

Resolutions

Making a difference on issues that matter to you

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



Have your say, member-led campaigning

The WI is renowned for taking on tricky issues. Much of this reputation stems from the WI's resolutions process and the innovative campaigns that evolve from it.

In 1915, the WI set out to give women a voice and to be a force for good in the community. Almost 100 years on, the vision of the WI's founder members remains as relevant as ever and it is through the resolutions process, by

“There's incredible diversity in WI campaigning and public affairs...one minute the Public Affairs Committee is working with bee keepers and midwives, the next, we're meeting with the government on criminal justice reform.”

Marylyn Haines Evans, NFWI Public Affairs Committee Chair

“The Women's Institute has a special kind of power. You campaign for the things you believe in. Whether it is the environment, food labelling or women's rights, the root of your campaigning is always the same... changing people's minds through education, information and better understanding!”

Annie Mauger, Chief Executive of CILIP

working together, that members bring about real change at local and national level on the issues that matter to them and their communities.

Through the resolutions process, every WI member has a unique opportunity to turn a concern into a national campaign every year, backed by the weight of the whole of the WI movement. The resolutions process is democratic, educational, and member-led. Members put forward resolutions on issues that matter to them and once adopted at the NFWI Annual Meeting, they become the mandates that form the backbone of the WI's public affairs work as local and national campaigns.

At each stage of the process, members have an opportunity to learn about, debate, and vote on the issues proposed by their fellow members. From equal pay to climate change, from world poverty and fair trade to midwifery shortages and the declining honey bee population, WI campaigns are as diverse as our members.

“Being part of national campaigns adds a whole new dimension to your WI membership”

Jane Finnerty, Walton Manor WI



It starts with you

The WI empowers women to identify and tackle issues that matter to them. Campaigns are often creative and based on the willingness of members to get involved in a 'hands on' way as active citizens, right from the outset, by proposing and researching resolutions.

“When I found 57 Chinese lanterns on our Cheshire farm on a May Bank Holiday, little did I know that it would take me on a journey via *The Daily Telegraph* letter-page to *BBC Radio* interviews and an appearance on *BBC 'Countryfile'*, culminating in a Cheshire federation resolution.”

Ruth Pidsley, Capenhurst & Ledsham WI



Women Reaching Women Image: Elliott Franks

Working together to create change

From our Country of Origin Labelling campaign, stemming from a resolution put forward by a WI that wanted food labels to better reflect where food comes from, to Care not Custody, a

campaign that sprang from a resolution submitted by a member after a family tragedy revealed a major failing in the criminal justice system. Every campaign stems from a resolution that

comes from WI members themselves. Once resolutions are passed the NFWI turns them into campaigns and works with members to ensure that they have a real impact.

Campaign success:

2010 - £10m research funding to help better understand threats to the health and populations of honeybees and other pollinators.

2011 – European Parliament commitment to introduce mandatory country of origin labelling on all fresh meat.

2012 - Government concessions to planned legislative changes on Legal Aid reform, strengthening safeguards for domestic violence victims.

2013 - Government commitment to develop a comprehensive action plan for bee health.

2014 – £25m funding for pilot liaison and diversion schemes, a 'Care not Custody' approach.



COOL campaign at the European Parliament, 2011



Care not Custody campaign at the House of Commons, 2012

“What an amazing feeling - seeing 'my' resolution in *WI Life* as one of the 4 short-listed resolutions. It was stimulating to do the research and then write about a cause in which I am interested, also rewarding to find that I can still write coherently! Hopefully, I have raised awareness of an important issue.”

Liz Barker, Brundall Evening WI and Norfolk Resolutions Adviser



Image: Steve Forrest

What makes a good resolution?

Is the topic already covered by an existing mandate?

Check the mandate list in Speaking Out and contact the Public Affairs department with any questions about existing mandates.

Does the resolution require action?

It could call upon or urge action from a range of decision-making bodies, e.g. HM Government or the European Parliament or individuals, such as WI members.

Does it have the potential for the NFWI nationally and WI members locally to have an impact and take action?

Can members work on the topic in their local communities to make a positive change? Does it work for a national campaign?

Does it call for the right type of action?

Can the government actually bring about the change you desire, or could another organisation or body take it up?

Is it accurate?

Check your facts and make sure

your information is up-to-date; remember policy changes quickly so make sure your resolution won't be out of date as it progresses through the resolution journey.

Does it have clear and concise wording?

Ask your Federation Resolution Adviser, Federation Chairman or WI Adviser for help with this.

Does it deal with only one issue?

Resolutions should look at one area of change at a time; do not try to fit more than one issue into a resolution or the campaign will be confusing and diluted.

Is the issue something people will be passionate about?

Talk the resolution over with family and friends and see what kind of reaction you get.

Have you left plenty of time?

