

North Yorkshire West Federation Women's Institutes

North Yorkshire West Federation WI **The Minutes of the Spring Council Meeting 2023**

Held on April 22nd at Tennants in Leyburn.

Health and Safety

There was a short health and safety presentation by Heather Stoney, Federation Chairman.

The meeting all sang Jerusalem.

Welcome

Heather gave a short welcome speech to the meeting. She said that the Federation is celebrating its Ruby Anniversary (40th) this year and this was when the Yorkshire Federation was divided up and it became North Yorkshire West Federation. The red roses are to celebrate the anniversary.

She then introduced the meeting to the guests and welcomed them. The guests were from North Yorkshire East Federation – Janice Whiteford and Margaret Ellison, guests from Teesside Federation – Debbie Baszjinski and Diane Fall, guests from West Yorkshire Federation – Heather Ross and Helen Harrington, speakers from West Yorkshire Federation – Lynne Moran, Margaret Middlemas and Jean Tallis, past Chairmen – Ellen Dunkley, Sylvia Foxtan and Sue Riley and BOT members.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were from the Trustees of East Yorkshire Federation, Joan McLaren from Bishop Monkton WI, Marcia Newton from Masham WI, Mary James from Austwick WI, Sue Mouser from Glasshouses WI, Irene Noble from Kirkby Malzeard WI, Tricia Wood from Skipton Dalesway WI and Maureen Nyberg-Metcalf from Skipton Dalesway WI.

Approval of the Minutes of the Spring Council Meeting 2022

Heather Stoney the Federation Chairman asked the meeting to approve the minutes of the Spring Council meeting held on 5th April 2022 at the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate. This was seconded by Helen Davison of Roecliffe WI.

Introduction of Board of Trustees

Heather then introduced the members of the Board of Trustees, Julie Clarke – Vice Chair and Chair of Activities, Hazel Smyth – Federation Treasurer, Pam Myers – Assistant Treasurer, Anne Harrison, Sue Earl Armstrong and Sue Butters – Advisers, Janet Kazlauciusas – Chair of Public Affairs and Helen Smith, Federation Secretary. She thanked them all for their hard work.

Presentation of the Accounts for the Year Ended 2022

The Federation Treasurer, Hazel Smyth, then presented the Accounts for the Year ended 2022. A copy of the accounts has been sent to each WI. Income exceeded expenditure which is good news – there was a total of £7, 382. Costs have increased as there were more events and meetings in 2022 and Helen Smith was employed as

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Federation Secretary. The Federation has no paid cleaner or financial assistant now. The increase in income has come from subscriptions, 200 club and events. Members' contribution through subscriptions is only £22,000 per year. The Federation has benefitted from interest rate increases and the hard work of Julie's able team of Great Yorkshire Show volunteers. Hazel said that the Federation is needing more volunteers this year, so asked the meeting to please volunteer.

Reserves were £154,659 at the end of 2022. It is the Federation's policy not to let this fall by more than £5,000.

Some of the funds that the Federation holds are restricted, for example Denman was sold and a new education trust set up, the Federation is looking at how to use the funds. There is a suspended fund which is kept for three years – this is kept separate for startups of new WIs. Some WIs have struggled with finance because banks have decided that WIs could be money laundering and they have sent out standard forms (they have to by law). Hazel asked any members to get in touch if they are experiencing difficulties. She said that some WIs find online banking easy and some do not - some banks only allow one person access to pay money in. Many WIs have two cheque signatories. The National Finance Office states that dual authorization can be achieved by one member signing an invoice and one paying online. On some banking apps banking can be done by mobile phone to avoid using post offices if there is not a nearby bank.

Hazel stated that postage has gone up as have newsletter and booking form costs. She told members that if it helps them booking forms can be sent by email. She advised them that if it is better for their WI to send one payment for different events or subs etc, this can be done. She mentioned the NFWI raffle tickets – the more are sold the more money comes to the Federation.

Hazel talked about Gift Aid and how NFWI are keen to use it to raise funds. The government has stated that £6 million worth of Gift Aid has not been claimed by charities. If all WIs and Federation claimed Gift Aid this might mean that subscriptions might not have to be raised. This can be done through HMRC. She told the meeting that Pam is the Gift Aid expert and she is happy to help WIs. It is money that is easy to claim without putting on events.

