



Public Affairs Digest

Issue 45: April 2020

Dear Member,

Welcome to the NFWI *Public Affairs Digest*, an e-update on all the latest WI campaigning news, delivered directly to your inbox.

If you know anyone in your WI who is interested in our campaigns, please direct them to the campaigns area of [MyWi](#) to sign up to receive this Public Affairs Digest.

The main priority for the NFWI is the safety and wellbeing of our members. During the Covid-19 outbreak, it is important that everybody stays up to date on the health advice that the government issues.

If you haven't already, please visit [this link](#) for the latest, up to date government guidelines.

You can also visit [this section](#) of our website for information from the NFWI on ways you can help your community, sources of support and other helpful information such as setting up a virtual meeting.

If you would like to see something that isn't already on there, please do get in touch and we will do our best to help facilitate this.

Link together to alleviate loneliness

With self-isolation and social distancing measures in place, more of us may now be feeling the effects of loneliness. If you're looking for ways to help and keep busy, volunteering is a great way to feel part of your community, and

support local organisations who are under pressure as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.



To search for opportunities near you visit [Do-it](#), the UK's national volunteering database, or get in touch with your local volunteer centre in [England](#) or [Wales](#). If you'd like to volunteer your professional skills from home, take a look at [Reach Volunteering](#) – an organisation linking charities to people with the expertise they need to support them through these challenging times.

Whether it's a national scheme or a local initiative you have set up yourself, we would love to hear about anything you are involved with. Email us at pa@nfwi.org.uk.

SOS for Honeybees

Due to the ongoing public health restrictions, the Public Affairs team has decided to revisit one of our most popular campaigns - SOS for Honeybees.



Our bees still remain under threat. They have lost much of their natural habitat

in the past 60 years, including 97% of wildflower-rich meadows. They continue to be under attack from pesticides, intensive farming and climate change. Creating pollinator-friendly spaces can help to replace and restore lost habitats and will help to give Britain's pollinator population a helping hand.

We are encouraging members to consider creating a pollinator friendly space in gardens, balconies or window boxes.

Many of you may find it difficult to source gardening equipment at the moment, but if you can, now is the perfect time. In response to customer demand, many supermarkets have expanded their gardening range, and many garden centers offer online deliveries.

If you are inspired, keep an eye out for our SOS for Honeybees blog posts on [the website](#). We will be posting monthly blogs on a range of topics.

You can also take a look at our SOS for Honeybees resources [here](#), which include seasonal planting guides and recipe packs.

NO MORE

violence against women

No more violence against women

It is devastating to hear that domestic abuse killings have more than doubled since the Covid-19 lockdown. Whilst we welcome the Home Office's announcement to provide £2 million to bolster domestic abuse helplines, more needs to be done to protect survivors and their children. With many support services struggling to cope with demand, we need to see a cross-governmental working group to ensure there is sufficient funding and make sure it reaches vital frontline services.

Since the Coronavirus lockdown, the National Domestic Abuse helpline has seen a 25% increase in calls and online requests for help and the Refuge helpline has seen a 700% increase in calls to its helpline in a single day.

If you or someone you know requires support you can find further information on the [NFWI website](#).

Make Time for Mental Health

This Mental Health Awareness Week, (18-24 May), we'd love to hear what you're doing to look after your mental health during lockdown. Maybe you're learning something new or have joined a virtual exercise class? Sharing your stories may inspire others to make changes.



Let us know [via email](#), or by using the hashtags #MakeTimeforMentalHealth and #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek on social media.

Food Poverty

According to the Food Foundation, more than 3 million people (6%) in Britain have gone hungry since lockdown began 3 weeks ago. The Foundation is calling for a Government-lead National Food Aid Task Force to support councils with welfare assistance, provide nutritious food parcels and scale up delivery options.



If you need emergency food or support you can contact your local food bank, they are doing their best to follow social distancing measures and stay open. You can find the contact details of your local food bank using your postcode [here](#).

If you are able to support your local food bank with donations, or by volunteering, visit the [Fareshare website](#) for further information.

If you have any questions or require additional information please contact us at pa@nfwi.org.uk and we will do our best to help direct you to the right place.

