CORNWALL FEDERATION OF WOMEN’S INSTITUTES

**STYLE GUIDE**

**Introduction**

The CFWI style guide is designed to ensure everyone takes a consistent and professional approach to our communications with members and the public. The guide outlines CFWI style, grammar and spelling preferences and commonly used terms within the organisation.

If you encounter WI style problems not dealt with here, please contact countynews@cornwallwi.org.uk.

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**CFWI Preferences**

**Talking about the WI**

‘The WI’ is preferable when talking to the public about what the organisation does as a whole.

**WIs**

WIs are either a ‘WI’ or multiple ‘WIs’.

No full stops are needed.

Do not use the terms ‘Institute’, ‘Club’, ‘Group’ or ‘Branch’ to refer to a WI.

**CFWI**

‘CFWI’ is preferable when talking to members about what we are doing at a county level.

Do not use the term ‘County’ to refer to CFWI.

**NFWI**

‘NFWI’ is preferable when talking to members about what is happening at a national level.

Do not use the terms ‘National’ or ‘NF’ to refer to NFWI.

**Singular and plural**

WI, CFWI (and other federations), NFWI, the Board of Trustees and CFWI sub-committees are all singular, e.g.:

* The NFWI employs over 90 staff.
* Surrey Federation is celebrating its centenary.
* Manchester WI is based in northwest England.
* The CFWI Board of Trustees meets on the second Tuesday of each month.
* The Arts and Leisure Sub-committee is holding an event in March.

Other collective nouns are also singular, e.g.:

* The government has announced an investigation.
* The BBC is launching a new website.

**WI publications**

Titles of WI publications use initial caps, e.g. County News, the Yearbook, the Annual Report, WI Life, Public Affairs Digest, the Annual Review.

**Offices and titles**

Titles take initial caps, e.g. WI President, WI Secretary, WI Treasurer, Board of Trustees, Trustees, Federation Chair, Federation Vice-chair, Federation Secretary, Federation Treasurer, WI Advisers, Trustees.

At national level, it’s the NFWI Chair.

At federation level, it’s left to the discretion of the office holder to determine whether to use Federation Chairman or Federation Chair.

Use initial caps when referring to specific federations, and lowercase when talking about federations in general, e.g. Cornwall Federation, all federations in England.

Do not use Mrs, Ms, Miss or Mr unnecessarily; use Sally Smith, rather than Mrs Sally Smith.

**Projects and campaigns**

Use initial caps for names of projects and campaigns, e.g. WI Healthy Living and Wellbeing Week, Make Time for Mental Health, WI Walking Netball.

Use lowercase when referring to projects or campaigns in general, e.g. ‘The programme will run for two years.’ ‘The campaign launched in 2018.’

**Abbreviations**

Spell out the full name the first time with the abbreviation in brackets and then use the abbreviation thereafter\*, e.g. The Cornwall Federation of Women’s Institutes (CFWI).

\*There is no need to list the abbreviation if you don’t go on to use it thereafter.

Some abbreviations can be taken as known, e.g. UK, USA, the BBC.

**Language and Writing Style**

**Use clear and plain language**

Always write for the reader, e.g. ‘Members can take part in our new campaign action’ rather than ‘We are inviting members to take part in our new campaign action’.

Use plain English (see [Appendix 1](#Appendix1)) and write concisely.

Stick to the active rather than passive voice, e.g. ‘The WI has published a new report’ rather than ‘A new report has been published by the WI’.

**Among/ amongst and while/ whilst**

Use ‘among’ and ‘while’ rather than ‘amongst’ and ‘whilst’ as it sounds less formal.

**Inclusive language**

Be sensitive in your choice of language, so use:

*‘over-60s’ rather than ‘OAPs’ or ‘pensioners’*

*‘older people’ rather than ‘the elderly’*

*‘people with disabilities/mental illness’ rather than ‘the disabled/the mentally ill’*

Use ‘woman/women’ rather than ‘lady/ladies’.

