



Hello everyone,

By the time you read this we shall have so very much enjoyed The Debenham Project Garden Party, and I am thinking about how wonderful this event has become over the years. It exists only through the great generosity of Lyn and Mike Rouse, and is the one occasion each year when everyone – carers, those they care for, volunteers, donors and other participants in the project came together as a “family” in a beautiful garden just to enjoy the company, the entertainment, and the luscious buffet afternoon tea. It also gave me the chance, on behalf of the trustees, to thank everyone for all they have done in achieving yet another successful year.

However, my thoughts also turned to asking the question: What is it that makes The Debenham Project not only special for us, but also identifies it as special across Suffolk, regionally and even nationally? It would be easy to see the project as simply a set of regular support activities and services, but it is much more than that. It seems to “belong” and to have become “owned” by the community – everyone has a stake in it and I hope feels able to turn to it, if and when, they need some help. But it is also, in part, due to the way the project is seen by someone who may not have connected with it but may have seen a poster, read our brochure, accessed our website, taken a leaflet, or just noticed our logo i.e. the way those who might need our support know we are there for them and how to get into contact. In the business world this is the “image”/“identity”/“brand” of an organisation. It is not an easy thing to define but broadly it is how we seek to communicate, visually and in words, “what we are, who we are, what we do, what we offer, and what we believe in”. Marketing gurus charge a fortune to create an identity eg Ronseal – “It does what it says on the tin”. We couldn’t go down that path, but in the beginning some very talented volunteers set to and produced what carers and professionals alike have described as simple, straightforward, comprehensive, and above all directly in tune with the needs of the users. I cannot tell you how many compliments I have received over the years.

However, after 9 years, things have moved on. So we have been taking a new look to see how we can make it even better. We are retaining the best – our logo has become almost iconic – but also uplifting and enhancing other elements to reflect brightness, positivity and liveliness. For example, I hope you will have noticed our new poster. Also, we launched a redesigned 4th edition of our brochure at the Garden party. The next phase is to redesign the website whilst also revising our leaflets to be visually eye-catching. It will take some time but, since we intend to be around for at least the next decade, we believe greatly worthwhile. Very many thanks to Richard Blackwell and his team, and especially to Sarah Carruthers.

To finish I want to thank the family and friends of Jock Fuller for their generous donation in his memory, and to welcome both Megan Kingston (River Green Café) to our great baking team, and Simon Hoets to our brilliant volunteer drivers. And a reminder that we will be relaunching our pop-up department store for the Village Yard Sale later this month – look for it at the bottom of Gracechurch Street.

With best wishes, Lynden

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