



## **The Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland**

### **Annual General Meeting**

**Europa Hotel, Belfast**

**Thursday, 27th March 2025**

### **Chairman's Report**

#### **Honoured Guests, Executive Members and fellow members**

This is my first report to you as Federation Chairman and I would like to thank all the members who sent cards, congratulations and advice when I was elected. I never imagined it would be such a busy year and some might say a baptism of fire.

My first event came two days after my appointment, to the Music Festival in Templepatrick. This was my first time to an Arts event and I was thoroughly entertained. Over the last year I have attended all the Arts events, the Quiz Final, the Golf and the Christmas Event. My apologies go to the Bowlers whose Final I haven't made it to yet.

The talent that the Women's Institute has is amazing and I see it wherever I go. You are all too modest and hide your lights under bushels. I would hope, during my term to encourage more of you to shine and take part in competitions and events.

In 2024 I enjoyed the President's Lunch at the Balmoral Show. Visits to Ballydownfine's 30th anniversary dinner and afternoon Tea with Iveagh Area in Brownlow Castle, Lurgan. The Treasurer and I laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in the grounds of Belfast City Hall for Remembrance Day. So far this year I have celebrated Loughbrickland's 70th anniversary and at the end of March I attended the Young Farmers Club Arts Festival in the Millennium Forum in Derry. I have invitations to Monaghan Federation and Eglinton WI. Rosemary has taken my place at Ballymoney Area Group and attended the Farmers Union dinner on Friday 28th March in Cookstown.

The Balmoral Show as usual was in May when we had good weather and a good attendance. Lots of teas, scones and tray bakes served, ballot tickets and quizzes sold. The produce table was sold out, and competitions were well supported. The Arts sold paintings and Homecraft did a good trade in knitted toys and handmade items. Unfortunately we ran out of items for the children's Bran Tub early on Saturday. We are looking forward to this year's Show which takes place from 14th to 17th May when there will be all the usual stalls and a new look Tearoom where you will be able to choose your own scone and tray bake. However, ladies, this is our main fundraising event and without your support in providing all the necessary tray bakes, jams, chutneys, and cakes, etc. for the produce table we would not be able to run the WI and try to keep fees from having to rise.

The end of May brought a shock when Mary McManus our Operations Manager handed me her resignation as she had accepted a full time post elsewhere. The Executive decided to change the name of the post to Executive Manager and we advertised using the Belfast Telegraph and other organisations. Interviews were held on 10th and 13th March and after a difficult 10 months I am pleased to report that we have appointed a new Executive Manager, Emma-Jane Magee and I am pleased to welcome her here today.

In August we created a Public Relations Sub-Committee headed by Judith Wainright (Quoile Area), Ada Elliott (Iveagh Area) and Elizabeth McKinty (Inver Area). They hit the job running and for the City of Belfast Flower Show in September they produced a new leaflet which I am sure by now you have all seen.

We also have new pop-ups which you will have seen here today. It was decided that it would be a good idea to have a corporate approach to advertising. The leaflets are on the website where Institutes can enter their own details and print them off. I would encourage you to use the official leaflet rather than one of your own. Please make sure they are on display everywhere possible including the place you meet. If you don't advertise the public don't know about us. Areas and Institutes can order their own pop-ups through Headquarters.

As I advised at the Autumn Council Meeting we have been successful in obtaining grants for a database of members and a 3-year Strategic Plan and work on these will commence in April.

The competition for the Macausland Rosebowl (Institute of the Year) took place last year after a few years of absence and was won by Ballymoney WI. This year's competition form will be available on the website by the end of May. Please let's have lots of entries - if you are not in, you can't win.

Ladies, at the Autumn Council meeting in October and in my '*Checking In With The Chair*' in the magazine, I issued a challenge for each Institute to recruit 5 new members. I know some of your Institutes have been more than successful but others not so. However congratulations to all who succeeded

Over this past year I have been horrified by the number of people who tell me they have never heard of the Women's Institute or what we do. Ladies, membership numbers are being maintained, however, some Institutes are closing and we need to stop this decline if we are to survive until we reach 100 years - we have to do something. Members will not come to us, we have to go get them. It is not enough for some Institutes to go all out and others to make little effort. WE ALL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.

