

Inside this issue:

Westminster Launch 2

GRTPA Challenge to National Police Operation Documents 2

GRTPA discussed in the House of Lords 2

Funding 3

Polka 3

Liaising with other Support Associations 4

Press 4

Good Work Award 5

Contacts 5

# Breaking Down Barriers, Building Trust



Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter Date 14 July 2014

## About the Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association (GRTPA)

Welcome to the first issue of the GRTPA Newsletter. The Association is the first of its kind in the UK, launched in December 2013. It has received interest from both inside the Police and from the wider community and partner agencies.

There are many Gypsy Roma or Traveller Police Officers and Staff nationwide. However, throughout society, such is the level of prejudice towards these ethnic groups, not everyone is comfortable in disclosing their ethnicity.

Our main objective therefore is to provide a support network for GRT Officers and Police Staff. Through support we aim to in-

crease confidence, to be open about ethnicity and by being visible, aim to challenge the negative stereotypes which exist.

The GRTPA was initially launched in Kent with the help of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Anne Barnes. Letters have been sent to the UK Police Force's Chief Constables to ask for assistance in promoting the Association.

### **AGM**

We held our first AGM in March 2014 where the constitution was agreed. Copies of this and the minutes can be obtained by emailing

[management@grtpa.com](mailto:management@grtpa.com)

## Membership

There are currently 62 full members from the UK and 6 Slovak members. So far, 15 of the 43 UK Forces are represented. Membership is open to all serving officers regardless of their ethnicity. Honorary membership is available to retired officers and staff or members of external organisations who are suppor-

tive of our aims and objectives. The Association currently has six honorary members including Council Officials, Professionals and one Police and Crime Commissioner.

We are looking for suggestions on how to raise our profile and increase our membership.



**'a penchant  
for violence'**



## Westminster Launch

To celebrate the formation of the GRTPA, the Traveller Movement have organised a national launch in the Houses of Parliament. This important event taking place on 17th July, will be hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies Travellers and Roma and will be chaired by Andrew Slaughter MP, the Shadow Justice Minister.

Yvonne Macnamarra, CEO of the Traveller Movement said.

*"The Traveller Movement is proud to be supporting the launch of the Gypsy,*

*Roma, Traveller Police Association and we hope that it will mark the beginning of a more meaningful relationship between the police and the communities that will build trust on all sides."*

*"The formation of the GRTPA also sends out a clear message of hope for all young Gypsies and Travellers. The barriers are being broken down and it's good to see Gypsies, Roma and Travellers visibly engaging with civil society in positions of authority and responsibility"*

A full report will be available in our next issue.

## Apology for discriminatory document

Following a complaint by the GRTPA to Operation Liberal, the national police operation set up to tackle distraction burglary, a formal apology has been received from its Director of Operations DCC Peter Goodman.

The complaint came after the release of a document entitled "Travellers and Traveller events"

The GRTPA felt this document contained inaccurate information which reinforced the negative stereotype of all Travellers being criminal and violent.

Following the complaint, the document was immediately withdrawn by Operation Liberal and an apology issued. DCC Goodman said

*"My biggest disappointment is that we are dealing with organised criminality from within Traveller communities as well as other communities and we have a responsibility to be especially sensitive to the vast majority of law abiding members of all those communities rather than to reinforce stereotypes. This will be addressed."*

## GRTPA discussed in the House of Lords

In April the GRTPA was discussed in the House of Lords during a debate on Gypsy Roma Traveller issues. Attached is a link to a transcript of the debate for your information ( GRTPA are

discussed at 4:31 and again 4:56 )

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2014-04-02a.976.0&s=speaker%3A12957#g976.2>



## Funding

As a non-profit Association initial start up funding of £500 has been gratefully received from Cambridgeshire Constabulary. They have also given the Association a display board (valued at approximately £200) which again was very gratefully received. The EXEC committee is actively looking at other avenues of funding with several Police Forces and associated organisations approached.

ACPO have agreed to fund the cost of the initial launch in Westminster. Thames Valley Police have kindly agreed to fund an update of our website and running costs for two years

The EXEC are always on the lookout for any ideas, funding is so desperately needed to raise our profile so please get in touch with one of us if you have any suggestions.



## Polka (The Police On Line Knowledge Area) Community

The Police On Line Knowledge Area (POLKA) community, which we share with the ACPO GRT Working Group is now up and running. It is an open community that anyone can join. There are a variety of useful documents already posted as well as a couple of blogs. Jim Davies recently presented to the South East Trading Standards Institute. This makes for a very interesting read. There's also a link to a good practice guide on Gypsy and Traveller Prisoners published by the Irish Chaplaincy.

