

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **How Things are Going: Seated Exercise the Debenham Way (A Fit Club Video): Bird Song Opera: New Support Services**

This is our 4th newsletter following the suspension all our group activities within the project just a month ago, and three and a half weeks into the national "Lock Down". So far we have been very fortunate when compared to the situation in London and many other cities. I guess this comes as no surprise as we live in a part of the country where shopping locally and exercising within the social distancing guidelines is so much easier than in a town or a city. We also live in particularly lovely part of Suffolk so that, for most of us, the daily refreshment of a walk in the countryside is available on our doorstep. However, with the increase in talk/pressure for a strategy to release the restrictions, it would be easy for us in our little corner of East Anglia to think that the virus has passed us by and we can get back to chatting to everyone in the High Street, picking up on meeting friends for lunch, calling in on our neighbours, popping in to the Woolpack for a pint (or a box of matches - a family anecdote!) within the next few weeks. Being totally honest, I believe that any relaxation of the restrictions will be gradual and will prioritise protecting front-line nurses, doctors and social carers, and shielding those who are elderly and/or frail from infection. It will probably mean that those of us who are well into the "senior citizen" category will be asked to continue in some form of isolation for rather longer. I know that we will be able to cope with it but, perhaps, we will need a bit of help. So The Debenham Project is trying to do as much as it can by telephone, e-mail and the internet.

We see/hear the UK-wide situation in the media but it is very difficult to know exactly what the situation is here in Debenham. On a weekly basis, we are not only keeping in contact with all our "families" who are living with dementia, but also with all those others (and volunteers) who have been a part of our regular support groups - Carers Club, Info cafe, CAMEO, Fit Club, Lunch Clubs, One-to-One, etc. So far everyone seems to be managing reasonably well. However, if you know of anyone who particularly needs support please ask them to contact me either directly on 01728 862003, or via our website.

In keeping with our trying to make "isolation" just a little bit more bearable for those who are among our older and more frail in our community, we have been thinking about managing / reducing stress, keeping / getting in shape, and remaining / becoming positive. Last week we launched our short course in "[Relaxing the Debenham Way](#)" incorporating a slide show of the [Debenham Lake](#). This week we have developed an on-line version of the Debenham Project's Fit Club which Zoe and Theresa have run every week in Dove Cottage - As well as a little something to lighten your hearts.

We all know that we should do at least a little regular exercise, but at this time when we, and especially our older and less mobile neighbours, are spending much of our time isolated in our own homes. Why not join in with our Fit Club on line? Over the past 9 years Zoe George and Theresa Palmer have been our wonderful instructors for our weekly seated exercise group in Dove Cottage. Just before the "Lock Down" we recorded a video of one of our sessions that you can access for free. This session has been specially designed for anyone in the community who might like to join in with us in some regular gentle and safe exercise in their home, on their own or, perhaps, with a carer or family member. All you will need is a dining room or kitchen chair - preferably without arms - and a ball or small cushion. This is something we can all enjoy and feel the better for - see our what its like on our News Page. To find out more and register click "[Exercising the Debenham Way](#)". To find out more about Zoe click on [Your Trainers](#) and if, you feel like it, join her free "Chill and Stretch" sessions online by visiting www.fitclub.org.uk. She is doing some chair based sessions.

And now, who doesn't love the joy of our countryside birdsong - the blackbird, the thrush, the lark and the robin, the chiff-chaff, the turtle dove, the cuckoo, and the wren? But what about a whole orchestra of avian operatic stars? Try this for size and tell me that it doesn't lighten your heart - "[The Bird Song Opera](#)"

Finally, we have added an extra couple of support services to our "[Coronavirus \(COVID 19\) Local Information, Help and Advice](#)" list

The **Alzheimer's Society** has produced on-line information on "**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support for People Affected by Dementia**" <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/coronavirus>

If you are worried or concerned about how you are coping mentally, or if you are a carer for someone with dementia or mental illness, please don't hesitate to call the **Norfolk and Suffolk Mental Health NHS Trust Helpline** on **08081 963494**.

So far, Debenham and our surrounding villages have been amazing - When this is over, a special thanks will be due to Richard Blackwell, Jane Baldwin, and many others for "A Helping Hand in Debenham". If you are worried about shopping or have any other problem please call them on **07752296136**.

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

With all best wishes,

Lynden