WE’RE delighted to announce that Paul Hollywood has become a patron of our charity.

The Great British Bake Off star is urging everybody to support our work protecting some of society’s most vulnerable people.

Paul said: “Living in Kent, I see the difference Porchlight makes every day and it’s a cause that’s very close to my heart. I’ve spent time with the Porchlight staff and know how passionately they feel about making sure people get a second chance. The people they support are taught new skills and given job opportunities so that they can flourish when they feel ready to move on. Having worked my way up from a job in the family bakery, I know how important these work skills are. I’m proud to support Porchlight, and I encourage others to support them too. Together, we can make sure they’re there for the most vulnerable people in society.”

Despite plenty of upcoming TV commitments, Paul said he hopes to come back again in the future for some baking sessions.

WE’RE offering a warm welcome to three more patrons – Paul Auston DL, Chairman of Checkmate UK, Paul Barrett, managing director of Barretts Kent, and The Very Rev Dr Robert Willis DL, Dean of Canterbury. Their involvement is great news for the charity and the thousands of people we support.

When Paul Hollywood came for breakfast at one of our young persons’ homeless hostels, one resident was feeling the pressure.

He was treated to a brioche with jam and white chocolate, baked by ex-chef Casey.

“I was feeling a bit of pressure because it’s Paul Hollywood, but it was a good kind of pressure,” he admitted.

Luckily, Paul – who was visiting to find out more about the work done by Porchlight – was full of praise, describing it as very, very good and adding: “Homemade is one of the most difficult things to get right.”

WE’VE picked up a few trophies over the past couple of months, one of which is a Kent Charity Award.

Porchlight was named Community & Environment Charity of the Year at last month’s awards ceremony. Judges praised our work giving a fresh start to the growing number of people who are homeless in Kent.

They also heard about our work in communities, addressing the issues that can potentially lead to homelessness. This includes supporting individuals who feel isolated, working with GP surgeries to address problems which can affect someone’s ability to live independently, and running a service to support families.

“It was such a good night and there were so many deserving charities – we were very proud to be there,” said Porchlight’s Rachel Kelly.

We invited current residents Liam and Kyle and former resident Aaron to join us for the awards evening. It was a chance for them to enjoy some top class hospitality (courtesy of the Mercure Maidstone Great Danes Hotel) and join us on stage when we were announced as winners.

A warm welcome

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Paul tries our baking…
Our Christmas appeal brings in more than £40,000

JUST before Christmas, we asked for help funding our services. Your response was amazing.

Our appeal raised an incredible £40,050, putting Porchlight in a better position to help Kent’s growing number of homeless and vulnerable people.

Jane Redman, our director of fundraising and communications, said: “We are thrilled that our supporters have been so generous this Christmas and are touched by the concern they’ve shown for people who find themselves homeless at this time of year.”

The money will help fund Porchlight’s helpline, street teams and ‘Jobs, Education & Training’ scheme to get people back into work. These vital services help people rebuild their lives and put homelessness behind them for good.

Unfortunately, rising homelessness across Kent means our work is far from over. A small monthly donation could ensure our services continue to be there for anyone who needs them in 2017.

Footballers tackling mental health

UNLIKE most football teams, Swale Tigers’ main goal isn’t winning... it’s mental health recovery. All the players have experienced mental ill health and playing football enables them to open up about how they’re feeling.

“If the environment is right and you get them engaged by playing football or some other means they eventually start to talk,” says club founder Matt Bromley.

The club is part of Live Well Kent – a network of mental health and wellbeing organisations across the county. The Live Well Kent service is jointly run by Porchlight and Shaw Trust www.livewellkent.org.uk

A NEW reading scheme for our residents has received the backing of Terry Waite.

He visited one of our hostels to chat about Bookbinders, a reading scheme run in collaboration with the Kent Messenger group.

Terry, who was famously held hostage in Lebanon for five years while working as special envoy to the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote an entire book in his head while in captivity. That book ended up becoming the bestselling Taken on Trust.

His story proved inspirational for our residents. One, Alan, said: “The man is truly amazing. It was a privilege and honour for me to sit here and take it all in.”

Bookbinders is about finding alternative routes into reading, whether it’s hearing a story like Terry’s, receiving a recommendation from friends or discovering a book via film adaptations. Find out more at kmcharityteam.co.uk/schools/bookbinders

Terry Waite joins book scheme

It’s official: we’re a great charity to volunteer for

IF you’re looking to volunteer your time to charity, Porchlight is a great place to be. In fact, it’s so rewarding that we’ve become Kent’s first organisation to receive the REVAMP mark of excellence for volunteering.

