



Hello everyone. It is surprising how quickly Christmas is over and the New Year is "up and running". The "Project Office" – that's me sitting at the computer at the dining table! – is back in full swing and the calendar of our activities is filling up.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> we had our first Awareness meeting of the Spring season - you see that we are always trying to look forward! Alan Reynolds and Dr. Rob Butler, who are two of the leading personalities guiding Suffolk's strategy to tackle the problems that dementia presents, gave us their knowledge of, and insight into, the County's response. Both stressed that community initiatives would be critical in supporting both carers and those they care for. Our next Awareness evening will be at Dove Cottage on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 7.30 pm when we hope to be looking at aspects of respite and nursing care – please watch out for the posters.

Usually, I talk about finances towards the end of my report. However, this month I want to especially thank the Womens Institute for their very generous donation. The W.I. has always been central to the community – without it we, in rural villages like Debenham, would lack one of the very important elements. For them to give their support and blessing to The Debenham Project is something of a "Seal of Approval" for what we are seeking to achieve. We also received a very welcome contribution from The Forget Me Not Club in Crowfield, and continue to receive smaller, but no less important, individual donations. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all our supporters.

Last month, I announced that we would be setting up a "specialist dementia and mci\* clinic". This is an important collaborative project linking ourselves with Suffolk Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust. We have now decided that this will start on March 8<sup>th</sup> at 9.30 am in Dove Cottage. We had hoped that it would have commenced in early February but the "snow and ice" created such a backlog in other clinics that there has been a slight delay. In the very near future our website ([the-debenham-project.org.uk](http://the-debenham-project.org.uk)) will provide more details – you can also call 01728 862003.

Another partnership that has come up trumps is with Suffolk Libraries and Museums. They offered to sponsor a special afternoon at the Mid Suffolk Light

Railway at Brockford Station (near Wetheringset). It was an occasion to remember what it was like to travel by train in "times gone by", and what it was like to have afternoon tea with sandwiches, scones and cakes. We were also entertained by the East Anglian Traditional Music Trust and their "traditional dancing dolls". For a few moments, I stood to one side and just observed – I find it difficult to express how powerful the event was in supporting carers and cared-for alike – the enjoyment and participation shown in everyone's faces was a true pleasure and justifies everything that we are trying to do.

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 and kind regards

Lynden

\*mci: mild cognitive impairment