

## **ACWW GUIDANCE**

There is a long association and strong relationship between Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) and the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI), although they remain two separate and independent charities with separate governance, missions, and separate charitable objects.

We appreciate that this means that if WI members wish to support ACWW they must navigate their way around charity law and Charity Commission guidance relating to what can and can't be done to support ACWW. We receive a lot of queries from members about this relationship and what is expected of their WIs or federations.

The following document has therefore been developed to help explore this further. The below guidance outlines the historic and current relationship between ACWW and the NFWI, federations and WIs, including voting on ACWW resolutions and managing any financial support from federations and WIs to ACWW. The document also outlines the provisions that both ACWW and the NFWI have put in place to help simplify this and ensure any support is given in line with the appropriate charity requirements.

The NFWI actively encourages WIs to explore the work of ACWW and get involved if they want to. However, as with any fundraising, campaigning activity or support to an external organisation, this is for members to decide based on what is important to them and where they want their WI to focus. Though the NFWI maintain a national relationship with ACWW, support at federation and WI level is not mandatory.

## **ACWW AND THE WI**

ACWW was founded in 1929. In 1935, the NFWI took organisational membership, which provided all WI members the opportunity to support the activities of ACWW formally if they chose to. This membership relationship offers WIs an opportunity to support activities outside of their own communities and be part of a worldwide network of women working to influence change on a global scale.

Since 1935 many federations and WIs have subsequently become ACWW member societies, giving WI members a more personal relationship with ACWW, the opportunity to give more focus to ACWW activities and to work directly with ACWW on areas that fall within the WI's charitable objects. As these relationships have developed and WIs and federations have made their own decisions about what support they wish to give, the role of the NFWI within this relationship has changed.

## **THE ROLE OF NFWI IN SUPPORTING ACWW**

NFWI and ACWW remain strong partner organisations with many shared goals and ambitions with regard to supporting women. However, since 1935 the role of the

NFWI in supporting members' relationships with ACWW has changed as WIs and federations have developed their own direct relationships.

In 2022 the NFWI's role focusses on providing guidance on campaigning and fundraising, focused on the following objectives:

- To keep members informed and aware of the work of ACWW through the Public Affairs Committee. *This work includes arranging activities like resolution discussion days in advance of ACWW's Triennial conference and where appropriate promoting ACWW initiatives to WI members. NFWI continually reviews these communications to ensure it gets the balance right, getting information to those who are interested but also reflecting that ACWW support is an individual choice for WIs and federations.*
- To appoint NFWI ACWW Reps as appropriate to support the national relationship between both organisations and lead NFWI Board discussions on relevant topics
- To maintain active contact between the two organisations at national level to proactively identify national opportunities for partnership and collaboration on joint campaigning priorities
- To support WIs and federations who wish to raise funds for ACWW and provide the appropriate support to ensure these donations are compliant with charity rules and the WI constitution. *This work includes the NFWI Board and solicitors reviewing all ACWW funded projects each year to ensure that anything donated by WI members is going to activities compatible with the WI's charitable objects and in line with Charity Commission guidance on charity-to-charity fundraising. This avoids WIs having to assess these projects individually to check they are compatible with WI charitable objects and Charity Commission guidance. With the introduction of the new project fund in June 2022 we will be establishing a new way of engaging with these discussions at an early stage, but WIs and federations can feel assured that these checks are in place.*

## **THE ROLE OF WIs AND FEDERATIONS IN SUPPORTING ACWW**

### **LOCAL CAMPAIGNING ON ACWW RESOLUTIONS**

ACWW, like NFWI, has a strong campaigning history and many of its areas of focus align with the campaigning activity of the WI. The NFWI encourages WI members to vote on and support ACWW campaigns through their own WIs and federations where these align with the WI's priorities and where members are interested in getting involved.

However, it must be remembered that the NFWI, federations and WIs are all legally obliged to work within their charitable objects, as set out in the WI Constitution, and

therefore they can only vote on ACWW resolutions where a WI mandate on that area exists. This is in the same way that any other local WI or federation campaigning activity can only be undertaken in line with these mandates. Similarly, ACWW can only work internationally on issues upon which it has resolutions passed by its global membership.

