

A QUICK GUIDE FOR THE WI COMMITTEE



This booklet is intended to provide WI Committee members (Trustees), especially those new to their roles, with a very brief summary of basic guidelines to help them in their work.

More detailed information can be obtained through HFWI's office or your WI Adviser. Other useful sources and contacts are listed at the end of the booklet.

Herefordshire Federation of Women's Institutes

WI House, 90 St Owen Street, Hereford HR1

Tel: 01432 272268

Email: fedsec.hfwie@gmail.com www.thewi.org.uk/herefordshire

Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 9.30am to 2.30pm

Table of Contents

Sections	Page
About the WI Organisation	2
The WI Committee	3
Expenditure and Fundraising	4
WI Finances	5
The President	6
The Secretary	7
The Treasurer	8
Your WI Programme	9
Denman and Groups	10
Contacts and Links	11

Message from the Federation Chair

The HFWI Trustees thank you and appreciate your commitment to the organisation by accepting the position of a committee member of your WI, thereby ensuring the WI continues to prosper for generations to come.

Both HFWI Trustees and WI Advisers are available to offer help and supports at all times; contact details are in the Federation Year Book.

‘All members are responsible for their WI not just a couple of super women’.

The WI is What You Make of It

The WI comes in all shapes and sizes. We offer women the opportunity to join and be involved in the way that suits them. Usually this means joining a local WI, though some may prefer to set up a new WI with like-minded women with the help of a WI Adviser from the Federation.

About The Herefordshire Federation of WIs

The HFWI has over 1450 members in about 57 individual WIs within its area. The Federation office in Hereford is run by three members of staff. HFWI's Trustees all belong to and are elected by WIs within the Federation, and they arrange visits to Denman plus educational, informative, and social events for members. Our WI Advisers run training workshops for WI Officers, and Federation sub-committees organize activities in a range of subjects including sport and leisure, crafts, quizzes, public affairs, day trips/outings, international affairs, campaigns, IT, social media and archives. HFWI is involved every three years with the Royal Three Counties Show. HFWI's newsletter is compiled and published ten times per year and is available in hard copy and on email.

About The WI Organisation

The Women's Institute organisation is based on the ideals of fellowship, truth, tolerance and justice. With its original roots in rural and agricultural areas, it now embraces the interests of women in both rural and urban communities. The organisation is democratic, non-sectarian and non-party political. Membership is open to all women who have reached the age of majority, upon payment of the annual subscription. This entitles a member to attend 11 monthly meetings, and to receive eight issues of the magazine WI Life each year without any additional compulsory charge.

The WI is the largest women's voluntary membership organisation in the UK, with some 220,000 members in more than 6,300 individual WIs in England, Wales, the

Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Its main purposes are to advance the education of women and girls for the public benefit in all areas including issues of political and social importance; music, drama and other cultural subjects; all branches of agriculture; crafts; home economics; science; health and social welfare; to promote sustainable development; to advance citizenship by promoting civic responsibility and volunteering. The organisation seeks to give women the opportunity of working together through the WI in their communities, of developing their capacity and skills, and of putting into practice the ideals for which the Women's Institute organisation stands.

Each WI is a charity governed by the Constitution and Rules for WIs (2013) and every WI committee member is therefore a charity trustee. This means there are some legal requirements, but guidance and support are available from your Federation and the NFWI so that your WI can thrive within this framework.

The WI Committee & Its Members

Every WI is an individual charity run by a committee elected from the membership. Teamwork is the key to running an effective committee, and a successful WI.

Before you start – be sure you're eligible to be a trustee.

A person must not act as a charity trustee if they:

- have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception, terrorism, money laundering, bribery, contempt of court, misconduct in public office or any offence concerning a charity;
- are an undischarged bankrupt, have entered into a formal arrangement (e.g. an individual voluntary arrangement) with a creditor or under a debt relief order;
- have been removed as a company director or charity trustee because of wrongdoing;
- are physically or mentally incapable of managing their own affairs;
- are on the sex offenders register

All committee members (trustees) must sign the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration for fit and proper persons' annually at the initial meeting of the new committee. (Amended for 2018 and available for download on MY WI.)

Election to the Committee

The Constitution states that every committee member must be properly elected or appointed at an Annual Meeting of her WI, or co-opted at other times of the year. Each WI must have three officers: President, Secretary and Treasurer. It is usual to

have at least one Vice-President, and also an Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer. The offices of Treasurer and Secretary, or of treasurer and Vice-President (but no others), may be combined. The WI decides how many members the committee will have. Other roles could include Programme Secretary, MCS representative (whose duty it is to enter and update members' details on the Membership Communication System database), Outings Secretary, Refreshments Organiser, and Visitors' Hostess.

