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, Federation Chair or Federation Co-Chairs.

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) 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 titles of 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 (insert name) 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 (insert name) said: “We are grateful for the support of our WI members.”
- CFWI Vice-Chair (insert name) 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
accordingly ..... in line with this, so
acquaint yourself with ... find out about, read
aforesaid ..... this, earlier in the document
as a consequence of .... because
as of the date of ..... from
as regards ..... about, on the subject of
at the moment ..... now (or edit out)
at the present time ..... now (or edit out)
by means of ..... by
cease ..... finish, stop, end
commence ..... start, begin
comprises ..... is made up of, includes
consequently ..... so
contrary to ..... against, despite
costs the sum of ..... costs
deem to be ..... treat as
denote/depict ..... show
despite the fact that ..... though, although
due to the fact that ..... because, as
during which time ..... while
for the duration of ..... during, while
for the purpose of ..... to, for
for the reason that ..... because
further to ..... after, following
furthermore ..... then, also, and
give consideration to ..... consider, think about
henceforth ..... from now on, from today
hereby ..... now, by this (or edit out)
herein ..... here (or edit out)
hitherto ..... until now
if and when ..... if, when (but not both)
in a number of cases ..... some (or say how many)
in accordance with ..... as under, in line with, because of
in addition (to)..... and, as well as, also
in advance ..... before
in case of ..... if
in conjunction with ..... and, with
in connection with ..... for, about
in consequence ..... because, as a result
in excess of ..... more than
in lieu of ..... instead of
in order that .....so that
in receipt of .....get, have, receive
in relation to .....about
in the absence of .....without
in the course of .....while, during
in the event of/that .....if
in the near future .....soon
irrespective of .....despite, even if
(it is) mandatory .....(you) must
may in the future .....may, might, could
moreover .....and, also, as well
nevertheless .....but, however, even so
notwithstanding .....even if, despite, still, yet
(it is) obligatory .....(you) must
on behalf of .....for
on numerous occasions .....often
on the occasion that .....when, if
owing to .....because of
per annum .....a year
personnel .....people, staff
provided that .....if, as long as
referred to as .....called
relating to .....about
subject to .....depending on
subsequently .....later
that being the case .....if so
thereafter .....then, afterwards
undertake .....agree, promise, do
until such time .....until
utilise .....use
ways and means .....ways
whatsoever .....whatever, what, any
whether or not .....whether
with a view to ..... to, so that
with effect from .....from
with reference to .....about
with regard to .....about, for
with respect to .....about, for
you are requested .....please
your attention is drawn to .....please see, please note

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