Firstly, we have to embrace Social Media and if the Office Bearers of Institutes don't do emails or WhatsApp please appoint someone in your Institute who is willing to act as a contact. Area Committees should have WhatsApp as it makes for easier and quicker contact. Make use of Facebook, etc to advertise your meetings. Since the pandemic most villages and local areas have Facebook pages that let you know what is going on in your Area. All these are readily available free.

There is a form online for people to make enquires about joining. These come directly to Headquarters and are forwarded to your Executive Member who should make the first contact with the person. She will then forward details to the relevant Institute.

Ladies, members, Institutes and Areas need to actively promote yourselves within your communities to encourage membership and demonstrate the diversity of the WI. If you need help please talk to your Area representative. So let's get out there and make our great organisation known.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances the magazine that was due out tomorrow will be late this month. Keep an eye on Facebook for the publishing date.

As Sheelagh has already told us we have now been granted incorporated status, however, there is still a lot of work to be done and therefore it will remain dormant until our end of year at the end of August. During this process I and the Executive have learned about Articles of Association and other legalities. On behalf of the Executive, I want to thank Sheelagh for all her hard work and diligence.

Thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to come today and I would ask you to encourage your members to attend this meeting next year and the Autumn Council Meeting in October.

Thank you to the six Sub-Committees for their hard work in preparing events, competitions, etc. Their comprehensive reports are attached to the back of your agenda.

I would like to thank my Vice-Chairman Rosemary, our Treasurer Sheelagh, who keeps a tight hold of the purse strings and the members of the Executive for their help and support over the last year.

In closing, I must pay tribute and give my thanks to Caroline for editing the magazine and Kathleen our Finance Officer. They are kept busy keeping the office running. As well as their main jobs, they do all the preparation for today, and the other events held throughout the year and numerous other tasks. They work hard and know the way in which you the members react and are forever going the extra mile, especially this year to keep the organisation functioning under what were difficult conditions this year.

Thank to our President Lady Anthony for her continued interest and enthusiasm for the WI.

Please we will not grow unless everyone of us puts the effort into getting new members and raising the profile of our great organisation.

Finally, as Lord George said:

*“Don’t be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated.  
You can’t cross a chasm in two small jumps.”*

**Brenda Richardson**  
**Federation Chair**



**The Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland**

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### **Treasurer's Report**

**Madam Chairman, guests and members**

Good morning, ladies, it is a pleasure to see you all here in the Europa Hotel for our AGM, and such a good turnout augurs well for the WI.

Today, I want to present to you, our latest Financial Statements, to bring you up to date on financial matters that are happening within the Federation and remind you of some issues.

First and foremost, the **Financial Statements** for the year end 31 August 2024. These were presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 31 October 2024. The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet were published in the New Year Magazine 2025. At last, we have some good news, we have turned around a deficit of £42,188 to a surplus of £25,007 but don't get too excited we got a grant of £18,000 for a database and strategic planning, which we have not spent. But that still leaves us with a surplus of £7,007. This is great as last year I reported that our accountants had concerns about us being a going concern.

So how did we achieve that? A large part is due to you our members paying the £5 increase in fees which came in September 2024. We had a very tight expenditure budget and we sought savings wherever possible, which is reflected in reductions mainly in our insurance premium, light, heat, stationery and travel. We are still working to improve our expenditure; in fact, my Executive colleagues are tired listening to my mantra "is it in the budget".

This is not easy, times are difficult, as you well know, we are subject to the same pressures as you are, and there is no sign of them getting

easier and we have the increase in employers National Insurance contributions coming in, in April.

We have to thank the Executive and its Sub-Committees for continuing, when possible, to hold meetings online and the ability of the members to share lifts and use public transport.

The Ulster Countrywoman continued to show a surplus which was up just over £4,000 on last year. This is a funny one, income from sales and advertising were down because there were fewer editions but this led to a reduction in printing cost, and overall, we had a surplus! However, there is no better way of achieving this than more members buying the Magazine. Every year we ask you to please encourage all your members to buy one, let's not have any more sharers - at least not in the WI! Did you know you do not have to be a WI member to purchase one, so encourage your friends and family to take out a subscription, better still buy them one for Christmas!

Balmoral produced a surplus but it was £2,623 down on last year and only slightly up on 2022. This is disappointing considering all the effort put into it by the Balmoral Sub-Committee and our members. The Executive was so concerned that so much work goes into virtually standing still that it asked the Sub-Committee to carry out a major rethink of the Tea Room. A big thank you to you all and please do rally round again, to make this a bumper year.

