

Meeting	Community Development Committee
Date	3 rd February 2026
Report Title	Haydon Wick Haven
Agenda Reference	7b
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The Haydon Wick Haven Activity Report – December & January

Introduction

This report provides an overview of activities delivered at the Haydon Wick Haven during December - January, highlighting sessions that supported resident wellbeing, community connection, and engagement with local services and heritage.

Cruse Bereavement Support Visit

The Haven welcomed representatives from Cruse Bereavement Support who shared their expertise and services with residents. Cruse, the UK's leading bereavement charity, provided invaluable insights into their free support services including one-to-one counselling, group sessions, and telephone helplines for anyone experiencing grief and loss. The compassionate approach of the Cruse team was particularly meaningful for residents who have recently experienced bereavement, whilst others appreciated knowing that professional, confidential help is available should they need it in the future. The session created a safe space where grief could be acknowledged openly without judgment, helping to reduce the isolation that often accompanies bereavement and reinforcing that there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

Swindon & Cricklade Railway Presentation

The team from Swindon & Cricklade Railway visited to share exciting news about upcoming events and improvements at this beloved local heritage attraction. The presentation offered residents insights into how passionate volunteers preserve and transform this important piece of railway history into a vibrant community space for families and railway enthusiasts. The session was particularly engaging for residents with personal or family connections to the railway industry, evoking memories and stories from their own experiences. Residents appreciated learning about ongoing developments and upcoming events, with several expressing interest in visiting or recommending the railway to family members. The visit demonstrated the value of maintaining links between The Haven and local community organisations, ensuring residents remain connected to wider local activities and heritage.

Halloween Bingo Session

The Haven community came together for a Halloween-themed bingo session filled with laughter, excitement, and plenty of festive spirit. The morning was characterised by enthusiastic participation, with residents enjoying the thrill of marking numbers and the joy of shouting "BINGO!" when prizes were won. The Halloween theme added seasonal fun through decorations and themed prizes, creating a celebratory atmosphere. This session provided important social interaction whilst offering gentle cognitive stimulation through number recognition and sustained attention. The competitive yet friendly nature of the game encouraged participation from residents with varying abilities, and the shared laughter fostered a strong sense of community belonging.

Police Community Engagement Visit

The Haven welcomed local Police Community Support Officers Lee and Kate from Swindon and Wiltshire Police for an engaging community safety talk. The officers shared important information about local policing, crime prevention, and staying safe in the community, whilst residents had opportunities to ask questions and raise concerns. This visit provided reassurance and built trust between residents and local police services, demonstrating that officers are accessible and committed to supporting the community. The informal, friendly approach encouraged open conversation and helped residents feel more confident about reporting concerns or seeking assistance. Direct contact with community officers addressed common anxieties about safety and security whilst providing practical advice on protecting against doorstep crime, scams, and fraud.

Remembrance Day Activities

In recognition of Remembrance Day, The Haven organised a themed word search activity that allowed residents to reflect and remember together. This quiet, contemplative activity provided an opportunity to honour the memory of those who served and sacrificed during times of conflict, whilst engaging in gentle cognitive stimulation. The Remembrance theme was particularly poignant for residents with personal or family connections to military service, and the activity created space for sharing memories and stories from wartime experiences. Such reminiscence work helps maintain personal identity, validates life experiences, and fosters intergenerational understanding of significant historical events whilst reinforcing community bonds and collective values.

Benefits to Residents

The diverse programme provided multiple benefits across resident wellbeing. Social connection was fostered through group activities like bingo and shared remembrance, combating isolation whilst building friendships and community spirit. Cognitive engagement was supported through games and word searches that provided mental stimulation in enjoyable, accessible formats. Emotional wellbeing was addressed through access to bereavement support information and the creation of safe spaces for reflection. Importantly, visits from external organisations ensured residents remained connected to their wider community and aware of available services and support, building confidence that help is accessible when needed. The variety of activities catered to different interests and needs, demonstrating The Haven's commitment to supporting whole-person wellbeing through diverse, quality programming.

Conclusion

The Haven delivered a varied programme that supported resident wellbeing across social, cognitive, emotional, and practical domains. From bereavement support to heritage presentations, festive entertainment to community safety advice, and reflective remembrance activities, the programme demonstrated responsiveness to resident needs whilst maintaining strong connections with local organisations. We extend our sincere thanks to Cruse Bereavement Support, Swindon & Cricklade Railway, and PCSOs Lee and Kate for taking the time to connect with our community. The Haven remains committed to providing meaningful activities that enhance quality of life and ensure residents remain active, connected, and supported members of their local community.