

**Ali Martin, Support and Development worker, Mid and North Argyll**

**Gypsy Traveller Carers Project, MECOPP Carers Centre 13.04.22**

Since the last meeting lots of work has been going on.

working alongside members of the Census team to engage with The Gypsy / Traveller community living on our two Travelling sites in Argyll and Bute Council (Bayview in Benderloch and Duncholgan Lochgilphead) It was only in 2011 that a tick box was added for Gypsy/Irish Travellers (Not Roma) in the census. In the 2011 Census some Gypsy / Travellers did Identify and tick the box but many did not for lots of different reasons. Funding was made available for more work to be done with the community, to complete the Census form. This is a positive step forward but in Mid and North Argyll most of the Gypsy / Traveller community do not live on the sites as they are not in good repair. Most Travelers are living in the settled community, for some not through choice.

There has been a community meeting with Acha to look at the short term improvements to be done at Bayview as it is in a poor condition, the short term repairs have already started at Duncholgan, this is money that was allocated and shared between both sites 50,000 for each site.

In 2021 a site design plan was developed under the Gypsy/ Traveller action plan "Improving the lives of Gypsy / Travellers 2019-2021, this was publishing jointly by the Scottish government and COSLA in October 2019.

In March 2021 the housing 2040 document announced the Gypsy/Traveller accommodation fund, up to 20 million of capital funding is available to local authorities over 5 years 2021-2026. There is a site Design Guide which has been developed to sit alongside the funding programme, setting the direction for newly built or refurbished accommodation.

MECOPP are involved supporting the Gypsy / Traveller community to voice their views for accommodation that is of good quality and culturally appropriate. There will be community consultations to support this, with Acha and Argyll and Bute council. The information gathered from the consultations will support a bid to the accommodation Fund.

MECOPP are working with the Highland Health Board Gypsy Traveller Partnership Working Group, looking at engagement with the Travelling community, Empowering the Community to be heard, improving physical and mental health.

We are now looking at running groups and residential, we had a 2 day residential in Pitlochry last month for Carers and Cared for, it was amazing. Everyone had fun, relaxed and chatted about the old days ☺ 4 families from Argyll and Bute benefited from this residential.

I am going to attach a flyer for an up and coming Residential, this is slightly different. Woman's Voices is run by MECOPP and it is open to any woman in Scotland from the Gypsy / Traveller Community. It's about empowerment, building confidence and being heard.

I have also been helping our Food Insecurity Worker, North and Mid Argyll are in her remit but she is based in Edinburgh. We have 2 groups organised for North and 2 groups organised for Mid Argyll area. The focus for the first sessions is on Financial Health and how that affects you, where and how to find help. The second session on Self-care and self-management strategies, Food and Mood.

That is all the updates to this point ☺