WI Handbook 2026

This handbook covers everything you need to know about the WI, being a member, and setting up and running a WI. This includes the role of the WI Officers, recruiting and retaining members, and dealing with affairs across the organisation.

Please note that all updates from the last version of the WI Handbook are listed at the end of this document in section 17

Contents

1. Introduction to the WI 5
   1.1 Types of charity structures 6
   1.2 The Charity Commission 7
   1.3 Governing documents 7
2. Forming a WI 9
   2.1 WI Advisers 9
   2.2 Additional Specialist Volunteer Roles 10
   2.3 Creation of the decisions 10
   2.4 Signing the Constitution 11
   2.5 New WI grants and subscriptions 12
   2.6 Appointing a WI committee 12
   2.7 The Officers 13
   2.8 The President 13
   2.9 The Secretary 14
   2.10 The Treasurer 15
   2.11 Additional committee positions 16
   2.12 Additional roles that do not have to be carried out by a committee member 17
   2.13 How to set the WI programme 18
   2.14 Resources for the committee 20
   2.15 Trustee eligibility declaration forms 20
   2.16 Re-election 20
   2.17 Disqualification and removal of committee members 20
3. Membership of the WI 22
   3.1 Subscriptions 22

3.2 Visitors' fees 23
3.3 Membership of multiple WIs 24
3.5Honorary membership 26
3.6 Delegates 26
3.7 Waiting lists 26
3.8 Complaints 27
4. Meetings of the WI 28
4.1 Access of carers to WI meetings and events 28
4.2 Girls and children at WI meetings 28
4.3 How to hold an Annual Meeting 29
4.4 WI committee meetings 33
4.5 Special Meetings 34
4.6 Quorum and voting majorities 34
5. Sub-committees 36
6. Equality, diversity, and inclusion 36
6.1 The Protected Characteristics 37
6.2 Age 37
6.3 Members with disabilities 37
6.4 Transgender members 38
6.5 Non-binary members 38
6.6 Pregnancy and maternity 39
6.7 Race 39
6.8 Religion and belief 39
6.9 Sexual orientation 40
6.10 How to promote equality, diversity and inclusion at your WI 40
6.11 Reporting concerns/discrimination 40
7. Safeguarding 41
8. Health and Safety 41
9. Campaigns 42
9.1 Speaking out through the WI's national resolutions process 43
9.2 The PA Digest 44
10. Finance 44
10.1 Finance checklist for new WIs 44

10.2 Banking 45
10.3 Using WI funds 45
10.3.1 Paying charity speakers or speakers donating their fee to charity 45
10.3.2 Paying non-charity speakers 46
10.4 Fundraising 46
10.5 Gift Aid 46
10.6 Bursaries 46
10.7 Raffles 47
10.8 WI Lottery 48
10.9 Conflicts of interest 48
11. Digital services 50
11.1 The Membership Communication System (MCS) 50
11.2 My WI 50
11.3 The WI website 50
11.4 WI Learning Hub 50
11.5 NFWI social media 51
12. Promoting your WI 52
12.1 Social media 52
12.2 Local media 52
12.3 Recruitment Materials 52
12.4 Using the WI logo 53
13. Special procedures 53
13.1 Bye-laws 53
13.2 Enlargements, suspensions and re-formations 53
13.3 Closure 56
14. The NFWI 56
14.1 NFWI – London office 56
14.2 WI Enterprises Ltd 58
14.3 NFWI Education & Training 58
14.4 NFWI Wales 59
14.5 The Denman Trust 59
14.6 NFWI Board of Trustees 60
14.7 NFWI Annual Meeting 60

14.8 The National Council 61
14.9 NFWI mailings 61
14.10 NFWI policies, guidance documents and publications 61
15. Property of the WI 62
15.1 Property 62
15.2 Archiving and record keeping 63
15.3 Data protection 63
15.4 Insurance and health and safety 64
16. Contact information 64
17. Updating this handbook 65
Appendix A: Glossary of terms 67

1. Introduction to the WI

The WI was established in 1915 based on the ideals of fellowship, truth, tolerance and justice, to give women a voice and to be a force for good in the community. Since then, the number of WI members and the ambitions of the WI have grown tremendously. Today, the WI is a trusted place for all women to share experiences and learn from each other.

The main purpose of the WI is:

- To advance the education of women and girls for the public benefit in all areas.
- To promote sustainable development for the public benefit.
- To advance health for the public benefit.
- To advance citizenship for the public benefit by the promotion of civic responsibility and volunteering.

These are known as our charitable objects. You can find out more about these in the Constitution. For information about the Constitution please see section 1.3.

Our WI vision statements are:

- **Bold and inspiring**: We will be a bold voice representing all women and the communities in which they live.
- **Growing and relevant**: We will work together to continually promote the achievements of our organisation, reach more women and grow our membership.
- **Inclusive**: Our membership will reflect our local communities and we will represent women from all backgrounds through the work we do.
- **Flexible**: We will remove any practical barriers to women supporting us by offering flexible ways they can engage with what we do.

There are three parts to the WI:

1. WIs: Joining your local WI means becoming part of the WI as an organisation. Every WI is an independent charity within the framework of the WI Constitution and belongs to a regional office, known as a federation. There are approximately 5,500 WIs across England, Wales and the Islands.
2. Federations: There are 69 federations and each one is run by an elected board of members – who are known as Federation Trustees – and employed staff.
3. The National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI): The NFWI is responsible for running the organisation as a whole. Its headquarters are located in London and there are also offices in Cardiff and in Oxfordshire. The NFWI employs around 40 staff, headed by a CEO. Find out more about the NFWI in section 14.

1.1 Types of charity structures

There are different types of charity structures, and the structure of a WI determines what their governing documents are. WIs are usually charitable unincorporated associations. WIs with an annual income under £5000 do not need to register with the Charity Commission.

Trusts	A charitable trust is a way for a group of people (trustees) to manage assets such as money, investments, land or buildings. Governed by a trust deed, the contents of which are flexible as there is no statutory framework. The trust is not a legal entity in its own right, which means it cannot enter into agreements in its own name; the trustees will need to enter into an agreement in their personal capacity. This means there is no limitation of liability. Trusts are typically used for charities that do not need a corporate structure or a wider membership.
Unincorporated Charities (our WIs and some of our federations are in this category)	This is a charity, club or community group, effectively a small UK charity that does not have its own legal identity. Like a trust, there is no limitation of liability, this means that the Trustees are responsible for any arrangements the group enters into because the group itself cannot enter into any legal arrangements. Insurance can be taken out to limit individual liability and arrangements such as holding trustees be put in place where property is held by the group. This is the most common and simplest model for small groups or charitable organisations who do not have complex legal arrangements or liabilities. NFWI provides a model constitution for unincorporated WIs and unincorporated federations. An unincorporated charity can be registered with the relevant regulator but may not be. Each regulator will set a threshold for annual turnover, over which a charity must be registered, and this applies whether the charity is incorporated or not.
Charitable companies limited by guarantee (CLG)	A limited liability company which has a constitution in line with Company and Charity law and reports to the appropriate regulator, e.g. Charity Commission in England and Wales and Companies House. This is often referred to as a dual reporting requirement as there are obligations to two regulatory bodies. This is a model used by many of our federations and the NFWI. The activities of the charity are governed by their constitution and the NFWI provides a model CLG constitution for federations. This is an incorporated model and so the charity has its own legal personality.NFWI provides a model CLG constitution for federations. This is an incorporated model and so the charity has its own legal personality. This means any contracts and agreements are made in the Charity's name. Trustees have limited liability for a charitable

	company's debts or liabilities as long as they have operated appropriately in line with the constitution, legal and regulatory requirements and in the best interests of the charity.
Charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs)	This was a relatively new model introduced in 2016 which was specifically designed for charities with an aim to provide a simplified model for incorporation. CIOs are regulated solely by the relevant Charity Regulator e.g. Charity Commission in England and Wales, which avoids the need for dual reporting. NFWI provides a model CIO constitution for federations. A CIO is an incorporated model and therefore, like CLG, has its own legal personality, so contracts and agreements are made in the CIO's name. Trustees have limited liability for a CIOs debts or liabilities as long as they have operated appropriately in line with the constitution, legal and regulatory requirements and in the best interests of the charity.

1.2 The Charity Commission

The Charity Commission regulates and registers charities in England and Wales. It produces guidance for trustees on how they should meet their legal duties and responsibilities.

WIs with an annual income of over £5,000 must register with the Charity Commission and in turn will receive a charity number. WIs with an annual income of less than £5,000 are still charities but do not have to register with the Charity Commission and thus do not have a charity number; their signed Constitution is proof of their charitable status.

No charity is permitted to use the registered charity number of another charity. For example, individual WIs cannot use the NFWI's charity number.

All charities, registered and unregistered, must abide by charity law. WIs are charitable and everything they do must be consistent with that special legal status.

To register with the Charity Commission or for more information visit www.charitycommission.gov.uk

1.3 Governing documents

The WI's governing document is the Constitution and Rules for WIs (known as the Constitution). This states the purposes of the WI and the way it should be run. A WI should sign its Constitution at the formation meeting (please see more information about this under the section on forming a WI in section 2).

Federations have either the Unincorporated Constitution and Rules, the Incorporated Articles of Association , or the CIO constitution.

The NFWI has the Articles of Association for the National Federation of Women's Institutes.

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the applicable governing document. All the governing documents and policies are on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance.

Find out about My WI in section 11.2.

2. Forming a WI

WIs come in all shapes and sizes. We have WIs that meet virtually and in person. We also have workplace WIs, prison WIs and hospice WIs.

If a person wishes to set up a WI, wherever the space may be, they should get in touch with their local federation. They can then invite potential members to a meeting to tell them about this and those who wish to take part will then be invited to the formation meeting. Federations will go through the guidance with you, which can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Running a WI / Setting up a WI.

2.1 WI Advisers

A WI Adviser is appointed, managed and renewed by their federation and will work under the direction of her federation Board of Trustees. The WI Adviser is a member of the federation Membership sub-committee. The appointment is annual. The person filing this appointment will be responsible for:

- Opening, closing, enlarging and suspending WIs
- Supporting initial interest meetings, researching geographical areas and promoting the WI in a new area.
- Informing, supporting and encouraging WIs
- Signposting WIs to a portfolio of NFWI resources

WI Advisers will receive free training through VIA and they will be trained in the following:

- Structure of the organisation: relationships within the three tiers
- Constitution: understanding the structure, roles and responsibilities and governance
- Strategic Vision: how this relates to their role
- Resources and policies: what is available and where to access it
- Programme Planning: how to develop an interesting programme that aligns with our vision and has a balance of WI business and social/educational engagement.
- Effective Communication: each WI will be different so learning to adapt communication styles to each audience and to different sets of circumstances, including understanding how best to communicate with virtual WIs. Members of a virtual WI should be offered opportunities to engage in federation activities along with all other members in that federation. The federation should ensure provision is made for members of virtual WIs to join in activities, where possible, online.

2.2 Additional Specialist Volunteer Roles

Alongside the WI Adviser role, are a range of Specialist Volunteer Roles. They are members who have a good knowledge of the WI and also have particular skills and experiences.They can be called upon to support WIs by addressing specific issues such as WI finances, Public Affairs resolutions, WI Officer training, linking into federation events, managing complaints, promotion and marketing and federation governance.

They could sit on a federation board, a federation sub-committee or be members known to the federation for their skills who would be willing to help in the relevant areas.

Please note, not all federations will choose to appoint to these roles depending on what skills they have on their boards.

Within a federation Specialist Volunteer Roles could include:

- Federation Resolution Co-ordinators
- Climate Ambassadors
- Safeguarding (Federation Safeguarding Officer which must be in place see 7. Safeguarding)
- Digital Champions
- Federation Complaint Leads
- Social Media Volunteer
- Web Editor Volunteer
- PR and Marketing Volunteer

2.3 Creation of the decisions

In order for a formation to take place, the following decisions must be proposed by the members, agreed by a majority vote, and recorded:

- to form a new WI
- the name of the WI
- day, time and place of the monthly meeting. For virtual WIs, you will need to make a note that meetings will be held online.

- number of Vice-Presidents
- number of members on the committee

These can subsequently be amended and some changes may need to be made at an Annual Meeting or Special Meeting as required. For example, the WI might want to alter the number of committee members as the WI grows.

The WI Adviser will write or type up a record of the formation meeting, including the decisions, the number of members present and the names of the WI Advisers present. A copy of this record must be kept.

2.4 Signing the Constitution

A New WI Welcome Pack is sent to the WI's allocated WI Adviser who brings this pack along to the next meeting following the formation meeting, known as the second meeting, and explains the contents. This pack includes four copies of the Constitution, which must be signed at the second meeting. Please note that a WI Adviser can request for this pack to be emailed to them. They can then forward the documents that need to be signed to the Officers of the WI. These documents can be signed online. Officers can either do this by having their signature scanned in and copying and pasting this onto the Constitution, or other document. Otherwise there are free online platforms to input signatures which you can search for with your search engine.

When signing the Constitution, the name of the WI and the federation is filled in and the Constitution is then signed by the President and Secretary, which is witnessed by the WI Adviser and then dated. This date is the WI's official formation date. This process is then repeated four times. After all four copies of the Constitution and Rules have been signed:

- One copy should be returned to the NFWI along with the Venue and Officers Details Form.
- One copy should be sent to the federation office.
- One copy should be filed in a safe place by the Secretary of the new WI with all the WI's official papers.
- One copy should be given to the bank with the WI Bank Account form. Check with your bank if they will accept Constitutions that have been signed online.

It is also good practice to store an electronic scanned copy of the signed Constitution.

2.5 New WI grants and subscriptions

Once a new WI has formed the NFWI make a small grant to the federation to be used towards the WI's initial costs. The federation may pay for the first few meetings of the WI until the account is set up and the finances established.

Once appointed the committee will need to open a bank account in the name of the WI.

