

adult care & community services

DEBENHAM RESOURCE CENTRE

Report to Annual Parish Meeting April 27 2009

Background

Debenham Resource Centre was converted from the old Barclays Bank Building in Cross Green, Debenham, opening in May 2003.

Mid Suffolk District Council are supporting staffing at Debenham for 3 years from 2009-2012 by contributing £2,300 each year.

Debenham Resource Centre is a library, linked to the Suffolk County Council Libraries, Archives and Information Service. As such, it offers the same services to the people of Debenham as every library in Suffolk.

- It's free to join the library and everyone is welcome.
 - With a library card you can borrow books, CDs, DVDs, videos, spoken word such as story cassettes and language courses, and computer games from Debenham Resource Centre or any library (and return them to Debenham resource Centre or any other Suffolk library).
- Access to the internet is free
- The virtual reference library on our web site provides links to a wide range of selected internet resources from travel information to homework help.
- The library online service offers free and supported access to e-government sites, including parish, district, county and national websites
- You can consult the Infolink database which holds details of useful and varied organisations across Suffolk. You can ask a question on AskSuffolk, our email enquiry service.
- From Debenham Resource Centre or any library, you can access services and special collections, such as the Music and Drama collection; the home library service and the Suffolk Record Office; you can also access ancestry websites and research your family history – a very popular pursuit, these days!

Facts about Suffolk Libraries

Around 500,000 library cards in circulation

In Suffolk, all libraries are open on Sundays. This is a pioneering service.

2500 people are offered library services in their own homes

Suffolk is one of the first library services in the country to offer a self-service system

We answer over 700,000 queries each year

Over 117 million internet pages are accessed from libraries each year

Suffolk Record Office holds written, aural and photographic historical documentation of Suffolk for the use of present and future generations

Services Offered at Debenham Resource Centre

All Suffolk Library services mentioned above are offered at Debenham.

We also offer:

Free basic internet tutorials for adults

Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

Free Bookstart activities for babies and toddlers – nursery rhymes and story time.

Bookstart is a national programme that works through locally based organisations to give a free pack of books to babies, with guidance materials for parents and carers. It promotes a life-long love of books and is based on the principle that every child in the UK should enjoy and benefit from books from as early an age as possible. The first five years are the best time for learning to talk and most of a child's language comes from the adults around them. Babies and toddlers who love books begin reading sooner and have a better chance at school.

Free craft activity sessions for children at weekends

National Initiatives such as the Reading Game

The largest national reading promotion for children aged around 4 to 11, the Summer Reading Challenge is now run in 94% of UK library authorities (99% in England). It runs in public libraries through the summer holidays, and is supported by leading children's publishers.

A free local noticeboard for events and activities

A selection of leaflets and information about local events and services

A small reference section which includes Parish Council minutes

The newspaper and a cup of coffee

And always, a welcome to every customer.

Use of the Centre

There has been a general increase in the use of the centre in 2008-9 with visitor figures up by 15.21% in the last year.

We are also delighted to report that the number of books, DVDs, CDs etc taken out by borrowers has increased on average by 36% since 2008.

The Resource Centre is a popular and well-used facility in Debenham and some statistics about its use and services are attached. It is a significant community resource for learning, leisure, information, culture and ICT, despite its small size.

Volunteers

We run a very successful programme of volunteer placements for young people, helping with ICT, stock work and the Reading Game. Other volunteers from the community also support the Centre, particularly over the summer months with the Reading Game. We welcome additional volunteers for the Reading Game in the summer to talk to the children about what they have read

Events at Debenham Resource Centre, 2008-9

National Year of reading

2008 was designated the National Year of Reading, and Debenham Library took part by hosting a visit from well-known children's author and illustrator Jane Hissey. Jane came and read stories to children from Helmingham Primary School. And then we took her up to the High School in Debenham and she ran an illustration workshop with children from year 8. It was a most successful afternoon.

National Reading Game

Debenham took part in TEAM READ, the annual National Reading Game for school children in Summer 2008. This game is a reading challenge to children to read and describe six books

over the course of the summer holidays. It keeps them reading, helping maintain their reading skills in the long summer break. It is a fun, family-friendly way of bringing books into everyday home life. In 2008, we increased participation by just under 50%: over 75 local children and families took part in the challenge last summer, topped off by a presentation of certificates by Councillor Eddy Alcock in September. The library will take part again in 2009.

Bookstart

A regular nursery rhyme and story session is now taking place every Saturday morning at 11.15 for the under fives and their carers. This happens while the library is closed, and is very well supported by local dads in particular. Plenty of out-of-key singing and loud musical instrument playing goes on, and children change their books each time they attend a session.

We are in the process of setting up a second session during the week. This will take place at the Children's Centre.

Internet Tutorials

There's a long waiting list for our weekly, one-hour, basic online sessions now, and over 30 local people have attended between one and six sessions each over the year. They learn how to use the internet and email in sessions which take place while the library is closed.

