

Meeting	Community Development Committee
Date	3 rd June 2025
Report Title	Memory Café & Companion Café
Agenda Reference	6
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Memory Café Co Ordinator's Recommendations.

1. To note report.

Memory Café

March

The Memory Café Co Ordinator, Deputy Clerk, HR & Services Manager and the Memory Café volunteers recently participated in a valuable safeguarding training session at the Wyvern Theatre. The comprehensive workshop provided important insights and practical guidance, enhancing the team's ability to create a safe and supportive environment for all café attendees.

At the last Memory Café of March participants were treated to a captivating presentation by Sharon Tyler, who shared her extensive knowledge of Swindon's old telephone exchange. Sharon's entertaining anecdotes brought history to life as she recounted amusing incidents from the early days of telecommunications in our community. The session sparked animated conversations among attendees as they recalled their own experiences with telephones and Swindon from bygone eras.

The session ended with Lin's popular seated exercise, residents enthusiastically joined in with the gentle movements designed to improve mobility and wellbeing. The exercises provided not only physical benefits but also created moments of shared enjoyment throughout the group.

April

The Memory Café kicked off April with a delightful Easter bonnet making session. It was wonderful to see all the creative and unique designs that emerged during this activity. What might appear to be simple crafting serves an important purpose - these activities provide vital stimulation to the brain and neural pathways for participants.

The entertainment highlight was Tony M, who performed for the group. Tony has become quite popular within Memory Café circles, thanks to his engaging sense of humour and thoughtfully selected song choices that encourage everyone to join in. His performance was particularly successful, as all residents were inspired to get up and dance along to the music.

These thoughtfully designed activities create meaningful social connections while supporting cognitive health in an uplifting environment.

Our final Memory Café of April featured a welcome return from the Swindon Society, who had not visited since last year. The engaging presentation included a slide show comparing old and new Swindon, which sparked lively conversations with our residents about their experiences growing up in various parts of the town.

The interactive session provided wonderful opportunities for reminiscence and connection as stories were shared about Swindon's evolution over the decades. Many residents eagerly pointed out familiar landmarks and recounted personal memories associated with various neighbourhoods.

Lin concluded the successful morning with a popular seated exercise session, helping everyone stay active while having fun.

We extend special thanks to Tru Delights from Moredon for the generous donation of three delicious Victoria sandwich cakes, which were thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees.

May

The Memory Café welcomed the beautiful May weather with vibrant activities that engaged all participants. Residents put their creativity to work on decorating pots and planting sunflower seeds, bringing a touch of sunshine indoors while anticipating the blooms to come.

Thames Water representative Rob paid a special visit to introduce the new support scheme designed specifically for elderly and vulnerable residents in the parish. This informative session provided valuable resources for our Memory Café residents.

The highlight of the morning was Tony M's engaging performance, Tony kindly stepped in at the last minute to support us as our original entertainment let us down. His wonderful singing talent combined with charming wit had everyone smiling and tapping their feet. The rock and roll tunes proved irresistible, inspiring many residents to rise from their seats and dance, filling the room with joy and energy.

The Memory Café continues to be a vibrant hub where community connections flourish alongside meaningful activities that stimulate both mind and body.

Sensory Garden Refresh

In April, the Memory and Community Co Ordinator seized the perfect opportunity to begin rejuvenating the Sensory Garden. Working alongside a couple of dedicated volunteers, they embarked on the first phase of a seasonal spruce-up that promises to breathe new life into this special space.

The team focused on essential preparation work—carefully removing accumulated weeds, thoroughly raking over the soil, and readying the garden beds for new plantings. This foundational work creates the perfect canvas for the upcoming addition of fresh plants and vegetables that will soon bring colour, texture, and nourishment for the garden.

This collaborative effort not only enhances a shared environment but strengthens community bonds as volunteers work together toward a common goal.

look forward to the next stages of this project as we transform our Sensory Garden into a vibrant space for everyone to enjoy in the coming months.

Companion Café

At its heart, the Companion Café strives to create a haven where concerns can be voiced freely, experiences shared openly, and support offered generously. We recognise that dementia presents uniquely in each person living with it —while journeys may share similarities, every experience remains distinctly personal to the individual and their loved ones.

The Companion Café stands as testament to the power of community in facing dementia together, reminding us that while the path may be challenging, no one need walk it alone.

March

The Companion Café welcomed several new residents in March.

Admiral Nurse Tim joined our gathering, offering personalised advice and navigating residents toward essential support services. The Admiral Nurses represent an invaluable lifeline for those traversing the complex path of dementia care—connecting families with resources precisely when they are needed most.

Wiltshire Farm Foods made a timely visit, bringing not only informative menu magazines but insights into their specialised food delivery service throughout the Haydon Wick area. Residents discussed the diverse menu options and quality of meals—critical considerations for maintaining good nutrition during the dementia journey, also giving an option for the companion to have a break if they cook regularly.

Rod from Swindon Lions captivated everyone with a presentation of their ingenious "Message in a Bottle" scheme. This brilliant initiative provides vulnerable or elderly individuals with a simple yet potentially life-saving system: vital personal information stored in a bottle kept in the refrigerator, allowing emergency responders to quickly access critical details during moments of crisis.

April

April hosted Dee, one of the Admiral Nurses from GWH. The informal chat featured Dee's personal perspective on dementia's impact.

The chat covered the Admiral Nurse's community-based role, emphasising specialised support services available to families navigating dementia care. Dee provided valuable information regarding hospital care for dementia patients, addressing common concerns and practical approaches.

Attendees received resource materials outlining support networks. The session facilitated knowledge exchange between professionals and community members, creating an environment conducive to learning and support.

The Companion Cafe continues to serve as an effective platform for keeping the communication of important healthcare information to the public, while building community connections around dementia care.

Working Towards

- Networking within the Dementia care resources.
- Initiating work on community noticeboards to increase local awareness of both café programmes.
- Promoting new attendees out of the Parish the donation offering.
- Bringing the Sensory Garden to life and expanding upon the Community Plot with the help of Volunteers and some of the Parks & Open Spaces Team.
- On going recruitment and training of volunteers for the Sensory Garden team and Companion Café.
- Building the Companion Café, and expert speakers.
- Looking for new entertainment ideas and craft activities using the seasons and stock already purchased.
- Safeguarding training online course
- Planning the Christmas period
- A breakfast morning
- Tea Dance and Barn Dance event planning
- Planning for the summer event Over 60's and Memory Café community area
- Finish the Companion Café welcome pack, with all useful info for the start of your Dementia Companion Journey.

Memories from the Memory Café



Sensory Garden



Companion Café Pictures

