



Hello everyone,

Because Debenham decided to "get on and do something" over 5 years ago we have been able to develop a range of local services and activities which are regularly praised as the sort of support that can really make a difference. Similar to us there are also other communities who have enthusiastically taken up the challenge – Halesworth, Hadleigh, Wickham Market, Sudbury, etc. - and the Alzheimer's Society, Sue Ryder, AgeUK Suffolk, Suffolk Family Carers have set up cafes, advice and information schemes, peer support groups, etc. However in simple numbers, there are roughly 20,000 people in our county who are living with the impact of dementia on their lives (family carers and those with the illness), but the estimated total capacity of the services for each of them amounts to less than an afternoon per year!! Of course, not everyone needs or wants such support, and many will participate only when they are finding it increasingly difficult to cope. Nevertheless, we need to multiply the current capacity by 2, 3, and 4 times. The Debenham Project is playing a very significant role in achieving this but it could not happen without the tremendous goodwill and effort of everyone in our community that has made it a success. It is that success that enables us to confidently share our understanding and knowledge with decision makers, professionals and communities alike. Thank you.

The first of our 'Way Back When' reminiscence afternoons was held on April 12th and was very successful. Everyone enjoyed chatting about past times lubricated by a cup of tea and a piece of cake, and all brought to mind by our collection of vintage photos and objects from the 40s, 50s, and 60s. The next session is on May 10th in Dove Cottage from 2pm. Please come along and help us to make it into a regular event filled with lots of laughter and, perhaps, some of the spicy tales of Debenham Way Back When. Please notice that these get-togethers are for everyone, family carers who need a bit of relaxation, those who have difficulty remembering what they did yesterday but who can share their stories of earlier times in amazing detail, and those who just enjoy a friendly trip down memory lane. It would be wonderful to welcome you, feel free to bring along something of interest from home but, most of all, bring your memories.

As you know, I am continually humbled by the generosity of so many people and organisations. Their donations are really important for us. No matter how small they might be, they are equally valued for the difference that they make. This is especially so as funding from the local authorities, the NHS, and many other grant making organisations generally cannot be used for day-to-day running costs and this presents real difficulties for mature community projects such as ours. So this month my sincere thanks go out to Little Waitrose in Ipswich, to the Discord wellbeing choir, to the family and friends of Gwyn Power, and to others for their kind donations.

Best wishes, Lynden
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