Use inclusive words such as ‘firefighter’ and ‘staffed by’, rather than ‘fireman’ and ‘manned by’.

**Other Style Points**

**Spellings**

Use the following:

* Adviser not advisor
* Coordinate, cooperate (but a co-operative society, the Co-op and co-opt)
* Coexist but co-education
* Online not on-line
* Email, but e-learning and e-skills
* Fundraising
* Ever-changing
* Open-ended
* Re-formed

**Upper case and lower case**

Use upper case for the following WI terms:

* Chy Noweth an Conteth (please note correct spelling)
* WI: Annual Meeting
* CFWI: Annual Council Meeting, Resolution Roadshow
* NFWI: Annual Meeting, Autumn National Council, Special Meeting
* Board of Trustees
* Membership Support Sub-committee, Arts and Leisure Sub-committee, Environment and Public Affairs Sub-committee, Events Team, Cookery and Craft Sub-committee
* Rules, Constitution
* Gift Aid
* NFWI: Education Committee, Membership Committee, Public Affairs Committee, etc.

Use lower case for the following WI terms:

* formation record, suspension record
* federation office
* bank account
* resolution

Use upper case for specific titles and lowercase for titles in general, e.g. ‘Minister of Defence’ but ‘government ministers’.

Use lowercase for offices in general: chief executives, chairs, boards of trustees.

Use lowercase for ‘internet’ and ‘email’ when used in the middle of the sentence.

Use lowercase for seasons of the year (winter, spring, summer and autumn), unless they appear in the title of a document, book, song, etc.

**Titles**

For titlesof books, plays, films, operas and radio and TV programmes, newspapers, magazines, journals and WI publications, capitalise the first word of the title, and all words within the title except articles (a/an/the), prepositions (to/on/for, etc.) and conjunctions

Use capitals for titles prefixing names, but not for job descriptions: ‘Although being president of the United States is stressful, President Biden was glad to be re-elected.’

**Dates**

Write dates in the following style: 6 March 2019

**Headings and titles**

Use initial caps only on the first word, e.g. ‘Our history’, ‘What we do’, ‘Running your WI’

**Punctuation**

**Full stops**

No full stops after abbreviated titles such as Mr, Mrs and Dr

No full stops after St (Saint)\*

\*The general rule is that a full stop is not needed if the first and last letters of the abbreviation are included.

No full stops in ‘WI’

No full stops in commonly known abbreviations such as BBC, FBI, RSPCA and NATO

Never use two spaces after a full stop at the end of a sentence.

**Commas**

Never use a comma between the penultimate item in a list and ‘and/or’, unless required to prevent ambiguity.

* She taught knitting, origami and drawing.
* I ate fish and chips, bread and jam, and ice cream.

**Exclamation marks**

Never use more than one exclamation mark at the end of a sentence. Use exclamation marks sparingly.

**Abbreviations**

Use approximately rather than approx.

NB not N.B.

e.g. precedes an example or examples

i.e. precedes an explanation

When using people’s initials, use a space but no full stop to separate initials: C S Lewis or J R R Tolkien.

**Apostrophes**

Dates do not require apostrophes (e.g. 1990s) unless the century is omitted (e.g. the year of ’66 was a great one).

**Contractions**

‘It’s’, ‘don’t’, ‘won’t’ etc. are less formal than ‘it is’, ‘do not’ and ‘will not’ and are preferable, especially online,

**Hyphens**

Use ‘to’ instead of hyphens between date ranges when writing, as it’s easier to read, e.g. March to September (rather than March-September)

**Reporting speech/ quotation marks**

Introduce reported speech either with a colon or comma, followed by double quotation marks, e.g.:

* CFWI Chair Helen Kestle said: “We are grateful for the support of our WI members.”
* CFWI Vice-Chair Pam Selley said, “I am looking forward to our next Speakers’ Auditions Day.”

The first word of the quote starts with a capital letter and punctuation stays inside the quotation marks.

Keep single quotation marks for quotations within a quotation.

