



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

April 2022

Supporting Ukraine

This is a message from the national Public Affairs team.

"We are deeply concerned about the ongoing situation in Ukraine and the threat that the conflict poses to civilians. We urge the UK government to provide humanitarian assistance and to do everything in its power to bring the conflict to an end and to protect the Ukrainian people.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and all those fleeing violence. We have compiled a list of locations in the UK coordinating collections of clothing and other items to send to Ukraine or support refugees arriving in the UK." (There are currently no addresses listed in the Midlands but there are plenty of organisations listed online) " If you know of a collection in your area, please email us at pr@nfwl.org.uk so we can add it to the list.

Please note that as per the WI charitable constitution, WIs can only fundraise for charities that benefit the local community and therefore would not be able to collectively organise to raise funds, co-ordinate donating goods or anything of this nature to support Ukraine. All activity must be in line with the NFWI's fundraising guidelines. To find more information on our fundraising guidelines for members, [visit My WI](#). This guidance is so that those who may want to help as individuals have the resources to do so.

What's needed? Warm clothing, sleeping bags, blankets, first aid kits, hygiene products, children's clothes and toys. Please check the details of your local collection point before donating.

If you have Ukrainian, Russian, or other language skills that could be of use to people fleeing the invasion and its attendant political crises in the coming weeks, [please fill out this form](#) to volunteer with [Respond Crisis Translation](#).

[Translators Without Borders](#), a well-established NGO is currently looking for volunteers. In particular, they need help from people with the knowledge of one of the following languages: Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Romanian, and German."

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200 Club Winner £10

C Marsh Newton WI

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for regular posts and updates.

<https://www.facebook.com/WMFVI>



Chairman's Address



Hello Everyone,

I wasn't keeping a close eye on the calendar and so I completely forgot about Shrove Tuesday until I had a What's App from my grandsons wanting to know what we were having on our pancakes. Apparently, they

were having the works with strawberries, whipped cream, chocolate sauce and both golden and maple syrups! When I said that if I got round to making pancakes we would have just lemon juice and sugar they were horrified. When I asked them what they were going to give up for Lent they had no idea what I meant so cue lesson from Grandma on the meaning of the lead up to Easter. What do they teach them in schools these days?!

When I was a girl I used to attend Sunday School at our local parish church and the Sunday before Ash Wednesday we were all given Lenten boxes to put our savings in. In those days I used to love Mars Bars and it seemed to be quite a sacrifice to give these up and put the 6d that they cost into my box. On Palm Sunday we all took our boxes to Sunday School and we were given palm crosses reputedly made from reeds from the Holy Land. On Easter Sunday we were told the total amount raised from the boxes which went into the parish funds and the person who had saved the most was given a prize Easter egg. Does this bring back memories for you?

These days I don't have a sweet tooth so giving up chocolate would be no hardship. I do however enjoy a gin and tonic or a glass (or two) of fizz and so I make a conscious effort to give these up for Lent and give the money to whichever charity I am supporting for the year. This year it has been easy as I wasn't allowed alcohol during my hospital stay (or visitors for that matter) and then I was on strong antibiotics which don't mix well with booze so I have been feeling particularly virtuous. I must keep it up till Easter day.

With Spring well and truly established and Easter on the horizon WIs will be looking forward to their own Annual meetings. Your three Advisors would be delighted to join you at those meetings as it gives us a chance to meet our members face to face and to find out what your WI gets up

to. We don't bite and we don't interfere unless asked to run the election for President so please invite us if you would like to meet us.

It was lovely to see so many of you at the two zoom Business Meetings on the 15th March. Many of you are long-standing WI members so you know much of what the Trustees do for our WIs but for some attendees it may have come as a surprise to find out that we are unpaid volunteers who try to make the Federation as accessible as possible. If anyone would like to attend a Trustees meeting to find out more (or to join us) then drop me an email and I will send you the details of our next meeting.

I hope to see many of you at forthcoming events but in the meantime enjoy Spring and Eastertide.

Lynn

News

NFWI Bulb Scheme



Now is the time to think about next years garden bulbs. Please have a look through the bulb catalogue, your secretary will have a copy. A digital copy is also available.

Members who have ordered bulbs in the past have been very pleased with them.

Send orders to Mrs Chris Sears (address is with the catalogue), to arrive no later than 1st June 2022.

Over to you

Quinton WI

to support the campaign our Secretary and Craft Club Leader created the special pack pictured below to give to each of their members, with enough spare to give to the centre staff where we meet, and our speaker for the evening. Each pack contains two packs of seeds. The seeds are a special mix of bee-friendly flowers that provide bees with much needed food and shelter. The pack also includes a green heart for the 'Show the Love' campaign and a message asking members to share a packet of the seeds with a friend.



