

North Yorkshire West Federation Women's Institutes

North Yorkshire West Federation WI **The Minutes of the Spring Council Meeting 2024** **Held on April 10th at Hampsthwaite Village Hall**

Health and Safety

There was a short health and safety presentation by Heather Stoney, Federation Chairman.

Everyone attending the meeting sang Jerusalem.

Welcome

Heather gave a short welcome speech to the meeting.

She then introduced the meeting to the guests and welcomed them. The guests were past Chairmen – Ellen Dunkley and Sue Riley – Heather said that it was lovely to see them both. There were no guests from other Federations as the meeting was limited for numbers, but Heather said that they would be invited to Autumn Lunch in October this year. Heather introduced the Board of Trustees – Julie Clarke – Vice Chair and Chair of Activities and GYS Committees, Hazel Smyth, Federation Treasurer, Pam Myers – Assistant Treasurer, Sue Butters – WI Adviser and Helen Smith, Federation Secretary. Unfortunately, Sue Earl Armstrong was unable to attend the meeting and Heather said our thoughts are with her. Janet Kazlauciusas is stepping down as a Trustee. Heather thanked all the Trustees and the Federation Secretary.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were from Sylvia Foxton, past Chairman of the Federation, Sue Gudgeon of Long Preston WI, Jan Harris of Skipton Dalesway WI and Mary Partridge of Glasshouses WI.

Approval of the Minutes of the Spring Council Meeting 2023

Heather Stoney the Federation Chairman asked the meeting to approve the minutes of the Spring Council meeting held on 22nd April 2023 at Tennants Garden Rooms in Leyburn. This was proposed by Lea Taylor of Coverdale WI and seconded by Jen Capewell of Richmond WI. She asked if the meeting was happy that she signed them as a correct record, and it was agreed.

Presentation of the Accounts for the Year Ended 2023

The Federation Treasurer, Hazel Smyth, then presented the Accounts for the Year ended 2023. A copy of the Annual Report and accounts has been sent to each WI.

Hazel began by highlighting the points of interest in the Annual Report. She said that some members will have seen that last year the meeting voted to appoint JWP Creers. The company was taken over in January by Fortus North but Veronica who dealt with the Federation is still the accountant there. Income exceeded what was expected and was £8,000. This was more than in 2022. Income included subscriptions of 25,000 which does not cover all the overheads.

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Events and workshops large and small were held and were successful due to members' support. Hazel thanked everyone who had supported the Great Yorkshire Show and said that Julie would be delighted to accept help this year.

The interest rate on the savings of the Federation were better over the year and amounted to £5,500 this year on the deposit account. The Federation gained money from the sale of National raffle tickets – they were sold at Great Yorkshire Show - £699 was sent back to the Federation from National Federation. The Federation Gift Aid claim was £600.

Hazel asked members to let us know what sort of activities they would like us to hold. If they are not affordable, she said they should let us know. She said, however, that costs need to be covered by charges.

The other cost incurred this year was in changing to a CIO. Hazel said that we have taken legal advice which are included in costs for 2023, but there will be additional costs in the future. These include costs associated with problems with the lease of Alma House and it will affect the 2024 accounts.

Reserves in 2023 are 162, 847. The current policy of the Federation is to keep £85,000 back. If there was another pandemic, for example, this would cover rent and salaries. There is enough money to run the Federation for a year. Some of the funds in the reserves are restricted, for example, the Denman Funds, which were received due to the sale of Denman by National Federation. Some of the funds were for tea fund, boiler fund etc. All these funds have been consolidated into one fund. For now, National Federation has not explained what courses should be paid for with the funds. Another significant fund is the Suspended WIs Fund. Several WIs have been suspended and for some it is three years ago since they were suspended. Funds from the ones which have been closed for three years have been transferred to the Federation. They were held for 3 years in case another WI opened in the same area and needed access to the funds. Also, the Board of Trustees agreed to fund all training of WI officers relating to the running of WIs. The Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers meeting in May is free to attend and the New Members meeting is free. The MCS meeting in Bedale costs £7.50 per WI as there are still associated costs.

Regarding issues with finances over the year, Hazel said that she knows that a lot of WIs had problems. She said that the WI is not the only charity to have problems with bank accounts and she advised WI members to record every phone call with the date and time and to keep letters and emails so that a formal complaint can be made. Pam contacted her local MP, and this worked. Banks are increasing some costs on cheques for some WIs and if WIs were considering online banking, Hazel asked them to get in touch. She told members not to worry about authorization as some banks allow you to do this online with another person signing an invoice. National Federation has said that this is acceptable.

