



**Surrey Federation of WIs**  
6 Paris, Parklands, Railton Road,  
Guildford, Surrey, GU2 9JX.  
01483 233230 [info@surreyfedwi.org.uk](mailto:info@surreyfedwi.org.uk)  
[www.surreyfedwi.org.uk](http://www.surreyfedwi.org.uk)



March 2023

Dear New Member

We would like to welcome you warmly to the Surrey Federation of WIs. We are a band of around 7,500 members, spread across 154 WIs in Surrey.

Membership of the WI offers you a community of like-minded women. You will be able to make new friends, acquire a diverse range of skills, visit new places and campaign on matters that are important to you, both in your community and nationally.

In addition to your own WI, which will offer you a monthly meeting, workshops, visits and much more, you will also be able to access a broader range of activities provided by the Federation. The wider community of the Surrey Federation offers you a major event each year which is the Annual Council Meeting in March. As well as keeping you up to date with current developments, you will also enjoy both challenging and entertaining speakers.

The Federation also provides you with the opportunity to take part in cross-county events e.g. a Literary lunch, a Croquet Day and much, much more. You can also attend cookery and craft workshops run by experts in their field, enter competitions and join a Camera Group. For details of Surrey Federation Events go to the website [www.surreyfedwi.org.uk](http://www.surreyfedwi.org.uk) For NFWI events visit Denman at Home at [www.denman.org.uk](http://www.denman.org.uk) The opportunities on offer are endless.

The Federation's monthly publication Surrey WI News, available currently online via the SFWI website and in hard copy through your WI, will ensure that you are made aware of all such activities, and will keep you entertained with articles and stories about WI life in Surrey, along with the Federation's continually updated social media platforms and website.

You can participate in as much or as little as you wish. Your membership of the WI is what you make it.

I hope that you will be inspired.

Very best wishes,

*Angie and Jill*

**Angie Leach and Jill Mulryan**  
Joint Federation Chair

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WI



## Who we are and what we do

The National Federation of WIs (NFWI) is the largest women's organisation in the UK with over 220,000 members. It is non-sectarian and non-party political and as such is able to influence national and international affairs by becoming involved in campaigns for the environment, education, health and other areas of particular concern to women.

WIs were started in Canada in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless, a farmer's wife, who wanted women in rural communities to support each other in their daily lives by learning new skills, taking part in social activities, to have fun and to make new friends. Although no longer confined to countrywomen, these aims still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first WI in Britain was established in Anglesey in 1915. Please see [www.thewi.org](http://www.thewi.org) for full history of the WI.

We see ourselves as “a modern voice for women” and that includes you!



### Your Group

Many WIs belong to a group of neighbouring WIs. They take it in turns to meet together, once or twice a year to “share” a speaker, arrange an activity, outing or demonstration. The group is a good way of meeting with other members from nearby WIs, and a great way to widen your circle of WI friends.

Please ask your WI committee for details of your Group.

### Your Federation

Your WI belongs to Surrey Federation (SFWI)

Our role is to support the purpose of the NFWI, and we do this through a wide range of activities that allow members to turn their interests into achievements and their concerns into campaigns. We offer you the opportunity to discover your talents, learn new skills and improve the quality of life in your community alongside all that’s on offer in your own WI.

### Your WI

Your WI is a place for fun, friendship, laughter and learning.

Your WI meets a minimum of eleven times a year with an events programme arranged by its own committee. As well as these monthly meetings, most WIs have regular interest groups and activities.

As a member, you take part in electing a committee and President every year, ensuring that each WI is run by the members for the members. The on-going strength and vitality of your WI is important, so please consider helping the committee during your membership.



## Surrey WI News

Through our monthly publication Surrey WI News, we aim to keep you informed of forthcoming events, news, views and opinions from our members and other relevant organisations. This is available online through MYWI and in a hard copy at your WI meetings. Please ask your committee if you don't see it.