Responsibilities and Duties of the Committee

- To conduct the business of the WI
- To administer the funds
- To suggest policy and plans of action and present these to the members for approval.

WI committee members, the trustees, take on responsibility for implementing the aims and objects of the organisation as stated in the WI Constitution, and must make sure their WI abides by charity law. They are responsible for organising the monthly meetings and regular committee meetings, suggesting and arranging an annual programme of activities for members, and for setting the budget and controlling the finances. Mailings which include the Federation newsletter, together with other information to help you manage your WI, are sent to all Secretaries of Herefordshire WIs from HFWI's office each month.

The Federation regularly offers training sessions to help officers in carrying out their duties.

“The WI is What You Want It to Be”

Expenditure

Room hire for at least 11 monthly meetings each year, fees for speakers or demonstrators, insurance, pooling-of-fares, plus expenses for refreshments, stationery, phone calls etc. will all have to be paid. The charge per member for extra activities must cover all costs involved. A budget will help to assess whether estimated income will be adequate.

Fundraising for your WI

Most WIs have to raise additional funds at some time, and it's quite usual for a trading table (at least 10% of sale price for the WI) and/or raffle to be run at monthly meetings.

Speakers who sell books etc at meetings are asked to donate 10% to the WI. Special fund-raising events can be arranged, but if a specific purpose – say to

provide an educational bursary - is stated beforehand, then the money raised must be used for that purpose.

Fundraising for Other Appeals or Causes

The assets of a WI, including any funds held by the WI, may only be used for the charitable objects set out in the Constitution, as stated above.

A WI has the power to raise funds for and donate funds to causes/appeals that further these Objects, e.g. Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

The WI Objects are flexible and do not restrict a WI to raising funds for its own programme. As a guide, remember the key words women, local, community.

There is nothing to prevent a group of WI members, acting as individuals, from raising funds for causes outside the scope of the WI Objects, such as national or international humanitarian appeals, armed forces charities or animal welfare organisations, but this must not be done in the name of the WI. No WI funds and no WI or NFWI logos or trademarks may be used in connection with any such activity.

WI Finances

In financial matters there are both legal and constitutional requirements to act in accordance with the correct procedure.

Income

A WI's basic income will come from its share of the members' subscriptions. Each year, the National Federation decides the total amount of the subscription and the share to be allotted to the WIs, the Federations, and to NFWI itself. Other sources of income include payments from the members for refreshments, events, special interest groups, outings, newsletters, calendars, diaries etc. If some members of your WI pay income tax in their own names, it may be possible to claim Gift Aid on their subscriptions.

Important points to note about WI Money

WI funds belong to the charity and not to the members.

- The funds of the WI must be applied for the purpose of carrying out the Objects of the WI in accordance with the Constitution and for no other purpose.
- The committee as a whole is responsible for the financial well-being of the WI and for administering the WI's funds. Members should be consulted, but it is the committee's judgement how to use funds. They should consider if a

proposed plan is modest, justifiable and a reasonable use of charitable funds, serving WI purposes.

- The committee is responsible for ensuring every member is fully paid up for the year, and that the correct payment for membership fees is forwarded to HFWI promptly.
- The committee must appoint an independent financial examiner (not necessarily a WI-trained IFE) and ensure the WI's accounts are independently examined each year.
- If annual income exceeds £5,000 in two consecutive years, and is likely to remain so, your WI must register with the Charity Commission, and will then have its own individual charity number.
- A WI must not make use of another WI's or Federation Charity number in any correspondence.

Roles of the WI Officers

President

The President is the lynch-pin of a WI and as its leader she sets the style. She should be enthusiastic and decisive, yet approachable and friendly in her manner, interested in her members' views and ready to listen to their suggestions. It is from the contributions of a growing and diverse membership that the development of a WI will spring and it falls to the President, more than anyone, to encourage and foster this development.

The President is elected at the Annual Meeting from the elected committee members by a secret ballot of the members. This role can be shared.

The principal responsibilities of the President are:

- To have a copy of and be familiar with the WI Constitution.
- To co-ordinate the affairs of her WI, and the work of her fellow officers and committee members.
- To represent her WI both within and outside the organisation.
- To encourage good relations between the WI and the local community, and with the outside world in general.
- To make sure her WI prospers through the active participation of its members at WI, federation and NFWI levels and by means of a developing span of interests and activities.

The President's specific duties include:

- Chairing WI meetings, committee meetings and the Annual Meeting.
- Ensuring that the constitution and rules of the NFWI, the Federation and her WI are observed.

