



Hello everyone,

They say “it’s your age” whenever I remark that “it seems like it was only last week that I sat down to write our previous newsletter for the magazine, and here I am again setting out on our next contribution. You may remember that last month I talked about the need for a massive increase throughout Suffolk in the availability of the sort of community-based activities and services that we offer. However, Suffolk is not unique by any means. The Welsh government and local authorities are also very concerned that the support available to families coping with the impact of dementia is inadequate. They asked The Debenham Project for its thoughts on how to make this better and visited us to interview us for a conference that they were organising for key decision makers and the senior professionals in their health and social care sector. Following this, Paddy Fielder and I were invited (they paid our expenses) to present Debenham’s ideas and achievements at a separate meeting of experts, practitioners and community project leaders in Porthcawl by the sea. It was an honour and pleasure to be able to respond, especially in such glorious weather! My abiding feeling is that there are so many people who are passionate about “making a difference” and that there are so many excellent ideas that, given proper support by national and local government, and the NHS, they will succeed. Following our visit to Wales we have produced a slide presentation entitled “The Four Mile Rule” which narrates the story of The Debenham Project which can be found on our website.

Talking about people who are enthusiastic to help, not long ago my phone rang and a voice said “Is that Lynden? This is Roz (Brooks). I am doing a sponsored cycle ride from Land’s End to John O’Groats at the beginning of May. I would like the Debenham Project to be one of my two charities. Is that ok?” You can imagine my delight and of course my reply. As I write this, she is about half way there – I am not sure how she is feeling in the saddle but so far she has already raised nearly £1,500. I am so grateful. Yet again it was one of those “out of the blue”, unsolicited acts of generosity that show how much ordinary people care. But that is not all. Emma Huband (A Debenham High School student) did a sponsored hair cut in which she donated her amazing tresses to the “Little Princess Trust” for children who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment or other illnesses, but she also wanted to donate the money she raised (£70) to The Debenham Project – How can I thank her enough.

Finally, very many thanks to Sports Relief for their generous grant of £1,000. They are one of the few charitable funds who are anxious to help support community-based projects to be sustainable i.e. to contribute to their everyday running costs - thank you. I am also very thankful for the Co-ops green disc scheme for its focused support of local projects. I do wish that our County Council was more responsive to the longer term needs of successful community-based voluntary organisations which not only respond to the very real needs of the elderly and frail but, in doing so, provide considerable savings in the rising bill for health and social care.

Best wishes, Lynden

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