



Newsletter – July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012

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6. **Private donations!** “..... I’d just like to give you this towards the project .....”

Hello everyone,

**1. Wow! What a day!** A little while ago I received a letter from The Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk with an invitation to The Queen’s Jubilee Garden Party at Sandringham. It is really something that The Debenham Project has been honoured in this way. Almost everything about our success is due to the efforts of those in Debenham but it could not have happened without the freely given help from a range of professional organisations. So, when asked to bring someone who has been very important in our project. I had no hesitation in asking Louise Diss (until recently the dementia services manager of Age UK) who has been “just magic” in her support. It was truly a wonderful occasion and the famous cucumber sandwiches were every bit as good as expected. You need a special garden to be able to entertain 4,000 guests and on June 12<sup>th</sup> it was just magnificent in such glorious sunshine. The Queen and Prince Andrew spent over an hour just walking amongst the guests and chatting to them in a completely relaxed atmosphere. A truly memorable afternoon.

**2. A week later! Another special occasion!** The project’s annual garden party has become something of a much appreciated tradition. Mike and Lyn Rouse once again very generously opened up their wonderful garden and provided a superb buffet luncheon for all those incredible people - volunteers, carers, cared-for, professional supporters, etc - who have freely given their time and money over the last year. It is always a great occasion and this year the sun shone, over 70 attended and many more wanted to come but, as is the way at this time of year, were on holiday or committed elsewhere. It is just a way of saying “thank you”.

**3. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation comes to Debenham!** In my last newsletter I told of our delight that we had been asked, on behalf of the Rowntree Foundation, for our help in a national study looking at how local communities can make a real difference in caring for those who are elderly and frail and, particularly those with dementia. In the middle of May

we hosted Sian Lockwood (CEO of Community Catalysts CIC) for a 2 day intensive visit to do a case study on The Debenham Project. For Sian, it must have been a significant challenge for her to be able to get “under the skin” of the project and to “tease out” those things that are the keys to our success thus far. For the project, it was an opportunity for a wide cross-section of everyone – trustees, steering group, volunteers, carers, professional support workers, councillors, council officers, etc. - who are all a part of the project, to “tell their story” and to show that this project “actually works”. For me, I confess that it was, on the one hand, quite a stressful experience because in 2 days a good researcher - and Sian is very good! – will always find the weak spots and be able to tell the difference between being “well-meaning” and “doing something a bit special”. On the other hand, it was one of my most enjoyable and affirming professional times. When Sian left, I hoped we had convinced her that The Debenham Project was not only important to Debenham and its surrounding villages, but was something that should be taken notice of at national level – and that she had become a firm “friend of the project”. Having now had sight of her first draft of her report, “I think she was, and has!” On behalf of the project I want to express my most grateful thanks to her.

**4. Launching the Carers Co-op!** Providing top quality professional domiciliary care in Debenham and the surrounding villages has taken a big step forward this month. Christies Care UK has joined with The Debenham Project in an innovative project to help create a network of local self-employed carers, not only offering the highest standards of personal care, but also supporting their clients as “friends and neighbours”. We are also going to be following Pam Bell’s lead in Wickham Market and setting up a group of fully trained volunteer carers who can help out for a few hours in an emergency or provide an opportunity for a family carer to have a little “time for themselves”. As a vision, we hope eventually to facilitate the provision of all forms of domiciliary care, including rehab, specialist, end-stage and end-of-life. This is a new approach – an alternative to the standard agency approach with its inherent problems in rural areas - which we believe is ideally suited to communities such as ours. We will start by trying to get together 4 or 5 existing self-employed carers and recruiting a similar number of volunteer carers, and then taking it from there - “We won’t see if it will work unless we try to make it work!” So, we have appointed Sam (Samantha) Cage to be our project coordinator and facilitator who will work with Christies (and possibly another organisation that is interested in joining in) to “make it all happen”.

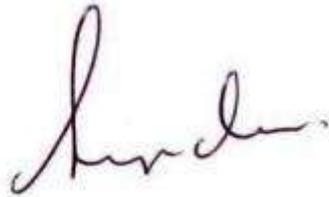
**5. The Debenham Project launches unique research project!** As ordinary people we accept that the earlier we can treat a serious illness such as cancer, the better the outcome will be – “A stitch in time saves nine”. However, when it comes to dementia this does not seem to be quite the case - often it takes a major crisis before any help is looked for and, by then, it tends to be more a matter of “making the best of the situation” than aiming for the best quality of life. How can we encourage family carers to seek help earlier?

On July 1<sup>st</sup> we appointed Tim Mason and Gordon Slack to conduct a research project which is funded by The Norfolk and Suffolk Dementia Alliance. They will ask the family carers, volunteers and professionals connected with the project, together with other members of the community, about their experiences, views and opinions - what things either encourage or discourage families from seeking support, how can we develop improved local awareness, and what services should we try to provide locally? Based upon the findings, the project will “Take Action”! We understand that this will be the first time anyone in the UK has sought to carry out such a community-focused study - The Alzheimer’s Society have asked to be kept in touch as “they will be very interested to compare our findings with their own research”.

**6. Private donations!** The Debenham Project would not exist except for the tremendous goodwill and financial support that has been given by local funding agencies including Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council, The Norfolk and Suffolk Dementia Alliance, and The Suffolk Foundation to help us with specific projects. However, this month I want to highlight how very grateful we are to all the individuals and local organisations that have helped us by making private donations. They may be small by comparison but each time that someone has quietly said to me “I’d just like to give you this towards the project” I am reminded of just how many truly caring people there are around. I would also like to mention The Ipswich Orwell Rotary Club and their past president, Helen Brookson. Helen and the club, not only nominated the project as one of Ipswich Waitrose’s monthly community charities, but also made us one of their nominated charities for the year. As a result we have been presented with a cheque for £300 from the Rotary and another cheque for £216 from Waitrose. Finally, I would like to thank the family of Kay Holifield for their very kind gift made in her memory. For her daughter, Sue and her family, getting the best professional care was so important in helping Kay stay in her own home for as long as possible. We were delighted when she asked us to put the money towards implementing the local carers cooperative.

If you would like to know more about our work and services 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/>. Past newsletters are archived on the website.

With my very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynden Jackson', written in a cursive style.

Lynden Jackson (Chairman)