- With the Treasurer, agreeing the WI's annual accounts.
- Making sure that monthly bank statements are seen by the committee.
- Promoting a greater understanding of the WI and its activities by means of the Federation Newsletter, WI Life, WI Training, My WI, NFWI and HFWI websites, and any other sources of relevant information.
- Co-ordinating the work of all sub-committees and working groups.
- Encouraging other members to become involved by taking on some duties.
- Working continually to encourage the recruitment and introduction of new members into her WI.

“It’s down to each of us to make the WI everything it can be”

Secretary

The Secretary works closely with the President and should be aware of the WI’s Constitution. She shares with the President the responsibility for the general arrangements of meetings, but as Secretary, she is responsible for seeing committee business is carried out. The Secretary is elected annually by the committee at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting. This role can be split into Correspondence Secretary, Minutes Secretary and Programme Secretary.

The principal responsibilities of the Secretary are:

- To try to maintain a good relationship with the members.
- To make sure WI business is smoothly conducted.
- To handle and acknowledge all correspondence, referring to the President as appropriate.
- To establish and maintain good relations with the Secretary and Staff of the Federation.

The Secretary’s specific duties include:

- With the President, preparing the agendas for the committee meeting and the WI meeting. To make sure the meeting runs smoothly, it’s important to allow time for all the items which may have to be included, e.g. recommendations from the committee to the membership; items from the Federation Newsletter; information from NFWI; information or reports from the Treasurer, sub-committees or delegates.
- Writing minutes for the committee meeting and a record for the WI meeting and agreeing these with the President. When the minutes/record have been agreed, it is recommended that they should be available for committee members/WI members to read at the next committee/WI meeting.
- Making sure that invitations with a pre-paid reply form are sent to speakers and other guests with detailed guidance on how to find the meeting place.
- Ensuring that the notice board is kept up-to-date. Can be delegated to a committee member.

- Keeping an up-to-date record of each member's name, address, phone no and email address, ensuring that that latest GDPR regulations are adhered to and that all WI members have signed a sheet to show that they are aware of what their personal information is used for.
- Ensuring that if you use photographs of members in your publicity that you have signed permission from those members for that use.
- Ensuring that members' details are correctly entered on the MCS. This task could be delegated to a specially-appointed MCS rep., who may or may not be on committee. NFWI uses the MCS database for mailing the magazine WI Life to the membership.
- If you have split the role, the tasks above will also be split accordingly.

“All WI members have a valuable contribution to make to their WI, give members a job to do and they stay involved”

Treasurer

The Treasurer's role is to be a guide and adviser to the committee on financial matters, and to maintain the WI's actual accounts. The Treasurer is elected by the committee members at the first committee meeting after the Annual Meeting. This role cannot be split but it is strongly recommended that there is an Assistant Treasurer appointed.

The principal responsibilities of the Treasurer are:

- To be aware of the requirements, particularly of those relating to finance, of the WI Constitution and of charity law.
- To establish and maintain accurate and sufficient records of the WI's income and expenditure, and ensure these records are kept up-to-date.

The Treasurer's specific duties include:

- In a newly-formed WI, opening a bank account in the name of the WI. At least three committee members should be listed as authorized signatories, one of whom must be an officer. Two signatures are required for all payments, and for other instructions to the bank.
- Ensuring that the bank mandate is updated as necessary.
- Preparing a budget, i.e. an estimate of income and expenditure for the year ahead.
- Collecting annual subscriptions from all members.
- Sending membership fees due to both NFWI and HFWI, plus pooling of fares for the NFWI Annual Meeting, to the Herefordshire Federation office by the dates given.
- Paying the expenses of your WI's delegates, and all other authorized expenses.
- Issuing receipts for money collected for refreshments, raffles, visits, events etc.

- Paying all money received into the bank promptly.
- Maintaining a system for cash payments.
- Regularly updating the accounts and reconciling the bank statement each month.
- Completing a financial statement for the WI at the end of each financial year.
- Ensuring that all the books and records needed for an independent examination of the WI's accounts are ready for this to take place before your WI's Annual Meeting.
- Presenting the independently examined accounts to the committee and members.
- If the committee decides to use electronic banking, taking advice about necessary safeguards and procedures and putting these in place.
- Ensuring your WI registers with the Charity Commission if annual income exceeds £5,000 over 2 consecutive years and is likely to remain above that level. WIs are advised not to use the Treasurer's address for this purpose, but to use the HFWI address.
- If your WI's annual income falls below £5,000 and is likely to remain so, consider de-registering from the Charity Commission.

