



Minutes of the Steering Group Committee meeting held on 6th February 2013 at The Oaks, Debenham.

Present –Lynden Jackson (Chairperson), Richard Blackwell, Alison Gravatt, Peter Holme, Sue Jackson, Mary Morley, Gillian Shacklock and Joy Walton.

1. Apologies – Apologies were received from Paddy Fielder.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting:- Amendments have been made to the wording of the Booklet. The minutes were approved.

2. Consideration of general progress on current and near-term objectives.

a. Current activities & services.

Food & Friends Alison's group are currently meeting about once a month for a pub lunch and for the occasional coffee morning.

Joy reported that the hosts and helpers had held a meeting at the end of last year. The Coopersfield lunches are working well. A new, permanent scheme manager has been appointed there but her name is not yet known*.

The possibility of making a summer day trip was discussed, perhaps using the Red Cross facilities at Felixstowe. Diane and Joy will look into the possibility of this. It was also proposed that a Christmas lunch could be provided if a need was identified. This was offered by others in the village a few years ago and there were no takers.

Joy's lunch club is going well. They have been for lunches out as well as on other trips. The other lunch clubs also continue to be successful. All have had to cope with changes in their membership.

Carers Club & Info' Café. Both these events continue to grow, offering conversation, tips and mutual support. Currently between 12 and 30 people attend and there have been three new referrals recently; one via an outreach worker, one through the family and the other following up on one of our leaflets given to them by a GP. Halesworth library have donated a memory box to the group which is much appreciated. All the volunteers are very good.

'Phone Line. Alison reported that line has received about four calls. The 'phone volunteers meet regularly to make the rota and no-one has dropped out.

Fit Club. There is still a waiting list for this activity which is great fun and is showing benefits, with increased mobility in some as well as being yet another excellent social occasion.

Information & Advice. Revision of the leaflets is on-going.

'Phone calls are received regularly and callers are either referred on to other organisations or encouraged to join one of the Project groups.

- b. Awareness & referrals. Awareness has increased well over the years, much of this by word of mouth. Referrals from GP's and other services are now being made regularly. The police and fire services are being made aware of the assistance that could be given in cases of emergency.
- c. Dove Cottage improvement and rental. The disabled toilet is now in place but the external access is still to be completed. This work will be carried out as soon as the builder is able to return. The Project contributed £5,000 towards this improvement which will benefit many users of Dove Cottage. Unfortunately our initial rent-free arrangement for Dove Cottage has now come to an end. A rent of £720.00 per annum has been agreed. The usual rent is £15 per hour.
- d. Debenham On-Call and Carers Co-op. Sam Cage is paid to administer these projects which are funded by the Suffolk Foundation Award. There are now eight fully trained Debenham On-Call voluntary carers for emergency cover. A full service for this will be advertised shortly. There has been a lot of interest in the Carers Co-op. However, one problem is how to provide training when self-employed carers are continually busy caring.
- e. Research Project. This commenced six months ago. Phase 1 is just complete which has involved developing the best methodology for reliable data collection. This has involved thirteen respondents who have helped identify both barriers to, as well as, the positive elements that enable people to engage with their problems. Most respondents are over 70 and not computer literate. The questions need to be open-ended followed by face-to-face interviews to discuss the responses in more depth, always bearing in mind that everyone is different and therefore interviews need to be tailored for the individual. The data from the research will be used to make the Debenham Project accessible, as identified by carers' needs, as early as possible. It will also be available to the NHS and Local Authorities for use in designing services more appropriately from the results given. It will also be added to other services data requirements, thus preventing the need for every service to approach carers individually. Willie Cruickshank, dementia alliance, will be sent a copy of the data for his use.
- f. Dementia Friendly Communities. This is a government initiative to give accreditation to twenty dementia-friendly communities. It was felt that twenty across the country was not sufficient and that as The Debenham Project is already recognised and called on for its views it should qualify as the first Dementia Friendly Community!

The cost of training “dementia friends” for general awareness in the community is likely to be far greater than the budget being provided by government.

