assessment of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs.

European Work

We have recently completed the UK section of the study “European policies and funds to combat anti-Gypsyism”. Led by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and mandated by the Open Society Institute (OSI) the study was implemented in



Raising health awareness on the Metz Bridge site, Middlesbrough. Photo courtesy of the Society for the Promotion and Advancement of Romany Culture



About "No Space for Hate"

Policy Officer Report

cooperation with the European Anti-Racism Network (ENAR) and Central European University (CEU), with the advice of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC).

The cross-country comparative study was based on five national country case-studies: Germany, Sweden, the UK, Spain, and Romania - selected as potentially having the most promising policies and practices in Europe.

The overall objective of the study is to produce new knowledge and to gather interesting/promising examples in the area of combating anti-Gypsyism and other group-focused enmity at national and EU level. The research focused on the policies, practices, institutional settings and funding schemes of EU institutions and national governments that aim to address anti-Gypsyism proactively (i.e. to promote diversity mainstreaming) and also reactively (i.e. prosecution of hate crimes against the GRT community).

#Respect4Roma: Brussels Conference on anti-Gypsyism- The Open Society Foundation, the German Foreign Office and the European Commission organized a conference on the responsibility of national governments and the European Union in tackling anti-Gypsyism on 15 November 2016 in Brussels. Siobhan Spencer MBE (representing Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group), Helen Jones (Leeds GATE) and Adrian Jones



Pictured: Josie O' Driscoll, Sherrie Smith (Herts. Gate), Leigh- Marie Smith and Michael Hargreaves (Hargreaves planning). Taken at the up date on Gypsy and Traveller Planning Law Event.

(NFGLG's Policy Officer) were among those attending.

NFGLG are now members of the ERGO (European Roma Grassroots Organisations) network and we are looking forward to working closely with them in the future.

Local Work

Adrian has continued to work closely with Birmingham City Council (Europe's largest local authority) and their partners in the health service in the Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller Task Group, to implement the "Experts by Experience" recommendations and better address the needs of the City's GRT communities. Adrian represents NFGLG at the Council's GRT Task Group, which meets quarterly but has also advised the Council outside of these scheduled meetings e.g. with regard to approaches to Unauthorised Encampments.

We were successful in applying for "Awards for All" funding for a project ("No Space for Hate") which aims to address hate crime in the Birmingham area. This project will bring together ethnic and faith communities, culminating in an event focusing on race hate crime and what we as citizens and community members can do to combat it in order to produce communities that are safer, more integrated and better for all those living in them.

Also in the West Midlands we are working with the Worcestershire GRT Partnership (bringing together a range of agencies including local authorities, NHS, the Police and housing providers) on a range of themes including accommodation/planning, policing, education, employment and health.

Adrian continues to work with the Society for the Promotion and Advancement of Romany Culture (SPARC) in Cleveland who have (in the past year) been successful in obtaining funding for them from Heritage Lottery Fund (a heritage project in schools), Awards for All (a health project) and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland (a continuation of their work focussing on improving relationships between the Police and the traveling communities)

Presentations

Adrian spoke on "Improving health outcomes for GRT communities" at the "Health and Diversity in Birmingham" event on 6th May 2016 and (following that) was invited to be Keynote Speaker at the MERIT Equality Analysis Workshop in Birmingham on 20th May 2016.



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