

Meeting	Community Development Committee
Date	4 th February 2025
Report Title	Memory Café & Companion Café
Agenda Reference	6
Author	Jo Newman, Memory Café Coordinator

Memory Café Co Ordinator's Recommendations.

1. To note report.

December

December the 11th began with a vibrant gathering that included:

- Christmas tree craft activities
- Folk music performance by The Even More Band
- NHS nurse providing COVID and flu services.

The Memory Cafe Co Ordinator organised an extra Memory Café on December the 18th, to celebrate Christmas featuring:

- Bell ringers performing festive tunes.
- Arval Choir delivered a fantastic finale of popular Christmas songs.
- Special appearance by Father Christmas who handed out raffle prize.
- Local pre-school children joined the festivities.
- Presented a handmade card to the Memory Cafe
- Participated in the choir performance with tambourines and bells.

The combination of different generations coming together, from pre-school children to Memory Café residents, created a truly memorable festive celebration. The musical performances, ringing from bell ringers to the choir singing, along with the children's instrumental accompaniment, filled the Memory Cafe with festive spirit.

December 2024 proved to be an exceptional month for the Memory Cafe, with both the regular session and special Christmas Cafe providing engaging activities and entertainment for all participants. The inclusion of intergenerational activities and various musical performances helped create a warm and joyful atmosphere during the Christmas season.

January

The new year brought warmth and cheer as we welcomed our residents back to the Memory Cafe. The atmosphere buzzed with creativity as Story-shed led an engaging bookmark-making session, allowing everyone to craft their own unique pieces. These handmade bookmarks not only served as practical items but also as personal mementos of a shared creative experience. A particularly special highlight was the debut of our new "Singing for the Brain" program, expertly led by our dedicated volunteer, Keren. Her first session proved to be a remarkable success, filled with interactive moments that brought smiles and engagement to all participants.

On the 22nd of January, the Memory Cafe hosted Rural Music they provide a wonderful blend of music, a delightful combination of keyboard and clarinet performances. The soothing melodies worked their magic across the room, with participants visibly relaxing and sharing warm smiles as the music played.

The session concluded on an energetic note as Lin led everyone through their popular seated exercise routine. As always, these exercises brought out plenty of laughter, demonstrating how physical activity can be both beneficial and thoroughly enjoyable. The combination of gentle movement and shared amusement provided a perfect ending to the session.

This successful blend of musical entertainment and physical activity exemplifies how the memory cafe continues to create meaningful experiences that engage participants both mentally and physically, while fostering a powerful sense of community and joy.

The combination of creative crafting and musical engagement perfectly exemplifies our commitment to providing diverse, enriching activities for our residents. These therapeutic activities do more than just pass the time - they create meaningful moments of connection, stimulate cognitive function, and bring joy to our community, as we move forward into the new year.

Companion Café

January brought some new faces to our Companion Café, Tim, representing Admiral Nurses, and Heather and Rachel from Swindon Carers, shared invaluable insights and support resources that touched many hearts in the room. In the warm atmosphere of our cafe, companions found that rare, precious moment to open up about their caregiving journeys.

"This is often the only chance we get to really share our thoughts" one companion shared, highlighting how these meetings have become a vital lifeline for those supporting loved ones full-time. The space allows companions to voice their anxieties, swap experiences, and find understanding among others walking similar paths.

Right at Home joined forces with our dedicated volunteers to create a joyful, secure environment for our residents living with dementia. While caregivers connect and share, their loved ones enjoy meaningful activities in a safe, understanding space.

Working Towards

- Ideas on creating a promotional package to attract potential funding and sponsorship for Memory Café and Companion Café activities, working with the Marketing & Events Co Ordinator.
- Initiating work on community noticeboards to increase local awareness of both café programs.
- In March, the Community Garden project in collaboration with the Parks & Open Spaces Team will be digging over the plot and seeding.
- Exploring alternative venue options for the Memory Café and events.
- Strengthening the Companion Café's structure and focusing on meeting companions' specific needs.
- Networking with other carer facilities to enhance support and resources.
- Recruiting additional volunteers for the Memory Café, Companions Café and the Sensory Garden .

Memories from the Memory Café



Companion Café Pictures

