

Hinckley Canalside WI

Members' Handbook

2026 -27



Website: <https://hinckleycanalsidewi.co.uk/>

Email: canalsidewipresident@gmail.com



Welcome to Hinckley Canalside WI

Now you are a member, you are part of The National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) which is one of the largest voluntary organizations for women in the UK, with around 170,000 members in approximately 5,500 WIs.

In 1915 the NFWI set out to give women a voice, to be a force for good in the community. A trusted place for women, run by women of all generations, giving an opportunity to share our experiences, or learn from someone with real knowledge, first hand. The same is true today.

The name of **Hinckley Canalside WI** was chosen as the original catchment area had strong links to the local waterways, the canal literally running alongside some of our homes, and Trinity Marina and The Wharf Inn were not far away. At our first meeting on 2.11.2011 we had around 30 members. This quickly built up to and is currently over 75 members of varying ages and backgrounds, some of whom live outside of Hinckley. We moved venues in January 2020 to the Mary Forryan Centre at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Leicester Rd, Hinckley LE10 1LW, but decided to retain our name. In March 2020 physical meetings became impossible due to the COVID-19 epidemic, and we moved to provide virtual speakers online using Zoom from June, with a plan to resume physical meetings as soon as this became safe and possible. We resumed physical meetings in September 2021. We also have several special interest groups meeting regularly, which includes two craft clubs, a book club, and darts and skittles teams.

We produce a monthly newsletter about past events and future plans with other information, circulated by email where possible to keep down costs; printed copies are available at meetings for visitors or those without email.

We also have a website <https://hinckleycanalsidewi.co.uk/> and a **Facebook** page.

We hope you will find this handbook informative and useful, as you may know little about WIs in general or how our WI operates. We are a friendly, informal group and want you to feel welcome and included in our plans and activities from the beginning. If you have any questions or would like to suggest further additions to future editions of this handbook, please talk to a committee member. Details were correct at time of review. Your committee's details and photos are on the next pages, with their primary role/responsibilities, but any of us would be happy to help in any way we can.

Hinckley Canalside WI – Who's Who

Your committee members, main responsibilities and other contacts for the current year are below. The president is selected or retained by members' votes, following nominations, at our annual meeting each November.



Mandy Cutler

President
WI Adviser, Trips/Events, Website Updates,
Programme Card, Members' Handbook,
Committee Data



Mary Groombridge

Secretary
County Events Bookings
Assistance with trips/events



Karen Saunders

Committee Officer



Margaret Lawrence

Vice President
Programme Secretary
Member Liaison



Denise Wilson

Monthly Newsletter



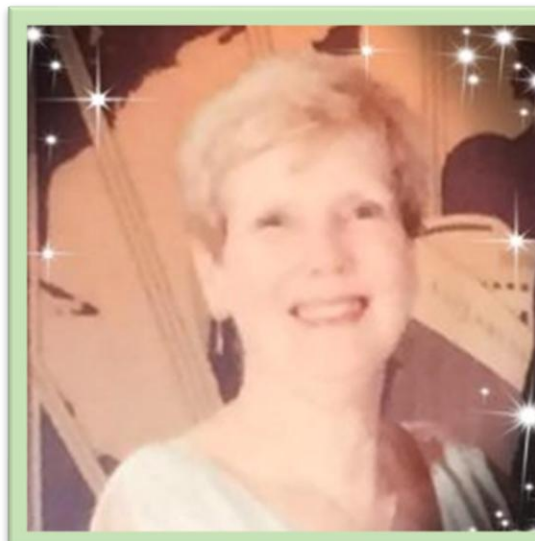
Pat McShane

Membership Secretary/MCS
Book Club
Darts Co-ordinator
Gift Aid
ACWW
Resolutions
Collection of recycling items



Gill Hannah

Members' Welfare/Birthdays
Raffles
Skittles Co-ordinator
Theatre Trips
Scrapbook & Publicity



Cath Greenwell

Sales Table
Trade Register
Record of Monthly Meetings
Meeting Snapshot

	We currently have vacancies on the committee – if you would like to get involved in any way, large or small, talk to any of us. You would be very welcome.
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Refreshments Team

	
Justine Goodwin	Jenny Wright

Other Contacts	
Julie Cooper	Third Tuesday Craft Group &
Mandy Cutler	WI Adviser

Information about Canalside WI Meetings

We usually meet on the 1st Wednesday of every month; January can be an exception when we may meet on the 2nd Wednesday. There is no official meeting in August, but usually a social/fundraising event. Our meetings take place at the Mary Forryan Centre at St Peter's Catholic Church, Leicester Rd, Hinckley, LE10 1LW - starting at 7.30pm prompt. There are plenty of car parking spaces – no charge.

