



Debenham Project Update and Local Information

May 24th 2020

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **Pass it On: How Things are Going: The Debenham Project Songbook: Suffolk Virtual Care Response: The Herbert Protocol:**

I would like to begin by saying that although the Debenham Project was set up to specially focus on supporting those who are living with dementia, over the years its role has evolved to include anyone else who might benefit by participating in our activities and services. This is particularly true of the on-line resources we have recently created to help not only our older and more isolated participants, but also anyone who may be feeling the stresses and strains of “Lock Down”. Please do let your friends and neighbours know what is available and encourage them to try them out. And if there are any who would like to receive this and future newsletters let me know.

It is a tough time for everyone, but tougher for some, and especially those who are trapped in London, the other cities and the bigger towns where they haven't been able to get out and refresh their spirits in our wonderful countryside (safe distancing of course). As you will have observed, Debenham is particularly lovely this year - at the risk of drawing on World War 2 memories of the “Battle of Britain” summer, we have been blessed with a beautiful spring and early summer to help us through the early stages of the pandemic, but there is quite a long time to go. The famous summer of 1976 started just like this and carried on until the beginning of September. I hope that this one may also continue likewise (although with the Lord's help of a bit of regular rain overnight to help our gardeners and farmers!).

“And the good news is” once more everyone Sue and I have spoken to by phone or as we have threaded our way at a safe distance around the village and out exercising, seems to be surviving reasonably well and in pretty good spirits. And on a personal level our son Matthew has, we believe, finally turned the corner and is now on the road to recovery. Thank you so much for all your kind thoughts and words.

Meanwhile, “A Helping Hand in Debenham” continues to support vulnerable and isolated residents in the area and Jane Baldwin is coordinating the delivery of food parcels from the Parish's village foodbank – Anyone in this time of national crisis can find themselves in difficulties – It's not just the very vulnerable - The shut-down of retail shops, businesses and companies has left many families facing serious financial difficulties – Please do not feel embarrassed or hesitate to contact Dina Bedwell (Debenham Parish Clerk – 07514 277974) if you are struggling to support yourself or your family (It is strictly confidential).

I am delighted to say that our webmaster Chris has been working away behind the scenes and added a [new page](#) on The Debenham Project website specifically to offer simple access to our current on-line activities

and local support information such as chair-based home exercise, relaxation, mindfulness and meditation, Covid-19 info, etc. I can now announce that we have added **“Singalong with The Debenham Project Songbook”**. Many of you will know Stephen Mckie, our wonderful "Music Man", who has entertained us many times at our annual Garden and Christmas Carers Club parties. Stephen has, in his own inimitable style, recorded an extended concert of all the songs we love to sing - "A Melifluent Old Time Music Hall Extravaganza for your Delectation." I guarantee that you will find yourselves wanting to join in, and why not. So we have also produced "The Debenham Project Songbook" with all the words to all the songs. To open the songbook and enjoy the concert [click here](#).

This pandemic has highlighted quite a number of things that, at the community level, we all know about but somehow had not really achieved a level of awareness, understanding, importance or priority in the minds of those in The Government, NHS, and Local Authorities who are in a position to make things happen. One of these is that the majority of older persons are not computer, smartphone, e-mail, facebook, Internet, or even DVD recorder savvy. This is not a reflection upon them or something new. It has been happening since the beginning of time. Our younger generations strive to create new technology to match their new way of living and it can be a struggle for us in the older generations to match their expertise in using their technology. This is why I was so pleased to learn that Suffolk County Council had purchased 1000 “tablet” videophones as an element of “Suffolk Virtual Care Response”. They offer the simplest of “Press the Button and you are connected” video calls to family and friends and are being provided to those who are vulnerable and isolated. If you know someone who would benefit please let me know – no guarantees! To learn more go to [Alcove Video Carephone](#) .

When opportunities for those who are living with dementia to get out of the house, have a trip to a favourite spot and enjoy a cup of tea in a café or garden centre are limited, the stresses build up in both carers and those they care for. This is the sort of situation when many family carers are seriously worried about the person they care for wandering and getting lost and distressed. We desperately hope that this won't happen but it makes sense to be prepared just in case. If the worst happens and the person you care for does go missing either when you are out and about, or at home, contact the Police as soon as possible and before you go any further – They will not mind, and will advise you what to do next – Under that uniform they are amazing. And to help them find and bring your loved one home please think about using “The Herbert Protocol” – a form which describes your loved one together with a photo of them. [I have attached their leaflet](#).

I hope you find this letter useful and of some comfort at this difficult time.

With all best wishes,

Lynden