



The Federation Office, Evelyn Suffield House, Norwich

Information for New Members



How Did It All Begin?

Originating in Canada in 1897, the WI was founded by Adelaide Hoodless, a farmer's daughter who lost her fourth child through ignorance of basic hygiene. The first meeting was attended by 101 women at Stoney Creek, Ontario, and urged that lectures and demonstrations in domestic science and home-crafts be made available to rural women.

The first WI in the UK met in September 1915 at Llanfair PG, Anglesey, North Wales.

The first 22 WIs in Norfolk were formed in 1918 and the following are still in existence: Barnham Broom & District, Ditchingham, Hardingham, Hethersett, and Hingham. The Norfolk Federation was formed on the morning of Saturday, 1st February 1919. Lady Evelyn Suffield was the first Chairman.

What It's All About?

We have now grown into the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK. We are non-sectarian and non-party political.

The aim of the WI is to provide a democratically controlled educational and social organisation for women, offering quality of life in the community, and enabling them to develop their own skills and talents

How Does It Work?

Every WI is affiliated to a Federation and there are 69 County and Island Federations. Those Federations are, in turn, affiliated to the National Federation based in London.

There are over 220,000 members who belong to some 6,300 WIs located in

England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

National Federation of WIs

The National Federation (known as "National") is run by a Board of Trustees, elected every two years by secret ballot, by all WIs and Federations.

There are several sub-committees covering all the topics which WIs are interested in. Members from all over the Country are appointed to serve on those committees.

Like Federations, there are also paid administrative staff who help to run the numerous facets of the organisation.

The National Federation is based at 104 New King's Road, London, SW6 4LY, website www.thewi.org.uk

County Federations

Federation Boards of Trustees are also elected by secret ballot every two years by all the WIs in that Federation.

Just like National, there are various sub-committees, with members appointed from the county.

The Norfolk Federation currently has over 3,500 members in 140 WIs.

WIs

The Committee is elected annually by the members, again by secret ballot.

We all work together on the issues that affect us at every level; whether it be education, leisure, the local community, women's welfare, the environment or international affairs, a WI somewhere is interested and active.

Everyone who serves on a Committee, at whatever level, is a volunteer.

How Does Your WI Work?

Each member pays an annual subscription when she joins the WI. This is reviewed every year and fixed by the National Board of Trustees.

The subscription is divided between your WI, the Federation and National.

As part of your subscription, you will receive eight copies of *WI Life* a year. This magazine is produced by the National Federation. It is posted to you at home and is full of useful information.

The three levels of the organisation are governed by a Constitution. Your WI may also have some bylaws, pertinent only to them.

All WIs must hold 11 meetings in the year and once you have paid your subscription, you are entitled to attend these meetings without any extra cost. August meetings are traditionally a time when WIs have a summer party or an outing instead of a meeting. Many WIs will also have a “bring and buy” stall or a raffle, but these are optional.

At the monthly meeting, there will be some official business, a speaker or demonstrator and a chance to chat to fellow members over refreshments.

As well as their monthly meeting, a lot of WIs have craft groups, book clubs, walking groups, darts and bowling teams, and others beside, who will meet during the month.

Your WI is run by a Committee, nominations for which are sought the month before the Annual Meeting (normally November). The Officers are the President, the Secretary and the Treasurer. The number of other committee members is set by the WI's bylaws.

Dual Membership

You can belong to more than one WI. You will have a main WI, to whom you pay the full subscription and will pay about half the subscription to your second (or third!) WI. You will have voting rights on WI matters at all WIs you belong to but can only vote on National or Federation matters at your main WI.

Associate Membership

If someone has problems finding the time to attend meetings, the WI Associate Scheme may be an option. Associates receive *WI Life*, and can take part in all National activities open to WI members. Associates also receive the Federation's monthly newsletter and are entitled to take part in Federation activities.

If you would like more information on either of these options, please contact the Federation Office for more details.

Some WI Jargon Explained

As with any organisation, there are lots of terms and abbreviations, which a new member can find confusing! So here are some of the most commonly used ones:

ACWW



Associated Country Women of the World. The WI is a member of ACWW, working together with other women's organisations across the world to raise the living standards of rural women, to promote international friendship and understanding and a voice for countrywomen on international matters. WIs can donate to ACWW by collecting loose change. This scheme is called 'Pennies for Friendship'. The Board of Trustees choose a specific ACWW project and money raised by WIs goes toward that.

