



Hello everyone,

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 also be very pleased to guide you to a wealth of on-line literature.

I dare say you wouldn’t be surprised by the amount of time that is taken up in explaining to various individuals and organisations the nature of the project, what it achieves, and whether it is successful in meeting its objectives. Sometimes this is because others have heard of us and want to explore doing something similar. On other occasions it is to do with us bidding for money to cover our costs or start something new. And then there have been the times when we were asked to prepare a report/presentation/description to be published as an example of good practice. However, the most time consuming is the annual “Trustees Report and Accounts”. This document is required by The Charity Commission to monitor what we have actually been doing, what we have achieved and whether we are operating within their financial, legal, and policy standards. In other words, The Charity Commission is our equivalent of The Care Quality Commission. Although it rarely inspects and rates charities, it has the power to do so, and perhaps it should exercise that power more often. So you will appreciate that the Trustees Report and Accounts has to be taken very seriously. It is a big document covering all aspects of the project and my especial thanks go to Roger Cockerton (Treasurer) for his considerable help in its preparation and to Charles Rickard (independent auditor) for checking its financial truth.

In the briefest of summaries, 2015/16 proved to be another successful year for the project. It continued to be an innovator and leader in community-based dementia care. It provided over 200 person sessions of support per month to family carers, those with the illness and others through a wide variety of groups, activities and services. It has a sound financial base with reserves within the Charity Commission’s guidelines but we must not be complacent. Along with almost all care charities in Suffolk, the project is finding formal funding for day-to-day running costs very hard to come by. If it were not for the tremendous generosity of so many local individuals and organisations we might be in a very different position.

Finally, I want to thank Christine, Barry, James and all at Abbots Hardware for donating the proceeds of their Christmas Draw to the project which, together with other customer donations raised £375.50. Also, if anyone would like to help with a new lunch club please let us know (01728 860348).

With best wishes, Lynden