

The Debenham Project

Report for the Debenham PC AGM, 11th May 2026

- The Debenham Project was founded in 2009 to provide practical and well-being support to local (in Debenham and the surrounding villages) family carers, and those they care for, living with the impact of dementia on their lives. But also inclusive and welcoming other resident who can benefit from the activities, groups and services we offer.
- Currently supporting (over the last year) 100 individuals with 62 volunteers who have provided over 2000 hours of their time.
- The Debenham Project has been recognised, not only in Suffolk, but also nationally, as an exemplar of innovation and best practice.
- Caring for a loved one with dementia is something none of us want to have to do but without exception we do. It is a role that may last for years – it involves 24/7 52 weeks of the year heartache, stress, exhaustion, and frustration – testing the love that had been the commitment for so many, many years – and it is relentless.
- Currently, the project offers a [wide range](#) of activities, groups, and services including “Carers Club and Info Café”, “Fit Club”, “Talking Listening and Caring”, “Songs for Sharing”, “Care to Dance”, “Lunch Club”, “Post-Diagnosis Support”, “Forms and Paperwork”, and individual events.
- Activities are mostly hosted in Debenham – Dove Cottage and Coopersfield – on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis – providing an average total of 12 sessions per month – each being attended on any one occasion by approximately: Carers Club; 20-30, Fit Club; 15-20, Songs for Sharing; 15-20, TLC; 10-15, Care to Dance; 8-10.
- Whilst the Project’s centre lies in dementia support, we also aim to be inclusive, and welcome anyone who may be able to benefit from participating in what we do e.g. in our exercise group, and our “Transport for Medical Appointments” service, which has provided over 70 local residents with lifts on 250+ occasions during the past 12 months. This is not just a “taxi” service – our drivers are there to accompany and support their passengers for their whole visit no matter how long it takes and no matter what problems might occur.
- Our fundamental aim is for our care to be unconditional.

The Debenham Project has always evolved, and it continues to think of new ways that we can offer new opportunities to engage in new activities – we are developing our “Debenham Project Allotment” – “come and cultivate not only lovely vegetables but also cultivate new friends”. Also, we have over the last few months been conducting a trial into how we can offer some professional respite care to families who are really struggling to cope with the mental and physical stress and anxiety of their 24/7, 52 weeks of the year caring role – and becoming at risk of breaking down into crisis. We are so very grateful for the Parish Council’s £10,000 grant which will enable this initiative to be extended into towards becoming an important new element in the support The Debenham Project is able to offer. Adding Short-Time Respite to its catalogue of activities, groups and services represents a new chapter in its life.

The Debenham Project is the creation of our entire community - "It is wholeheartedly a community project - not just a local charity" - and we will do everything we can to continue to keep it special and worthy of your support.

Lynden Jackson (Chair), 7th May 2026