



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes.



April 23

Chairperson's Address



Hello Everyone,



As I write this it is snowing quite hard and my bulbs are looking very sorry for themselves as the snow has settled around them forming a very pretty looking blanket. Only yesterday the sun was shining out of a clear blue sky and everywhere was looking Springlike despite the cold wind. These sudden changes of weather exemplify to me the joys (or hazards) of living in this country. Whilst we are on the subject of bulbs, by the time you read this your Secretaries will have received the bulb catalogues for next year so if you want a good show next Spring it will soon be time to place your orders.

This month we are delighted to welcome Lisa Blackburn (dual member of Balsall Heath & Moseley and Bournville WIs) who has taken on the task of Cog Editor. In future, if you wish to have anything that your WI has been up to published in the Cog please send your photos and write ups to the new email specifically for Cog Media. It is COGMEDIAWMFWI@gmail.com. We are always pleased to hear from you so please keep your entries coming for us all to read and enjoy.

The total votes for the proposed new Resolution produced a clear winner to go forward for discussion with 36,736 members nationwide in favour of supporting Clean Rivers. WMFWI had organised a Resolutions Cascade to be held at the BMI on March 30th where we would put forward arguments for and against the proposed Resolution to help give a broader understanding of the topic ready for you to discuss at your meetings whether you as a whole WI wish to support this Resolution. Sadly, only 10 members have expressed an interest in attending this meeting and so we have taken the decision to cancel the Cascade. However, we hope that you will still discuss the topic in your meeting before passing your decision to your Resolutions Delegate to vote on your behalf at the National Annual Meeting on 25th May. It is important that your thoughts on the matter are heard as every member of the WI needs to be involved in the Resolutions process.

As Trustees we do listen to you and in response to concerns that events often take place in the south of the region, we are beginning to arrange competitions and events to the north of the city. Our usual Annual Quiz will still take place in Shirley but for the first time we are also holding a Quiz in Aldridge and we hope that WIs to the north will support this. Full details will be with your Secretaries by the time of your April meetings.

In the meantime, I hope that the weather warms up and that we can look forward to a sunny Easter weekend.

Lynn

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Quinton WI

Quinton WI members received these 'Show the Love' green heart birdfeeders made by their Climate Ambassador, **Jennie Collins**. Here she is with them. **Diane Guard, Quinton WI**



HalesOwen WI

HalesOwen WI have planted an Elizabeth rose to honour the late Queen. It has been planted on their 'Halesowen In Bloom' plot that their WIn Bloomers maintain, for all those walking by to admire. Would like to acknowledge and say thank you the WIn Bloomers for all their hard work in maintaining the plot.

HalesOwen HawNets (bottom left) are a combined walking netball team from HalesOwen WI, Hawne WI and Quinton WI. With 17 members we have been playing and competing in tournaments since 2018. We have a strong friendship and support system, and enjoy our nights out as much as the netball. Photo from our latest tournament on 6th March in Walsall. **Lorraine Legge, HalesOwen WI**



200 Club Winner
Dot Underwood,
of Green Lane WI



Victory Belles WI



Victory Belles dedicated our February meeting to climate change. We discussed the Climate Coalition 11 point mandate, and outlined ways we could all make simple changes in our own homes and routines.

We went on to make pledges on our green heart templates, and made woven paper Dutch heart pledge pockets to keep them in.
Claire Woodland, Victory Belles



Aldridge WI

Above and right: What a fabulous meeting! Bollywood dancing for everyone, whether sitting or standing, and our ladies were brilliant!

Barbara Leech, Aldridge WI

Balsall Heath and Moseley WI



Balsall Heath and Moseley WI were introduced to the art of Morris Dancing, led by Glorishears of Brummagem Morris Dancers. Much fun was had by all. Glorishears tell us they're always keen to invite new dancers, so if you're interested in joining, do contact them at :

<https://glorishears.wordpress.com/contact-us/>

They're also available for bookings. They're based in Perry Barr. Here are BH&M people learning what good exercise it also is.



Above Photo Credit: Susan Barnes, BH&M WI



Hilary Close, Climate Ambassador at Dickens and Forshaw Heath WI maintains a Climate Change noticeboard with latest news and ideas. For Show the Love, Hilary made green heart pots for everyone which were seeded with cress or white mustard. The label on the compostable pot explained that Show the Love is about protecting things we love from climate change. Heart shaped biscuits completed the display.



