



Newsletter – January 1st 2012

“Happy New Year”,

I hope that everyone had a special Christmas and I wish you all the very best for the coming year. My personal wish is that it will be one in which the cuts begin to be balanced out by investment in new and better ways to provide care. I know that there are many in the local authorities, the NHS and the charities who are working hard to make that happen.

Looking back over 2011 the clear picture is of the project growing and evolving into something which is acknowledged far beyond the Debenham area as an example of just what a community project can achieve. Just a month ago three of our team were invited by The Suffolk Foundation to a ceremony at the Apex in Bury St. Edmunds to receive an award of £10,000 from the Suffolk Foundation. This was in recognition of what the project has achieved thus far. With this, and our own funds, we hope to tackle some of the difficulties that family carers find in getting professional carers in our area. It topped out a year of awards including our winning of Suffolk Acre’s Probert Cup, a Mid Suffolk District Council & Stowmarket Rotary’s achievement award, and recognition in our own parish’s community awards. We have also become known to other parishes and community organisations and were delighted to have been adopted as “The Captain’s” charity by the Ufford Park Golf Tuesday Club – another example of how people from across the county see the importance of the local and personal dimensions in coping with the impact of dementia. Finally, we were featured on Radio Suffolk in early December – special thanks to Harriet Ward (a former family carer and now one of our volunteers) as the star! It is all a great encouragement to everyone who is part of The Debenham Project – thank you.

During the year the Debenham Project passed a significant milestone by having provided some level of support to more than 50% of the estimated numbers of those in our area caring for someone with dementia. That support ranged from advice and information, to lending a listening ear, and on to participation in our activities and events. For many, just knowing we are here to help has made a big difference.

Looking forward to 2012 the clear picture is of the project continuing to develop, and also trying to help other communities explore ways that they can help their family carers (and those they care for). I have already mentioned that we will be tackling some of the issues concerned with the supply of professional personal care in our area, but we are also thinking about how carers can be put in touch with all sorts of high quality professional support – perhaps a “professional register”? In addition, we want to explore how we can encourage those who may have the early symptoms of dementia to seek advice, and those who are family carers to seek support well before they find themselves in crisis. There are many other ideas for the future, but we have to make sure that in whatever we try to do we have a good chance of

succeeding and “not to do too much too quickly”.

We believe that it would be great if there was not only a Debenham Project, but also a Halesworth Project, a Framlingham Project, an Eye Project, and so on across Suffolk. We are committed to encourage other communities to “go ahead and do something”. Most rural communities have something to build on – all we can say is “this is what we did – is it any help”? Each town and large village will develop its own way of helping its local community of family carers. If Debenham can help we will, but our priority is to support family carers in Debenham and our surrounding villages.

Finally, once again, I would like to thank all those individuals and local organisations who have made generous donations to support the work of the project.

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 our website at <http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk/>.

With my very best wishes for the New Year,

Lynden