



Newsletter – November 30th 2010

Dear all, winter is definitely upon us and as I look out on Debenham High Street the snow is beginning to fall again. I don't expect that I shall be going far for the next few days. Of course, it will have an impact on participation in our Carers Club, lunches and other activities but we will be "open" as normal and keeping "in touch". Sam Cage, in her role as Carers Liaison has settled in to the task and is fast becoming the "cheerful voice" on the phone and in her e-mails.

Each month usually brings something new to say and this is no exception. Over the last year we have managed to develop and consolidate a range of services which are supporting carers and those they care for. These mostly focus on areas such as information access, practical and emotional support, social interaction, etc. A key to our approach in all of these has been to work in close partnership with the professional support workers and agencies. In early February next year a new partnership will be launched which will bring together the Debenham Project with Suffolk Mental Health's dementia services.

Over the last few months we have been discussing with the Mental Health Trust how we can make life easier and less stressful for carers and cared-for when they are seeking a diagnosis, attending a memory clinic, or just asking for specialist medical advice. It has been said by all carers that having to travel to Ipswich or Stowmarket is difficult and disorientating and that if specialist clinical support was available locally and in a familiar environment it would make a big difference. So, together, we shall be setting up a clinic, to be held every two months in Dove Cottage. We shall eventually be providing a comprehensive dementia and memory specialist facility linking together the clinical, social care/support, and information aspects. The services that it is aimed to include are:

Diagnostic assessments

Follow up and longer term monitoring

Memory screening

Informal "drop-in" advice

Clinical information and advice

Social and health care information and advice

Support information and advice

Patients and carers residing within our area (and extended north to include

Eye and south to Grundisburgh) will normally be referred to this clinic unless they would prefer to attend at Ipswich or Stowmarket. We intend that the atmosphere will be more informal and social than is generally possible within the "hospital" environment. This is an innovative venture in which the Mental Health Trust, the GP practice, the charities, and The Debenham Project are all contributing to a team approach integrating health and social care at the local level.

The last meeting of the autumn session of our Education and Awareness programme welcomed **Julia Dawson from The Alzheimer's Society**. As an old friend of the project – one of the wonderful professional outreach workers who are the "front-line" and so important to so many who are trying to cope with dementia – she demonstrated the empathy and commitment that are so important in supporting carers. Sadly, **Alan Reynolds (Area Manager, Adult and Community Services for Suffolk County Council)** could not join us due to illness. He was to talk about how the County is responding to the ever growing numbers of those with dementia – especially difficult in the present financial conditions. However, the slot was filled with a presentation of the next developments in the project.

Alan has been rescheduled for the first session of our spring programme on January 13<sup>th</sup> 2011. He will be joined by **Dr. Rob Butler of the Suffolk Mental Health Partnerships Trust**. Rob is a key member of the team who have planned, and are implementing, the efforts to tackle the increasing problem that dementia presents to Suffolk. Please do try to come along – everyone is welcome.

Please watch out for the posters and invite anyone that you might feel would be interested – as ever, tea and coffee will be available.

I end with some news on the funding of the project. We are so grateful for the support that has been given by the local authorities in the form of our Mid Suffolk Local Partnership grant. This is intended to be used to cover our core costs and it gives us security for the next two years. In addition we have continued to receive private donations, and donations from local community groups – thank you to everyone. This is money that is earmarked for the extra and special things that we can do e.g. trips and events, discretionary grants for those with particular needs, the little luxuries that can pamper a carer just a little, etc. Ask a carer what makes the difference between the "good" and the "best" and it will be the personal touch with those small extras.

So, we are now hoping to set up a "Social and Fundraising" element to the project. We are looking for a number of volunteers who might want to organise functions and raise money to finance those special things that "make the difference". It is not just about raising funds but also about encouraging the social side of the project, i.e. "have a good time and at the same time benefit our cause". Anyone who would like to help in any way, please let me know.

Thinking ahead, as from January 2011 the newsletter will come out every two months – the Parish Magazine contributions will continue on a monthly basis.

As always, thanks to all in Debenham, the surrounding villages, the local authorities, and our partners for all their support.

If you would like to know more please see our display in the Post Office, ring 01728862003, call in at the Library Resource Centre or visit [www.the-debenham-project.org.uk](http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk) where you can access all our newsletters, and much more.

With best wishes, kind regards, and a very Happy Christmas

Lynden