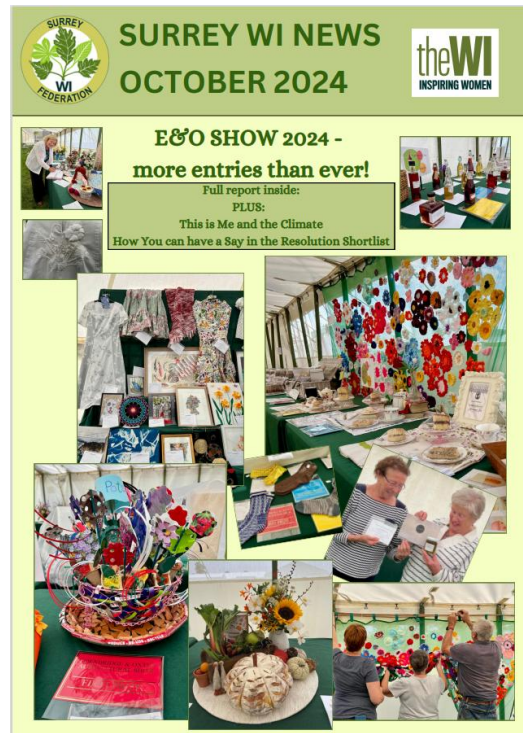
## Social Media

In addition to SFWI published materials, you may wish to follow us at:

**Facebook:** Surrey Federation of Women's Institutes

**Twitter:** @SurreyFedWI

**Instagram:**  
[www.instagram.com/surreyfedwi](https://www.instagram.com/surreyfedwi)



## Website

You can check our website for more information:

[www.surreyfedwi.org.uk](http://www.surreyfedwi.org.uk)

## Trustee Team

The SFWI is run by a Board of Trustees with the other Teams delivering a wide range of events for members from all over the Federation.

Up to fifteen volunteers are elected by Surrey WI members every two years to serve on the Board. The Chairman (Co Chairs), three vice chairmen and Treasurer are elected annually by the Board members. Further members can be co-opted.

## Teams and Working Parties

Each SFWI Team deals with a specialist area as follows:

### Skills, Activities and Learning Team (SALT)

Helps members to improve their knowledge and skill in a variety of subjects by organising lectures, demonstrations and courses for all SFWI members to attend. They also arrange outings, trips and experiences to further the aims on of the constitution, including in art, literature and sport.

### Member Support Team (MST)

This team supports the organisation, growth and development of the WIs and their members through training, positive promotion and visiting WIs.

### Resolution and Campaigns Team

This team is a link between NFWI and our WIs and their members. They take the campaigns and resolutions and turn them into workable local ideas for our WIs to engage with and work together to support the National Campaigns.

### Office Team:

This is made up of employed staff and volunteers who deal with the day to day running of the organisation. Along with the Trustees, this Team oversee the governance of the organisation.



To help our organisation thrive, we need different ideas from new Team members.

Why not ask to attend a Team meeting of your choice as an observer to discuss if you would like to join that team or the Federation Office, details of which you would find in this



- Care not Custody (2008)
- SOS for honeybees (2009)
- End Plastic Soup (2017)
- Link Together to Alleviate Loneliness (2017)
- Make Time for Mental Health (2018)
- Get on Board for a Better Bus Service (2019)
- Don't Fear the Smear (2019)
- End Modern Slavery (2020)
- A Call to Increase Potential Stem Cell Donor Registration (2020)

## Resolutions

The WI has a rich history in campaigning and these all start with a resolution. These resolutions respond to a concern or event that w WI feels strongly about.

Each year in May your WI will be asked to vote on the NFWI resolutions. These are then taken to the National Annual Meeting where a final discussion and voting takes place. The selected resolutions then become a mandate and campaigning starts.

Over the years members' concerns have ended in campaigns for example:

- Keep Britain Tidy (1954)
- Freedom from Hunger (1961)
- Free Family Planning (1973)
- Equality of Opportunity (1975)
- The Dangers of Acid Rain (1980)
- Compulsory DNA Testing (1990)
- Care of the Environment (2005)

## WI Advisers

Your WI is a place for fun and friendship. To support our WIs, SFWI has appointed advisers who have been trained by NFWI. They are linked to the Member Support Team above and their role is to:

- Start new WIs
- Give help and advise to members
- Help with resolutions
- Run training days on many aspects of committee work
- Visit annual meetings when requested

If you wish to contact your adviser, please email the office on [info@surreyfedwi.org.uk](mailto:info@surreyfedwi.org.uk) and you will be put in touch.