Finally, Hazel asked that all Treasurers send their WI subscriptions in as soon as possible as National needs them by 30th April – if WIs have not got the total amount, send Federation what you have.

Hazel proposed the adoption of the accounts for 2022 and Margaret Golightly of Glusburn and Crosshills WI seconded it.

Hazel proposed the adoption of JWP Creers as the Financial Examiner for 2023 and Leah McCooke from Harrogate Rascals WI seconded it.

Hazel thanked the meeting for being members and asked them to volunteer for the Great Yorkshire show. She said that herself and Pam Myers would help with any questions members might have and to email or phone the office.

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Chairman's Report

Heather thanked Hazel and Pam for the enormous amount of work they had done. She then addressed the meeting and said that the Federation has had another challenging year but because of the commitment of all the Trustees and the resilience and support of members she was able to report that as the year progressed, the Federation has been able to move forward positively.

She said that the Board was cautious at the start of the year with events because of being unsure about how many events would go ahead – there were questions about whether the Federation could afford a loss and whether the members would support the events.

The Trustees have continued to do all the tasks that the remaining paid employees would have done, which has saved the Federation a great deal of money. With members' subscriptions and support at events the Federation has finished the year in profit. The Federation Secretary only works 25 hours a week which is a cost saving.

The Trustees have been a supportive and hard working team, just as members are in their own WIs.

The year of events commenced in April when it was the first face to face Spring Council since 2019. These were anxious times as the Board of Trustees had inherited a contract for the meeting from 2019 for the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate. The Federation sustained a small loss but this was expected. There were a few hiccups on the day, but despite all this it was a wonderful day – we had Ann Jones in the morning, a truly inspiring WI member, and the author Dulcie Lewis in the afternoon who is very funny and a wonderful storyteller. It was lovely to see members having fun.

Heather went on to say that we remembered lost friends from our own WIs and family members.

The Great Yorkshire Show was an anxious time, although rewarding and fulfilling. Several ladies were first time helpers and the feedback was amazing – “It was hard work, but we did have fun.” This was a credit to the GYS Committee who worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Heather asked if members could complete forms to help as Catering Assistants or Stewards which could be obtained from the office or downloaded from the website.

Heather went on to talk about Autumn Lunch which took place at a new venue – the Gamekeeper's Inn at Long Ashes near Grassington. It was a fun filled day with good food and amazing entertainment – these were the words of members who attended. The morning speaker was a local author who had a fascinating life. In the afternoon the meeting was entertained by the Harrogate Ukulele Band – members were singing and clapping and dancing in the aisles, which ended with the majority of ladies switching on their telephone torches with their arms in the air singing to Sweet Caroline.

The last Federation event was the Carol Service held in the splendour of Ripon Cathedral, Heather said it was a great way to start Christmas. Donations from the

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collections have been forwarded to food banks in the Harrogate, Ripon, Skipton and Richmond areas.

Heather then talked about Federation Committees. The Activities Committee is chaired by Julie Clarke, Public Affairs Committee by Janet Kazlauciunas and Membership Support Committee is chaired by Sue Earl-Armstrong. She said that all the Committees have stands and they will be available to answer any questions. The Committees have arranged very successful events, trips and workshops throughout the year. These involve a great deal of hard work and she thanked the members for their support.

Heather talked about CIO – Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and thanked the members for their support as the Federation moves forward. She said that there is a great deal of work to do.

She then went on to appeal for help, as mentioned in the April newsletter. The Federation needs help and support from members who may feel that they have time to join a committee or ultimately become Trustees. Judith Stansfield stood down as a Trustee in October, which means that the Federation is at least one Trustee short. Heather asked members to contact her at home by email if they felt they could help. She said that the newsletter advert has already attracted some response. As a Federation we have lost some WIs and this is always difficult. The membership support team does provide a lot of time and support for WIs before the final decision to close is made. Heather said that we miss the ladies from those WIs – some do rejoin but she said that it is a valuable income that we do not receive. She added that membership has not recovered from the pandemic. The biggest aim of the Federation this year is to increase membership. Heather said that she appreciated that WIs try to increase membership in their own areas but it is not easy. She asked members to contact the Membership Support Team if they required any help with this. She said that the Board of Trustees are custodians of the Federation and would not want to let members down. She said that we would like to have a Federation to celebrate 100 years, but she will have stood down by then. She asked members if they were having any 40 years celebrations to please send photos and reports to the office and that we look forward to seeing them at some of our get-togethers.

