

# The Volunteer

Winter 2018 / 19



**From a bunker into a community  
Tales from the Tip  
Reuse in the news  
Move IT Forward**

# Welcome ...

The wet and windy weather doesn't seem to have deterred our team of volunteers.

At the last count we had 42 helping us across our three sites - the Reuse Centre in Phoenix Park; the Tip Shop on Docks Way and The Shed out in Llantrisant.

These are busy times for our volunteers - in the last six months alone more than 262 tonnes of items have passed through our shops - all handled at some point by our team.

As 2019 gets underway we appreciate more than ever the time, effort and enthusiasm our volunteers put in. Without them we would simply not be able to function.

As a small way of trying to say thank you we are still running our monthly get-together lunches for volunteers - so please keep an eye out for dates. We even hope to get more guest speakers - let me know if there is any particular subject or issue you may want covered.

Last summer we started our exciting digital inclusion project

**Move IT Forward.** Autumn saw us busily recruiting as we met organisations across Newport.

The **Move IT Forward** programme is aimed at 25+ and 54+ who need some IT skills. We work one to one at a pace the learner chooses. We start with the very basics before working our way up to programmes like Open Office, emails, and using the internet.

The beauty of the programme is that whilst you are learning you are also completing an 'Agored Cymru' Level One qualification.

If you want to hear first hand from someone whose done this programme, read Eileen's story "From absolute beginner to social media promoter."

*Saffy*



# What makes our social media volunteer tick?

Anne Marie is the Reuse Centre's long term social media volunteer.

## ***What makes you happy?***

My family, my children (most of the time) and my five rescue cats. I also like sunshine and a good book.

## **Talking of cats - which one makes you laugh most?**

Crystal - also known as "The Evil One" as she has a Jekyll and Hyde personality. She will lie on her back with her feet in the air looking cute but as soon as you go near her she goes for you!

## **What's the best thing about volunteering here?**

The people I work with are really lovely. It's the perfect working environment for me and I love the unusual stuff that comes in.

## **What's the most challenging part of your work here?**

Selecting things I think will stand out online and positioning items in the shop to show their potential.

## ***What's your guiltiest pleasure?***

Chocolate - though I don't really feel guilty as it's just a cocoa bean. It's a vegetable after all (that's what I tell myself).



## **How do you relax?**

I put on my pyjamas and read a good book with a cup of camomile tea (plus chocolate as well).

## **What would your super power be?**

To be invisible. I would sneak into rooms and listen to conversations I probably shouldn't hear.

## **Have you ever had a near death experience?**

Over the years I have stopped breathing in my sleep a few times and had to be resuscitated in hospital. Life is good!

## **What would your "last supper" be?**

A Greek salad with lots of green olives.

## **What is the favourite item of clothing you own?**

My Dr Marten boots - I wear them most days.



# Tales from the Tip Shop

*To say this place is busy would be a gross understatement. From the moment it opens there's a constant stream of customers either rummaging around for a bargain or dropping things off. We asked some of our volunteers what it's like working here.*

## **Joe and Vickey**

"We started volunteering here six months ago having been regular customers before. Joe's day starts by collecting the eggs from our chickens at home. If we have any spare we share them with the other volunteers.

One thing I like about working here is that it's often impossible to guess what will sell. In October, for example, we sold a large high back wooden chair. I thought nobody would want that - but I was wrong - it was used in

a Santa's Grotto this Christmas.

Another example was a very large teddy we sold. That's not so unusual, but the lady said it was for her donkey! It was orphaned and needed something to snuggle up against at night.

This is also a great place to socialise. Joe has made a lot of new friends here. I would say the Tip Shop has definitely changed our lives for the better, especially for Joe. His confidence has undoubtedly grown and it gets him out of bed each day."

### **Richard Cook (Cookie)**

“What I like most about working here is meeting the huge range of people we see every day.

I like helping people in need, people who have nothing. It gives me great satisfaction to know these things are going to be appreciated. It's also rewarding when people come in and say how great the Tip Shop is - that happens quite a lot and its nice to be appreciated.”



Cookie pretending to move a sideboard



Shop assistant and former volunteer Mike

### **Mike**

I love it here. My day starts at 7:30 when we open up and sort out the front for the early customers. I really enjoy the variety of people we get coming in.