Ordinarily the annual membership fee is made up of three parts and is divided between the WI, the federation and the NFWI. However, new WIs keep the whole subscription amount in their first year until the next subscriptions are due in the following subscription year.

For more information about subscriptions please see section 3.1.

2.6 Appointing a WI committee

At the Annual Meeting, the WI members will elect a minimum of three committee members including a President from those who are elected. For virtual WIs, Officers may have already been identified for the new WI in advance of the meeting, but if there are more individuals wishing to be Officers than there are vacancies, individuals can be chosen by secret ballot using electronic means in advance of the formal business of the WI commencing. There is a guide to electronic voting available on My WI here or by going to My WI / Running your WI / Guide to Running Meetings / How to...host a virtual meeting. The elected committee members may co-opt additional committee members provided that the number of co-opted committee members is less than one-third of the elected committee members at the time of any co-opted committee member being appointed.

To be a committee member you must have paid your subscription for the current subscription year, and not be employed by your WI.

The WI committee has delegated authority for the overall management of the WI and must work together as a team, delegating tasks and helping each other where needed. Having a flexible and adaptable committee ensures committee members are supported and can carry out their role effectively.

The WI committee's role is to:

- Manage the affairs of the WI.
- Ensure the WI is run in accordance with the Constitution and other legal requirements.

- Ensure the WI is operating within the organisation's policy framework.
- Arrange the time and place of meetings. For virtual WIs, the committee can decide what software to use and should make sure there is room in the budget for the appropriate subscription/licence for the software.
- Outline the programme and present it to the WI members for approval.
- Administer funds of the WI following consultation with the WI members.
- Ensure the financial accounts of the WI are accurate and that the members are kept up to date with the financial state of the WI.
- Encourage the long-term success of the WI through recruitment and introduction of new members to the WI.

The committee must meet at least six times a year, ensure decisions are made by the correct quorum (for more information see section 4.6), take minutes of the meetings, make rules consistent with the Constitution, and manage conflicts of interest. They must also ensure that members are actively involved in the way the WI is run, with regular communication on any changes and providing an opportunity for discussion and votes on changes where appropriate.

2.7 The Officers

The Officers of the WI are the President, Vice-President(s) (if appointed), Secretary and Treasurer. The WI may combine the offices of Treasurer and Secretary or the offices of Treasurer and Vice-President(s) if the Federation Board of Trustees agrees to this.

It is recommended that the Officers have generic email addresses e.g. WInamepresident@domain.org.uk. This allows continuity when members in the role change.

2.8 The President

The President is elected at the Annual Meeting, by a ballot of the members, from the elected committee members. The specific duties of the President are to:

- Chair WI meetings, the Annual Meeting and committee meetings.
- Co-ordinate the affairs of the WI.
- Oversee the work of the committee and sub-committees.
- Ensure the resolutions process takes place and oversee this.
- Oversee the bank reconciliations with the committee as a whole.

When chairing meetings, the President should:

- Agree the agenda (including timings) with the Secretary, familiarise herself with the necessary information and write any letters on behalf of the WI before the meeting.
- Ensure new members, visitors and speakers are welcomed by someone from the WI's Welcoming Team, committee or wider membership.
- Inform members of everything they need to know.
- Ensure all opinions are heard and questions are answered.
- Oversee voting and decision making.
- After the meeting, check and approve the minutes and follow up any work generated from the meeting.

2.9 The Secretary

The Secretary is elected annually, by the committee, at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting. The specific duties of the Secretary are to:

- Arrange meetings and ensure committee business is carried out.
- Handle and acknowledge correspondence, referring to other Officers as appropriate. This includes communicating and actioning any federation or NFWI information received. A virtual WI must also provide contact details for the public; this can be an email, website and/or social media channels.
- Ensure the WI complies with data protection requirements. For example, only collecting the necessary information from members to enable the WI to provide membership services.
- Organise and coordinate the work of any sub-committees and working groups.
- Assist the President and Vice-President(s), if applicable, with their duties.
- Keep in regular contact with the federation.
- Answer queries from members asking for assistance from the federation or the NFWI where necessary. When a member joins, the committee will need to get their consent to communicate with them and send them communications (documents, financial records etc) electronically. This is particularly important for virtual WIs where electronic communications are likely to be the only option offered.

At WI meetings, the Secretary should:

- Maintain an attendance register.
- Prepare the agenda with the President, provide all committee members with detailed agendas and note any apologies.
- Distribute the federation newsletter and any other items.
- Take the record of the WI meetings and minutes of the committee meetings andagree these with the President

- Ensure that WI meetings minutes are available for the members to read at the next meeting.
- If a member has an enquiry on committee meeting minutes, the relevant information can be shared upon request, but we recommend not sharing the full set of minutes as Committee minutes are confidential.
- If records of WI meetings and minutes of the committee meetings are taken and shared electronically, the availability of paper copies must be made clear to those who do not have access to the electronic version. These can be provided on request so the Secretary does not need to print unnecessary copies. For storing minutes, check the federation's archiving policy in case it requires physical copies of minutes. Data protection guidelines should be followed for keeping things online, such as password protected computer or password protected online platform for keeping documents online. For virtual WIs, ensure that these documents are electronically signed.
- Ensure speakers and visitors know where the meeting venue is and have appropriate access. For virtual WIs, ensure they have the correct details to join the online meeting, see WI welcoming teams for more information.
- Report on the committee's recommendations, the federation newsletter, information from the NFWI and reports e.g. a member's experience of the Learning Hub or other activities of the WI.
- Remind members of closing dates for applications, events, outings etc.

It is important that the Secretary's information is kept accurate on the Membership Communication System (MCS) to ensure she receives the NFWI mailings and is able to gain access to the free content on the WI Learning Hub. For information about the MCS please see section 11.1 and for information about the NFWI mailings please see section 14.9.

2.10 The Treasurer

The WI committee as a whole is responsible for the financial well-being of the WI.

The Treasurer is elected annually, by the committee, at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer's main duties are to:

- Open a bank account in the name of the WI and ensure the committee appoints no less than three signatories (usually the President, Treasurer, and one other committee member) to authorise payments on behalf of the WI. All payments must be authorised by two signatories.
- Draw up the budget for the financial year based on the previous year's figures. This will be presented first to the committee and then to the members for

approval. The budget must be regularly monitored and may be revised if necessary.

- Collect the annual subscriptions and pay these, and all other monies, into the WI bank account.
- Ensure the following obligatory payments are paid on time:
  1. Annual subscription fees to the federation (including the NFWI portion).
  2. Pooling of fares for the NFWI Annual Meeting. For more information on Pooling of fares see section 14.7.
  3. Delegates' expenses.
- Give financial reports to the members at least quarterly.
- Keep the accounts up to date and prepare a statement at the year-end for examination by an independent examiner. Your federation can provide you with a WI trained Independent Financial Examiner (IFE).
- Reconcile the monthly bank statements with the accounts and ensure the reconciliation is seen by the President and committee at each committee meeting.

Other duties of the Treasurer include:

- At WI meetings reporting on the WI's finances, making suggestions about fundraising, discussing the allocation of bursaries and covering any other financial matters.
- Keeping the bank mandate up to date as signatories change.
- Paying all invoices and issuing receipts.
- Presenting the independently examined accounts to the committee and then to the members at the Annual Meeting, accompanied by bank statements.

2.11 Additional committee positions

Additional roles include, but are not limited to, the following:

Vice-President(s)	The Vice-President(s) is elected at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting. You can have up to three Vice-President(s). The president can delegate duties to the Vice-President(s), such as chairing the WI meeting.
Assistant Secretary	The Assistant Secretary should have specific tasks delegated to her such as taking the minutes or completing the attendance register.
Assistant Treasurer	The Assistant Treasurer should have specific tasks delegated to her, such as collecting the annual subscription fees.

2.12 Additional roles that do not have to be carried out by a committee member

Membership Communication System (MCS) Representative

An MCS Representative enters members' information onto the MCS and ensures all details are regularly checked and updated. For more information about the MCS see section 11.1.

Social Media Officer

A member who is responsible for running the WI's social media channels, and updating them with the latest news, photos and upcoming events. This role can be shared by a few members.

Programme planning team

The programme planning team can put together the speakers and activities for the year. Please see section 2.13 'How to set the WI programme' for more information. This team can include committee and non-committee members.

Bookkeeper

The Bookkeeper may keep the records of the financial affairs of the WI where this cannot be carried out by the Treasurer. The financial responsibility for the WI remains with the WI committee.

Climate Ambassadors

Climate Ambassadors do great work to promote the NFWI's Climate Change campaign. Over the years, they have formed influential relationships with their MPs and their wider communities and helped engage a wider audience in the WI's campaigning work. The NFWI provides information, support and the latest information to support the work of this role. If you would like to find out more about Climate Ambassadors, please see My WI here or by going to My WI / Public Affairs and Campaigns / News and Actions or alternatively contact the Public Affairs Team at pa@nfwi.org.uk

- **WI Welcoming Teams**

Continually welcoming new members is essential to the future growth and well-being of the WI. It is therefore very important that visitors and new members are welcomed and looked after by the WI as a whole and that they immediately feel part of what we do.

We recommend that all WIs have a Welcoming Team with a minimum of two people. It is this team's responsibility to:

- Welcome visitors and new members.
- Guide them through their first few meetings and explain how things work. For virtual WIs, when a new member gets in touch who wants to join, make sure they know how to join the next meeting, possibly arrange a practice beforehand with them if needed.
- Introduce them to the Officers of the WI.
- Explain the process for joining, i.e. how many meetings they can attend before they are required to pay the subscription fee and whether they are expected to pay a fee or give a donation as a visitor.
- Ensure they have someone to sit with.
- Ensure they have someone's contact information.
- Tell them all about the WI, including the organisation's structure, the NFWI, the federations, and the campaigns.
- Inform them of the opportunities available to them, for example they can serve on the committee and any sub-committees, represent the WI as a delegate at federation and NFWI events, and get involved in the resolutions process.
- Tell them that once they have been added to the MCS, they will receive a welcome pack from the NFWI within two weeks as well as access to My WI. Please point out that delivery of their first copy of the WI Life magazine will depend on when the member is added onto the MCS as we produce four issues a year of the WI Life magazine.
- Let them know who the MCS Representative is and how to contact them if they do not receive their welcome pack as expected (the MCS Rep can be contacted via the WI Secretary).

2.13 How to set the WI programme

The programme planning team will put together the programme for the year; this task should not be left to one person. Consider how the programme will attract current and new members to the WI. All members should have the opportunity to offer ideas for the programme.

When planning your programme, the following can be helpful:

- national issues which have a local impact
- NFWI campaigns and projects
- press, radio and TV
- local industry and organisations
- members' experiences

- speakers who have attended national and federation events (most federations have speaker lists for WIs to use)

It is helpful to plan your programme alongside the local, federation and national events to ensure they marry up where appropriate.

Check out the NFWI Events Calendar on My WI here for inspiration by going to My WI / Running your WI / Creating your WI Programme / Events Calendar. This includes International Women's Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, Pride, WI Day and Black History Month.

Programme ideas should be developed with the needs and abilities of all members in mind to ensure all activities are accessible and inclusive.

Before the programme is presented to the full committee, the costs should be assessed. For example, find out each speaker's fee and whether this includes travelling expenses. Or if the meeting is to be a trip somewhere, find out the transport and entry costs.

When the committee has agreed the programme, this should be shown to all members for their comments. Someone will need to make the final arrangements for each meeting, and it might be helpful to appoint a Programme Secretary for this job. The Programme Secretary can then:

- Send invites to speakers.
- Follow up with the speakers nearer to the date of the meeting.
- Ensure the speaker knows the meeting venue location and the timetable of the meeting.
- Agree a commission rate if a speaker wishes to sell their own goods at the meeting (this is usually 10%).
- Ensure you have all the necessary instructions and equipment if you are doing a crafting activity.
- Check arrangements for outside visits including transport, entrance fees and refreshments.

Printed or electronic copies of the programme should be circulated to all members and should include:

- name of the WI
- programme year
- time, date and place of WI meetings
- website, email address and social media information of the WI
- the WI logo
- contact information for the Secretary and President
- details for each monthly meeting, including the speaker/topic/activity/visit

- details of any extra activities in addition to the monthly meetings
- a welcome note for visitors
- NFWI and federation events and dates
- contact information for the NFWI and federation

Programmes are brilliant advertising for your WI and can be used to attract new members. Why not display your programme in your local area or on any local websites or social media accounts?

2.14 Resources for the committee

Federations may hold resources for WIs, such as WI account books and financial statements, and receipt books.

2.15 Trustee eligibility declaration forms

All WI committee members are legal 'Trustees' of the charity and are required to sign the Trustee Eligibility Declaration form. This form can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Running a WI / Trustee Eligibility Form (Declaration for fit & proper persons). New forms should be signed by all committee members (including those re-elected) at the start of every new committee term.

2.16 Re-election

All Officers and committee members are elected at the Annual Meeting. Previous committee members may be re-elected, subject to any bye-law of the WI limiting terms of office.

2.17 Disqualification and removal of committee members

Committee members are trustees, elected by the members. However, as with any trustee an individual must be eligible to take on these duties and may be disqualified once in role in the following circumstances:

- She is disqualified under the Charities Act 2011 from acting as a trustee of a charity. (Disqualification under the Charities Act 2011 includes bankruptcy).
- The committee members reasonably believe she has become physically or mentally incapable of managing her own affairs and they resolve that she be removed from office.

- She resigns her office by notice to the WI.
- She fails to attend a meeting of the committee for three consecutive meetings unless the committee members decide otherwise.
- At a WI committee meeting a resolution is passed that the committee member is removed from office. At least half of the WI committee **must** be present at the meeting. The committee member **must** be given 14 clear days' notice that the resolution is to be proposed, specifying the circumstances underlying the proposal, and has been afforded a reasonable opportunity of either (at their option) being heard by or making written representations to the committee members.
- She ceases to be a WI member.