Please see [www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk) for full details.

## Subscriptions

On joining the WI and then annually in April, you will pay your subscription to your WI Treasurer.

The amount you pay to your Treasurer is divided three ways. Approximately 50% of the fee is kept by your own WI towards its running costs. 25% is paid to SFWI towards its expenses, including the staff salaries. The remainder is paid to the NFWI which covers the cost of eight copies per year of the members magazine WI Life and the running of the tier of the organisation, campaign resources, national activities and national training for volunteers to help run WIs at local level.

The subscription is reviewed annually by the NFWI, discussed at the National Council and then fixed. Members are notified of the next year's subscription rate during the previous autumn.

The WI is a national organisation whose subscription represents very good value. The more you become involved, the greater your enjoyment and the better value your subscription becomes.

Your own WI uses the subscriptions (supplemented by fundraising) to run your WI. These funds are required to be used in accordance with charity law and accounted for annually to members and SFWI. You are entitled to 11 free meetings a year provided by your own WI. Many WIs offer free extra activities, however costs for extra activities are to be paid by the member, not the WI. Please refer to **MYWI** for full guidance regarding subscriptions, use of funds and charity guidelines.

## Additional Information



## Your Federation Office

In October 2006, the Federation moved into new purpose-built offices situated to the north of Guildford town centre on the site of the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks. This is where the day-to-day business takes place and where the Federation Secretary and staff work closely with the Board of Trustees and sub-committees. It is where the beautiful anniversary wall hangings are displayed, and the Surrey Centenary Commemorative Book can be viewed. Training courses are also held within the building.

## Contact Details

Surrey Federation of WI's, 6 Paris, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX

The office is open for visitors between 8am – 4pm Monday – Friday and is closed during weekends and Bank Holidays.

Tel: 01483 233230 (**The phonenumber is open between 9am – 1pm Monday – Friday**)

Email: [info@surreyfedwi.org.uk](mailto:info@surreyfedwi.org.uk)

Website: [www.surreyfedwi.org.uk](http://www.surreyfedwi.org.uk)





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## **ARCHIVES AND ARCHIVING**

Archives are the written record of the activities of a WI and should include the Minutes of the Committee Meetings, the records of monthly meetings, Annual Reports and any histories of the WI that may have been compiled by members over the years. Many WIs will also have scrapbooks and photo albums. The formal archives will be held by the current Secretary, the scrapbooks may well be in the care of the member who keeps them up to date. Older material may have been put into the safe keeping of the Surrey History Centre in Woking.

I would suggest that if your Archives and other WI possessions are stored in several different places then it is sensible to make a full list of who has what. One copy of this should be kept with the Committee Minutes and each member involved should have a copy. The list should be reviewed regularly.

WI archives stored in a village hall, or a private home should be securely boxed and clearly labelled, the Federation's contact details should be clearly marked in case of need.

Textiles – Many WIs have banners and tablecloths that are in regular use, I would recommend that they are wrapped in acid free tissue and within a fabric bag, ideally with a bleach-free fabric, however old cotton pillowcases are very useful for the storage of smaller items. These items often have historical significance besides being examples of varied stitching techniques.

### **Notes from the Federation Archivist – Linda Oliver**

Please keep all WI records in a safe, clean and dry place and **do not** use plastic bags or envelopes, as they can cause damaging conditions in which paper will degrade rapidly. Paperclips and Pins should be brass to avoid rust. Acid free tissue and envelopes are readily available.

I strongly recommend that all WIs keep their Records of Meetings and Committee Minutes in loose leaf format, thus creating a smaller volume of archives to be kept safe by your secretary. I know that many WIs send out Minutes and Records by email and that storage on the cloud is an option, but if this is your preferred path, then please take care to use strong passwords and ensure that these are recorded safely and passed on from member to member as required. Please note that in accordance with the Data Protection requirements any minutes sent out to Committee members should be as an attachment to an email, rather than in the body of the email, and you should ensure that you use BCC when sending out such emails.

