



Stronger Together

Launch of Traveller Pride Week 2021

[#TravellerPrideWeek](#) [#StrongerTogether](#)

www.facebook.com/travellerpride2021

(20th September 2021) Traveller Pride Week 2021 will be launched today at 12.00noon until 1pm via a live Facebook event themed **Stronger Together** which will be addressed by Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman and feature a panel of Traveller perspectives on the community’s response and resilience during the covid pandemic, and the launch of an online video campaign. The event is open to the public on Facebook live - <https://fb.me/e/DbGDCeMz>

The all Traveller panel will be chaired by activist and campaigner Rosemarie Maughan and speakers include actor Martin Mahon, singer Sharyn Ward, student Jason Sherlock and primary health care worker Mary Collins. Addressing the event Minister O’Gorman said, *“Traveller Pride is a wonderful opportunity for Traveller and Roma communities to celebrate their rich and diverse cultures and to proudly affirm their identity. Importantly, it also provides the settled community with an opportunity to get to know, understand and value Traveller achievements and culture, which enrich us all”*

Traveller Pride Week is an annual two-week initiative of national and regional events celebrating and promoting Traveller’s contribution and achievement across Irish life with National events this year taking place from **September 20th - 26th** and local community events **27th September- October 2nd** for more information and local events go to www.facebook.com/travellerpride2021

This year organisers are renewing a campaign to showcase the community’s rich and diverse culture and build support and solidarity between Travellers and non-Travellers and features an online video including Martin Mahon and Sharyn Ward both past recipients of the Traveller Pride awards in the arts and music. Martin commented; *“It’s about putting fire and self confidence in some Travellers who might never have been able to have it, or never been able to find it in their life ... so Traveller Pride gives them a moment to feel appreciated. It gives them a moment to feel like they can actually go on and achieve past the stereotype that people create”*

Sharyn Ward said *“Traveller Pride is great for the community, to find things to be proud of and to remind us of who we are, to highlight all the good things about our art and our culture. “it’s a great way to make us feel good about being us.”*

Organisers are encouraging people across Ireland to champion their campaign by sharing the Traveller Pride video and messages using social media platforms hashtags [#TravellerPrideWeek](#) [#StrongerTogether](#).

Available spokespeople: Martin Mahon, Sharyn Ward, Martin Collins (Pavee Point, Traveller Pride Steering Committee), Rosemarie Maughan

For further media information please contact Breda Hogan, 0852817736, bredahogan10@gmail.com or Eve O’Brien 0830671007 eve@itmtrav.ie

Traveller Pride Week is jointly supported by eight Traveller organisations; the Irish Traveller Movement, Pavee Point, the National Traveller Women's Forum, Minceirs Whiden, Exchange House, Involve, the Parish of the Travelling People and National Traveller MABS and is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Panellist Biographies

Martin Mahon - Traveller actor, writer, and activist. Traveller Pride Award Winner 2014 – Arts and Culture category

Martin has performed in many stage productions with Siamse Tire and written for theatre. Since winning the award, Martin's acting career continues to progress, and he will make his TV debut this autumn in a new RTE production. Martin has used his platform to get involved with Traveller and mental health issues and joined the Kerry Traveller Health and Community Development Project in Tralee and where he is now Vice Chair of the Board and involved with numerous campaigns to promote Traveller equality and a visible spokesperson on those issues.

Sharyn Ward – Singer and Traveller Pride Award Winner 2019 – Music category

Sharyn Ward is a mother of two from County Longford. She rose to prominence in 2019 as a contestant on the popular Virgin Media One show, Ireland's Got Talent. Her exceptional rendition of Black is the Colour earned her a place in the final where she sang One Starry Night – a song which “makes me proud to be a Traveller”, she said. Sharyn continues to perform while juggling motherhood and life in the music studio.

Jason Sherlock – University graduate and master's student

Jason Sherlock is a 22-year-old Irish Traveller born and raised in County Galway. Having received his undergraduate degree in economics, sociology and political science, he is currently studying a Masters in International Finance in NUI Galway, with the hope of working in the banking sector on graduation. He was involved in founding the Minceirs Whiden Society in NUI Galway.

Mary Collins – Traveller Primary Health Care worker

Mary is a Primary Health Care Worker in Pavee Point's Primary Health Care for Travellers Project. Mary has worked in Pavee Point and directly in her local Traveller community in Finglas for many years, and is particularly passionate about addressing Traveller health inequalities. Mary saw first-hand the impact of the pandemic, as she worked to support her community on the frontline throughout Covid-19.