Jess Antoniou, our volunteering coordinator, says: “We look for people who want to make a difference to both others and themselves. Volunteering can involve one-on-one work, so having people who are confident and good conversationalists can help. Ultimately, we choose volunteers based on personal qualities rather than experience.”

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Get ready for the Colour Run...
WE believe employment is the best way to break the cycle of homelessness and leave the streets behind for good. Many of the people we support have complex needs, but the routine and stability a job provides are important steps in overcoming them.

Of course, an increasingly crowded job market is making it tougher for people to find work and homelessness carries a stigma amongst prospective employers. Also, people who have been homeless are more likely to lack basic skills such as maths, English and even IT.

That’s where Porchlight’s Workwise programme comes in. It’s aimed at people we support who are after their first job, returning to the workplace after a long absence or already working but looking for something new.

Changing lives

The Workwise programme allows people to build their CVs, receive interview training and learn how to use the internet to seek out job opportunities. They’ll also have access to work placements, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities – all important stepping stones to paid employment.

Employability sponsors

OUR employability sponsors help us by providing funding, as well as valuable work placements so that our service users can enhance their skills and experience. We’d like to congratulate our team (and the employers they work with) for their brilliant efforts in turning people’s lives around.

Workwise was named ‘Innovation of the Year’ at the recent Chartered Institute of Housing South East regional awards. We’d like to thank Mount Ephraim Gardens, Greggs, Holiday Extras, Canterbury Auction Galleries, the Brett Group, Land Securities and Pfizer for their continued support – we couldn’t do it without you!

To find out more, visit porchlight.org.uk/help-us

Bright future for electrician Josh

APPRENTICE electrician Josh has a promising career ahead of him - but this wasn’t always the case.

The 20-year-old works for the Brett Group construction firm, but not so long ago homelessness nearly ruined his chances of getting a career. Josh was 18 and studying to become an electrician when he became homeless as the result of a family relationship breakdown. He kept off the streets by sofa surfing but his education suffered.

“I was struggling to get into college and was nearly kicked off my course. Fortunately, Porchlight gave me somewhere stable to live and I was able to return to my studies and gain my qualification.”

Josh stayed with us for a year. During this time we first spoke to the Brett Group about Josh and they agreed to offer him a week-long work experience placement.

His work ethic impressed the Brett bosses and a few months later they took him on as a trainee electrical engineer. The company has now put Josh on a four-year electrical engineer apprenticeship. When it’s done, he’ll be a fully-qualified electrician.

“Hopefully he’ll stay with us when he’s qualified,” said Brett’s electrical department manager Dave Cunningham. “Josh is very driven and we’d do everything we can to help him be successful.”

Josh, now 20, knows he has a bright future ahead. “I live in a place of my own and I’m really enjoying being part of the Brett team. I feel like I’m learning a lot and they’re helping me develop.”

Porchlight works with businesses who are in a great position to make a difference to people’s lives. Some take on our clients and, working with us, make sure they get all the support they need to grow into their new role.
Stopping homelessness before it starts

THERE'S now more support for people in Dover, Shepway and Thanet who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Porchlight has received extra funding to help vulnerable residents manage issues that can cause homelessness, including eviction, relationship breakdowns, job loss or debt.

Our homelessness prevention teams will work in collaboration with local debt advisors, GPs, community centres and other organisations to tackle people’s problems before they escalate into a crisis.

Worried about becoming homeless? Call 0800 567 7699

Bringing sport to Dover’s young people

WE are running sport and recreational activities for young people in deprived parts of Dover.

The ‘Springboard’ activities, which are for 11 to 18-year-olds and their families in the Folkestone Road and St Radigunds wards, will develop positive attitudes towards education, the community and their own future prospects.

The scheme is being funded by the Port of Dover Community Fund and Southern Housing Group. More details will be announced soon.

Join our Mount Ephraim run

JOIN us for this popular fundraising 10K run around the beautiful Mount Ephraim Gardens near Faversham.

It takes place on Sunday 6 August. Runners will enjoy breathtaking views of the Kent countryside, and there will be medals for everyone who completes the course.

Participants who raise £20 or more will receive a free Porchlight running vest, and entry into the run includes free family admission, so your nearest and dearest can come and cheer you on.