Visitors, however, have to be aware that if they put anything down it might get sold - the turn-over can be that fast!

I remember when Cookie once had to change into his work boots. He'd put his own boots in the back of the shop when a customer

spotted them and we sold them for £1 - bargain!

Cookie spent ages looking for them before we worked out what had happened. Luckily the customer came back the next day and Cookie got his boots back; but that was a close one!



The Tip Shop crew ...  
Newport's reuse pioneers.

# The Shed

Transforming a bunker into a community.



Connor, Cheryl, Tom & Paula - with the latest must have accessories for winter 2019



Nadine - Cleopatra outfit anyone?



Paula with a re-purposed chicken run!

*By Paula Perry: Shed Manager*

The Shed started as three empty tunnels back in the summer of 2017. The name was chosen by Rhonda Cynon Taff Council and set the tone for a complete transformation.

At first Hazel and myself had no help and it was hard work. But that has all changed - we now have a fantastic family of volunteers without whom this place would simply not function.

I like to think we've created a welcoming atmosphere - it's a community where customers from near and far come to visit.

If a volunteer has a particular interest we like to try and put them in charge of a specific section.

Cheryl and Nadine, for example, have their clothes boutique. Conner and Mathew look after the CDs and entertainment. Jonathan keeps us on our toes with the recycling and Terry, Sean, Anna and Steve will turn their hand to almost anything that needs doing.

One of our long term volunteers, Tom, became a staff member

back in July 2018 .

We currently have a team of 12 regular volunteers.

With the amount of work they do I sometimes I wonder what drives people to volunteer for us.

Anne (front cover) "To me the Shed offers such a practical approach to sustainability that serves the community on so many levels. As volunteers our contribution directly impacts on people and the planet - and that's a good feeling."

For others the socialising aspect draws them. As Cheryl puts it: "I love the social side of working here - the people are great."

That feel good factor spreads to our customers and even the mass media. In November ITV Wales News did a live broadcast from here featuring Cheryl and Connor. The broadcast showed a red dress from Cheryl's boutique corner which sold first thing the next morning - as seen on TV!

We are also constantly trying to generate new ideas to encourage reuse.

Our entrance hallway, for example, features our latest re-purposed ideas (taking something and using it for something else). There are some wonderful ideas coming in; from a chicken run that acts as a jewelry display to a chair bookcase.



Nov. - The first month we beat the Tip Shop!



Cheryl in her element



Christmas dinner - incase you couldn't tell

# From absolute beginner to social media promoter

*Eileen, our newest social media volunteer, learnt her trade through our Move IT Forward programme.*



Following my redundancy after 20 years as a filing and archive manager, I was referred to *Move IT Forward* by my work coach at the Job Centre.

I desperately wanted to improve on my digital skills and bring myself out of the ark! My grandchildren all use smart phones and laptops and although I have a laptop, I couldn't use it!

When I was working everything was paper based.

Since taking the *Move IT Forward* course with Saffy, however, I've not looked back. When I started I immediately felt relaxed in the friendly atmosphere.

Anything I needed to learn, from CV writing to using PowerPoint, was approached with support and patience. My confidence grew together with my skills.

We started with the absolute basics and built up to designing a poster, working at a pace that suited me. I also achieved an Agored Cymru Level 1 Award.

Through *Move IT Forward* I'm more hopeful about getting back to work. I'd like a job in administration but while I'm looking I'm helping with the reuse centre's social media promotion!

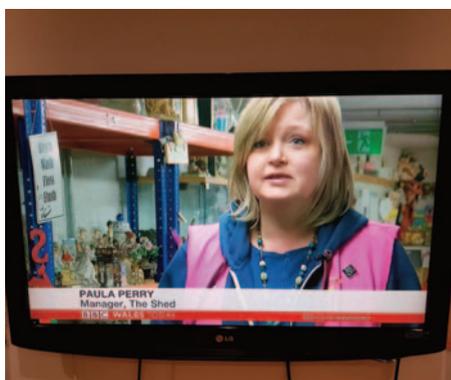
At home I really enjoy gardening, and in the long term I'm hoping to eventually use my laptop to design my dream garden.

Where there is an opportunity to improve, there's way forward!

