



The Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland

Autumn Council Meeting

**Mossley Mill, Carnmoney
Saturday, 26th October 2024**

Sub-Committee Reports

Arts

A new Arts Committee was formed after the Annual General Meeting and will serve for three years. Our first activity of the new WI season was the Festival of the Spoken Word, held in Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall on Saturday, 19th October 2024 at 10:30 am. There were a magnificent sixty-three entries for six categories and ladies came from Institutes across the province. A brilliant day – well done to all who entered and entertained! A round-up of this event will be published in a the magazine.

The Arts Coffee Morning will take place at WI Headquarters on Friday, 7th February 2025 when entries from the Arts Festival Competitions will go on display. This is always a very enjoyable morning, so do come along and support our WI artists. 'My Favourite Place' is the theme for the Painting section. There are also classes for 3D Decoupage, Calligraphy and Good Handwriting. (The deadline for submitting Arts Festival entries to WI HQ is Thursday, 30th January 2025).

On Saturday, 1st March 2025, the Drama Festival will be held in Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall. Unfortunately, last year (and just emerging from the pandemic) we had to cancel the Drama Festival due to lack of entries, so I do hope we can hold it in 2025 and repeat the success of our Spoken Word event. It would be disappointing for those who want to enter the Drama Festival if we had to cancel again – and I just know there is so much talent out there among our Institutes!

Templepatrick again is the venue for the Music Festival on Saturday, 1st April 2025. Last year, we had a very successful Music Festival, featuring our talented soloists and choirs, including a new choir. We hope it will be a repeat success in 2025. Now is the time to start rehearsals and details of the set pieces have recently been released, with web links to the music now available. An updated advert will be published in the Autumn magazine.

It is always nice to see a good audience at all our Arts events. It is appreciated very much by all those who take part and gives them such encouragement.

Thanks to Templepatrick WI who serve the refreshments at our festivals when they are held in Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall – tea, coffee and scones from 10:00am, priced £3.50! (Remember to bring along your packed lunch! Tea/coffee will also be available.)

Details of all the Arts promotions can always be found in the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine, as well as the WINI website and Facebook page. I would like to thank my fellow Arts Committee members for all their help and support to me as Chair of the Arts Sub-Committee.

**Margaret McCracken
Chairperson, Arts Sub-Committee**

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Homecraft

Since the AGM in March, the Homecraft Sub-Committee has been busy. In May, we had a successful Balmoral Show. Your knitted and crocheted toys, along with other handmade items on our stall, raised an amazing £2,173. Please continue to knit farm animals, dinosaurs and other small toys for next year's Show. The Committee will be making some items to sell as well. We will also be setting the Craft Competitions for next year's Balmoral and look forward to seeing all your entries.

On Saturday, 14th and Sunday, 15th September 2024, we put on a display of handicrafts at the City of Belfast Autumn Fair Flower Show in Botanic Gardens – and are pleased to have been awarded the BCC Rosette for Society Display of the Show! The Institute/Area table entries for the WI Competition 'Autumn Bounty' were of a high standard and really showcased the talents of our members.

On Saturday, 21st September 2024, twenty-five ladies attended a One Day School at WI Headquarters. Classes were English Quilting, Millinery, Patchwork and Unfinished. A productive day was had by all.

Homecraft are running a Christmas Craft Day workshop at WI Headquarters on Saturday, 30th November 2024. This is suitable for both beginners and seasoned crafters. We hope to see you there for crafty fun and friendship. Full details will be published in the Autumn *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine.

Please support our workshops at WI Headquarters. They are reasonably priced compared to equivalent private events. If you are organising a One Day School in your Area, the Homecraft Committee can help you with classes. Suggestions for future classes are always welcome.

Something new for Homecraft is that we are delighted to have been allocated a stand at The Knitting & Stitching Show, running from Thursday, 7th – Sunday, 10th November 2024 at Titanic Exhibition Centre, Belfast. Hopefully we can encourage some of the crafty shoppers to join WI!

The Committee is also currently busy planning a Spring Workshop for 2025. Plans are also being put in place for the Homecraft Weekend in March next year, which will again be at Drumalis to keep the cost down for you. Classes to be confirmed. Details will be in the magazine. Book early to secure your place!

Running all these events wouldn't be possible without the help of my Committee and of course Kathleen.

Elizabeth McKinty
Chairperson, Homecraft Sub-Committee

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Home and Garden

This year has flown by, and we are all making the most of the autumn days. Once again, Home and Garden has another busy year. We had success with the Balmoral Show Competitions back in May, entries were steady and the standard was high. It was great to see so many members supporting us. We are already discussing the Competitions to be set for Balmoral 2025.

Home and Garden's next big event will be the Christmas Event, taking place in the Armagh City Hotel on Saturday 23rd November 2024. I look forward to seeing many of you there. There will be lots of stalls to start your Christmas shopping. Our demos for the day include Cake Decorating, Chocolate Making (*Chocolate Manor*) and the *Just Sing!* Community Choir who will all hopefully get us in the Christmas spirit! The Competition for the Romanian Platter is to make a Christmas-themed cushion (12inch by 12inch, any medium).

Climate change is still part of our remit and articles are still ongoing in the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine. In the Autumn magazine we look at the subject of electric cars.

