theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

NEWS
DEVON WI

MARCH — 2026

Pictured: Ladies from Sir Joshua Reynolds WI enjoying a fun Cocktail Experience, learning to mix cocktails and mocktails—a thoroughly enjoyed evening!



CHEERS!

CELEBRATING THE NEW LOOK DEVON WI NEWS

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theWI INSPIRING WOMEN | Devon

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The opinions expressed in Devon WI News are not necessarily those of the Devon Federation of Women's Institutes .

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRS




Staff News and Exciting Developments at WI Devon
As we move into spring, we have several important updates to share about changes within our office team and the exciting new direction we are taking with our communications and marketing.

Wishing Lindsay a Happy Retirement
We begin with warm wishes for Lindsay, who has now retired after working so hard and so well over the past three years. Her support for members—often in a very busy office—has been greatly appreciated by all who have worked with her.

Lindsay has said she may now join the WI herself, and we very much hope she does! Her friendliness, calm efficiency and dedication will certainly be missed, but we wish her every happiness in this next chapter.

Welcoming Carly to the Team
We are delighted to welcome Carly, who has joined us in a temporary role. She has already thrown herself into the work and is settling in wonderfully. We are sure you will all make her feel very welcome and support her as she supports you.

Thank You and Best Wishes to Bev
At the end of March, our long-standing Bookkeeper, Bev, will also be retiring after many years of dedicated service. Bev has kept the finances in order — ensuring every pound is in just the right place!

We send her our heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes for a happy retirement. You will hear more in due course about the appointment of a new Bookkeeper.

Looking Ahead: New Marketing and Communications
Alongside these staff changes, we are also embarking on a fresh marketing strategy. The first step is the launch of the **new-look Devon News**, which you will begin to see from this issue onwards.

We are also working on a brand-new **WI Devon website, including updating social media**. More details and updates will be shared next month as this exciting project develops.

Update on the Sale of The Firs
The Board will shortly be confirming the Solicitors who will take us through the next stage of the process alongside the Estate Agents.

We have also been asked about storage arrangements once we move. Some items will be transferred to the archives office.

Jan has confirmed that the remaining items will come with us. We will continue to keep you all updated as the project progresses.

NFWI Online Meeting - June
Please support the NFWI by attending the online meeting. See page 2 for details.

DFWI Online Meeting – July
We will share further information about our DFWI online meeting, taking place in July, more information in the April edition.

Devon Federation Annual Event – Late September/Early October
Devon Federation Members Day, planned for late September/early October in Plymouth. More information to follow.

DFWI BACS details are below. **Please remember to email the person you are paying and copy in Beverley our DFWI bookkeeper.**
bookkeeper@devonwi.org.uk
Devon Federation of Womens Institutes DFWI **Sort code 08-92-99** **Account no 67185081**

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES ANNUAL MEETING

ONLINE OBSERVER TICKETS

THURS 4TH JUNE 2026

ONLINE VIA ZOOM 10.30AM START 4.30PM FINISH

Observer tickets are available on a donation basis, with individual tickets being set at **£5** and larger group tickets set at **£20** (plus small booking fee) *(these donations will be used to offset significant production meeting costs incurred)*

As the meeting is online, participation can be for the whole day or what suits your schedule, even get together with WI friends, to listen to the inspiring speakers Registration is directly through the booking platform Eventbrite - for members only,

TICKET REGISTRATION LINK

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nfwi-annual-meeting-2026-observer-tickets-registration-1541107226199?aff=oddtdtcreator

This is registration only - no tickets will be issued – a confirmation of registration will initially be emailed and the Zoom link will be sent out in the weeks leading up to the event

Latest date for registration: 19th May 2026

Watch parties are encouraged - members can arrange to meet as a WI or Group, to watch the online meeting together (no limit on numbers) at a venue or elsewhere.

Please note that voting attendees (WI Link Delegates), will each require a Wi-Fi enabled device i.e. a smart phone, iPad or laptop in order to place votes during the meeting.

