



Combined Steering Group & Trustees Meeting

Thursday 22 June 2023, 7.30pm, Dove Cottage.

Present: Lynden Jackson, Sue Jackson, Mike Rouse, Roger Cockerton, Chris Bishop, Caroline Manning and Richard Blackwell.

- 1) Welcome and apologies. Lynden welcomed everyone and noted that the following apologies had been received from Paddy Fielder, Mary Morley, Carol Garrett and Pete Holme.
- 2) Previous Minutes from Monday 13 March 2023. These were agreed and approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 3) Chair's Report.
 - a) **Website** – the new website is now up and running and looks very good with some very positive feedback from users and professional colleagues. The website address has now reverted to its original format – the-debenham-project.org.uk
 - b) **Booklet and literature/leaflets** – the revamped booklet and leaflets etc. had also been well received. Thanks were recorded to Sarah Carruthers for the huge effort she has put into making this all happen.
 - c) **Peer Support Group / TLC** – Caroline updated the group and reported on some new members. Volunteers to help run the sessions had been only Caroline on one occasion which was 'different' for those attending but in a good way. There are usually three volunteers who can accommodate a greater number of attendees. Suggested that we should keep a note about each session to aid with learning from experiences. The data would also be useful for grant applications etc.
 - d) **Other Groups** – It was noted that the carers club numbers were increasing a little as well, and that the two lunch clubs continue to be successful. Fit Club numbers are returning to previous levels after a few weeks of lower numbers.
 - e) **Post Diagnosis Support Service** – Paddy is still in the process of setting this all up with approximately 5 volunteers. Paddy is managing the immediate needs personally. Lynden reported on a disappointing experience with an NHS England professional chat room he belongs to that is meant to be a forum for ideas exchange etc. However, there seems very little interest in community-based dementia support. A couple of posts he has made have received nil responses which rather defeats the object of the chat space! He is following up with the organisers.
 - f) **Promotion** – Carol has been working very hard on promoting the project and has attended most surrounding village parish council meetings to raise the profile of the project. Surprisingly, many of the parish councils had not realised that the Debenham Project was a service that their parish could use! It was proposed that we produce a list of contacts for those areas that are further afield so we can direct enquirers to appropriate people in their vicinity.

- g) **Finance** – Last year we broke even, with this year looking even better. Roger proposed that we should consider spending some of the resource. Producing a 'Set Up Pack'

that could be sent to other groups looking to emulate the project would be a good starting point.

- 4) **Project Relaunch Event** – Feedback had been very good and noted that many people did not want to leave after the event had finished and were quite happy to remain and chat about the project and its successes. The project gained 2 new volunteer drivers as a direct result plus 2 new lunch club members. Many positive comments about the high standard of the publicity material and the new booklet. Thanks again to Sarah and Richard for their efforts. Roger would be sending an invoice to Debenham Vets for the refreshments for the event which they had very generously agreed to sponsor. Lynden to advise Roger of the amount. The new advertising banners were on display at the meeting which looked very professional and very impactful.

5) **Future Project Developments**

- a) **Local Promotion** – Lynden suggested that we need some newer and better designed window stickers that could be used by individuals or shops within the village. The existing ones are now very dated.
- b) **Consultation Event** – Lynden is keen that we receive feedback about the services provided (good and bad) so we can adapt accordingly. It was suggested that relatively small denomination vouchers be used as 'thank you' for those participating.
- c) **Collaboration / Research / Outreach** – the current Dementia Connect organisation does not appear to be working very well and is failing to 'connect' people from various areas together. We believe there is a need for local 'champions' to be identified who can own the activities and services being delivered in their area. Research projects, when identified as required should be grant funded from the major funding sources. With regard to Outreach, it was strongly felt that we cannot stretch ourselves any further. To overcome this situation, we will produce some slide packs that can be sent out to other groups looking to do what we do. This should give them a good starting point.

6) **Organisation and Management**

- a) **Recruiting** – noted that Mary Morley had resigned from the Project after many years of loyal service. Huge thanks were recorded for Mary's unstinting service to the Project.
- b) **Roles and Responsibilities** - nothing to report.
Noted that the Garden Party had grown from its original format and was now a very large annual event. The group was asked to think about the future of the event at its next meetings.
- c) **Date of Next Meeting** – Set as Thursday 21 September 2023.