The best ideas take time to research and develop, bear this in mind as you get started. You don't need to wait for the submission form to arrive each July to start thinking about your resolution!

Short listing criteria

These are the criteria used by federation representatives to draw up the shortlist of resolutions each October. A good resolution combines some, or ideally all, of the following elements:

- Topical** - it fits with current areas of public interest or the NFWI's work priorities.
- Timely** - it is not 'yesterday's news'.
- Targeted** - the resolution has a clear and realistic objective.
- Achievable** - the resolution is calling for something meaningful and sensible that can be achieved.
- Partnership potential** - the NFWI's work will add value to the work of other organisations.
- Accurate** - it reflects the current situation and does not use outdated or obsolete information as its basis.
- PR potential** - there is a potential to gain positive media coverage for the WI that could lead to an increase in membership, perhaps by challenging rather than reinforcing media and public stereotypes about the organisation.
- Appropriate** - it fits with the WI's charitable objects, our history and ethos.

Our SOS for Honey Bees campaign

In 2009 a resolution on the decline of honey bees was passed by members at the AGM. A single resolution can achieve a huge amount!

“Honey bees play a vital role in the pollination of food crops and in our environment. In view of concerns about the accelerating decline in the UK honey bee population, this meeting urges HM Government to increase funding for research into Bee Health.”

Hindon & Fonthill Bishop WI

2009

AUGUST 2009

WI members wrote to their MPs to lobby for bees to get their fair share of funding for pollinator research, and lobbied their local councils to make public spaces bee friendly.

OCTOBER 2009

Members from around the country held Bee Aware days in their local communities to raise awareness about the plight of the honey bee. Members challenged themselves to exclusively eat food pollinated by bees for one day.



OCTOBER 2009

WI members visited the Food and Environment Research Agency to see the work of the National Bee Unit. Members learned about the Unit's work controlling bee pests and diseases and advising beekeepers.

2010

Many WI members pledged to become Bee Ambassadors, and to spread the word about the plight of the honey bee in their own communities. Members came together at the WI Bee Ambassadors Conference at Denman.



JUNE 2010

Funding was secured! National Insect Week saw the announcement of the Insect Pollinator Initiative research fund. Two of the projects funded exclusively deal with honey bees, and they feature in six more of the nine projects.

Members continued to raise the profile of bees and take action for bees and other pollinators in their communities.

2013



JUNE 2013

Our Bee Summit with Friends of the Earth saw Bee Minister Lord de Mauley commit to firm action to safeguard bees and other pollinators.

JULY 2013 The Welsh Government launches its Action Plan for Pollinators.

2011-12

2011

BugLife and the RHS launch campaigns for pollinators.

2012

Friends of the Earth launch the 'Bee Cause' campaign.

2014

MARCH 2014

Defra published their 'Bee Action Plan', the draft National Pollinator Strategy. A major success for campaigning efforts and ensuring the right environment exists for pollinators long term.

The journey of a resolution

STAGE 1 - THE LONGLIST

July

Resolution submission forms are received by federations and WIs. The form provides guidance on and the criteria for submitting a resolution. Members wishing to submit a resolution can contact their Federation's Resolution Adviser for guidance.

September

Closing date for resolution submissions. Public Affairs & NFWI-Wales conduct initial research on resolutions submitted. Resolution longlist and briefing notes are circulated to resolution shortlist federation representatives and all federations.

October

Federation representatives attend an NFWI meeting to select resolutions for the annual shortlist. NFWI trustees and staff support the meeting and provide advice on process and tricky issues but federation representatives are responsible for shortlisting.

November to January

The titles and wording of shortlisted resolutions along with key facts are published by the NFWI in *WI Life* and circulated to federations and WIs through the Moodle and website. A selection slip for each member to make their selection is included in the magazine. Every single member has the opportunity to select which resolution they would like to see put forward for voting at the Annual Meeting. Selection slips are collated by federations.

WIs and federations may wish to hold a meeting to discuss shortlisted resolutions.

February

Deadline for federations to send in collated results of members' resolution selections to the NFWI (at least 10 working days before February Board meeting).

Mid February

NFWI Board of Trustees meets to finalise list of resolutions for the AM agenda, based on the number of selection votes from members, progress of existing campaigns and key developments on the resolutions. AM resolution(s) sent from the NFWI to all federations after the Board meets and further briefing notes are published on the NFWI website and Moodle.

April

AM resolution(s) published in April's *WI Life* magazine.

April/May

WIs and Federations hold resolutions meetings, to discuss the resolution(s) to be voted on at the AM and in order to help decide whether they wish to vote in favour or against the resolution.

May/June

Resolution(s) voted on at the AM by WI delegates.

August mailing

Campaign action notes on new mandate(s) sent to all WIs.

STAGE 2 - THE SHORTLIST

STAGE 3 - PREPARING FOR AM