

ANNUAL REPORT

20 24



**FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS**

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A BRIEF MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS, DARREN DIGHTON AND JUDY POINTING:

In 2023, Friends Families and Travellers celebrated Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories through educational, visual, and celebratory storytelling under the theme of “Weaving Journeys”.

This fantastic and knowledgeable project was launched during the 15th year of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and brought to life the patterns and stories that connect us to our rich heritage, cherished cultures, and histories recorded over hundreds of years and across many parts of the world. A true celebration reflecting the histories, cultures and contributions our collective nomadic communities have brought to the world.

Sadly, as conflict and prejudices continue in parts of the world, the education, advocacy, campaigning, and celebration undertaken by FFT becomes ever more valuable and transformational for our communities and allies.

Our dedicated colleagues at FFT have shown their unwavering commitment to improve the lives of our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Throughout 2023 the team at FFT have challenged the notorious Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, delivered much needed educational resources, improved access to health resources, and provided much needed outreach to families and individuals in need.

Our fantastic FFT staff, volunteers and Trustees aim to ensure life opportunities and fairness is available to all members of our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, whether that be the participation in sports or arts, access to advice and guidance, or preserving and celebrating the stories, tales, art and music.

Whilst threats to our ways of life and living our lives are still present, our communities and allies continue to weave a journey rooted in the right to live nomadically, free from discrimination with access to justice, health, education, inclusion, and celebration!

On behalf of the Board of Trustees Judy & I would like to take a moment to put a spotlight on our entire team of staff and volunteers at FFT for their dedication and impact. Thank you all for always treating our community members with dignity, respect, and inclusion.

DARREN DIGHTON
CHAIR

JUDY POINTING
VICE CHAIR



OUR TEAM

TRUSTEES DURING 2023/24

Neil Ansell
Chair

Dominique Corbett
Treasurer

Marc Willers
Vice Chair

Judy Pointing
(Vice Chair)

Marc Willers

Ben Stroud

Marius Taba

Tony Thomson
(Until October 2023)

Rob Torkington

Heidi-Victoria Ireland

Alison Smith

Sarah Mann
Company Secretary

HONORARY PRESIDENT

Baroness Janet Whitaker

STAFF

Abbie Kirkby

Anna Young

Angela Barnett

Barry Winchester

Chelsie Dolling

Chris McDonagh

Doug Devaney

Elijah Vardo

Elvira Popenko
(Until July 2023)

Emma Bray

Emma Nuttall

Emma Whitcombe
(Until May 2023)

Georgina Allen

Hal King

Ivy Manning

Jessi Bruce

Jonathan Jones

Kara Hewitson

Lena Stokes

Lulu Jones

Maisie Lumsden

Martha Ostick

Maxine Lambert

Michelle Gavin

Millie Cooper

Ngawang Dhargyal

Rosie Fox

Rosie Hollinshead

Ruby Conlon

Sami McLaren

Samson Rattigan BEM

Sarah Mann

Scarlet Hannington

Suzanna King

Tarana Inam-McDermott
(Until April 2023)

Tommy Buck

Victoria Gilmore

Zillah Holford

VOLUNTEERS

Amelia Jepson

Kathy Smith

Michael Manning

Patience Manning

Terry Green

Mary Glasheen

Amy McGourty

Daniel Partt

Zihannah Da Trindade

Lara Danti

CRYSTAL'S VARDO CAST AND CREW

Francesca Hennebury

Richard Cook

Jasmine Atkins-Smart

Lucy Mepsted

Maisie Lumsden

Sarah-Jane Miller

Stewart James Barham

Suzanna King

TRAVELLING TALES GUEST ARTISTS

Chris Penfold-Brown

Elijah Vardo

Francesca Hennebury

Gemma Challenger

Imogen Bright Moon

Janna Eliot

Johnny Doherty

Kay Andrews

Leon Rawlinson

Lubi Pyrah

Martha Ostick

Ollie Mallik

Rachel Keet

Raine Geoghegan

Sarah-Jane Miller

Thomas McCarthy

Tilly Miller

*A special thanks to the
Crown Derby Museum*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the Chief Executive's report as part of the Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) Annual Report 2024.

