**NFWI ANNUAL MEETING 2023 ST DAVID’S HALL, CARDIFF - THURSDAY 25 MAY 2023**

Jerusalem was sung by all members.

 Appointment of returning officers and tellers – carried

 Adoption of standing orders – carried

 Constitutional (ordinary) resolution: federations to become CIOs – carried

**CHAIR’S ADDRESS**

Ann Jones, NFWI Chair, opened the Annual Meeting at 10:30 a.m. promptly and welcomed both in person and on-line members, to the meeting which had a sporting theme.

Ann then gave a warm welcome to those who had travelled a long way and hoped everyone felt re-energised, loved and recognised. Ann said that we had recruited 21,000 new members this year and she wished them an enjoyable WI experience. WI remains as strong and relevant as it did at the very beginning - long may we continue to have a strong membership.

Over the last year a challenge was set to gain those lost generations, with WIs asked to encourage new members. Various WIs increased their membership hugely and were acknowledged with thanks by Ann.

We have had 12 months of campaigning to support refugees, with Conversation Cafes being supported by a grant of £100 from NFWI. WIs are encouraged to ensure that any donations are registered for Gift Aid as it makes a terrific difference.

Another change over the last 12 months was in Education. Denman College closed in 2022. What is next for Denman? A different, new model, inclusive, flexible and accessible for all members. Denman opened in 1948, and in 2023 we shall ensure we provide education, moving forward being innovative and attractive to membership. How do we use profits from the sale? It was announced that there would be an all-new purpose WI Learning Hub powered by Denman through national education, on-line to members, with no costs for WI members.

£2.75M from the sale of Denman will fund our educational programme. Email communications will be forthcoming as more information is released. WI is rising to all the challenges. THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT.

**GUEST SPEAKER - EBONY RAINFORD-BRENT** From a poor home background, Ebony became the first Black woman to play cricket for England and received an MBE for her charity work encouraging Black and African and Caribbean heritage teenagers into cricket.

**RESOLUTIONS**

The first speaker was “FOR” the resolution for clean bathing water sites, campaigning for clean fresh water on behalf of the River Action Charity and taking river authorities to court.

The second speaker was “AGAINST” the resolution as there are alternative ways of dealing with the problem, asking us to think about the wording of the resolution to make sure we are getting what we ask for regarding bathing sites.

**RESULTS OF THE RESOLUTION** FOR 4,007AGAINST 742Carried by 84%

**How do our Resolutions act in our society?**

The Chair of Public Affairs (on behalf of each WI Member). Nicky Amos and Emma spoke on how important past Resolutions were, reflecting on the relevant issues of the day that were affecting the lives of every woman. Nicky stated that we are representing a wider audience of more than 180,000 members and the power we have together as a group. Emma focused on the health of women and how lifesaving issues of “Contraception, HIV, Ovarian Cancer and Violence Against Women” had been addressed through WI campaigns.

**GUEST SPEAKER - LAURA McALLISTER** Laura played women’s football for Mill Hill and the Welsh team Bridge End. Elected as Vice President of UEFA, the first woman to hold this post in Europe.

**ANN JONES CHALLENGE**

Where we need to focus next – Review our Constitution, where you want us to go next 2025 to 2030. Girls and the next generation of WI Members is not too distant a future. Reflect on what we need to offer them in the near future. The future is bright. Our late Queen’s love of WI. Queen Camilla is a WI member, King Charles III’s Coronation, protecting our recent environment challenge.

The next Annual Meeting is in The Royal Albert Hall on 5 June 2024.

All in all it was a good two days, meeting delegates travelling on the coach down to Cardiff, at the wonderful evening meal in The Leonardo Hotel in Cardiff City Centre and at the Annual Meeting. I enjoyed the experience and should like to repeat it.

 **Jacqueline Buckby**

**Delegate for Ashley Welland Valley WI**