



Monthly Project News

December 2016

Hello everyone,

Christmas is almost upon us and everyone is rushing to get the presents bought, the decorations up, and all the other things completed. In the Church Year December is the period of Advent when we prepare for the coming celebration by taking stock and looking forward to the future. For others it is a time to enjoy getting together with workmates, friends, and family for a party or a meal.

However, for family carers of someone with dementia it is often a difficult time – exhausting and emotional – when they may need that extra bit of understanding and care. So, each of our groups in the Debenham Project has been making this month's events especially festive; Carers club and Info Café are putting on a Christmas party with all the goodies and a wonderful entertainment and singalong with our very own "Music Man" (Stephen McKie); Cameo is off to the Pantomime but I bet they will also be enjoying a sumptuous Christmas tea: Food 'n' Friends clubs will be putting on their Christmas lunches: Fit Club will no doubt be "in the mood" with a festive routine (sounds like a "chair jive"!!), and Way Back When having fun too.

You may remember that in Advent 2 years ago St. Mary's Church put on an exhibition of "Charitrees" celebrating the brilliant efforts of all our community groups, and last year it was repeated with the theme of "Debenham Stars". On each occasion Sue Holfield and her team created a superb exhibit highlighting the work of The Debenham Project. This year, St. Mary's is once more organising an exhibition – this time with the theme of "Debenham Angels" – and Sue et al have once again excelled with their display. Please try to visit the exhibition and spend a little time thinking about all those who do so much to make Debenham and its surrounding villages so special.

These days it is all too easy to assume that everyone is "on the internet" and can access information and advice at the "click of the mouse". Nothing could be further from the truth and especially so for the majority of family carers and those with dementia who are in their 70's, 80's and 90's. Certainly, there are many expert "silver surfers", but even they find it difficult to find simple, straightforward, and helpful information. Which is why the Debenham Project produced, and made available, a range of leaflets and other material. Over the years the project information rack near the door of the Post Office proved its worth when measured by the number of leaflets that were taken. When the Post Office closed we no longer had somewhere to display our information, leaflets, and booklets. Happily, the Debenham Library offered to host it in their new premises at the primary school. As well as leaflets and booklets, the library is also building up a small stock of recommended books, and the staff will be very pleased to guide you to a wealth of on-line literature.

Just as I was about to ask Mary to send our "Monthly News" out I have heard that we are to

be part of a new way of to help families who have to cope with fact that someone they love may have dementia. We know how this feels and the need for someone close that they can turn to for advice and information, but and by far most importantly, someone to talk to who will listen and understand. Suffolk County Council and NHS Suffolk is funding a new approach which places the emphasis on supporting local communities to “be there when you need them” and to “get on and do something” to help make things better. The consortium, that we are a member of, has been successful in its bid to lead the future dementia advisory and support service for Suffolk. This will not significantly change what we do, but it does mean that we will be a partner in a network of dementia friendly communities, dementia alliances and projects like ours which will have access to, and support by, Sue Ryder and other professional agencies when needed. It is pretty much the model that we have been suggesting since almost the beginning, and a significant step forward in the Social Services and NHS thinking. It's unlikely to be perfect and certainly will not be anywhere near enough to "solve the problem", but it is a start.

Finally, do remember that we have a couple of wheelchairs. If you would like to take someone with mobility problems out for a stroll, or if you need one to take them to an appointment, please just ask.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas,

Lynden

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