



Hello everyone,

Christmas will soon be upon us, so everyone is adding in to our regular activities those little extras – the mince pies and sausage rolls, the crackers and the wine, the party hats and chocolates – that help to make them just a little bit more special for our family carers, those they care for, and all who join in. We even have our very own “Music Man” coming to lead an old-time Christmas sing-a-long at the Carers Club.

We believe that it is very important that we "feel" and "understand" the lives of family carers, and those they care for, in order that we can not only decide what services and activities to offer, but also to help the NHS and the Social Services provide the best support. So in July last year with funding from The Norfolk and Suffolk Dementia Alliance we embarked on a research project to comprehensively capture the circumstances, experiences, and perceptions of those who are coping with dementia in our community. We were especially interested in exploring what encourages/discourages families in seeking early support and diagnosis. Tim Mason and Gordon Slack contacted and talked to, it seems, almost everyone connected with the Debenham Project. Their report has just been published and clearly identifies a number of important issues. As far as we can tell this is the first time that any community in the UK has carried out such an analysis and it is already attracting a great deal of interest from those responsible for designing Suffolk’s future dementia services. If you would like to know more please visit our website and look on the News and Progress page.

Final, people are so kind and I just want to gratefully acknowledge all those private gifts - some modest, some large – that help to pay for what we do. Especially, I would like to thank Sue Vickress, together with her family and friends, for their most generous donation made in memory of her husband Alf. Also, many thanks to the customers of Waitrose in central Ipswich for contributing to a cheque we received under their “Community Matters” charitable giving scheme.

Wishing you all “A Very Happy Christmas” on behalf of the Trustees, and “Thank You” for all your support.

With best wishes,

Lynden

For more information on The Debenham project please contact the **Project Phone Line:** 01728 862003 or visit our **Website:** www.the-debenham-project.org.uk