3. Membership of the WI

WI membership is only open to women registered female at birth (biological women) who have reached the age of majority Women may join by filling in the Membership Registration Form and paying the required subscription fee to their WI. A WI member is bound by the rules of the NFWI and of the WI for so long as she is a member. The form on My WI is editable online so can be emailed to perspective members for them to edit (add their details) and email back to the WI's MCS representative. Members should be able to do this with any device, so they do not need the full version of Adobe, it will work on a PC, phone, iPad etc. The form can be found here or by going to My WI / Running your WI / Resources and Guidance / Member Registration Form.

Being a WI member means:

- Upholding the core values and ideals of the WI, which are fellowship, truth, tolerance, and justice.
- Utilising educational opportunities to continue learning.
- Welcoming women and forming friendships.
- Speaking up against inequity and promoting meaningful change in society.

Find out more about the expected behaviour of members on the 'Code of Conduct' page on My WI.

The benefits of being a member include:

- making friends in your local area and further afield
- a minimum of 11 physical or virtual meetings a year
- four issues of WI Life magazine a year (digital version available on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Life, for members with visual impairments, registered blind or those with dyslexia, an audio version is available on request by emailing wilife@nfwi.org.uk)
- access to My WI (the online area for members)
- access to VIA (VIA is the WI's learning platform)
- having an active role within your community
- getting involved in local fundraising opportunities
- taking part in the campaigns process
- access to national and federation events

3.1 Subscriptions

- Each WI member pays a subscription fee for her membership. Subscriptions rates are set by the NFWI Board of Trustees in consultation with the National Council (which is made up of representatives from each federation). The

subscription fee is split into three portions: one for the WI, one for the federation, and one for the NFWI. WIs have the flexibility each year to decide whether to either waive their portion of the subscription fee, reduce it slightly, or keep it the same. For clarity, the WI portion must not be higher than the maximum set by the National Federation and is applied equally across all WI members of a WI that has chosen to apply the subscription flexibility. For more information about subscription flexibility, please see My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / Subscription Rates / Subscription Flexibility Guidance for WIs

.

The subscription year runs from April to March, and not from the date the member joined. New members, or those who have not been a member in the past year, will pay their subscription on a pro-rata basis in the first year they join the WI. For more information about pro-rata rates, please see thewi.org.uk

Subscriptions are collected at WI level and the process below is followed:

WI	• The members pay their subscriptions to their WI. • The WI keeps their portion of the subscription fee and sends the remaining amount on to the federation with a breakdown of how many members joined and, if there are pro-rata subscriptions, in what quarter.
Federation	• The federation keeps their portion of the subscription fee and sends the remaining amount on to the NFWI with a breakdown of how many joined what WI and, if there are pro-rata subscriptions, in what quarter.
NFWI	• The NFWI finance department receives the subscriptions and updates the MCS accordingly.

New WIs keep the whole subscription amount in their first year until the next subscriptions are due in the following subscription year.

WIs can claim Gift Aid on their subscriptions. For information about Gift Aid please see My WI here or by going to My WI / Running your WI / WI Finances / Gift Aid.

Only members who have paid their subscriptions are able to vote at Special Meetings and Annual Meetings, including the NFWI Annual Meeting.

3.2 Visitors, open meetings and sub groups

Arrangements for open meetings, guests and visitors are decided locally by WIs in consultation with their members.

It is up to each WI whether they wish to charge a visitors' fee and, if so, the amount. If a fee is charged, this may have Gift Aid implications as meetings would then count as

a benefit for these purposes. Alternatively, visitors can be invited to make a donation to the WI upon visiting. For more information on this, please see the NFWI Gift Aid guidance.

It is recommended that an individual is permitted to attend as a visitor up to three times before she is obliged to pay the subscription fee and become a member, although this is the WI's decision.

Sub-groups are outside of the formal offering. They are groups run by WIs that are additional to the core membership meetings. Some sub-groups are open only to members, and are offered as a membership benefit. Other sub-groups are open to both members and non-members. The running of sub-groups is up to individual WIs.

Further guidance on open meetings, guests, visitors, and sub-groups is available on My WI here or by going to My WI / Running your WI / Resources and Guidance /Guests, Visitors and Sub-Groups Guidance

3.3 Membership of multiple WIs

A woman who is a member of a WI (known as her primary WI) may become a multi member in as many additional WIs as she chooses by paying the WI portion of the annual subscription to each of them.

Multi members may participate and vote at the meetings of all WIs they are a member of. They can also stand for election as an officer or committee member. Multi members can only act as. a delegate at their primary WI. For virtual WIs, the provisions for multi membership means that some members may be a member of a virtual WI and a WI in their local area, or indeed a member of a second virtual WI. The same rules for multi membership applies here.

Pro-rata for multi members

WIs can choose to apply the pro rata rate to multi members. WIs will be able to set the WI portion according to their usual approach to ensure they are fair to all their members. The pro rata applies from quarter 2 onwards i.e. from July. To see the amounts on My WI please click here.

Subscription Flexibility Scheme for multi members

A multi member will only pay the NFWI and federation portion once, when joining her primary WI (along with the WI portion as set by the WI), even if the WIs are in different federations. At the multi member's second WI, she will pay the applicable WI portion of the subscription fee only.

If her second WI opts to waive the WI portion for the year, then she will also have her portion waived.

A multi member may have one WI that waives the fee and one that does not, thus a multi member may be paying different fees year on year for her WIs.

Please remember that the pro rata rate is also affected if the subscription flexibility is applied. Please adjust the pro rata amount for the WI portion only by the deduction the WI has agreed to apply.

3.4 Termination of membership

The Constitution covers termination of membership in articles 13 and 14.

Termination of membership guidance is available for both WI committees and federation Board of Trustees with further details on the procedure to be followed. These can be found in Appendices B and C. It is important to state that this is a process that is rarely used as WI committees and federations will try to resolve any issues before they get to the stage of a membership being considered for termination. However, we understand that circumstances may arise when the only course of action left is to terminate an individual's membership. Please note, this means a membership termination is a 'last resort' action.

A WI committee or a federation Board of Trustees (BoT) which wishes to terminate a membership must refer to the relevant guidance before proceeding with a termination of membership.

Termination of membership guidance for WI committees can be found in Appendix B.

Termination of membership guidance for federation Board of Trustees can be found in Appendix C.

Very important: all information and communication relating to a termination of membership is confidential.

A WI membership is terminated when the member dies or if she has not paid, in full, any sum due to the WI within the relevant timeframe as decided by the NFWI from time to time.

A WI committee may also decide, in good faith, that it is in the best interests of its WI to terminate an individual's membership. Very important: a WI committee can only terminate a membership of its own WI. For this to be valid, a membership termination has to be carried out by a resolution to remove the WI member. This is proposed and passed at a WI committee meeting.

The member must be given 28 days' notice in writing of the committee meeting at which the resolution will be proposed and the reasons why it is to be proposed. In writing can include an email.

The member must be informed she can make verbal or written representations to the committee meeting. The member must be informed that she can also ask someone else to be her representative and make verbal or written representations on her behalf. The member's representative does not have to be a WI member. Whether to have a representative or not is the member's decision.

A vote by secret ballot must be held to determine whether the resolution is passed or not. The vote is passed by a simple majority. Advance and proxy voting must be allowed to ensure the whole committee has the opportunity to vote.

Should the resolution to terminate the membership be passed, the member has a right to appeal to the federation Board of Trustees (BoT).

A federation BoT may also decide, in good faith, that it is in the best interests of a WI to terminate an individual's membership. Very important: a federation BoT can only terminate an individual's membership at the WI the member belongs to. For this to be valid, a membership termination has to be carried out by a resolution to remove the WI member. This is proposed and passed being at a federation BoT meeting. The member must be given 28 days' notice in writing including the reasons why. The member must be allowed to give representations at the federation BoT meeting or appoint a representative of her choice. A vote by secret ballot must be held. Voting by advance and proxy voting must be allowed to ensure the whole federation BoT has the opportunity to vote. The vote is passed by a simple majority.

3.5 Honorary membership

WIs cannot appoint honorary members. The Constitution states that women can only become members by paying the subscription fee.

3.6 Delegates

In such a large organisation, it is impossible for every member to attend every meeting at Federation and NFWI level. Therefore, a member can become a delegate to represent their WI at those meetings. Delegates must be elected. Members can only stand as delegates at their primary WI. This means that a member who holds multiple memberships cannot be a delegate for any of her additional WIs. If there are more nominations than delegate places then the committee may organise the elections as it thinks fit as long as nothing is done which is inconsistent with the Constitution.

3.7 Waiting lists

Due to venue capacity being reached, some WIs may have to operate waiting lists on which interested women are placed. Where this occurs WIs are encouraged to see if there is an alternative venue they could use.

WIs should inform their WI Adviser or Federation Membership Chair if they are operating a waiting list, who can then monitor this. If the waiting list has enough women on it to allow a potential new WI opening, this option should be explored.

As is standard practice, when a new WI opens near an already established WI, the federation should consider how this would work and encourage the WIs to work together where appropriate such as for joint events and fundraisers.

3.8 Complaints

WIs must have a complaints policy in place that sets out how complaints will be managed. WIs are welcome to adopt the NFWI Complaints Policy in part or in full and this is available to download on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Complaints. The NFWI Complaints Policy includes a time frame for making a complaint in which an incident must have taken place within. NFWI have outlined within the Complaints Policy a 6-month period to which a formal or informal complaint can be made. As a last resort, a WI committee can propose terminating a membership. Please contact the NFWI membership team for guidance at membership@nfwi.or.uk

4. Meetings of the WI

A minimum of 11 meetings* open to all WI members must be held each year. At these meetings members come together in person or virtually for an activity or event, as well as to socialise with each other and have fun.

At each meeting, the following WI business must be covered:

- welcome to all members and possibly a special mention of new members/visitors
- record of the last meeting and signing where necessary
- matters arising
- correspondence (including the federation newsletter)
- financial statement by the Treasurer (at least every three months)
- reports from any sub-committees, delegates, working parties etc.
- reminder of upcoming events and the election of a delegate if required
- next meeting information

* The 11 meetings are included in the price of the subscription. Members should not incur additional costs when attending these meetings (excluding contributing to refreshments such as tea/coffee etc). Please aim to only have activities that require additional payments as optional extras.

4.1 Access of carers to WI meetings and events

The WI is a place for all women and meetings should be accessible for members with disabilities where possible. This includes allowing members' carers to attend meetings. If it is the WI member who is the carer, the WI may need to allow the person the WI member is caring for to attend, if the cared for person cannot be left safely on their own and the WI member cannot find an alternative carer for the meeting. Please see the policy on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on the access of carers to WI meetings and events for more information on this.

Please see section 6 for information about equality, diversity and inclusion.

4.2 Girls and children at WI meetings

If girls (those under the age of majority) wish to attend WI meetings, they can do so if they are accompanied by an adult and in agreement with the members of the WI. They will remain the responsibility of the adult who accompanies them and the WI will not be responsible for them during their time at the meeting.

Sometimes WI members would like to bring young children to meetings or may need to if they have no other childcare options. It is up to the members of the WI as to whether they wish to allow this but WIs are encouraged to be flexible and ensure that women are able to overcome any barriers to joining meetings.

4.3 How to hold an Annual Meeting

A new WI must hold an Annual Meeting within 15 months of formation. Established WIs must hold an Annual Meeting once in every calendar year (it does not have to be the same month every year). The date and time of the Annual Meeting is decided by the committee and must be agreed with the Federation Board. Notice of the Annual Meeting must be included in the WI's annual programme or given to each member at least 21 days in advance.

At the Annual Meeting the WI members elect at least three committee members and a President from the elected committee members. There is no maximum number of committee members prescribed by the Constitution, but the committee can decide a maximum number as it sees fit.

The committee sets the nomination process for candidates to stand for election as committee members.

If the number of candidates is the same as or lower than the number of committee member places, then the candidates are, in effect, elected to the committee.

If there are more candidates than committee member places a vote needs to be held. The committee members may co-opt additional committee members provided that the number of co-opted committee members is less than one-third of the elected committee members at the time of any co-opted committee member being appointed This means that if the committee has five committee members, four must be elected and only one can be a co-opted committee member.

No person can become a committee member unless she is a WI member, not be employed by her WI and has paid her subscription for the current subscription year.

The following should be done in preparation for the Annual Meeting:

- A statement of accounts for the last financial year must be independently examined (or audited).
- At least one month before the meeting, the WI Secretary should request nominations for the committee and check whether those nominated are willing to stand.
- If there are more nominations than places on the committee, an election must be held. The WI Secretary will then draw up the ballot paper for the meeting.

- The WI Secretary should check the eligibility of members willing to stand for election to the committee against the criteria in the Constitution.

- It is advisable to seek more nominations than there are places on the committee and there must be a minimum of three committee members.

- If a WI committee wishes it may share the names of the candidates who will be standing for election as WI committee members with its members in advance of the Annual Meeting. This gives the members time to consider how they wish to vote. If she wishes the Secretary may also contact the nominees for the WI committee and check in advance if they would be willing to stand as President should they be elected onto the committee.
- If a vote will be needed, the WI Secretary arranges two tellers, usually members of a neighbouring WI, or other people independent to that WI (e.g. Federation representatives).
- The WI should agree the actions needed in the event of a tied vote for the committee or President.
- The WI Secretary prepares the agenda for the Annual Meeting and the Annual Report for presentation to the committee for approval.

Committee elections:

- The WI committee will have decided whether or not nominations for committee elections may also be accepted from the floor on the day. If it has been decided that this will be part of the nomination process, such nominees should be asked their willingness to stand and eligibility to become a charity trustee.

- Persons employed by their WI are not eligible for nomination.
- If there is a need for an election i.e. there are more nominations than committee places, this can be done by secret ballot.
- It is advisable to open the ballot first so that the voting is completed before the start of the Annual Meeting.
- Only WI members who have paid the relevant subscription for the year may vote. The WI may, if the committee members decide, allow members to vote by post or suitable electronic means (including email) to make a decision on any matter that is being decided at an Annual Meeting (or Special Meeting see 4.5). Please note if allowing postal and/or electronic voting the WI must put any safeguards in place that the NFWI prescribes. In addition, postal and/or electronic voting must be part of a secret ballot where the decision being voted on requires this system or the committee has decided to use a secret ballot.(There is a guide on advance postal and electronic votes and proxy votes on My WI).

