



Newsletter – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2013

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**1. Garden Party!** Wow! What an afternoon. Each year Mike and Lyn Rouse open up their wonderful garden and so very generously provide a “thank you” party for everyone who has been directly involved in the project over the last 12 months – volunteers, carers, cared for, professional support workers, donors, participants, etc. In the past Mike and Lyn have put on a Garden Luncheon Party with the most sumptuous buffet for us but this time we felt like a change. This year they treated us to “Afternoon Tea in the Garden” with a scrumptious spread, a marquee, a jazz band, and glorious sunshine (pre-ordered of course!). I know that every one of the 100+ who came will remember that afternoon for many years to come. Thank you so much, Mike and Lyn.

**2. Dementia Friendly Communities!** I mentioned “The Prime Minister’s Challenge on Dementia”, with it’s aim to encourage communities to become “Dementia Friendly”, in my last newsletter. Well, at the beginning of May we received a request from the national “Challenge Team” for Debenham to become one of the very first early-adopters of the scheme, and authorized to use the logo which you see above. Although we might argue that, after almost 4 years, we have come further than most other communities in this aim, this is a continuing process – a constant evolution in how Debenham is not only becoming more and more “dementia friendly” but also in what we do to become “dementia proactive” in supporting local family carers and those they care for. In addition, we will be seeking to share our experience and understanding with other communities which are just setting out on the journey.

**3. Sam takes the Next Step!** You will all have heard of our Carers Liaison person - Sam Cage - from my articles over the past years, and many of you will have come to know her as an enthusiastic, energetic, young lady with a smile and a laugh for everyone. She has looked after and made contact with all the family carers who are what The Debenham Project is all about. Just a year ago we asked her to set up Debenham On-Call and the Carers Co-op, on a 12 month part-time contract. She has done a great job in getting them up and running whilst continuing in her voluntary role – and also earning her “real” living as a senior care worker. Her contract with us came to an end at the beginning of this month and also it was a time for Sam to think about developing her professional career. So, when, a couple of months ago she was asked to set up a new "local" domiciliary care agency I was delighted for her. It is a substantial challenge and risk but I am sure that "with a little help from her friends" she is up for it. However, this does not mean that we are losing her – she is keen to continue her

voluntary contribution to the project – but it does mean her role will be a little different. Although Sam is still going to be a big part of the project, I want to express all our grateful thanks for everything she has achieved, and to offer her all our very best wishes for this new chapter in her career.

**4. Stephanie Steps In!** One big worry (and one of ours) has been: How do we maintain our liaison with all our family carers and those who come to the Carers Club, Info Café, etc. now that Sam must focus on her new job? We are very keen that we should not lose her as a volunteer but we must recognise that she will not be able to give as much of her spare time as she has done in the past. We must also be careful to avoid any conflicts of interest. The answer has come in the form of Stephanie Tomkins. Stephanie has been an active volunteer (telephone line, Carers Club, and Clinic) since the beginning of the project and she has very generously offered to share the carers liaison role and ensure that we continue to give all the support to carers that we can. I know that Stephanie and Sam will make an excellent team. Thank you, Stephanie, for coming to the rescue.

**5. Coping with the Crisis Out-of-Hours!** Last time I wrote about a family that “didn’t get the care they deserved” – how they had had to cope with a crisis that probably could have been avoided. If “the signs had been recognized” early and there had been a coordinated response guiding the GPs (in and out of hours), the MH Crisis Team, the ambulance service, the police and the Adult Care Services the outcome might have been very different. After being admitted in the middle of the night to hospital via A&E the gentleman was diagnosed with dementia and 3 weeks later was discharged directly to a specialist dementia care unit. It all came together eventually but, for the family it was “four days of hell”. Following on, I am pleased to say that since bringing it to the attention of senior members of the Care Commissioning Group, the Norfolk and Suffolk (Mental Health) NHS Foundation Trust, and the Adult care Services, it has been taken very seriously. I can report that avoiding such crises and handling them more effectively when they do occur, is high on the agenda.

**6. Ministerial Roadshow!** Also in support of the Prime Minister’s Challenge We were asked to present our project and provide a display at a regional “ministerial road show” conference with Norman Lamb (Minister for Care) in Cambridge. We were delighted with the compliments made by the minister – “an inspiration to us all” – and particularly pleased that he asked to hear more about our ideas and plans for the future. It just goes to show that small communities can make a difference.

Finally, I can’t sign off without mention of the many generous donations that we receive – and especial thanks this time to the family and friends of Freda Harvey for their donations made in her memory and amounting to £550.

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<sup>307</sup>

Lynden Jackson (Chairman)