

Autumn Lunch 2025

In October we held our Autumn lunch at The Green Room, in Hinckley. Gail Wooliscroft, Federation Vice Chair attended and writes *"As a regular attender of the Spring/Autumn lunches I have always enjoyed them, I must commend the organisers of the recent Autumn lunch which was especially enjoyable. The venue, which I hadn't been to before, was cosy, warm and welcoming and in a different part of the Federation from where we had been before. The food choices were ideal for Sunday lunchtime, the meal itself was delicious, tasty and hot. Jack Lawton the farmer's singing was delightful. He sang a variety of well known and loved standards, which we all knew and could join in with. I am looking forward to the next one and would encourage other members to join me. It was a delightful afternoon and was well attended."* Also Dawn from Bitteswell WI wrote to us and said *"Please pass on our thanks to Glenice and all the people involved organising the Autumn Lunch. Elaine, Janet, Jennie and I had a really lovely afternoon. The meal was excellent and the entertainment brought back some wonderful memories with Jack's singing. He is very talented"*.



Federation Chairman
Glenice Wignall
glenicewignall@lrfwi.org

Federation Treasurer
Mary Hobbs
maryhobbs@lrfwi.org

Federation Secretary
Tina Lee
fedsec@lrfwi.org

**Office Manager/
Accounts**
Lois McKinder
wihouse@lrfwi.org

Finance
finance@lrfwi.org



Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes

incorporated in England and Wales as a Company limited by Guarantee No. 02769771 Charity Reg No. 1016 766

WI House, 135 Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5LQ

Tel: 0116 2661342 Email: wihouse@lrfwi.org

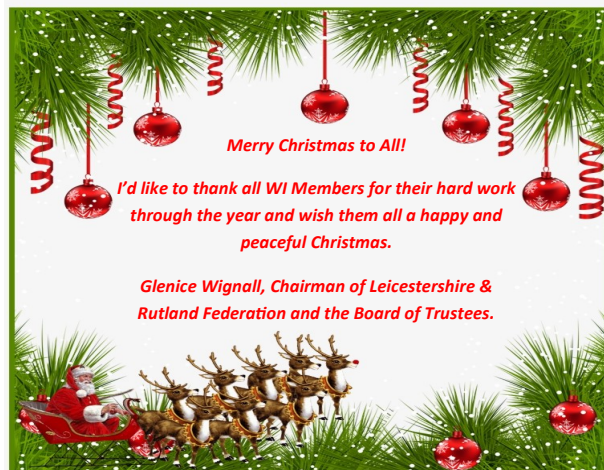
Opening hours: Mon-Wed 9.30am—2.30pm

www.leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk or scan QR code

Find us on Facebook: Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WIs



From the Board



From the House



Help with County News—Could you spare a couple of hours a week and have some experience of editing and using Publisher? If so would you like to volunteer to help with editing County News and keeping our website up-to-date?

Please get in contact with WI House to find out more. Thank you!

Christmas and New Year closing of WI House

A reminder that WI House will be closed over the Christmas and New Year period from Thursday 18th December 2025 and will re-open on Monday 5th January 2026.



The Baldwin Trust Charity Update

Dear Members

WI House has received an update from the Secretary of our chosen Charity, The Baldwin Trust —as follows:

"We are extremely grateful for the support received from all the WI members; a number of groups also booked trips with us this year, unfortunately, due to how we operate, if the groups left a cash donation with us onboard the boat after their trip, I won't be able to attribute it to them, my apologies. I will look into how many and which groups have been onboard with us and let you know; every trip booked is supporting the work of the Trust, which we really appreciate".

Members can still make donations:

1. Send cheques to - **The Baldwin Trust, c/o Mrs H Coombe (Secretary), 2 Cottesmore Close, Syston, Leicestershire LE7 2DJ**. Please write **WI Charity of the Year 2025** on the reverse so we can count WI donations.

2. Via **BACS**: Account name: **The Baldwin Trust** Sort Code: **30-90-89** Account Number: **37391360**

3. Via the website - www.baldwintrust.co.uk

4. Posting a cheque to **The Baldwin Trust** and we will send them through to the charity every quarter.

Thank you



WI group	Donation received	Date
Federation AGM - on the day donations and bear sales	£106	Mar-25
Federation AGM - post event cheque received	£250	Apr-25
Seagrave WI	£500	Sep-25
Groby WI	£20	Oct-25
Burton Overy WI	£10	Oct-25
Hallaton WI	£25	Oct-25
Sheepy	£50	Oct-25
Total	£961	

Membership Committee

The LRFWI Membership Committee is responsible for assisting WIs with any help they require. I hope you find the following items useful. Mandy Cutler, Membership Committee Chair.

