

**ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**  
of the Board of Trustees



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**STAFF**

WI House has been at the centre of some key events across 2022 and 2023. It was the launch pad for coaches for the Torquay holiday and Stratford Christmas Market. The house was a lovely setting for a cream tea after the February Belgrave Community Culture events. We enjoyed crafting with Dorset Buttons, Embroidery and our regular Which Craft sessions. We have delivered training to Treasurers, Presidents and Secretaries and hosted Inter-Federation meetings with our colleagues across the Midlands with the hope to continue to learn and grow. We are opening further to the possibilities of the future .

Our staff team has changed as we said goodbye to Lauren Saunders in May 2023 and Lois McKinder joined us as administrative assistant in July 2023.

Committee meetings still continue at WI House and we have welcomed observers and co-opted new members to committees—please come along to see the work behind the scenes and you'd be very welcome!

**WI MEMBERS IN LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND**

There are 110 WIs in Leicestershire & Rutland and 3,400 members

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Chairman:** Glenice Wignall
- Vice Chairman:** Gail Wooliscroft
- Treasurer:** Linda Martin
- Elected Members:** Maxilyn Geary, Mary Hobbs, Janet Kirk, Gail Wooliscroft, Susan Woollard.
- Co-opted Members:** Beverly Blackburn, Rita Caves, Rosemary Heyes, Sue Lobb

**COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

- Art & Crafts:** Eileen Williams
- Finance & House Management:** Linda Martin
- Fund Raising:** Rita Caves
- Leisure Activities:** Maxilyn Geary
- Membership:** Janet Kirk
- Public Affairs & International:** Glenice Wignall

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is made up of thirteen elected members who volunteer to give up their time to run the Federation for the Membership. They are responsible for the financial affairs of the Federation, the running of WI House and the staff, as well as overseeing all the committees and the events they put on for all the members.

The Annual Council Meeting at Leicester Grammar School was an amazing day with excellent speakers and displays. It was enjoyed by all who attended and was one of the standout events of this year.

The Board and Federation Secretary oversee the trip to the NFWI Annual Meeting that was in Cardiff this year. It was an interesting day with the chance to make new friends from our Federation and others that we met on the day.

The Board constantly review the events that are put on for the members to see if they are meeting the needs of the membership and we try to react to comments and suggestions to improve things. We have to be mindful of the Constitution and work within it. We are open to new ideas if you have any. We look forward to building on last year's successes.

## ART & CRAFTS

It is always a pleasure to share skills with those who are willing to learn something new or something that they have not done for a long time. Our committee, made up of volunteers, work hard behind the scenes to make sure that a good selection of workshops and dabble days are available. My personal thanks to all the members of our committee, both past and present. We work together as a team, each to their own strengths and we are always looking for extra women to join with us, giving us new ideas and skills. If that is you, then please come and sit in on one of our meetings to see what we get up to.

This past year has been busy with the ACM competitions, embroidery and Dorset Button workshops and Spring and Autumn Dabble days at Broughton Astley and Syston. We have also started the craft sessions on Thursdays, once a month, so that we can support each other in our craft work. Please come along if you are able.

Everything that is planned will be in the County News, and we will be hosting our stand at the ACM as usual. Your support will be welcome, please take the time to chat to us.

## FINANCE & HOUSE MANAGEMENT

The Committee has continued its work to maintain WI House and garden in good order.

House maintenance this year has included fire and electrical safety updates and boiler maintenance. We have hosted several events in the House and garden over the course of the year.

The Shop in a Box scheme has now almost ceased with just a small number of WI branded goods on offer mainly at the Annual Council Meeting.

Sales of Taylors Bulbs again went well and our thanks go to all who supported this Scheme. The new catalogue will be available on the website in the Spring and leaflets will be distributed at the ACM.

Support for the Monthly Draw has reduced this year but we continue to awarding three prizes each month.