Heather ended her address by mentioning an event which changed the great WI movement, and that was the very sad death of our beloved Queen, who we somehow thought would live forever. She epitomized everything that was good about our nation, she was a loyal WI member and was very special to our Federation. She added that who could forget “The Cake Incident” at the centenary Annual Meeting in 2015. She will never be replaced but will last long in our memories.

Heather said she hoped that members would enjoy any celebrations in their communities or WIs and that it will be an amazing weekend celebrating the Coronation and a day of celebrating all our wonderful volunteers, without whom society could not manage.

Heather thanked the meeting and hoped they enjoyed the day.

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Introduction to Morning Speaker

Sue Earl Armstrong, Chair of Membership, introduced the speakers for the morning session, the Climate Change Ambassadors from West Yorkshire Federation, Lynne Moran, Margaret Middlemas and Jean Tallis.

The three Climate Ambassadors, starting with Lynne, gave a very interesting presentation, she first stated that everything we do has an impact on others. She said that she started to worry about climate change about 50 years ago with the hole in the ozone layer and coloured loo paper. She joined her local WI and they walked for Big Green Week. There was a display in the local library which was a get well card for the earth. People talked about it at the knit and natter group and teenagers came to talk to them.

Lynne went on to talk about the insidious nature of plastic and how it is so hard to get rid of. It takes 400 years to break down in landfill. If it is in the sea it breaks into little pieces and is eaten by wildlife. The toxic liquid it produces seeps into waterways. She talked about Eco fraud and how some companies describe their products as a little bit green we will buy them. Biodegradable does not mean compostable. She said that we all need to find alternatives to products in plastics, eg shampoo bars.

Jean was next to talk and she wanted to talk about sustainable clothing. The fashion industry is notorious for over producing clothing as the public demands it. She said that we need to buy more ethical brands and buy preloved clothes. We throw 350,000 tonnes of clothes into landfill. Cotton uses a lot of water in production and chemical dyes can be harmful to people and rivers. There are fabrics made from more sustainable sources like Tencel Lyocell, hemp, seaweed, viscose which comes from bamboo and flax which makes linen. She informed the meeting of some brands that were more ethical. She implored people to wash their clothes less often.

Margaret was the final speaker and she mentioned Earth Day which has been held every year since 1970. She said that there are 8 billion people in the world, four times as much as when she was born in 1960. She said that now we have higher expectations of our standard of living. The United Nations has five sustainable goals – Refuse, Reduce, Repair, Reuse and Recycle. We need to reduce what we are using. We waste 1.6 billion tons of food each year – 60% is wasted at home and 40% of food produced is wasted. This ends up in landfill. She said that we should buy more local, check items in the fridge, avoid BOGOF deals, freeze when buying in bulk, keep track of what you have, look at sell by dates and see if food is still fit to eat, grow more and be creative with recipes, take up veganism and compost what you cannot eat.

She asked members to look at their energy consumption to see if they could reduce it. She also asked the meeting to use people power to influence decision makers and talk to people about the subject of climate change.

Vote of Thanks

The vote of thanks was given by Pam Myers, Assistant Treasurer.

The Chairman then announced the lunch.

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The meeting recommenced at 1.45 pm. The Chairman.

The results of the 200 Club draw for April were announced as follows:

194 – Ruby Booker, Skelton on Ure WI

117 – Ripon Centre WI

187 – Verity Randall, Harrogate Rascals WI

Presentation of Certificates and Awards –

Awards: Nora Worth Annual Craft Award, Ella Pullan Trophy, Federation Rose Bowl, and Ann Martin Award

The Chairman presented the following certificates and awards and provided members with a brief summary of the individual awards:

The Federation awards bursaries of £25 for members to apply for which can then be used at any Federation event as full payment or part payment for a workshop or event. This year the bursaries are given to:

Rosita Moore, Aspin Park WI

Wendy Jakeman, Skelton on Ure WI

Julia Wall, Giggleswick WI

Val Fennell, Aspin Park WI.

