

# Singing for the soul - in more ways than one

## • Choirs are becoming cool, says founder

**FOR the past year, a community choir has been filling the air with sweet music.**

**Wokingham Community Choir has been raising the roof of The Bradbury Centre in Rose Street with a variety of songs types, from gospel and soul to country and rock and roll.**

**Growing from scratch to 25 members, the choir has chosen to help out a local good cause.**

**ALICE MURPHY found out more about the Sing Wokingham project.**

"AFTER years of decline, choirs are becoming cool."

So says Dorian Edwards, the musician who helped form Wokingham Community Choir.

"Choirs have not always been sexy," he explained.

"There was this idea that if you were going off to choir practice, you were a sad loser.

"But it seems a lot of people want to get involved in singing these days."

Mr Edwards, who lives in Barkham Road, said the many benefits of singing and choirs are becoming clear.

"You can have singing for health, singing for pregnancy, singing against depression, singing for fun and even singing to cure snoring.

"There's no doubt that singing is good for you and you can get two hours of goodness for less than the price of a pint of Guinness."

He formed Wokingham Community Choir in October last year to share his enthusiasm.



**Choir founder Dorian Edwards.**

*Picture by Katie Lamb. W081604.*

As a semi-professional singer, he performed in venues across the UK and Europe in the 1980s and even in Nashville, Tennessee.

He decided to form Wokingham Community Choir to encourage people to take up the hobby and this year, any profits raised will go to Daisy's Dream in Twyford.

Proceeds from concerts and public activities held by the choir will go to the charity, which supports bereaved children and their families.

Mr Edwards said: "I was keen that the choir would run on a not-for-profit basis.

"It also seemed logical that as we are a local choir we should support a local charity. The work of Daisy's Dream is essential to the many families they work with and rewarding for all those who support the work."

There are now 25,000 registered choirs in Britain, and a recent BBC programme The Choir, with choir-master Gareth Malone, as well as the popular TV choral competition Last Choir Standing, have meant the profile of choirs has never been higher.

Mr Edwards says one of the attractions of Wokingham Community Choir is that it is not just for perfect singers.

With more than 40 years' experience teaching, playing and performing music, he says almost everyone can learn to sing.

He said: "I believe if you can speak you can sing.

"In the last 40 years I have only met two or three people who could not carry a tune in a bucket, so there is no excuse for not giving it a go.

"It's the ultimate in team working and a great social activity."

The choir is holding an open evening on Thursday, October 15, from 7.45pm in The Rose Room at the Bradbury Centre in Rose Street.

Anyone interested in joining a choir can just turn up to find out more.

For more information, email [singwokingham@gmail.com](mailto:singwokingham@gmail.com).