Annual Reports 2025 and Financial Statements

Dear WI Secretaries,

Just a reminder that following your Annual Meeting, you need to forward a copy of the Annual Report Form and a signed copy of the 2024 – 2025 Annual Financial Statement to the Federation Secretary, at WI House. The email address is: wihouse@lrfwi.org
The Annual Report Form 2025 can be found on the LRFWI website under Running a WI.

Please get in touch if you need some help. Contact details of WI Advisers can be found in the LRFWI Yearbook under the Membership Committee.

Free Online Training for WI Officers



For WI Officers new to the role, or those who want a refresher, free online training is available on the **WI Learning Hub**. Just click on the following link which will take you to the WI Committee Roles Area: <https://learninghub.thewi.org.uk/wi-committee-role-area/>

Here you will see **WI Officer Induction** and once you have clicked into this you can book the relevant **30 minute module**.

There are separate modules for Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers. Each module provides all the essential information needed to confidently take on the selected role.

Thank you for stepping into this leadership role within your WI.

The LRFWI Membership Committee will be offering training for officers at WI House in spring 2026.

LRFWI County News Calendar 2025/26/27

Dear Members,

As you know, items for County News have to be submitted in advance to enable Tina Lee, our Federation Secretary, and Lois Mc Kinder, Office Manager, at WI House to complete all the necessary work for each edition.

You may find the following calendar useful and this can also be found on the LRFWI website under **County News**:

A Reminder: Your items should be sent to WI House by email: fedsec@lrfwi.org or post.

Make sure to include the name of your WI with your article. Please try to keep **Around the Counties** articles to **120 words and 2 photos** so we can include as many as possible and save paper, ink and postage costs.

Articles may be edited.

Remember there will be no County News in December.

COUNTY NEWS EDITIONS 2025/26	DEADLINE FOR ITEMS TO BE SUBMITTED	DEADLINE FOR FLYERS	RELEASE DATE FOR COUNTY NEWS ISSUES (wk of 3 rd Mon of month)
DEC 2025/JAN 2026	1 st November 2025	10 th November 2025	17 th November 2025
FEBRUARY	1 st January 2026	14 th January 2026	19 th January 2026
MARCH	1 st February 2026	11 th February 2026	16 th February 2026
APRIL	1 st March 2026	11 th March 2026	16 th March 2026
MAY	1 st April 2026	15 th April 2026	20 th April 2026
JUNE	1 st May 2026	13 th May 2026	18 th May 2026
JULY/AUGUST	1 st June 2026	10 th June 2026	15 th June 2026
SEPTEMBER	1 st August 2026	12 th August 2026	17 th August 2026
OCTOBER	1 st September 2026	16 th September 2026	21 st September 2026
NOVEMBER	1 st October 2026	14 th October 2026	19 th October 2026
DECEMBER 2026/ JANUARY 2027	1 st November 2026	11 th November 2026	16 th November 2026

Membership Committee (continued)

Dear Members, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I wanted to remind you of the 6 sessions of physical first aid training and 3 sessions of Mental Health First Aid training across Leicestershire and Rutland. **These sessions will be free to WI members who gain a place - and the federation will pay up to £10 in travel expenses.**

Why First Aid Provision?

At the time of our application for the grant, the resolution to be voted on at the National Annual Meeting was ' *Bystanders Can be Lifesavers*'. As you know, this is now a campaign, and we felt a grant would enable LRFWI members to support this campaign.

One of the examples of projects that the Denman Trust stated it would look on favourably in applications was a Mental Health Program.

The Denman Trust has placed emphasis on the 'reach' of the grant awarded – the greater the impact of the educational provision the better.

So, if you do gain a place on a course, we ask that in return you do **either**

- a write up about your experiences for your own WI newsletter and a neighbouring WI's newsletter.
 - Or you may get your write up circulated to WI members on email.
- or**
- you can request that you talk briefly to WI members about your experiences at one of your home WI monthly meetings and at a meeting of a neighbouring WI.