The Ella Pullen Trophy is awarded for the Institute who has gained most members in the Federation over the past year that started off with 30 members. This year it has been awarded to Swale WI. Unfortunately, they are unable to attend Spring Council today, but it will be presented to them at their May meeting.

The Federation Rose Bowl is for the Institute who has gained most members in the Federation over the past year that started off with less than 30 members. This year the winner is Skipton Dalesway.

The Kathleen Bird Trophy – this is awarded for a specific project or competition to promote the WI. This year the winner is Sue Fitzsimmons from Low Bentham WI who is unable to attend, but a member from Low Bentham WI is going to receive the award on her behalf.

Norah Worth Annual Craft Award – this year the subject for the entry was “An item of jewellery in any medium”. This year the winner is Nicola Sykes of Fearby & Healey.

Ann Martin Award – this commemorates Ann Martin, a former member of Glasshouses WI and past Federation Chairman from 1992 to 1996. The bursary is awarded to a member who has made a significant contribution to her community. This year we had some excellent entries and as it is the last year that the Federation has funds from the family's generous donation to create this award, the entries were judged and we awarded four bursaries:

1st place: Helen Barton who has been awarded a cheque for £50.

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Joint 2nd place: Sara Baldwin-Cole who has been awarded a cheque for £35. The other joint second was Diane Hosking also receiving a cheque for £35.

4th place: Cath Hewitt, who has been awarded a cheque for £15.

The Chairman said that sadly this year is the last year we will be able to award the Ann Martin Bursary.

Long Service Awards

Connie Tooby	Settle	63
Kath Smith	Austwick	60
Ruby Booker	Skelton on Ure	60
Jennifer Stansfield	Fearby & Healey	60
Anne Harrison	Bainbridge	57
Jean Longster	Masham	56
Brenda Umpleby	Killinghall	50
Diane Horne	Arkendale	50
Betty Morland	Arkendale	50
Gina Gates	Arkendale	50
Lesley Fidler	Farnley Estate	40
Judy Wall	Masham	40
Joan Fraser	Kirkby Malzeard	64
Joan Jackson	Bilton	62
Edna Colley	Sharow	57
Barbara Thwaite	Hellifield	50

Kath Smith of Masham WI had also been a member for 40 years and a certificate will be sent to the Secretary.

WI Birthdays

Masham WI – 96 years
Bishop Monkton WI – 96 years
Ripon Centre WI – 95 years
Upper Nidderdale WI – 95 years
Spofforth WI – 95 years
Roecliffe WI – 90 years
Glusburn & Crosshills WI – 75 years
Fearby & Healey WI – 75 years

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Sutton in Craven WI – 70 years

Hampsthwaite WI – 75 years

Sharow WI – 95 years

Scriven WI – 95 years

Certificates were given out to representatives from the WIs for long service awards and WI birthdays by the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The WIs who were not present will have their certificates posted to them.

The Chairman added that photos of this year's Spring Council meeting would be put into the newsletter and she asked members to send in photos.

Raffle Announcement

The raffle was announced and the winning tickets were attached to the prizes.

Introduction to the Afternoon Speaker

Sue Butters introduced the afternoon speaker, David Harper, who is an author and television personality. David gave a hilarious talk on the Georgians and their somewhat dubious personal hygiene. There was much audience participation and everyone was amused and entertained. Questions were taken from the floor.

Vote of Thanks

The Vice Chairman thanked David Harper and said that it was very entertaining and informative.

Chairman's Closing Remarks and Announcement of 2024 Meeting

The Chairman thanked all the members for coming to the meeting and she said she would like to think that everyone had a wonderful day. She thanked David Harper and the West Yorkshire Federation speakers and said that it was a lovely lunch and that the Federation could not do it without the members. The date for next year's meeting is Wednesday 10th April and the Chairman added that no venue has been booked yet but it will be in the Harrogate area. She said that it needs to be moved around the area to keep everyone happy.

The Vice Chairman said that the Chairman does not like being praised and added that it was her birthday. Everyone sang Happy Birthday.

National Anthem

Everyone stood to sing the National Anthem, remembering that it was "God Save Our Gracious King".

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

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