AFM

Autumn Federation Meeting (or known simply as "Autumn Meetings"). Four or Five meetings held in various venues around the County, at different times and days, to enable as many members as possible to attend. There are usually two speakers – one on a social concern topic, the other more light-hearted. All the Sub-Committees are present with a stand with information on their activities, together with other items of interest.

Annual Meeting – also known (incorrectly!) as the National AGM: The National Annual Meeting, held in June, in different venues around the Country. It is usually known by the city

in which it's held (for 2022, "Liverpool")! Every WI is linked in a group of 4 or 5 WIs, who take it in turns to send a delegate. Delegate expenses are paid for by the WIs they represent. Members can attend as Observers (or Visitors), but have to pay. It is at this meeting that all WIs cast their votes for the Resolutions. There is always a big-name guest speaker or two. The Federation arranges coach travel and, because of the distance, organises a one or two-night stay.

Annual Meeting

Held by every WI to elect the officers and committee.

BoT

The Federation Board of Trustees. They are responsible for the overall running of the Federation.

FAM

The Federation's Annual Meeting, held in the first few months of the year, in Norwich. Each WI is represented by one voting delegate and other members of each WI are welcomed as paying guests. This is an all-day event, at which there is some business in the morning and an interesting guest speaker in the afternoon. There is also time to view each Sub-Committee's stand, giving details of events and what they do.

FO

Federation Office. Also known as The House or The Office. This is where all the administration for the Federation is carried out, including generating all the flyers and other information sent out in the monthly mailing.

Group

Neighbouring WIs form a Group to meet together once or twice a year. The advantage of being in a Group is that they can often afford more expensive speakers. It is also a good way to get to know members from other WIs.

The Harnser

The Norfolk name for a Heron and the symbol of the Federation.



MCS

Membership Communication System. When you join the WI your details are entered onto this national database. This information is used to send out *WI Life*, for National to plan interesting events and is a tool for your WI to keep in touch with members. Every WI should have an MCS Rep, who keeps the information up-to-date and is the only one with access to that information. Details are never passed to third parties.

My WI

Is the National dedicated WI website, exclusive to members. You can access all sorts of information from here. Make sure you give your MCS Rep your email address and you will automatically be sent login details.

NFWI

Refers to the **National** Federation of Women's Institutes.

In Norfolk, though, it also refers to OUR Federation – the **Norfolk Federation** of WIs, run by a Board of Trustees, elected every two years by Norfolk WIs.

If you receive any correspondence and can't decide who sent it – check the address!

Resolutions

Every year members put forward suggestions for Resolutions. Resolutions are proposals for campaigns. A shortlist of possible Resolutions is sent to every WI and every member votes for a Resolution they care about. From this, the most popular Resolutions nationally go forward for full debate at every WI meeting in May. The voting results of those debates are given at the Annual Meeting and if a majority "Yes" vote, the Resolutions will become national campaigns.

The Norfolk Federation – A Brief History

The Federation formed on Saturday, 1st February 1919.



Our First President and then Chairman, from 1919-1945

Lady Evelyn Suffield

“There is nothing I care more for than the Women’s Institute. The more Institutes I visit the more I realise what a happy family we are.”

Lady Suffield was an inspirational, and much-loved County President for nearly thirty years. She travelled round the county lecturing on the WI and Public Health in the Villages. Encouraging members to work with her and with each other, and keen to bridge the class divide, as she described at the time, ‘between the labourer’s wife and the great lady’. Asking members to encourage younger women to join the WI she hoped they would be a little more tolerant if they missed a meeting or two and not be so prim and proper! Otherwise, she warned them, ‘it’ll only be us old ones left!’ Lady Suffield retired as the first and last President in March 1948, a resolution was passed that no further president be elected. She died at home, Harbord House, Cromer in 1951, in her 81st year

Federation Offices: Where it all began

In 1920 a suite of rooms was secured to use as offices for the newly formed Norfolk Federation of Women’s Institutes at 3 Davey Place, Norwich. Early in 1939 the Executive Committee was faced with the urgent problem of finding new premises. A lease was secured on 3 Castle Street, Norwich. In 1950 a Resolution was passed that the Executive purchase a building or building site for a permanent WI Headquarters.

