



Hello everyone,

So much has changed for the better over the last month – We have daffodils in bloom in the garden, the sparrows and blue tits are gathering ready to begin nesting, the trees and hedgerows have taken on a fresh green tinge, and I stood not much more than 2 arm’s length away from a song thrush singing its heart out – Truly, Spring has arrived for Nature, so who are we to argue? And so it is also with the Covid crisis - The statistics are looking good, over 90% of the elderly and vulnerable have been vaccinated, and a third of the whole population has had the jab – Time for us to “wake up and smell the coffee”. I believe we can start to think about how we can get back to “life as we knew it”. But carefully! I am sure there will be some lumps and bumps along the road.

As far as the The Debenham Project is concerned, we will need to be extra careful. However, I very much hope that we may be able to resume some of the face to face contact we used to offer such as One-to-One support, transport, individual help and advice, etc. perhaps towards the end of April or the beginning of May. We may even be able to hold some socially distanced outdoor events, activities, and lunches towards the end of May when the weather has become more reliable. But running our groups and activities in Dove Cottage is something that will have to wait significantly longer. Sadly, we have had to delay our Annual Debenham Project Garden Party, so wonderfully and generously hosted by Mike and Lyn at the Limes, until next year – You can bet we will make it a very special occasion!

Over the past year our thoughts and concerns have been dominated by trying to do what we can to keep in touch with everyone, and offer support, by phone, e-mail, newsletters, and our website. But that doesn’t mean we haven’t been looking beyond the pandemic and to how care and support could be made so much better for all (carers and those they care for) who are living with the impact of dementia on their lives. As a member of the Suffolk and North East Essex Dementia Forum (an official advisory group of experienced practitioners) we are contributors to two very important debates about the future of dementia care investment and practice in our county. Firstly “giving the diagnosis to, and supporting the families of someone with dementia”, and secondly asking the Health and Well-Being Board (The top Bananas!) on March 11<sup>th</sup> to use their position and influence to not only “Make Suffolk a Dementia Friendly County” but also “Make Suffolk Dementia Pro-Active”. Please think of us trying to do our best to convince our Council Leadership, Health and Social Care Management, and other key agencies that “we need to get on and do something” NOW!

As I write, I understand that the Government will relax the guidelines on care home visiting to permit one close relative will be able to visit – and touch! - loved ones in care homes as from March 8<sup>th</sup>. So much, So Small, but So Sad.

Finally, thank you everyone who has made donations to the Project. It is your support that has ensured that we will be around for years to come. You can access all of our on-line help by visiting our new “[On-Line Resources](#)” page and can find our "Coronavirus - Local Information and Support" list on our [News and Project Progress page](#). You can also call us on 01728 862003.

With all my best wishes,

Lynden