



NEWS RELEASE

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Nick Headon opens Porchlight agency day

On Thursday 30th July, Nick Headon, former drummer with Rock band The Clash, will be opening an agency open day, hosted at Porchlight supported accommodation project, Fern Court in Dover.

Opened in 2003, Fern Court provides accommodation and tailored support to 12 single homeless people and is one of 8 Porchlight supported accommodation projects in Kent.

The agency day is an opportunity for different organisations that support people with complex needs to meet each other and continue the development of effective working partnerships.

Despite Nick's fame in the 1970's and early 80's he is no stranger to the services provided by Porchlight, "Despite receiving plenty of royalties from my time with The Clash, my drug and alcohol addiction led me to bankruptcy and eventually homelessness, staying on friends sofas and busking. Five years ago, with the support of a homeless charity in London I finally cleaned up my act. I can fully appreciate the hard work and essential job charities like Porchlight do."

Roger Jarrett, Dover Services Manager, said, "We are delighted to have someone that understands our work supporting us in this way. The open day is a great opportunity to make sure we liaise with all the agencies in the local community that work so hard to support vulnerable people."

To find out more about the work of Porchlight visit www.porchlight.org.uk

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Notes to the Editor:

1. Fern Court offers high support to 12 single, homeless people over the age of 18. The project is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The length of stay depends on the individual but the project is specifically short stay with people staying on average about six months.

The hostel contains 10 fully furnished flats. Seven of these flats are self contained, one is a two bedroom flat and one comprises of three en-suite rooms with a shared kitchen. There are laundry facilities on site for the residents to use.

Tenants are responsible for their day to day activities. They are encouraged to attend house meetings and to voice their opinions on the running of the project. We also actively promote people to get involved in other activities being run, such as art groups or training sessions.

2. Established in 1974 as Canterbury Cyrenians, Porchlight is a Kent wide independent local charity that works to support single, vulnerable homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. It was and works throughout Kent.

3. Porchlight has accommodation based projects in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. The outreach team works with street homeless people as well as supporting former homeless people in their own homes, to prevent them returning to street life. Other services support people in their own homes who are at risk of becoming homeless.

4. In 2008-9 Porchlight helped over 1,600 vulnerable people. Porchlight projects include:

Kent Outreach: Our street outreach team work across Kent including working within prisons to help offenders who will be released from prison homeless.

Young Persons Services: This includes a direct access hostel, longer stay hostel and shared house, providing support for a number years, until each individual is ready to live independently.

Mental Health: We run a housing project in Dover specifically for people with enduring mental ill-health. We also provide support to 7 clients in another purpose built accommodation project in Margate. In addition we also have a young persons' mental health service that enables young homeless people with mental health problems to better access the health services they need.

General Accommodation: We have hostels in Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and Ramsgate. They range in the levels of support provided from high support needs with staff available 24hrs a day, to medium support with staff available on a 9-5pm basis.

Floating Support: This is a preventative service that provides support to vulnerable people in their own home who are at risk of becoming homeless. Many of these clients have been through the hostel system and are almost ready to live independently but just need a little support every now and again.

Training and Service User Involvement: We have a team that works with people accessing any of our services and helps them develop their skills and education. We provide tailored training and

encourage people to get involved in the running and improvement of their project, or volunteer on a more formal level in the organisation. Porchlight is committed to involving our service users throughout all the activities of the charity. They are actively encouraged to become involved in education, employment, volunteering and service user involvement opportunities.

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