Our investments did well over the year increasing by 7.4%. They were showing a steady increase until January when they reached £169k but have fallen back to £163k as a result of the uncertainty due to the new administration in the States. We will continue to monitor the situation but fluctuations are part of investments and we have to take a long-term view. We are grateful to our advisors Investec, now due a merger Rathbones, for looking after us so well.

The membership figures continue to be a worry, standing at present at 3,432, from 3,500 last year in 122 Institutes down from 127, our Chairman will have more to say on this. This of course affects our income from the membership fees, the fewer members, the less income, and existing members asked to pay more. In 2023, you voted that a review of the members subscriptions be carried out annually and that changes be made if necessary. I am pleased to say that with a surplus last year and a predicted one for this year I am not proposing an increase in the subscriptions this September.

Looking at other sources of income:

I am delighted to inform you, that in November we received a legacy of £15k from the late Jean Blair, a well-known member from Ballysallagh WI. She also left a sum to Ballysallagh. Then in January, the late Rita Kirkwood, left a legacy to her Institute Dundonald.

Some of you may remember, that on various occasions I have suggested that you remember the WI, particularly the Federation, in your will, I ask you again to do so. This is very special gift and it is heartwarming to know that there are members who valued the WI so much.

Federation House needs maintenance, apart from new carpets and redecoration, we need to upgrade the insulation. This costs money so we are in the process of applying for a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. It is giving up to £50k capital funding to improve the energy efficiency of community buildings. It is a complicated process; we have got through stage1 and now have to undergo carbon literacy training before we can get to the stage 2 application. If we are successful, we can make the building more energy efficient by putting in cavity wall insulation, upgrade the insulation in the roof space, new lighting, etc.

**Gift Aid**, or should I say, the gift of Gift Aid. Not many things in life are for free but Gift Aid is. It is a very valuable source of income and at no cost to the member taking part in the scheme. Please encourage your members to sign up for it when the Gift Aid request goes out, it should bring in more funds than it does.

Leaving the finance aside, I do have one very important matter to report on. At last year's AGM you voted that the Federation should apply to become a limited company. Well, we are now an incorporated company limited by guarantee to give it the correct title. We are not yet ready to go live as we are working with the Charity Commission for various permissions and our solicitor is preparing the transfer deeds. We will continue to be known as the Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland, there will be no Ltd in the title.

Some housekeeping matters:

A big thank you to all the Institutes who got their returns and members subscriptions in before the 15 December deadline, I cannot stress how important it is to our cash flow. There are still a few Institutes who have been late, there was one came in two weeks ago.

Now that you are settling into the routine please do continue, it helps everybody including the Treasurers who won't have it hanging over them over Christmas.

If your Secretary or Treasurer is not here today, will you please bring the following back to them. Kathleen spends long hours trying to get information together so that she can ensure that all members are insured or more simply that she can communicate with you.

Firstly, Treasurers please enclose a completed Insurance form with your subscriptions, these must be up to date so do not include anyone who has left, or as been found on occasions died. It is very easy to keep up to date if you do it on your computer and you can send it in online.

Secondly Secretaries, please get the yellow form giving the names and contact details of your office bearers in, as soon as possible after your AGM, without it we have no way of contacting you. Will you ensure that it is completed fully, please do not score out names from the previous year and write over them or just write "same as last year" or "no change". If there was no return the previous year, we have no information at all.

Finally, and this applies to everyone, if you send money in by bank transfer, please make sure you include your name, Institute and what it is for. Poor Kathleen has spent hours trying to track down payees of sums with no details, her time could be better spent elsewhere.

### **A few other matters:**

Once again, I would like to remind you about **the Handbook**. It is an invaluable resource, giving you details of governance of the Federation and such topics as the running of your Institute, insurance, finance, etc - a handy 'go to', or you could go on the website.

**Notes to All Treasurers** continues as a regular feature on page 4 of the Magazine, with reminders and topical hints to help Treasurers through the year. If you have a topic that you would like covered, please let me know. These are at least one of many good reasons for buying the Magazine.

We have offered, on many occasions, to run meetings or short courses specially for Treasurers. We are still very happy to do so. They can be done face to face in different centres around the country or online. They will not be high powered accountancy sessions as every effort will be made to make them as simple as possible. No previous experience needed. Just let us know if you want one.

