



Hello everyone,

Almost exactly 5 years ago The Debenham Project was publicly launched. It had just the beginnings of the range of support that we try to provide today. One of the services initiated was suggested by Idrone Brittain – a confidential telephone line operating in the evenings at weekends (Fri/Sat/Sun).

Each weekend evening since then, without fail, there has been a volunteer at the end of the line to talk to - a listening and understanding ear for family carers who may be reaching the end of their tether. I know that there have been only a limited number of calls in that time, but that has not affected the value of the service. Whenever we asked family carers, they repeatedly said that it was important to know that there was someone local there "in case" - an insurance against the time of a crisis.

When we started there was no such service available to meet the emotional needs of those caring for someone with dementia. Today, there is the Suffolk Dementia Helpline (01473 353350) which is providing excellent and caring support to all who make contact and so the needs of our carers are now being met on a county-wide basis. So it was decided that the time has come to formally close the Debenham Project's weekend helpline. However, this does not mean that we are no longer providing telephone support - everyone who calls the telephone line number or the Debenham Project main number will come through to "Bleak House" and we will always respond.

I believe, that by being prepared to offer a voluntary telephone helpline here in Debenham, we had some influence in the decision to fund a Suffolk-wide service.

So, very many thanks are due to all of the helpline team who have "been there" every weekend evening (more than 750 times) over the past 5 years – it has been the sort of special commitment that deserves all our gratitude.

Changing the subject but still about being grateful, this month I also want to thank those volunteers that make such lovely cakes for our Carers Club and Info Cafe. Truly, they rival the best of "the Great British Bake-Off".

Please remember that you can donate your Co-op "divvy" to the project simply by asking for it to be given to The Debenham Project – Number **609313**.

Lynden

Phone 01728 862003 or visit our **Website:** www.the-debenham-project.org.uk