**Guidelines for Annual Meetings**

**The Annual Meeting**

Notice of the meeting giving the date, place and hour of the meeting must be included in the Annual Programme of meetings given to each member

The Officers have extra specific duties at the Annual Meeting. The President and Secretary should work closely together to ensure all arrangements are in hand. The President and Treasurer need to meet to look at the examined Financial Statement, together with the bank statements. The President is required to sign the Financial Statement along with the independent examiner and Treasurer. The President should encourage all members to accept nomination for committee ideally at least one month prior to the Annual Meeting so that a ballot can be held.

Nominations may also be accepted from the floor on the day.

**The President**

The President chairs the Annual Meeting, only handing over the chair during the election for a new President. If a new President is elected, she does not take office until the Annual Meeting has ended. The current President gives a short address after the Committee's Annual Report has been given by the Secretary. It is a good opportunity for her to thank the members, committee and particularly the officers publicly for their encouragement and support throughout the year. She concludes by saying 'I propose the adoption of the Annual Report'. No seconder is required. Members then vote by show of hands.

**The Secretary**

The Secretary should have collected nominations for the new committee at least one month before the meeting (permission of nominees must be sought) and made out ballot papers if needed. She arranges for the tellers, usually members of a neighbouring WI. She prepares an Annual Meeting agenda with the President (see specimen agenda), including the wording of any resolutions to be discussed, and she prepares the committee's Annual Report, which she presents to the committee for their approval.

The Secretary prepares detailed agendas for herself, the President, Treasurer and WI Adviser, if present. At the Annual Meeting, besides her normal meeting duties, she reads the committee's Annual Report - this is a report of the year's activities of the WI.

**The Treasurer**

An important item is the appointment of the independent examiner. The committee, not solely the Treasurer, recommends using the services of a Federation IFE (Independent Financial Examiner) or puts forward a name - someone with financial experience who is not a member of that WI nor related to a member of the committee.

The Financial Statement is presented by the Treasurer. Copies of the statement should be available to members, so that they may follow her explanations. She should encourage questions and have all the relevant papers to hand. The reconciled Bank Statement should be on display for all members to see. At the conclusion of her presentation she should say 'I propose the adoption of the Financial Statement'. The President will then ask for a seconder and, when the statement has been seconded, questions will be invited. The President should encourage interest in the WIs finances by asking for comments as well as questions. A vote by show of hands is then taken on the adoption of the statement.

The budget may appear on the Annual Meeting agenda, but many Treasurers feel a separate presentation at the first meeting of the new WI year is preferable.

**Nominations/Elections**

Nominations should preferably be submitted at the WI meeting before the Annual Meeting. In order to get a good number of nominations, as many members as possible should be asked if they are willing to stand for Committee. It is advisable to seek more nominations than there are places on the Committee. After the closing date for nominations, the Secretary should prepare printed or photocopied ballot papers, listing the names of all those who have accepted nomination in alphabetical or reverse alphabetical order - remembering to include initials or first names when surnames are the same - and a note of the number to be elected. Check the papers carefully, a simple mistake could mean the whole ballot has to be repeated.

**Election of Committee**

It is advisable to open the ballot before the start of the meeting so that voting is completed before the start of the Annual Meeting business. If possible the ballot should be held in a separate room, but you may have to make do with a corner at the back of your meeting room. Only members present at the Annual Meeting may vote. The tellers should be provided with Tellers' Charts and the Secretary, or WI Adviser if present, is responsible for making sure that they understand how to use the charts.

Before the start of Annual Meeting business, the President should ask if everyone present has voted and, if so, to declare the ballot closed.

When the tellers have counted all the ballot papers, they should write the names of those elected, in alphabetical order and not disclosing the votes gained by each candidate, on a flip chart or board and give the result to the WI Adviser, if present, or announce it themselves. If a tie has occurred for the last place on the committee, they should recount the votes for the tied places; if this still results in a tie, the tellers must draw for the last place and should not reveal that there has been a tie.

**Election of President**

If a WI Adviser is present at the Annual Meeting, she will conduct this part of the meeting.

Each member should be handed a slip of paper and asked to nominate the President for the coming year from the newly elected committee. Each nominee is then asked to indicate in writing whether or not she is willing to stand for election. All members then vote - again in writing - between those willing to stand for election; voting papers are collected, counted and the result announced. In the event of a tie, the procedure is the same as in the ballot for committee.

If a committee member is absent from the Annual Meeting, but is willing to be nominated for election to any office, she should state her willingness in writing.

**Majorities required at WI meetings**

In the WI, WI decisions, proposals and resolutions which have been put to the vote are normally carried on a simple or straight majority of those present and voting. Those who are not actually present to vote in person, or who abstain, are discounted.

**Special Procedures**

**WI Decisions**

The basic procedures according to which the WI is to be run will have been decided at its first meeting. These will include:

* The name of the WI
* The number of members to be elected to the committee
* The number of Vice-Presidents
* The month of the Annual Meeting
* The day, time and place of the regular meeting

These decisions should have been listed and pasted in the front of the record book. They may be amended at a special general meeting of the WI or the Annual Meeting. Every member should be notified of the proposals so that they may attend the meeting. A WI Adviser will advise on this if needed.

The last of these decisions is the only one which can be altered by postal ballot. If this option is exercised, all ballot papers should be sent direct to a WI Adviser for counting.

**WI Bye-Laws**

Some WIs have bye-laws, for example limiting membership of the WI because of the requirements of the hall in which they meet. These bye-laws are drawn up according to the WI Constitution and are reviewed annually and may be altered or rescinded at the WI Annual Meeting or at a Special Meeting called for that purpose. (See Rule 45)