Public Affairs – March 2023

Liz Galloway, Vice Chair & Public Affairs

URGENT: Have your say on the Government's 10-Year Cancer Plan

NB: *the Government's deadline is 27 March 2023.*

The survey's available if you log into MyWI at:

[My WI | Have your say on the Government's 10-Year Cancer Plan \(thewi.org.uk\)](https://thewi.org.uk)

Or [10-Year Cancer Plan: Call for Evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

The Department of Health and Social Care is developing a 10-Year Cancer Plan to improve England's cancer services, and they are asking for evidence and ideas to help shape their plan.

As part of our See the Signs campaign, the WI is teaming up with Ovarian Cancer Action to create a single submission on behalf of the ovarian cancer community.

The survey covers topics including:

- The sources you go to for information on the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer
- Any ideas you have for how to raise greater awareness of the signs
- How confident you would feel recognising the signs & going to your GP if you experienced any
- What you would like to see prioritised over the next decade in ovarian cancer
- And about your personal experiences, if you have or have had ovarian cancer

International Women's Day 2023



International Women's Day is a global holiday celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement, bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women.





The Million Women Rise March – Saturday 4th March 2023

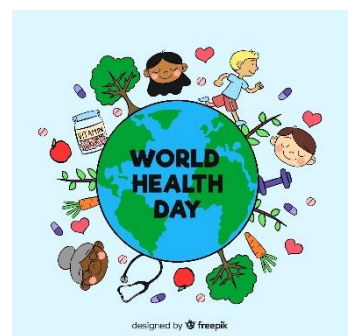
Women from the West Midlands joined hundreds in the annual women only march to protest against violence towards women, locker-room culture and ingrained sexist behaviours within institutions such as the police force. It is held on the Saturday closest to International Women’s Day. Members representing the West Midlands included **President of Harborne Village WI, Lynda Gibbon**, and **Nancy Coldwell, of Knowle WI**.

International Day of Remembrance for Victims of Modern Slavery - March 25rd 2023

This is a Global Day of Remembrance for the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, declared by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The legacy of 400 years of slavery still leaves its mark today, and the day serves to educate people around the world on the causes, consequences and lessons of the transatlantic slave trade, and to communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice.

World Health Day – 7th April 2023

The World Health Organisation (WHO) observes its 75th anniversary on 7th March. It began in 1948, founded by a desire of countries worldwide to safeguard their vulnerable and maintain the highest level of health and well-being for all. Each year has a focus, and this year to mark the anniversary the theme is “Health for All”.





NB Please note the change of date – now brought forward from September to June. Go online at the <https://greatbiggreenweek.com>

The Green Heart Hero Awards took place at the Terrace Pavilion in the House of Commons last week.

Hedge cutting in Spring and Summer

As spring approaches, albeit hesitantly, here's the RSPB's legal advice on hedge trimming and cutting, which is subject to the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981. Some mature hedgerows are protected by law but this wouldn't normally apply to garden hedges.

We recommend avoiding hedge cutting during the main breeding season for nesting birds, which usually runs throughout March to August each year. This can be weather dependent and some birds may nest outside this period, so it is important to always check carefully for active nests prior to cutting.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife>

Using Peat-free Compost

After 2024, garden centres won't be allowed to sell peat compost so it'll be important to consider the pros and cons of the alternatives. If, like me, you've had some bad experiences with early peat free composts, I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that the outlook is much brighter now.

Apart from their value as varied and specialised habitats, the urgency to protect natural peatlands has taken on a new importance with the advent of climate change. Incidentally, they also provide a flood defence 'sponge', mopping up heavy rainfall and releasing it slowly into our river systems.



Peatlands are capable of locking up huge amounts of carbon ... they're 'carbon sinks'. When dug up and sold for us to grow our seedlings and fill our hanging baskets, massive amounts of carbon are released into the atmosphere. The amount of peat in composts has reduced by half over

recent years but the good news is that there are also perfectly viable alternatives.

I'm told that the current forms of peat-free compost are much more effective than in the past and although more expensive, provide a pretty good growing medium.



Flowers for Pollinators

Don't forget to sow some seeds for bees and other pollinators. Easy annuals like marigolds, sunflowers and other daisy like flowers, alyssum, cornflowers, antirrhinums, cosmos, zinnia, stocks, dahlias will always attract them, as will lavender and buddleia if you're thinking a bit larger! There are plenty of ideas online, just search 'flowers for pollinators'

... and you may like to put this date in your diary for the autumn:



Birmingham Honey Show at Winterbourne Gardens, Edgbaston Park Road

Sat 09, Sun 10 September 2023
10.30 – 5.00pm
Heritage Open Day – free entry

The weekend is all about our 'buzzing' residents, the honey bees. See the bees in glass observation hives, attend live bee demonstrations (weather permitting) and meet local beekeepers. Stalls for all the family, activities, plant sales and more.