The Committee of Quinton WI were delighted to be given a card to share with a friend or relative supporting 'Show the Love' campaign. During lockdown Committee member Chris Tout began an online Watercolour painting class with Quirky Bird and presented a card to each committee member at our last meeting. She will be sharing her skills with members at our craft night later in the year.



Our Climate Ambassador also gave a short talk on sending a Show the Love postcard to our local MP as well as showing us eco brick made from shredded plastic inside a plastic bottle which she will use in her vegetable garden. Members were asked to bring their recycling projects from last years Show the Love Campaign Challenge.

Fiona Northey, Quinton WI

Dickens and Forshaw Heath WI

At our meeting on Valentine's Day our Climate Ambassador Hillary presented us all with a green origami heart. Inside each heart was a note telling us of one of the Resolutions, past or present, that the WI have championed over the years.



This heart now takes pride of place beside my no loopholes bracelet which Hillary also made for us. Many thanks for all her hard work and her ability to enlighten us on what we can do to further support our Resolutions.



I was also so proud of Dickens and Forshaw Heath in their support of Women for Women food bank donations, bedding for women's refuges, and old bra collections for women in need. It is lovely to see our institute working together for the benefits of others and having fun in the process.

How good is it to be getting back to normal!!

Castle Bromwich WI



Our 100th Anniversary was in 2020 but unfortunately, due to Covid, our celebrations were postponed. We do have a claim to fame in that Lady Bradford was the first Castle Bromwich Women's Institute President in 1920. We did manage to celebrate with a lovely meal at The Grimscote Hotel, Coleshill in November 2021 (better late than never) and everyone had a wonderful time with good food, a brilliant talk by Ex-President, Annie Redgrave, regarding the Women's Institute and Women's progress through the ages.

A lap top presentation was also shown during the afternoon of the many outings, parties, etc we have had over the more recent years. Everyone left with a special 100th Anniversary cupcake, having already received a printed cotton shopping bag in 2020.



At a recent meeting Castle Bromwich W.I. had a visit from Bridget McNeela, a local lady, who cares for some lovely Owls and who brought along two to the meeting to meet us all. All Members thoroughly enjoyed the visit and many had their photographs taken with an owl. Shown in photo is Member, Vera Humphries on the left with Bridget watching on. Bridget also explained how she looks after them and how much it costs to feed them.

Marion Rous, Secretary, Castle Bromwich WI

Berkswell WI met this week, which was the one hundred and second anniversary of our first meeting. We were unable, due to the pandemic, to celebrate our centenary as we would have wanted. We thankfully survived and are now looking to the future, and to making new memories. We were entertained by our friend Dot Hall, four times president of Berkswell WI. She did a beautiful flower arrangement which we gave to one of our members to take home.



Whilst working her magic, Dot told us of her adventures when visiting the birthplace of the WI in Stoney Creek, Canada, many years ago.

Dot has been a WI member and loyal friend to Berkswell for fifty years. She told us about a day trip to Iceland (not the freezer store) and described the marvellous scenery and fascinating things to be seen there. She reminisced about members of days gone by and how fortunate we have been to have belonged to a group of interesting ladies and to have shared our lives with them.

We at Berkswell, especially with our Annual Meeting approaching, look forward to the coming year and all that it will bring. We give thanks for the WI.

Jayne Maxwell, President, Berkswell WI



Competitions

VALERIE DAGGATT COMPETITION FOR CREATIVE WRITING

As part of the celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee we are asking members to write a story based around their idea of the most important contribution to women's education, health and happiness that has happened over the past 70 years of her reign. So much has happened during this time including the contraceptive pill, the relaxation of the divorce laws, equal pay, greater opportunities in the world of work—the list of improvements in our lives goes on and on. I am sure all of you have tales to tell so please enter the competition and let us hear your stories. The cup will be presented to the winning writer at the Annual Meeting and we hope she will be able to read her story to everyone there.

Your secretary has the details.

LADY DENMAN CUP COMPETITION

This year the competition is to write a piece either comical, serious, fact or fiction using no more than 500 words which reflects the powerful impact when a community comes together. The entry requirements have changed this year and members are required to enter directly with NFWI and not via their Federations. Further information is available from My WI.

HUXLEY CUP COMPETITION

This year the Huxley Cup Competition, supported by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, invites WIs to design a small community space for wellbeing and wildlife. The wildlife aspect of the entry should focus specifically on the theme of: Our Fabulous Flying Friends—think about birds, bees, butterflies, moths and bats.

The competition is open to all members: entries must be submitted on behalf of the WI and not as an individual. Members are encouraged to work together to compose a design as only one entry per WI will be accepted. Further information is available from My WI.

