

Meeting	Community Development Committee
Date	1 st September 2026
Report Title	Memory Café & Companion Café
Agenda Reference	8a
Author	Jo Newman, Memory Café & Community Coordinator

Memory Café & Community Coordinator's Recommendations.

1. To note report.

July

July was exceptionally warm, but the Memory Café remained full to capacity throughout. Attendees did their best to stay cool while enjoying a summer-themed singing session from Nikki, including Just One Cornetto and Football's Coming Home.

Swindon PCSOs visited to introduce residents to the Herbert Protocol. Officers stayed on to help residents set up identity bracelets; however, the chips did not function correctly, and the accompanying QR code led to a paid sign-up page rather than the intended free registration. PCSO Emma noted these issues and took the details away to report back.

The final session of the month had a relaxed and engaging atmosphere. Residents took part in planting sunflower seeds, an activity that encouraged sensory engagement through the feel of the soil, alongside light-hearted conversation and friendly competition over whose sunflower would grow the tallest. The group also welcomed guest performer Alice May, who entertained members with a selection of beautifully sung cover songs, adding a further element of enjoyment and connection to the morning. Overall, the session offered a positive combination of sensory activity, social interaction, and music-based engagement for those attending.

August

This morning's Memory Café session was well attended and took place in warm, sunny conditions. Fans were provided to keep residents comfortable, alongside fresh fruit and a steady supply of cold drinks throughout the morning.

The session opened with a creative activity, in which residents decorated birds and flowers to take home or display in the Memory Café's sensory garden at Goodearl Allotments. The activity was well received, resulting in a wide range of colourful and creative pieces.

The morning concluded with a singing session led by Donna, which proved popular with residents and encouraged spontaneous dancing among several participants.

Overall, the session provided valuable opportunities for social engagement, creative expression, and physical activity in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

Donations

We are grateful to have received a generous gift of £200.00 to the Memory Café, kindly donated by the best friend of a resident who sadly passed away, in loving memory of their friendship. Additionally, we received £60.50 from the funeral donation box collected in memory of Marlene, which has also been gratefully received in support of the Memory Café. A rose bush will be purchased for the Sensory Garden, and ideas will be explored for other long-term uses of the funds in their memory.

Companion Café

The Companion Café continues to prove itself a safe and welcoming space, with attendance steadily growing. It has become a valuable forum where companions can come together to share concerns and seek support around challenges that are often difficult and deeply personal.

The Memory Café & Community Coordinator is dedicating time to making referrals for additional support where needed, and is also engaging with different areas of Adult Social Care, inviting them to attend sessions and share information about the services SBC can offer.

Working Towards

- Ongoing planning and sourcing of new entertainment and activities for the Community Cafés.
- Completing a few safeguarding cases and forwarding them to Swindon Borough Council.
- Continued expansion of the Companion Café.
- Continuing to do referrals and safeguarding concerns
- Networking with other community projects.
- Ensuring volunteer training remains up to date.
- Training on Deprivation of Liberty.
- Hosting the new event in September, Abba afternoon.
- Taking care of the Sensory Garden watering and growing
- Waiting on confirmation of visit from pre-school children to the Sensory Garden.
- Recruiting new volunteers.
- Updating volunteer files.
- Exploring the option of arranging Dementia Bus training again for families who are struggling.
- Attending funerals of residents who have sadly passed away, on behalf of Haydon Wick Parish Council and the Memory Café/Haven.

Memory Cafe pictures



Companion Café pictures