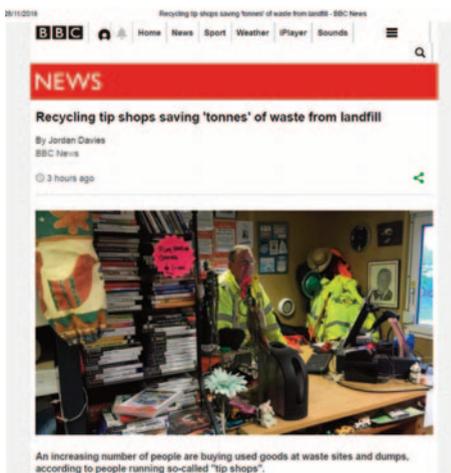




First the Argus ...



... then ITV Wales News...



... and then ... BBC Wales News!

# IN THE NEWS!

Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers the Tip Shop and Shed both hit the news in November.

It started with the South Wales Argus taking up the story of the Tip Shop success, running a large picture of the team who were in on 6th November.

ITV Wales News then followed with a live broadcast from The Shed. Manager Paula showed them round and volunteer Cheryl got in on the act with her clothes boutique corner while Connor managed to somehow avoid the cameras!

The end of November saw BBC Wales News coming down to the Tip Shop. They interviewed Vicky and Jo as well as staff.

“I spoke with the BBC journalist again a few days later” said Phil Hurst of Wastesavers, “and he told me it was one of the most commented on positive news stories he had ever covered!”

Shops at recycling centres and volunteering are definitely on the media’s radar for 2019.

# Meet the manager!

Nicola Rossiter is the Reuse Operations Manager.

## What makes you happy?

Winter and Christmas! The first day of Autumn when you can see your breath really makes me excited for Winter and Christmas. I love spending time with family and close friends and it's always a good excuse to spoil the people you love.

## What's the most challenging part of your work here?

Fitting everything in! The Reuse Centre is getting busier and busier and my to do list never seems to get any shorter!

## What's your most guilty pleasure?

Dipping Mc Donald's chips in chocolate milkshake... Although now I'm pregnant I've been told I can't have the milkshakes so I've had to just make do with the French fries!

## Have you had a near death experience?

Only emergency operations for me, twice. Both were serious and lost a lot of blood.

## What would be your super power be?

To speak and understand any language in the world.



## How do you relax?

If I'm stressed, listening to music really loud helps.

If I just want to wind down it's feet up on the sofa and a good book.

I also have a wingback chair (from the Reuse Centre of course) that looks out onto the bird table in my garden. I could quite happily watch the sparrows and starlings squabble for hours.

## And for your "last supper"?

Lamb Sunday dinner with all the trimmings.

## What is the favourite item of clothing you own?

My big yellow waterproof coat – it's so cosy!

# What's happening ...

|  |                            |           |
|--|----------------------------|-----------|
| Volunteer Lunch  | Reuse centre Week starting | 21st Jan  |
| Volunteer Fair   | Maesglass Community Centre | 23 Jan    |
| Volunteer Lunch  | Reuse centre Week starting | 4th March |
| Creative writing, photography, run and talk, yoga for beginners - Mind Newport have activities on most weekdays! |                            |           |

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A big thank you to all our volunteers. We're sorry we couldn't include all of you in this edition of *The Volunteer*, but we hope to produce another edition in late spring.

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## Support Organisations

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Gwent Assoc of Voluntary Orgs   | 01633 24 15 50 |
| Citizens Advice Bureau          | 03444 77 20 20 |
| Newport City Council            | 01633 65 66 56 |
| Newport City Homes              | 01633 38 11 11 |
| Newport Mind                    | 01633 25 87 41 |
| Womens Aid                      | 01633 84 02 58 |
| Samaritans                      | 01633 25 90 00 |
| Credit Union                    | 01633 21 49 13 |
| Job Centre Plus                 | 08001 69 01 90 |
| Gwent Drug & Alcohol Service    | 03339 99 35 77 |
| BAWSO (Black & Ethnic minority) | 01633 21 32 13 |
| Share Centre Newport            | 01633 21 27 82 |



# Come on Nan- keep up!

## move IT forward

Over 54 and feeling a bit left behind with all this digital revolution?

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for the absolute IT beginner!

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