



Mental Health Awareness Week

THE POSITIVE SIDE OF LITTER PICKING

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Week, we spoke to some of our local volunteers about the benefits of litter picking and how in turn this is having a positive effect on their own mental health. BY RHYS PEARCE



My wife and I litter pick in the Nantyglo area and have thoroughly enjoyed it since we started. We decided to do this for the following reasons: To give something back to the community, to make a difference to the local environment and to encourage us both to get outdoors. What really gave us a lot of satisfaction was when a member of the public stopped his car and came over to shake our hands and thank us for the good work we were doing for the community. What a boost and feel good factor it gave our mental health. - **Stephen and Marcia**

I feel like litter picking is such a positive thing to do. Personally, it gives me a real sense of pride that I am helping to keep our borough clean. People stop to chat, you're outdoors in the fresh air and you're getting a physical workout (no gym required) I would say to anyone who is lonely or just wants to get out of the house to register as a Litter Champion! - **Pauline**

I enjoy litter picking as it gets me out of the house and helps to keep me fit. I often bump into people that I haven't seen in years; with many stopping to say thank you. - **Bernie**

Greg Thomas of Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Mind, said: "We see volunteering as being really important in tackling social isolation and in reintroducing people to community activities and engagement. For many people, volunteering can be that first step back into a work environment, without the pressure of having to maintain a job etc. But it can also allow people to explore what opportunities may best suit them on their journey of recovery".



Rob Townsend of Adferiad, said: "Litter Picking is great for mental health as it can motivate people to be active and to go outdoors, as well as strengthening and broadening the awareness of both nature and the wider community. Not only is it a great way to socialise, but it can help improve self-esteem by providing a way to 'give something back'."



If you or someone you know would like to talk, please contact:

- **Mind:** 0800 132 737
- **Adferiad :** 02920 407 407
- **Samaritans:** 116 123
- **SANEline:** 0300 304 700
- **CALM:** 0800 58 58 58