



Hello everyone,

## A New Year Begins

Last August, I really hoped that once we had begun to re-open our Carers Club and Info Café, our Fit Club and Transport service, and one of our Lunch Clubs it would be a steady if relatively slow road to getting back to the level of participation and support that we enjoyed prior to the first lockdown. And so it was, with numbers slowly increasing again, we were able to celebrate at the beginning of December with an early Christmas tea with festive goodies and a carol singalong led by our amazing “Music Man”, Stephen Mckie. Not quite such an event as in the past but, nonetheless, a lovely occasion.

Sadly, and shortly within a week or so, the impact of Omicron led to a rapidly rising level of infections although the numbers of hospitalisations remained low. However, it seems that the peak has now been passed and case numbers are rapidly falling back. Therefore, as our numbers are not so great at the moment, and everyone is fully vaccinated and being careful, we will continue to meet whilst keeping a very close eye on the situation.

Meanwhile, requests for transport to medically related appointments have substantially increased as GPs, hospital departments, and all the other health professionals are seeking to get back to some form of normality. Inevitably, the high levels of staff absence due to the virus have led to frequent cancellations and re-bookings at short notice. I wish to say a special thank you to our volunteer drivers who have been so understanding and supportive. The service is available to anyone living in and around Debenham who has difficulty in arranging transport to and from an appointment. All you need to do is phone 01728 862003. Please try to give us 7 days notice - we understand that this might not always be possible. We will then organise a volunteer driver who will contact you to arrange a pick-up time and, on the day, take you, make sure you get to the right place/clinic, wait for you, and return you home. The cost of 40p per mile, which we will subsequently invoice you for, is just to cover the drivers' expenses at the standard rate.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for all the generosity and support that the Project has received from our community (and beyond) over this last difficult year. It has certainly been worrying at times but throughout I have never had any concern that the Project would not survive and recover. Your support has ensured that we will be around for years to come.

With all my best wishes,

Lynden Jackson

[www.the-debenham-project.org.uk](http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk) ; 01728 862003