- If a tie occurred for the last place on the committee, the NFWI advises another round of voting between the tied candidates. If this still results in a tie, it should be dealt with as previously decided by the WI. Please note that any postal and electronic votes continue to be counted in subsequent rounds to decide a tie, until the person that is being voted for by these votes is no longer in the running.
- Once a result has been reached, the tellers write the names of those elected, in alphabetical order, and prepare to announce it when the Annual Meeting business begins.
- Any new committee members only take office once the Annual Meeting has ended.
- The number of votes gained by each candidate must never be revealed.

The below table shows the number of votes required for an overall majority to be achieved. For example:

Number of voting members	Overall majority
10 voting members	6 votes
11 voting members	6 votes
12 voting members	7 votes
13 voting members	7 votes
14 voting members	8 votes
15 voting members	8 votes

Please note that the overall majority should be more than 50%.

Annual Meeting business:

- Before the start of the Annual Meeting business, the President should ask if everyone present has voted and, if so, declare the ballot closed.
- The President chairs the Annual Meeting, only handing over the chair to the tellers during the election for a new President.
- The committee must present the Annual Report. Adoption of the report is proposed by the President and no seconder is required. Members vote by show of hands.
- The committee must present the signed statement of accounts. Adoption of the accounts is proposed by the Treasurer and a seconder is required. Members vote by show of hands.

- The financial statement is presented by the Treasurer. Copies of the statement should be available to members. A copy of the reconciled bank statement should also be on display for members to view.
- The committee recommends the appointment of the IFE for the following year. This is proposed by the Treasurer. Members vote by show of hands.
- Bye-laws which may have been made in addition to the WI Constitution may be rescinded by vote at the WI Annual Meeting. A two thirds majority of those present is required.

Election of the WI President:

- This follows the election of the committee members.
- This is conducted by the tellers.
- The members of the newly elected committee are announced.
- If a committee member is absent from the Annual Meeting but is willing to be nominated for election to any office she should state her willingness in writing in advance. Each WI member should be handed a slip of paper and asked to nominate the President for the coming year from the newly elected committee.
- Each nominee is then asked to indicate whether or not she is willing to stand for election.
- All members then vote, choosing between those willing to stand for election.
- If proxy voting and voting in advance has been allowed, then these votes must also be counted. (There is a guide to advance postal and electronic votes and proxy votes on My WI).Voting papers are collected and counted by the tellers and the result announced.
- In the event of a tie, the vote is continued until one person is elected.
- If a new President is elected, she does not take office until the Annual Meeting has ended.

The below is an example of an Annual Meeting agenda:

1	Appointment of tellers if a ballot is to be conducted (if not done at previous meeting)
2	Ballot for committee (including opening and closing times of the ballot)
3	Record of the previous AM minutes
3a	Record of the previous month's WI meeting (if the AM is being combined with the usual monthly WI meeting)
4	Matters arising on the record
5	WI ordinary business
6	Review of bye-laws
7	Resolutions (if notice has been given for any to be proposed)

8	Appointment of IFE for the coming year (unless done with the budget when the Treasurer is elected)
9	Presentation and adoption of the financial statement
10	The committee's Annual Report
11	President's address and adoption of the Annual Report
12	Result of vote for the committee
13	Nominations for President
14	Vote for President and results
14	Thanks and social time

4.4 WI committee meetings

A WI committee meeting shall be held as soon as possible after the Annual Meeting of the WI to elect the Officers and attend to any other urgent business.

Verbal notice of this meeting may be given to the newly elected committee member at, or immediately after, the Annual Meeting.

Proposals involving any question of policy or finance may not be decided until notice of the proposal has appeared on the agenda. Exceptions to this may be made if urgency is voted by two-thirds of the committee members present and voting. Decisions made by the committee can only be revisited and rescinded if notice of the proposal to rescind has been given on the agenda and when two-thirds of the meeting are in favour of rescinding.

When voting on any proposal is equal, the President shall have a casting vote in addition to her ordinary vote.

The below is an example of a WI committee meeting agenda:

1	Apologies for absence
2	Minutes of the last meeting
3	Matters arising from the last minutes
4	Matters arising from the last WI meeting
5	Correspondence
6	Financial statement
7	Report of sub-committee
8	Arrangements for the next WI meeting
9	Future plans, including member retention and recruitment
10	Any other business

4.5 Special Meetings

Outside of scheduled meetings, there may be occasions where more immediate business comes up and you need to call a Special Meeting to discuss this. Examples of when a Special Meeting may need to be arranged are:

- To remove a committee member.
- To pass a resolution on the enlargement of a WI.
- To pass a resolution on the transfer of WI property.
- To pass a resolution on the closure or suspension of a WI.
- To make, repeal or alter bye-laws.

Special Meetings can be called by the committee or at the written request of at least one quarter of the WI members who have paid their subscription for the current year. Notice of a Special Meeting must be sent by the Secretary to each WI member at least 10 days in advance, setting out the date, place and time of the meeting and a note of the purpose for which it is called.

Voting procedures at Special Meetings called for a resolution about the enlargement or termination of a WI, a transfer of a WI's property, or a closure or suspension of a WI

These votes are by secret ballot.

WI members may vote at the meeting or may vote in advance by either:

- sending their vote by post or email (or other suitable electronic means agreed by the committee) to the President or Secretary. Postal and electronic votes must be received by the end of the day before the meeting.
- Members can also arrange for their vote to be given to the Chair of the meeting, by hand, before the meeting starts.

There is a guide to advance postal and electronic votes and proxy votes on My WI.

At least one-quarter of the WI members must vote on the resolution.

The resolution must be approved by a majority of three-quarters of the WI members voting on the resolution.

4.6 Quorum and voting majorities

A quorum is the minimum number of WI members who must be present at a meeting before it can officially begin. Members can be present by attending physically and by attending virtually, if virtual participation has been agreed by the committee. meetings must have a quorum number of members present (this makes them quorate) for voting to take place. Anyone sending a proxy vote (where this is available) is not counted

towards the quorum. Remember that members attending electronically, where this is allowed, are present and do count towards the quorum.

The quorum at WI committee meetings is three, or one third of the committee members (rounded up) if that is greater than three.

The quorum for Special Meetings is one-quarter of the members, unless the Special Meeting is called for the purpose of passing a resolution on the enlargement or termination of the WI, a transfer of the WI's property, or a closure or suspension of the WI, in which case at least one quarter of the members must vote (either in person/virtually or by proxy) for the resolution to be passed. For these Special Meetings the resolution must be passed by a three-quarters majority see 4.5 Special Meetings.

5. Sub-committees

Sub-committees give members the opportunity to develop their specific interests.

The WI committee may appoint sub-committees of such persons as it thinks fit and determine their terms of reference, powers, duration and composition. The Chair of each sub-committee or someone appointed for the purpose must report the proceedings of each meeting of the sub-committee to the WI committee. Sub-committees may not hold funds or have power to dispose of the funds of the WI. The committee should provide for virtual means of meetings/decision-making, when establishing the sub-committees for virtual WIs.

Effectively, this means that a sub-committee cannot act separately from the WI committee. The budget of the sub-committee would be part of the WI's overall budget, for which the sub-committee would be accountable to the WI committee. Because a sub-committee cannot hold funds, all monies received, and all expenses incurred must always go through the WI's bank account and should be managed by the WI Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer.

Members must have the opportunity to be on sub-committees if they wish to.

6. Equality, diversity, and inclusion

The WI is open to women. We welcome and celebrate a diverse cross-section of women, offering a space where they can be themselves surrounded by other supportive women. This is the essence of the WI, something we are all proud of and something we all contribute to.

We do not ask members any personal questions as part of the joining process and are committed to ensuring all members are treated fairly and equally whatever their background or individual circumstances. We strive to provide equal access to all opportunities on a national and local level.

What is equality? Equality is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunity. Practically, this means ensuring all women have an equal opportunity to join the WI and participate as a member.

What is diversity? Diversity is understanding that each woman is unique and recognising our individual differences. For the WI, this means celebrating the diversity of our members, recognising differences and embracing these differences to inspire, educate, campaign and fundraise.

What is inclusion? Inclusion is a basic right and its objective should be to embrace everyone regardless of individual differences. For the WI, this means creating a welcoming and friendly environment where every member is included.

Our organisational and legal position is set out in the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This policy applies to all WIs and federations.

6.1 The Protected Characteristics

Members must not be treated less favourably, or be denied access to any opportunities, on the grounds of the protected characteristics. These are:

- age
- disability (including mental health and hidden disabilities)
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief (including those with no religion or belief)
- sex
- sexual orientation

Any such treatment may be discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

6.2 Age

The WI has a broad age range of members, and this provides the opportunity to form intergenerational relationships. These friendships enrich the experience of being a WI member and enable women to meet and learn from women they may not usually meet in their day-to-day lives. Membership is open to women who have reached the 'age of majority', which means the age at which a person is entitled to vote in national elections in the country or Crown Dependency in which the WI is based.

6.3 Members with disabilities

The WI aims to ensure members with disabilities can, as far as possible, receive the same services as those who do not have disabilities. Reasonable adjustments may need to be made to minimise or remove the disadvantages experienced by those with disabilities.

An example of a reasonable adjustment is taking steps to ensure that members with dementia are able to arrive at and leave the meeting or event venue safely.

What is reasonable depends on the circumstances of each individual including:

- The type of disability.
- How practicable the adjustments are.
- How the adjustments would overcome the disadvantages experienced.
- The size of the organisation, the resources available and the cost of the adjustments.

The WI may have to change the way things are done, change a physical feature of its property and/or provide extra aids or services where it is reasonable to do so. WIs who do not own their meeting venue will need to talk to the venue management/owner about this.

It is recommended that the WI committee speak to those members who require improved accessibility to fully understand and meet their needs.

As stated in section 4.1, making meetings accessible includes allowing members' carers to attend meetings. Please see the policy on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion / NFWI Access of Carers to Members with Disabilities to Meetings and Events on the access of carers to WI meetings and events for more information on this.

6.4 Transgender Inclusion

The WI is an inclusive, supportive, and progressive organisation that offers different ways to engage in our movement for members and non-members. The WI provides educational opportunities and the platform to campaign on important issues, whilst celebrating the WI's long history of trans inclusion, and embracing the sisterhood and solidarity of our movement.

Transgender women are welcomed to a range of local and national activities that are open to non-members, as well as our national Supporter scheme. Based on the WI's history of trans inclusion, we believe that including transgender women in these activities enriches our organisation to ensure we are a place for both biological women and transgender women to celebrate who they are and influence positive change in their communities.

WI membership is open to transgender men. This is because they were registered female at birth.

6.5 Non-binary members

Non-binary is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably within the binary categories of "female" or "male". Gender is often expressed in terms of masculinity or femininity but for some gender is a spectrum. Gender identity is a person's sense of their own gender, and there are many different gender identities on this spectrum. A person who was registered female at birth but who identifies as non-binary is able to join the WI as a WI member. This is because they were registered female at birth.

6.6 Pregnancy and maternity

Our members will include women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or who have recently given birth, and it is important these women are supported. For example, this may mean ensuring women feel able to bring their baby to WI meetings and providing a quiet space where members can breastfeed or express milk where possible. Talking to members about this is the best way to ensure their needs are met.

6.7 Race

Race includes a person's skin colour, their nationality, ethnic origin and national origin. We recognise that unfortunately racism exists in our society and we are committed to ensuring members understand what racism is and, if encountered, how to report it.

Racism can take many forms such as racist behaviour/language or the creation of rules that result in harmful treatment of people based on their race. Race discrimination does not need to be deliberate; it is possible for someone to discriminate against someone else without realising it or meaning to do so.

There is no place for racism or prejudice within the WI, and we work continuously to ensure that the WI is a place for women of all races and where members are empowered to challenge racism in their communities.

6.8 Religion and belief

The WI is non-sectarian meaning that we are not connected or affiliated with any particular religion or religious belief. We therefore welcome both women who belong to an organised religion or have religious beliefs, and women who do not. Please remember that people may hold beliefs that do not fall into 'organised religion' such

as ‘spiritual’. The Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act also includes ‘beliefs’ as a wider concept.

6.9 Sexual orientation

The WI welcomes all members, regardless of their sexual orientation and no WI member should be treated differently because of their sexual orientation.

6.10 How to promote equality, diversity and inclusion at your WI

- Ensure all women are welcome, included, accommodated for and celebrated.
- Include equality, diversity and inclusion on committee and board agendas.
- Where possible ensure meeting and event venues are accessible for all members.
- Where possible ensure activities, events and outings are suitable and open to all members.
- Foster a culture where members can ask for changes and see those changes being made where possible.
- Think about how your WI uses inclusive language that reflects the ideals of the organisation.

For more information about equality, diversity and inclusion please see the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Glossary on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Police and Guidance / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

6.11 Reporting concerns/discrimination

We take breaches of the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy very seriously and will begin investigations into potential breaches when necessary. If we are made aware of issues we may choose to follow these up as a formal complaint even where this has not been specifically requested and the complainant will be contacted about this.

If you have any concerns about equality, diversity and inclusion, or wish to report potential discrimination, please get in touch with your WI committee, federation or the NFWI Membership and Engagement Team using the contact information in section 16. You can also view the NFWI Complaints Policy on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Complaints which WIs and federations are welcome to adopt.

7. Safeguarding

The WI acknowledges that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and is committed to preventing abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all young people, adults at risk, and Representatives of the WI.

The NFWI Safeguarding Policy, updated in April 2023, replaces the following policies:

- Admission of Girls to Membership Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Safeguarding is making sure someone is safe and can live their life in the way they want to, without causing harm to others. No person should worry about something of harm happening to them, others taking advantage of them, or others putting them in a position that they are unhappy with or which causes them distress. Young people and adults at risk are at particular risk of harm.

