



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

YOUR INTRODUCTION TO THE WI



The WI can be everything you want it to be
We offer all women all kinds of opportunities

The WI is the largest women's organisation in the UK. We are a dynamic group of like-minded women who are passionate about learning, sharing and making a positive impact in our community.

Started in Canada in 1897, the first WI in Britain was established in Anglesey in 1915 to give women a voice at a time when we were meant to be seen but not heard. We were established to educate women and campaign for the environment, education, health and other areas of concern to us. The rest, as they say, is history but you can find out more at www.thewi.org.uk

We see ourselves as a modern voice for women and that includes you, because together we are stronger.

The Structure of The WI



National Federation of WIs (NFWI)

The National Federation of Women's Institutes headquarters are based in London and oversees the running of the organisation.

Suffolk West Federation of WIs (SWFWI)

Every WI in West Suffolk belongs to Suffolk West Federation of WI's (SWFWI).

The Federation oversees all Suffolk West WIs and offers a wide range of activities that allow members to turn their interests into achievements and their concerns into campaigns.

Your WI

WIs are in towns and villages across West Suffolk. Every WI is an independent charity and follows the WI Constitution, whilst being unique in what they offer.

WIs are a place of fun, friendship, laughter and learning. They meet monthly with an events programme arranged by their committees. Most WIs also have regular interest groups and additional activities.

WIs are run by members for members, by electing a committee and President every year. The ongoing strength and vitality of your WI is important, so please consider joining your WI committee.

WI Campaigns



The WI
campaigning for
change since
1918

Resolutions

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

Every August/September, your WI has the chance to submit a resolution to NFWI. After an elimination process, your WI will be asked to vote on the proposed resolutions. That vote is submitted at the NFWI Annual Meeting where the votes are counted and the WI's next campaign is revealed!

You can read more about the resolution process at <https://swfwi.org.uk/campaign>

Our campaign history includes



1943

Equal Pay for Equal Work
It was Suffolk West's Bures WI who set the ball rolling!



1954 Keep Britain Tidy

Led to the formation of the Keep Britain Tidy group.



1972 Family Planning

Achieved free birth control for all women.



1980s Aids Awareness

One of the first groups to talk about AIDS.



1990s Fairtrade

Campaigning helped form the Fairtrade Foundation.



2009 SOS Honeybees

Raising awareness of the plight of the honey bee.



2018 Mental Health

Making seeking support as acceptable as physical health issues.



2024 Dental Health

Campaigning for investment in Dentistry.

Climate Ambassadors



WI members who feel passionately about climate change and who want to campaign locally within their communities have the opportunity to be a WI Climate Ambassador.

Climate Ambassadors are invaluable to our organisation and do great work to promote the WI's [Climate Change campaign](#). They also work alongside other organisations dedicated to climate change, like the [Climate Coalition](#).

Every Climate Ambassador is individual and can choose how involved they are with campaigning. To find out more about the role you can download NFWI's [Climate Ambassador flyer](#).



#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. Community Champions have also been invaluable in 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!

SWFWI Office



Our SWFWI headquarters are based at Park Farm Business Centre in Fornham St Genevieve.

The WI office is managed by our Federation Secretary and Financial Assistant, who work alongside the Trustees, WI Advisers and WI teams to ensure the Federation runs smoothly.

We also use our HQ for events and WI training.



Unit 11 | Park Farm Business Centre
Fornham St Genevieve
IP28 6TS

Tuesday - Wednesday
10AM - 4PM

Thursday
10AM - 2PM

Stay In Touch

Sign up to our SWFWI mailing list at www.swfwi.org.uk to stay up to date with all the latest federation news and events.

Follow Us on Social Media



@swfwi



office@swfwi.org.uk



01284 336645

www.swfwi.org.uk

Save our website to your favourites



SWFWI Teams

SWFWI Trustees

SWFWI is run by a Board of Trustees. They are all WI Members who volunteer to oversee the running of the Federation.

Trustees are elected by WI members every two years. Further members may be co-opted in throughout the year. The Chair, Treasurer and Vice Chairs are elected annually by the Trustees.



SWFWI Teams

Supporting the Trustees are our teams who deliver a wide range of events for members.

Creative Leisure Activities

Dedicated to encouraging the development of craft skills with workshops and other art based activities.

Events

Responsible for planning and running larger Federation events such as speaker lunches, educational seminars and coach trips.

Membership Support & Media

With the support of our WI Advisers, the team are on hand to offer guidance with running your WI, responsible for promotion, engagement and shaping our image.

Public Affairs

Dedicated to keeping members informed and educated on WI resolutions and campaigns.

Find out more:

<https://swfwi.org.uk/public-affairs>

Sports & Leisure

Responsible for organising a variety of activities to keep the body and mind active, fit and healthy.

Join Our Team

To help our organisation thrive we always need new ideas. If you'd like to be involved contact fedsec@swfwi.org.uk to attend a team meeting.

You don't have to be a Trustee to join one of our teams!



Your WI Subscription

Once you join the WI you will pay your subscription to your WI Treasurer. Subscriptions are renewed annually on 1 April.

The amount you pay is divided three ways.

■ Your WI ■ SWFWI ■ NFWI



Approximately 50% of the fee is kept by your own WI to contribute towards its running costs for monthly meetings and speakers, as well as insurance and financial examiners.

25% is paid to Suffolk West Federation (SWFWI) for running expenses, including staff salaries, as well as training for WIs and The WI Hive newsletter.

The remaining 25% is paid to NFWI to cover the cost of your eight yearly copies WI Life, the running of that tier of the organisation, campaign resources and training.

You can also become a member of more than one WI. You only pay the NFWI and federation fee once when joining your primary WI. At your other WI(s) you will pay the WI fee only. There is no limit on how many WIs you can join.

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

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LEARNING HUB

Also included with your subscription is the WI Learning Hub.

Everyone should have the opportunity to create their own, unique learning journey in an accessible and flexible online environment. The Learning Hub offers live and on-demand courses, the majority of which are free for WI members.

Start your learning journey at www.learninghub.thewi.org.uk

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

Your Membership Checklist

You should have received the following from your WI Secretary:

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

It's essential you complete the registration & GDPR forms.

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

Welcome to the WI

Once registered you will officially become a member and will receive your My WI login via email.

My WI

mywi.thewi.org.uk/ is exclusively for members. It's the place to find everything you need to get the most from your membership.



WI Life

You will also receive NFWI's magazine, WI Life, delivered directly to your door eight times a year.



Staying in Touch

SWFWI Mailing List

Sign up to our mailing list at www.swfwi.org.uk to stay up to date with all the latest news and events from our federation.

Follow Us on Social Media

for daily updates



@swfwi

www.swfwi.org.uk

Don't forget to save our website to your favourites