In news stories and press releases the speaker always ‘said’ the quote, never ‘says’.

Use single quotation marks when writing about book chapters and sections, essays and magazine articles, e.g. The ‘Running your WI’ section of My WI.

**Telephone numbers and emails**

If you are including a telephone number in a sentence, use the following format: Please contact CFWI on 01834 272843.

If you are including an email address in a sentence, please use the following format: For more information, please contact countynews@cornwallwi.org.uk.

**Ampersands**

Always write the word ‘and’ rather than use an ampersand (&) unless it is part of a brand name or an organisation’s official name.

**Numbers and Lists**

**Bullet points**

Use bullet points to list items and break up text.

When each bullet point is a complete sentence you should:

* End your introductory sentence with a full stop.
* Start with a capital letter.
* Put a full stop at the end of each point.

If bullet points are not complete sentences, start with a lower case and omit any closing punctuation, e.g.

This section of the website contains:

* essential membership information
* committee roles and responsibilities
* key WI policy information
* a copy of the WI Constitution

**Numbered lists**

For lists of short items or titles, start with capitals – there’s no need to end with a full stop, e.g.

Members joining the walk on Saturday should bring:

1. Stout boots
2. Rainproof jacket
3. Backpack
4. Walking stick

**Numbers**

Spell out one to nine as words and write 10 upwards as figures. Be flexible, for example you can write ‘nine and ten’ or ‘9 and 10’ in the same sentence.

Spell out words for ‘first’, ‘second’ and so on up to and including ‘tenth’; use numbers and st/nd/rd/th for larger ordinal numbers.

Avoid starting a sentence with a figure but if you have to, always spell out the number, e.g. ‘Ten people thought…’ rather than ‘10 people thought…’

Spell million and billion in full when using words, e.g. £3million. Under CFWI style guide, a billion is the equivalent a thousand million.

**Percentages**

Use % with figures (1%, 9.5%) rather than writing out ‘per cent’ with words (one per cent).

**Time**

Use am/pm and insert minutes only when needed: 10am (no space), 3.30pm; for opening hours: 12noon to 4.45pm

Use noon or midnight rather than 12pm or 12am.

**Appendix 1: Plain English words**

(an) absence of no, none in order that so that

accordingly in line with this, so in receipt of get, have, receive

acquaint yourself with find out about, read in relation to about

aforesaid this, earlier in the document in the absence of without

as a consequence of because in the course of while, during

as of the date of from in the event of/that if

as regards about, on the subject of in the near future soon

at the moment now (or edit out) irrespective of despite, even if

at the present time now (or edit out) (it is) mandatory (you) must

by means of by may in the future may, might, could

cease finish, stop, end moreover and, also, as well

commence start, begin nevertheless but, however, even so

comprises is made up of, includes notwithstanding even if, despite, still, yet

consequently so (it is) obligatory (you) must

contrary to against, despite on behalf of for

costs the sum of costs on numerous occasions often

deem to be treat as on the occasion that when, if

denote/depict show owing to because of

despite the fact that though, although per annum a year

due to the fact that because, as personnel people, staff

during which time while provided that if, as long as

for the duration of during, while referred to as called

for the purpose of to, for relating to about for the reason that because subject to depending on

further to after, following subsequently later

furthermore then, also, and that being the case if so

give consideration to consider, think about thereafter then, afterwards

henceforth from now on, from today undertake agree, promise, do

hereby now, by this (or edit out) until such time until

herein here (or edit out) utilise use

hitherto until now ways and means ways

if and when if, when (but not both) whatsoever whatever, what, any

in a number of cases some (or say how many) whether or not whether

in accordance with as under, in line with, because of with a view to to, so that

in addition (to) and, as well as, also with effect from from

in advance before with reference to about

in case of if with regard to about, for

in conjunction with and, with with respect to about, for

in connection with for, about you are requested please

in consequence because, as a result your attention is drawn to please see, please note

in excess of more than

in lieu of instead of