



Hello everyone,

As we recover from the impact of the pandemic I believe that most of us have the utmost praise for the achievements of the NHS in responding to the Covid crisis. However, I sense amongst those I come across in my daily walks, that it has highlighted the need for significant improvements in the way we, as a nation and a county, have cared for our older relatives, friends and neighbours. And I do sense a willingness in the “Corridors of Power” to explore new approaches aimed at making services much more community-based and person-centred. The current buzzword in national and local government is “co-production”. For you and I, it means asking you and I what local services and support would make a real difference to how well we can cope with living with dementia and other chronic and progressive illnesses as patients and carers. I know that you will argue that this is only common sense, and so it is, but as my father was wont to say “commonsense rarely seems to be common practice”. Over the years I have seen a number of proposals for restructuring Social Care and the NHS based more upon academic research and the need to cut costs than upon the everyday needs of people struggling to cope. So now is the time to make known your views. If you have any ideas that you think would make the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of you or someone close to you better, please contact Dan Poulter (our MP), Mathew Hicks (our County Councilor and Leader of Suffolk County Council), or, Kathie Guthrie (our District Councilor). They will listen not only to your concerns, but also and especially, to your suggestions for improvements to the way you feel Health and Social Care should be delivered in the community. Each of us can, and do need to, have a say – Please don’t hold back! But if you don’t wish to contact them directly, please feel free to tell me about them and I will see that they reach the right people.

One of the most effective ways of coping with the day to day struggle of living with dementia is to “get out of the house” and visit places which may bring back good memories, but more often are somewhere to “enjoy an afternoon cup of tea” in a quiet garden or familiar café, by the sea or in a village. They are places of joy and contentment which those with the illness usually find reassuring and safe. So, I thought that it would be good for all of us to share those special places – cafes, garden centres, pubs, rural attractions, etc. – that are welcoming, understanding and caring of everyone who visits them. Do let me know who and where they are by e-mail or phone (01728 862003 or lynden.jackson@the-debenham-project.org.uk). I would love to hear from you.

I hope for all of us that, someone sometime will knock on the door and say “we just thought this would be something nice for you to enjoy”. I have had the pleasure of being one of the volunteers who have, with my St.Mary’s Church hat on, knocked on that door over the last few months. Margaret Samain and the “Framsden Fundraisers” have been great supporters of The Debenham Project over the years. Knowing how lovely it is to receive such an unexpected gift, they are giving a special afternoon tea to participants in the Debenham Project. So, for 50 or so participants in the Project, I will soon be knocking on that door again.

Finally, thank you everyone who has made donations to the Project - Your support has ensured that we will be around for years to come.

With all my best wishes, Lynden