



You know, it's not too difficult to think of something to report each month – often it's difficult to decide what to leave out!!

Every now and again it is important to take stock and show that what we are doing is making a difference – that our efforts are worthwhile. That means “checking up on the numbers”.

We now have, at the last count, 34 carers and 31 cared-for on our books and we are becoming aware of more as time goes by. About 2/3 are actively involved in one or more of our activities. About 12 are, for the moment, happy to be supported with information only. Overall, we have helped between 50 and 60 carers and cared for over the past year. We are probably giving some level of support to about 30% of the estimated total numbers of dementia carers and cared for. This is actually a very good proportion compared with the “national average”, but it shows that we still have a lot to do. We expect this figure to grow throughout the coming year. We have also helped several “remote” carers who have relatives with dementia outside our catchment area. Our “awareness campaign” has also brought the project some new volunteers – so welcome to you all – where would we be without you.

However, the project is not “about the numbers” it is about the difference that can be made to the quality of life of individual carers and those they care for. We can't tell just how much it means for a carer to know that there is someone there for them at the end of the phone line if they are reaching the end of their tether, but we have seen, and been told, how much it means to be part of a Food 'n' Friends lunch club, or to be able to come to CAMEO, or to enjoy the afternoons at the Carers' Club and Info Café. These are the measures that show that we can make a difference.

On the publicity front we were asked by BBC Look East if they could do a short piece on the project as part of their series on caring for the elderly. Paddy Fielder, Melanie Woods and myself were “roped in”. After a whole afternoon of filming I now know what it means to “end up on the cutting room floor” but they certainly presented the project very positively.

Mary Morley has now organized the autumn sessions of our Education and Awareness programme. The first date is the 8TH of September at 7.30 in Dove Cottage, 39 High Street, Debenham when we shall have speakers to tell us about “Being aware of what services are available” and “The role of Age

Concern in supporting carers and the elderly". All are welcome.

Another date for your diaries is October 3rd. Ruth and Jamie Monck-Mason have very kindly offered to organize and host a concert by the internationally renowned AUER String Quartet, at their home, Tawnys, in aid of The Debenham Project. Tickets will be available from Ruth at Websters. Watch out for the details in the Parish Magazine and on the posters.

As always, thanks to all in Debenham, the surrounding villages, the local authorities, and our partners for all their support.

If you would like to know more please see our display in the Post Office; or ring 01728 862003; or call in at the Library Resource Centre or visit www.the-debenham-project.org.uk

Lynden