In addition, we would encourage you to book a **free** Heartwize visit to your home WI. Heartwize focus on the problem of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and teach basic resuscitation skills .For the **Heartwize Resuscitation Training Programme:**

Tel: [01455 687993](tel:01455 687993)

Mob: [07976 275038](tel:07976 275038)

E-Mail: heartwize@heartwize.org

DATE	COURSE TYPE	VENUE	DATE IN COUNTY NEWS	Closing Date for applying for a place
Tuesday 17th March	Mental Health First Aid Champion	Mary Forryan Centre, Hinckley.	December/January	17 February 2026
Wednesday 15th April	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church, Market Harborough.	December/January	18 March 2026
Saturday 9th May	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	St Peter and St Paul Church Hall, Uppingham.	February	11 April 2026
Thursday 14th May	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	Beedles Lake Golf Club East Goscote.	February	16 April 2026
Thursday 11th June	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	Ashby Baptist Church.	March	11 May 2026
Tuesday 16th June	Mental Health First Aid Champion	Methodist Church, Oakham.	March	15 May 2026
Saturday 12th September	Mental Health First Aid Champion	Church Rooms, Quorn.	June	15 August 2026
Thursday 17th September	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	Mary Forryan Centre, Hinckley.	June	20 August 2026
Wednesday 7th October	(Physical) First Aid Course for Adults	All Saints Church, Oakham.	June	07 September 2026

If you have applied for a place in response to a **customised flyer for a course at a particular venue**, then you will be placed on a list until the closing date. Places will then be distributed **evenly across WI's** where members have applied. **For example**, if there are 12 places on a course and 6 WIs apply, then the first two from each WI list will get a place - the remaining applicants will be reserves on a waiting list.

Mandy Cutler

Fund Raising Committee

Don't miss the flyer which is going out for **A Musical Cream Tea on Thursday 12th March 2026.**

You will notice that our guest is Roy Carter singing Motown. One of our committee members was on a cruise this summer and went to the ship's theatre, holding 600, and heard a tribute to the Stylistics which was very well received. Next morning she managed to speak to one of the performers, Roy Carter, who told her he also did solo performances. He has also excelled in bands including The Foundations and the Drifters.

This seemed an opportunity not to be missed and he has been booked to entertain us. We look forward to seeing you there.

Arts & Crafts Committee

On Saturday 8th November members of the Committee and 30+ ladies assembled at Syston Community Centre for our Autumn Dabble Day. On offer to ladies were 6 very varied dabbles to be attempted in an hour. We were kept to time by our ever effervescent Chair, Clare. We broke for lunch at noon. We began again at 12.30 so just a quick break to refuel and refresh.

The day wound up promptly at 3.30pm. Ladies left clutching 5 finished items of their choice or had the opportunity to complete at home. It was a busy and joyous day which we hope ladies who attended found as enjoyable and rewarding as we did.

From the Committee and ladies who attended a heartfelt massive thank you to our refreshment ladies Mary and Marie, who did a splendid job all day for us.

Save the date for our next one: **Saturday 18th April 2026 at the Mary Forryan Centre** in Hinckley.

Do keep an eye on County News for our workshops and other activities for you to enjoy.



Events —What's on

2026:

Monday 19th to Friday 23rd January 2026—**Alvaston Holiday** £399

Tuesday 10th February 2026—**Bell Foundry**, Freehold Street, Loughborough, LE11 1AR £16

Tuesday 3rd March 2026—**Greek Orthodox Church Visit**, Aylestone Road, LE2 7LN £10

Thursday 12th March 2026—**A Musical Cream Tea—Roy Carter** Sings Motown, Kirby Muxloe. LE9 2EN £12

Tuesday 17th March 2026—**Mental First Aid Champion Training Course**, Mary Forryan Centre, Hinckley

Saturday 28th March 2026—**Annual Meeting**, Leicester Grammar School, LE8 9FL

A reminder of the closing dates for Competitions:

Darts Competition 2026—booking to be received at WI House by 31st January 2026

Federation Art Trophy 2026—paintings to be received at WI House no later than 5th February 2026

Edith Buckley Poetry Competition 2026—entries to be received at WI House by 19th February 2026

Margaret Johnston Trophy Competition—entries to be received at WI House by 28th February 2026

Secretaries/Treasurers—Don't leave your booking until the closing date. You can add to the booking by phone at a later date if further members want to attend.