My personal preference will always be for a paper record, stored in proper conditions, that will enable you to have a record of your activities to refer back to when needed, and will give you a history of your WI for future use.

During writing of the Centenary Book in 2018, and as WIs prepare to celebrate their own significant birthdays, it has become obvious that not all WIs hold complete archives. This is due to material having been lost, stolen or destroyed by fire and flood. I would like to encourage all WIs to consider sending their written archives to the Surrey History Centre. I suggest that you keep perhaps the last 10 years record and minute books, deciding at what frequency to add to the deposit.

### **The Surrey History Centre**

The History Centre holds the Federation's own archive along with archive material from at least 100 suspended WIs as well as that deposited by active WIs who do not have safe storage space. Textiles and artefacts cannot be accepted. I would be very happy to help you with this and can make the deposit on your behalf, or you may make the deposit yourselves. If you choose the latter option, then I would appreciate having a list of what you deposit for my records.

Scrapbooks and Photo Albums may be accepted, but with the limitations of space in the Centre's strong room, it may only be possible to deposit material which reflects the part the WI plays in the community/village life, for example those scrapbooks made in 1965 for the NFWI Golden Jubilee. Scrapbooks and Photo Albums will be of much more use if pictures are all clearly captioned with names, dates and places.

The Surrey History Centre is at:

130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6ND

**Tel:** 01483 518737

**Website:** [www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre)

**Email:** [shs@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:shs@surreycc.gov.uk)

### **Notes for WI Secretaries**

The following list should help you keep what is necessary and prevent you from becoming overwhelmed with the volume of paperwork that some WIs keep. May I urge you when writing Minutes / Records to put the full date at the beginning of each entry, it makes my job so much simpler when it comes to sorting out archives from suspended WIs.

## What to keep

Committee Minutes	Permanently
Records of Meetings	Permanently
Signed Rules	Permanently
Annual Reports	Permanently
Registration Certificates	Permanently
Charity Registration Documentation	Permanently
Insurance Policies & Leases	Permanently
Scrapbooks, Photo Albums	Permanently
Correspondence with Inland Revenue	Permanently
Correspondence with SFWI or NFWI about fundamental matters that effect the running of your WI	5-10 years as applicable
Surrey WI News or your own Newsletters to Members	Current and previous year
Arrangements for WI Programmes	Current and previous year's correspondence
WI Programmes	Permanently
All trivial correspondence	Dispose of when dealt with

**WI Treasurers** should keep Financial Statements & Account Books for 7 years

Please feel free to contact me with any queries, either via the Federation office [info@surreyfedwi.org.uk](mailto:info@surreyfedwi.org.uk) or directly via email [barlindo@ukgateway.net](mailto:barlindo@ukgateway.net)

## **The Federation Archive**

Archive material held in the Federation Office comprises the Federation's own archive material and that of WIs that have recently suspended. I have a wonderfully varied collection including programmes of events held over years, photographs, scrapbooks and books about WI history both National and local. I have copies of the Celebratory Albums made for the retirement of Mrs Auerbach, our first Federation Chairman, and Miss Sutherland, the first Federation Secretary, also the album made for the Federation's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

The archives of suspended WIs are kept for three years, and then taken to the Surrey History Centre, they are a wonderful source of historical information.

I also have a collection of WI Banners and Tablecloths which are destined for the collection at The National Needlework Archive at Greenham Common in Berkshire.



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## **NFWI Charter**

### **1. Introduction**

This document outlines the principles of the partnership between the NFWI and its members and explains what members can expect from being part of the NFWI. It also outlines what NFWI staff can expect from members. This is a living document and will be regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects feedback from members and changes to resourcing at NFWI.

The WI is based on the ideals of the fellowship, truth, tolerance and justice. In all that we do, members and staff are expected to demonstrate and operate with these values.

### **2. Principles**

The partnership between the NFWI and its members is based on the following five principles.

#### **2.1 Support**

The three tiers of the NFWI (WI/federation/NFWI) exist to ensure all members are effectively supported and can get the very best from their WI experience. This relationship is one of partnership and shared purpose. All members should feel able to contact the NFWI for advice and guidance.

