



Hello everyone,

As I write this looking out on a snowy and icy High Street, it reminds me that such wintry conditions place added pressures on family carers of the elderly frail and especially those with significant symptoms of dementia.

The **Debenham On-Call** team of voluntary carers, has been created in collaboration with **Christies Care**, and is now a reality. It exists to help the family carer (husband, wife, partner, friend, or neighbour) of an elderly relative or friend who needs support day by day, hour by hour, and minute by minute – a demanding and exhausting role. When there is an emergency, an important appointment, or they may really need just a few hours for themselves, having a specially trained local friend and volunteer who can stand in and cope can be a “life saver”.

Please make this service known to anyone you know who could benefit from the reassurance that all they need to do is ring Sam Cage (01449 711551) or the Debenham Project Helpline (01728 862003). **Debenham On-Call** is not restricted to just family carers looking after someone with dementia. It is intended to offer cover for any elderly and frail person who needs someone with them in the house for all but very short periods of time.

For further information see Sam Cage’s article elsewhere in this magazine in which she also mentions our information and awareness sessions for “Dementia Friends”. The idea is that if, as a community, we all have a better awareness of the illness, the effect it can have on families and friends, and how to comfortably relate to those with symptoms, the concerns and stigma associated with dementia will be greatly reduced. It will be much easier for families to seek help earlier and accept support because their friends, neighbours, those they meet in shops and the street “understand” and “are there to help” if a little bit of support is needed. It is particularly important to help to avoid the isolation that families feel when friends and neighbours find it hard to communicate or are afraid of what seems to be strange behaviour. I would like to invite you to these two evening sessions in March – I assure you that they will not be “heavy and depressing” - I am sure you will find them “interesting and inspiring” – and the course is designed for all us, whether we work in a shop or business, are a member of a village organisation, a self-employed professional, a GP, nurse, family carer, professional carer, volunteer, or just someone who would like to know more. More details will follow, look out for the posters, and get in touch with Sam.

As ever, we are very appreciative of all the private donations that we receive and this month especially those given by the family and friends of John Norman in his memory.

If you would like to know more about The Debenham Project, please visit our website [www.the-debenham-project.org.uk](http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk) or you can call in at **The Library Resource Centre**, Cross Green, Debenham and ask Maureen 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 best wishes,

Lynden