



Hello everyone,

Over the past few years The Debenham Project has matured and now follows a natural rhythm governed by the activities, support groups, and services that are managed and run by our volunteers. By and large it seems able to carry on without a need for any obvious “organisation” and “management”. And that is exactly as it should be - “It is Simple, It is Local, and It Works”. It is all down to the exceptional goodwill of everyone who is part of the project – volunteers, carers, cared-for, donors, support workers, etc. So each year it is a great pleasure to be able to say a big “Thank You” to everyone at our annual Garden Party. It has always been a lovely occasion, and this year’s event on July 11th was no exception. The fact that it takes place each year is all down to the great generosity and hospitality of Lyn and Mike Rouse. Not only do they throw open their wonderful garden but they also provide a luscious afternoon tea in a marquee with music throughout. This year we were superbly entertained by our local very talented musicians, Stephen, Katie, Anna, Izzie and Francesca. The weather was glorious and altogether, over 120 of us, could not have enjoyed a pleasanter afternoon. Indeed, once again a wonderful success. Thank you Lyn and Mike, and thank you everyone who came.

Talking of successes, last month I mentioned that The Debenham Project was about to jointly host a major conference with NHS Suffolk and Suffolk County Council. Over one hundred and sixty health and social care professionals, service users and community leaders came from across the county to learn about Suffolk’s innovative projects for dementia and elderly care support services, and to address the challenges presented by dementia and “getting older”. We were very fortunate to have two “senior wizards” of the NHS – both national directors of NHS England – Prof. Alistair Burns (the UK’s Dementia Tsar) and Prof. John Young (leading the NHS’s efforts to provide quality care for frail elderly people). The feedback following the event was exceptionally complimentary with Alistair and John publishing a joint article praising Suffolk’s achievements and in particular recommending The Debenham Project’s unique approach – “The Debenham project is a model for community support, needs modest investment but the societal return is palpable. There is no mandate around Debenham, it was not created as a top down process – it needed leadership but it depends on (the) community. There cannot be Debenham projects everywhere but there could be elements. Perhaps there is a bit of Debenham in us all”. The success of the conference is already being built upon to develop a common vision for how the county should provide the best quality care and support for those who are living with dementia, and for all elderly people in general. For more information please go to our website.

To end, I would like, as ever, to express my grateful thanks for the many generous donations that are made to support what we do, and to remind you that we have a wheelchair that is available for loan – a summer picnic and afternoon out and about in and around Debenham could be a special occasion for someone who is housebound.

Best wishes, Lynden

Phone 01728 862003 **Website:** www.the-debenham-project.org.uk