This year has seen significant milestones in our mission to promote the rights and improve the lives of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities across the UK.

Continuing to provide advocacy and casework support at a local and national level, this year, our incredible Service Delivery team helped Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people with over 4300 issues ranging from access to justice, to accommodation resolution, to tackling digital exclusion.

In fact, we helped distribute over 90,000GB worth of data, and supporting more people to access online services.

At a national level, we are aggrieved that people living on roadside camps and itinerant Boaters were excluded from energy support grants, but we're also extremely heartened to know that our political campaigning led to over 10,000 Gypsy and Traveller households accessing more than £3.5 million in support.

Over the past few years, we've been battling anti-Traveller legislation in the courts, and I'm extremely proud to lead a team that persuaded the Supreme Court to declare anti-Traveller wide injunctions as having a "negative impact on the ability to pursue a nomadic way of life".

Not only that, but the notorious Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 was dealt a devastating blow by Wendy Smith, a Romany Gypsy, as well as FFT and our legal team, in partnership with human rights giants Liberty, when a High Court judge ruled that the Act's

extension of the power to ban Gypsies and Travellers from an area from 3 to 12 months was in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Our amazing youth work continues to go from strength to strength, breaking down barriers and inspiring the next generation of Gypsy and Traveller activists, with away days to the Houses of Parliament to see how laws are created, as well as mock trials where the young people acted out all the different roles in a court!

I have been deeply moved by the openness and generosity shown by Gypsy and Traveller families up and down the country, with donations pouring in as part of our Season's Giftings campaign. Through your support, we're extremely proud to have been able to provide over 50 families across Sussex food, toys and gas bottles to spread a little bit of Christmas cheer— our Favourite Moment of the year!

I'd like to extend a huge thanks to our wonderful staff team, Trustees, and volunteers for their hard work and unparalleled passion and commitment, day in day out.

Together with you, our supporters, we hope to continue our positive impact on the lives of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people, families and communities. In fact, I hope that one day our services will not be needed at all.

Happy reading!

SARAH MANN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



THIS YEAR

Our Service Delivery team helped people with over **4300** issues, while our various online, helpline and one-to-one advice sessions engaged with more than **1300** people.



As part of our ongoing Digital Inclusion drive, we distributed **750 SIM cards**, each with **6 months'** worth of free calls, texts and data. That equals **90,000GB** of data given out.



We trained over **1900 people** on providing inclusive services to Romany, Irish Traveller, Roma and nomadic communities.

OUR IMPACT

SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

“

A huge thank you for the support you all provide to us and the Travelling community in Manchester - as always your support has been fantastic and we appreciate you all.”

“I would give 10 out of 10 for this group and I would give Jessi 10 out of 10 for her support, her listening, sometimes very difficult situations I was in and she got me through it.”

“

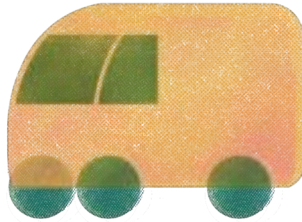
“FFT have been invaluable in helping me put my life back together again, after an acrimonious split that saw me lose everything... I really couldn't have done it without the help I received, and will remain eternally grateful towards Jonathan for being there for me.”

”



OUR IMPACT

Financial Impact



Through FFT, we helped give out more than **£109,000** in grants to our beneficiaries, to help make daily life a little easier

