

'Hard knock' choir to bring sunshine onto Jersey streets

By **Lauren Gouyette**

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A NEW singing group formed by the Grace Trust is hoping to bring some sunshine to the streets of Jersey.

Meeting weekly at the All Saints Church Hall, the group features a range of people from the streets, whether they are homeless, alcoholics, or people who used to be in those situations.

'We are a bit of a choir of hard knocks,' said Grace Trust manager Gerry Padden who started the choir seven weeks ago after watching a DVD of people doing the same in Melbourne.

'They had been formed into a choir by an Australian singer who had a heart for the homeless. Eventually, from singing in a hall they performed at the Sydney Opera House and I thought, well, if they can do it in Australia we can have a go here in Jersey, too.'

With their theme song being 'More-cambe and Wise's Bring Me Sunshine, the group is hoping to do just that for Islanders with plans to go busking in town to earn money for the Grace Trust.

'By doing something like that it's a good partnership with us investing in

each other as we are helping them but in turn they're helping us. However, our dream would be to perform at the Opera House.'

The group are now enjoying singing Beatles hits and popular songs accompanied by Roger Bara on the keyboard. Mr Padden said: 'It's the highlight of their week and that's why we do it, to make them happy and feel more worthwhile. Singing is a great equaliser and brings everyone on to the same level but it's also great for giving them some focus, confidence, and putting a smile on their face.'



Choir practice at All Saints Church. Paul Hacquoil and Eddie Gallacher get into the swing of things

(right) Pictures: JON GUEGAN (00653676, 00653675)



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