

## SEPTEMBER 2017 - NEWSLETTER



*"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless"* - Sherry Anderson

**OCTOBER LITTER PICKS:** We are out litter picking as usual on the 1st **Saturday (7<sup>th</sup> October)** of the month, meeting at **9.15am**.

We are also out litter picking on the following weekdays during October, with the meeting time in brackets:

**Monday 02<sup>nd</sup> (9.15am), Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>, (9.15am) & Friday 20<sup>th</sup> (9.15am) & Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> (9.15am)**

All our litter picks meet at Park Drive (Llangattock) with equipment, bags and hi-vis provided. Please send us an email in advance ([llangattocklitterpickers@hotmail.com](mailto:llangattocklitterpickers@hotmail.com)) to confirm if you intend to come along so that we can plan the routes to litter pick and put out enough road safety signs beforehand.

Please note that it is essential that you bring a fully charged mobile phone with you, in case of emergencies - unfortunately if you don't we won't be able to use your help that day.

**LITTER SORTING:** We have as a group for many years sorted through the litter collected at the end of each month. This allows us to recycle as much of the litter collected with some months achieving up to a 70% recycling rate. It also allows us to gather data on the amount of drink related litter collected and support the group's belief in the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme here in Wales to reduce such types of litter. Depending on the number of bags collected in a given month the litter sort can take up to 6 volunteer hours to sort through but is made all that much easier and quicker the more volunteers we have assisting.

This is the first time we have put a call out for assistance on litter sorting and if you have an hour to spare please drop us an email at ([llangattocklitterpickers@hotmail.com](mailto:llangattocklitterpickers@hotmail.com)) to let us know you wish to come along to help out. We litter sort under shelter so come rain or shine we will be sorting on the following dates in October:

**Tuesday 03<sup>rd</sup> (9.15am) & Monday 30<sup>th</sup> (9.15am)**

**SEPTEMBER'S RESULTS:** Volunteers' efforts were rewarded with 22.5 bags of litter from 59 miles of road side verge, country lanes, canal tow path and community areas in and around Llangattock. 31.5 hours of volunteer time were needed to achieve these results.



**LITTER PICKING STICKS:** In recent months we have handed out a number litter picking sticks to Llangattock residents who on their walks in the community pick up litter and who have in the past done so using their hands. If anyone is litter picking this way and wishes to use one of our litter picking sticks please get in contact with us as we are happy to provide you with a litter picking stick to save you doing it with your hands.

Thank you to those members of the community who do their bit outside of our group in picking up litter and making the community and surrounding what it is.

**FLY TIPPING INCIDENTS:** We litter pick predominately in Powys but our patch also sees the group litter pick within Monmouthshire and a small part of our patch is within Blaenau Gwent. We come across fly tips from time to time and report them into the local authority for collection. If you come across anyone fly tipping or see a fly tip in situ, you too can report the fly tips into the relevant local authority for collection with contact details provided below:

**Powys County Council:** [powys.gov.uk](http://powys.gov.uk) or **01597 827 465**

**Monmouthshire County:** [monmouthshire.gov.uk](http://monmouthshire.gov.uk) or **01633 644 644**

**Blaenau Gwent Council:** [blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](http://blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) or **01495 311 556**

We are believers in sharing with you good service/good practice that the group receive. Blaenau Gwent Council have recently launched a new reporting system for fly tipping. The Council have also increased their head count of staff in their street services department and now operate a 5th street cleaning team.

We are pleased to report that this is having an impact on the timely collection of fly tips that we are reporting into the Council mainly at Hafod Road (Brynmawr) which we litter pick up to Intermediate Road in Brynmawr as part of our patch.

The first class service does not only stop at the collection of the fly tips but also the communication with the group upon receipt of the report by the Council and also the collection of the fly tip and what actions (if any) are to be taken in finding the culprit/s. We have shared this feedback with the Council with whom we have built a good working relationship with over the years the group has been operating.

**DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME:** Well Scotland has decided that they "have the bottle" and following an announcement by their First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Scotland will be having a Deposit Return Scheme. The announcement comes as the First Minister unveiled her new programme for government, which sets out how Scotland will be run for the next 12 months. Scotland will now legislate for the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme on cans and bottles (both plastic and glass). Just in Scotland alone over 130,000 cans and plastic bottles are binned in Scotland each and every day many of which ends up as litter. Scotland currently has a recycle rate on drinks containers of just 50%. When compared to the likes of Norway (96%) and Germany (97%) who are just two of over forty countries/states around the world that have a Deposit Return Scheme proving that there is a place for such a scheme in Scotland to improve recycling rates and reduce litter enhancing the environment at the same time.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the UK Government, Michael Gove, back in July called for a UK wide Deposit Return Scheme. The Environment Audit Committee at Westminster has re-launched its enquiry into drink related litter in September.

Here in Wales following gaining manifesto commitments from Plaid Cymru, Liberal Democrats and the Conservative parties in the Senedd at the last elections. We are pleased to report there is now cross party



support here in Wales for the introduction of such a scheme. The Welsh Government is currently reviewing their Waste Strategy looking at how well Wales has performed against targets set out in the Towards Zero Waste.

From the review and the subsequent evaluation this will see the updating of the Welsh Government's Waste Strategy. As part of the review there is research being carried out under the banner of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) of Deposit Return Schemes and Reverse Vending Machines which would receive the cans/bottles back as part of a scheme.

Wales were the first home nation to introduce a single use carrier bag charge with all other home nations following suit. Wales leads the home nations on its household recycling with Welsh local authorities reaching their 64% target four years early and is on course to reach the target of 70% prior to the date of 2025. This now sees Wales 2<sup>nd</sup> in Europe and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world for recycling. Interestingly the two countries above them both have a deposit return scheme.

If Wales is not careful we will not be the first mover on a Deposit Return Scheme which would be a real shame given its ambitions on waste. Come on Dr Andy Rees (Head of Waste Strategy, Welsh Government) and Lesley Griffiths (Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Welsh Government) and do the right thing and help Wales finally get to grips with its national blight of litter especially in this case drink related litter with the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme.

We continue to work closely with a number of organisations here in Wales and beyond with the goal of the introduction of such a scheme here in Wales.

**!!!Breaking news!!!** Just before we were about to press the button to publish the newsletter Sky's Ocean Rescue campaign ran an article where Lesley Griffiths was recently interviewed. The Cabinet Secretary confirmed to Sky News that she is considering a Deposit Return Scheme and that it could come into force "as early as next year or the year after". The Cabinet Secretary went onto to say "but I need to make sure there are no unintended consequences" which we already know is one the drinks industry like to play on. The impact on household kerbside recycling and impact on local authorities is nothing new from the drinks industry.

There is plenty of evidence from a number of countries where such schemes are in place that not only demonstrate that such a scheme can complement household kerbside recycling but enhance such schemes. There are also wider benefits to local authorities in reduced litter picking costs, ability to divert services elsewhere with their authority from the need to litter pick, revenue generation from unclaimed deposit bearing containers with their household kerbside recycling scheme and deposit bearing containers collected through their litter picking services/litter bin collection to name just a few of what are a number of benefits.

**EVIDENCE OF DRUG USE:** From time to time we find ourselves having to report into Dyfed Powys Police evidence we gather whilst out on litter picks of drug use on our litter picking patch that is over and above the normal amounts we usually come across. September saw the group having to report such into Dyfed Powys Police. We are pleased to report that in the same week of us reporting into Dyfed Powys Police the Police confirmed to the group via Twitter that they had been successful in stopping a number of "persons" in possession of cannabis on Hillside/Llangynidr Mountain on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> September.

You can contact us via:

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