Federations are required to appoint a Federation Safeguarding Officer (FSO) from within their existing federation board and ensure that there is a named person holding this role at all times. If an FSO cannot be appointed this role defaults to the Federation Chair.

All Federation Trustees will hold equal responsibility for the implementation of this policy and ongoing management of safeguarding. The FSO will be the lead and first point of contact, as well as being the liaison person between the federation, the WIs within the federation and the NFWI.

WI members need to be made aware of who the FSO is within their federation.

The NFWI will appoint a National Safeguarding Officer (NSO).

If a WI member, Representative, or Beneficiary has a safeguarding concern, they should report it to their FSO in the first instance. If a WI member, Representative, or Beneficiary is unable to contact the FSO, or the person covering for them, or the concern raised relates to the FSO, they should contact the NSO.

The NSO can be contacted by emailing: safeguardingofficer@nfwi.org.uk

The full NFWI Safeguarding Policy and the template safeguarding incident reporting form can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Health and Safety.

8. Health and Safety

The NFWI has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all staff, members, visitors and contractors whilst working or taking part in NFWI activities.

The NFWI Board of Trustees has agreed this NFWI Health and Safety Policy and this document replaces previous versions.

The NFWI has a duty to ensure all organisers, visitors and relevant members are aware of the NFWI Health and Safety Policy and that those responsible for ensuring its delivery have clear information and training to support them.

This Policy will need to be adhered to whenever a meeting, course or event is organised on behalf of the NFWI.

This is a compulsory policy for all federations and WIs. Though the implementation may vary depending on the size and activities of the charity, all WIs/federations must adopt the policy and follow the guidance. It is the responsibility of the WI committee/federation board to ensure this is implemented.

This policy is an introduction to the areas which WIs and federations should be aware of and take action in relation to. This document (and any supporting resources) do not provide a comprehensive guide to all health and safety considerations and trustees are encouraged to remain up to date on the different aspects of this policy.

This policy operates alongside and in conjunction with any additional requirements stated by the WI, federation or any insurance providers or partner organisations. Federations and WIs should ensure they are aware of their insurance cover and any additional requirements of their insurer.

The health and safety policy along with all supporting documents can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI policy and guidance / Health and Safety.

9. Campaigns

With a large, informed and active membership, the WI is widely recognised as a powerful force for positive change. The WI is unique as a campaigning organisation with its democratic ethos where every member is given the opportunity to shape the WI's national campaigning priorities.

Between July and September each year, WIs and federations submit proposed resolutions to the NFWI. All WIs and federations may submit resolutions. The NFWI's annual resolution procedure is a democratic process driven entirely by WI membership and every member can contribute.

A resolution is a short statement and call to action from a WI or a federation, generally aiming to highlight a social, political or environmental issue. Resolutions generally call for action on a particular topic where it is felt the WI can make a positive difference.

Through a year-long process WIs and federations shortlist, debate and vote on resolutions. Once a resolution has been adopted at the Annual Meeting, the NFWI's Public Affairs Department turns it into a national campaign. Through national and local campaigning, members then play a key role in achieving change on important issues.

As well as taking part in the national process, WIs and federations can pass local resolutions on issues they are passionate about, providing it fits with the WI's charitable objects. You can contact the NFWI Public Affairs Department via pa@nfwi.org.uk for more information on this.

The NFWI resolution process for national resolution submissions is as follows:

Stage 1	Between July and September, WIs and federations submit resolutions about current social or political issues they are concerned about to the NFWI. Resolutions must be signed off by the Federation Resolutions Co-ordinator before submission to the NFWI.
Stage 2	In early autumn, the submitted resolutions are discussed and debated by a panel of member representatives and reduced to a shortlist which is circulated to all members.
Stage 3	In late autumn and winter, federations and WIs hold meetings to discuss the shortlisted resolutions, giving every member the chance to have their say on the shortlist. Each member casts their selection for the resolution they support the most.
Stage 4	In the spring the NFWI Board of Trustees reviews the results of the member selections and agrees on the resolutions to be presented to the Annual Meeting and voted on. This is usually one resolution, but sometimes more than one is taken forward.
Stage 5	At the Annual Meeting, delegates hear from the resolution proposer, seconder and experts on the topics. Votes are then cast on the resolution(s) which, if passed, will go on to form the basis of a WI campaign.

A more detailed schedule is sent to every WI each year, and available to download from the WI website.

Federations will have their own processes for considering potential federation resolutions. Please contact your federation for more information.

9.1 Speaking out through the WI's national resolutions process

Your members may feel strongly about an issue of social or political interest discussed at one of your meetings. If your members would like to see the issue become a national campaign, any WI or federation can submit a resolution to the NFWI between the

months of July and September each year. You don't need to be an expert on the issue but you should:

- Carry out some research on why the issue is important.
- Think about how the WI could make a difference on the issue.
- Be specific about what you want to change.
- Call on a particular organisation to do something.

Resolutions should be:

- Timely – it is the appropriate time for looking at the issue.
- Targeted – clear and realistic goals.
- Achievable – the resolution is calling for something meaningful and sensible that can be achieved.
- Open to partnership potential – the WI's campaign will add value to the work of other organisations.
- Accurate – reflects the current situation with accurate information.
- Open to PR potential – potential to gain positive media coverage for the WI.
- Appropriate – fits with the WI's charitable objects, history and ethos.

Please contact your Federation Resolutions Co-ordinator or the NFWI Public Affairs Team via pa@nfwi.org.uk for more information about resolutions and NFWI campaigns.

9.2 The PA Digest

The Public Affairs Team has created a monthly e-update on all the latest WI campaigning news. You can subscribe to this on My WI and view recent issues here or by going to My WI / Public Affairs and Campaigns / Public Affairs Digest

10. Finance

The WI Treasurer oversees the financial affairs of the WI but the financial well-being of the WI is the responsibility of all members.

10.1 Finance checklist for new WIs

When setting up a WI, the following finance tasks must be completed:

- ☐ Appoint a Treasurer.

- Set up a bank account including appointing signatories and online banking.
- Decide how you will collect the subscriptions, i.e. cheques, BACS, cash, card machine.
- Collect the subscriptions (the WI keeps all of the subscription in their first year) and Gift Aid forms from members.
- Download the account book and financial statement spread sheet from My WI here or by going to My WI / WI Finances / WI Account Book and Financial statement, as this is where all outgoing and incoming funds are recorded.
- The committee should have a look at the finance section on My WI here or by going to My WI / Running your WI / WI Finances, which contains lots of helpful information.

10.2 Banking

At the formation meeting, the resolution to open a bank account in the name of the WI must be recorded, along with the decision about who will be the signatories. A copy of the decision and a copy of the signed Constitution will need to be shown to the bank to open the account.

Once the Treasurer has been appointed and the bank account opened, the subscriptions collected at the formation meeting can be handed over to the Treasurer for banking.

10.3 Using WI funds

WI funds must be used in accordance with the Constitution as agreed by the WI committee following a consultation with the members.

10.3.1 Paying charity speakers or speakers donating their fee to charity

There are two potential scenarios here:

1. The speaker raises an invoice for payment by the WI. Here, the WI pays the invoice to the speaker for their services. The speaker may well then pass this on to the charity, but this is not a donation from the WI to the charity but a payment to the speaker for services.
2. The charity raises an invoice for payment by the WI. Here, the WI pays the invoice to the charity for their services. This is not a donation to the charity but payment for services, therefore the charity's charitable objects do not have to be in line with the WI's charitable objects.

10.3.2 Paying non-charity speakers

If you are paying a non-charity speaker, the speaker must raise an invoice for payment by the WI. The invoice may be in the individual's name or the organisation's name. Here, the WI pays the invoice to the speaker for their services.

10.4 Fundraising

WIs can raise funds not only for their own programmes, but also to support other charities that are in line with the WIs' charitable objects as set out in the Constitution.

There may be causes that WI members want to support that fall outside the scope of the objects. WI members can fundraise for these causes as long as they do this as individuals and not in the name of the WI.

Please see the NFWI Fundraising Guidelines for further information on fundraising.

10.5 Gift Aid

WIs, federations and the NFWI can claim Gift Aid on their portion of the subscription fee, and this can be claimed for up to four years prior. This equals 25p for every £1 of subscription for members who have completed the Gift Aid Declaration Form, provided the member has not received more than 25% of the subscription fee portion in benefits.

For further information on Gift Aid, please see My WI here or by going to My WI / Running your WI / WI Finances / Gift Aid.

10.6 Bursaries

WIs can decide to award a bursary if there are sufficient funds available. The conditions of the bursary should be drawn up and agreed in advance. Bursaries can be awarded to enable members to attend a course within the federation or anywhere else. The bursary could cover all or part of the costs of the course. It is important to consider:

- How much the bursary will be for and how often this is offered.
- When the bursary will be drawn.
- How soon the winner has to apply/take up the bursary and the deadline for using it.
- What happens if the individual doesn't wish to/can't utilise the bursary.

- Decide if you would like the winner to do something in return for being awarded the bursary, such as give a talk to the members about their experience.
- Consider any Gift Aid implications.

10.7 Raffles

Raffles (also known as lotteries) are regulated by legislation and the Gambling Commission. It is therefore important that if you are organising a raffle, you follow the below guidance. Raffles have three essential elements:

1. Payment is required to participate.
2. One or more prizes are awarded.
3. Those prizes are awarded by chance.

Raffles held either at an event (such as a fête) or where only members of the WI can take part don't need a license or registration.

The profits from a raffle organised and promoted by a charity are exempt from corporation tax (or income tax in the case of charitable trusts) so long as:

- The lottery is organised and promoted in line with either section 3 or section 5 of the Gambling Act 2005.
- The profits from the lottery are only used to meet the charity's aims.

A section 3 lottery (known as a 'small lottery') must abide by the following conditions:

- The raffle must be held as part of an event or 'exempt entertainments', such as fêtes and bazaars.
- The total value of the prizes can be no more than £250.
- The proceeds of the lottery must not be used for private gain.
- No cash prizes may be given.
- The sale and issue of tickets and the announcement of results must take place during the entertainment and at the event location.

A section 5 lottery, also known as a 'society lottery', is more tightly regulated and the general public can be invited to take part. This type of lottery can only be arranged by an organisation or group registered with the Gambling Commission, or with a local authority, depending on the size of the lottery business. Charities and trading subsidiaries can apply to register with the Gambling Commission.

Please see the NFWI Fundraising Guidelines for further information on raffles.

10.8 WI Lottery

The WI lottery sits under WI Enterprises. It was launched in Sep 2024 with the aim of increasing income to all levels of the organisation. There are weekly draws with prizes ranging from £25 to £25,000. Players from the previous month are entered automatically into a super draw to win additional prizes.

WIs and federations can have their own lotteries under the same platform. All the administration is handled by our partner company, Gatherwell. WIs have their own customised page when they join. 40% of every pound spent goes to the WI, 40% goes to Gatherwell toward prizes and the admin cost, and 20% goes to the federation and National to be split after costs.

Setting up your own Lottery can be done in just a simple two-step process. You'll need to follow the link: https://www.thewilottery.co.uk/good-causes/apply

Once you sign in, you'll need to enter some basic information such as your Federation/WI name, email, contact number and address, etc. Then there are some questions about "causes" – your cause will be anything related to providing support and service to your community. Your cause is your own Federation or WI and you can add any information on the work that you do in your community or how these funds can help fund your aims and objectives. Please note the funds are for WIs, federations and NFWI.

When registering, the website may ask for the charity number, you can choose 'other' from the drop-down menu to complete this question.

For support to set up a WI lottery please contact:

Phone: 02081 838485

Email: support@theWILottery.co.uk

NFWI staff and their immediate family are not eligible to enter the WI lottery.

10.9 Conflicts of interest

- The committee members are the trustees of the WI and are bound by Charity Law.
- The income, funds and property of the WI must be used solely to further the charity's objects.
- Trustees can neither benefit from the charity's funds, nor be perceived to do so.
- The trustees' duty of loyalty to the WI must avoid any possibility of self-interest.

- No trustee, or person connected to a trustee, may be appointed to any office, paid by salary or fees, or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or in kind from the WI.

11. Digital services

11.1 The Membership Communication System (MCS)

The MCS is a secure online database of members' details, used at all levels of the organisation for many different functions. Every WI must have an MCS Representative to ensure the data relating to their WI and its members remains up to date at all times. If information is not up to date, then this will mean the WI and its members may not have access to all of the benefits of membership to which they are entitled.

11.2 My WI

To access My WI go to mywi.thewi.org.uk

My WI is an online area for WI members, with content on WI news, stories, blogs, campaigning, membership information, crafts, cookery, competitions, activities, etc.

WI members must be registered on the MCS with an email address. Members should access My WI regularly to keep up to date with the latest information.

For help with My WI please email hq@nfwi.org.uk or call 0207 371 9300.

11.3 The WI website

The public facing website (thewi.org.uk) contains information on membership options, the history and structure of the WI and our national campaigns. Its primary aim is to attract prospective new members.

All WIs are listed on the website and can be found by a postcode search. WIs must keep their information on the MCS up to date as this is what information feeds through to the website and your WI's page.

11.4 VIA

Empowering futures through life-long learning: Launched in February 2026 with new branding and an enhanced user experience, VIA is part of the ongoing commitment of Denman College to deliver the mission of the WI to educate and inspire, through an accessible and welcoming online learning platform.

VIA means 'by way of' or 'through' and that's exactly what it represents. Every learning journey happens VIA us and has been designed to guide, support and connect learners as they explore new ideas, build skills and move towards their goals, whatever stage of life they are at.

At VIA, we believe lifelong learning has the power to transform lives; inspiring confidence, unlocking new skills, and opening doors to opportunities that can shape brighter futures. Through flexible and accessible online learning, VIA supports individuals, families, and communities to grow, whether its developing careers, improving well-being, or discovering new passions.