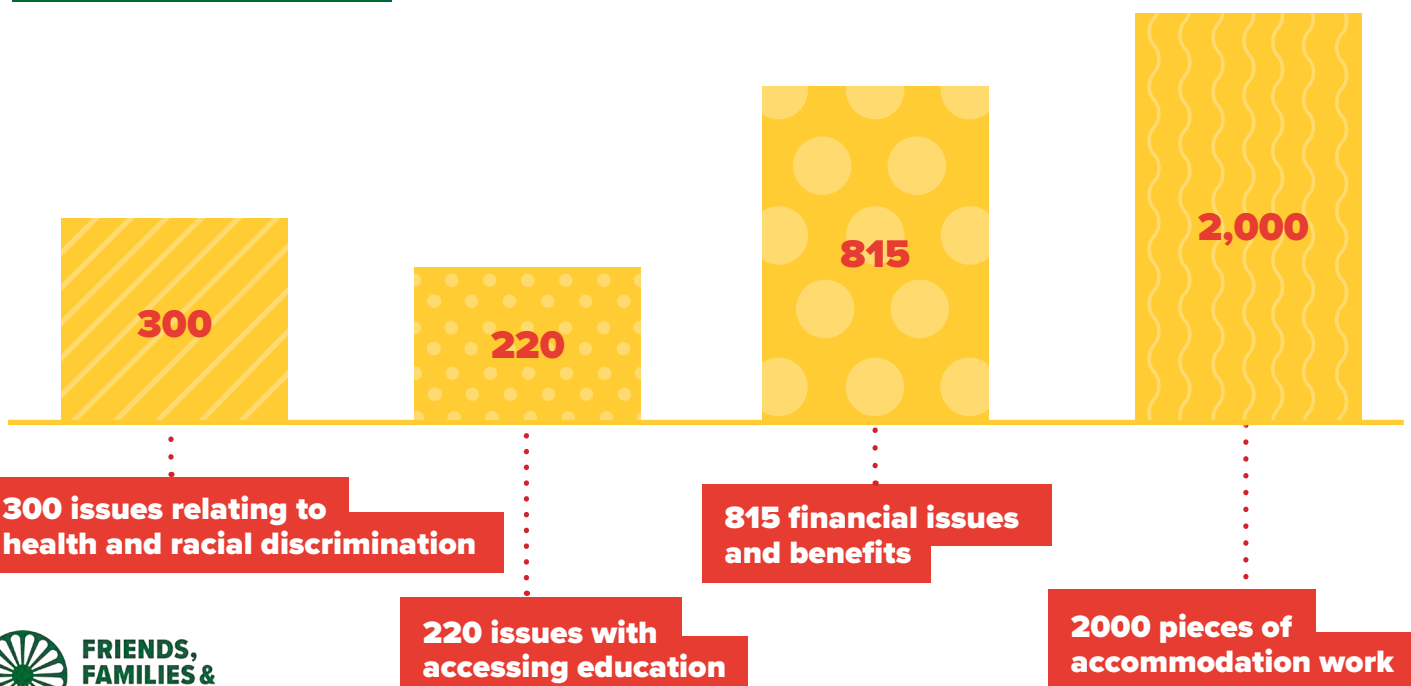
We helped Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations access more than **£250,000** in essential funding, to better support their clients

480 grants

FFT clients accessed more than **480** grants for essential items, advocacy and support

Community Support

WE DEALT WITH OVER:



We held over
4,320 advice
sessions



We helped over **1,300** people with the issues that mattered most to them



WE HELPED
DELAY MORE THAN
40 EVICTIONS

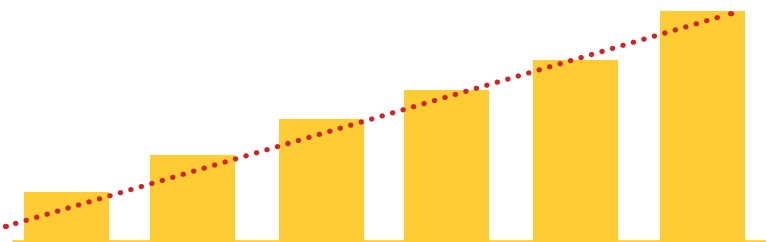
160+ FAMILIES ACCESSED
BENEFITS, WITH OUR
SUPPORT, HELPING
GUARANTEE FINANCIAL
STABILITY



WE SUPPORTED OVER **50 PEOPLE** ON THEIR PATH TO EMPLOYMENT, STRENGTHENING THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Training & Workshops

Over **130** people took part in our **Kushti Collaborative** project, bringing communities together to share skills



We helped **30** young people gain accreditation or a qualification, encouraging a brighter future

Our website was accessed over **200,000** times 



higher confidence

More than **105** people reported higher confidence after attending our workshops



100%

of people who took our inclusive services training rated it *Good or Very Good*

SUPPORTING NEEDS

Romany Gypsies, Roma and Irish Travellers face some of the poorest health and education outcomes of any minority ethnic groups in the UK, contributing to a cycle of inequality made up of barriers embedded in daily life.