Make a Match Blood Drop Exhibition

Many members have been making craft items of blood drops to raise awareness of the Anthony Nolan charity and there is an online exhibition of them on MyWI. There is an urgent need for more donors. The blood drops can be made year-round and instructions are available to download from MyWI.

If you or someone you know wants to register as a potential donor, you can read more and register here: www.dkms.org.uk/thewi or www.anthonynolan.org/WI

You can order Make a Match postcards for use at your spring events. Order them by emailing PA@nfwf.org.uk

Six Big Moves

Transport for West Midlands are updating their Local Transport Plan. (LTP) Find out about the **Six Big Moves** and how they might affect you. Take part in the online consultation to share your thoughts, before April 17th. Follow the link: [6 Big Moves | Transport for West Midlands \(tfwm.org.uk\)](https://www.tfwm.org.uk/6-big-moves)



Submit your resolution for 2023/24



You can now submit your resolutions via our online form, email or post.
Submissions must reach your federation by Friday 01 September 2023.

Submissions are now open for WIs and federations to put forward proposed resolutions for the 2023/24 process. This is your chance to highlight an issue you are concerned about, and put forward your ideas about what you would like to see the WI campaign on from next year.

A resolution is a call for change on a current issue in society. Once a resolution has been adopted at the Annual Meeting, the NFWI Public Affairs Department turns it into a campaign. Through national and local campaigning, members play a key role in achieving change on important issues.

Any WI or federation can submit a resolution, as long as it has been voted on and approved. A virtual discussion event will be held on Wednesday 12th April at 7pm, register your interest on MyWI. Get involved in the resolution process!

Do you want to support or reject this year's chosen resolution?

This resolution will now go forward to the Annual Meeting in June and we have the choice to either support or reject it. What's your view?

Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife: The problem

According to Surfers Against Sewage, sewage was pumped into rivers and seas nationwide over 400,000 times in 2020, totalling over 3.1 million hours of pollution.

Sewage is spilled into rivers as storm overflow. This is a mechanism to prevent capacity issues in sewage treatment systems, which can happen with high rainfall. Intensive livestock and poultry farming also contributes to river pollution in some areas through farm waste making its way into the water.

The current situation

The UK has over 600 designated Bathing Waters – sites that are popular for swimming and paddling and have been designated under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. The Regulations were put in place thanks to the EU Bathing Waters Directive that was first introduced in 1976. UK designated Bathing Waters are mostly coastal, with 16 lakes and two rivers.

Designated Bathing Waters are the only places in the UK where bacteria levels in open water are monitored and the data published. Gaining bathing water status requires joint working from swimming groups, community groups and local authorities, as well as data gathering, for example counting the number of bathers using a stretch of river over the summer.

The Outdoor Swimming Society state that bathing water designations have been 'hugely important in helping to clean up popular swimming spots.



Points to consider

- The WI holds past mandates on the issue of water pollution and river quality, so this resolution could bring a new angle to this past work.
- Many organisations are already campaigning on this issue and the Government has taken action in the past months. Aspects of this issue that has received significant and sustained media attention over the last two years.
- The focus of the resolution is narrow. Would a campaign on this topic benefit from a wider focus to improve river water quality?
- The original title of Resolution 4 was Clean Rivers for People and Wildlife but there's no mention of *wildlife* in the text. The latter is of course a very valid objective.
- The statement on Designated Waters omits to mention the 16 designated lakes which exist as well as two rivers.
- This resolution seems to be purely about bathing waters and not wildlife
- There is some concern that unguarded bathing waters could be a potential hazard to children and particularly so in times of high water such as flooding.

Liz Galloway, Chair, Public Affairs

Diary of Events 2023

12 th April	Resolution Virtual Discussion Event. (7pm)
21 st April	Spring Outing (Stamford)
21 st April	Menopause the Musical 2, Alex theatre
25 th May	NFWI Annual Meeting, Cardiff
2 nd June	Quiz, Aldridge Church Centre
9 th June	Quiz, Shirley Community Hall
21 st June	Summer Outing (Skegness)
13 th July	Croquet (Kenilworth)
19 th September	Autumn Outing
23 rd September	Skittles, Hockley Heath
25 th September	Annual Meeting
November 2023	Christmas Outing (Hyde Park)
9 th December	Christmas family celebration

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for regular posts and updates. https://www.facebook.com/W_MFWI



Crafts

Hello all,

you may be aware that Debbie Arkinstall stepped down as Chair of Craft last year, that title has now passed to me. A new craft committee has been formed as the old one disbanded. Our aim is to be pro-active and bring you a jam-packed programme of workshops, competitions, events, outings, and projects.