Regarding insurance and risk assessments, Hazel said that WIs are concerned that they are not insured, but they are. She talked to the existing insurers/brokers following conversations with other Treasurers from other Federations and the North Yorkshire West Federation decided to go with NFU Mutual. Hazel said that she felt confident that the agent understood what a WI was, what they did and what he was

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insuring. She asked WIs to contact her if they need any further information about the policy document.

Hazel talked about postage costs which are all going up and advised members to feel free to send things together. She said that the Federation is trying hard to send everything in one envelope. Helen also sends things by email. She told members that if they need help setting up a central email address, please let her know. She asked the members if they were sending a booking form for the Great Yorkshire Show, to please send an SAE. Julie had to send out 50 sets of tickets out that did not have SAEs. She advised members that they could send booking forms by email to Helen but to let us know that they are paying by BACS.

Gift Aid

£600 was claimed from Gift Aid last year and there remains several WIs to be claimed for. Once WIs have signed the form they can claim back four years' worth of Gift Aid and everything in the future. Members must say if they are not able to pay Gift Aid – eg if they are paying less tax or to a different charity. You fill out a spreadsheet and upload it to HMRC. She asked if they could also send them to Pam Myers. Hazel said if members had any queries, they should get in touch with herself or Pam – even if they only have ¾ members who can do Gift aid this will give them £30 or £40 back to their WI.

Associated Countrywomen of the World (ACWW)

Hazel said that the Pennies for Friendship organised by ACWW is still going but they have no WI representative. The scheme is still running in some WIs, she asked that members please let her know if someone wants to be a representative. WIs can also send money to ACWW.

Subscriptions

Hazel said that some WIs have sent subscriptions in, and some are still collecting them. She asked if they could be forwarded before the end of April if possible.

Adoption of Accounts

Hazel proposed adoption of the 2023 Accounts, Kath Rayner of Skelton on Ure WI proposed the adoption and Helen Churchill of Ripon Centre WI seconded this. All delegates were asked to raise their hand if they agreed. There were none against.

Hazel asked the meeting if they would agree to using Fortus North as the Accountants this year – Sara Baldwin Cole proposed the motion and Vivienne Pearce of Skipton Dalesway seconded it. There was a show of hands in agreement and none against.

Regarding the adoption of the Annual Report, Lesley Fidler from Farnley Estate WI proposed the motion and Gail Evans of Threshfield & Linton WI seconded the motion. There was a show of hands in agreement, and none were against.

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Chairman's Report

The Federation along with many Federations throughout England have had challenges this year. We are struggling still to get members to large events since Covid. At the start of 2023 members were still unsure about attending large groups but as the year progressed the situation improved, and we have been able to move forward very positively.

Our other challenge for 2023 is again like other Federations we are short of trustees to join the Board, but because of the commitment of all our trustees and the resilience and support of all our members I am sure that we will move forward to 2024 still as North Yorkshire West Federation. We have three possible new Trustees and new members on all three committees. Well done to members and Trustees for all their hard work.

The Trustees have carried on doing all the extra tasks to assist our Federation Secretary Helen Smith. This is a cost-saving exercise as Helen is only part-time, this has enabled the Federation to save a great deal of money and with your subscriptions and support at events we have finished in the black! I could not have survived the endless worries if I had not had a very supportive and hardworking team of trustees supporting me. We do work as a team, just as members do in their own WI's.

On your arrival at the venue, you will have been given an envelope each for your WI Secretary – there is a new copy of the constitution in the envelope as the Federation is now a CIO. We will send the constitution out to other WIs in the monthly mailing. This should encourage future Trustees of the Federation as now they are no longer financially liable to the Federation. Heather thanked Hazel who she said had put time and effort into the project and guided herself and Julie. Heather said that delegates were also given a questionnaire about the newsletter, (not the one to be sent out in May). She asked delegates to please fill this in and leave it in the basket at the exit as it really does help. Comments can also be added.

Heather said that there is one more important message – regarding the MCS, this is a vital link for the office at the Federation and National as well. Not all lists are up to date. There is a national award which is based on information from the MCS, so it is important to keep this up to date. She asked Treasurers to tick the paid box when subscriptions were received. She asked WIs to let Helen know when there has been a change of officer.

During the year we celebrated our Ruby Anniversary- it was forty years since North Yorkshire West Federation inception. We decided as a Board to do things differently and the trustees held “Tea and Cake “ At four locations throughout the federations, we felt we should go and visit our members, we had a slide show and quiz, lots of friendships were renewed and members thanked us for going to see them.

