



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WI

The WI can be everything you want it to be



We offer all women all kinds of opportunities

Who we are and what we do

The National Federation of WIs (NFWI) is the largest women's organisation in the UK. 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 environment, education, health and other areas of particular concern to women.

WIs were started in Canada in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless, a farmer's daughter, 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 are still relevant in the 21st century. The first WI in Britain was established in Anglesey in 1915.

Please see www.thewi.org for the full history of the WI.

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

Your WI

- is a place of fun, friendship, laughter and learning
- meets a minimum of eleven times a year with an events programme arranged by its own committee
- most WIs have regular interest groups and activities in addition to their monthly meetings
- is run by members for members by electing a committee and President every year

Remember, the ongoing strength and vitality of your WI is important, so please consider helping the committee during your membership.



Your Federation

Your WI belongs to Suffolk West Federation (SWFWI).

The role of the Federation is to oversee all the WIs in Suffolk West and offer a wide range of activities that allow members to turn their interests into achievements and their concerns into campaigns.

National Federation

The National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) headquarters are based in London and oversee all the Federations across the UK.





The WI
campaigning for
change since
1918

Resolutions

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

Each Spring your WI will be asked to vote on the proposed resolutions. Your WIs vote is taken to the NFWI Annual Meeting where a final discussion and votes are cast. The selected resolutions then become mandates and campaigning begins. Our campaign history spans more than 100 years and includes:



1943 Equal Pay for Equal Work

It was Bures WI (Suffolk West) who set the ball rolling!



1954 Keep Britain Tidy

The WI resolution led to the formation of the Keep Britain Tidy group.



1972 Family Planning

The WI campaigned to establish the case for free contraception, irrespective of age or marital status.



1980s Aids Awareness

The WI was one of the first organisations to talk about AIDS and got the public talking about the issue.



1990s Fairtrade

The WI joined with CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Traidcraft and the World Development Movement and helped to form the Fairtrade Foundation.



2009 SOS Honeybees

WI members formed a network of 'bee ambassadors' raising awareness of the plight of the honey bee.



2017 End Plastic Soup

The campaign was launched to protect the oceans from contaminating microplastic fibres.



2018 Time for Mental Health

Making seeking support about mental health issues as acceptable as physical health issues.



2019 Five Minutes That Matter: Cervical Screening

Helping save lives by raising awareness of the importance of cervical screening.



2022 Women and Girls with ASD & ADHD

Under-identified, under-diagnosed, misdiagnosed, under-supported.



WI Community Champions



#WICommunityChampions

For over 100 years WI members have remained at the heart of their communities, keeping everyone connected and supporting those in need, even in the most challenging circumstances.

Suffolk West members have shown their resilience and collective strength in many ways; from sewing scrubs and facemasks for West Suffolk Hospital during the pandemic, to supporting local food banks and showering Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid with essential donations. They've also been invaluable crafting specialist items for NHS charity My Wish; knitting blankets to keep elders warm, crocheting hats for premature babies and stitching syringe driver bags for palliative care patients.

WI members have always been champions of their communities because community is at the heart of the WI and together we are stronger!

Climate Ambassadors

Federations also have dedicated Climate Ambassadors to support WI members who feel passionately about environmental matters.

WI Climate Ambassadors are valuable to the organisation and do great work to promote the WI's Climate Change campaign. Over the years, they have formed helpful relationships with their MPs and their wider communities.


Follow the link below to watch a short video and hear directly from Climate Ambassadors about why they joined the scheme.

mywi.thewi.org.uk/public-affairs-and-campaigns/news-and-actions/become-a-wi-climate-ambassador


SWFWI Federation Office

This is where the day-to-day business takes place, and where the Federation Secretary and Finance Assistant work closely with the Board Of Trustees, WI Advisers and committees. It is also a venue for Federation activities and training.

 Find us: Unit 11, Park Farm Business Centre in Fornham St Genevieve, IP28 6TS

 Tuesday-Wednesday (10AM-4PM) and Thursday (10AM -2PM)

 office.swfwi@gmail.com

 01284 336645.

THE WI HIVE

Your monthly buzz on Suffolk West 

Keeping In Touch

The WI Hive is our monthly newsletter where we aim to keep you informed of events and news from the Federation and WIs across Suffolk West.

It's available digitally or printed. You can sign up at suffolk-west.thewi.org.uk/news-and-events to receive a **FREE** copy via email or request a hard copy to be posted from the WI Office for just 73p per month!

Social Media

In addition to The WI Hive you may wish to follow us at:

 facebook.com/swfwi

 instagram.com/swfwi

 twitter.com/swfwi

Website

You can also check suffolk-west.thewi.org.uk/ for the latest information or scan our QR Code



My WI

My WI is the place to find everything you need to get the most from your membership.

Once you join the WI you will receive an email from NFWI with a password to access the members only area and can sign in via mywi.thewi.org.uk/

SWFWI Board of Trustees

SWFWI is run by a Board of Trustees with sub committees delivering a wide range of events for all our members.

Up to fifteen volunteers are elected by Suffolk West WI members every two years to serve on the Board. Further members may be co-opted in throughout the year. The Chair, Treasurer and Vice Chairs are elected annually by the Board.



