Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison group was the first group in the country to obtain funding to allow the Gypsy voice to be heard in local district and borough plans. It banged a drum that one time many did not take seriously enough. We are now in position in the country where the bulk of consultations on Local Plans will be undertaken with no Gypsy voice being heard; consultation will be piecemeal across the country. We are pleased to report that although the DGLG Big Lottery planning project officially ended in July of 2012 we have been able to keep DGLG planner Roger Yarwood at the office with National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Group [NFGLG] funding so that we do not lose continuity to the planning work. Funded by the Tudor Trust, to cover the East and West Midlands.

We had a tottering time for three weeks, but Roger still undertook the enquiry for Blaby district where we have had casework and there is a high need. The hearing for Newark will be coming up shortly and is very important as it has one of the oldest settlements of Romany Gypsy people in the East Midlands. Michael Hargreave from ITMB is able to cover South East plans and LGTU London City plans. This is quite important as 25% of all need is within that area.

DGLG are recognised as a national phone line service and have received calls from every region in the UK, including Scotland and Wales. Calls have recently increased from local authorities in relation to their G&T Accommodation Needs Assessment as required under s225 of the Housing Act.

We are now 5 years on from the first assessments and we need to undertake them again.

Phone line costs had risen in the last three years and Bridie has worked hard and looking for an alternative provider. We will evaluate this next year. It certainly saves costs if we have a worker or volunteer on the phone line, rather than ringing back, but at busy times we have no option.

Logged calls into the office and mobiles totalled 2,580. Wednesday drop in also brought in substantial casework over the year. 60% of casework is around accommodation issues, we cover planning applications, planning conditions, eviction liaison, other land issues, legal advice, and mediation on rent reviews. There was a substantial amount of health assistance within this figure. Health issues are material considerations on planning cases and also a reason not to evict. Two of our families are subject for judicial reviews; we have undertaken a land report for one district to help them identify land. Approximately a third of our calls cover NFGLG and we continue to host the work here at the office.

We are grateful to Tracy Critchlow for her admin and accountancy work on Fridays to keep us in check.
Development from the Health for Life Events means that Wednesdays are now a ‘drop-in day’ for any Gypsy Traveller to come in and discuss difficulties. It also enables us, to liaise with the relevant agencies. We have provided assistance on a number of issues. We try and encourage appointments if possible, it can get manic but we get through it!!!!!!!!!!

It can sometimes be fraught with difficulties and very often older members don’t remember a significant date or when they were born. However we have found some of the services very helpful, others not so much as they expect everyone to fit nicely into a pigeonhole.

We have found that there is still a huge lack of knowledge about the Gypsy community and so we put on events to raise awareness of the Gypsy/Traveller way of life.

Apart from that, these drop in days are very useful and give everyone an opportunity to chat, relax a little and, slowly but surely get things done!

Bridie phone line worker and health and social event organiser.
Health for Life Event January 2012

Tai Chi practice, with thanks to Emmanuel Williams.

Talking workshops with Johanna Price

Geraldine “Please can I have some more?”
Derbyshire BME Forum

We had the launch of the Health for Life event in January and followed this up by a weekly drop-in at the office on a Wednesday for elder members in particular or those needing help with social care needs.

We have a good working relationship with other small BME groups in Derbyshire. We meet up monthly and get involved in joint events and training. The forums act as a consultative body for Derbyshire County Council and we consider them invaluable.

We have undertaken a review on health related benefits. Individuals who have fallen off the system due to letters not getting to their care/of addresses have had their benefits stopped. These people need specialist help, so we signposted them to the relevant services. For others, we have had to undertake the cases ourselves.

We have assisted two of our elderly members with literacy issues, it is very important that they retain their driving licenses, even if they no longer drive. They need to feel they can become mobile if ever the occasion arises. The paperwork to renew a license for 70 + drivers is a bit confusing to say the least.

One lady did not understand a letter about Personalisation, she needed to know if she was eligible for extra support. There needs to be further work around universal benefits, in light of the proposed changes next year. We understand a letter will be sent out to individuals that needs to be answered immediately so that their benefits will not be stopped. This is very problematic for road side families in particular.

At a more strategic level we have been able to send volunteers to Derbyshire Health Watch meetings. There is proposed change with regard to the GP clusters. Work in other areas, such as the BME Pilot carers project, targets carers to register with their Dr and also with Derbyshire County for a carers card and carers support. Volunteers or workers can assist clients to apply for a carers fund for respite in the future.

We have a Christmas event planned in conjunction with NFGLG and West Midland volunteers where we will have a qualified practitioner undertaking 20-minute massage sessions with a particular emphasis on diabetes and foot care. We look forward to the event but we also know that it will bring individual casework more busy days, manic weeks but good outcomes within the year -------- we hope!!

Tom McCready was approached by Derbyshire Fire Service with regard to producing a safety video. We felt that the very excellent video undertaken by Kent Fire Service in conjunction with Joe Jones of the Canterbury Support Group could not be beaten and so, copyright permission was sought to reproduce it. With a team of volunteers, the Gypsies and Travellers fire leaflet was also updated.