We're committed to making learning welcoming and inclusive for everyone. Built on a strong sense of community, VIA is open to all who want to learn, regardless of age, gender, location, or digital confidence. With a wide variety of courses designed to encourage curiosity and build confidence, there's something to inspire every interest and every level. And with courses available from just £3.99*, everyone can enjoy access to quality, low-cost learning.

Wherever you are in your learning journey, we're here to help you grow in confidence, connect with others, and thrive.

**A selection of specialised courses will require a fee for all attending, but we always work hard to keep these charges as low as possible. The majority of our courses are free to WI members, please check before booking.*

11.5 NFWI social media

The NFWI has an active presence across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Follow us to keep up to date with the latest WI news, stories and highlights. If you have social media pages for your WI or federation, don't forget to tag us in your posts so we can see what you're up to! Social media is a great way of us showing those outside our organisation what we do and presenting a positive image of the WI to those who don't yet know us.

Instagram: @womensinstitute

facebook.com/thewi

Further guidance on setting up social media pages for your WI can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Publicising your WI / Online Promotion / Social Media.

12. Promoting your WI

To ensure current and potential members can find out about your WI, it is important to promote it in your local area. This can be done using websites, social media, local media, distributing leaflets, etc. We know that many women are just not aware of the WI in their area, so it is vital that the WI has a strong community presence and continually encourages new members to join. There are recruitment materials available on My WI here or by going to My WI / Communications and PR / Publicising your WI / Recruitment Materials, which includes promo videos which WIs can download and share on their own website and social media. See 11.3 for details.

12.1 Social media

WIs are actively encouraged to use social media to promote their WI as it can be a brilliant recruitment tool and method of keeping in touch with current members.

Further guidance on setting up social media pages for your WI can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Publicising your WI / Online Promotion / Social Media.

12.2 Local media

- Engaging with local media can be a great way to publicise your WI, whether this is a local radio station, magazine or newspaper. If your WI is holding an event which you would like to receive local media coverage of, reach out to your local media contacts. A detailed PR Guide is available to download from My WI here or by going to My WI / Publicising your WI / Resources and Guidance / NFWI PR Guide, which includes advice on putting together a press release to send to the media and thinking about the message you want to give about your WI and the wider organisation to encourage others to join.

12.3 Recruitment Materials

The NFWI has created a set of recruitment materials including leaflets, flyers , posters and promo videos that can be downloaded from My WI here or by going to My WI / Communications and PR / Publicising your WI / Recruitment Materials, and distributed or displayed in your local area.

12.4 Using the WI logo

As the WI logo has been trademarked, WIs can only use it once they have signed the trademark agreement with their federation. If your WI has not signed this agreement, you should contact your federation office.

Always include the name of your WI when using the WI logo to promote it. This is to show the communication is from your WI and not the NFWI.

13. Special procedures

13.1 Bye-laws

Bye-laws are drawn up according to the Constitution and may be altered or rescinded at the WI Annual Meeting or at a Special Meeting called for that purpose. It is recommended that bye-laws are reviewed annually.

13.2 Enlargements, suspensions and re-formations

Members are permitted to vote in advance of Special Meetings called for enlargement or suspension by post, email (or other suitable electronic means agreed on by the committee) or hand delivery. Votes by post or email must be sent to the President or Secretary. They must be received by the end of the day before the meeting. Proxy votes by hand must be given to the chair of the meeting at the beginning of the meeting. WI enlargements, suspensions and re-formations must be conducted by a WI Adviser.

Enlargement:

- Enlarging means one WI joins another to establish a new enlarged WI and this may be an alternative to suspension.
- To enlarge a WI, consent must be obtained from the Federation Board of Trustees.
- One of the WIs is classed as the ‘terminating’ WI and the other as the ‘continuing’ WI.
- The WI Adviser must liaise with both WIs to manage the transition to enlargement and keep the Federation Board informed.
- The committees of both the continuing WI and the terminating WI must consult each other and agree on the name of the enlarged WI, and who will make up the enlarged WI’s committee. A WI Adviser may attend meetings and help facilitate discussions. Meetings may be in-person or online.

- The two WIs have one month from obtaining consent for the enlargement from the Federation BoT to agree on the name and WI Committee composition. If they cannot agree within this timeframe, the Federation BoT makes these decisions. (If the continuing and terminating WIs are in two different federations, it must be the decision of the continuing WI about which federation it is deferred to).
- Each WI calls a Special Meeting and puts forward a resolution to enlarge which must be seconded.
- All WI members must be notified of the proposed enlargement 10 days before the Special Meeting.
- At the Special Meetings of both WIs, a secret ballot is held to approve the resolution and terms of the enlargement.
- At least one quarter of the WI members must vote on the resolution to enlarge, either at the meeting or in advance in accordance with the Constitution.
- A three-quarters majority of those voting is required in favour of the enlargement in both WIs.
- Example of the wording for the resolution to enlarge: *[name of member] proposes that [name of WI] should enlarge with [name of other WI] with effect from [date] and in future will be known as [agreed new name] with [names of the agreed committee members] as the committee.*
- Once the resolution is passed, the terminating WI must pay all outstanding monies, have the books independently examined and the account closed.
- A copy of the independently examined financial statement should be given to the continuing WI with all the remaining property and records.
- If the terminating WI is registered with the Charity Commission, its record will need to be updated and closed.
- Funds from the terminating WI will be transferred to the continuing WI.
- The NFWI should be notified of the enlargement as soon as possible.

Suspension:

- The suspension of a WI must be conducted by a WI Adviser.
- The Federation Board of Trustees must be informed of the intention to suspend.
- A Special Meeting must be called by the WI when a resolution is put forward to suspend which must be seconded.
- At least one quarter of the WI members must vote on the resolution, either at the meeting or in advance in accordance with the Constitution.
- A secret ballot must be held.
- The resolution to suspend must be approved by a three-quarters majority of the WI members voting. If a three-quarters majority is not achieved, then the WI will continue, and a committee and Officers must be elected.
- If the members vote in favour of the resolution to suspend:

- The minutes of the meeting containing the resolution to suspend must be written at once, approved by those present and signed by the President.
- The treasurer should pay all the outstanding bills and the balance of the funds is forwarded to the federation. The bank account should be closed – it may take a few weeks for the final statement to be received.
- Arrangements for the disposal of any WI property should be made in line with the constitution and charitable objects and in consultation with the WI Adviser and federation.
- Written details of these arrangements should be signed by the President and the WI Adviser and retained with the minutes of the meeting.
- The WI's record must be passed to the Federation Board of Trustees for safekeeping along with an independently examined copy of the accounts.

- Example of the wording for the resolution to suspend: *[name of member] proposes that [name of WI] should be suspended with effect from this meeting held on [date].*
- The suspension will last for three years, after which time it is officially closed, unless in the interim a new WI has been formed serving that area and then the WI will officially be re-opened and access given to any remaining funds.
- The NFWI should be informed of the suspension by the WI Adviser.
- The property of the WI (such as china, furniture and trophies) may be given to another local organisation or kept in case the WI reforms.
- Members should be actively encouraged to consider joining other local WIs or becoming WI Supporters. The WI will need to update their Charity Commission record if registered.
- Full members from suspended WIs will continue to have access to their membership benefits including receiving the WI Life magazine and access to My WI etc. until the end of that subscription year. If the Multi WI suspended, the benefits will continue as normal for the remainder of that subscription year (receiving WI Life magazine and access to My WI).
- Members whose primary WI suspended can choose to join a new WI as a multi member and will only pay the applicable multi member rate as set by that WI.

It is strongly recommended that WIs should suspend within the same subscription year they have paid their subscription for. If a WI suspends in a new subscription year where subscriptions have not been paid, this makes things challenging as you must be a member in order to vote to suspend.

Re-formation:

- A WI can be re-formed within three years of suspension.

- It does not need to involve the same members, use the same venue or retain the original name. It is simply up to the federation to decide if it serves the same area as the former WI.
- Any funds of the suspended WI being held by the federation should (excluding interest) be passed to the re-formed WI.
- The procedure for re-forming a WI is the same as starting a WI, although the re-formed WI does not get to retain the full membership subscription for the first year.
- Please note that the formation grant from the NFWI is only for new WIs and not re-formations.
- The NFWI must be informed of the re-formation as they will then update the MCS and send a welcome pack to the WI.
- The re-forming WI does not need to sign the WI Constitution again as the original will remain in force.

13.3 Closure

Federation Secretaries will be notified by the NFWI when suspended WIs pass the three-year mark and are officially marked as 'closed' on the MCS.

14. The NFWI

14.1 NFWI – London office

The London office is based at 104 New Kings Road, London, SW6 4LY and is made up of the following teams:

Team/ department	Function	Contact
Legal & Governance Manager	Services and provides support to the NFWI Board, and to provide a central administrative service to the NFWI, federations and WIs.	boardsecretary@nfwi.org.uk
Digital Services	Responsible for the NFWI's IT, including thewi.org.uk, the MCS, My WI, and the WI Learning Hub. With help from the Finance Team, they also work on data protection compliance across the NFWI.	mywi@thewi.org.uk dataprotection@nfwi.org.uk
Events	Works with other committees to deliver a broad range of events for both WI members and the	events@nfwi.org.uk

	general public/ potential members.	
Finance	Works across the organisation and advises the NFWI Board on finance and management issues.	fd@nfwi.org.uk
CEO	Leads and supports the NFWI staff team and works in partnership with the NFWI Board and Officers in supporting members and ensuring the continued strength and on-going development of the organisation.	m.green@nfwi.org.uk
Human Resources (HR)	Offers advice and support on all matters relating to employment. The team works closely with the CEO on staffing issues to support staff in their working lifecycle at the NFWI. The team also signposts federations to support and guidance on employment matters.	HR@nfwi.org.uk
Membership and Engagement	Responsible for creating ideas and projects that support the WI membership. The team focuses on the recruitment and retention of WI members and helps create a smooth WI member experience.	membership@nfwi.org.uk
Public Relations (PR)	Sitting within the Membership and Engagement Team, PR oversees all aspects of communication with and on behalf of the WI, including all media contact and social media presence.	pr@nfwi.org.uk
Public Affairs	Works on the NFWI's campaigning and influencing work focused on securing positive change on the issues	pa@nfwi.org.uk

	that matter to WI members. This includes the provision of a research and policy development function, campaign development, and managing relationships with decision-makers.	
Resources	Oversees the London office in terms of building management and supplies. They are the main contact for the office and deals with general calls and emails. They also manage the MCS and assist MCS Reps and federations with any issues they may have when using it.	hq@nfwi.org.uk

14.2 WI Enterprises Ltd

WI Enterprises Ltd (WIE) is the commercial trading company of the NFWI and is based at our London office. The company exists primarily to produce the membership magazine WI Life and operate other commercial ventures in order to generate a profit each year. This profit is passed over to the overall charity to help fund its aims and objects. This income helps keep the membership subscription low, ensuring charity costs are not passed on to members where this can be avoided.

The company provides special offers to members through the magazine and the NFWI voucher booklet each year and produces a range of WI branded products which members can purchase either through the magazine or the online shop via the NFWI website. WIE also manages our external commercial partnerships and operates the NFWI Annual Raffle each year, the proceeds from which are divided between the company and the federations.

You can email WIE at wilife@nfwi.org.uk

14.3 NFWI Education & Training

Based at The Lambourn, Wyndyke Furlong, Abingdon, OX14 1UJ.

Email: VIA@nfwi.org.uk

The Education & Training team contributes to the development and implementation of the educational activities of the charity by driving forward a diverse range of learning

opportunities for members and volunteers, ensuring that the NFWI meets its strategic objectives.

Using 4 key pillars; Environment, Lifelong Learning, Digital Inclusion and Governance, learning is flexibly geared towards enhancing both personal and professional development; driving members to create long-term and meaningful social and economic well-being for themselves, their families, and their communities. With the support of the Education Advisory Group and the team works to equip learners with the freedom and control to learn anywhere, through friendly experts, guidance, socialisation, interaction or collaborations.

14.4 NFWI Wales

The NFWI Wales team is based at Suite 5, 11 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9HA . Telephone: 029 2022 1712. Email: walesoffice@nfwi-wales.org.uk

NFWI Wales encourages federations and WIs to participate and supports them in a programme of community projects, cultural activities and training. It seeks to build on the particular needs of a bilingual Wales and the opportunities that arise.

You can stay in touch with NFWI Wales on Twitter: @NFWIWales

14.5 The Denman Trust

Denman College* is a registered charity linked to the National Federation of Women's Institutes. Strategic oversight and direction are provided by the Denman Board, supported by the NFWI Learning and Development team and dedicated working groups of external volunteers.

In 2024, a new educational model was introduced to give WI members access to free, flexible learning opportunities. Designed to support learners in pursuing their interests, passions, and academic goals, the model aimed to make lifelong learning more accessible and convenient for all.

As part of its launch, the model introduced the Denman Grant Scheme, enabling federations to apply for funding to deliver educational opportunities tailored to their members interests and needs. It also saw the launch of the new online learning platform, VIA, in February 2026, featuring refreshed branding and an enhanced user experience.

Together, these developments ensure the continued delivery of the Denman College's charitable objects through a range of integrated elements, including fundraising, sponsorship, commercial activity, investments, the federation grant scheme, and the VIA platform, and will continue to be developed, and introduced in phases, as part of an exciting new chapter for the NFWI, creating a cohesive and comprehensive educational offering for all learners.

**Denman College is the formal registered charitable name.*

For more information visit the website at https://via.thewi.org.uk/

Facebook: @learnwithvia

Instagram: @learnwith.via

14.6 NFWI Board of Trustees

The NFWI Board of Trustees is a panel of members who are democratically elected every three years to lead the organisation as a whole. Our Board of Trustees and staff are committed to maintaining the WI's core values, acting as stewards for the organisation's resources and shaping the organisation for generations of women to come. It is a primary focus of the NFWI Board of Trustees to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

14.7 NFWI Annual Meeting

The NFWI Annual Meeting takes place every year and is held as an in-person event at a different venue once every three years. At the NFWI Annual Meeting, the public affairs resolutions are voted on by delegates and, if applicable, any changes to the NFWI Board of Trustees are announced.