SWFWI Sub Committees

Each sub committee represents a specialist area:

Creative Leisure Activities encourage the development of skills in craft and other art based activities.

Events are responsible for planning and running larger Federation events such as speaker lunches, educational seminars, coach trips and concerts.

Public Affairs keep members informed and educated on WI resolutions and campaigns. They also send a quarterly PA memo to members. Past issues are available on suffolk-west.thewi.org.uk

Promotion & Media are responsible for publicising the WI, engaging new members and shaping the image of Suffolk West.

Sports & Leisure organise a variety of activities aimed at keeping the body and the mind fit and healthy.

To help our organisation thrive we always need new ideas. You don't have to be a Trustee to be part of one of our sub committees!

To find out if you would like to be involved then why not ask to attend your preferred committee as an observer. Contact the Federation Office to register your interest!

WI Advisors

Your WI is a place of fun and friendship. To support our WIs, SWFWI has appointed advisors, who have been trained by NFWI. Their role is to:

- start new WIs
- give help and advice to members
- help with resolutions
- run WI committee support workshops
- visit annual meetings when requested.

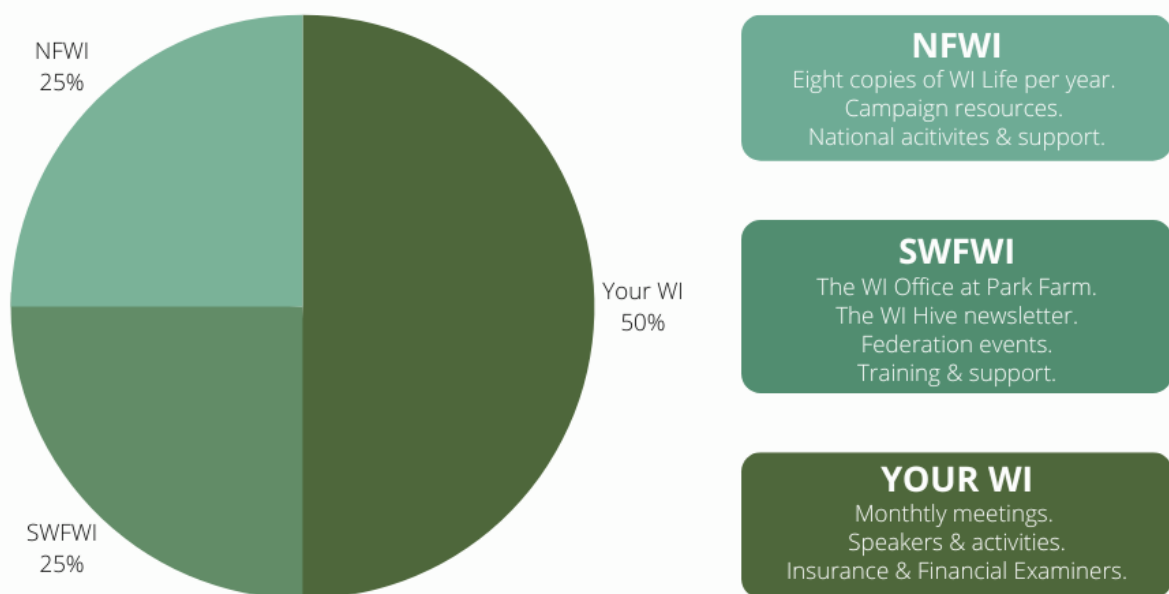
If you wish to contact your advisor please email office.swfwi@gmail.com

Subscriptions

On joining a 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 including speakers. 25% is paid to SWFWI towards its expenses, including the staff salaries. The remainder is paid to the NFWI which covers the cost of eight copies per year of 'WI Life' sent to each member, and the running of that tier of the organisation, campaign resources, national activities and national training for volunteers to help run WIs at a local level.

You can become a member of up to two WIs at the same time, this is called Dual Membership. As a Dual Member you only pay the NFWI and federation fee once when joining your primary WI. At your second WI you will pay the WI fee only.

Subscription costs are reviewed annually by NFWI and members are notified of the next year's subscription rate in the autumn.



Your WI subscription represents good value. The more you become involved, the greater your enjoyment and the better value your subscription becomes.



Your Membership Checklist

As a WI member you should have received the following from your WI Secretary:



- WI Member Registration form
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) form
- Gift Aid form (optional)
- Information on how to pay your subscription to your WI
- Your WI programme

It is essential you complete the WI registration form and the GDPR form.

Once you've received these and paid your subscription fees, your information will be added to the WI membership system (MCS) by your WI.

You will then receive your My WI login via email and your optional membership card will be available on My WI. The WI's quarterly magazine, WI Life will be delivered directly to your door.

Finally...

- Don't forget to sign up to Suffolk West's monthly newsletter The WI Hive via suffolk-west.thewi.org.uk/news-and-events

It's **FREE** and includes all the latest news and events from your Federation and our WIs. If you require a printed copy please contact your WI Secretary.



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twitter.com/swfwi

suffolk-west.thewi.org.uk/