



LEVINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE - REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISHES MEETING Wednesday 24 May 2023

I am pleased to present this report in this my 4th year as President of our wonderful WI.

Before writing this, I looked at my 2022 report & I must say how good it is to be able to comment that this last year has been 'normal' & not affected by Covid, though, obviously, we are still aware of the virus & try to reduce the risk as much as practicable.

Our current membership stands at 36 - a very creditable number for such a small village although a third come from outside the parishes, saying they just enjoy being part of our friendly group. I am pleased to say that we continue to get new members from the village, as our reputation as a friendly & welcoming bunch continues to grow.

We meet in the Village Hall, at 7:30, on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, as a rule.

Speakers on a variety of subjects are booked to entertain and educate us. This year the topics have included things as diverse as self defence techniques; sign language for the deaf and a talk featuring unusual gravestones (which was more interesting than it sounds!). A talk by a forensic scientist was particularly well received, as she had worked on high profile cases of which we were all aware. Zelda from Viking Glass was another popular speaker &, coming as she did in the Autumn, meant we could purchase items as Christmas presents.

As we are a very sociable group we sometimes deliberately choose not to have a speaker as members welcome the chance to chat with each other & catch up on news. Often these occasions are accompanied by good food & the odd glass of Prosecco which seems to have become our favourite tipple!

It's customary to hold a competition at each of our regular meetings. The member who has earned the most competition points at the end of the year is presented with a rosebowl to hold for the following year. This trophy was renamed this year to honour our dear former member Pat Owen who sadly passed away in 2022.

But our WI is not just about the monthly meetings. We also organise regular walks; lunches/teas out; cinema/theatre trips & other outings such as the private guided visit to see the Staffordshire Hoard at Sutton Hoo which we enjoyed late last year. Such outings are particularly useful for those living alone who welcome the chance to attend such events in the company of others.

Craft workshops have also become popular events. These are usually held on a Saturday morning to allow those who work to attend.

All WI's are affiliated to a County Federation as well to the National organisation. Several members have attended Federation events such as coach outings; kurling; 10 pin bowling; & flower arranging.

Of course, important features of the past year have been the late Queen's platinum Jubilee & the Coronation of King Charles. I was humbled to have been asked to light the village beacon for the Jubilee, in recognition of the WI's 60th anniversary the previous year & the role it plays in our parishes. The WI played its part at the Jubilee celebrations by putting up the bunting in the marquee for the Sunday tea party. Many noticed our line of knickers – not strictly Jubilee bunting we know but we thought people would enjoy a smile & that it would reinforce the message that WI members are not all stuffy tweed-wearing fuddy duddies – we are just ordinary people who enjoy a variety of interests & who certainly have a sense of humour! On that note I will close my report!

Marian Rose
President, Levington WI