

HERTFORDSHIRE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES ANNUAL REPORT

For the year from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

FEDERATION CHAIR:	Jill Profit - Royston WI Kestrels, Church End, Barley, Royston SG8 8JN
FEDERATION VICE-CHAIRMAN:	Pat Kingsland - Knebworth WI 13 Shackledell, Stevenage SG2 9AE
FEDERATION VICE-CHAIRMAN:	Joanna Defries - Colney Heath WI The Willow, Church Lane, Colney Heath, AL4 0NH
HONORARY TREASURER:	Caroline Ellis - Bricket Wood WI 8 Broomfield, Park Street, St Albans AL2 2HY
VICE TREASURER:	Rahat Aboobaker - Potters Bar Gems WI 38 SanTERS Lane, Potters Bar, EN6 2BX
FEDERATION SECRETARY:	Hayley Tapp (Until 12 th April 2024)
COUNTY HOUSE:	29 High Street, Wheathampstead, St Albans AL4 8BB Tel: 01582 834010 Email: office.herts.wi@gmail.com

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rahat Aboobaker – 38 SanTERS Lane, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 2BX
Potters Bar Gems WI

Hannah Costin – 63 Ceasars Road, Wheathampstead, Herts, AL4 8NR
Wheathampstead WI (from 12/3/2024)

Joanna Defries - The Willow, Church Lane, Colney Heath, AL4 0NH
Colney Heath WI

Margaret Eccleston - 3 Lindsey Road, Bishops Stortford CM23 2TA
Bishops Stortford WI

Caroline Ellis – 8 Broomfield, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2HY
Bricket Wood WI

Pat Kingsland, 13Shackledell, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 9AE
Knebworth WI

Phillippa Mackinnon – 210 Runley Road, Luton, Beds, LU1 1UB
St Albans City WI

Lorraine Mead – 68 Longacres, St Albans, Herts, AL4 0DR
The Causeway WI

Jill Profit – Kestrels, Church End, Barley, Royston, SG8 8JN
Royston WI

Joyce Spackman - Standon Green End Farm, High Cross, Ware, SG11 1BW
Much Hadham Afternoon WI

Anne Styles – Robbers Cottage, The Street, Braughing, SG11 2QF
Braughing WI

Pamela Wright - 29 The Walk, Potters Bar EN6 1QG
Oakmere WI

WI ADVISERS

Margaret Eccleston – 3 Lindsey Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts, CM23 2TA
Bishops Stortford WI Chair

Pam Kershaw - 4 Icknield Way, St Albans AL3 4NQ
The Causeway WI

NON-BOARD OF TRUSTEE APPOINTMENTS
FEDERATION ARCHIVIST
Catherine Abrahams (Bricket Wood)

FEDERATION EDITOR OF WI NEWS
Beverley Hayes

BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPOINTMENTS
COUNTY CRAFT ADVISER

Anne Styles
COMBINED ARTS OFFICER (MUSIC & DRAMA)
Joanna Defries

FEDERATION & INTER-COUNTY QUIZ
Pamela Wright

MEMBERS SUPPORT TEAM
Margaret Eccleston

RESOLUTIONS OFFICERS
Joyce Spackman
Phillippa Mackinnon

CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER
Phillippa Mackinnon

SPORTS OFFICER
Lorraine Mead

YEARBOOK CO-ORDINATOR
Joyce Spackman

NUMBER OF INSTITUTES – 74
NUMBER OF MEMBERS – 2890

Meetings held: 12 Board of Trustees and
1 Appointment

REPORT OF THE CHAIR FOR THE YEAR to March 2024

Meetings in person

Meetings via Video Conferencing (Zoom)

I am serving my second year in office as Chair of the Federation. It is a great honour and a role that I am very pleased to be fulfilling.

Our annual meeting was held in October 2023. Gail Morecombe, daughter of Eric, entertained us with an amusing insight into her life with Dad. We only hold one business meeting a year now, which is our Annual Meeting in October, whereas we used to hold two, one in the Spring too. Our Spring meeting has changed into “An Afternoon with...” In April 2023, we welcomed Charles Hanson who talked about his life in antiques and valued members’ items. The Spring event will be an annual fund raiser for the Federation.

Our teams are organising entertaining and educational events for you all to enjoy. Although our larger events attract a good audience, we must not forget all our Team events too, whether large or small gatherings. It is not all about fund raising, although we must, but offering our members the hand of friendship, education or enjoyment in a group suited to that activity. Our larger events have included Adam Frost of Gardeners World, who was such a humble, humorous, and engaging speaker, the audience were captivated. Mark Frances from the Sewing Bee also brought in a large crowd. We hope to provide something for everyone.