New venues are being sought to extend our programme of events around the county and make accessibility to all members our priority.

We will enlist a host of Art and Craft experts, to pass on their knowledge and share their skills through a variety of workshops both in person and online. We hope to cover as wide a range of subjects and projects as possible, so everyone can learn something new.

New competitions will be introduced for you to participate in, and more opportunities for all members to showcase their talents. There will be novice, and skilled crafter categories to encourage more entries.

We will share our further plans with you as they unfold, so please watch this space.

If you have any requests, suggestions, or thoughts you would like to share with the committee, please use our new generic email address; wmfwi.craft@gmail.com

Claire Woodland, Chair of Crafts

Workshops

Glass Fusion Tuesday 4th April 2023

This workshop is now fully booked. Interest has been shown for a repeat of this event on a Saturday. A new date for this will be announced soon. If you would like to register your interest in this please contact the committee.

Outings

WMFwi and the Craft Committee have a stand at Sewing for Pleasure at the NEC, Saturday 18th, Sunday 19th March. Pictures and results of our weekend will be published in the next newsletter.

Contact Claire Woodland, Chair of Crafts at wmfwi.craft@gmail.com

Competitions

Montgomery Shield 2023

An Embroidered Sampler

You are asked to produce a traditional embroidered sampler. This can be a traditional cross-stitch design, freestyle embroidery using various stitches, or Sashiko embroidery. You can even use a kit, though you must state this on your entry. The important thing is it must be decorative! Extra consideration will be given for originality.

The finished piece of work must be mounted and framed, no larger than A3.

OR

you can create a decorative sampler in the form of a fabric book. Do ensure the back of your work is neat and tidy. Finished size no larger than A4.

Judging will take place at the Annual Meeting in September 2023. Entries will be accepted up to and including this day. Notice of your intent to enter must be registered by the end of August 2023.

Please contact wmfwi.craft@gmail.com

Trustees Trophy 2023

Green and Pleasant Land

Members are asked to create a painting either in oils, acrylic, inks or watercolour depicting a 'Green and Pleasant Land'.

The completed artwork must be no larger than A3. It can be framed or mounted if desired.

Judging will take place at the Annual Meeting in September 2023. Entries will be accepted up to and including this day. Notice of your intent to enter must be received by the end of August 2023.

Please contact wmfwi.craft@gmail.com

Watch this space for new competitions to be announced covering a wider variety of Arts & Crafts. There will be an entry level for all capabilities and interests. Cookery, baking, modelling/sculpture, photography, wearable art/craft, to name but a few.



Arts and Activities

Julie Afridi Martin - Entertainment Subcommittee Chair

I've managed to get out to a few events during the past few months. An amateur production of The Calendar girls at Cannock was sensational. I was in the audience too this year, for my own musical theatres production of Peter Panto, which made a delightful change. Mind you I don't think they bargained on some of the children in the audience wanting to join in with the fun quite so much! I've been for 3 visits to the cinema too and I trip to the museum. It reminded me what a rich source of arts we have here in the West Midlands.

I'd like to exploit this and find performances that you might enjoy. Just one problem? What kinds of productions do you think we should target?

Traditionally we've done panto, ballet, musicals and theatre trips. I'm reviewing cinema screenings of theatre events at the moment as this seems a cheaper way forward for 'tickets, to shows across the country we might otherwise not be able to attend. Apparently, you get some pretty decent comfortable seats too watch this space.

NOW IT'S OVER TO YOU LADIES PLEASE
LET ME KNOW WHAT TYPES OF PRODUCTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO TO & WHERE



QUIZ DATES

Two quizzes this year ladies:

Friday 2nd Aldridge at The Church Centre and Friday 9th June Shirley Community Centre.
Please see the Flyers for Full details and book your tables £20 for a Table of 4 people.

KARTING

To date I've only received 2 enquiries about this I will start researching this once I have a group of 15 interested parties. Thanks



WHERE ARE ALL OF OUR AMATEUR WRITERS??