This decision laid a great responsibility on all the members to raise funds. Institutes, on their own initiative, contributed £276 11s 4d (£276.57). Due entirely to the efforts of members of the Federation, the sum of £4,000 was eventually raised to purchase a Georgian House in the centre of Norwich.

The move to 45 All Saints Green, Norwich, took place on 31st July 1952. The official opening ceremony was performed on 5th September, and the house named ‘Evelyn Suffield House’ in memory of the Federation’s founding Chairman. Miss Gates, the Federation Secretary from 1946-1967, lived on the first floor!

The typewriters of the 1950s may be silent now and letters written with pen and ink are a thing of the past, this special house remains a place for members to relax and enjoy one another’s company, with opportunities to learn new skills. Evelyn Suffield House continues to be the busy, working heart of the Federation, and a wonderful legacy initiated by those women of the WI, over 60 years ago.

Federation Sub-Committees

There are 7 Federation Sub-Committees, who organise numerous events for members.

- Arts & Leisure Activities
- Digital Training
- Sales & Marketing
- Communications
- Membership Advisory
- Creative Activities
- Public Affairs

Everyone on a Sub-Committee is a WI member herself and all are volunteers. The Chairman of each Committee is also a member of the Board of Trustees. The Committees explain what they do below.

Arts & Leisure Activities

Our remit includes “the arts”, (such as music, drama, art appreciation, museum and theatre trips), as well as encouraging members to take part in sporting and leisure activities. We organise demonstrations, lectures, instruction and competitions in leisure, arts and sporting activities.

Among the regular events which take place are 10-pin bowling and darts tournaments. The Bridge Club meets on Wednesday mornings in The House and holds bridge lunches twice a year. The Mah Jong Club also meets fortnightly in The House. If you are interested in coming along to these Clubs, contact the Office for details.

As well as arranging outings to places of interest, the Committee also organises the annual Federation holidays.



There are taster days for activities that members have expressed an interest in.

Members throughout the Federation are encouraged to submit new ideas and requests through the Federation Office, to add new pursuits as well as old favourites to the calendar.

Communications



Our role is to connect with members old and new, to reach out to future members and to help the Federation and its Sub-Committees promote the WI and what we do in Norfolk. We do this through The Norfolk WI News magazine, our website and social media. We also tell the public at large how fabulous an organisation we are, get people involved in our campaigns, our crafts and our leisure activities. We also organise the annual Federation Writing Competition. One of our responsibilities is assisting our team of EDP writers, who contribute weekly articles and occasional “Op-Ed” pieces to the Eastern Daily Press. The Communications Sub-Committee works closely with the Digital Activities Sub-Committee.

Creative Activities



A Centenary Salver entry

The Sub-Committee is responsible for providing activities involving visual and creative arts to all members within the Federation. The aim of the Sub-Committee is to promote all aspects of the arts for your enjoyment, in the form of demonstrations, exhibitions, competitions, and organising trips to exhibitions and Museums. There are opportunities to attend all-day workshops at the Federation Office, or around the County. These have been as diverse as ribbon embroidery, stained glass and cookery demonstrations. There is also an annual Craft Day at Bacton, with a variety of courses to choose from, with skilled tutors on hand to assist.

“The Centenary Salver”, a co-operative competition, is held annually and all WIs within the Federation can take part. The theme of the competition is decided by the Sub-Committee and various crafts are undertaken to interpret the theme. The year culminates in a large sale known as “Unwanted/Unfinished”, held in Evelyn Suffield House.

We can also arrange for our Pop-up Shop, of donated craft items (such as embroidery silks and knitting wool), to be available for WI meetings.

Some courses are available to certificate level should you wish to take your interest further; for instance, we also organise Food Hygiene Certificates. The Sub-Committee aims to reflect the requirements of members and therefore suggestions for future activities are always welcomed.

Digital Training Team

Borne from The Digital Team, a National initiative at Federation level, we are here to inspire, enthuse, educate and guide members to develop their digital skills. As part of that remit we organise digital training courses, which take place at Federation Office, and work closely with the Communications Sub-Committee. We can also organise workshop sessions for small groups of WI members in the village or town where you live, only charging travel expenses – just get in touch with the Federation Office if you would be interested in a session. If you need some individual assistance, contact us on our dedicated email helpline. We may not know all the answers, but we will do our best!