MONTGOMERIE TROPHY

Institutes are asked to produce a tabletop display on a base board no larger than 46cm x 46cm (18" x 18") on the theme of **"Beside the Sea"**.

This can be knitted, crochet, feltwork or a combination of these skills.

Institutes wishing to enter are advised to look at "On with the Show", the NFWI handbook. It gives guidance on exhibiting and judging criteria. It is available online at <https://mywi.thewi.org>

Rules: -

1. All items made are to be of similar proportion and scale and in keeping with the size of the board.
2. The board must be NO larger than 46cm x 46cm (18"x 18")
3. The board must be covered and to form part of the competition theme
4. Appropriate toy filling must be used
5. As the entry will be judged from all sides, no backboard will be allowed, and
6. Judging will be in accordance with "On with the Show" guidelines and the judge's decisions are final.

Please note judging will take place in October 2022 and it is the individual Institutes responsibility to set up and display their entries on the day. Tables will be provided.

TRUSTEES TROPHY

This year's competition is on the theme of 'TREES'.

This competition for members is a photograph based on the theme of Trees.

- 1) The finished photograph/print must be no more the 7" x 5"
- 2) Can either be in colour or black/white
- 3) The photograph can be mounted.

The entries will be judged at our Federation event in October, so this will give you all plenty of time to come up with a stunning photograph!

Please note that the judge's decision is final.

Public Affairs



Members are urged to learn the signs of ovarian cancer and consult their GP if they have any concerns. The month of March is

Ovarian Cancer month. Help to make women aware of the symptoms and spread the word so that more women get an early diagnosis.

How You Can get Involved:

Display WI leaflets and posters in public places (with permission)

Share WI support and information in the Campaign Action Pack

Members' personal stories are available online



The second reading of the Plastics Pollution Bills is due on 18 March 2022 when two WI-backed Bills are down to be discussed by MPs. Alberto Costa MP's Microplastic Filters (Washing Machines) Bill, and Alistair Carmichael's Plastic Pollution Bill

feature gold-standard measures to help clean up our seas of plastic pollution. Alistair's Bill would set legally-binding plastics elimination targets, and Alberto's Bill would require all new domestic and commercial washing machines from 2025 to include a microplastic fibre capture filter.



Following cuts and less use of local buses in recent years, the Government has agreed to extend its support through to October 2022. Bus Service Improvement Plans are being produced by Local Transport

Authorities and Bus Operators in England over the next few months. Ensure your views are heard on improving bus services in your area. A campaign action pack can be downloaded.

The Public Affairs Digest for Feb/March was issued on 08 March

Digest gave details about how members could get involved in International Women's Day (08 March). I'd love to hear from any of you who did mark the occasion with any celebrations or activities.

Annual Meeting: I'm still hoping to receive your photos of activities, visits, events, achievements to put together a Powerpoint to show at the Annual Meeting.
liz.galloway@hotmail.com

Take action to protect our right to protest (NFWI)



We have joined over 350 other organisations in calling for changes to the **Policing Bill** which is currently making its way through Parliament. Now we need your help to ask MPs to protect our right to protest.

From our earliest days when WI members supported the suffrage movement, the **ability to gather together to make our views and voices heard has been at the heart of all of our campaigns**. Yet the changes in the Policing Bill will make it much harder for us all to take part in protests and marches.

Please write to your MP using our template letter which can be downloaded from www.thewi.org

As you've probably heard by now, the successful resolution for this year is as follows:

Women and Girls with ASD & ADHD - under-identified, under-diagnosed, misdiagnosed, under-supported received the most selections from members and the NFWI Board of Trustees has decided to put this resolution forward to the Annual Meeting. The overall votes were up by 10,000 this year.

WIs now need to decide how they want their delegate to vote at the Annual Meeting. There's more information on MyWI.

As Climate Ambassador and Chair of your Public Affairs Committee, I'm wearing my heart on my sleeve!

I'd like to give you my thoughts on why we have a Public Affairs Committee and how it fits in to the culture of the WI. We are the largest voluntary organisation in the country and we are well respected – we have a strong voice and our national team use it in Parliament and beyond. Campaigning is part of our culture ... working together to make things better!



We have 12 key and current campaigns which gives us a wide choice of which ones to support. SOS for Honeybees has been running since 1909 and is still extremely popular. Others like More Midwives have come and gone, either because the objective was achieved or else was picked up by others. Most recent are Stop Modern Slavery or No More Violence Against Women.

Those of us who are familiar with our WI website will know that there's a great deal of very useful information behind each of these campaigns and this is further supported by Zoom sessions, action packs and regular updates in PA Digest (free to every member). A small team of NF

individuals work very hard and produce a wealth of supporting information.

