

Debenham Project Update and Local Information

January 27th 2021

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **Starting a new year: Enough of that!! Having a Plan: New additions and developments: A couple of other Debenham Projects: Finally.**

Starting a new year: When we left the old one behind I imagined that, with the test and trace system fully operational and the vaccination programme coming on stream, we would soon leave behind the fear and worry, especially for the elderly and vulnerable, and the concern that the NHS could become overwhelmed. I am sure that most of us hoped that we could be getting back to normal early this Spring – How wonderful that would be! But then the new strain of the virus proved that Covid-19 still had a sting in the tail and the infection rate suddenly and dramatically leapt up and seemingly out of control. Lock-Down 3! So here we are once more back where we were in last March/April. Sadly this is not springtime with its glorious weather to enjoy on our daily exercise walks (with or without the dog). Nor does it have the novelty of starting new projects, taking up new interests, cheering on the doctors, nurses and carers, marvelling at Captain Tom's magnificent achievement, volunteering and such. No! the days seem dark and cold, cloudy and rainy, sleety and icy, windy and blustery, drizzly and miserably, or all at once. And we are all feeling rather sad, tired and worn down after 10 months of isolation, being unable to visit loved ones, missing close contact with our families and friends, keeping our distance, and trying to "stick to the guidelines". Speaking purely for myself, I find that the endless depressing speculation on the television and in the media is not helping – I would prefer just a simple bulletin once a day and a best guess Government Plan for the next few months. However, that is not going to happen so I shall just have to try not to worry, stick to the guidelines, and get on with things.

Enough of that!! Let's look on the bright side. We have the end in sight. All but a very few of those in care homes, have been vaccinated, and within a couple of weeks the same will have happened for the over 70's and others most at risk. The number of daily infections is falling sharply, and the number of admissions to hospital seems to be approaching the peak. With the completion of the first vaccinations throughout the top priority groups by the end of February I would expect to see a very different situation and the pressure on the NHS due to Covid-19 substantially reduced. As to the Lock-Down, I think we must brace ourselves for the long haul but I am quite confident that once the better weather comes to cheers us and things look good on the statistics, the relaxation of the restrictions will be at the top of the agenda – but slowly and carefully!

Having a plan: And if the Government won't give us a plan then we shall have make our own one for The Debenham Project. In fact, we have always had a plan based upon the pattern of the pandemic, the steps taken to limit the infection rate, and when the lock-down seems likely to be lifted. Our plan has been: To ensure contact with all involved in the project by weekly phone calls, e-mails, and regular newsletters concentrating especially on those families who are the most vulnerable: To develop an on-line support package which offers exercise, relaxation, music, nature, etc. to help participants cope with the suspension of all our face-to-face activities and services: To secure the Project's financial sustainability through the crisis and beyond: To prepare for the time when we can all get together and begin recovering back to our pre-Covid state. We are in good shape on each of these, but all good plans must be open to change.

New additions and developments: In the meantime, we will carry on with our current plans. One of the next additions to our on-line resources will be "dance at home" for the over 55s. Dance East is launching "Debenham Movers" with the aim of making dance and movement more accessible to residents in Debenham (No experience is required). The first step is to provide pre-recorded taster

sessions as part of our Well-Being Package and then, later on in ZOOM sessions led by experienced dance artists exploring a range of taught and improvisational exercises. The main goal of these classes is to benefit you both mentally and physically, and give you the opportunity to meet with others over the ether.

In addition, we have added a lot more 5 minute exercise snacks to the menu of The Fit Club Snack Bar. They are not fully integrated yet but you can easily access the full menu from the [Well-Being Package](#) page or directly at <http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk/debfitclubmenu.shtml>. We are also adding audio versions of the elements of our on-line relaxation course.

For the future we are thinking about a "Memories" element. 10 Years ago Mike Challis recorded the reminiscences of a number of long-time residents of the village. It would be good to accompany these with photos of the time for visitors to wander through "Vintage" Debenham. I hope you will look out for it, but it will take a little time to get it going.

A couple of other Debenham projects: couple of projects that, although we are not directly involved in, get our support and best wishes for success. The first is "Love & Kindness Letters" - a community project running throughout February. The aim is simply to spread some love & kindness during a difficult time that challenges connections. It's easy to get involved, all you need to do is write a letter or create a picture that can be shared with others. If you would like to take part, either to send or to receive a letter, or both, please get in touch with stephanie.stanhope@outlook.com / 07854750272. Anything we can all do to show how much we care about everyone in our community will make a difference over the coming months. So please take part.

And secondly, "The Debenham Pop-Up Shop" (see below). It's a simple idea. The Basic Life Charity collects food from local supermarkets which is still in perfect condition but is destined to be waste for various reasons eg. approaching its use by date, stock replacement, etc. They then distribute to pop up shops like ours where it is sorted and laid out. Anyone can then come, purchase a hessian bag for £2, fill it with whatever of the goods on display are desired, and take them home. That's all there is to it. What could be better not only is it a bargain, it saves good food ending up in landfill. I hope you will try it out.

Finally: A big 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.

I am sorry that it has been longer than usual - Things seem to have been a bit busy lately, but I will get back into the rhythm. Until next time,

Take Care and Keep Safe. All best wishes,

Lynden.

Lynden Jackson

The Debenham Project
Bleak House, High Street, Debenham, IP14 6QW