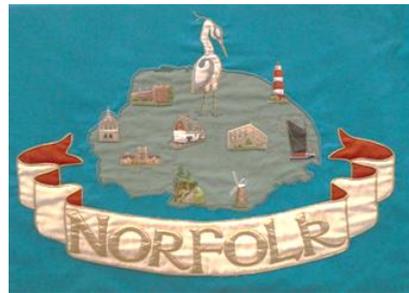
Email: winorfolkdigitalhelp@gmail.com



Membership Advisory

This Committee is composed of WI Advisers and Assistants whose function is to assist, encourage and advise WIs, and potential trainee Advisers. These members are trained by the National Federation and appointed by the Federation to help with the smooth running of WIs and to give help and advice to committees. We aim to make sure that WI members know everything that is available to them and to help them get the most from their subscription. Our role is to create a link between the members and the County and National Federations. WI Advisers are always looking for opportunities to open new WIs and trying to help with any problems that the existing ones may have.

We run training days on all aspects of committee work, on the expectations of Officers, committee members and new members. These are informal sessions where you can learn with friends in small groups. WI Advisers visit WIs and attend their Annual Meetings, can help with elections, and are always available to give help throughout the year. Your Adviser is only a phone call away, so do make contact as no query or problem is too small and a brief chat or prompt action can often help.



Federation Banner created by a member. It is displayed in the Members' Room and only exhibited at FAM

Public Affairs

The aim of this Sub-Committee is to keep members up-to-date on matters of public concern. We advise, initiate and undertake to follow up work on National and County mandates of social concern, including the National Green Hearts campaign and International Women's Day. The Sub-Committee includes the following Norfolk Federation appointments: ACWW Representative, Carers & Health Matters, Environment Officer, Climate Ambassador, Resolutions Co-ordinator and Science Representative. So that our voice is heard, the Federation has appointed Committee members to represent the WI in other organisations: these include Age UK Norfolk, Norfolk Carers and the Norfolk Bus Forum.

We arrange events on diverse topics such as science and the environment, health and home, and women's affairs locally and globally. The annual Women Walk the World, part of ACWW, is a popular event organised by the Committee.



One of our most important jobs is to guide WIs through the Resolutions, organising information days for members, with experts to give us more background information before we cast our votes. Please write in if we can help you in any way.



Sales & Marketing

The Sales & Marketing Sub-Committee are responsible for sourcing the range of gift items for sale in the Federation Office and at Federation Events. We also ensure that all the stationery requirements of a WI are stocked, which includes the National WI diary.

The Federation Calendar is also organised by the Sub-Committee. This is an annual competition, where members are invited to submit photographs on a chosen theme.

These are then judged by our professional printers and 13 photos chosen for the calendar, with the best photograph being awarded The Judges Calendar Cup.

The Front Office in The House has an excellent range of items for members and the public. Boxes of goods can also be provided for individual groups to take out to their own meetings. We are always interested in new ideas for items to sell and promoting the WI to non-members.



And there's more ...

Federation Events Team

This very busy Team is responsible for the large-scale fundraising events, including regular Celebrity and Literary Lunches, the bi-annual Garden Party, Christmas events and many other events that usually involve food and entertainment.



Garden Party, Mannington Hall, 2018

What do our members enjoy? Eating, talking and shopping! We combine all this with our regular monthly **Nosh & Natter lunches**, usually held on the first Friday of the month at The House. Menus for the year are published in advance and booking is essential! You can book using the Magazine's application form.

With all events that include food, please make us aware of any allergen or dietary requirements when booking – we do try to cater for everyone.

Western Area

Because of the diversity of the County, a group of members have established a Committee who organise various events in the far-west of the County. You don't have to live in that part of Norfolk to attend! The Western Area Committee kindly contribute to the Federation from these events.



The Western Area Fundraising Committee

Harnser Wood The Federation's own Woodland



Did you know that the Federation has it's own woodland? It is at Elsing and is free to anyone to walk round. It was planted by members to mark the Millennium and is managed by the Woodland Trust.

