



Debenham Project Update and Local Information

December 17th 2020

Hi Everyone,

In this letter:

I guess this will be a “Good News – Bad News” sort of a newsletter, but I hope it will be mostly about a not too distant future when we will be able to rebuild our groups, activities and services and actually enjoy each other’s company. Over these last many months we have really missed being together for a lunch, a Fit Club session, Cameo, Carers Club and the Info Café. In our weekly conversations with as many as we can speak with, we have heard of their problems and anxieties, their struggles and their isolation. But also, I have been uplifted by their resilience and ability to cope in this almost impossible situation.

I know that we are now well into winter, the days are often dark, and the atmosphere cold and damp. I expect that, like me, all most of us want to do is to curl up in front of the fire with a good book, or watch an episode of our favourite TV box set – and to hibernate until Spring. These last few months have been predictably very sad for us in The Debenham Project. Covid 19 has taken its toll on all elderly and frail families and especially those who are living with dementia. It has been particularly heart-breaking for those with a loved one in a care home. Whilst they have been allowed to “visit” separated by a window or at a distance outdoors clad in PPE, it is no substitute for “being together and sharing the love and comfort and memories that marked so many years of marriage and family life. I do hope that with the rapid testing kits that are now available, most care homes are welcoming family members to safely visit now.

As I write, the best news is that the immunisation programme is under way and, despite all the difficulties of transporting and distributing the vaccine, it is being delivered to an increasing number of GP practices which have begun to carry out Covid vaccinations locally. Our turn, here in Debenham, can’t be far away. Of course, initially, it will be given to the most elderly and vulnerable members of the community, and to health and care staff. However, I can see that, very quickly, the programme will accelerate once mass vaccination sessions can be organised – as we know our GP practice is very efficient at this – but it will be a huge task.

Nevertheless, it looks like it should be possible to protect our older generation – the vast majority of those who may be at risk of serious / life-threatening symptoms – by the Spring. What a relief that will be. And practically that means that we ought to be able to resume our groups, activities and services that have been missed so badly. How wonderful that will be.

Finally, this is a scary time for many charities whose incomes have “fallen off the edge of the cliff”. However, The Project has received amazing support with a number of unexpectedly large donations from individuals, local organisations, and from further afield. This month I particularly want to thank: The East of England Co-op for its grant of £200 towards our exercise videos: Joe Davis Ltd. for two huge boxes of giftware that we can sell: Alexander Ratcliffe and The Phoenix Partnership – Alexander nominated The Debenham Project to be the recipient of the £2,000 prize for his winning TPP’s “Chatting for Charity” competition. Thank you indeed.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to everyone who has so generously made donations to the Project – and I do mean really generously! This means that we are in good financial shape for the future. Thank you to Abbotts and Websters who sold “Debenham Project” Christmas cards: Thank you to all the shops and businesses who have displayed our collection boxes; Thank you for all the very kind donations we have received in memory of Garry Manning; Thank you to those who put a lovely surprise in a Christmas card; and thank you to everyone else who has given their support.

Finally, you can access all of our on-line help by visiting our new “[On-Line Resources](#)” page, where you can find the current version of our "Coronavirus - Local Information and Support" list, and our [News and Project Progress page](#).

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

With all best wishes,

Lynden

The Home But Not Alone helpline is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, tel. 0800 876 6926 Suffolk County Council's web link for Home But Not

Alone: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/home-but-not-alone/>

The Suffolk Advice and Support Service helpline number is... 0800 068 3131 open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Web link: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

[19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/](#) The COVID-19 Emotional Wellbeing information Hub offers resources, guidance, tips and support... www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/covidhub The First Response 24/7 freephone line is ... 0808 196 3494 for anyone who feels their mental health is being adversely effected and need help.