**MINDLIFE**

*A new monthly column by Jennifer Miles Davis on behalf of Mind in West Essex*

**Naked Speed Founder Mark Williams tells us what inspired him to build a motorbike for Mind**

Mark Williams, founder of motorcycle firm Naked Speed, which restores and builds bespoke motorcycles, is building a Honda CX500 Café Racer motorbike from the ground up using only donations, to raise funds for Mind in West Essex.

Williams, a self-confessed petrol head with an eye for design “eats, sleeps and dreams everything mechanical”. At 21 he landed his dream job with a Spanish superbike racing team, and went on to race semi-professionally. Accelerating forwards to the present day, his workshop in Wendens Ambo is a motorbike enthusiasts’ utopia, full of semi-built bikes and parts. Even his coffee table is a bespoke build – stacked up motorbike wheels.

But life hasn’t been without its difficulties for Williams. Things took a dramatic turn at just 19 years old, when his father took his own life. A few months later, his best friend was killed on his motorbike by a drunk driver. Williams goes on to mention several more tragic losses of close friends and family. A risky lifestyle compounded by unresolved grief caught up with him, and ten years ago he found himself contemplating taking his own life. He called a crisis number and mental health nurses visited. He says if he hadn’t made that call he might not be here today, but even now he occasionally finds himself in a dark place, hence the decision to work on this build. “For me it’s all about awareness. Because I’ve suffered with my mental health, with depression, I just want people to have help if they need it “

Although Williams has made a good start, the build still has a way to go, and Williams is looking for donations and sponsorship to enable him to complete it. The bike will be on display at the Mind in West Essex stall at the Dunmow Soapbox Race on Sunday, May 29th 2019. To sponsor the build, contact jdavis@mindinwestessex.org.uk, or visit [www.mindinwestessex.org.uk](http://www.mindinwestessex.org.uk) or [www.naked-speed.com](http://www.naked-speed.com).