

Debenham Project Update and Local Information

May 5th 2020

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **How Things are Going: Relaxation of Restrictions for those with Dementia: Serendipity and National Dawn Chorus Day: Free Mindfulness sessions: Virtual Dementia Support: Financing the Project**

We have continued to keep in touch by e-mail and phone weekly. So far, everyone seems to be coping reasonably well although for some, isolation has raised their anxiety level significantly as going out to visit familiar places and cafes on a daily basis has been curtailed to "local exercise". **Good News!** The Government has adjusted its social distancing guidelines for those who are living with dementia and mental health illnesses - See the attachments. You are now permitted to exercise outdoors more than once a day and also to travel outside your local area. You will still have to maintain safe social distancing of 2 metres. To make use of this facility you will need to have with you some form of documentation to support your need to do so. This change has been made in recognition of the serious problems being experienced by some family carers, and those they care for, for whom daily going out and visiting familiar places has been a very important way of coping. Also, being confined in their homes continuously for many hours has been psychologically and emotionally stressful. I have attached the "Easy Read" Government Guidelines.

It is surprising how often serendipity (the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way) has played its part in our lives - at least it seems so to me. On May Day, last Friday, as I was walking back from my early morning exercise with our dog Nelly, I was thinking about one of the themes in my last newsletter - the healing properties of simply observing and listening to nature. I was reminded of Mike Challis' lovely Derrybrook Soundtrack and who should I spot down on the bank of the lake but Mike himself. He told me the Sunday was National Dawn Chorus Day and he was scouting out the best position to video the sunrise accompanied by the Chorus. So if you would like to see and hear the result click on "[4.45 and the day is beginning](#)". You might also like his slideshow of "[Mickfield Meadow](#)". Incidentally, also as a result of our encounter, he has offered his video editing skills to help with our on-line exercise video.

Gatehouse (Living Well in Later Life) are offering a free course in [mindfulness](#) sessions which can, not only help with the stress of isolation, but can also be a recipe for improved psychological and emotional well-being throughout life. Mindfulness is also central to our own "[Relaxing the Debenham Way](#)" short course.

The Debenham Project is a founder member of "Dementia Together" which is the Suffolk hub for the support of those living with dementia. It offers a range of services, sadly a bit limited by the pandemic, but has adapted and developed its support. So please ask them by phone or on-line for help if you are beginning to feel you might not be able to cope. However, like us and many other support charities they are finding different ways of helping - especially on-line - and have just launched their "Virtual Meets" for May (see the attachment).

I am sure that you will all be aware that the Coronavirus emergency is having, in the immediate and will have long term, a very large impact on the income of all charities and and voluntary organisations. I personally feel that the big national and international charities will weather the storm best because they have very effective (some may call them aggressive!) fundraising

departments. For many small and local charities and other groups whose only aim is to support their community it may be a matter of survival, for others it will mean rebuilding their organisations after having to greatly cut back their services. I just want to reassure you that The Debenham Project is here to stay. As you know we have over the years enjoyed amazing support from local individuals and organisations which together with some grants and other sources of funds, has helped us to build up sufficient reserves to weather the storm. For the time being our income has nose-dived but I am certain that once "social normality" returns we will find that the kindness and generosity of Debenham and our surrounding villages is still there in abundance. Meanwhile Roger, our treasurer, and I are planning how we might financially "manage" our way through the crisis with the minimum impact.

You can access lots of other material by visiting the "[News and Project Progress](#)" page on our website. I have also attached the current version of our "Coronavirus - Local Information and Support" list.

I hope you find this letter useful and of some comfort at this difficult time.

With all best wishes,

Lynden