We have held three Speakers Showcase events this year. These were welcomed both by WI programme coordinators and prospective speakers. Lists of speakers are available in the Yearbook.

We thank you for your continued support of our committee and the Federation.

## FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

In September 2022 we held our annual Autumn Lunch at Devonshire Place in Leicester. The guest speaker was the well-known Nick Hamilton, son of Geoff Hamilton, from Barnsdale. He talked about Barnsdale after his father from 1996 to the present day. After his talk we were able to buy a splendid array of different plants that he had brought along.

The lunch was excellent and the event was well attended.

At the end of October 2022 we enjoyed our first Race Night at the Stoke Golding Club. The organisation of the evening was well run and many bets placed over about eight races. The fish and chip supper and the running bar made the evening most enjoyable.

We started 2023 in April with Tea with Baroness Bolsover at Thurnby Memorial Hall. The Baroness's victorian gown was most eye-catching as she demonstrated the essential do's and don'ts of Afternoon Tea Etiquette. The afternoon tea that followed with sandwiches and cakes was much enjoyed. We feel it was a very successful afternoon.

Two weeks after the King's Coronation we returned to Devonshire Place for our annual Spring Lunch. Our guest speaker was Lynne Sharpe who is a National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies Area demonstrator. We asked her for a red, white and blue theme for her demonstrations and when the arrangements appeared on the platform they were quite exquisite. Needless to say lots of photos were taken. Her presentation was first class and it was a lovely day with the usual Devonshire Place service.

## LEISURE ACTIVITIES

2023 has been a positive year for us. We have two new members on our committee and have arranged lots of popular events

The Federation is now ticketless for events, this has had its teething problems but is the way forward and the Leisure Committee is working closely with the office to make it work.

Margaret has arranged the Federation skittles and darts tournaments this year, both events have had their problems, but lessons have been learnt and hopefully WIs will continue to support these events in future years.

Other events arranged throughout the year have been

- Four coaches from around the federation visited Stratford Christmas market, it was a very cold sunny day, but this didn't stop people shopping and trying the food on offer from the numerous stalls.
- Pétanque evenings, the final one was a team events and 'yes' Leisure won and took home the wine as a prize.
- An enjoyable coach trip to RHS in Malvern.
- A Blue Badge guided walk in Abbey Park, again this had problems as Leicester City Council had decided to close the road to the main Abbey Park car park for the day.
- The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary walk to Billa Barra Hill followed by lunch provided by Markfield WI.

Anyone that has any ideas of events they would like please get in touch with a committee member or better still come and join the committee.

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## MEMBERSHIP

The WI Advisers and support Advisers who make up the Membership Committee have been working hard visiting WIs as well as always being available to offer advice and encouragement on email or over the phone to any WIs or Members who contact us. We only have three Advisers currently and two helpers so are kept busy, but we do our utmost to deal with all enquiries. We run training sessions for officers and these are for new or long serving Presidents and Secretaries to learn best practice and exchange ideas with others. We help pass on information and updates from NFWI and help WIs understand the working of these.

We run the Federation Quiz each year with help from willing WIs without whom it would not be possible to hold this successful event, so we thank you for your support. The Committee organise the link delegates for the National Annual Meeting and help brief the delegates attending on their role at the meeting. We also organise Groups and oversee the election of Group Secretaries and Treasurers.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS & INTERNATIONAL

The Committee has maintained an active and interesting programme of events, furthering its role of keeping abreast of current issues in local and national life.

In addition, through the Resolution Adviser, the Committee maintains the Federation's annual cycle of resolution selection. It continues to be very encouraging to see how many members voted this year and their passion for topics. The Committee organises a Resolution Conference, providing expert speakers on the shortlisted topics. We also have responsibility for promoting the Federation links with ACWW. This year over £2,000 was donated to Pennies for Friendship.

Our programme continued with the successful events of Science Question Time and a faith visit to the Hindu temple.

