

November 11th 2020

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **Good news Indeed: However, here we are again: Kindness and support: Where we stand: “Stay Safe and Carry on”: Meanwhile: A little bit of Joy:**

Good news indeed: Just a couple of days ago it was announced that the first of the Covid-19 vaccines being developed has successfully completed its mass trials and proved that it has achieved a remarkable 90% effectiveness in preventing infection. I guess we all had faith that the global effort to combat the virus would succeed in time, but it is wonderful that we now have the scientific evidence in black and white. And I sincerely expect the Oxford vaccine to be able to report similar achievements within the next few weeks. Other teams around the World will follow. It is truly amazing what can result when scientists and engineers, and pharmaceutical companies across international boundaries come together with the single aim of finding a solution to a global threat to all of us. Sometimes, science can seem remote and academic but, this time, it will make a difference to everyone on the planet, it will make my life and your lives better and safer. It now looks as though my “Crystal Ball” may actually work after all! I hope that we will be able to look forward to an Easter without all of the fear and worry and uncertainty, and heartache, and sadness, and isolation, and depression of this last year. But I also hope that we will not forget about the caring, the love, the giving, the kindness, the understanding, the insight, the connectedness and the sacrifice.

However, here we are again: Once more we are in lockdown and wondering how long it will be before we can begin to feel that the rate of infection has been brought back to the levels in the Summer and we can begin to look forward to resuming, using a misquote from Spock in Star Trek, “... life as we know it”. However, if I am truly honest, last time wasn’t too bad for me and many of us blessed by living in this lovely and caring village. We found that life became somehow easier, gentler, and quieter (the lack of traffic through the High Street was amazing). Many of us were inspired to “exercise” more and I met so many more people on my regular walks around the Debenham Lake and our surrounding countryside. It proved an opportunity for us all to reconnect with nature and to feel the stress of life simply fall away – and I am sure for some to feel more “alive” (and perhaps very differently). I sincerely hope that we can get through this latest lockdown with a similar positive attitude. Of course, it wasn’t so simple for the many vulnerable, elderly and frail members of our community elderly in their enforced isolation – missing the direct contact of their families and friends, unable to go further than their garden (if they have one) and dependant on the kindness of others to do their shopping for food and other essentials. Also, and especially, it was very hard for those family carers with a loved one in a care home and unable to visit them. Nevertheless, in Suffolk we were very fortunate when compared with those in the cities and towns of the North and in London, and those whose businesses, and with them jobs, suddenly had to close.

Kindness and support: But wherever the impact of the virus has been felt, in town or in country, one word has stood out above all others for me, and that is kindness. So many people have volunteered to help strangers, neighbours and friends alike. So many organisations and charities adapted and evolved to generously support those who were in

need. It spoke to me that, despite all that is said about our selfish and self-focused society, that precious quality of kindness is ever present throughout our communities. So, as we go through this second phase of the crisis, if you find yourself, or know of someone else who is, struggling to cope please reach out – There is always someone willing to help – and it might just be the person you least expected. Additionally, Suffolk’s “Home But Not Alone” helpline has been reinstated alongside other information and services offering support to those in need over the next month or so and, perhaps, longer – See below.

Where we stand: Each day, as I have wandered with our black Labrador Nelly around the Village, Debenham Lake, Hoppit Wood, Broad Meadow, and the surrounding countryside, I have enjoyed coming across friends, neighbours, fellow dog walkers, allotment holders, runners, visitors, etc. and stopping to chat. We have celebrated the lovely autumn weather, exchanged local news, expressed our opinions on the various aspects of the impact of the coronavirus, shared our views on the steps that are being taken to limit the effect of this virus on all our lives, and so on. Meeting and chatting is so important in building and maintaining a community. However, one of the topics that have dominated our conversations is: “Why do we, when we have a low infection rate, have to lockdown just the same as Liverpool, Manchester and the North East? It seems so unfair! Well, the way I see it is this: If we do not abide by the restrictions, although at the moment our rate is low it will continue to rapidly rise until it approaches the levels we had in March and April. Of course, nothing is certain but if we all follow the guidelines we may be able to not only keep the rate low but also reduce it substantially. This will greatly help us save lives here in Suffolk and enable us to recover our normal way of life more quickly. So

“Stay Safe and Carry On”: It doesn’t mean we have to become hermits but only to keep a little distance from those with whom we do not live, try not to make direct contact with (or pass very closely by) others in shops and on the High Street, and take some simple (distance, hygiene, mask) precautions if you have to have someone come into your home – a tradesperson, a carer, a delivery person, a nurse, etc. – and do not let anyone enter unless they have made a previous appointment (any business they have can be conducted at arm’s length at the doorstep).

Meanwhile: The Debenham Project is still alive and well and we are doing as much as we can on-line, on-phone, and on-email. Thanks to a generous grant from the East of England Co-op, our lovely Zoe George and Theresa Palmer have made eight more bite-sized seated exercise videos for our Fit Club Snack Bar which will soon be uploaded to the Well-Being Package – Thank you indeed, Sharon for making that possible. Also Margaret Samain from Framsdon, who created the “Relaxation” element of the package, has been making an audio version to accompany it. And then Steve Robbins has produced three “Way Back When at Home” boxes, each filled with a mixture of books, photographs, old newspapers, CDs, DVDs and recollection cards to go out on loan – A treasury of memories to dip into during a grey winter’s day. And now for.....

A little bit of Joy: Hi Lynden, I hope I haven’t left sharing these few lovely images too late for your newsletter. Over all the years since The Debenham Project arrived on the Debenham scene our lunch clubs, events and expeditions have been a something very special to look forward to each month that can make a big difference for those living with

dementia (family carers, those they care for and let's not forget those who have cared for a loved one who has passed away). In the Project we have three lunch clubs which have almost certainly organised over 300 lunches with memberships of between "just a few" (5 or 6) up to "a lot" (12 to 20). So, here some photos of some of our many outings to remind us of all the good times we enjoyed so much before Covid came along, and help us all look forward to when we can get together once more. Lots of love to everyone, Joy XX (Joy is our lunch groups' coordinator and the leader of the club pictured here. L)





Finally, you can access all of our on-line help by visiting our new "[On-Line Resources](#)" page, where you can find the current version of our "Coronavirus - Local Information and Support" list, and our [News and Project Progress page](#).

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

With all best wishes,

Lynden

The Home But Not Alone helpline is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, tel. 0800 876 6926 Suffolk County Council's web link for Home But Not

Alone: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/home-but-not-alone/>

The Suffolk Advice and Support Service helpline number is... 0800 068 3131 open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Web link; <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/> The COVID-19 Emotional Wellbeing information Hub offers resources, guidance, tips and

support... www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/covidhub The First Response 24/7 freephone line is

... 0808 196 3494 for anyone who feels their mental health is being adversely effected and need help.