Pooling of fares:

- This is the amount payable to the NFWI by each WI and federation for every in-person NFWI Annual Meeting. The resulting pool of money is used to pay the travelling expenses of each delegate to the NFWI Annual Meeting.
- Designed to ensure that every delegate – regardless of personal circumstances or distance travelled – can afford to attend as the costs are shared equally.
- Federations and WIs may also agree to share other costs (such as accommodation) of attending any in-person meetings of the National Federation.

- Newly formed WIs are still liable to pay pooling of fares in their first year if their formation meeting date falls before the NFWI's Annual Meeting, which is usually in June, if this is an in-person Annual Meeting as opposed to an online Annual Meeting.
- The pooling of fares fee is decided by the NFWI Board of Trustees and is communicated to WIs and federations in the August mailing*.

*Kindly note that in years when the event is fully online, there will be no requirement for federations and WIs to pay Pooling of Fares fees.

14.8 The National Council

The National Council is an integral part of the governance of the overall charity. The National Council is made up of two representatives from each federation, the Federation Chair and Treasurer, and meets at least once a year. If a representative is unable to attend they can appoint a deputy, who must be a federation trustee.

The National Council is actively involved in the decision-making processes of the Charity as laid out in our constitution. As members and WIs you are represented on the National Council by your two representatives who will put forward thoughts and ideas and vote on proposals based on the experience of you and other members in your federation. This is one of the many reasons why it is important for you to regularly engage with and share your thoughts with your federation.

14.9 NFWI mailings

Each year the NFWI send three or four mailings to every WI Secretary. The March mailing is a hard copy. Federation Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers receive a copy of this and any additional information for federations only.

14.10 NFWI policies, guidance documents and publications

All NFWI policies and publications are available to download on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance.

The following NFWI policies apply to all WIs because they set out our organisational and legal position:

- NFWI Access of Carers Policy
- NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Glossary
- NFWI Charter

- NFWI Code of Conduct
- NFWI Health and Safety Policy
- NFWI Safeguarding Policy

WIs will find the following NFWI guidance documents helpful:

- Fundraising Guidelines
- Lottery Guidelines
- Serious Incident Reporting

WIs should make sure they have the following policies in place:

- a complaints policy – WIs are welcome to adopt the NFWI Complaints Policy in part or in full
- a data protection policy

Please check My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance, for policy updates.

WIs also have access to the following publications:

- The NFWI Annual Review: This is an electronic publication, reflecting on WI activity throughout the year (October to the end of September), the review looks back on the huge range of member projects, events and campaigns actions that took place in the last 12 months. There is also a WI highlights video available to download from My WI here or by going to My WI /Publicising your WI / Annual Review
- The WI newsletter: This brings together news and stories from around the WI. Everyone is welcome to subscribe to this newsletter, whether you're a member or not, so please spread the word and encourage others to subscribe! You can sign up to receive the newsletter directly to your inbox each month by visiting: www.thewi.org.uk/media-centre

15. Property of the WI

15.1 Property

Many WIs own their own halls. Many of these are governed by a deed that is separate from the WI Constitution. It may also be described as a Declaration of Trust or Conveyance. If there is a deed, this will explain what the hall may be used for, whether there are any special conditions for sale or other disposal and what is to happen to any proceeds of sale. If there is no deed, the WI Constitution will apply. This allows the WI to use the proceeds of sale either in whole or part for WI purposes or the proceeds may be invested, and the income used for WI purposes.

The NFWI recommends that all WIs renting a venue familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures set by the owners or landlords, ensuring the WI operates in line with governance requirements.

All WIs that own their property or venue are able to access all policies and guidance on MyWI under policy and guidance. In the event of a WI suspending, and the WI hall being sold, legal guidance must be sought on authority to sell and how to use the proceeds of any sale. These will be found in the deed or, in the absence of the deed, the WI Constitution will apply.

The WI should contact the NFWI for general advice and seek professional independent legal advice for anything case specific.

15.2 Archiving and record keeping

For information about archiving and record keeping, please see My WI here or by going to My WI / Resources and Guidance / Looking after your WI Archives

15.3 Data protection

All WIs process and hold personal information about individuals in order to provide membership services and to operate efficiently. This could be names, addresses, phone numbers, bank details, or anything else that could be used to identify individuals. WIs therefore need to ensure this processing is carried out in accordance with data protection legislation.

In accordance with the principles of accountability and transparency, WIs need to be able to demonstrate that they understand how they process personal data and why they do so. WIs will need a legal basis for processing data, such as explicit consent from members or processing the data being within the legitimate interests of the WI for the sole purpose of administering membership. They also need to document any consent given by members for such processing to take place.

The NFWI privacy policy (which can be found on My WI and thewi.org.uk) and registration forms outline the minimum ways in which personal information is used by the three tiers of the organisation to administer membership. However, your WI might also process information in other ways, for example, for events, to send birthday cards or to collaborate with other organisations.

It is also important for WIs to take appropriate steps to ensure personal data is kept safely and securely. This includes limiting the number of people who can access data

to only those the WI has deemed necessary, such as MCS Reps. Additionally, it may include steps such as keeping physical data in a locked cabinet, ensuring data kept on computers is password-protected, and destroying or deleting personal data when it is no longer needed.

For more information about data protection and the obligations of WIs, including answers to commonly asked questions and guidance for WIs, please see My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Poilcy & Guidance / Data Protection

For virtual WIs, it is important to remember to keep your members and your WI safe online. As other WIs will undertake physical risk assessments of their meeting places, virtual WIs will be required to undertake a similar exercise for their activities. All the requirements of GDPR should be observed, this guidance can be found on My WI here or by going to My WI / Essential Information / WI Policy and Guidance / Data Protection. Attendance at a virtual WI meeting cannot be taken as consent for an individual's image or details to be shared with others. Members should be reminded before each meeting not to record meetings or take screen shots. If your WI would like to do this for promotional purposes or for minutes, please ask permission of your members before doing so and provide details of how these images will be stored and used. Based on the virtual platform you are utilising; consider how you will keep meetings secure and open only to those who are members or prospective members. Sharing meeting links with others should be discouraged.

15.4 Insurance and health and safety

Each WI is advised to take out any insurance considered necessary to protect the WI and Trustees. Federations may have a group scheme available to WIs. While WIs are not obliged to take this, many WIs do and it is recommended that WIs contact their federation and check what is covered by any group scheme that is available. WIs should check what public liability insurance their venue holds.

WIs are advised to check NFWI's Health and Safety Policy (see section 8. Health and Safety). They are also advised to be aware of any health and safety policies put in place by the venues they use and any requirements within the venue's public liability insurance policy.

It is expected that WI committees regularly undertake risk assessments and revisits these as appropriate.

16. Contact information

If you would like to contact us about the WI Handbook, please email membership@nfwi.org.uk, call 0207 371 9300 or write to us at NFWI, Membership and Engagement Team, 104 New Kings Road, London, SW6 4LY.

17. Updating this handbook

This handbook will be updated as required. The 2025 WI Handbook was updated in March 2026 . The following updates were made:

- The Year has been updated.
- An explanation of where changes can be found in this document has been added above the Contents List on page 1
- Section 1.3 Governing Documents, the My WI link and location has been updated
- Section 2.1 WI Advisers, ‘WI Learning Hub’ has been updated to VIA
- Section 2.2 Additional Specialist Volunteer Roles, Social Media and Web Editor has been separated
- Section 2.2 Additional Specialist Volunteer Roles, ‘Website Development’ has been renamed to Web Editor
- Section 2.2 Additional Specialist Volunteer Roles, ‘Volunteer’ has been added to Social Media role and PR & Marketing role.
- Section 2.9 The Secretary, additional information has been added for the circulation of committee meeting minutes
- Section 2.12 Additional roles that do not have to be carried out by a committee member, Climate Ambassadors, the My WI link has been updated
- Section 2.12 Welcoming Teams, the number of WI Life magazines has been updated from ‘eight’ to ‘four’.
- Section 3 Membership of the WI, the membership form link has been updated
- Section 3 Membership of the WI, the location of the form on My WI has been updated
- Section 3 Membership of the WI, the amount of WI Life magazines has been updated within the membership benefits list. The language has been updated to align with the updated EDI policy.
- Section 3.2 Visitors, open meetings and sub groups: This has been renamed and was formerly called ‘Visitors’ fees’. Additional information has been added including where further guidance can be found.
- Section 3.3 Membership of multiple WIs, the paragraph on subscription variations has been removed. Information about the pro rata subscription rate and multi members has been updated. Information about the subscription flexibility guidance and multi members has been updated.
- Section 3.4 Termination: A sentence has been added to make clear this is a ‘last resort’ action.
- Section 6 Equality, diversity and inclusion: The first sentance has been amended to align with the updated EDI policy.

- Section 6.5 Non-binary members: language has been updated to reflect the April 2026 E,D&I update.
- Section 11.4 title has been updated from ‘WI Learning Hub’ to ‘VIA’.
- Section 11.4 VIA, all reference to the ‘WI Learning Hub’ have been updated to ‘VIA’.
- Section 11.5 NFWI Social Media, the My WI link and location on My WI has been updated
- Section 12.2 Local Media, the My WI link and location on My WI has been updated
- Section 14.3 NFWI Education & Training, the email address has been updated.
- Section 14.5 The Denman Trust, the email address has been updated
- Section 14.5 The Denman Trust. The social media handles has been updated
- Section 14.10 NFWI policies, guidance documents and publications, the My WI link and location on My WI for the WI Annual Review has been updated
- Section 15.1 Property of the WI, information has been updated in line with policies and procedures any venue owners or landlords implement when hiring a hall or venue.
- Section 15.3 Data Protection, the My WI link and location on My WI has been updated
- Appendix A: Glossary of Terms, ‘Termination of Membership’ has been added
- Appendix A: Glossary of Terms, ‘Termination of Membership’ definition has been added
- Appendix B: More information regarding the support available before starting a WI membership termination has been added.
- Appendix C: More information regarding the support available before starting a WI membership termination has been added.
-

Version	Date created	Last review date	Next review date	Document author
1	September 2021	N/A	February 2022	Membership and Engagement Team
2		February 2022	March 2023	
3		March 2023	March 2024	
4		March 2024	March 2025	
5		June 2025	March 2026	
6		March 2026	March 2027	

Appendix A: Glossary of terms

ACWW	Associated Country Women of the World. A worldwide organisation of country-women's societies to which the NFWI belongs. Federations, WIs and WI members can belong in their own right.
Ad hoc committee	An ad hoc ('for this purpose') committee is one appointed only to carry out one particular piece of work. It functions in the same way as a sub-committee and cannot hold office longer than the committee which appoints it.
Adopt	In WI procedure, agree to put into practice.
Affiliation	To be connected with another society, but not bound by its rules and policies; a WI may be connected with or affiliated to other societies provided that doing so does not interfere with its life as a WI and that the approval of the NFWI Board of Trustees has first been obtained.
AM	Annual Meeting. The NFWI AM is open to all members.
Amendment	A proposal to alter the wording or details of a resolution without affecting the principle of the resolution. An amendment must be clearly worded to show exactly which part of the resolution it is proposed to alter. Amendments are voted on before the resolution and, if passed, they at once become part of the resolution.
Balance sheet	A statement of all assets and liabilities and not merely a record of receipts and payments. It shows the complete financial position of an organisation. The assets include the current value of all property belonging to the organisation.
Budget	An estimate of receipts and payments, set out under headings of the money expected to be received and spent within a certain time.
Bursary	An amount of money set aside by a WI to be awarded to a member to be used for educational purposes.
Bye-law	An addition to, or modification of, the Constitution and Rules for Women's Institutes or federations which: a) holds good only for the particular WI or federation which makes it; b) does not conflict with the Constitution; and c) before being adopted by a WI, has been sanctioned by the federation Board of Trustees.
Casting vote	In the event of voting at a meeting being equal, it is usual for the President to have a deciding vote in addition to her ordinary vote. This is known as the casting vote.
Committee	A smaller body elected from amongst the members of a larger body for the purpose of carrying out the policy laid down by the larger body.
Constitution	The Constitution of an organisation includes the statement of its objects, together with the rules and principles which

	govern its conduct. Sometimes referred to as an organisation's 'governing document'.
Co-option	The power of co-option is given to a committee by the body which elects it to add a number of members to its own number. In WI procedure, a co-opted member has the same rights and responsibilities as other members.
Delegate	A member of WI elected to attend a meeting to vote according to the instruction which the WI has given. It is the duty of a delegate to present her WI with a clear report of the meeting which she has attended.
Democratic	Applies to government or an organisation, such as the NFWI, in which all rules give all members the same rights and obligation and decisions are made by majority vote.
Education Co-ordinator	A member appointed by her federation to coordinate educational activities within its area.
Endowment fund	A sum of money settled on an institution or society, not to be used up in current expenditure but to be invested to provide a permanent annual income.
Ex-officio	The holder of a certain office is often entitled to be a member of some committee or other body by reason of her office or ex-officio. The officers of a committee are always ex-officio members of the sub-committees appointed by it. Anyone ceasing to hold office at once loses any ex-officio rights because these belong not to any person but to the office itself. An ex-officio member has the full privileges and voting rights of all other committee members.
Extraordinary Meeting	A General Meeting other than an Annual Meeting.
Federation	A group of states or societies – in the case of WIs – joined together in one body with one government. In the WI this applies to the County or Island Federation grouping to which each WI belongs.
Federation Board of Trustees	The elected leaders of the federation. Between 8 and 15 elected every two/three years by the members of the federation.
Federation group	Some federations may organise their WIs into groups or districts geographically. This enables them to meet together where they might be able to enjoy more expensive speakers or activities. They can provide support to one another.
Financial statement	A periodical statement of receipts and payments and current finances of a society or company
Hon	Short for honorary, applied to unpaid officers.
Honorarium	A fee for specific services.
Independent Financial Examiner (IFE)	A person appointed by a small charity/organisation to examine its accounts and to report as to whether they are correct.
Lie on the table	When a meeting decides that a particular letter or paper shall lie on the table this means that it decides to take no action on

