

Connecting Communities Collective

The Connecting Communities Collective is a new partnership set up in the Oban area, thanks to funding secured from the Community-Led Local Development Fund and Investing in Communities Fund. It grew out of the understanding that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; that by working together, essential sector organisations can save resources, share learning, and reach to serve more people in their communities. In response to this, the Collective came together to address the challenges facing organisations regarding resources and capacity for partnership work.

Over the three years of funding, our focus will be on: developing and offering health and wellbeing programmes and events for community members, especially those experiencing hardship associated with access to food, fuel poverty and mental health; continuing dialogues with wider partners in order to identify strengths and gaps; and work together with wider partners to address these gaps and expand on our shared efforts to serve our communities.

As part of the bid we have also committed to learning more about [Community Wealth Building](#), which has been introduced and discussed during workshops and events put on by the Collective. Our sessions have focused on identifying challenges facing our region, and discussed solutions which will help redirecting wealth back into the local economy, places control and benefits back into the hands of local people. We look forward to continuing these conversations at future sessions.

For delivering on the Collective's work we've employed a Development Officer, Mika Schroder, to help organise events, link up work between organisations and explore new development opportunities, including shared funding bids. Her work over the Autumn will focus on reaching out to potential Partners to share information about a Collective Membership aimed at bringing more groups together for future collaborations. **As part of this work, she'd like to hear directly from what organisations and social enterprises around Oban want to see happen within the Collective, so feel free to email her with ideas that can form part of a survey to be sent out in the Autumn.** Her email address is mika@lornhealthyoptions.co.uk

During the Autumn we will also be piloting our Collective Tickets, through which we will be offering wellbeing-related experiences to people commonly served by our Partners. We are keen on expanding the number of experiences, as well as the reach of our Tickets, so please get in touch if you know people who would benefit, and we can explore ways to make that happen.

The Partners at the core of the Collective are:

- **Healthy Options** works to empower its clients for making positive changes in their lives to make long-lasting changes to improve physical, mental and emotional well-being;
- **Hope Kitchen** provides a safe place for people to get food, shelter and be made to feel welcome at their café as well as at their Green Shoots Community Garden ;
- **ALI Energy** works to address fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions by promoting and advising on sustainable energy use and renewable energy generation;
- **Youth Café** offers a place for young people to call their own to hang out, meeting friends, cook and over time build relationships with experienced youth work staff; and
- **Atlantis Leisure** runs a community-run facility focusing on supporting a wide spectrum of sporting and non-sporting needs within the community.