#### **2.2 Feedback**

All members, at any level of the organisation should feel able to share views, comments and feedback on their experience and this is actively encouraged to support the ongoing development of the organisation and a culture of continuous improvement. Feedback will be received in an open and constructive manner with formal follow-up as appropriate.

#### **2.3 Structure**

The SFWI has a three-tier structure to ensure effective and timely support is available. WI specific enquiries should be directed to the relevant federation in the first instance. These will then be escalated to the NFWI if necessary.

#### **2.4 Communication**

All views, comments and feedback should be shared respectfully and appropriately and within the values of the NFWI.

Members can phone, write or email to share their feedback. NFWI staff have individual email addresses, but there are also a number of general email addresses if you do not know the name of the staff member you wish to contact.

## **2.5 Respect**

All members and staff have the right to respect and to feel safe. Offensive or disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated and may end in disciplinary procedures (staff) or barring of an individual from contact with the NFWI (members). The same true for members, who will always be treated with respect and courtesy whenever they contact NFWI; the relationship is one of mutual respect and tolerance.

## **3. Response**

The NFWI operates a target response time for all enquiries received. This is outlined below. This response time is published for transparency and to manage expectations. This is the standard that members can expect and are entitled to challenge this if necessary. Individual NFWI staff teams operate target response times which vary based on the capacity of each team and the average volume of enquiries received.

Whilst the NFWI aims to provide an immediate response to last minute requests when it can, this will not always be possible. Where information is required and this is known in advance, we ask that you provide as much as possible. If an enquiry is an emergency, then this should be directed by phone to the NFWI London Office.

With enquiries on behalf of multiple individuals, such as those from a whole WI or a WI committee, we ask that the enquiry is sent only once. Multiple enquiries from different individuals on the same topic can slow down our ability to respond to enquiries within our timescales.

## **4. Response times**

The NFWI aims to respond to all enquiries – regardless of the method of communication – within 10 working days of receipt.



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## THE NFWI CODE OF CONDUCT

### 1. Introduction

The WI is an organisation centred on friendship, campaigning, education and fun. We are a place for all women where members are welcomed, supported and able to fully enjoy their membership and utilise all the opportunities that comes with it.

### 2. WI Members

WI members must:

- Demonstrate the WI values of truth, tolerance, justice and fellowship
- Be kind and considerate towards others
- Use inclusive and polite language
- Share views, comments and feedback respectfully and appropriately
- Respect others at all times
- Feel able to make mistakes and learn from these
- Raise concerns and complaints
- Comply with applicable WI, federation and NFWI policies
- Ensure the WI is place for all women by welcoming new members
- Avoid bringing the organisation into dispute

### 3. Trustees

WI and federation trustees must:

- Act in the best interests of the WI as a whole including federations and the NFWI
- Respect and maintain confidentiality
- Support the decision of the majority
- Work in partnership with each other
- Act within the governing documents and the law
- Manage conflicts of interest effectively
- Ensure concerns and complaints are followed up appropriately
- Carry out their role with the WI vision statements in mind; bold and inspiring, growing and relevant, flexible and inclusive

#### **4. Unacceptable behaviour**

The NFWI has a zero-tolerance policy of discrimination of any type, including racism, homophobia and transphobia and of any behaviour that intends to cause distress to another. Any such behaviour must be reported and will be investigated.

#### **5. Resources**

This code must be read alongside the following NFWI policy/guidance documents:

NFWI Charter

NFWI Complaints Policy

NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

NFWI Social Media Code of Conduct



Surrey Federation of WI's  
List of Acronyms Used

ACM	Annual Council Meeting
ACWW	Associated Country Women of the World
AFC	Autumn Federation Meeting
BOT	Board of Trustees
SALT	Skills Activities Learning Team
EDI	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
E&O	Edenbridge and Oxted Show
EPF	Event Planning Form
IFE	Independent Financial Examiner
MCS	Membership Communication System
MST	Members Support Team
NFWI or National	National Federation of WIs
RACT	Resolution And Campaign Team
SWIN	Surrey WI News
TTM	Trustee Team Meeting
WIAs	WI Advisers