

## News from the Jersey Employment Trust

# JET employee joins roster of white-collar comedians

Fundraising and relationship manager **Caroline Spencer** offers a selection of stories from the world of the Jersey Employment Trust

NICK Ozouf is known in the Jersey Employment Trust office for his bad jokes and awful puns. When he heard of the White-Collar Comedy Night, he couldn't resist the opportunity to put his humour to the test.

He says that his colleagues have been particularly supportive, as they are hopeful that the experience is going to improve his jokes.

In the past few years Nick has completed three physical challenges, raising thousands of pounds for charity, but this will be quite different, and he is glad that the process involves many weeks of training and mentoring, covering everything from stagecraft to presentation.

"I have never performed anywhere since school days 46 years ago, when I had a small part in Romeo and Juliet," he said. "Standing up in public doesn't worry me, and I know it's a supportive crowd, but will they laugh?"

"I laugh at myself a lot. And that will be the basis for my five minutes of stand-up."

Nick was born with Vitamin-D-resistant rickets, which leads to softening and weakening of the bones, causing various mobility issues. He also has hearing difficulties. As an employment co-ordinator at JET, he helps people with disabilities and health conditions secure and sustain employment.

One of his primary motivations for participating in the White-Collar Comedy Night is to raise money for JET as he sees first-hand what valuable work it does.

Nick's sense of humour has been heavily influenced by his favourite comedians from yesteryear, from Max Miller and Bob Monkhouse to Billy Connolly and Jasper Carrott.

He is being mentored by Nathan Cassidy, an award-winning regular at the Ed-



But will they be laughing on the night? Nick Ozouf is surrounded by some of his supportive colleagues: Mel Oxenham, Kerry Robinson, Chris Appleton, Sarah Boydens, Emma Burns and Cristina Farley

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Nick Ozouf

inburgh Fringe, and local amateur dramatist Stefan Gough. Nick is one of nine

people who are taking to the stage for the White-Collar Comedy Night, sponsored by Integritas Private Wealth. It has been organised by JET Ambassador Kiley Henley to raise funds for the Jersey Employment Trust.

"As someone working in HR and serving as an ambassador for JET, I see every day how meaningful employment can transform people's lives, so it felt natural for us to support them," she said.

"The idea for the event came from wanting to bring the business community together in a different way; something fun and high-energy that still raises money and awareness for a cause close to my heart. Comedy felt like the perfect fit, es-

pecially with such an incredible headline act in Luisa Omielan, who brings exactly the kind of bold, uplifting energy we wanted for the night. If we can fill a room with laughter while supporting the brilliant work JET does, that's a win all round."

Meanwhile, Nick is wondering whether to walk on dressed as a hobbit ("because I have the legs for it") or to walk on to the tune of Walk This Way, as he makes his way to the stage with a stick and a limp. He added: "I don't mind if they laugh with me or at me, as long as they laugh."

• The White-Collar Comedy Night is on 1 April at the Royal Yacht Hotel. Tickets have sold out. To sponsor Nick, please go to: [tinyurl.com/NickOzouf](http://tinyurl.com/NickOzouf).

## Meet the trustee...

THREE new people have joined the JET Board of Trustees: Robyn Le Gallais, Norson Harris and Neville Benbow. We will feature each in the coming months.

### Neville Benbow

#### Who are you?

I am 63, married to Katie, who I met shortly after I moved to Jersey on a three-year secondment... 27 years ago. I have two children, and I am proud grandfather to Effy, who is nearly five (as she tells me every day!).

Workwise, I am the chief executive officer of the Law Society of Jersey. I came to this 13 years ago after being made redundant after over 30 years in financial services. I am also the Acting Bâtonnier, having overall responsibility for administration of the Legal Aid Scheme in Jersey.

#### Why did you want to be a JET trustee?

I have long had an interest in protect-



Neville Benbow

ing and promoting the interests of the most vulnerable members of our community, providing a voice to ensure that often uncomfortable issues are heard and addressed.

I have long since admired the work of JET and have been inspired by the success that JET and Acorn have had, and continue to have, in supporting Islanders with a disability in securing and sustaining employment.

I have a significant interest in mental-health issues through my involvement in the training and accreditation of mental-health legal practitioners and as a lay member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, as well as through personal family experiences.

#### What do you do in your spare time?

I particularly enjoy spending time with my granddaughter, although keeping pace with her (and finding new places to hide in the house) is increasingly difficult. I enjoy all forms of sport, in particular rugby union, cricket and Formula 1. I have started cycling again, albeit with an electric bike, to improve my fitness, as well as to test out my new knees.

