

## Monthly Project News for January/February 2017

Hello everyone,

In order to try to ensure that everyone who participates in the Project, i.e. carers, cared-for, volunteers, donors and others, is kept in touch we send out this newsletter by e-mail and also ask those who look after our various groups to make hard copies available. It is based upon our regular articles which many of you may have read in the Debenham Parish Magazine. However, many more do not see the magazine and even if you have already seen the magazine articles please glance through this newsletter as it includes further topical items, details and information.

### **Highlights:**

Here are some of the recent highlights of The Debenham Project.

Reflections on the Debenham Project. In an interview given for a Welsh Government meeting Lynden Jackson describes how the Project came into existence, its philosophies, achievements and vision. See the videos on this page

A new home for our "Advice and Information Display". The Debenham Library, now at Sir Robert Hitcham's Primary School, are very kindly hosting our display of leaflets and booklets following the transfer of the Post Office to the Co-op. The library also stocks a number of recommended books and will help you access quality information via the internet.

Dementia help and support - a new initiative. Dementia support for carers and those they care for is changing. A new community-based approach involving The Debenham Project will be launched in April 2017 which aims to focus on encouraging local support. A network of local dementia friendly and active support projects is being created which will offer immediate, personal and continuing support to those who are having to cope with the impact of the illness on their lives.

"One-to-One" family support is here. Many families successfully manage to cope with the impact of dementia on their lives in the earlier and middle stages of the illness without the intervention of the NHS and Social Services. However, they often say that they felt left to cope on their own one following the initial diagnosis and that they periodically would value being able to periodically contact someone familiar for assistance at times of difficulty.

Trustees Report and Accounts. 2015/16 proved to be another successful year for The Debenham Project. It continues to be an innovator and leader in community-based dementia care. It provided over 200 person sessions of support to family carers and those with the illness in through a wide variety of groups, activities and services. More information is in February's Parish Magazine and a summary is presented below.

### **Additional contributions:**

Following on from the last of the above items, each year we have to prepare a major report for The Charities Commission. This usually takes quite a while by the time we have collected the date, prepared the financial accounts, written an account of our stewardship, and had it all independently audited. Here are only the highlights, but all the details and our financial situation are available on our website by going to Trustees page

## **Highlights of the Year 2015 / 2016**

### Services:

Register of local professional support and domestic help was initiated.

Monthly "Way Back When" reminiscence therapy group started.

Sponsored a weekly "New Age Kurling" sessions initiated and run by ActiveLives.

"Confidential Telephone Helpline" closed in favour of Suffolk-wide service.

Project meets its target of an "afternoon a fortnight" level of support (i.e. 200 person sessions per month, c.f. Suffolk provision is circa an "afternoon per year").

### Dementia Friendly Communities:

Debenham continues to be one of the UK's leading dementia friendly communities.

Publication of the third edition of "This is: The Debenham Project".

All High Street businesses display "Working to become Dementia Friendly" window stickers.

Dementia awareness presentations to years 10 and 11 Debenham High School students.

Student involvement/work placement in Carers Club and Info Café.

### Funding:

Finances are still sound in terms of local contributions and donations.

Private donations and those made in memoriam were very important and gratefully received.

Financial engagement by the statutory authorities is a concern.

### Working with Others:

Healthwatch – Representation on the Mental Health Focus Group.

Publicity and presentations across Suffolk and throughout the region.

Organised a major conference on the future for dementia support in Suffolk.

7 service users involved in CCG engagements to plan future services. Collaboration with CCGs to audit the nature and availability of dementia services across Suffolk.

### Volunteer and Service Statistics:

Volunteers continue to offer their time – 113 and still counting.

44 people give 2 or 3 hours on a regular basis, 24 on an occasional basis, and 45 who can be called on if required.

Cameo, Carers Club and info Café (fortnightly), Fit Club (weekly), and

3 individual Lunch Clubs (monthly).

Overall, near to full capacity of over 200 person sessions per month.

Support to over 60% of families coping with dementia, plus others who are frail and elderly.

#### Research and Evaluation:

Proposal submitted to The Health Foundation for a pilot project to encourage other communities to set up volunteer-based dementia support.

Numerical evaluation of participation in our activities, services and groups.

For the full Trustees Report and Accounts please go to: Trustees page

#### Activities and Opportunities:

Another feature that we would like to include is to advertise opportunities that we have heard of and which you might like to think about or pass on to others.