Your WI Programme

A WI programme isn't just a list of speakers and activities for current members to enjoy during the year; it is a tool for communication with your members and the best promotional item your WI has to attract new members.

This is your WI's window on the world - a chance to show off just what makes your WI unique and interesting. The basis of a good programme is the list of activities and events going on throughout the year that keep your current members engaged and hopefully attract new ones. But it can include so much more, for example:

- details of your meeting venue – full address and postcode so speakers and new members can find it easily, and starting time of meetings;
- month-by-month list of speakers/activities/demonstrations/competitions;
- any sub-groups, e.g. walking group, craft group, book club; when/where they meet;
- names and phone numbers of committee members but name only for the Treasurer, for security reasons;
- details if your WI has its own website, email address, Facebook page etc.;
- for WIs which produce their own newsletter, information how to obtain it;
- information about the Federation newsletter and website;
- if space allows, perhaps a little bit about HFWI or NFWI - or Denman, the WI's own residential college at Marcham in Oxfordshire.

It is vital to give value for money; making sure members are satisfied with what their WI offers.

All Herefordshire WIs can have their own page on HFWI's website; a great promotional opportunity, and free to every WI!

Safety Protocols

The committee need to put in place safety protocols to protect the Trustees, members of the WI and finances and should discuss and make provision for:

- Backing up and saving copies of all minutes and financial information kept on computers.
- Having a WI memory stick to back up all WI files of minutes and financial spreadsheets and storing files on more than one computer
- Printing off and keeping on file as hard copies 7 years of Financial Statements; also lodging a copy of the financial statement with WI House in Hereford.
- Having dedicated email addresses and Facebook pages to protect the identity of members.
- Checking the Internet 'Banking online' Guidelines as set out by the Charity Commission
<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc8.aspx#sthash.As9IlnU.dpuf>
- Guarding against fraud.

Denman College, Marcham, Oxfordshire

<http://www.denman.org.uk/>

Groups

Groups do not form part of the WI Constitution but in Herefordshire our groups provide a valuable opportunity for members to get to know members of other WIs in their area. Coming together in larger groups enable members to arrange more expensive speakers or social events which might be outside the scope of smaller WIs.

A full list of the WIs in each group is in the HFWI yearbook. Each group is organised by representatives from each WI in the group.

Getting Involved

Herefordshire Federation Trustees and WI Advisers arrange a wide selection of events, courses and training sessions of interest to members. Please take the time to tell your members about them and encourage them to get involved. Notices are mailed out and information about them is on the website.

www.thewi.org.uk/herefordshire

We Are Here To Help

WI Advisers, HFWI trustees and the staff in the office will always do their best to answer queries and give support. There is information about the Federation on the website and also on the Federation Facebook page.

HFWI Yearbook is updated and handed out to every WI in the Federation every year and lists contact details for Trustees and Officers within the Federation.

Denman, Marcham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6NW

Tel: 01865 391991 Website: www.denman.org.uk Email: info@denman.org.uk

www.witraining.org.uk The WI's dedicated training website.

National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) 104 New Kings Road, London SW6 4LY

Tel: 020 7371 9300 Website: www.thewi.org.uk Email: hq@thewi.org.uk

WI Adviser: A member trained by NFWI to support and advise WIs. Advisers are the only members authorised to form new WIs, or to suspend/close those not wishing to continue.

WI Constitution: Current edition dated 2013. Contains all WI Rules. Stored on My WI (see above), available from HFWI office. All WI's should have a hard copy and preferably all committee members.

WI Guide: General information for WI members. One copy per WI. Stored on My WI (see above), available through HFWI office.

WI Handbook: Detailed guidance for running a WI. Now constitutionally out of date but advice is still sound. Unavailable online but some WIs may still have a hard copy.

WI Independent Financial Examiner (IFE): A member trained to carry out independent examinations of the annual accounts of WIs, as required by the Constitution.

WI Life: Magazine for all WI members. Eight issues a year sent to each member's home.

MCS2: Current version of NFWI database; mailing list for WI Life magazine.

Pooling-of-Fares: An annual payment from every WI to cover the costs of delegates' travel to the NFWI Annual Meeting, usually held in June at different venues around the country.

Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) A charity with similar Objects to the WI.

Charity Commission: A range of services for all charities. www.charitycommission.gov.uk

HM Revenue & Customs: Issues tax reference numbers; administers and pays claims for Gift Aid. www.hmrc.gov.uk

With acknowledgement to NFWI for extracts taken from the WI Handbook, the WI Guide, My WI and the WI Advisers' Toolkit.

Produced by Herefordshire Federation WI Advisers November 2018.