

ZOE BALL ANSWERS CHARITY'S SOS CALL

Local celebrity leads show of support as homelessness charity launches winter appeal

Hove homelessness charity Lorica St Patrick's was joined by Zoe Ball on Thursday 22 November when she visited charity founder Father Alan Sharpe at the start of his fundraising sleep-out at Brighton's Churchill Square.

Local celebrity Zoe answered a plea from the charity which sent out an SOS (Support Our Sleeper) call in a bid to raise vital awareness and support for its winter fundraising appeal. As a result, Zoe and pupils from year 6 of St Paul's primary school in St. Nicholas Road visited Father Alan at the start of his sleep-out in a miniature replica of St Patrick's church. The real church is home to the charity's 22-bed Nightshelter and All Night Café in Hove's Cambridge Road.

Situated on Churchill Square's entrance piazza on Western Road, Father Alan's sleep-out event was aimed at highlighting the plight of the city's homeless. "With temperatures dropping as winter takes hold, this is the most dangerous time of year for homeless people," said Father Alan. "We desperately need to raise £50,000 to fund the operation of our emergency Nightshelter and All Night Café which are quite literally a lifeline for those in need. That's why I slept out. I wanted to show what the homeless will be left to do if we can't afford to keep our doors open this year. Since funding issues have meant we have to rely more and more on donations, the odds against us get greater by the day."

Father Alan is hoping that Zoe Ball's involvement and the resulting publicity will mean the public are moved to support the cause and make whatever donation they can. Late night shoppers were able to pick up a special Advent collecting box, also in the form a miniature St. Patrick's church which can be used in the run-up to Christmas to collect money for the cause.

Anyone wishing to obtain an Advent collecting box or make a donation should call Sandie Foster on 01903 745740.

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Issued for: Lorica St Patrick's www.lorica.org.uk