Federation Events commenced with Spring Council, this was held at Tennant's Garden Rooms at Leyburn, it is always a favourite with members and consequently was well supported. The hospitality was excellent, and I think all attendants enjoyed the day. In the morning, we were given an informative talk by three ladies from West

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Yorkshire Federation on Climate Change and how we can make a difference.

After Lunch and all the certificates and awards were presented, we were royally entertained by David Harper about Georgian England. David made the subject come to life he wandered through the audience, we laughed and shrieked at tales of powdered wigs and mice. To keep up appearances he stuck with his notable brightly coloured trousers. It was lovely to see and hear fun and laughter and ladies going home stating "What a wonderful day".

The year progressed with events that were organised by the committees and were well supported. Great Yorkshire Show was upon us – How would we cope for four full days and less helpers, but as always members that did help came up trumps, they stayed longer. They did double shifts, they come back on other days, the support was amazing, we could not do it without you - Thank You. They are long days, but laughter and friendship are the best medicines for tired feet!! We look forward to 2024.

The Federation was unable to have an Autumn Lunch this year because we did not want to bombard you with too many events in the Autumn, but it will be back in 2024.

The Federation Carol Service had a new venue this year, we travelled to Holy Trinity Church in Skipton, we had a wonderful service attended by over two hundred members, Nidderdale Community Choir joined us for the service, they were amazing and braved the extreme cold (The heating boiler had broken down and the weather was appalling) but the warmth of the members made it all worthwhile.

I must finish my report by saying a huge thankyou to all the Federation committees and their team of helpers who have arranged very successful trips, events and workshop throughout the year, without their unwavering support and the support of you our valued members my role would be much harder.

Introduction to Morning Speaker

Heather introduced the morning speaker, Ruth Packwood from Hope at Home. Ruth thanked Heather and Helen for the logistics of arranging to have her as a speaker.

Ruth talked about her organization, Hope at Home, which supports victims of modern slavery by hosting them within families in the UK. She outlined the work the organization does and how hosting works. People can volunteer to host a victim of modern slavery in a spare bedroom in their own home to give the person stability and safety for a period. She told the meeting that there are not enough spaces available now. Hope at Home very carefully match the person to the host, and the hosting is not permanent, it is usually 3 to 6 months. Ruth gave a definition of modern slavery – this is when a person is exploited by others for personal or financial gain, whether tricked, coerced or forced and they lose their freedom. She outlined the types of modern slavery. The delegates and visitors to the meeting took part in a short questionnaire to help them understand the subject in more detail and there were some surprising answers to the questions Ruth asked. Ruth explained

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what a person should do if they suspect a case of modern slavery, that they should not intervene themselves but ring 999 or the modern slavery helpline. Ruth said that anyone can host, and she outlined the requirements. There were then questions from the floor. Ruth drew the meeting's attention to the organisation's website at www.hopeathome.org.uk.

Vote of Thanks

The vote of thanks was given by Pam Myers, Assistant Treasurer.

The Chairman then announced the lunch.

The meeting re-commenced at 1.45 pm.

The results of the 200 Club draw for April were announced as follows:

225 – Andrea Ainley, Askwith with Weston WI (£100)

177 – Scriven WI (£50)

102 – Rylstone WI (£25).

Presentation of Certificates and Awards

Long Service Awards

Heather said that next year only the 0s and 5s would be given out. Alan Dedicoat gave Julie her 50 years award. The award for Janet Handley, who sadly died, was taken by a representative from her WI and will be given to her daughter. She mentioned Sylvia Foxton who is receiving an award but who cannot attend due to illness. Certificates were given out to representatives from the WIs for long service awards and WI birthdays by the Vice Chairman. The WIs who were not present will have their certificates posted to them.

The awards were as follows for long service:

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| Sylvia Foxton | Skelton on Ure | 70 years |
| Kathleen Carlisle | Rylstone & District | 68 years |
| Joan Fraser | Kirkby Malzeard | 65 years |
| Sylvia Bentley | Killinghall | 60 years |
| Brenda Clayton | Goldsborough | 60 years |
| Eileen Houseman | Arkendale | 60 years |
| Enid Crowe | Newton le Willows | 60 years |
| Margaret Evans | Harrogate Library | 60 years |
| Beryl Bamforth | Rylstone & District | 58 years |
| Mary Sutcliffe | Rylstone & District | 57 years |
| Janet Handley | Newton le Willows | 55 years |
| Irene Verity | Fearby & Healey | 55 years |
| Ruth Patchett | Fearby & Healey | 55 years |
| Julie Clarke | Coverdale | 50 years |
| Annie Heseltine | Malham | 50 years |
| Elizabeth Booth | Austwick | 50 years |

