



Debenham Project Update and Local Information

August 18th 2021

Hi Everyone,

In this letter: **Hollyhocksville: Relaxing into a world beyond Covid: We are opening for "business as usual": A "day at the seaside": "Having your say": Countywide Dementia Action: DebFest and other fundraisers: Online Mindfulness for Later Life: "Signing Off": And, finally.**

Hollyhocksville: When Sue and I first came to the village nearly 47 years ago the High Street didn't look very different from what it does today, Surely, some of the businesses have been converted into homes, others been replaced by new businesses, and of course we have, particularly, lost our banks, all but one of our pubs, and the local garage. And, there are many more cars and much more traffic. But the "look" and the "feel" remains that of a friendly rural village in Suffolk. A big contributor has been the front gardens – they may be small but each year they put on a wonderful display and a delightful variety of styles – And how they change from year to year. This year I was reminded that I don't remember seeing any hollyhocks in 1976 when we came to Debenham, but since then they seem to have found root in the cracks and edges in the pavement, the churchyard and anywhere they can. This year their floral display has been exceptional – Debenham is worthy of the title Hollyhocksville. Here are just three of so many lovely photos.



Living right in the centre of Debenham is a great privilege in many ways. Although, the High Street and Gracechurch Street are often pretty busy with cars and goods vehicles, they are also busy with friends, neighbours, passers-by, and visitors. We only have to descend our front steps to meet someone we know (or don't know yet!) to share a few (or many!) words of greeting and a chat about this, that, or nothing in particular. It often means that a bit of gardening (Sue) or a bit of watering (Me) takes a lot longer, but we love it – It is what a village is all about – you meet someone as you go, greet them, but also stop to simply share those few words that make a real connection.

Relaxing into a world beyond Covid: I know that Covid-19 has not gone away, but the risks it presents to us all have dramatically reduced – not gone way but very low – and much

lower than many other risks that may lead to life-threatening illness e.g. flu, falls, strokes, heart attacks, blood clots, hypothermia, etc. But we still need to be aware that, although we may be “double jabbed” we can still become infected and suffer something like a really bad case of flu and it’s after effects. And, it is still a major concern for anyone who might be amongst those of us who are vulnerable and cannot fight off the virus. So, it is only sensible that, for the time being, we continue to take care to “keep a little distance”, “wear a mask in shops and crowded places”, and “look out for ventilation and fresh air”. But above all, enjoy the company of family, friends and neighbours.

Clearly, the pandemic has changed things and they will never be quite the same as they were. Sitting in my chair, of a morning, reading the paper and glancing out of our lounge windows, I see lots of people pass by who I don’t think I recognise and, even if I do, I can’t always put a name to them – they may be visitors (they take photos of the house!) or new residents – but they are always delighted to be here and are a pleasure to talk to. Most noticeably, we have new members of our community who need to be welcomed and encouraged to participate in all that goes on in Debenham. I look forward to the next few months leading to the time when Covid-19 has totally lost its impact on our lives and its place in our everyday High Street conversations in favour of “Catching Up”, “The Debenham Fete”, “What’s Happening”, “Ipswich Town FC”, “The Art Exhibition”, and the regular worries about proposed housing developments.

We are opening for "business as usual": The Government guidelines have been formally relaxed and, so far, without any significant changes to the statistics. We are in planning to re-open our clubs and meetings in Dove cottage from the beginning of September. The regular monthly schedule will be:

Cameo – 1st and 3rd Tuesday afternoons

Carers Club and Info Café – 2nd and 4th Tuesday afternoons

Fit Club – 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday mornings and 2nd and 4th Thursday afternoons

Transport service for medically related appointments – hospital, GP, physio, clinic, optician, dentist, etc. – On request – It has already resumed.

Advice and Information – 9.00 am to 5.00 pm daily on 01728 862003, and on our website.

One-to-One – Help with “Power of Attorney”, Benefits, Wills, etc.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back. If you would like to know more please go to our website (below) or phone me. And, if there is someone whom you think might like to join any of our groups or clubs also please let me know. However, be assured that we are watching the Covid infection rate very closely and we will review our plans and modify or delay them if necessary.

