

Annual Meetings

Every WI has a meeting once a year which is called their Annual Meeting. It is a constitutional requirement that each WI holds an Annual Meeting every year.

The Annual Meeting is an opportunity for each WI to look back at the previous year and look forward to the coming year.

Looking back is covered in two documents: the Committee's Annual Report which is written by the Secretary and the Financial Report which is compiled for the committee by the Treasurer. These reports should be circulated to all members ahead of the meeting or if an actual meeting is held the reports can be read out to the members. This year things may be different: even if a WI has not held any meetings for the last 12 months the Annual Report can still comment on how the members have kept in touch with each other – phone calls, visits and walks (socially distanced), newsletters and meeting bags to name a few. The Annual Report as well as WI records and minutes are always an interesting read when looking back at the social history of an era. Lockdown will provide some interesting reading. The introduction of Zoom meetings too.

The Financial Report may not record many payments during the past year. If this is the case and there are less than about 10 entries, instead of having the accounts examined by an official auditor, an Adviser can check the Financial Statement and all the necessary paperwork – but bear in mind that the WI will be responsible for getting things to and from the Adviser. A copy of the examined Financial Statement should be sent in to the County Office in June or by July at the latest. These will then be checked by the WI Advisers and any queries can then be raised.

Looking forward takes place at the Annual Meeting. Normally this is held so that members can attend in person.

The WI Constitution has now been changed to allow Annual Meetings to take place in various forms – even virtually at a Zoom meeting. In this case it is essential that all members are kept in touch and receive both the documents mentioned above. The documents should be emailed or posted to members. This then gives time for members to ask any questions or make any comments.

For a virtual Annual Meeting, the Advisers suggest that Committees and Presidents are nominated ahead and if there needs to be an election then the nominated Adviser for the WI should be involved. Voting can take place by phoning, texting or emailing the Adviser ahead or in a secret poll at a zoom meeting.

Your DFWI Advisers have put together some “Guidelines for Virtual Annual Meetings” Diane has recently sent this document out to all WI’s.

It is also available on the DFWI website:

<https://dorset.thewi.org.uk/news>

or on 365 Sharepoint [click here](#)

or ask your WI Adviser for a copy.

This is a new situation for all WI’s and some WI’s will choose to do things differently this year.

If your WI prefers to wait until a later date to hold their Annual Meeting this is another option and this enables members to meet as usual, in person. In which case please let Diane in the office know about this temporary change of month so that the Board of Trustees can be informed. This is a courtesy. This should be documented by your WI too.

Your Advisers are here to help so do contact them to answer any questions. The Advisers are all looking forward to the day when they can attend your meetings again. They have enjoyed meeting some of you at the recent “Meet and Chat” sessions on Zoom and more sessions are being planned for May. Dates to be announced nearer the time.

Liz Smith

WI Adviser