Every watch party that includes voting attendees (Delegates) must appoint a lead contact who will liaise with the NFWI on the morning of the event; this is to ensure all constitutional requirements are met and to report the number of voters in attendance.

A digital party pack including important technical information will be emailed to all those registered for group tickets NFWI Events Team will contact all registered attendees with further information.

Please note that updates to information and speakers can be found on the NFWI website. A meeting agenda will be sent to all WIs in the NFWI March NFWI mailing.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



This is the busiest time of year for the Advisers as we try to visit as many WI Annual Meetings as we can. If you would like your Adviser to attend your Annual Meeting it is not too late to let her know. We always enjoy meeting the members and hearing all about your WI's achievements and successes, events and activities. When we visit, we do not come to judge your WI and the way things are run but to offer support and guidance. We are also happy to act as the teller for the elections of the committee and the President and to give a short address if space on your Agenda allows.

If you have concerns about any aspect of the Annual Meeting there is a wealth of information on MyWI (https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/guide-to-running-meetings/wi-annual-meetings) or, of course, please feel free to contact your Adviser.

A huge thank you to the outgoing officers and committee members for your enthusiasm and hard work over the past year. Secretaries will now be seeking nominations for the committee for the year ahead. Why not consider stepping up and nominating yourself? You can then be part of the team that takes your WI forward with fresh ideas, renewed energy and enthusiasm. Roles can be shared to lessen the load, there is free on-line training for Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers, and support and training is available from the Adviser Team. There are also lots of jobs that can be undertaken without being a member of the committee. This takes the pressure off the committee - many hands really do make light work.

A special thank you to all the Treasurers who have managed the day-to-day financial affairs of their WIs so efficiently this past year. They have recorded all transactions, reconciled the accounts and prepared the Financial Statement ready for independent examination prior to presentation and adoption at the Annual Meeting. Our team of independent financial examiners (IFEs) has been depleted again this year, but we have managed to cover all the WIs that requested a DFWI IFE. It's not too late, however, to request one if you haven't already done so.

A word of reassurance, too, to our Treasurers. I know that when the IFE signs page 4 of the Financial Statement some Treasurers are hoping for and expecting to see some complimentary comments in the space above her signature. However, in accordance with the guidance from the Charity Commission, your IFE will only use this space to draw attention to any financial concerns she has. This could be something like the inappropriate use of funds, inaccurate record keeping, or an inadequate paper trail to support expenditure. If everything is in order she will leave this space blank. So no news here is actually good news!

EVENTS

WOMAN'S HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

Members of the Sub-committee ERC have been busy organising a **Woman's Health Awareness Day**. To be held at Longdown Village Hall, on Wednesday 15th July 2026, from 10 am to 3pm. The cost is £8 for the day and £9 for visitors. There will be refreshments but you'll need to bring your own lunch.

There will be a variety of speakers on topics such as Breast Care Awareness, CPR and using a Defibrillator, Health and Nutrition and Dental care. Alongside the speakers you will be able to find out more on Smear Tests; Bowel Health; Menopause; Incontinence; Bone Care, and also Blood Pressure.

Come along for an informative and interesting day.

Please email **jackie.bufton@devonwi.org.uk** for more information.

EVENTS

POCKET MEADOWS

We are hoping that the terrible wet weather has not washed away our autumn sown seeds and we look forward to them blooming in the coming months. To take this to the next stage we have organised a fantastic screening of a film called My Garden of a Thousand Bees filmed by the acclaimed wildlife filmmaker Martin Dohrn. Along with the film we will find out how to monitor our blooms and pollinators, so that we can provide vital data to the national database POMS. There will also be a small craft activity that we are sure you will enjoy. There is flyer and booking sheet with your WI. The events will be held in Liverton Village Hall and Barnstaple Library in April (we are waiting for confirmation of dates) – both events are from 10.00am through to 3pm. Refreshments are available but you will need to bring your own lunch. Cost of the event will be £3.00 per person (subsidized) and members will be offered places first and then if there is space visitors will be welcomed at a cost of £4.00.