#### What was your very first job?

My first job was at Longleat Safari

Park, where my father was the vet, which started when I was 14 and I was asked to assist with traffic control on a bank holiday, earning a life-changing 50 pence per hour.

There was no minimum wage then, so when I went back the following summer, nothing had changed, so I was working ten hours a day (with no lunch break) for the grand sum of £5 per day, six or seven days a week.

However, I moved on from traffic control to controlling the gates into the monkey jungle and the lion and tiger reserves, to being a boatman on the lake, driving the safari bus and in my final year, aged 18, to being a game warden in the lion and tiger reserves, which was ideal training for many of my future roles where I found that I was often having to step into the lion's den!

#### Best piece of advice?

Never do anything that compromises your integrity or you will never be trusted completely about anything in the future.

'It felt like all the things that really mattered to me... were being addressed by JET'



JET Ambassador Dr Adam Perchard Picture: ROB CURRIE

SEVERAL JET Ambassadors have been nominated for Liberate Jersey's DIFERA awards, which are being announced at a special evening on 20 March.

Dr Adam Perchard, whose professional life revolves around theatre, music, visual art and poetry, was nominated for Inspirational Person of the Year.

"It was such a gorgeous surprise," they said. "The awards celebrate all my favourite things about our island – people going out of their way to support each other and make life better for one another – so I was delighted to be a part of that."

Adam joined as a JET Ambassador last year.

"It felt like all the things that really mattered to me, kindness and inclusivity, that I try to fold into my creative practice, were things that were being directly addressed by JET, and JET was making such a very real difference to people's lives," they said.

They have insight into the importance of physical and mental health. While working as a lecturer in London, Adam had a nervous breakdown which at the time they put down to the stress of academia, feeling overworked and under-valued.

"That work culture really wasn't right for me, but it was the result of early trauma that really caught up with me. Growing up as a queer child in a world that felt like it wasn't made for me – that leaves its mark."

"I know how debilitating anxiety and depression can be and how hard it is to find help. It's one of the things JET tackles that really speaks to me. It's difficult to be proactive and get yourself out of it when all

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Dr Adam Perchard

your faculties are working at their worst.

"The decision to change career was very frightening, but I'm so pleased that I did because once I found myself in the right place, surrounded by a community of people I loved working with, I was able to really blossom," they said.

• Dr Adam Perchard will perform at the Squirrel Scurry on Saturday 25 April, in aid of Acorn and the Lowes Legacy Fund. Sign up now: [tinyurl.com/SquirrelRun2026](http://tinyurl.com/SquirrelRun2026). A full interview with Dr Adam Perchard appears in today's JEP Weekend supplement.

'Leaf' a comment – and maybe win a full English...



Monika Gorska, from the Acorn Café, next to the oak tree featuring some of the customers' messages

AN oak tree has popped up in the Acorn Café as part of an initiative inviting customers to make small donations to support the work of Acorn Enterprises.

For a minimum £1 donation, customers can write a message to the team at Acorn, attach a squirrel to the tree, and be entered into a monthly draw to win a full English breakfast.

Every pound goes directly towards supporting Acorn's mission of providing work and training opportunities to Islanders who have a disability or long-term health condition.

Café manager Violetta Jurek said: "We are proud to be part of this wonderful community at Acorn. We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has donated so far."

"The kindness and generosity shown in the first few weeks has meant so much. It's been heart-warming to see everyone com-

ing together. It shows how much love there is on this island for Acorn.

"It's important to me that we give back and use our platform to help where we can. There are Islanders living with disabilities and long-term health conditions who face challenges most of us will never fully understand. We see Acorn's work every day. Acorn gives support, dignity, opportunity and hope. And I believe that as a small local café, we have a responsibility to stand with our wonderful community, not just serve it."

Acorn fundraising lead Georgia Hodgson added: "We're thrilled with how well this has taken off in just the first few weeks. We'd like to thank the café staff for supporting us, and a big thank you to customers for donating and for leaving such lovely messages. We'll be reading through them as part of a wellbeing initiative with our team at Acorn."

## Employability workshop



Chloé Minson (centre) pictured with JET Ambassadors Sasha Russell, Kiley Henley, Tina Palmer, Sue Gill, Claire Reynard and Ana Cengic

WE recently delivered a successful employability workshop for 17 clients, supported by six JET Ambassadors and strategic HR consultant Chloé Minson. The session focused on strengthening CVs and improving interview skills.

JET organisational development lead Emma Burns said that the engagement and energy throughout the session was inspiring, and clients left feeling more confident and better prepared for their job-seeking journey.