This means in practice that where an ACWW resolution has been put forward on a topic on which the WI does not hold a resolution, WI members, WIs and federations must abstain from voting. NFWI can offer guidance on such matters as requested, although for federations and WIs who are ACWW member societies any resolutions should be formally discussed (and minuted) before placing a vote.

## **RAISING FUNDS FOR ACWW AND IMPORTANT CHANGES IN 2022**

Many ACWW members show their support by raising vital funds to support the portfolio of ACWW projects around the world. By becoming members of ACWW individuals and organisations have made a commitment to supporting the charity's work in this way when they can.

Members will be aware that previously monies raised by WIs would go to the 'Women Empowered' fund, via *WI Pennies for Friendship*, not specific individual projects. ACWW is currently in a transition period and from June 2022 the *WI Pennies for Friendship* fund and the 'Women Empowered' Fund will cease to exist and will be replaced by the 'Rural Women in Action Fund'. This change reflects wider changes in ACWW's approach and its project funding which will be adopted in 2023.

ACWW will be changing the way its international development projects work from 2023, to reflect the modern needs and realities of such work. All donations that ACWW receives from WIs or federations will be accounted for and noted as a separate income line when ACWW publishes its annual accounts just as they always have been. Member donations should not be restricted to projects as ACWW cannot guarantee that it is possible to use donations in this way, as all projects have associated administrative costs, and rely on the overall existence of the organization to be implemented and monitored.

These changes will not change the way WIs and federations can donate to support the vital work of ACWW or the impact this funding will have. There will however be some minor changes to how these donations should be referenced and **you are no longer required to reference 'WI Pennies for Friendship'**.

When donating, Federations and WIs should make any cheques payable to "ACWW". Any cheques received by ACWW from a WI will automatically be logged as a WI donation, and these donations will be clearly accounted for in ACWW's publicly published annual accounts.

From March 2022 onwards, all donation receipts will include a reminder about the change in fundraising, and from 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, no further donations to the 'Women

Empowered' Fund will be accepted. If received after this date, specific donations to the 'Women Empowered' Fund will be returned, with an invitation to consider supporting the 'Rural Women in Action Fund' instead. This is to ensure compliance with fundraising good practice, and that all donors maintain an awareness of how their money is being used.

Federations should either collect and forward cheques from WIs onto ACWW or let WIs send their cheques directly to ACWW. Federations should not be handling these donations through their accounts or incurring bank charges or other costs on behalf of ACWW for administration of donations.

*NB. Of course, individual membership and donations sit outside of the guidance above. This guidance note provides information only for any activity undertaken in the name of the WI. WI members may choose to develop an individual and personal relationship with ACWW and there are categories of membership ACWW offer to support this.*

In addition to the changes ACWW raises funds, there will be some additional changes to methods of work. ACWW is establishing **a global network of ACWW Coordinators**, with each member society invited to nominate someone for this role. They will help raise awareness of ACWW's work, support fundraising, and provide the feedback ACWW needs from every member society and region. Coordinators will receive training, resources, and take part in regular virtual meetings with ACWW's World President and Area Presidents. A role description and application process will be circulated by ACWW shortly (please note NFWI do not have access to this at the current time). This role does not replace the existing WI ACWW Representatives, but it may be that federations who hold ACWW membership may wish to appoint the same person act in both capacities.

## **ONGOING SUPPORT**

The NFWI Board would like to express its thanks to WI members for their continued support to ACWW. We know that this is crucial to the success of so many ACWW projects and will continue to make such a difference to the lives of rural women all over the world. We are proud of the long association between our two organisations and the incredible work of our members, and we look forward to this relationship continuing to develop.

If you have further questions about the changes that are happening at ACWW please contact Sydney Salter at ACWW in the first instance at [sydney@acww.org.uk](mailto:sydney@acww.org.uk)