Seeds are available now for Spring Sowing – just drop an email to **jackie.bufton@devonwi.org.uk** we have plenty. Every bloom counts!

SOUTH DEVON WI CHRISTMAS SERVICE AT ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, PLYMOUTH

On Thursday, 4th December, members from WIs across South Devon gathered at the historic St Andrew's Church in Plymouth for a joyful Christmas service. The occasion brought together friends old and new, and united in festive spirit and song.



The service was led with warmth and reflection by Reverend Philip Cairns, who guided the congregation through a selection of much-loved carols. A highlight of the evening was a moving solo performance of "O Holy Night" by Gill Regan of Down Thomas WI, which filled the church with beauty and reverence.

Readings were shared by representatives from Cornwood, Yealmpton & Brixton, Down Thomas, Hartley, Erme, Plymouth City, and Elburton WIs, each adding their own voice to the celebration. In keeping with tradition, the service concluded with a stirring rendition of "Jerusalem," sung with pride and passion by all present. Afterwards, members enjoyed the opportunity to socialise over a hot drink and a mince pie, a perfect way to round off the afternoon. The atmosphere was one of fellowship, festive cheer, and gratitude.

A big thank you to Bridget, Vice President of Plymouth City WI, whose hard work and organisation ensured the service was a memorable success.







FSC TEAM LUNCH AT RATTERY

The team catered for 65 members to a 3 course lunch. We had a very entertaining speaker in Sheila Parker ex Tiller girl. Photo shows members from Chudleigh and Magnolia WIs waiting for lunch.



EVENTS

PLAY, COMPETITION & CRAFT EVENTS - 2026

One connected, committee over the last few years, has gone from strength to strength. So, we're thrilled to be planning ahead again for an inspiring 2026.

Exciting updates on the Play Competition will be coming soon, along with details of two fantastic Craft events later in the year.

Watch this space — and get ready to join in!
Your enthusiasm and participation are what make these events such a success.
p.wyatt@devonwi.org.uk

EVENTS

SPEAKERS BOOK

Working Together: Programme Planning Pilot -SPEAKERS BOOK

Tuesday 21st April • 2:00pm–4:00pm
Ashburton Town Hall

We are pleased to announce the launch of our Working Together Programme Planning Pilot, taking place on Tuesday 21st April at Ashburton Town Hall.

This focused two-hour session will bring partners together to explore collaborative approaches to programme development, share insights, and help shape the next phase of our joint working model. Full booking details will be confirmed shortly. In the meantime, we will be preparing a promotional flyer and bigger article for the April edition of Devon News, alongside finalising the structure for the afternoon.

The session will be designed to encourage discussion, practical planning, and the co-creation of ideas that support our collective aims.
More information required email
speakers@devonwi.org.uk

FEDERATION HOLIDAY 2026

The Federation holiday for 2026 will be to the Lake District.

Staying at Grange-over Sands, with visits including Ullswater, Keswick, Ambleside, Kendal, Lake cruise on Lake Windermere and the Kirkstone Pass (weather permitting)

Booking form and flyer with your secretary. There are only 10 single rooms available so if you require one please book early.

For any more details please contact
Janet.connolly@devonwi.org



PRIMLEY WI DONATIONS TO LOCAL CHARITIES



Primley WI's 2025 fundraising efforts culminated in the presentation of cheques for **£1000 each to Sid Valley Help Scheme and Sidmouth Voluntary Services**. Successful events throughout the year—including the summer "Time for Tea," Open Gardens, and the Christmas Fayre and Soup Lunch—raised funds for both charities.

At the January meeting, cheques were presented to **Keith Gillanders** (Sid Valley Help Scheme) and **Carol Drover-Taylor** (Sidmouth Voluntary Services) by **Carla Scott**, President of Primley WI. Pictured left to right **Keith Gillanders**, **Carla Scott**, and **Carol Drover-Taylor**. Both recipients thanked members for their generous support.

Over the past four years, Primley WI has supported local charities including the Admiral Nurse for the Sid Valley, Sidmouth Community Christmas Lunch, the Mustard Seed Café, and Sidmouth Hospice at Home.

