



Hello everyone,

“Sometimes things don’t work out as you hope”. A year ago we were working with the Suffolk Mental Health Trust to set up a local NHS specialist memory clinic so that patients and carers would not have to travel to Ipswich or Stowmarket to see the consultant. The clinic was also viewed as somewhere anyone could “drop in” to discuss their concerns and needs with a specialist nurse or professional support worker. Our experience over this last year has certainly shown that this sort of clinic is ideal in offering a friendly and welcoming atmosphere minimising stress and confusion in both patient and carer as well as offering immediate contacts for information, advice and support. Although, in its operation it has been a success, the numbers of referrals has been less than we expected whilst the “demand for diagnoses” in Ipswich and the other large towns has increased markedly. The result is that “our” consultant is having to devote all her time to her Ipswich clinics and will no longer be able to come to Debenham. However the trust is committed to the idea of local consulting clinics and will gladly reinstate the facility if referrals from our area increase. A bit of a disappointment but we have always said that we will try things, and if they don't work as we expect, try something else.

In the meantime we are offering a new approach which goes a long way towards meeting the original hopes. We have trained several volunteers who are happy to accompany carers / patients to their appointments as a “friend” who can help explain things and provide them with information, advice and useful contacts. In addition, carers will still be able to make an appointment to talk confidentially with the specialist nurse or support worker at either our Carers’ Club or Info café. And, by the way, don’t forget that should you happen to need the loan of a wheelchair for a short period of time, then the project can help – all you need to do is call us on 01728 862003.

If you would like to know more about The Debenham Project, please think about visiting our website [www.the-debenham-project.org.uk](http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk) where you can access all our newsletters, and much more. If you are a bit unsure how to contact us on the web please call in at **The Library Resource Centre**, Cross Green, Debenham and ask Melanie or one of her staff to help you. A range of leaflets are available at the **Post Office** and don’t hesitate to call the **Project Phone Line** 01728 862003.

With my best wishes,

Lynden