The City of Belfast Autumn Fair Flower Show took place in September this year and it was lovely to see so many Institutes and Areas entering displays for the WI Competition '*Autumn Bounty*'. Congratulations to Seaforde WI on being the overall winner!

My thanks to my Committee and to Kathleen and Caroline in the office for all their help and support over the year.

Teresa Feeney
Chairperson, Home and Garden Sub-Committee

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International

As we welcome our new Committee members for our International Sub-Committee; it is heartening that we have some new members and some who have agreed to stay on Committee to serve a further term. This brings a healthy mix of experience and fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the planning and work of our Committee. Everyone is very welcome.

At the end of our last term of office, we reflected on how much we had achieved as an organisation and we were heartened to read of the new project supported by ACWW which is called '*Planting the Seeds of Peace*'. Over 200 children from Ukraine who had suffered from the result of conflict and had been displaced to Romania have been offered the opportunity to learn about planting and growing, as well as climate change. The update on the success of this project should be available soon. A call for new applications to the Education and Community Development project closed at the end of August so we hope to hear of the outcome of these applications soon.

There are a number of podcasts which have been posted on the ACWW website (www.acww.org.uk) relating to Leadership for Equality by UNESCO and ACWW jointly. They have different themes, such as '*Women in Community Development*' and '*Women in Sport*'. It is worthwhile having a listen to these podcasts and finding ones that interest you most to gain some more information on the work of ACWW.

We are very much looking forward to the next ACWW European Conference which will be held in Netherlands and as information becomes available, we will pass this on to members so we can plan to attend in October 2025. The ACWW World Conference will be hosted by Canada, in Ottawa from 24th April – 5th May 2026. So please save these dates and look out for more information as it becomes available.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support, whether it is financial contributions, *Women Walk The World*, promotion of our work, or participation in craft work and competitions. I also want to congratulate the worthy winners of the Evelyn Lord Trophy and the Mary Boyd Competition.

We have an exciting three years ahead and no doubt will be reporting on our achievements at the next Rural Women's Day next year.

Ruth Carroll
Chairperson, International Sub-Committee

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Magazine and Leisure

A total of six editions of the *Ulster Countrywoman* magazine are now produced on a yearly basis – September, Autumn, Christmas, New Year, Spring and Summer. Our Editor, Caroline does an excellent job in producing informative and interesting magazines from the articles sent in by WI members. The complimentary remarks reflect her expertise. Institutes are now invoiced for all six magazines with the October edition at the cost of £12.00pp.

In this new season, we had the September edition which you have received, Autumn edition (available from next Thursday) and a Christmas edition at the end of November. Members are always encouraged to submit interesting and unique articles, not necessarily all WI related, along with photographs, including those for the front cover. To assist the Editor, we would be grateful if you could send in your content well in advance of the deadlines, keep to the word count where applicable and no blurry photographs – these are no longer used. News and photographs that do not make it into the magazine may appear on the FWINI Facebook page, on Instagram or on the website.

Items for the Christmas magazine should be submitted to the Editor *before* **Friday, 1st November**:
editor@wini.org.uk

Should you wish to increase your order of the magazine, please let WI HQ know as soon as possible so that the staff can try to accommodate you and the correct number of magazines can be sent to the relevant Institute.

So far this season, two business meetings of the Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee have been held – one to elect the new Sub-Committee and Office Bearers for the term 2024 – 2027 and a business meeting for the new season.

The Bowling and Quiz finals earlier this year were well attended, with both venues providing excellent facilities. The *Golfer of the Year* Competition took place at The Riverside Course, Portstewart on a beautiful Monday in June. This was a most enjoyable day for all concerned. The Photographic Competition was well supported and the array of different photographs for the subject theme captured the judge's imagination. The planning for 2025 Bowls, Quiz and Golf are well under way – dates and venues to be confirmed.

The **Phyllis Gailey Literary Competition 2025** titled '***Out With The Old In With The New***' is an opportunity to write an exciting original story coining this phrase – closing dates for this Competition and the **Scrapbook Competition** are the end of January 2025. All details are in the Autumn magazine.

The **Photographic Competition 2025** with the theme '***On Its Own***' should produce many interesting images as you are out and about. The closing date for entries will be Summertime 2025, but hopefully in the meantime this title will inspire you. Further details will be published in a future edition of the magazine.

We extend our congratulations to the winners of our competitions, the runners-up and to all those who enter. Details of all competitions, closing dates and winners are published in the magazine, on the WI Facebook page and the website.

The **Fireside Quiz** will be delivered with the Autumn magazine, at still just only £1.00 – no price increases here! It's a fun way to pass an autumn evening. All Institutes will receive 10 sheets and I would encourage you to sell these 10 sheets to your WI members or friends and family. This income helps keep costs down when booking halls/catering, etc. for our other competitions. Please send in your entries before the closing date. (Additional sheets can be requested from WI Headquarters).

The *Ulster Countrywoman* is the magazine of the Federation of the WI of Northern Ireland and as such is the showcase of what we do. The magazine is not only enjoyed by its members but also sent to family and friends abroad as well as the businesses and organisations who advertise with it. An excellent read keeping the WI 'connected'.

Christine Rankin
Chairperson, Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee

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