If you want to book as an individual, use the booking form on our website under:

Federation Downloads

—email the form to wihouse@lrfwi.org or call 0116 2661342

Monthly Draw

Our monthly draw winners will be informed by letter and announced on our Facebook page

1st Prize £25

2nd Prize £15

3rd Prize £10



Thank you to all of the members who have supported the Federation by buying a Monthly Draw ticket!



Around the Counties

Coleorton



We are 60 years old! We had a celebratory party on 1st October instead of our usual meeting to celebrate and mark this milestone in our history. We welcomed Gail Wooliscroft, Federation Vice Chair to share our afternoon with us.

The WI committee provided homemade cakes, sandwiches and scones and served a delicious afternoon tea complete with a glass of Prosecco, in the decorated Beaumont Centre. Entertainment was provided by Hazel Salt who sang a medley of well known songs.

After tea the cake which was baked and beautifully iced by Helen, to commemorate the event, was cut by Carol who was present at the first WI meeting 69 years ago and is one of the longest serving members.



As everyone left they were presented with a single red rose to take home as a memento of the afternoon.

Swannington

The crafting members of Swannington WI recently got together to knit Remembrance poppies, which as well as giving our crafters a very interesting project, they then took it one step further and presented the completed poppies to Bright Hope House in Swannington; in order that they could sit alongside the Royal British Legion's poppies there and help to raise money for the Poppy Appeal.



Maureen Andrews, one of our members who has benefitted greatly from Bright Hope's day care centre, as the photo shows, she was only too delighted to be asked to do the official handover of the poppies to Matt Buckley, Care Services Manager.

Cossington

Our members really enjoy skittles and always look forward to our matches which are always well supported.

We decided for an extra social evening to have a skittles social. Many of our members came along and enjoyed having a go. Some of them have not been confident to put their names forward to play in a match. We may find more keen to play in the future.

The evening was finished with a pub meal.



Thurnby and Bushby

At our October meeting we welcomed Ginnette Brookes who spoke to us about her passion for ballet, which started when she was three years old, and her journey to become a ballet teacher. She spoke about Silver Swans, a ballet programme developed by the Royal Academy of Dance to teach ballet to the over 55s and the benefits of gentle exercise for both physical and mental health. We enjoyed an informal quiz on ballet music before trying a few steps ourselves. With chair backs as our bars, we performed simple steps and graceful arm movements to some very relaxing music with varying degrees of success. It was great fun and very enjoyable.



Leicester Ladies

What a fantastic year it's been for us. Last year we had just 15 members, and now we've grown to 32 – how wonderful to see our group thriving! September's meeting was an absolute blast. We enjoyed a brilliant evening of Line Dancing with Yvonne, who taught us 6 fabulous dances. It was such good fun!

In October, we held our AGM. To make the evening a bit more entertaining, the committee organised some fun games to play. One of the favourites was *Get to Know You Bingo*, where we had to mingle and ask each other questions like "Would you have pineapple on your pizza?" and "Can you whistle?" It was a brilliant icebreaker – and we got to know each other a lot better by the end of the night!



Gopsall Villages

In October, 12 members of Gopsall Villages WI took part in a glass fusion workshop. The £100 Bursary gift went towards the cost of the event. The session was run by "Smartsy" fused glass from Ratby who

provided all of the materials for the event. We could choose from a range of designs to create our finished articles, such as a robin, a heart, a circle, a Christmas tree, a plant stake or a "dingle dangle". May was our tutor and she explained how to arrange our chosen pieces of glass onto the plain background shape and then we had to gradually glue them in place until we were happy with our design.

Once completed, the pieces were taken to be fired - and then the fusion takes place! The photos show details from the evening.



Around the Counties

Newbold Verdon

We were delighted when two of our members showed us how to make two items of crafts. First was to cover a small notepad. We covered the notepad in felt and decorated it with small felt items – butterflies and/or flowers. Having completed the notepads, we moved on to bookmarks. Using the same type of felt, we sewed our choices of decoration on to the felt strips and then sewed two pieces of felt together. It was a very enjoyable and social evening. Our thanks to Bridget and Margaret for all their hard work



Botcheston

Claire, one of our eagle-eyed members, when reading WI Life, noticed that if you book a holiday through Riviera Travel they will give 10% of the booking cost to your WI. A couple of our members booked their holidays/cruises and our WI duly received the 10%. Along with some funds from our summer events, this enabled Botcheston WI to give a donation of £2000.00 to LOROS – a LOROS representative – Debbie Trussell - can be seen below receiving the cheque:



LOROS are going through a very tough time at the moment, having to reduce some of the services they offer – we hope that this donation will in some small way help to keep their most valuable services running – we never know when we might need them.

