

**Agenda Item 12: Report to Full Council on the proposal to run a Friendship Café in the Library,
on Monday afternoons when the Library is closed and the space is not used.**

Outcome:

To improve the lives for residents in Wroughton by reducing loneliness & isolation, giving residents the opportunity to get together & make new friends in a safe & welcoming environment, thereby improving their health & wellbeing.

Information gathered so far:

Cllr Campisano & I were invited to Chiseldon Parish Council's Memory Café's Afternoon Tea. A number of their attendees (some of whom were from Wroughton and attended Wroughton's Memory Cafe) would attend additional/ friendship groups if they were available.

Wroughton Soup & Sandwich Club is run by volunteers. This is so popular they have had to start a waiting list, as they can't physically accommodate any more people in the room they use. I have spoken to a few attendees who would welcome an additional opportunity in an informal setting where they could meet peers and chat, and make new friends. Soup & sandwich is busy and people sit, so there's not much opportunity to circulate.

As people become older, they may experience their friendship & support groups diminishing, whether from friends dying, a need to relocate away from their support network to be closer to family, or their health means they are unable to continue to access the groups/ activities. They are more likely to need a local offer.

Swindon Housing holds community cafes in Penhill & Stratton where everyone is welcome. They are designed to reduce isolation by providing a space for people to meet, friendships to be formed, where local people can discuss local issues and share information.

Stratton-St-Margaret Parish Council holds a 1 hour monthly Evergreen Club for senior citizens at Grange Leisure & Community Centre Café, to help older residents get out and meet other people.

Proposal:

Wroughton Library is closed all day Monday's and the space isn't used, therefore it could be used for a Community Café/ Friendship Group, where people who find it difficult to get out and meet others for whatever reason, can come together, make new friends, reducing loneliness & isolation.

REQUEST:

Is this something which Members would like the office to look into further, including, but not limited to:

- Finding out whether similar groups are provided by other parishes and elsewhere within/ outside the borough, whether these groups are successful, whether the group runs itself or whether there is someone paid to run it, and if so their hours, job role and cost.
- whether any funding would be available to pay for someone to run & administer the group (eg: set up/ down, make teas/ coffees, arrange for organisations to attend to provide advice etc) at least initially, although even if funding is available to start, it would most likely require WPC to continue to fund it going forward (assuming it's successful) unless further funding could be found.
- carry out some informal consultation – eg: by speaking to those who go to soup & sandwich, the NHS Community Navigators, SBC Housing, and SBC befriending coordinator to speak to a larger number of potential stakeholders to better gauge the need & outcomes.
- How often people would like to attend such a group – weekly, fortnightly, monthly.