



Hello everyone,

Christmas has, once again, been enjoyed and now we look forward to the New Year. If it proves to be anything like last year we shall indeed be busy but also making a difference for family carers in and around our village. It is just over 3 years ago that we launched the project and a big part of the initial effort was directed towards increasing awareness and understanding of dementia and its impact on family carers. We have certainly come a long way since then and now the rest of the nation is following in our footsteps with the “Dementia Friendly Communities” and “Dementia Friends” national campaigns. For us, it is time to see what more we can do, and so in the early months of the year we will be setting up “professional” level training in dementia for our volunteer carers, and also providing opportunities for general volunteers, local businesses and organisations, and interested individuals to learn more about the illness and what we can all do to reduce the impact that it has already had here in our community.

Of course such activities do not come cheap despite what the Government seems to think – It costs, on average, we have to find core funding of about £9,000 a year to run the project. In addition we have to find the money for special development activities such as the Carers Co-op, Debenham On-Call, and our research work. However, I have stopped being surprised (well almost) how often we receive unexpected and spontaneous donations – some small, some surprisingly large – I am just enormously grateful. Let me tell you of a couple. The first came our way as a result of a group of families who recently attended a dinner dance and (as you do) set up a drinks kitty behind the bar. At the end of the evening they simply decided to give what was left over straight to The Debenham Project. The second occurred at our Christmas Food ‘n’ Friends lunch at Coopersfield when a couple of unexpected visitors turned up and flabbergasted us with a donation from Suffolk Respite of £2,000! Also, and again unexpected, I would like to thank the organisers of the Christmas Festival Evening for nominating The Debenham Project as one of its two local charities and also thanks to the volunteers who “manned the buckets”.

So, all I wish to do is to say is “thank you” and to wish everyone a Very Happy New Year.

Lynden

If you would like to know more about The Debenham Project, please visit our website www.the-debenham-project.org.uk or you can call in at **The Library Resource Centre**, Cross Green, Debenham and ask Maureen or one of her staff to help you. A range of leaflets are available at the **Post Office** and don’t hesitate to call the **Project Phone Line** 01728 862003.