Broughton Astley

We were very grateful to Carol Marsden for stepping in at the last minute as our speaker this month, and what an inspiring lady she is! Her motto of “Never say Never – Think Maybe – Say Yes” is the background to “Carol’s Capers – Adventuring For Charity”. Her adventures have taken her from sledding with Huskies in Lapland to trekking in the Sahara Desert and many things in between to raise money for local charities, which has amounted to over £30,000. She has appeared on Bargain Hunt and The Chase, where her team only lost by 3 seconds! Our competition on the theme of Halloween attracted four amazing entries who all won well-deserved points.

Our poppy team has worked hard to complete more nets of knitted poppies for our Remembrance displays around our memorial gardens this November.



Bitteswell

All set up for our open meeting to show our visitors all that is on offer at our WI.

Our speaker, Vanessa Morgan gave a very interesting talk about “Local murders in the 19th century” beginning with one in Bitteswell Bakehouse!

The different murders highlighted the indifferences between men and women with longer sentences for women. Occasionally women were hanged whereas men were given hard labour. Hangings were a spectacle during the 1800s often attracting ten thousand plus spectators. Women's bodies were dismembered and sent for medical research.

Following refreshments, a TV police quiz took place testing everyone's memory. It was a lot of fun. Sadly, there were no visitors this time despite using social media and placing posters in local venues.



Quorn afternoon

A new member's view

“Back in August I decided to join Quorn WI (afternoon) group, and what a good decision that has turned out to be.

On my first visit I was given a very warm welcome by various members and also found there were quite a few familiar faces to chat to as well. I really enjoyed the fact that we started the session with both verses of Jerusalem, lustily and tunefully sung without any accompaniment. The speaker was a flower demonstration which as I am a flower arranger myself was obviously of real interest. I came away from that first meeting having won a lovely lily plant in the raffle, with a free novel from the bookshelf, and having joined one of the three book groups! Quite a result for a “Newbie”.

“At my second meeting the speaker was Paul Reed, a dresser to the stars of the stage and what an amazing and interesting person he proved to be; bringing with him some wonderful original costumes, and explaining the tricks used for quick costume changes”.

“In October we had a talk about the life of a ladies maid, where we were led into the world of the Victorian era and all the intricacies and restrictions of the fashions of the time. At the end of that meeting I had signed up for the Christmas lunch and could have joined a party going to the local pantomime if I hadn't already got a ticket”.

“So I have to say that I know I am going to very much enjoy being a member of such a lively and friendly group, and an added bonus was receiving a lovely handmade card for my birthday”!

Around the Counties

Ullesthorpe



On Thursday October 9th Ullesthorpe ladies welcomed Paul Gardner and his wife Sue to the meeting. It proved to be a very enjoyable afternoon.

He is very well known in Hinckley as a founder of the local history group. He was awarded the British Empire medal for services to Hinckley community and is a past contributor to the Hospital Radio station. He can be heard on Fosse 107 radio each Sunday. He raises money for local charities through online quizzes and prize draws. He also gives talks to local groups about Hinckley and his life in pantomime shows.

Paul has appeared at Concordia several times. He told us how he started as a teenager and how he worked at the comedy routines involving water and falling over. There was a lot of audience participation and videos of excerpts from the many Pantos at Concordia.

A very interesting person who is proud to belong to Hinckley.

We have started a new venture. Walking and lunching. Those who are able walk for a few miles and then meet up with the ladies not able to walk far for a chatty lunch. So far, we have walked near North Kilworth, lunching at Alberts Antiques and then Monks' Kirby village, meeting at Malt Kiln Farm Shop.

In October we also joined a group walk in Leicester discovering the history of one of our famous Leicestershire people Thomas Cook. This was a very interesting guided tour led by Steve Bruce.

Blackfordby

On 9th November, one of our longest serving members, Jean Mason laid our Wreath at the War Memorial in the village. Jean has been a member of Blackfordby WI for over sixty-one years.