These same barriers can also affect nomadic groups, such as New Traveller, Showmen and Boater communities.

To tackle the root causes on the frontline, our Service Delivery Team delivered workshops, increased training and employability opportunities for young people, and provided free healthcare information and advice to families.

IMPROVING FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Improving access to opportunities and reducing the risk of economic and financial exclusion, our Service Delivery Team launched a Young People Employment programme, to support FFT's work towards helping young people's transition into education, training or employment.

RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH RESEARCH

We released a series of briefings outlining the barriers Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people face across education, maternal health, race hate and prejudice, and economic exclusion, to widen understanding of the issues faced and to help improve people's life chances.

WORKING WITH OTHERS TO HIGHLIGHT DISCRIMINATION

Supported by FFT, a national survey led by the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity, with the largest number of Gypsy and Traveller respondents to date, exposed the racism and discrimination Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people face.

MAKING SPACE FOR YOUNG GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Facilitated by our Service Delivery Team, the UK Parliament Education Centre took young Gypsies and Travellers on a tour of Parliament, giving young people an opportunity to see how politics impacts day-to-day life, how laws are created, and to experience an environment that is often considered out of reach.

GIVING SEASON

Our [Season's Giftings campaign](#) was launched for the second year running! Thanks to everyone's support, 50 Gypsy and Traveller families across Sussex received toys, food, or a gas bottle, ending the year on a high and helping us spread festive cheer.

HEALTH EQUALITY

To tackle health inequalities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, our Service Delivery Team facilitated a range of workshops on the importance of healthy eating, and enrolled more young Gypsies and Travellers onto our award-winning [Young Health Champions Programme](#), to support them in cascading health messages to peers and family.



CHALLENGING LAWS AND POLICIES

FIGHTING INJUSTICE IN THE COURTS

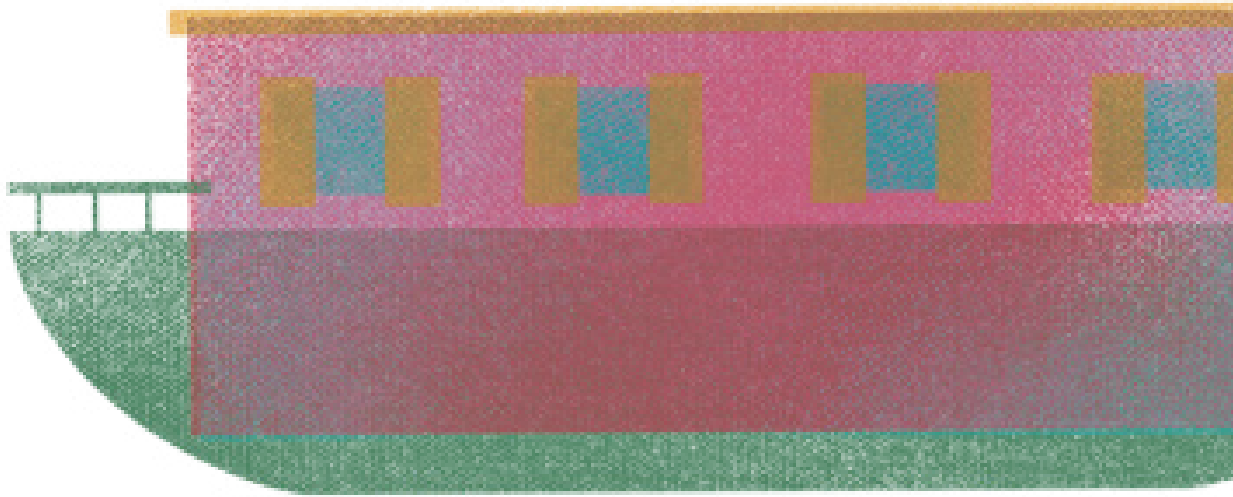
We fought the use of anti-Traveller wide injunctions in the Supreme Court, where a judge recognised that wide injunctions have a “*negative impact on the ability to pursue a nomadic way of life*”, severely restricting the use of the injunctions.