This may sound like a bit of a rant, but actually it's a plea. Many of you will not want to campaign, not feel it's in your character, but campaigning doesn't need to mean waving banners or getting arrested! It can simply mean, doing what you can to spread the word, gently and reassuringly passing on the message and providing as much information and support as is asked for. At the same time, the challenges of making green hearts, No More Loopholes bracelets or other craft activities to spread the word mean members working together ... having fun and achieving a common goal.

My plea to each WI is to ask one member to suggest a campaign which her WI can follow up with some activity. This might be a local visit, a talk by an expert, distributing fact sheets or else a related craft project. *I'd be delighted if that person emailed or rang me and introduced themselves, I'd love to know or discuss their plans. I'd also love to have some of your photos to show at our Annual Meeting in July.*

Liz Galloway, Chair, Public Affairs liz.galloway@hotmail.com

Climate Coalition Appeal

Climate Ambassadors, please take action!



A new report released today shows that the impacts of climate change are getting worse, and hitting those least responsible the hardest. Here in the UK, we've seen just how devastating climate impacts can be if extreme weather like we've experienced these past few weeks becomes more frequent.

Every day without action gives us less time to protect the things we love - but if we act now, we can still create a cleaner, safer future for generations to come.

Climate change can feel huge, especially at times like this, but the small actions we take today make a big difference. Your voice always counts, and together we can continue to send a message to decision makers that's impossible to ignore.

Tell your MP to take action today!



Today's report, published by the IPCC - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - is vital for assessing the impacts of climate change and highlights the need for visionary leadership and action from governments across the world to limit emissions and bring us closer to a safer future.

More details and template letter/PC and find my MP on www.theclimatecoalition.org

The RSPB reports that **The IPCC** report shows climate change is hitting wildlife hard – visit their website for much more explanation and ways in which potential damage is being mitigated.

"Today's report highlights how species are being pushed to extinction. Climate change (alongside other factors including habitat destruction and pollution) is putting the future of species and the eco-systems we all depend on at risk." www.rspb.org.uk



March is seed sowing time and many of the seed merchants are discounting their seeds in your local garden centre or supermarket. You might well pick up some good annuals or wild flower-mixes. Single flowered or semi-doubles are best for the bees. When you're buying compost for your hanging baskets or root trainers, don't forget to check that it's peat free.

Public Consultation on the Draft Masterplan for Edgbaston Reservoir

A second round of consultation has opened on the proposed development of Edgbaston Reservoir. The consultation has been extended because of significant changes. The proposed development is mixed housing, commercial and community uses, open space, ecology and water-based sport and recreation. There are a number of ways you can express your opinion but the public consultation closes on 15 April.

Please contact the North West Planning team at Birmingham City Council to share your views.

<mailto:planningandregenerationenquiries@birmingham.gov.uk>

What's On

Summer Outing to Barmouth

Tuesday 21 June 2022



Join us on our Summer Outing to Barmouth.

We will aim to arrive by 11am to enjoy a day at the Seaside and depart at 4.00- 4.30pm.

Seats cost £20

Closing date is Friday 29 April 2022

Pick Up points;

Allesley Village, Solihull, Cotteridge, Halesowen, Boldmere, Walsall Wood, Baggott Arms / Scott Arms

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

Booking available via your secretary

Dates for your Diary

04.05.2022	ACWW Walk Cannon Hill Park
10.06.2022	Quiz
11.06.2022	NFWI Annual Meeting Liverpool
21.06.2022	Barmouth
07.07.2022	WMFWI Annual Meeting The Hyatt
14.07.2022	Croquet
02.11.2022	Craft Showcase The BMI
03.12.2022	Carol Service St Martins in the Bullring

ACWW

Pamela Griffiths is planning a walk around Cannon Hill Park on **04 May 2022 - Meet at 11am**

Cannon Hill Park is the most popular park in the city, covering 250 acres consisting of formal, conservation, woodland. and sports areas. It also contains Birmingham Nature Centre and the MAC theatre and gives access to the River Rea Walkway. Café and toilets are onsite.

The nominal time for the full walk (5 kms) is approximately one hour but many shorter options to return to the centre are available.

Leisure & Wellbeing

invite you to play

Croquet

Thursday 14th July 2022 at Kenilworth Lawn Tennis Club, Crackley Lane, Kenilworth CV8 2JS

Tickets cost £8.50 and are available via your secretary

Leisure & Wellbeing

are hosting a

Quiz

7pm Friday 10th June 2022

at Shirley Community Centre

Stratford Road Shirley B90 3AD

Teams consist of up to four members

£17 per table to include Tea/Coffee and cake

Booking via your secretary