VAL DAGGART WRITING COMPETITION

Members are invited to submit a piece of writing (no more than 1,000 words) On this subject

My fondest memory of the natural world

There is an entry fee of £5 for this competition to cover the costs of judging and moderation

Entry forms available from Julie Afridi Martin jtafridi@hotmail.co.uk

28 Vicarage Road Yardley B33 8PH

0121 784 7010

Closing date for entries Monday 26th June 2023

**Please remember to include a A5 SAE so that your entry form can be sent to you.
Plus, your £5 cheque made payable to WMFWI or contact me for bank details.**



Darts

The first Darts matches were played last month between:

Yardley won v Hobs moat

Solihull won v Yardley

Good luck to everyone playing their first and subsequent matches in March

The Hobs Moat team

The Yardley team

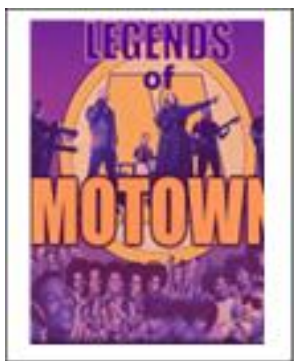


Book Corner

You will remember, that during Lock down we had a reading corner in the cog that invited members to critique and recommend new or good reads. If you'd like to do this, please send you recommendations and a short review to Julie – jtafridi@hotmail.co.uk for inclusion.

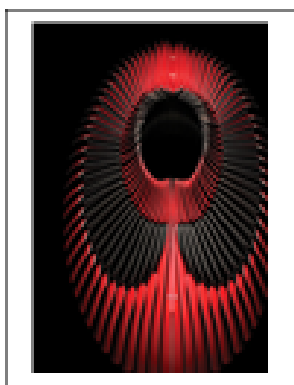


Here's a taste of what's on in and around our area:



Dovehouse Theatre, Solihull

Kineton Green Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7ER
Friday 26th May @ 7.30pm
Cost is £22
Tel: 0121 706 7139



Mac Birmingham

The multiplicity of queerness is here explored via metalwork and metalsmithing, in an exhibition that makes visible the ways in which LGBTQIA+ creatives are shaping, disrupting and contributing to contemporary culture.

Featuring artworks, video interviews and an Instagram campaign, the Craftspace presentation aims to 'make connections within a diverse, intersectional, complex and fluid community of making'. Showcasing welded and hydroformed 'imperfect' objects, Roxanne's work explores and reimagines identities formed through the impact of diaspora and migration.

Sat 12 Nov 2022 - Sun 2 Apr 2023



The Belgrade Theatre Coventry

A world premier adaptation of Manjeet Mann's celebrated novel of young-adult fiction: Manjeet Mann's 2020 novel, Run Rebel.

Trapped by her family's rules, their expectations and her own fears, Amber finds freedom on the running track. As her body speeds up, the world slows down, and she soon feels compelled to start a revolution - for her mother, her sister, and herself...

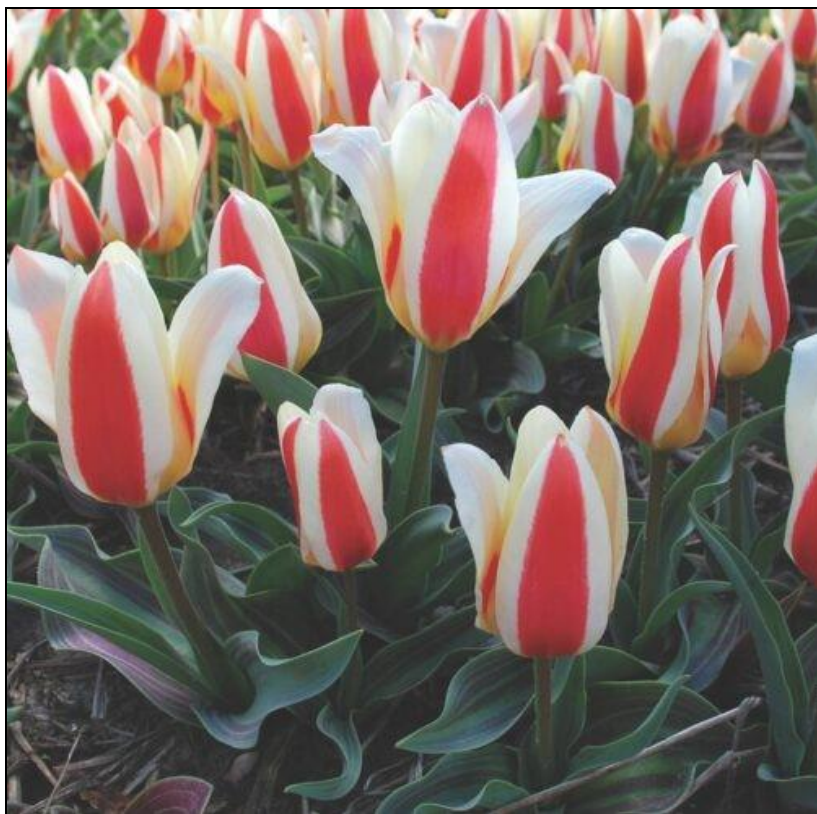
Run Rebel has been written especially for audiences aged 11-plus.