To register, go to porchlight.org.uk/mountephraim10k

Sleep out spirits aren’t dampened by rain, wind or ice

IT HAS been a cold winter, but that didn’t deter many of you from taking part in sponsored sleep outs.

They are a great way to raise vital funds for our homelessness services and also give a sense of what it’s like for those who have no choice but to sleep rough every day of the week.

- Bennett Memorial School pupils raised £3000 by spending the night in makeshift cardboard tents. The experience also gave them an insight into the conditions currently faced by hundreds of homeless people in Kent.
- Rotary Club of Canterbury Sunrise and their guests made £14,000 for Porchlight by spending the night in cardboard tents. They saw off heavy rain by protecting their cardboard tents in bubble wrap.
- Gateway Church Youth Group in Ashford took on their own challenge, which resulted in them raising £2800 for us.
- Most Homes staff and associates of the company spent a night in cardboard tents as part of their year-long challenge to raise £50,000 for five charities including Porchlight.
- Most recently, Sevenoaks Scouts spent an evening under the stars resulting in £2100 of sponsorship.

Thank you to everybody who has spent a night outside to help people who are homeless. Of course, sponsored sleep outs aren’t limited to the winter – you can do them any time of year.

Our team can give you the help you need to plan a successful event. For more information, please visit our website at porchlight.org.uk/sponsoredsleepout

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Kayce’s week without…

WELL done to Kaye Payne whose One Week Without challenge raised over £400. Kaye summed it up: “I would have given up more but had to think about the ‘new’ me. Raising money and awareness of what Porchlight does, she had cold showers (she had cold water throughout the challenge) TV and social media.

A HUGE thanks to the 25 churches, community groups and individuals who took up the One Week Without challenge in January. Participants put themselves in a homeless person’s shoes with sponsored sleep outs, frugal dinners and going without home comforts to raise a fantastic £10,000.

Well done everyone – you’re amazing. To find out more about our fundraising challenge, visit porchlight.org.uk/oneneweekwithout

IN MEMORY OF JOE
A MASSIVE thanks to Conyer Cruising Club, Barclays UK and Swale Marina who raised £5126 in memory of Joe Wright. Joe, who worked for Barclays and sadly passed away aged 26, was a Porchlight supporter. His colleague Nicola Brown put together a Conyer Cruising Club fundraiser which made £4124 for us. Barclays added £1000 to show how much Joe was valued. Also, £5855 was raised in November by trekking the Inca Trail. Thank you to all of them.

PANITO BOOST
A CHARITY performance of The Marlowe Theatre’s pantomime Dick Whittington, hosted by Barretts of Kent, raised £270 for us.

THANET HELP
Cathedral Rotary Club has generously given us £3000 over three years to help support our work in Thanet. Thank you!

MUSIC TO OUR EARS
A UNIVERSITY of Kent carol service at Canterbury Cathedral raised more than £2300. Several of our staff went along and came back with glowing reviews.

THE INCA TRAIL
THANKS to Gill Barry and Ian Pascal who raised £2300. Several of our staff went along and came back with glowing reviews.

JAMES VILLA’S CHOSEN CHARITY
James Villa Holidays has kindly made us their charity of choice for 2017. They’ll be taking part in a dragon boat race, sponsored sleep out and more to raise funds for us.

PROHIRE SUPPORT
PROHIRE, a company that provides vehicle software, has kindly donated £6500 to help us tackle homelessness across Kent.

PUSH IT 4 PORCHLIGHT
ACTIVE Life raised nearly £1000 by holding a ‘Push It 4 Porchlight’ event. People did bokwa, pound and aqua zumba, with the money going to our Street Games sports scheme. Thank you to everyone who took on the challenge and raised money for us.

GETTING WORK-READY
The property company Land Securities has kindly pledged £10,000 worth of employment training for up to 15 of our clients. It will be done in collaboration with The Learning Shop at Bluewater.

YOU MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE
Thank you for your support makes a difference but we know that how we use your data is increasingly important to our donors.

YOU CAN FIND OUR UPDATED SUPPORTER CARE CHARTER AND PRIVACY NOTICE ON OUR WEBSITE AT porchlight.org.uk. Thank you for your continued support.

JAMES WILDE HOLIDAYS has kindly made us their charity of choice for 2017. They’ll be taking part in a dragon boat race, sponsored sleep out and more to raise funds for us.
It doesn’t cost much to make a difference...

By donating just £8 a month, you can help us to save lives. That’s the same as giving up a cup of coffee each week.

www.porchlight.org.uk/donate