



Hello everyone,

Early in February I was reminded of how supportive Debenham is of those in our community that are in need of a bit of help, and especially those who are more elderly and more frail than the rest of us, those whose illnesses make it difficult to attend appointments, those who are struggling to cope because they are overwhelmed with caring for a partner, those who are isolated and lonely, and those who are living with dementia and other chronic illnesses. I was also reminded that much, maybe most, of this support is informal and not organised or dependent upon The Debenham Project or other charities such as AgeUK, Suffolk Family Carers, Sue Ryder, Alzheimer's Society, etc. It comes from friends and neighbours "lending a hand". I am regularly delighted to see examples of such care in action.

However, there are an increasing number of elderly and frail people in ours and every community, perhaps more so in the larger towns, who don't have that informal network to call on when needed – and that is where the Project comes in – by offering practical and emotional help with information, advice, social contact, transport, access to professional support, etc. But the Project can't do everything and, why this month, I want to encourage everyone to just keep an eye out for anyone who may have become isolated and rarely chat to anyone else for days on end, and see if there is anything that would help them to enjoy more social contact, or whether they need a little support.

On the subject of practical support, the Project has a small network of volunteer drivers willing to take people to and from hospital and other medical appointment. This service is so much appreciated by those who would otherwise have great difficulties. The last couple of months have been exceptionally busy and very many thanks to our regular drivers (and a couple of other volunteers) – over 32 return trips since the beginning of the year. I am concerned that we are asking them to do substantially more than I would like – I believe that the Project should not ask volunteers to do more than about couple of hours or so a fortnight. If there is anyone who would like to help by joining our transport team it would be great.

Once again, I am so grateful for everyone's support and donations. Please also remember that if you need to borrow a wheelchair – we now have three – just ask.

With best wishes, Lynden

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