Tues 21 March - Sat 25 March. Prices from £10

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL

The tickets have now been paid for and will be sent to the appropriate WI's asap I receive them. Have fun march everyone!





WI Bulb Scheme

Now is the time to think about your garden for next year and browse the new bulb catalogue for ideas which has plenty of choice with good reviews from our members. Your secretary has the catalogue and order forms.

Please send your orders together with cheque payable to WMFWI to
Mrs Christine Sears
131 Berkley Road
Shirley, Solihull
B90 2HU

By no later than 1st June 2023

ACWW WOMEN WALK THE WORLD

WEDNESDAY 26th APRIL 2023 @ 11AM

THE ROUNDHOUSE BIRMINGHAM

MEET AT THE ROUNDHOUSE

WALK AROUND EDGBASTON RESERVOIR WITH AN AUDIO TOUR NARRATED BY PEOPLE WHO LOVE THE RESERVOIR'S WEALTH OF HISTORY, WILDLIFE AND GREEN SPACES

DISTANCE 2-1km

The roundhouse is a grade 11 listed building built for stabling of horses next to the Birmingham Old Midland Canal

Restaurant and tour of the Roundhouse available

The Metro stops near the Roundhouse and is free with a Senior Bus Pass

The Roundhouse, 1 Sheepcote Street, Birmingham B16 8AE

Look forward to seeing you

Pamela

ACWW Coordinator: pamela.email@btinternet.com

WMFWI, 50 Station Road, Kings Norton, B30 1DA, 01216944201

Email Lynnsmith@blueyonder.co.uk

CHARITY NUMBER 1012552, REG.COMPANY NO. 2723008



Summer Outing

Wednesday 21st June 2023

Skegness



Join us on our summer outing to the award-winning seaside town of Skegness that offers plenty to see and do or just sit back and enjoy the prestigious Blue Flag award winning beach that it is amongst the cleanest in the world.

Complete your seaside experience with an ice-cream or a delicious portion of fish and chips, there's nothing quite like fresh fish and chips by the sea.

Plenty of shops, bars and restaurants and local transport can take you along the coastal road. Easy walking, nice and flat!

We will aim to arrive by 11 – 11.30am to enjoy the day and depart at 5.00pm.
Cost inclusive of coach, is **£23.00** (non-members welcome)

Contact Kimslivinski60@gmail.com

Pick Up points; (times to be confirmed)

Allesley, Yardley, Solihull, Cotteridge, Halesowen, Walsall Wood, Mere Green, Boldmere

Please contact Kim Slivinski 07843 123748 if you would like to discuss other pick- up points

WMFWI – Summer Outing to Skegness

Cheques to be made payable to WMFWI to - Kim Slivinski, 136 Common Lane, Sheldon, B26 3DN by no later than 25 April 2023

INSTITUTE _____ Require _____ tickets @ £23.00 =Total £_____ Pick up _____ please include a sae with your application and list name of applicants on the reverse of this slip

Refunds will not be issued for this event unless cancelled by the Federation



West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

CROQUET

THURSDAY 13th JULY

The cost is £10.00 which includes tuition, equipment and tea/coffee
and biscuits.

Please wear flat shoes and bring suitable wet weather clothing in case
of inclement weather

THE VENUE IS KENILWORTH LAWN TENNIS CLUB

CRACKLEY LANE, KENILWORTH, CV8 2JS.

PLAY STARTS AT 2.00PM

If you have booked a place but are unable to attend on the
day please contact Julie Afridi Martin 0121 784 7010

Closing date Friday 23rd June 2023

**As there is only one date there will be a draw if
oversubscribed.**

**Return to Julie Afridi Martin, 28 Vicarage Road, Yardley
Birmingham B33 8HP by 23rd June 2023.**

_____ Institute - cost £10/person

would like _____ places for Thursday 13th July

Cheque made payable to WMFWI for _____

Please give a contact name, email and phone number