As ever we have the Sales Table. Please browse and buy.

Before I finish, I must thank our loyal and grossly overworked staff for all their help. It has not been an easy year with no manager for most of it. Kathleen and Caroline continue to be unstinting in their dedication to the WI. A big thank you to them, we can't do without you both.

Madam Chairman, that concludes my report and it gives me great pleasure to propose the adoption of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2024 and the appointment of M. B. McGrady and Company as our accountants and auditors for the coming financial year.

Thank you.

**Sheelagh McRandal**  
**Federation Treasurer**



# The Federation of Women's Institutes

## Annual General Meeting

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### FWINI Sub-Committee Reports 2024-25

#### Arts Sub-Committee

A new Committee was formed after last year's AGM. The first function we were involved in was attendance at Balmoral Show 2024, where the Committee manned the art exhibition of paintings for sale by WI Members. There wasn't as many paintings as usual to display but there were quite a few sold. Beautiful tapestry pictures were donated by the family of a deceased member to be sold with proceeds going to WI Funds. These proved very popular and sold well. Thanks go to the family involved.

The Festival of the Spoken Word was held on 19th October 2024 at Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall. There were 63 entries in 6 classes. The adjudicator was Jenny A. Marshall, FVCM LVCM (TD) BSc Hons PGDip. She praised everyone for the variety of entries and gave professional and encouraging critiques. Templepatrick WI provide morning refreshments, which is always very welcome to all. Participants and audience are asked to bring their lunch with them. Tea and coffee are provided by the Committee and this arrangement seems to work well.

A very successful Coffee Morning and Arts Festival was held at Headquarters on 7th February 2025. The theme for Paintings this year was 'My Favourite Place' and there were 42 entries. There were 5 entries for 3D Decoupage, 6 entries in Calligraphy and 30 entries for Handwriting. The judge was Sinéad McDermott, a teacher of Art and Design and owner of The Design Factory. She commented on the high standard and variety of the works submitted. We had a good attendance and it was a very successful morning. Committee members supplied prizes for the ballot which was well supported.

After 5 years we were able to host the Drama Festival at Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall on 1st March 2025. Templepatrick WI as usual provided the morning refreshments. Thanks go to the 5 WIs that entered – Armoy, Garvagh, Moneymore, Muckamore and Richhill. I hope we will have more entries next year. There were 4 sketches and 2 plays. It was a very enjoyable and entertaining day. The adjudicator was Louise Nelson, former Head of Drama and CCEA Drama Moderator from Ballymena Academy. We had great acting and Louise gave great praise and professional advice to all those who entered. I admire all those who took part.

We now look forward to the Music Festival on 5th April in Templepatrick Presbyterian Church Hall. It was very successful last year with 5 choirs taking part. It was good to see a large audience, which gives support and encouragement to those performing. I am hoping for the same again this year. I would like to thank Templepatrick WI who provide scones, tea and coffee in the morning of each of our Festivals at Templepatrick.

My thanks to the Arts Committee members who are so willing and who work so well together in getting all the events organised. I very much appreciate the work of the office staff, Caroline and Kathleen, who have been so helpful to me since I became Chair of the Arts Committee.

Thank you to all those who attend our events and I hope more of you will consider attending future events. It is always a very enjoyable day out and it offers great support and encouragement to all who participate.

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

## **Balmoral Sub-Committee**

The Balmoral Show is always an important event in our Women's Institute calendar. As well as being a major source of income for our Federation the Show with its thousands of visitors, provides the opportunity to showcase the many activities of our wonderful Women's Institute and also gives our entire membership the opportunity to contribute and participate in baking for the tea room, providing for the market stall and taking part in the various competitions. It also highlights the talents of our members in art and craftwork.

The Women's Institute is renowned for the quality of the home baked produce which we provide for our traditional teas during the four days of the Show. While we had a very successful Show in 2024 our takings were slightly down from the previous year and the Committee thought that some changes had to be made in order to move forward.

Various suggestions and ideas were explored and we decided to reorganise the tea room and try out self-service this year. We also hope to have better signage to make our tea room more easily located. We are once again accommodated in the annex behind the Eikon Centre.

Our work in the Showgrounds will start on the Saturday before the Show opens when all the equipment needed will be transported from Headquarters. From an empty space the WI Balmoral team under the leadership of the 'Balmoral Committee' will work their magic and transform this empty space into a tea room and kitchen, leaving ample space for our market stall and usual display of beautiful crafts and competition exhibits.