Discussions are starting to take place, the three threads running at the moment are GRTPA – What do you want to achieve?

Over and under policing of the GRT communities

Families of traveller prisoners

Please find some spare time to log in and contribute to the blogs and discussions. We would also value any informative leaflets or documents which we can added to the forum.

MPA  
GPA  
WN  
Traveller  
Movement  
CHURCHES  
NETWORK  
FOR GRT  
IRISH  
CHAPLAINCY

Roma  
woman's  
journey from  
selling The Big  
Issue to lunch  
with the Queen

## Liaising with other Support Associations

We are keen to make contact with other support associations and groups, both internal and external to the Police. It is hoped this will enable us to progress our objectives more efficiently. Work has already started in various forces to establish contacts and enter into dialogue.

The Churches Network for GRT distributed a press release in March welcoming our formation and offering assistance.

Professor Acton said, *"I was greatly moved to hear police officers and employees, both men and women, of varying seniority tell of their experiences, and reaffirm their commitment to both their own vocation as police officers and to supporting others who might face discrimination because of their ethnicity."*

The Irish Chaplaincy have been in touch to wish us well follow-

ing our link on POLKA to their published Practice Guide 'Gypsy and Traveller Prisoners' Further details of their Traveller Equality Project are available at [http://](http://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/Groups/160519/Irish_Chaplaincy_in/Our_Work/Traveller_Equality/Traveller_Equality.aspx)

[www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/Groups/160519/Irish\\_Chaplaincy\\_in/Our\\_Work/Traveller\\_Equality/Traveller\\_Equality.aspx](http://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/Groups/160519/Irish_Chaplaincy_in/Our_Work/Traveller_Equality/Traveller_Equality.aspx)

The guide is available at <http://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=130347>

The Traveller Movement have thanked us for our input in relation to their attempt to obtain Judicial Review of OFCOM's decision not to investigate "My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding". Our members provided them with details of bullying, harassment or racism witnessed as a result of the programme

## Press

Below is a link from the Guardian website which shows recent publications regarding GRT communities, it makes for some interesting and at times, inspirational reading (see article on Roma woman's journey from selling The Big Issue in the North to lunch with the Queen).

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/roma-gypsies-and-travellers>

The GRTPA was present at a recent protest against the use of racist language towards

Gypsies and Travellers by the Spectator Magazine. Please find below a link to an article on the protest published on the Institute of Race Relations Website and also link to a subsequent letter to the Spectator from the GRTPA

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/the-week/letters/9211691/spectator-letters-america-as-a-genetic-experiment-and-a-gypsy-reply-to-rod-liddle/>

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/no-formal-apology-from-liddle-or-the-spectator/>

## Good Work Award



Jim Davies recently attended the South East Trading Standards Institute, along with Frank Shepherd a member of his local Traveller community and Martin Woodley of Oxfordshire Trading Standards. Jim gave a presentation on the need to engage with the GRT Community and help educate as to what the law requires of them, rather than just enforce.

Jim tells us that this opportunity came about as a result of 18 months worth of work with Martin, Frank and the local community here in Oxfordshire, during which time engagement has increased and a considerable level of trust has been built between the groups involved. This has involved Martin and his team at Oxfordshire Trading Standards running workshops for members of local GRT commu-

nities.

Martin reports that incidents of doorstep crime involving Gypsies and Travellers have noticeably fallen and attributes this, in part to the work he and his team have been doing in improving engagement and providing education.

Considerable interest from further afield has already been shown in the work and other Trading Standards Departments are looking to develop something similar in their own areas.

If you would like to discuss this further then you can contact

Martin at [Martin.Woodley@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Martin.Woodley@Oxfordshire.gov.uk),  
Frank Shepherd at [beeches30@hotmail.com](mailto:beeches30@hotmail.com)  
Jim Davies via [Management@GRTPA.com](mailto:Management@GRTPA.com)

## Contacts

### **EXEC Committee**

Chair:	Jim Davies
Vice Chair:	Petr Torak
Treasurer:	David Matthews
Secretary:	Kate West
Media:	Kim White OBE
Admin:	Phillipa Prout

Our website is shortly to be spruced up with a complete overhaul. In the meantime if you have any questions, comments or suggestions please email the EXEC committee

I hope you have found something in this first newsletter of interest; we are hoping to produce one for members on a regular basis and would really appreciate your ideas, suggestions and contributions on the content.

Please contact

[management@grtpa.com](mailto:management@grtpa.com)