	the matter dealt within it. There can be no further discussion on the paper, but it is literally left on the table, and anyone present may read it.
Link delegate	A member appointed by the federation to represent more than one WI at Annual Meetings and Extraordinary Meetings.
Majority vote	The vote of the greater number.
Mandate	A command or instruction given by the electors to the elected, for example, resolutions passed at an Annual Meeting give the NFWI Board of Trustees mandates or instructions on how the WIs wish it to act.
MCS	The Membership Communication System, a database of every member's details which enables the mailing of WI Life. Each WI is encouraged to appoint an MCS Rep to update its' members details.
Memorandum and Articles of Association	The legal Constitution of the NFWI and incorporated federations detailing its character, powers, rights and duties.
Minutes	The official account of the proceedings at a committee meeting of the WI. Minutes should give detailed and accurate information regarding policy, decisions and resolutions. In WI procedure all minutes are confidential in that they are not available to non-members unless formally required, for example by the Charity Commission. Minute books should be carefully preserved so that they are available for reference.
Motion	A resolution.
Mover	A proposer.
My WI	Online area for members.
The National Council	Meeting of Federation Chairs and Treasurers, with the NFWI Board of Trustees, to discuss matters of policy and finance including the amount and division of subscriptions or membership fees.
Nem Con	A resolution is said to be carried Nem Con when no-one has voted against it, but some of those present have abstained from voting.
NFWI Board of Trustees	The leaders of the NFWI. Up to 15 members elected by the membership every two years. The Chair of the Federations of Wales shall be a board member ex-officio.
Nominate	To put forward the name of a person as a candidate for a particular position.
Nominee	The person who is nominated.
Non-party political	Open to members of all political parties or schools of thought.
Non-sectarian	Open to members of all religious faiths or schools of thought.
Notice	To give notice of a motion is to announce that one intends to bring forward a resolution on a certain point at a later meeting.
Officers	Those who hold office: President, Vice-President(s), Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary.
Out of order	Not in accordance with the rules of procedure or the rules or policy of the society. The Chair/President of a meeting may

	rule that a subject is out of order, which means that it may not be discussed.
Point of order	A question raised in a deliberative assembly as to whether proceedings are according to the rules.
Pooling of fares	An amount payable to the NFWI by each WI and federation for every in-person NFWI Annual Meeting. The resulting pool of money is used to pay the travelling expenses of each delegate to the NFWI Annual Meeting. Some federations operate a Pooling of Fares scheme for Council Meetings.
Policy	A course of action adopted by an organisation. This course of action must be within the Constitution and rules of the organisation and, in a democratic organisation, is always decided upon by majority vote.
Procedure	The rules laid down for the management of business at meetings.
Proposer	The person who brings forward a resolution at a meeting. After being proposed, a resolution must be seconded by another person to show that it has support behind it. Only after a resolution has been proposed and seconded can it be discussed and voted upon. If a proposal comes from the Chair, it does not need to be seconded.
Proxy	A member who is appointed to take the place and fulfil the duties of an elected member in her absence.
Quorum	The least number of members who must be present at a meeting in order that any decisions taken may hold good. A committee's standing orders should lay down the number necessary to form a quorum.
Recommendation	A proposal or suggestion put forward by a committee for endorsement and approval by the majority of members. In the case of a sub-committee, recommendations are made to the main committee, which decides whether these recommendations should be endorsed.
Record	A precis of events and decisions at a WI meeting, written in the form of minutes.
Referred back	If the committee does not agree with the recommendation of a sub-committee, it is usual, unless the matter is urgent, to refer back or send back the recommendation to the sub-committee to be reconsidered.
Regulation	Some agreed detail of management which is not of sufficient importance to necessitate the passing of a bye-law.
Representative	A member sent to a meeting on behalf of a body with full discretionary powers to vote on behalf of that body.
Rescind a motion	To cancel a previous decision. It is usual at a meeting not to rescind any motion recently carried unless notice to this effect has appeared on the agenda of the meeting and is passed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

Resolution	A positive statement of opinion put forward for consideration at a meeting. A resolution calls for action, and should therefore deal with one subject only, and be clearly worded so that a straight vote can be taken on it.
Returning officers	The persons appointed to count the votes in the ballot for the election of the NFWI Board of Trustees.
Right of reply	When a resolution has been fully discussed, the mover has the right of reply. After the mover has made her reply no other member shall speak for or against the resolution. The mover of an amendment does not have the right of reply unless the amendment is passed and greatly alters the resolution, thus becoming the substantive resolution. When several amendments have been passed, the Chair decides to whom the right of reply shall be given.
Ruling	An explanation, in cases of doubt, of what is the correct procedure in a certain case, or the exact meaning of some rule or regulation. Rulings are sought from higher authority, or from the Chair of a meeting.
Secret ballot	A system of secret voting by which voters mark their papers only with crosses and do not sign them. The voter drops her marked paper into a box and eventually the votes are counted by tellers. No one but the voter herself knows how she voted. Please note the Constitution allows for a WI committee to allow members to vote by post or suitable electronic means e.g. email on any matter that is being decided at an Annual Meeting or Special Meeting. Virtual WIs may be able to use their platform to conduct a secret ballot. Please check the guidance of your platform to see if this is possible.
Standing orders	The regulations drawn up by a meeting, defining its methods of work.
Standing sub-committee	One appointed to serve throughout the term of office of the committee which appoints it.
Sub-committee	A subordinate body appointed by a committee to deal with matters covered by its terms of reference and to recommend necessary action to the committee. A sub-committee must report the proceedings of each of its meetings to the committee which appointed it, and the recommendations of the sub-committee cannot be acted upon until they have been endorsed by the committee, excepting when the sub-committee has been given special powers to carry out some particular detailed piece of work.
Tellers	a) Impartial persons, usually two, appointed to take charge of the arrangements at an election, to see that all is done in order, to count the votes and make out a list of those elected during the meeting; b) Persons appointed by the meeting to count the votes of delegates.

Tellers' chart	A form used by tellers for recording votes, which should be used in secret ballots.
Termination of Membership	When a WI membership ceases during a subscription year. This can be due to death, the subscription not being paid within the relevant timeframe, or the WI or federation deciding, in good faith, that it is in the best interests of the WI to end a membership. A WI Member whose membership is terminated ceases to have any of the rights or privileges of membership from the WI her membership was terminated at. She is able to join another WI.
Terms of reference	The definition of the powers and duties of a committee or sub-committee drawn up by the body which appoints it or laid down in the rules.
Trustee	Members of the NFWI Board, Federation Board or WI committee are all charity trustees. Please refer to the Charity Commission for more information on the basic duties of a charity trustee.
Unanimous	A resolution carried unanimously when all voters present have voted in favour.
WI Adviser	A member appointed by the Federation. Most WI Advisers operate within their own federation but there is scope to operate across federations. She is the main contact for WIs and her role is to form and suspend WIs and supervise their enlargement. A WI Adviser also provides support to newly formed WIs for 3-6 months.
WI Life	The membership magazine of the WI, delivered direct to each member and WI Supporter Plus eight times a year. A digital version is available on My WI. For members with visual impairments, registered blind or with dyslexia, an audio version is available on request by emailing wilife@nfwi.org.uk

Appendix B Termination of membership, guidance for WI committees

The Constitution covers termination of membership in articles 13 and 14. This document provides guidance for a WI committee if a WI committee resolves, acting in good faith, that it is in the best interest of the WI to terminate a WI membership at its own WI.

Very important: the Constitution states that a WI committee does not have the right to terminate a woman's WI membership from any other WI. Please note that if there is an open complaint either about or from the member whose membership is under threat of termination, the complaint needs to be fully concluded before the process of terminating their membership can begin. This includes the conclusion of any appeals.

We strongly recommend that WIs contact their federation before starting a termination process. We also recommend that federations contact the Membership Team for clarification. Contact email: membership@nfwi.org.uk

The following steps are to be followed by the WI committee:

- The resolution to terminate the membership **must** be proposed at a WI committee meeting.
- The WI committee **must** give the member at least 28 days notice of its intention to terminate her membership and which WI committee meeting this will be proposed at. This **must** be in writing with the reasons why. Please make sure this is factual and no personal remarks/attacks are included.
- Very important: please remember that this is a confidential communication and the letter/email is only from the WI committee to the member in question and not circulated to any other members nor to any non-members. This is because the process is between the WI committee and the individual in question and the rationale for the termination may be sensitive.
- The member **must** be allowed to make verbal or written representations to the WI committee meeting.
- The member can choose to ask a representative (someone else) to make these representations for her. As per the Constitution this person does not have to be a WI member. The member **must** be asked if she would prefer to make her representations to the WI committee herself or appoint a representative.
- A secret ballot **must** be held to determine the outcome. Voting in advance by postal or suitable electronic means and proxy voting **must** be allowed to ensure the whole WI committee has the opportunity to vote. The WI committee should invite two members of the federation board to be tellers to ensure the vote remains unbiased. The federation board members must not have been involved in any preceding complaints.
- It is to be noted that just as with any other WI vote (outside of formal governance – AGM, Special Meeting etc.) there is no formal requirement for a quorum. If the WI committee vote to reject the resolution to terminate the member's membership she can continue as a member at this WI. There is no course for appeal for a WI committee which has had the resolution to terminate a WI membership rejected.
- The member can decide she does not want to challenge the WI committee's resolution to terminate her membership. It is recommended that the committee ask her to put this decision in writing. At the WI committee meeting, the member's decision can also be read out when proposing the resolution. At this point the resolution can be passed and the WI membership is terminated.
- If the member does not respond to the WI committee, as long as she has received 28 days' notice, it is recommended that the WI committee can interpret

her silence as a decision not to make verbal or written representations at the WI committee meeting.

- If the resolution to terminate her membership is passed, the member **must** be informed that she has the right to appeal. The member has 28 days from the date of the WI committee meeting to lodge a request to appeal the decision to the federation Board of Trustees. This needs to be made in writing. The WI committee **must** inform the member of all the necessary details.
- It is recommended that the federation BoT, where possible, comes to a decision within 8 weeks. More time can be given if needed. Any delays must be communicated to the WI member and the WI committee with the reasons for the delay.
- If the termination is rejected, the member can continue with her WI membership should she wish to.
- Please remember the membership is not terminated until the process is complete, including any appeals, and this is the recorded outcome.
- Should the individual's membership be terminated at any stage of this procedure, i.e. at WI committee vote or at an appeal to the federation BoT, the individual can take out a membership at any other WI (unless she has also had her membership terminated at that specific WI).

If you have any questions about this guidance please contact membership@nfwi.org.uk

Appendix C Termination of membership, guidance for federation Board of Trustees

The Constitution covers termination of Membership in articles 13 and 14. This document provides guidance for a federation Board of Trustees (BoT) if a federation BoT resolves, acting in good faith, that it is in the best interest of the WI to terminate an individual's WI membership.

Very important: the Constitution states that a termination of membership only applies to the WI the member in question is a member of. A federation BoT does not have the right to terminate a woman's WI membership from any other WI.

Please note that if there is an open complaint either about or from the member whose membership is under threat of termination, the complaint needs to be fully concluded before the process of terminating their membership can begin. This includes the conclusion of any appeals. It includes any complaints at either WI, federation or NFWI level.

We strongly recommend that federations contact the Membership Team before starting a termination process. Contact email: membership@nfwi.org.uk

The following steps are to be followed by the federation BoT:

- The resolution to terminate the membership **must** be proposed at a federation BoT meeting.
- The federation BoT **must** give the member at least 28 days' notice of its intention to terminate her membership and at which federation BoT meeting this will be proposed. This **must** be in writing with the reasons why. Please make sure this is factual and no personal remarks/attacks are included.
- Very important: please remember that this is a confidential communication and the letter/email is only from the federation to the member in question and not circulated to any other members nor to any non-members. This is because the process is between the federation and the individual in question and the rationale for the termination may be sensitive.
- The member **must** be allowed to make verbal or written representations to the federation BoT meeting.
- The member can choose to ask a representative (someone else) to make these representations for her. As per the Constitution this person does not have to be a WI member. The member **must** be asked if she would prefer to make her representations to the federation BoT herself or appoint a representative.
- A secret ballot **must** be held to determine the outcome. Voting in advance by postal or suitable electronic means and proxy voting **must** be allowed to ensure the whole federation BoT has the opportunity to vote. The federation BoT should invite two members of a neighbouring federation BoT to be tellers to ensure the vote remains unbiased. The neighbouring federation board members must not have been involved in any preceding complaints.
- It is to be noted that just as with any other WI vote (outside of formal governance – AGM, Special Meeting etc.) there is no formal requirement for a quorum. If the federation BoT vote to reject the resolution to terminate the member's membership she can continue as a member at this WI. There is no course for appeal for a federation BoT which has had the resolution to terminate a WI membership rejected.
- The member can decide she does not want to challenge the federation BoT's resolution to terminate her membership. It is recommended that the federation ask her to put this decision in writing. At the federation meeting, the member's decision can also be read out when proposing the resolution. At this point the resolution can be passed and the WI membership is terminated.
- If the member does not respond to the federation BoT, as long as she has received 28 days' notice, it is recommended that the federation BoT can interpret her silence as a decision not to make verbal or written representations at the federation BoT meeting.
- If the termination is rejected, the member can continue with her WI membership should she wish to.

- Please remember the membership is not terminated until the process is complete and this is the recorded outcome.
- Should the individual's membership be terminated at any stage of this procedure the individual can take out a membership at any other WI (unless she has also had her membership terminated at that specific WI).
-

If you have any questions about this guidance please contact membership@nfwi.org.uk