It is on Elsing Road, Elsing, Dereham, NR20 3DX.

Norfolk WI News Magazine

You have probably seen members collecting their copies of the Federation's magazine – Norfolk WI News, and hopefully you have been given a copy for yourself. The magazine is published every month.

It is full of information about everything that is happening in the Federation: classes, outings, holidays, competitions and much more, as well as reports from WIs on what they have been doing. You'll have all the information you need at your fingers tips, including the Application Form for all events, published each month.

Contact the Editor either by post or email magazine@norfolkwi.org.uk with your news and reports.



Every member can receive a copy of Norfolk WI News – just ask your Secretary for your copy!



Bursaries

The Federation is very lucky to be able to offer a number of bursaries. Your WI may well do so, too.

Bursaries are open to all members, to be used for a variety of educational opportunities. Some are for use in Norfolk only and some to help with the cost of attending other courses. For a chance to win one, all you have to do is send in your name, contact details and WI. Information about the bursaries is published in Norfolk WI News.

Office Staff (“the office”)

There are three paid members of staff:

Louise Casson – the Federation Secretary. Her role is to manage the House and Office, help members and WIs with queries and, with the Board of Trustees, run the Federation. Louise works full-time Monday to Friday, 8.30am–4.30pm

Vanessa Scott – the Finance Officer. Vanessa manages the Federation’s finances, with the Federation Treasurer. If you have a WI financial query, contact Vanessa. She works Mondays, 9.00am–2.00pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9.00am–4.00pm

Helen Hall – the Administrative Assistant. She carries out all the administration for Federation events and helps Louise. If you have any questions about an event contact Helen, who works Monday –Thursday, 8.30am–4.30pm

Interested in Volunteering at Federation level?

Front Office Volunteers: initially this is a good way to see the work of the Federation. Members volunteer to do a “shift” in the Front Office for a couple of hours a month. They are invaluable and are the first face anyone calling into the House sees, so you get to meet lots of members, and help the staff. Full training is given!

Sub-Committees: the activities of a particular Sub-Committee may interest you, for instance, and Louise can pass on your details to the Chairman, who will have a chat with you and may invite you to observe one of their meetings.

If you think you might like to be involved, please do speak to the Federation Secretary.

The Federation’s 500 Club

This is run along the lines of the lottery, open to members only. There are 500 shares available, at £5 a share. Half the income supports the Federation, the other is given in prizes. There are three prizes, the numbers being drawn at the monthly Board Meeting. Every year the first draw takes place in November and ends the following October. You can apply for as many shares as you wish.

Both the Bursaries and 500 Club are advertised in Norfolk WI News and you can apply for either of them using the Application Form.

The Federation Office Belongs to You!

The Federation Headquarters is at **Evelyn Suffield House** in Norwich (just a stone's throw from John Lewis). It was bought by members in 1952, who raised the money to buy the House and was named after the first President and Chairman, Lady Evelyn Suffield. So it belongs to all Norfolk WI members!

It is the hub of WI life in Norfolk and all Federation Sub-Committees meet here.

The House's opening hours are:

- Monday to Thursday, 10.30am-3.30pm
- Fridays when there is an event in the House

So what will you find when you visit...?

To start with, you'll always find a warm welcome!

On the ground-floor there is:

A Fully-Equipped Kitchen – where you can make yourself a cup of tea or coffee for a small donation

A Dining Room – which is also used for craft days and where the Bridge and Mah Jong Clubs meet

The Committee Room – this is where the Sub-Committees meet and some workshops are held

The Front Office – which sells all the WI stationery and gift items, and is staffed by volunteers. You can leave your parcels in the Front Office while you do more shopping!

The Members' Room – where you can sit and relax with a drink, eat your lunch, wait for your bus, or meet a friend. There are noticeboards with Federation and other information to browse. There is also a loo!

The Garden – is maintained by the volunteer Gardening Gang and a WISP (WI supportive partner). It is a haven in the centre of the city, where you can sit and relax – weather permitting!

Car Park – we are very lucky to have a car park at the rear of The House, accessed from Surrey Street. Parking is guaranteed for anyone attending an event at Evelyn Suffield House and at other times may be available. Ring the Office the day before to check availability; the website calendar also has information about availability.

