

Debenham Project Update and Local Information

September 13th 2020

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **“Cream Teas at Chesters”**: There is still time ...: How Things are Going: Please Have your Say.

It seems to have been a very long time since we have been able to enjoy getting together in any way other than an occasional socially distanced chat in the High Street. There is something special about a garden party, a day together at the seaside, and so many other summer events. Sadly, we had to cancel all those that were planned for this year. So you can imagine my pleasure when Sarah and Nicola suggested that, now the guidelines have been relaxed as far as people meeting outdoors, they would like to put on “Cream Teas at Chesters”. It was to be held in Sarah’s lovely garden as a social fundraising event for The Debenham Project. Within a couple of days they had it organised and planned, posters on the way, raffle prizes and support from all the local businesses, and all within the guidelines. How much money it would raise was not really important, this was something they wanted to do to lift the spirits of those who hadn’t had the chance to “dress up” for something special. The only thing that they couldn’t count on was the weather, but it seems even that responded to their enthusiasm. It turned out to be a very lovely day. In fact it was three lovely sessions late morning, lunchtime and afternoon. It was lovely for Sue and I to be able to chat with so many of those supporting and supported by the Project – friends that we have only been able to talk to by phone and e-mail - it would have been special to sit beside them and hug them but, for the time being, we must all keep our distance.

Altogether Sarah, Nicola and the “Team”, not only provided cheese scones and cream teas for about 75 guests but also delivered the same to all the businesses who had supported the event. I know that the money was not the main aim but I can’t fail to say “Wow” – It totalled more than £1300 – purely in donations and the raffle – for once, I was speechless. Thank you so much to everyone – to Sarah, Nicola, Sheila, and David (in his “modern man” suit of pastel blue pinny and matching trousers), to all our Debenham businesses, to those who couldn’t be there but made donations, and especially everyone who came and enjoyed a very special day.

We have had lots of songs asked for “By Special Request” and Stephen is now setting out to record them especially for you – It might take a little while because he is a very busy person. We are going to put each request on a CD and “deliver it to your door”. I hope you enjoy playing it and treasure it. Meanwhile, it is not too late for those of you that would like to have your favourite memory recorded as part of the album – Just e-mail me, phone me or drop a note through my door.

I appreciate that the increasing national rate of new confirmed Covid 19 is worrying, and there have been several new cases within Mid-Suffolk over the last week or so. The local incidence remains very low compared with the towns and regions which have been highlighted in the news, and this seems more likely to be a blip than an outbreak of the illness in our area. Nevertheless, it is an indication of how easily the infection can spread in communities that have hitherto been almost free of it. So we

all need to try to stick to the “Rule of Six” and other guidelines (I know it is not always easy and we can forget) and, especially, if we have been in areas with a significant incidence of the disease, to be just that little bit more careful.

Last time I asked everyone - present and past carers, cared for, volunteers, other participants, etc to give us your thoughts and feedback about:

- Overcoming the reluctance of some who have been diagnosed with dementia (or may be worried about it) to contact The Debenham Project. We want your views on why this might be, what we can do to overcome it, and what you might say to them to encourage them to make that first step towards not being on their own and to seeking a bit of help and support.
- What can we do better, and what ideas do you have for activities and services we might be able to offer in the future? Of course things are pretty messed up by Covid 19 at the moment but we are beginning to think about what we can learn from the last few months, and planning for the time when we can resume all our groups and face to face service.
- I was listening to the radio early yesterday morning and heard an interviewee say something like “data doesn’t change peoples’ minds, it is the stories”. The future will be different, and there is no doubt about that! So what is your vision of “An Ideal Future” for the provision of health, social and community care and support for older persons in Debenham and its surrounding villages. Have your say! We want to know your stories and what you think – what are the problems – what are the successes – what has made you feel better – what has made you feel worse - what is good – what is not so good – what could be stronger – what is not needed – what is missing – etc. It can be anything at all that might have an impact on yours or someone else’s health and well-being – the GP Practice - involvement with Social Care – Mental Health - Dementia Support – care and support for older persons - older Isolation – Community Groups – Housing – Hospital Treatment – Waiting Times – and so on.
- I cannot guarantee to solve any of the problems but I will collate them and make sure that they are circulated to those who have, at least, the potential to make a difference.

I intend to return to these topics regularly over the coming months. So, if you can, please help – A few heartfelt words can often have more impact than all the glossy reports produced by academics and advisors. I also know there are those of you who have lived through the dementia journey, in all its aspects, and whose experience and understanding are invaluable but could not be so briefly captured. Whatever, don’t be put off – anything you can offer in your own words will be special. It is important that when we do get out of this crisis things don’t just drift back to where we were before, so please have your say.

Finally, 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