We’re grateful for the incredible work of Chris Johnson of Community Law Partnership (CLP), Marc Willers KC, Tessa Buchanan and Owen Greenhall of Garden Court Chambers, and Richard Drabble KC of Landmark Chambers.



CALLING TIME ON THE POLICE ACT 2022

With FFT and Liberty as Interveners, Wendy Smith, a Romany Gypsy, challenged the new police powers under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 in the High Court. In a landmark decision, the judge ruled that the extension of the power to ban Gypsies and Travellers from an area from 3 to 12 months under the Act was in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights, limiting its impact on the nomadic way of life.



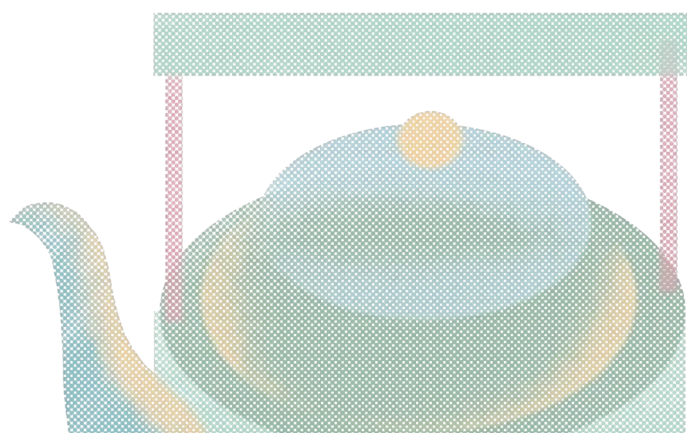
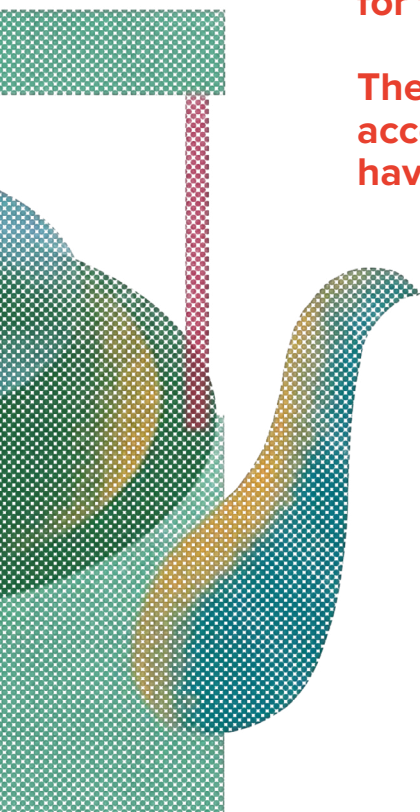
PONTINS BLACKLISTED

We gave evidence to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) investigation into Pontins Holiday Parks, which was found to have acted unlawfully against Irish Travellers for operating a 'blacklist' of common Irish names. If Pontins fail to adhere to the recommendations set out by the EHRC, the operator could face criminal sanctions, acting as a warning to others who choose to hold hostile policies against Gypsy and Traveller people.

ADDRESSING SITE PROVISION

As part of the Oak Project, we released a new report looking at the planning system's approach to Gypsy and Traveller sites from 1960 to 2023, using the past to create a blueprint for the future.

The report explores how we can dismantle barriers across accommodation provision so Gypsy and Traveller families have somewhere to call home.



CULTURES & HISTORIES

WEAVING JOURNEYS: A CELEBRATION OF GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER LIVES, HISTORIES AND CULTURES

Our theme for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (GRTHM) 2023 was '*Weaving Journeys: A celebration of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller lives, histories and cultures*'.

We featured stories of cherished stopping places, beloved textile patterns, and a family pack of beautiful A3 posters and sticker packs!

The theme encouraged people and families to share stories and discuss histories, and many even passed along the maps they created!

TRAVELLING TALES

This year, we launched a new project *Travelling Tales*, which saw our Vardo converted into a micro museum and storytelling space, filled with beautiful artefacts created, donated, and procured by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people from across the country.