Upstairs is the busy office, from where all the administration is undertaken. If you have a query, don't hesitate to get in touch!

Photocopying (both black and white and colour) is available for members, at a small charge.



The Members' Room

Save the dates 2022!

<p>January</p> <p>Monday, 10th Federation Office re-opens</p>  <p>Restarting... Tuesdays The Mah Jong Club</p> <p>Wednesdays The Bridge Club</p> <p>And ... We are also hoping to organise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Advanced Driving ◆ Day Trips to interesting places ◆ Lunches with speakers and demonstrators ◆ Science Trip ◆ Autumn Craft Day ◆ Christmas Craft Taster Day ◆ Pre-Christmas Holiday <p>To name but a few ideas!</p>	<p>February</p> <p>Friday, 4th Nosh & Natter</p>  <p>Friday, 18th Jigsaw Race Lunch</p> <p>Thursday, 17th Get Comfortable Online Session</p> <p>Monday, 28th Treasurer's Training</p>	<p>March</p> <p>Thursday, 3rd Climate Change Conference</p>  <p>Friday, 4th Nosh & Natter</p> <p>Monday, 7th Jigsaw Race Lunch</p> <p>Thursday, 10th Watercolour Workshop</p> <p>Tuesday, 15th Mah Jong Taster Day</p> <p>Wednesday, 16th Bridge Day with Lunch</p> <p>Monday, 21st Federation Annual Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday, 29th Auditions Day</p>	<p>April</p> <p>Friday, 1st Nosh & Natter</p>  <p>Thursday, 7th Osteoperosis Testing Day</p> <p>Friday, 8th – Sunday, 10th Centenary Salver</p> <p>Tuesday, 12th Calico Gardens Workshop</p> <p>Thursday, 21st Get Comfortable Online Session</p> <p>Thursday, 28th Resolutions Discussion Day</p> <p>Saturday, 30th ACWW Walks</p>
<p>May</p> <p>Wednesday, 11th New Members Drop-in Day</p>  <p>Friday, 13th Nosh & Natter</p> <p>Wednesday, 18th Beginners Bridge Day & Lunch</p> <p>Monday, 23rd Jigsaw Race Supper</p> <p>Tuesday, 31st Calico Gardens Workshop</p>	<p>June</p> <p>Friday, 10th – Sunday 12th National Annual Meeting, Liverpool</p>  <p>Thursday, 16th Get Comfortable Online Session</p>	<p>July</p> <p>Friday, 1st Nosh & Natter</p>  <p>Thursday, 14th Public Affairs Sea-Themed Event</p> <p>Friday, 22nd Receptions for Presidents</p>	<p>August</p> <p>Thursday, 18th Get Comfortable Online Drop In</p>  <p>Friday, 19th Tea Party for Front Office and Evelyn Suffield House Volunteers</p> <p>Also, please note that... Monday 1st to Friday, 12th Evelyn Suffield House is closed</p>
<p>September</p> <p>Friday, 2nd Nosh & Natter</p>  <p>Friday, 9th Celebration of Evelyn Suffield House's Platinum Anniversary</p> <p>Friday, 16th Autumn Craft Event</p> <p>Wednesday, 21st Auditions Day</p>	<p>October</p> <p>Wednesday, 5th Autumn Federation Meeting</p>  <p>Thursday, 6th Poetry Day Event</p> <p>Friday, 7th Nosh & Natter</p> <p>Tuesday, 11th Autumn Federation Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday, 19th Autumn Federation Meeting</p> <p>Thursday, 20th Get Comfortable Online Session</p> <p>Wednesday, 26th Autumn Federation Meeting</p>	<p>November</p> <p>Friday, 4th Nosh & Natter</p>  <p>Thursday, 29th Resolutions Shortlist Day</p>	<p>December</p> <p>Thursday, 1st Christmas Get Together for Front Office and Evelyn Suffield House Volunteers</p> 



Norfolk Federation of WIs

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The Federation is a registered charity, number 227411

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Administration Assistant : Helen Hall
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Website: www.norfolk.thewi.org.uk

and find us on



We hope this booklet has answered some of the initial questions which you might have about our exciting and ever-expanding organisation. If you would like any more information, please ask your WI President or Secretary, or contact the Federation Office.