



Hello everyone,

As I “wander” around the county attending various events, having discussions with professionals in health and social care, and meeting with other individuals and organisations involved in dementia support, I am almost always asked about how many volunteers The Debenham Project has, and how we recruit them. The answer I give, in short, is lots and we don't! The truth is that from the very start of the project we have never had a problem finding people who want to help those who are struggling to cope with the impact of dementia on their lives. At the initial public meeting more than 20 of those who attended signed up - “we don't know what to do, but tell us, and we will do it” – and since then caring people in Debenham and the surrounding villages have regularly offered their time (and love). So now we have over 100 volunteers – 45 regulars, 30 occasional helpers, and 30 people who have said we can call on them if needed. I know it seems a lot, but think of it this way:

There are over 100 families in our area who are living with the impact of dementia on their lives.

Volunteers all have their own families and lives; our policy is to only ask “a little of a lot” rather than depend upon the “a lot from a few”, and we try to limit this to no more than about ½ day per fortnight.

We currently have 11 different help groups, activities and services operating on a regular basis, providing 220 person sessions of support, to about 65% of those families living with dementia or who are elderly and frail in and around Debenham.

So perhaps 100 does not seem so many considering everything the Project does. What is wonderful is that so many love to give their time and effort, and each month others offer to join in and help out. Take for example this last month we have Lilianna, a new cake maker, together with Marie, Martin, and Clive who have volunteered for our “Get You There” transport network for medically related appointments.

Finally, I just want to say a big thank you to Tammi and her customers for the very generous donation resulting from her “name a bauble” Christmas tree. We are so grateful for all your donations and support throughout the year, and please remember that we can receive donations via the Co-op (just ask for your dividend to be given to **609313**) and on-line using the button on the home page of our website (below). Also don't forget, we have wheelchairs for loan if you need one for a few days.

With all my best wishes

Lynden

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