Tom also attends the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Working Group, this Countywide group meets as a forum 4 times a year. There is a set plan and achievable targets. It is highly likely that the next Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment [a requirement under s225 of the Housing Act 2004] will be organised through this group.

We are pleased to welcome Nigel Groom [Traveller Education Service] as chair for this next year.

DGLG looks forward to a productive year in 2013.
On the 11th Hour of the 11th month we will remember them

The 11th of November 2011 a Historic Moment

Members of the Romany & Traveller Family History Society, Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group and the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups assembled in London on Remembrance Sunday to lay a wreath in honour of Romany and Traveller people who have laid down their lives, alongside their compatriots, in armed conflicts, from the First World War to the present day.

The presence of Romany Gypsy people on the Cenotaph march was reported on in the national press. The Times newspaper noted that “Marching for the first time was a group from the Romany & Traveller Family History Society”.

The daughter of Tom and Muzelley McCready, also called Muzelley, attended the march. “It makes me feel extremely proud”, she said, adding that she felt it was an important event to attend, and hopes to become part of it in the future.
Heritage is a powerful tool. Heritage is something that gives a sense of place and identity, and helps to inform us about who we are and how a region has developed over time. One writer described the process as ‘place making in a placeless time’. (Robbins 1991) it is a process which has historically been difficult because the nomadic life combined with official discrimination has meant accurate government historical archives have not been wholly reliable, the communities themselves often placed less attachment to objects and historically the oral tradition has been meant little written work exists.

Collaboration by; The Monitoring Group, Lincolnshire Gypsy Liaison Group, and Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group

To be finalised for 2013
All Our Stories Project
Telling the Story of DGLG

The DGLG office was first based in Pam’s spare room. Boxes and files piled up and when Bob Dawson retired we moved and found an office in Matlock.

STOP PRESS
The “All Our Stories” application to the Heritage Lottery is successful and over the next 12 months DGLG volunteers will be very busy scanning in the DGLG photograph collection.

After a flood in the office last year, where we almost lost some photos we decided that it is very important to record these digitally, once photos are lost, they are gone forever.

Anyone can get involved in the project. We have many photographs that need identifying and we will have a series of events where we will try and identify who is on the photographs.

We will arrange workshops on a variety of subjects, e.g. preservation of photographs. The recorded picture story will tell the 25 years + history of DGLG.

DGLG photographs record the changes that have taken place, especially over the last 30 years. It is important to record recent history as well as wagon time.

Check out the story of the “Grinding Bike”. ©Tom McCready

www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAG9dn5IFtC

Pamela Fletcher at Appleby.
National Issues

- The government consulted on a new draft Planning Policy Statement called Planning for Traveller Sites. Our response was sent in by 6th July. The consultation included the consideration of the definition of ‘Gypsies and Travellers’, which would affect who is covered by the policy. Changes to planning policy are also proposed. The government intends that this new Planning Policy Statement will eventually replace the existing Circulars, which it announced were to be withdrawn some time ago.

- The ‘Localism Bill’ is progressing through parliament. This Bill will potentially introduce changes to the planning system which will affect our work. More emphasis is set to be placed on ‘neighbourhood plans’ and allowing local people to have more say in decision making. It may also introduce some worrying changes to enforcement powers and may even remove the right to apply for planning permission retrospectively.

- DGLG made a submission to the Panel Review of Government Policy on Gypsies and Travellers in February, highlighting the problems with the changes to planning set out in the Localism Bill.

- Other national consultations that we have been involved in are the New Homes Bonus (which proposes payment to councils for building new homes, including Gypsy and Traveller sites) and the National Planning Framework, where we were able to highlight what our priorities should be for a new planning system. We also commented on proposals on changes to planning applications fees, where we expressed our fears that if councils can set their own charges, they may charge a disproportionate amount for considering applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Regional Issues

- The Government has still not been able to formally revoke Regional Spatial Strategies, as this will happen through the Localism Bill. However the intention is still there.

- However, whilst the RSS’s are likely to be withdrawn at some point, evidence still shows that there are not enough pitches and this evidence still has to be considered by local authorities. So if local authorities are trying to reduce their pitch figures, we must show the evidence and present the reasons the accommodation need must be met. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are important in this because they estimate the number of pitches needed in each area.

- Unfortunately, the current consultation on the draft Planning for Traveller Sites is considering whether to refer to GTAAs, which would instead be replaced by ‘a robust evidence base’ with no formal guidance for undertaking the assessment.

Local Issues

- Local planning authorities are still preparing plans and policies and a lot of consultations are coming in, though these slowed in the run up to the elections in May. Many authorities are re-consulting on plans and policies which they believe have been, or will be, affected by changes in the Localism Bill and to the planning system through the National Planning Framework.