Our Poppy Wreath has Tommy knitted by Ann, one of our ladies, who sadly is no longer with us. His two lady friends were knitted by Viv. Our poppy displays decorated the area round the War memorial. We have already asked our ladies to start knitting as we would like to add two new trellises next year.

And our craft group has been busy, we made the little Christmas tree angels and for Halloween we made the book folded Witches.



Around the Counties

Glenfield Park



Our latest meeting was an open meeting when we invited visitors to join us and we were fortunate to have invited an excellent speaker, Philip Yorke to

this meeting. His talk was entitled *Dog eat Dog* which sounded very intriguing!. It appears that Philip was an investigative journalist who was responsible for researching a number of high profile cases.

He explained that he got into journalism, really by accident, working at the Hinckley Times, covering local sport. He then progressed to working as a sports journalist for well-known newspapers such as the Daily Mirror, and the Observer among others. However he became bored and that is when he embarked on a mission to expose fraud and corruption.

During his career he was sued 13 times but because he always worked with a lawyer he was never convicted. On the plus side he received several National Awards. Philip then gave details of 3 very high profile cases on which he had worked. Philip said at the beginning that it could be dangerous and in this case he received death threats and had his flat bugged.

He is extremely grateful that throughout it all his wife stuck by him. We were all enthralled by the talk and the interaction with the audience and were impressed by his work. An enjoyable, interesting evening and very worthwhile.



Woodhouse Eaves

At our October meeting we welcomed Phil Jesson, a volunteer with the charity Unseen, who spoke about the hidden issue of modern slavery. Phil explained how people are still exploited today through forced labour, domestic servitude, and other forms of abuse — even here in the UK. He encouraged us to be more aware of where our products come from and to look out for signs of exploitation in our communities. Phil shared practical ways to help, such as reporting concerns to the Modern Slavery Helpline and supporting ethical companies and charities. It was an eye-opening and inspiring talk that left us all thinking about how we can make a difference.



also as was that

Countesthorpe

We are delighted we have been awarded a £500 Community Grant via the grant scheme operated by Blaby District Council. The scheme supports voluntary and community groups within the area to assist them to develop and strengthen community facilities and activities for the benefit of Blaby District residents.

The grant will pay for our room hire and allow us to spend more of our funds on speakers and activities for our membership.

So a big Thank You to Blaby District Council, your support is very much appreciated.

Ilston on the Hill

Our most recent meeting proved to be a truly relaxing – and surprisingly invigorating – experience. We were delighted to welcome Duncan from Rutland Tai Chi, who joined us to introduce the ancient Chinese art of Tai Chi.

Duncan explained how the practice combines gentle flowing movements with deep controlled breathing to help improve balance, flexibility and mental focus. It is a discipline that encourages mindfulness and calm – something we can all benefit from in our busy lives.

Under his patient guidance and with his clear instructions and calm manner, Duncan made the sequences look effortless. There were a few wobbles here and there as we tried to follow the moves, but there was lots of encouragement along the way.

The biggest challenge was remembering to breathe properly – deeply and slowly from the diaphragm – instead of holding our breath in concentration. Who knew breathing could be so tricky?

By the end of the session we were pleasantly tired. The graceful flowing moves (and a few not-so-gentle stretches) gave both body and mind a good workout. Many of us commented how focused and peaceful we felt, as though we'd put our everyday worries to one side for a while.

As always we ended the evening in style with a well-earned cuppa along with a tempting selection of cakes, giving us all a chance to chat and compare notes about our first taste of Tai Chi.

News to **WI House** by email: fedsec@lrfwi.org or post to arrive by the **FIRST** of the preceding month

Make sure to include the name of your WI with your article

Please try to keep Around the Counties articles to 120 words and 2 photos so we can include as many as possible and save paper, ink and postage costs.

Articles may be edited.

County News will be emailed, posted on Wednesday of the third full week of the month.

Advertisements

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Please note we have made our advertising prices simpler!

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Small	£15	£45	£90	£162
Medium	£20	£60	£120	£216
Large	£30	£90	£180	£324

Please pay on receipt of invoice only.

We do not accept any responsibility for any adverts published in County News.

Please send material for County News to **WI House** by email:
fedsec@lrfwi.org or post to arrive by the **FIRST** of the **preceding**
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Any WI announcements can be made in County News.



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