While we are enthusiastic about our new arrangements we need your support in providing for the tea room and the market stall as well as helping with the various tasks associated with the Show, so please contact HQ if you are willing to come to the Show to help.

We are indebted to all our members for their commitment and willingness to contribute and hope this tradition continues for years to come.

**Janette Graham, Balmoral Sub-Committee Chair**

## **Home and Garden Sub-Committee**

It gives me great pleasure to present my report for Home and Garden. We are all looking forward to the longer evenings and the warmer weather and with Easter later this year we can only hope for a sunny one. May 2024 saw us back at Balmoral with once again a successful Show. Competitions were well supported and the children's birthday cake was a big hit. Competitions for this year's Show are advertised in the magazine and we look forward to seeing many entries. Once again, we are depending on the generosity of our fellow members throughout the four days.

At the start of this WI season, we took part in The City of Belfast Autumn Fair Flower Show which was held on 14th & 15th September 2024. 13 Institutes entered tables for the WI Competitions. It was lovely to see so many different entries and displays. Seaforde WI won first overall. The WI also won the Belfast City Council Show Rossette, awarded for the Best Society Award.

One of our most popular events in our WI calendar is our Christmas Event which took place on 23rd November 2024 in Armagh City Hotel with over 400 members attending. We had cake decorating with Jennifer and Dawn and the Christmas cake was donated to our ballot. Geri Martin from The Chocolate Manor demonstrated making her artisan chocolates and each member received a sample. After lunch we were entertained by the *Just Sing!* Community Choir.

The Christmas Event Competition was for a handmade Christmas cushion and was won by Hazel Brown from Ballywalter WI. Hazel was awarded the Romanian Platter.

Once again, we had our Christmas tree decorated with hats and scarves. These items were later donated to St. Vincent de Paul and The Salvation Army. Thank you to everyone who donated. Plans are now underway for this year's Christmas Event, which will take place on 22nd November 2025 in Armagh City Hotel. Details in upcoming magazines.

Climate change is still very much in our remit and the Committee members are still providing articles for the magazine. As you can see, Home and Garden have a busy year ahead. I would like to thank my Committee for all their hard work and support over this last year, and also Kathleen and Caroline in the office who do great work.

**Teresa Feeney, Home and Garden Sub-Committee Chair**

## Homecraft Sub-Committee

It gives me great pleasure to submit my first AGM report as Homecraft Chairperson. Thanks to my Committee who have worked very hard this year promoting Homecraft and the WI at events.

At the 2024 Balmoral Show the Homecraft Committee raised £2,173 through the sale of knitted toys and other handcrafted items. Thanks to our members for making this possible by donating items for sale. Lisnagarvey Area provided the display of handicrafts. The competitions were well supported, there certainly was a large clowder of cats!

In September 2024, we attended the Belfast City Autumn Fair in Botanic Gardens. There were 13 entries and the Homecraft items of a patchwork table runner and a decorated crochet pumpkin were all beautifully worked and popular with the public. I am very pleased that the joint Homecraft and Home and Garden display was awarded Society Display of the Show.

A One Day School was held in WI HQ on 21st September and attended by 25 ladies. Classes were: English Quilting, Millinery, Patchwork and Unfinished. It was a lovely, relaxing day, catching up with friends old and new.

November was a busy month. 5 days were spent at The Knitting & Stitching Show. This gave us an opportunity to showcase the talents of members within the WI and also to promote the organisation to potential new members. A Christmas Craft Day was also held in November. This was a fun and relaxing day, when members got together at HQ to handcraft some Christmas decorations whilst enjoying mulled wine and mince pies.

In January 2025, we attended a 'Craft Destash' fair to help with fundraising. £100 was raised.

Unfortunately, the planned Homecraft Weekend had to be cancelled due to low numbers. My Committee and I will look at other options for providing skill sharing and craft education that meets the needs of our members.

From September 2024 to March 2025, a total of 183 items were received for judging. The standard of entries remained high with 33 A+ and 125 A grades. 68 Ribbons, 5 Silver and 2 Gold awards were obtained this year. 66 entries were received for trophy judging.

Finally, I wish to thank Kathleen and Caroline for their support.