The Debenham Project is providing four evenings of training for volunteer carers in order to give a greater depth of understanding for those coming into closer contact with dementia sufferers and their carers. A two session course is also being provided from March for those in the general community in order to raise awareness and communication. It is hoped that these will be attended by representatives from the Parish Council, W.I., Fire Service, shops, schools etc.

- g. Football Memories. One of our volunteers, Steve Robbins, who is a football enthusiast, has suggested setting up a football reminiscence group for dementia sufferers. This follows his involvement with a former project user whom he befriended and is now living in a care home. He has approached Ipswich Town FC for material and they are keen to help and support. They may be able to offer special days to Project users. A similar project has been very successful in Scotland with Hampden Park. It is hoped that, as well as the reminiscences benefitting those with dementia, activities would provide an opportunity for some carer respite. The Project’s role would be to facilitate the scheme under the umbrella of The Ipswich Town Charitable Trust. The catchment area for participants will need to be wider than just Debenham in order to get sufficient numbers to be viable. It is hoped that a trial will be able to start in April.

3. Public Relations, publicity, presentations and discussion.

- a. POPs, DEV-P, and outreach. [POPs – Providing Older Peoples’ Services: DEV-P Dementia Enabled Village Project] These are on-going projects with Aldeburgh currently starting up and being targeted. Lynden gives talks to various groups, including Rotary Clubs, explaining the setting up and working of The Debenham Project.
- b. Joseph Rowntree Foundation follow up. The full report is yet to be published but we have received Sian’s (lengthy) report and she is still in touch with the Project**.
- c. Future East follow up. Future East is the regional advisory group for this area which reports to ministers on the ageing problem. In November Lynden gave a talk at their headquarters near Cambridge which resulted in a visit to Debenham by the Director of the Eastern Region RCN who was interested in discussing the Project’s ideas for nursing in the community. Lynden has been asked to present a talk at a conference of national groups such as Future North, Future West etc.
- d. 2nd Edition of The Debenham Project Booklet. Richard reported that revising the Project brochure had been quite involved with several significant changes being made. The second edition has a different colour, for ease of identification, but is still comprised of 24 pages. Booklets cost approximately 60p each.

- e. “What we do” and “how it is” portfolio. This is intended to be a portfolio in which carers and volunteers who are participating in the project describe “what the various activities from their viewpoints. Initially these contributions will be published on the website but may later be in other publications.
- f. Anything else – Westminster 2, Alzheimer’s, Age UK, RCN, GP Commissioning Group, etc. The second talk on the Project at Westminster was not deemed to have been as successful as the first as the audience appeared less open-minded. However, there was one professor and one Commissioning GP who each showed good interest. Other discussions with key individuals and organisations have continued and the project’s reputation continues to spread at all levels.

4. Consideration of the financial position and funding prospects.

- a. Financial position. The financial position is still quite sound, with several bequests and donations having been recently received. There is still a need for core funding.

5. Consideration of progress towards long term and (Vision of Caring).

- a. “Putting it all together” – an update of the “Vision of Caring”. Progress is on - going, albeit slowly. The major difficulty is in getting everyone together and actually committed to doing something together. Individually each organisation thinks the Vision of Caring is a good idea although the NHS still remains a challenge to become involved. Contacts and connections are still being made and maintained.

6. Policy Matters.

- a. Changes in CRB regulations. As there is difficulty in defining who is a vulnerable adult CRB checks will now be required on the basis of the function of the person making contact. CRB checks will be required for those undertaking personal care and giving financial advice. Those involved with Debenham on Call and the Carers Co-op will need checks and those providing transport may also be required to have one.

7. Any Other Business.

There is currently a person who needs transport on alternate weeks to attend a function in Eye. Mary will e-mail all volunteers to see whether one or two people would be prepared to provide this service on a rota basis.

The meeting closed at approximately 9.20pm.

* The new Scheme Manager is now known to be Kay Yule. She is very keen to ensure that Coopersfield is closely linked with the community.

** The report has now been published and is available on the website.