A day at the seaside: For several years – I think it is four now – Joy Walton has organised an outing at the Hut (<http://fopwa.onesuffolk.net/the-hut/>) on the promenade at Felixstowe. Enjoy a day with friends right on the Front overlooking the seashore – Fish and Chip lunch, rickshaw rides along the promenade, and paddling for those remembering their earlier days – transport can be arranged. This year it is on Sunday 22nd of August – not long away – but if you would like to come and if you are quick and ring Joy on 01728 860007 she will love to hear from you.

"Having your say": The University of Suffolk is working with the Parish Council, and The Debenham Project to explore the provision, availability, accessibility, cost, and quality of health and social care for all older people in Debenham and the surrounding villages. We hope that this will not only lead to a plan to support our local health and social care services, but also provide real data to persuade Suffolk's local authorities and NHS to invest more in our community. Please think of this as the first tentative step towards having a "Health and Well-Being Plan" similar to the "Debenham Neighbourhood Plan" which successfully blocked the Wimpey housing development. If you would like to be involved please complete the attached form and return it to me directly at lynden.jackson@the-debenham-project.org.uk. It would be great to hear from you.

Suffolk Dementia Action Partnership: Of course The Debenham Project was set up as a community-based project to support those living with the impact of dementia in and around Debenham. However, we have always been keen to share our experiences and try to encourage other villages and communities to start their own local activities and services. The Suffolk Dementia Action Partnership, set up by Suffolk's Health and Well-being Board, has the ear of the great and the good of the NHS, Social Care, local politicians, and many other local organisations. As a member of the partnership I fly the flag for investment in community-based support initiatives, and simple access to the information, advice, and access to activities and services that can make such a difference between "coping" and "crisis". Already on the agenda are the development of a new Suffolk Dementia Support Strategy, and a dementia friendly website for family carers, and those they care for, to find out about everything on offer in their area that they might like to participate in.

DebFest and other fundraisers: If you are looking out for a bargain for yourself or a present for someone special, we will be at Deb Fest at the Leisure Centre on September 4th. We will be selling a wide range of brand new giftware as well as small items of bric-a-brac – Look out for the posters. It is going to be a really great day out. Also, you might also spot the posters for a Garage Sale at The Butts on Saturday. Both of these events are fundraising for The Debenham Project and other local charities. So it would be lovely to see you there – We have so missed these village social occasions.

Online Mindfulness for Later Life: The Gatehouse Charity is running online mindfulness courses that are fully funded to **support older adults** (over 65), and also **carers over 18**, in

Suffolk, during and beyond the coronavirus epidemic. The course involves a weekly meeting via Zoom, with audio recordings of the practise and handouts to be downloaded. **Places are free but limited** to around 15 so please apply as soon as possible to secure a place. The next online course is in late September, but there will be further courses next year. Further details and a link to register interest can be found on the Gatehouse Charity website <http://www.gatehouse.org.uk> - Click on 'Later Life Project'.

“Signing Off”: The past year and a half has changed the way we all are – sometimes we have withdrawn but very often we have stepped forward. It may be that Covid-19 has still a bit of a “sting in its tail”. However I firmly believe that we all must shake it off and no longer let it govern our lives. Certainly, we still need to be careful, but life is about being together, enjoying each other’s (non-virtual) company, sharing our highs and lows, caring for each other, and being happy. So, this will be my last newsletter of the epidemic - 18 months and 30 newsletters – roughly once a fortnight. At the beginning it was every week but gradually came to be once a fortnight and, lately, once a month. I hope they have helped. Goodbye, lots of love, and take care. We will be back as soon as we can in the near future

And, finally: Thank you everyone who has made donations to the Project. It is your support that has ensured that we will be around for years to come. You can access all of our on-line help by visiting our [“On-Line Resources”](#) page. You can also call us on 01728 862003.

With all my best wishes, Lynden

Lynden Jackson

The Debenham Project

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