

News from the Jersey Employment Trust

Squirrels go to town for Acorn collections

By Caroline Spencer

STAFF have been going nuts for Acorn, dressing up in squirrel costumes as they warm up for the Squirrel Run.

The event, sponsored by TMF Group, is being held in memory of the late Dean Lowe, who worked at the Jersey Employment Trust for 17 years.

In April 2023, he and Kiley Henley completed the 26.2 miles of the Virtual London Marathon, wearing squirrel accessories and raising over £1,000 for JET's social firm, Acorn.

Fundraising manager Caroline Spencer said: "We wanted something fun to mark what would have been Dean's 50th birthday in February. We want to see at least 50 people dressed in squirrel costumes jogging through St Helier. We think Dean would have approved of having something a bit crazy in his memory."

Squirrels will gather in West's Centre at lunchtime on Thursday 13 March, where there will be a brief fun warm-up. They will head off on a short route which takes them to the Royal Square.

Apart from a mandatory £20 donation to register, squirrels are asked to raise at least £50 in sponsorship. Participants are responsible for buying or making their own costumes.

Money raised goes towards providing work and training opportunities for Islanders who have a disability or long-term health condition. Specifically, it will go towards internships at Acorn Reuse, where



Acorn staff and clients are making their own squirrel masks in textiles sessions

people working with JET's employment team get a period of paid work experience and paid work.

The Squirrel Run is also being supported by the Whitmill Trust, Magic Touch and All Island Media. Jersey Mencap are also getting involved, as many of their members knew Dean. They have been making squirrel masks in their Taking Part Making Art sessions.

To sign up for the challenge, go to: race-nation.co.uk/register/acorn-enterprises/acorn-squirrel-run.



Employment co-ordinators Tony Butters and Simon Jones limber up by climbing a tree outside JET's Oakfield office

Environmental and social-health check

ACORN is working with Acacia to assess its sustainability performance. The Future-Fit benchmark is an established management framework to help organisations assess their impact on society and the environment and set long-term goals to improve their sustainability.

Ian Roberts, a Future-Fit accredited advisor, said: "No organisation operates in a void but is dependent on society and the environment while at the same time it has an impact on society and the environment. The negative impacts can undermine its own future success.

"Key sustainability issues include the use of energy and water, procurement, the health of employees, and the organisation's conduct. Ultimately, the goal is to transform society into one which is environmentally restorative, socially just and economically inclusive, which is aligned to Future Jersey's vision of a sustainable Island."

He said he wanted to work with Acorn because "it is such a brilliant organisation and I am delighted to help in some way.

"Acorn is having a positive impact in Jersey, whether in reducing the amount of waste produced by others by providing a place to reuse tonnes of things which otherwise would probably go to La Collette, or providing jobs to individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions, who would otherwise struggle to find paid employment.

"It is a brilliant example of an organisation with a positive purpose seeking to help society address some critical issues."

David Rose, JET's strategy and risk manager, said: "The collaboration between JET, Acorn and Acacia has been an invaluable opportunity to take a structured, forward-thinking approach to sustainability. Working with Ian and leveraging the Future-Fit framework has allowed us to critically assess our environmental and social impact while setting clear, actionable goals for long-term improvement.

"Sustainability is not just about mitigating risks. It's about ensuring resilience, ethical responsibility and future success.



Dave Rose, strategy and risk manager for JET (left), and Ian Roberts, consultant at Acacia, a company specialising in training and consultancy in sustainability

This process has sparked important discussions within our leadership team, reinforcing our commitment to becoming a more sustainable and socially responsible organisation."

Mr Roberts added: "The Future-Fit

benchmark provides a framework and long-term goals, which enables us to assess the impacts of decisions and understand what trade-offs are potentially involved.

"I am hoping that by showing how two

non-profit organisations, that are often subject to more restrictive financial circumstances than for-profit organisations, apply the benchmark and the benefits this brings it will spur other organisations to do the same."

Meet the staff

Ian Florence

IAN Florence has been with Acorn since December as technical team leader (Woodshack, Electrical, Cycles, Recycling)

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Originally from Birmingham (UTV*), I started helping in a local pub when I was 16 and after moving around the UK I came to Jersey about 25 years ago for the surf and sunshine. While working as a chef I met my wife, who is originally from Poland. It turns out I love Polish food. We ran a family hotel together in Bonne Nuit and I also had my own business, The Herb Garden Café, at Samarès Manor. After I studied adult learning and teaching, I worked for Beresford Street Kitchen supporting people with learning disabilities and/or autism to find employment, which I really enjoyed. My wife and I have two grown-up daughters, who are beautiful, clever and creative.

*Up The Villa

How do you describe yourself in three words?

Creative, supportive, compassionate.

What has struck you so far?

I'm enjoying working with a lovely big team of positive and caring people. And I'm also amazed at just how much is donated. It's so varied and people can be really generous. The drive to be a zero-waste operation is important, but I can now see the challenges are big and an Islandwide problem.

What do you enjoy outside of work?

I enjoy cycling, especially touring, mostly through France, plus sea swimming, paddleboarding and surfing.

What plans do you have for the Woodshack? How would you like to see the Woodshack develop?

It's early days yet but I'm pleased to say



Ian Florence has been with Acorn since December as technical team leader (Woodshack, electrical, cycles, recycling)

that sales of kindling and firewood have been very strong this winter. The team have worked really hard. Ideally we want to secure further funding to purchase a machine to make high-energy-density briquettes, which have many advantages over traditional firewood logs.

They are much hotter, longer burning, cleaner and more efficient. We have some funding from the Ports of Jersey Commu-

nity Boost fund and RBC, but we need a little more.

I am also looking forward to working with the team to develop new products using their varied and extensive skills and creativity.

The cycles, electricals and metal recycling are also part of my watch and this is really enjoyable too. We have some really skilled people who are brilliant at testing

all kinds of electrical items and restoring bicycles, which are very popular. The metal recycling is also a hive of activity, where Acorn clients strip down everything that's broken or stuff that can't be sold on, such as old saucepans and cables. We love cables.

Matt Caboz

MATT Caboz started as plant nursery senior supervisor in January.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was a gardener for the National Trust at Wentworth Castle Gardens, Barnsley, looking after South Yorkshire's only Grade 1 registered landscape and their three national collections, Camellia Williamsii, Magnolia species and Rhododendron species.

How do you describe yourself in three words?

Focused, empathetic and caring.

What has struck you so far?

I'm enjoying the collaboration between the different departments in delivering one common vision: to create work and training opportunities for Islanders who have a disability or long-term health condition.

What do you enjoy outside of work?

Cold-water/sea swimming, cycling and walking.

What would you like all of Jersey to know about the Acorn plant nursery?

We really do have the healthiest and most-looked-after plants in Jersey. Come and visit and see what we have to offer.



Matt Caboz started as plant nursery senior supervisor in January

Get in touch

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