

Debenham Project Update and Local Information

May 14th 2020

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **How Things are Going: More Good News about Going Out: Fit Club Snack Bar: Stay Alert**

Its now eight weeks since we were all asked to "Stay at Home" and especially those of us who are over 70 and/or likely to be at serious risk if we catch the virus. And so we have followed the guidelines and it has achieved the result that was hoped for. The initial catastrophe we were facing has been avoided and I, not only, want to continue to give thanks to the NHS, carers, volunteers and so many others who have given so much in achieving it, but also to everyone who has put on a brave face and put up with their isolation over the last 2 months. It's not just about their not being able to socialise, go to the WI, Bridge club, favourite cafe, fit club, Church, etc. It is also about having to keep family and friends at arm's length, not being able to lunch and chat with them, not being able to give them a kiss and a hug, etc. That is, all those things that are so important in maintaining close and loving relationships - that is what they are giving up. So, "Thank You" from the bottom of my heart.

Tuesday afternoons is when Sue and I ring round to check up on how everyone is coping. Once more, everyone we speak to does seem to be managing quite well and they all seem to have their own "support network". Mostly this is their family, close neighbours, and friends. However, inevitably in a population such as ours there are quite a few in the older and vulnerable category who live alone and independently, and have always been proud and able to look after themselves. For them, the "**Helping Hand in Debenham**" volunteer force was set up to do their shopping, collect their medicines, and try to tackle any practical problems that they can't tackle themselves. It is an amazing achievement - they have 100 volunteers and the latest figures show that they are regularly helping 120 local residents. I think another big thank you to Richard, Jane and all the team is well deserved.

Last week I was delighted to be able to tell family carers and those they care for with dementia and other mentally related illnesses that they could now leave their home more often - several times a day - to get out and about in the countryside and to travel to familiar and favourite places even though they were not local. This recognised their special needs. In this letter, I am equally pleased that this relaxation of the guidelines has now been granted to all of us provided we strictly obey the 2 metre rule of "social distancing". Looking after our psychological and emotional wellbeing is not something most of us have worried about - But we should! The swifts have returned! Summer has come! Please make use of this freedom - To get out of the house and feel the refreshing atmosphere of the Suffolk countryside, to see the sea at Dunwich in all its power and gentleness, to listen to the songbirds' music, to share the quietness of the woods and fields, or marvel at the whirling acrobatics of the swifts and swallows is special indeed - Don't miss out.

In keeping with our aim to encourage those who are older and isolated to enjoy a little daily exercise, we are opening the "**Fit Club Snack Bar**" which will offer a free a la-carte menu of "Exercise Snacks". These are specifically designed to suit the tastes and needs of those who just wish for a few minutes of gentle exercise specially prepared for their pleasure, and to ease a few aches and pains, and stresses and strains. Over the next few weeks Zoe will be creating the individual "Snacks" so watch out for them and try them out when they appear. To sample the first of these 5 minute snacks [click here](#).

Finally, our nation may have successfully reached the "end of the beginning" of the pandemic but this is only "the beginning of the end". There will be several scares and worries before we can finally get back to the freedom to being able to go out to meet with our friends, go to the pub, lunch in a restaurant, attend events, etc. But we will get through it provided we use commonsense, follow the guidance, and Stay Alert. It may not be the catchiest of slogans but we all know what it means - Watch out for and help our families, friends and neighbours, and don't do anything that risks you or others catching this virus.

You can access lots of other material by visiting the "[News and Project Progress](#)" page on our website where you can find the current version of our "Coronavirus - Local Information and Support" list.

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

With all best wishes,

Lynden