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| Mary Caygill | Rylstone & District | 45 years |
| Angela Knowles | Rylstone & District | 45 years |
| Audrey Lockey | Newton le Willows | 45 years |
| Evelyn Walker | Newton le Willows | 45 years |
| Anne Ashton | Aspin Park | 45 years |
| Elaine Duerden | Aspin Park | 45 years |
| Margaret Walker | Aspin Park | 45 years |
| Rosita Moore | Aspin Park | 45 years |
| Pat Tankard | Aspin Park | 45 years |
| Christine Graham | Fearby & Healey | 45 years |
| Eileen Dodsworth | Glasshouses | 43 years |
| Margaret Andrews | Richmond | 40 years |
| Pat Dunnill | Starbeck Afternoon | 40 years |
| Ann Green | Roecliffe | 40 years |
| Jo Mitchell | Roecliffe | 40 years |
| Tricia Stewart | Rylstone & District | 40 years |
| Hazel Smyth | Marton cum Grafton | 40 years |
| Anne Gregg | Fearby & Healey | 40 years |
| Linda Ellis | Fearby & Healey | 40 years |

WI Birthdays

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| Marton cum Grafton | 100 years |
| Summerbridge | 95 years |
| Arkendale | 95 years |
| Burneston & Carthorpe | 95 years |
| Coverdale | 95 years |
| Kirkby Malzeard | 95 years |
| Malham | 95 years |
| Glasshouses | 75 years |
| Askwith with Weston | 75 years |
| Cononley | 65 years |
| Richmond | 40 years |

Awards: Nora Worth Annual Craft Award, Ella Pullan Trophy, Federation Rose Bowl, and Ann Martin Award

The Chairman presented the following certificates and awards and provided members with a summary of the individual awards:

Norah Worth Annual Craft Award – this year the subject for the entry was “Make what you like from a 100g ball of Double Knitting Wool”. The award was split this year and the two winners would receive the trophy for 6 months each. The winners were Lesley Fidler of Farnley Estate WI and Nicola Johnson of Aldborough, Boroughbridge & Dunsforth WI.

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The Federation Rose Bowl is for the Institute who has gained most members in the Federation over the past year that started off with less than 30 members. This year the winner is West Tanfield WI.

The Ella Pullen Trophy is awarded for the Institute who has gained most members in the Federation over the past year that started off with 30 members. This year it has been awarded to Spa Sweethearts. Unfortunately, they are unable to attend Spring Council today, but it will be presented to them by Heather at their meeting tomorrow evening.

Heather said that before the bursaries were announced, she wanted to mention Trustee Janet Kazlauciuonas and to thank her for all she has done for the Federation as a Trustee and as Chair of the Public Affairs Committee. She said that everyone wished her well for the future. Janet said she is not leaving, she is still on the Activities and GYS Committees. Heather presented her with a gift of flowers.

The Federation awards 10 bursaries of £25 each to WIs which are drawn at random. These can then be used at any Federation event as full payment or part payment for a workshop or event. This year the bursaries are given to:

1. Addingham WI
2. Coverdale WI
3. Fearby & Healey WI
4. Harrogate Library WI
5. Kettlewell & District WI
6. Masham WI
7. Salterforth WI
8. Starbeck Afternoon WI
9. Stray Ladies WI
10. Summerbridge WI.

Raffle Announcement

The raffle was announced, and the winning tickets were attached to the prizes.

Introduction to the Afternoon Speaker

Julie introduced the afternoon speaker, Alan Dediccoat, as a person who people would recognize simply by his voice.

Alan gave a very funny and enlightening talk and mentioned other celebrities that he knew including Terry Wogan. Everyone was entertained by his witty stories and memories.

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Vote of Thanks

Sue Butters thanked Alan Dedicoat for his entertaining talk. She said that he was a hard act to follow and that when he came in people recognized him by his voice, but they will never forget him now.

Chairman's Closing Remarks and Announcement of 2025 Meeting

Heather thanked all the members for coming to the meeting and she said she would like to think that everyone had a wonderful day. She thanked Alan Dedicoat and the caterer, Rachel Greensit and her team and volunteers from Killinghall WI who had made teas and coffees.

The date for next year's meeting is Saturday 12th April 2025 and the Chairman said that it will be at Tennants Garden Rooms in Leyburn.

National Anthem

Everyone stood to sing the National Anthem, remembering that it was "God Save Our Gracious King".

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm.