



Hello everyone,

I am continuing, this month, with inviting those who are really responsible for the success of The Debenham Project – the volunteers and professionals who lead and look after the activities and groups that can make such a difference – to tell us a little about what they do. This time it is Zoe George who, five years ago, offered to do a “taster” session of chair-based exercise for our Carers Club and which was so much fun that it rapidly turned into a weekly session. To this day, it continues to be seriously oversubscribed. “Over to you, Zoe”.

Hi, I am Zoe, and I own and manage a gym called “Fit Club”. Theresa Palmer and I have been running seated exercise classes as a part of The Debenham Project for over five years. These classes aim to improve mobility, muscle strength and joint stability, but are also filled with laughter and all that is lovely about “getting together”. The whole class takes place seated in a chair so that everybody can take part. We start with a warm up routine to music which focuses on all of the major muscles groups and joints and challenges our co-ordination. These exercises also stimulate our memories by starting with a few simple moves and then, each time we repeat them, adding on new actions – often building up to a routine of more than 50 moves. Don’t worry, very few of us manage to complete the routine without getting hilariously mixed up between our left and right hands, feet, and booms-a-daisies. We also use different pieces of equipment such as Pilates balls and bands to strengthen and stabilise specific areas of the body. And, by the way, we also stop halfway through the class for a well-earned cup of tea and the finest chocolate biscuits in any gym this side of Birmingham!

Exercise doesn’t have to be all about “no gain without pain”. The benefits of these classes are twofold: Friendship and support from others, and the physical benefit of the exercise. Our goals from the physical exercises are to keep people mobile; simple exercises on the legs to enable us to get out of our chair; other exercises can help mobility of the shoulders which can impact on tasks such as dressing yourself; and postural exercises can help us to keep upright and prevent falls. However, catching up with others, a good chat and a giggle are so very important to our mental wellbeing.



Thank you, Zoe.

To finish this month, I especially want to personally thank everyone who have supported the project with their donations.

With best wishes, Lynden

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