- We have recently taken part in two more Examinations in Public into Core Strategy planning documents, in Rutland (March 2011) and in the Peak Park (April 2011). The Inspector’s reports have yet to be published but in the hearing sessions it seemed likely that there would be positive changes to policy as a result of our input.

Roger Yarwood
In casework, we have had a successful outcomes.

Thanks to Roger we were successful in obtaining a permanent Showman’s site in Hemington for the Jones brothers.

Three temporary permissions for the Hollands’ and Gaskins’ at Greenfields, Braybrooke Northamptonshire.

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**Casework**

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Information about the
GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDER GROUP

In setting up this group, The Department of Education anticipate two key outcomes by establishing this group. The first is to create an opportunity for this Department to consult with and brief the communities on the range, reason, character, progress and problems of future DCSF policies in relation to the education of the communities concerned.

The second, and as a result of the first, will be to explore and exercise - with a significant cross section of the communities - their willingness and capacity to contribute to giving advice, to sharing ideas and observations and to actively engage with the process of raising community awareness, helping to change attitudes and behaviours and participation in the educational processes at all levels. In relation to the latter, it is hoped that members of the Group would be willing and able to offer advice on a range of realistic strategies for:

• effective communication with ‘grassroots’ members of the communities to aid in the dissemination of DCSF policies and their objectives;
• community articulation of advice on policy implementation and the eliciting of perceived educational needs and channels for their communication;
• enlisting the support and help of parents/carers for their children’s education;
• strengthening confidence in ethnic self-ascription;
• encouraging participation in decision making processes/structures including school Governing Bodies;
• understanding the requirements for secondary and higher education and the skills that will be demanded of their children in the modern globalised world;
• promoting participation in adult educational opportunities.

This process of consultation will allow the Department to engage the communities in policy decision making, whilst at the same time making sure that all policies are compatible with the Governments’ overall objectives (linked to Parliamentary legislation), sound educational practice and compliance with race and equality legislation. This approach provides opportunities for communication on policy developments and a sounding board to gauge views, feelings, fears and ambitions.

Proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Group

The Groups’ primary purpose is to work in partnership with the Department and individual members to bring about improved levels of access to education, accurate ascription, attendance and attainment of those attending or having access to educational settings. The Group will:

• foster effective communication channels with ‘grassroots’ members of the communities to bring about greater awareness of DCSF policies and their objectives;
• encourage the support and help of parents/carers for their children’s education;
• work to strengthen confidence and promote the benefits of accurate ethnic self-ascription;
• encourage participation in decision making processes and structures, e.g. joining school governing bodies;
• encourage greater levels of transition from primary to secondary, and participation in higher education;
• promote participation in adult education opportunities.
Information about the GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Working Together

As a consequence of being a member of the Group, individuals will agree:

• to treat one another with respect, and accept that everybody has a point of view which they have a right to express;
• to develop personal relationships to foster trust and open communication, remembering that the work of the Group is for the benefit of the wider GRT community and not individual members;
• to value constructive feedback and avoid being defensive; and
• to attend meetings on a twice yearly basis

Individuals and representatives of organisations must bear in mind that as a result of becoming a member of this Group, it does not suggest inclusion on any definitive list, or that the list is inclusive, or that it in any way legitimises an individual or an organisation above any other. The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Education Stakeholder Group (GRTESG) will normally meet twice every academic year.

On 4 April 2012, the Department of Communities and Local Government published a progress report by the cross departmental ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. One of the six commitments made by this Department is to look at the impact of section 444(6), Education Act 1996 and to consult on whether it should be repealed.

The Minister of State for Schools, David Laws and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for education and childcare, Elizabeth Truss, has launched a consultation on Improving educational outcomes for children of travelling families. The Government is proposing to repeal the current legislation that protects Travelling parents from being found guilty of school attendance offence if their child is absent from school, in certain circumstances.

We recognise the importance of consulting widely on these proposals and that is why we have launched a 12 week consultation seeking views on whether to repeal the section 444(6) Education Act 1996 and invite you to tell us whether you agree with our view.

Tom McCready and Siobhan Spencer attend the Education Stakeholder meetings, It has been apparent that the s444 Education Act is not liked and seen as a hindrance, but we would argue it is the only piece of legislation that recognises the Gypsy way of life in England and Wales and we will be undertaking a consultation response.
In 2013 DGLG as a Derbyshire wide organisation celebrates its 25th anniversary. [DGLG actually started in Derby City some 7 years before].

Due to our national work we amended our constitution accordingly to reflect all the work that we undertake and continue to be host office to the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups.

We have also produced a calendar since 1999, which has proved popular with the community itself and has been used as a successful P.R. tool with agencies with whom we have worked.

DGLG
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Phone line open
Monday 10 – 3pm
Wednesday 10 – 3pm
Friday 10 – 3pm

Please visit by appointment
we aim to make a reply back
to queries within 48Hrs.
There is an answer machine.

service available out of these
hours

Many thanks to Wish Computers for support in the office, Wish computers have also taken over the website domain and updates www.dglg.org