RESOLUTIONS
A BIG THANK YOU

I am delighted to report that this year's Resolution vote return has been the best we have seen in a long time. We received an impressive 86% overall return. Thank you once again for your excellent engagement.The Resolution being taken forward by the Devon Federation is Accessible Toilets.

From Liz Roberts - **liz.roberts@devonwi.org.uk**

APPLEDORE WI CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND GROWTH

Appledore Women's Institute proudly marked its 25-year anniversary in November 2025, celebrating a quarter century since the group was successfully reopened through the efforts of member and former County Chairwoman, June Blandy. A second celebration followed on 5 December at the WI's Christmas party, where members enjoyed a special anniversary cake, a finger buffet, and festive games organised by President Jane Hayman.



Although an earlier anniversary report was unfortunately missed from Devon WI News, the former retired editor has since offered their apologies. The oversight has highlighted the strength and activity of the Appledore branch at a time when several neighbouring WIs—Westward Ho!, Bideford, Abbotsham, Weare Giffard and Fremington—have recently closed.

DID YOU ENJOY THE EXETER CAROL SERVICE LAST DECEMBER?

Wish to be part of the Choir this year? Every new voice counts. Contact me now. **p.wyatt@devonwi.org.uk**. We also need TWO willing pianists to rehearse members in the East of the county and the Tiverton area.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

EVENT/COMPETITION	DATE	BOOKING DETAILS
National Federation of WI Annual Meeting	Thursday 4 June 2026 10:30am-4:30pm	See page 2 ONLINE Deadline 19 May '26
Health Day Awareness	Wednesday 15 July 2026 10:00am - 3:00pm	See page 3 A flyer will come out to all WI for booking details. More in April
Pocket Meadows	DATE to be confirmed April 10:00am - 3:00pm	Liverton Village Hall & Barnstaple Library See page 4 and email address **jackie.bufton@devonwi.org.uk**
Devon Federation	Wednesday 1 July 2026 Time tbc	ONLINE - More information in April News Letter
Devon Federation Holiday	Lake District	Booking forms and flyers with your Secretaries **janet.connolly@devonwi.org.uk**
Devon Federation Annual Event Members Day	Late September early October 2026	Plymouth - More information April & May
Carol Service Exeter	Wednesday 2 December 2026 - Time TBC	Exeter Cathedral
Speakers Day	Tuesday 21st April 2:00pm–4:00pm	Working Together: Programme Planning Pilot SPEAKERS BOOK, Ashburton Town Hall, See Page 5 - **speakers@devonwi.org.uk**
Next Board Meeting	18 March 2026	The Firs

The list above shows all events that we know about to date. For information on a specific event see elsewhere in this Devon News, contact the relevant committee, look on our website devonwi.org.uk, or contact the office. If the closing date has passed please make contact to see if there are any spaces left.

Please note that we do not give refunds for events booked, unless we have to cancel, as we may have to refuse other applications and can incur booking charges. If you book and cannot go please try to sell on your space to others in yours or neighbouring WIs. Some events should be booked through your WI while others may be individual bookings, For instance holidays or overnight stays will be by individuals. Online bookings will usually be personal too although a group of members may book together.

300+ CLUB WINNERS
MARCH - £25 EACH

162 Dawlish
459 Preston & Chelston

Thank you to everyone who sent in their wonderful submissions this month! If you don't spot yours in this edition — sorry! — it's not lost, just waiting patiently in the wings for next month's spotlight. So please do keep sending in your stories, snippets, triumphs, photos, oddities, and everything in between. After all... it's your newsletter! Send in by the first Friday of the month (6 March 2026)

On that note, a big thank you for all the imaginative (and occasionally eyebrow-raising!) suggestions for renaming the magazine/newsletter. Opinions ranged from "Why change it at all?" to "What about 'WI Devon Have News for U'?". Clearly, creativity is alive and well! We'll be sending out the voting soon — and don't worry, the Board won't be judging...
(We're leaving that entirely to you!)