“Adventure Dementia” offers active respite for those who are struggling with the impact of dementia – they are a “holiday away”. For more information click on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVaT33esFms>

#### **The Parish Magazine:**

And now to our contributions to recent Debenham Parish Magazines – And, for those who subscribe to the magazine, I hope that they might be worth a reread!!

#### January:

They say that: “It is good to look back on the Old Year but it is better to look forward to the New Year”. Looking back, I see that each year since it was launched in 2009 The Debenham Project has significantly grown and evolved, taking on new ideas and seeking to offer the best support that we can for family carers, and those they care for. Looking forward, I can already see that 2017 will bring yet more improvements and innovation in its services.

Firstly, we are planning to start a new service which is provisionally called “One to One”. Until now, the project has primarily supported people in a group setting – lunch clubs, Cameo, Carers Club, Info Café, Way Back When, Fit Club, etc. - and, other than our “transport for medical appointments” and “personal care and domestic support providers register”, we have not offered direct and continuing support on an individual basis. Several years ago Social Care funded a team of professional Dementia Advisors to provide this facility but it was not made a priority and was subsequently withdrawn. However, within the project, we know that, for many struggling families, the dementia advisor was critical in their avoiding or delaying major crises and critical hospital admissions. So, led by Paddy Fielder, we are setting up a small team of experienced retired health and social care professionals who are willing to link directly with individual families and offer support when they receive a diagnosis followed by help and advice whenever they may need “someone to come alongside” - not to take away the problems but to help them cope with them.

Secondly, we are to be part of a new way of to help families who have to cope with fact that someone they love may have dementia. We know how this feels and the need for someone close that they can turn to for advice and information, but and by far most importantly, someone to talk to who will listen and understand. Suffolk County Council and NHS Suffolk is funding a new approach which places the emphasis on supporting local communities to “be there when you need them” and to “get on and do something” to help make things better. The consortium, that we are a member of, has been successful in its bid to lead the future dementia advisory and support service for Suffolk. This will not significantly change what we do, but it does mean that we will be a partner in a network of dementia friendly communities, dementia alliances and projects like ours which will have access to, and support by, Sue Ryder and other professional agencies when needed. It is pretty much the model that we have been suggesting since almost the beginning, and a significant step forward in the Social Services and NHS thinking. It's unlikely to be perfect and certainly will not be anywhere near enough to "solve the problem", but it is a start.

This month, I want to say extra special thanks to: Stephen Mckie (our very own “Music Man”) for making our Carers Club Christmas party such a success: Sue Holifield and her friends for our delightful “Project Angels” in the Church (I hope you managed to visit the exhibition): Christine, Barry, James and all at Abbots Hardware for donating the proceeds of their Christmas Draw to the project: And to so many others who have supported us throughout 2016 with their donations, time, and support.

#### February:

I dare say you wouldn't be surprised by the amount of time that is taken up in explaining to various individuals and organisations the nature of the project, what it achieves, and whether it is successful in meeting its objectives. Sometimes this is because others have heard of us and want to explore doing something similar. On other occasions it is to do with us bidding for money to cover our costs or start something new. And then there have been the times when we were asked to prepare a report/presentation/description to be published as an example of good practice. However, the most time consuming is the annual “Trustees Report and Accounts”. This document is required by The Charity Commission to monitor what we have actually been doing, what we have achieved and whether we are operating within their financial, legal, and policy standards. In other words, The Charity Commission is our equivalent of The Care Quality Commission. Although it rarely inspects and rates charities, it has the power to do so, and perhaps it should exercise that power more often. So you will appreciate that the Trustees Report and Accounts has to be taken very seriously. It is a big document covering all aspects of the project and my especial thanks go to Roger Cockerton (Treasurer) for his considerable help in its preparation and to Charles Rickard (independent auditor) for checking its financial truth.

In the briefest of summaries, 2015/16 proved to be another successful year for the project. It continued to be an innovator and leader in community-based dementia care. It provided over 200 person sessions of support per month to family carers, those with the illness and others through a wide variety of groups, activities and services. It has a sound financial base with reserves within the Charity Commission's guidelines but we must not be complacent. Along with almost all care charities in Suffolk, the project is finding formal funding for day-to-day running costs very hard to come by. If it were not for the tremendous generosity of so many local individuals and organisations we might

be in a very different position. To see the full Annual Trustees Report and Accounts go to the bottom of the Trustees page on our website.

Finally, I want to thank Christine, Barry, James and all at Abbotts Hardware for donating the proceeds of their Christmas Draw to the project which, together with other customer donations raised £375.50. Also, if anyone would like to help with a new lunch club please let us know (01728 860348).

With best wishes, Lynden