

June 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

Hi Everyone,

**In this letter: How Things are Going: Expanding On-Line Activities: New Exercise Routines: Updated Local Information: Thanks**

I can't really believe that this is our 10<sup>th</sup> newsletter. That is just a little under one a week since lock-down. The first one was published on March 24<sup>th</sup>. A week before this we decided to suspend the most important elements of The Debenham Project i.e. our Lunch Clubs, Cameo, Fit Club, Carers Club, Info Café, and all one-to-one face contact. As we have talked to our carers, cared for, and other participants in the Project each week, we gain a sense of their mood and concerns. It is clear that nobody is happy to be restricted in when and how much they can go out of their homes, no-one is happy to be having to queue to shop at the Co-op, get their pension at the Post Office, or feel scared when they step outside their front door. However, so far, everyone is making the best of the situation. Like Sue and I, they miss being able to go out and have a lunch with their friends, being close to their grandchildren, being able to sit around a table in Dove Cottage to enjoy tea, luscious cakes, a chat, a giggle and a laugh.

I wish that I could say when we might be able to resume our get-togethers and groups in some limited form or other but I can't. The situation is far too uncertain to offer any prospect in the near future. I guess that if local testing and tracking showed that had been very few or no new cases in Suffolk for a sustained period, we might be able to consider restarting. However, I feel that that is not likely to occur before the Autumn and, more likely, not before the New Year. So "Hang on in there" – we will be back in full swing just as soon as we can.

Until then, we will continue to do whatever we can by keeping in phone contact, e-mail, and on-line. Over the last 3 months we have managed to put together a range of on-line activities and support that may help in getting through and coping with the restrictions.

Relaxation – Exercise at Home – Old Time Singalong Concert – Mindfulness and Meditation – Local Information and Support – Etc.

Actually, these are not just for those who are living with dementia or just for the duration of the Coronavirus pandemic. We believe that they can be equally of benefit for anyone who may perhaps be:

Less physically able / House-bound / Stressed / Lonely / Socially Isolated / Etc.

It doesn't matter what their age happens to be. At the moment, it is just a "collection" of items on the On-Line Resources page of our website. We want to continue to expand what is on offer. The elements of our on-line resources have come about through our philosophy of "getting on and doing something" and not spending valuable time and effort worrying about whether they are the best ideas, whether they are produced to professional quality standards, and whether they tick all the boxes. So if you have any ideas regarding more activities/services/information to

include please let me know and we will see what we can do. In time we plan to develop them into an integrated support package that could be made available on a wider scale through Suffolk's county-wide "Dementia Together" support service and NHS Social Prescribing.

A couple of weeks ago I announced our "Exercise Snack Bar". An al-a-carte menu of bite-sized 5 minute exercise routines that you can do in a chair – They take no time at all but it can make a big difference if you regularly "partake" from the selection. Zoe has added 3 new exercises for you to try and more will follow. Click on our [On-Line Resources](#) page and Enjoy!

We have also updated our "[Coronavirus - Local Information](#)" to include access to the "Debenham Food Parcel Scheme" and "The Herbert Protocol" which is designed to help the Police and the local authorities find and safely return home someone with dementia who has wandered and become lost.

Finally, three months on, I want to thank everyone in Debenham and the surrounding villages who have offered so much to help those who are socially isolated, those who face financial difficulty and those who are suffering stress and other mental issues. Debenham is a "special" place and we need look no farther than the immediate response when COVID 19 became the crisis it now is, and how so many volunteers have come forward to give their time to "Helping Hand in Debenham", "Debenham Food Parcel Scheme", and to help their neighbours. That is the generosity and care that has not only sustained, but grown the Debenham Project throughout the past 10 years.

You can access all of our on-line help by visiting our new "[On-Line Resources](#)" page, where you can find the current version of our "Coronavirus - Local Information and Support" list, and our [News and Project Progress page](#).

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

With all best wishes,

Lynden