We are pleased our membership remains constant, sadly we have had WIs suspend, which is always sad, very often not through lack of members but lack of members willing to stand as Officers. Remember you can share Officers roles and it is not too erroneous task, worth stepping up and giving it a try rather than see your Institute suspended. We, as the Board of Trustees, are here to support you. We have welcomed new Institutes, whose membership quickly grows due, in a large part, to the power of social media. It is so encouraging to see our members, younger or more mature, enjoying the ethos of this wonderful organisation. Learning from each other and sharing friendship. You are never alone when you enter a room of WI ladies.

We had a successful letting of our County Room at our Headquarters at 29 High Street, Wheathampstead from April 2023 for a year and we have just renewed the licence for another year. It is a major part of our

income, added to returned support for our Team and Federation events, which has led to a healthier financial year. The proportion of your subscription that the Federation receives is not enough to cover the Federation expenses of running our Headquarters in Wheathampstead or cover the staff salaries etc. All Board of Trustee members are volunteers claiming only for their expenses.

We need your continued support, either as a member or as a member of our Team or Board of Trustees. Our success depends on you.

We look to move forward positively into our next financial year.

Jill Profit

Chair from October 2022

MEMBERS SUPPORT TEAM (MST)

Meetings

WI Advisers:

Mrs M Eccleston

Bishops Stortford WI

Mrs P Kershaw

The Causeway WI

During 2023/24 the two members of the Membership Support Team (MST) met regularly, either in person, or when health issues intervened, kept in touch virtually or by telephone.

Our discussions regularly focussed on the health of our WIs, particularly those in difficulty. Sadly, the members of five WIs: Borehamwood, Furzeffield, High Cross & Thundridge, Highfield and Wormley, each voted to suspend their WIs for 3 years. In each case, despite their best efforts, net membership had dwindled, with fewer younger women joining. In consequence, due in no small part to the average age profile of these WIs, members were unwilling to stand for election to the committee or the role of President. Undoubtedly, to remain vibrant and attractive, WIs must frequently take in and support new members, try new ideas and continuously evolve. In June, in response to enquiries from a group of women in Royston where there were already 3 daytime WIs, we opened an evening WI. After publicising the opening, mainly on social media, they were overwhelmed by the response and around 40 women joined that evening. Thanks to an innovative team on the ground, Royston Evening WI is going from strength to strength. Another success story, Codicote WI, was rewarded nationally for the greatest yearly increase in membership.

Herts Belles WI celebrated their 10th birthday with a happy evening that reflected upon all that they had collectively achieved during these years.

During April and May, with assistance from other Board Trustees, we attended 15 Annual Meetings, assisting with their elections and speaking on the

proposed resolution "Clean rivers for people and wildlife".

In September, the MST successfully hosted an interactive workshop for new committee members and officers.

Throughout the year, we have spontaneously answered members' questions, some of which are later used for articles in HFWI News.

We have frequently worked with WI committees to find solutions to problems and will continue to do so in 2024/25, as well as hosting further workshops and hopefully opening new WIs as our Federation evolves in response to the needs of women in Hertfordshire.

Maggie Eccleston

Chairman Members Advisory Committee

ARTS & CRAFTS TEAM

All Meetings were held by either Zoom or In Person

Emma Golding	Herts Belles WI
Josephine Kersey	Hertford Heath WI
Lorraine Mead	The Causeway WI
Janet Rogers	Boxmoor WI
Marilyn Hornsby	High Cross & Thundridge WI
Anne Styles	Braughing WI (Chair)
Eileen Walker	Boxmoor WI

and Officers of the Federation

Arts & Crafts were busy last year with a very successful Afternoon with Mark Francis which included an exhibition of some stunning members' crafts, and an interview with Emma Golding a Herts Belle who has forged a successful career in dressmaking. This was followed in December by a smaller version of Try a Craft at the Mead Hall which members thoroughly enjoyed. We are exploring a few ideas for 24/25 which will be announced as soon as we can. However, I shall be stepping down as Chair in October so if anyone feels they would like to step up, now is your chance!

Anne Styles

Chairman, Arts & Crafts Sub-Committee

CURRENT AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TEAM

All Meetings were held by either Zoom or In Person

Maggie Eccleston	Bishops Stortford WI
Pat Kingsland	Knebworth WI
Phillippa Mackinnon	St Albans WI
Pat Murray	Buntingford WI
Joyce Spackman	Much Hadham Aft WI (Chair)
Barbara Wybrow	Bishops Stortford

and Officers of the Federation

Our Team has had a very varied year because of our very wide remit. We started the year with an international meeting held in Buntingford, the subject being Jordan, given by Basma Chitham who told us all

about her country and its many aspects. Members really enjoyed this evening with Basma.

We then went onto the NFWI idea covering the Food Day, we had something a little different for this and our speaker, Kate Harwood told us of the History of Allotments and how they still influence us today. This was held at Wheathampstead.

Next on to Much Hadham Village Hall for a presentation on Sign Language, very interesting and much to think about by our members and visitors. (This subject might be repeated in the future).

