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POLICE HUNT FOR NEW COP IDOL

COP Idol is set to return to the West Midlands for the sixth year – but the talent contest needs **YOU**.

As X-Factor winner Alexandra Burke jump starts her own solo career, the police-backed competition will try to find the best and most arresting wannabe pop stars in the Midlands.

But they will have to brave a panel of police judges to stake their claim to the title.

The latest competition, once again backed by West Midlands Police, is set to be bigger and better than ever before and organisers are keen to encourage more choirs to audition.

Police officers will give up their own time to make up the judging panel and pass judgement on contestants by speaking the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

In March, award-winning radio personality **Les Ross MBE**, from **BBC WM** will host more auditions than ever before at venues across the West Midlands, including:-

Saturday 21 March 2009, Pallasades Shopping Centre, Birmingham

Sunday 22 March 2009, Wulfrun Shopping Centre, Wolverhampton

Friday 27 March 2009, Touchwood Shopping Centre, Solihull

Sunday 29 March 2009, West Orchards Shopping Centre, Coventry

Those who survive the audition phase with the most arresting performances will be put through their paces and whittled down, until 12 acts remain.

The final showdown of the competition will be staged in September at the Tally Ho! Sports and Conference Centre in Birmingham with all money from ticket sales being donated to the Acorns Children's Hospice Trust who care for life limited children and their families from across the West Midlands region.

The performers or choir who convince the panel of judges they deserve to have a record will get the chance to cut tracks at the Priory Recording Studio in Sutton Coldfield.

TV personality **Myleene Klass** said: "I've supported Cop Idol for many years and it's really a unique way to raise lots of money for worthwhile causes, and this year is no exception. The event is also a fantastic way to search for new talent of all ages, and I would personally like to wish everyone who auditions the very best of luck."

Christine Hamilton added: "Come on Guys and Gals - stop dreaming of fame and DO something!!! Cop Idol' is not just a fantastic way to help raise lots of 'coppers' for the Acorns Children's Hospice but it is ready and waiting to discover new talent – YOUR talent! Get out there, take an audition, show the world what you can do – you have nothing to lose but stage fright!"

Last year, Simon Cowell described the winner of Cop Idol as 'super talented' when he appeared on ITV1s X Factor. Dominic Harris went on to reach the final stages of the popular television show.

Organiser Darren Yates said: "It doesn't matter if your seven or 75, we're looking for contestants of all ages and abilities who are guilty of being able to sing, and we're certainly keen to hear from more bands and choirs to audition!

"These events are a fantastic opportunity for our Neighbourhood Policing Units to engage new links with the community, help someone on the road to stardom and raise money for life limited children. We're also hoping to discover a few potential police recruits too."

Mike Tague, regional fundraising manager for Acorns said: "We are thrilled to be supported by this years Cop Idol contest. Acorns is desperately trying to raise the funds it needs to not only continue its existing service but to also care and support the hundreds of local life limited children and their families who do not currently benefit from Acorns. Cop Idol is a great project and we wish all the competitors well in their auditions."

If you think you have what it takes to audition, you must pre-register your interest by visiting: www.west-midlands.police.uk/copidol

Notes to News Editors and Picture Desks

Acorns Children's Hospice currently cares for over 600 life-limited children from across the West Midlands and Three Counties. Acorns offer a network of care services through its three hospices in Birmingham, Walsall and Worcester. The Acorns Community Team provides support to the whole family at home, 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week. It costs Acorns £4,500 per day, per hospice, to provide these services free of charge to families, and it receives very little of its funding from the government, relying almost entirely on community donations.

To arrange interviews or photographs, please contact Darren Yates on 0121 626 5869, or email: d.j.yates@west-midlands.police.uk.