

# The Connecting Communities Collective (Oban and Lorn)

## Overview



**The Connecting Communities Collective** is a partnership in the Oban area that was set up in 2023, 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.**

Our focus is 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.

The Partners have also, thanks to the collaborations emerging from the Collective, in March 2024 opened up a charity shop in Oban called “Re\_Store”. It functions as a second-hand shop whilst also providing exciting opportunities for promoting essential sector work in the town; running workshops linked to reducing waste and mending/upcycling clothes; encouraging circularity in our economy; support local businesses and charities through a range of activities. We are working towards the shop being sustainable by the end of its second year and bringing in a profit in Year Three. The shop also hosts our Rescued Food Project, where supermarket food is saved from landfill and people can take a bag of food for a £2 donation.

The Connecting Communities Collective is 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 redirect wealth back into the local economy, places control and benefits back into the hands of local people. We look forward to continuing these conversations.

For delivering on the Collective’s work, we’ve employed a Connecting Communities Development Officer to help organise events, link up work between organisations and explore new development opportunities. Their work has focuses on continuing to strengthen

relationships between existing Partners, and piloting ways for bringing Partner organisations into the work of the Collective. Apart from day-to-day admin and organisational tasks, they have joined Core Partners teams in planning and delivering projects and services around Oban, built up and trialed a system for providing Collective Tickets to Partners for offering to people and groups that they serve, facilitated ongoing discussions with Partner organisations, and coordinating the Collective's work in the shop. To bring the community together and to celebrate the first successful year of operation of Re\_Store, a sustainable Fashion Show was held in March 2024, which brought lots of local people together.

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
- [ALIenergy](#) 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.

We are inviting wider partner organisations in the area to work with us in rolling out our work. Please get in touch with our Development Officer, Aideen Shields if you would like more information or to share your ideas: [hello@obancollective.org](mailto:hello@obancollective.org)

