



Hello everyone,

Over the past 9 years how to best support family carers, and those they care for, who are living with the impact of dementia on their lives has exercised many minds. Until recently the favoured solutions have fallen into three categories: Diagnostic/Clinical (NHS), Crisis Intervention (NHS/Social Services), and Personal Support/Contact (National/Local Charities). These have all been characterised by a professional top-down approach. In the meantime a number of community-based projects have been independently initiated and grown up, of which The Debenham Project is a leading example. These projects are very different in nature and characterised by being largely voluntary, serving individual communities, bottom-up, and focused on “getting on and doing something”. It is these community-led that have delivered the practical, psychological and emotional support that is so critical to maintaining well-being and improving quality of life.

However, over the last couple of years, we have become aware of a “sea change”. The very top of those who manage our Health and Social Care sector have (at last!) become convinced of the importance of the critical role of communities in tackling the impact of dementia and other chronic ailments of the elderly. They have realised that without the wholehearted and active support of towns and villages, the NHS and Social Services cannot offer the quality of care that those who may be elderly and frail deserve.

It is therefore exciting that the Alzheimers Society is funding Worcester University to conduct a major research project with the aim of learning about the best ways to provide locally-embedded community support for people with dementia and their families. The project starting this month will focus on deepening the understanding of community-based interventions (such as social groups, clubs, activities and day support) that bring together people and families affected by dementia. We have been asked to be “on the team” and share our insight and expertise. I really hope that this work will encourage and underpin a properly funded approach to community dementia support here in Debenham and across the UK.

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). I especially want to thank Abbotts Hardware and their customers for their “5p Carrier Bag” donations in their Debenham Project collection box – an amazing £125! 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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