The Vardo had residencies at seven libraries, where we also ran a series of craft workshops and held evening events.

In total, more than 10,000 people saw our Vardo, with many experiencing aspects of Romany, Roma and Traveller cultures for the first time!

PROJECTS

We continue to deliver meaningful projects for long-term change

KUSHTI COLLABORATIVE

This project brought Gypsies and Travellers together for a variety of community-led workshops, ranging from rose painting to silver smithing to health engagements, and empowered over 130 community members to have positive experiences through wider participation, boosting wellbeing, increasing confidence and self-esteem.

INFANT FEEDING

Our [Health and Wellbeing Alliance](#) project on infant feeding focused on issues experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. We produced a report of the results and recruited a Healthcare Professional Steering Group and a Community Steering Group, as another lever towards reducing health inequalities and ultimately bettering the life chances of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

ENERGY GRANTS

At the start of the [energy crisis](#), FFT and our supporters fought hard to ensure Gypsies and Travellers were able to access the same financial support as other households in the UK. Official figures confirmed that over 10,000 Gypsy and Traveller households had then been able to access government energy grants, totalling a sum of over £3.5 million.

GYPSY ROMA TRAVELLER FRIENDLY CHURCHES

Launched by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the [Gypsy Roma Traveller Friendly Churches](#) project is a non-denominational scheme across the country to foster greater involvement by Christian churches and their congregations in providing support, shelter and stopping places. Chaplains have been appointed for the communities and the Archbishop of York has become the scheme's patron.

BARROW CADBURY CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PROJECT

This project explores the impact of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young adults and their families. The project started with the establishment of a steering group made up of community members and a series of prison visits, creating a pathway between people's experiences and national conversations. With the project due to end in 2025, we seek to disrupt the 'cradle-to-grave' CJS pipeline that many community members are disproportionately thrown into.

REPORTS

To continue targeting injustice at all levels, we carry out evidence-based policy research. Find some of our key research and reports from the past year below:

[CLICK TO VIEW ONLINE:](#)

Briefing on Education Inequalities facing Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in England

Friends, Families and Travellers, November 2023

Kicking the can down the road: The planning and provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in England 1960-2023

Friends, Families and Travellers, November 2023

Research Summary: Experiences of Suicide in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Friends, Families and Travellers, September 2023

Guidance: Tackling Maternal Health Inequalities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

Friends, Families and Travellers, May 2023



FINANCE

Statement of financial activities (Incorporating an income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31st March 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM				
Donations and legacies	1,162,928	151,588	1,314,516	1,063,184
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Fees, subscriptions and publication sales	224,375	-	224,375	201,115
Investment income	1,393,461	151,588	1,545,049	1,268,978
Other income				
TOTAL	1,067,962	201,015	1,268,977	1,302,047
EXPENDITURE ON				
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Office Costs	112,897	2,920	115,817	97,874
Project Costs	91,491	23,440	114,931	80,690
Staff Costs	1,038,755	96,795	1,135,550	969,156
Professional fees	102,562	1,633	104,195	106,723
Property Costs	35,495	1,161	36,656	34,043
Manangement charges	(23,069)	23,069	-	-
TOTAL	1,358,131	149,018	1,507,149	1,288,486
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	35,330	2,570	37,900	(19,508)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total funds brought forward	360,328	2,032	362,360	381,868
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	395,658	4,602	400,260	362,360

We raise awareness of the inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities so that the public are equipped with information that enables them to hold the government to account.

CLICK ARTICLES TO READ ONLINE

Refused a drink, scapegoated by MPs: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller life in Britain is only getting harder

The Guardian

'A relentless chipping away': Nomadic life and fuel poverty

Runnymede Trust

Ilkley Lido: MP in bid to stop Travellers camping next to pool

BBC News

Police investigate Traveller sites leaflet distributed by Welsh secretary

The Guardian

Jewish and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups horrified by Diane Abbott's racism comments

The i

Travellers in Woodley: no place to stop, Wokingham council says

Reading Chronicle

Gypsy and Irish Travellers in Wigan more than twice as likely to have poor health