**Elizabeth McKinty, Homecraft Sub-Committee Chair**

## International Sub-Committee

This year we welcomed our new Committee and it was very pleasing to see a number of new members, as well as some returning members on to the Committee.

We are glad to report a very successful Rural Women's Day in October 2024 with Nadia Manchandra from Dungannon (originally from Ukraine) as our guest speaker. Nadia gave us a very insightful presentation on life in Ukraine during the conflict and how she came to live in Northern Ireland.

The Mary Boyd Competition at this event was a reusable shopping bag – 1st was Lyndsay Johnston (Maghaberry WI) receiving the Mary Boyd Trophy, and 2nd Elsie Miskimmon (Ballysallagh WI) receiving the Margaret McMillan Award – *well done ladies!*

Margaret Broome was the worthy recipient of the Evelyn Lord Trophy for her previous contribution to UN / ACWW Committee.

As usual, our ladies have worked extremely hard to support ACWW projects through *Women Walk the World*, auctions and other very creative fundraising events. We are most grateful to everyone who contributes to ACWW and we look forward to seeing at first hand, the impact of the first project in Bucharest, Romania when we visit our European Conference later this year.

The Committee have also made contact with Flourish which is an organisation that aims to restore hope and dignity to survivors of human trafficking and ending modern slavery. Flourish has stated that they are most in need of toiletries for their survivors and we are actively looking at ways in which we can support their request.

I had the privilege to attend the second Women's Parliament which was held in Stormont on 28th February and was delighted to hear one of the Ranfurly WI ladies speak on the Provision of Child Care in Rural Area. The Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Children was also one of the topics raised and I am pleased to report that The Programme for Government (2024 – 2027) has pledged to continue to support this Strategy in the coming years.

The European Conference was originally planned for Netherlands in October of this year, but unfortunately the venue has had to be changed to Bucharest, Romania (14th – 17th October 2025); please look out on the ACWW website for further details as they become available.

Next year, the Triennial World Conference is to be held in Ottawa, Canada (26th April – 1st May 2026) and we look forward to attending this Conference and participate in the election of officers and debate proposed resolutions.

I would like to finish by thanking Rhoda and all the Committee members for their support and hard work over the year and look forward to joining as many of you as possible at the European and World Conferences. Thank you to Kathleen and Caroline for all the behind the scenes work which allows us to function as a Sub-Committee; and helps us promote the work of ACWW.

**Ruth Carroll, International Sub-Committee Chair**

### **Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee**

The Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee are responsible for the publication of our monthly magazine, the Ulster Countrywoman and the organisation and running of the following sporting events and competitions.

***Sporting Events:*** Bowls, Quiz and Golf.

***Competitions:*** Photography, Literary, Scrapbook, Best Magazine Cover, Best Magazine Article and Best Poem in the Magazine.

A total of six editions of the Ulster Countrywoman are now produced on a yearly basis - September, Autumn, Christmas, New Year, Spring and Summer. WIs are invoiced for all 6 magazines in October for the year – Please note that once invoices are issued a WI cannot decrease an order but may increase its order as and when required.

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.

The Spring edition will be available at the beginning of April. 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. Please refer to the article on photography in the September 2024 magazine. Not all photographs, articles or activities can make it into the magazine but they may appear on the FWINI Facebook page, on Instagram or on the website.

The magazine competition page continues to be well supported and our annual Fireside Quiz is greatly enjoyed by the membership. The Phyllis Gaily Literary Competition has attracted a large number of entries as has the Scrapbook Competition – the winners will be announced today at the AGM including the winners of the Quoile Trophy (Best Magazine Cover) and Mourne Cup for the Best Poem.

Congratulations to all the winners and runners-up in the competitions and to all those who enter the competitions supporting the Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee.

The Bowls Final was held last Saturday with 19 bowlers competing for the Milk Marketing Board Salver.

#### ***Upcoming events:***

**Quiz Final** – Thursday, 29th May 2025, Connor Presbyterian Church Hall, Kells.

\*Starting 7:30pm *sharp!* Teams need to be registered by 7.15pm.

**Golfer of the Year** – Monday, 16th June 2025, Greenacres Golf Centre, Ballyclare.

**Photographic Competition** – Title: ***'On It's Own'***. Closing date for entries: Monday, 7th July 2025.

Details of these competitions, closing dates and winners are published in the magazine, WI Facebook page and the website.

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, Magazine and Leisure Sub-Committee Chair**