Christmas Fair opening

Once again, the library opened specially for the Debenham Christmas Fair on a dark Friday night in December. Children's activities and a big secondhand book sale went down very well with over 350 people who visited on that evening. The queue to get in went out into the car park on occasions! The children decorated the library for Christmas, and we were delighted to be able to support the village.

Debenham Street Fair opening

The library extended its opening hours and opened all day for Debenham Street Fair 2008. We ran a book and secondhand DVD sale as well as children's activities. We had at least 200 visitors, but luckily we were able to borrow a tent to extend the space in the library for that day!

Extension of library services

--**Table and chairs outside.** We are very grateful to Councillor Alcock who donated £80 from his budget to fund a table and chairs for our borrowers to use while they read the paper outside on sunny days. In the spirit of keeping our shopping local, we sourced the furniture from the Debenham trader, Ruby and the Angel.

--**Sales of greetings cards, booktokens, secondhand books and DVDs and other items** – we have introduced items for sale at the library as an extension of the service we offer the village

--**Increase of spoken word** – we have extended the selection of storytapes and CDs for adults as there are particularly popular in Debenham

--**Increase in numbers, and refreshed display of books** – we have increased the number of children's books available, and we change the books and DVDs available in the library every few weeks

--**Resource Centre and mobile library are now interchangeable** – both library service points are using the same computerised system now, so that customers can take out and return items to either. Many people are enjoying this increased choice of when and where you can take out and bring back books.

Plans for 2009-10

Extra Bookstart session

We're in the process of organising an extra nursery rhyme session which will take place at the Children's Centre, during the week.

Activities for Older People

We are considering how to run some activities for older people in the village, and are planning to start this in September.

Debenham Arts Fair

We are planning a special event at the library for the Arts Fair – we're not sure yet what it will be, but we are working with the committee to create something really fun on the Saturday morning.

Christmas Fair

We'll be opening again, specially, for this annual event.

Rearranging the library

We have ordered more shelving and have worked out ways of packing even more into your tiny tardis of a library.

Opening Hours

16 hours per week :	Tuesday	9.30am - 1pm
	Wednesday	3pm – 7.30pm
	Saturday	12 noon – 4pm
	Sunday	12 noon – 4pm

Plus ICT classes and weekly Bookstart activities

Service Provision

- Suffolk County Council Libraries, Archives and Information service point, part of the Adult and Community Services directorate
- Access point ('C Store') for Customer Service Direct (CSD) – the partnership between Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and British Telecom, offering supported on-line access to Mid Suffolk and County Council services.

Use of the Resource Centre

Issues

May 2003 – March 2004	7869
April 2004 – March 2005	8426
April 2005 – March 2006	9907
April 2006 – March 2007	8936
April 2007 – March 2008	7619
April 2008 – March 2009	10,335

Visits

Annual visitor figures based on a visitor survey that is carried out in the library

2003/04 –	7436
2004/05 –	7696
2005/06 –	7228

2006/07 – 6864
2007/08 – 11,284
2008/09– 13,000

ICT classes

2008/9 Over 30 adults tutored by the manager in basic internet skills

Reading Game

The annual Summer Reading Game for children aged c. 4-12 years. The children read six books over the summer holidays, discuss their reading with staff or volunteers and receive certificates and medals when they complete the Game.

2003 – Starters: 36. Finishers: 23. Percentage finishing: 63%

2004 – Starters: 52. Finishers: 28. Percentage finishing: 53%

2005 – Starters: 60. Finishers: 34. Percentage finishing: 56%

2006 – Starters: 24. finishers: 9. Percentage finishing 37%

2007 – Starters: 47. Finishers: 26 Percentage finishing 55%

2008 – Starters 79. Finishers 49 Percentage finishing 66%

Comments about the Reading Game at Debenham Resource Centre

FROM THE PARENTS AND CARERS:

I think it is a great idea I will be doing it again with children. Kept their reading improving when they have time to enjoy it with us. Many thanks to staff

*This scheme has brought two children into the library who would not normally come.
Many thanks*

Really good scheme. It means children carry on reading over the summer break. Good for discussion, too, we discussed good books and ones that they didn't enjoy. Really good!!

This has been a great motivation for a reluctant reader. His confidence is unbelievable and this scheme has helped

I thought that this 'Team Read' idea was brilliant! It encouraged my son lots more than he would have and all the stickers were very motivational - a very big plus was it encouraged him to sit down and concentrate and practise his writing too which was an added bonus! Thank you all for the ideas and encouragement it was great fun for parents as well!!

AND FROM THE CHILDREN...

I thort it was reily fun. It's a good thing to do in the summer holidays

I enjoy he team read because it encourages me to read new books. I liked it because this year it was to so with the Olympics (I love sport)

A great way to spend the summer

Melanie Wood, Debenham Resource Manager

Gill Jenkins, Mid Suffolk Locality Manager

April 2009