Climate Ambassador Newsletter

The monthly Climate Ambassador newsletter is still ongoing, and this month we highlighted the Cheshire Climate Ambassadors and their virtual Climate Ambassador meetings; an update on the progress of the Environment Bill; the NFWI's response to the postponement of COP26, and some recommended green reads, podcasts, interesting films and TV programmes.



If you are interested in becoming a Climate Ambassador, please do register [here](#).



The Great Get Together

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 2020 Great Get Together (due to take place between 19 and 21 June) has been postponed. If and when a new date is announced for this year, we will update members through the Public Affairs Digest and our social media channels.

In the meantime, we will be looking at alternative ways members can stay connected with each other and their communities. If you have any ideas you'd like to share with us, please [email us](#).

A green diagonal banner with a gold leaf-like logo and the text "Campaigns Corner" in white.

We want to hear about local WI campaign activities. Please email us with your news!

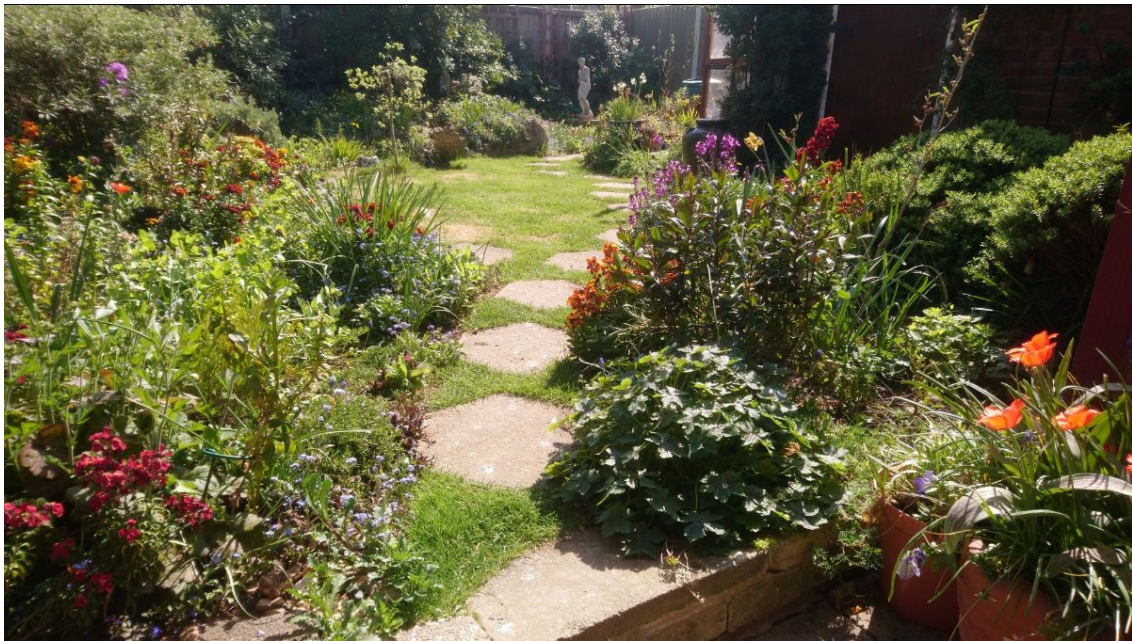
A row of five circular logos: "MAKE TIME for Mental Health" (purple with gears), "Link Together" (pink with a ribbon), "FOOD MATTERS" (green with a fork and knife), "5 MINUTE THAT MATTER" (pink with a clock), and "END PLASTIC SOUP" (blue with a wave).

Bee friendly gardens

This is the bee friendly garden of Climate Ambassador Gay from Baddow Bees WI in Essex.

For the past three years, she has expanded the flower beds at the expense of the lawn. To make it bee and insect friendly, she leaves long grass in places and have incorporate small wildlife ponds among her bee friendly plants for every season.





Bee friendly flowers include lavender and cornflowers. You can find more bee friendly flowers and gardening tips in our resource pack [here](#).

We know it can be difficult to access gardening equipment at the moment, but if you're lucky enough to have seeds and soil around, or you can access an online delivery service, now is the perfect time to plan a bee friendly space in your garden or window sill.

We have a PDF versions of the digest available, that you can share with the people around you. Please [get in touch](#) with the Public Affairs department if you would like a copy.

Please also encourage other members of your WI to sign up to receive this monthly digest.

Kind regards,

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