Our big meeting of the year was planned to be all about The Kings Coronation Garden idea. Our speaker, Adam Frost, a fantastic Speaker, was enjoyed by our very large audience. He briefly mentioned the idea of the Coronation Garden talking about his time spent with Geoff Hamilton, who was strongly in favour of all things organic. A wonderful afternoon.

We had a well-attended Zoom meeting for the resolutions.

We look forward to another year with plans already in place.

Joyce Spackman

Chairman, Current & International Affairs Team

HOUSE & PREMISES TEAM

All Meetings were held by either Zoom or In Person

Pat Kingsland	Knebworth Eve WI (Chair)
Lorraine Mead	The Causeway WI
Jill Profit	Royston WI
Joyce Spackman	Much Hadham Aft WI
EX-OFFICIO	Holding Trustees

and Officers of the Federation

All maintenance and repairs have been carried out on the premises as, and when required.

We were able to find a tenant for the County Room on a one-year licence, which has just been renewed for the coming year, April 2024 to April 2025. We can still have use of the County Room with agreement from the tenant. The income has proved a benefit to Federation Funding.

Pat Kingsland

Chair of House

PERFORMING ARTS TEAM

All Meetings were held by either Zoom or In Person

Pauline Baycroft	Oakmere WI
Hannah Costin	Wheathampstead WI
Joanna Defries (Chair)	Colney Heath WI

Patricia Gale Potten End WI
Joyce Gray Kings Langley WI
Pam Wright Oakmere WI (Chairman)
and Officers of the Federation

Coming up this year we have the ever-popular Kimpton Tea Party on July 4th. This time we have put it earlier in July before the schools break up for summer, according to some of the useful feedback we had from attendees.

November 7th is our bi-annual Literary Lunch, held again at Brookmans Park Golf Club and this year they are offering a carvery! The Speaker will be Maggie Brookes-Butt, a published author and poet based in Southgate. Both of these big events have only 80 places available, and tickets will not be available on the door, so look out for the announcements and book early!

December 4th, we decided to do another Christmas Carol Party at Marford Hall (Wheathampstead Memorial) as last year it was such a hoot! We had lots of valuable feedback from you so we shall be incorporating it as best we can.

Look forward to seeing you!

Joanna Defries
Chair, Performing Arts Team

Diaries and Calendars

Diaries to be ordered from NFWI in accordance with incoming orders from members.

Calendars - 350 to be ordered this year and will be sold on a 'First Come first served' basis.

SPORTS & LEISURE AD-HOC TEAM

All Meetings were held by either Zoom or In Person

Emma Golding Herts Belles WI
Lorraine Mead The Causeway WI (Chair)
Jill Profit Royston WI
Jean Thomas Sandridge WI

All meetings were held in person.

Walking Netball was held at Stanborough School, Welwyn continues to be very well supported and enjoyed by attendees.

Several members were brave enough to take to the skies in a glider from the Cambridge Gliding Centre. The evening was organised by Jill Profit and turned out to be a great success. The skies were clear making the flight an experience to remember. One or two members had two flights!

A trip to Thursford Spectacular in Norfolk was well attended. Members had lunch on site before going into the theatre for a 3-hour spectacular show. Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market was our event in December. Although it rained all the time we were there, it was very enjoyable.

Lots of plans are in-hand for 2024/25.

Mrs Lorraine Mead
Chair, Sports & Leisure Team

SPEAKERS AUDITIONS DIRECTORY

Another collection of interesting speakers this year and a large gathering of members at the Marford Hall to hear them. The new copy of the speakers book is due to be printed shortly and all the new speakers will be shown. Many of the "older" speakers have withdrawn for various reasons, so I do hope that you find some ideas for your institute. Please don't forget to let us know of any problem with any of the speakers.

Joyce Spackman
Chair, Current & International Affairs Team

HFWI QUIZ EVENTS

As we can see by the number of TV and Social Media programmes, Quizzing remains as popular as ever. 2023 was an important year for Hertfordshire Federation as we hosted the Finals of the 3 Counties Quiz.

Our HFWI Preliminary Round was held at Marford Memorial Hall, Wheathampstead on Thursday March 9th and 14 teams took part - the top 8 teams were selected for the Final.

This took place at the same hall on Wednesday 28th June at 7pm when teams from Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire joined us.

It was a very successful evening and a Hertfordshire Team – Bricket Wood WI won it. They were congratulated by our County Chairman Jill Profit who should then have presented the special Plaque to the team but unfortunately it was not available, so it was presented at a later function.

We were unable to hold an HFWI Fund Raising Quiz in Autumn 2023 but already have plans to run one on 18th October 2024.

As I write we have already held the Preliminary Round for 2024 (when 19 teams took part (names of top 8 teams in current Newsletter) and Buckinghamshire Federation are hosting this year's Finals.

Many individual WIs ran their own quizzes, and these were well attended, also the Afternoon Quiz in the monthly HFWI Newsletters continues to inform and amuse our members and long may they enjoy quizzing!

Pam Wright
HFWI Quiz Co-ordinator [Printed In House at HFWI – May 2024]