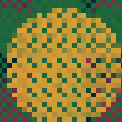
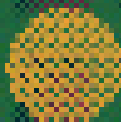
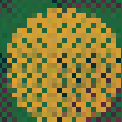
Wigan Today

Romany Gypsy woman takes government to court over 'discriminatory' policing

Open Democracy

Pontins senior managers instigated 'overt' race discrimination against 'undesirable' Irish Travellers, report says

People Management



WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

[AB Charitable Trust](#)

[Arts Council England](#)

[Barrow Cadbury](#)

[Blagrove Trust](#)

[Blue Moon Trust](#)

[Brighton and Hove City Council](#)

[Chalk Cliff Trust](#)

[Children in Need](#)

[Choice Support](#)

[Community Justice Foundation](#)

[Department of Health, Public Health England and NHS England](#)

[East Sussex County Council](#)

[Esmee Fairbairn Foundation](#)

[Garden Court Chambers](#)

[Gilead Sciences](#)

[Indigo Trust](#)

[Irish Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Emigrant Support Programme](#)

[Irish Youth Foundation](#)

[John Ellerman Foundation](#)

[Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust](#)

[Lewes District Council](#)

[Lewes Town Council](#)

[Lloyds Bank Foundation](#)

[Gift from Lisbet and Peter Rausing](#)

[Matrix Causes Fund](#)

[Moving for Change](#)

[NHS England](#)

[NHS Sussex ICB](#)

[Oak Foundation](#)

[Paul Hamlyn Foundation](#)

[Roddick Foundation](#)

[South Downs Housing Association](#)

[Sussex Community Foundation](#)

[Sussex Partnership NHS Trust](#)

[Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner](#)

[The Access to Justice Foundation](#)

[The Henry Smith Charity](#)

[The National Lottery Community Fund](#)

[UKHSA](#)

[University of Brighton](#)

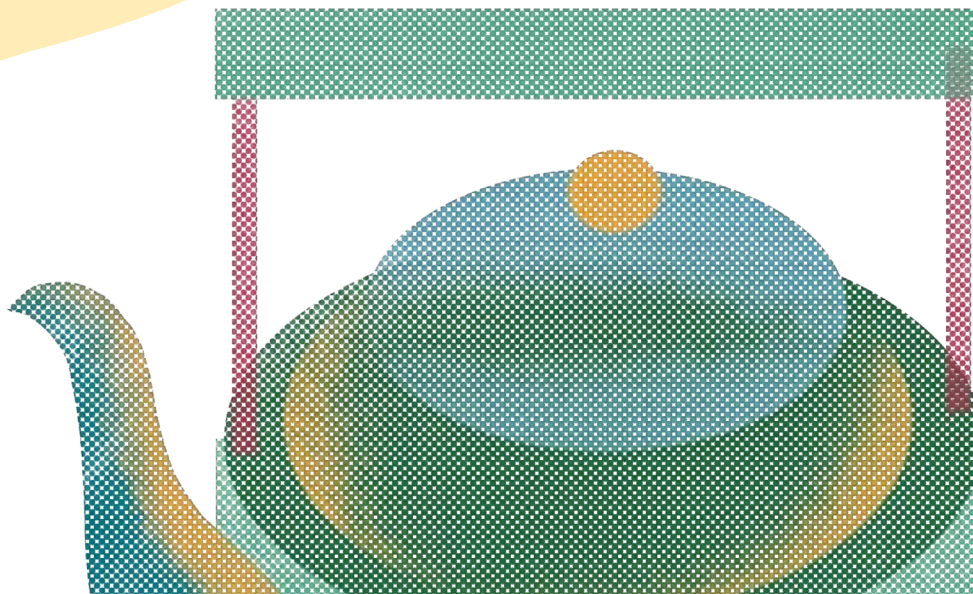


OUR FAVOURITE MOMENT

Our favourite moment this year was launching our **'Seasons Gifting' campaign** for the second year running.

With the help of our supporters, ***we provided food, toys and gas bottles to over 50 families across Sussex***, offering much needed respite during the Christmas period.

We look forward to spreading the same Christmas cheer next year.



FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS

Contact Details:

Address

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Community Base
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Brighton
BN1 3XG

Telephone 01273 234 777

Email fft@gypsy-traveller.org

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