There are 11 WI meetings each year included in your membership. The speakers/activities are planned in the autumn for the following April to March meetings and are presented for members' approval.

Members' suggestions for specific speakers or preferred interests are welcomed. Details of the meetings and planned activities for the year ahead will be in your programme, given out in April or on joining.

When you arrive at a meeting, please tick next to your name (they are displayed alphabetically by surname) on the attendance sheet at the table in the foyer. Members are asked to help with setting out tables and chairs, if they are able, and to help return furniture to its usual place at the end of the meeting.

Timetable for the Evening:

- 7.30pm welcome and WI business/updates by the president and committee
- Speaker/demonstration
- Thanking the speaker
- Refreshments and social time – opportunity to book event/trips or visit the sales table
- Meeting ends at around 9.30pm

Refreshments

Tea and coffee are available after the speaker's talk and cakes or fruit are provided by the members too, on a rota basis. At the meeting a committee member asks for volunteers to bake or buy for the following month. We do try to cater for any special dietary needs, so please let a committee member know if you have a particular dietary need, and we will do our best to accommodate this. Members are requested to contribute £1 for refreshments, though if you have provided cake or fruit, you are not expected to pay at that meeting. Any monies left after expenses are put towards payment of our Christmas buffet.

It would be great if you could **bring a reusable cup or travel mug** to our meetings – or **even your own crockery** with a zip up bag! This small gesture counts and is consistent with WI campaigns over the last 100 years on a range of environmental causes - such as the action on End Plastic Soup.

Raffles are run at meetings, and the proceeds are used for members' welfare. Prize donations are always welcome.



Thanking the Speaker

We thank the speaker before refreshments and are always looking for volunteers to fulfil this task. If you wish to volunteer, please contact a member of the committee. Thanks should be sincere, audible and delivered with a smile both in your voice and on your face! If you want some help with this task, here are some guidelines:

T Thank you Mr Jones – or if you know him well, Tony.

R Recall a relevant point from the talk – but do not re-run it all.

A Add a brief comment from your own experience.

C Compliment the speaker.

T Thank again – and stop!

Visitor Policy



We always welcome visitors, so if you have a friend who would like to come to a meeting, ask them to sign the visitors' sheet on the signing in table in the foyer.

Guidance from the NFWI (the national tier of the WI) states that an individual should be permitted to attend up to three times as a visitor before she is obliged to pay the full subscription and become a member.

As we claim Gift Aid on some members' subscriptions (with their consent), we do not charge a visitor fee. Visitors may wish to donate, but there is **no obligation**. A suggested donation per visit is £3.

Subscriptions 2026/27

National Subscriptions rates are set annually by the NFWI Board of Trustees, after consulting the National Council. Annual membership subscription for 2026/27 is **£54.00**. Subscriptions are due in April each year, to be paid by the end of the month. The subscription payment is distributed as follows:

Annual Membership Fee	Our WI share	Federation share	NFWI share
£54.00	£27.10	£12.55	£14.35

Pro-rata subscription for new or returning members in their first year.

New members joining the WI for the **first time**, or who have **not previously been a member of any WI for at least one year**, will pay a **pro-rata subscription** depending on the quarter in which they join. The rate per quarter, and the distribution are shown in the following table:

Date of joining	Total subscription	WI share	Federation share	NFWI share
1 Apr to 30 June 2026	£54.00	£27.10	£12.55	£14.35
1 July to 30 Sept 2026	£40.50	£20.33	£9.41	£10.76
1 Oct to 31 Dec 2026	£27.00	£13.55	£6.28	£7.17
1 Jan to 31 Mar 2027	£13.50	£6.78	£3.14	£3.58

Multi members (already a member of another WI) pay only the annual WI share to join another WI. The cost of multi membership - payable to the second WI - is a maximum of **£27.10** for the year 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027.

Please note that the NFWI Board of Trustees have now decided that WIs can pro-rata multi members if they so choose.

Canalside WI Membership Subscriptions 2026 – 2027

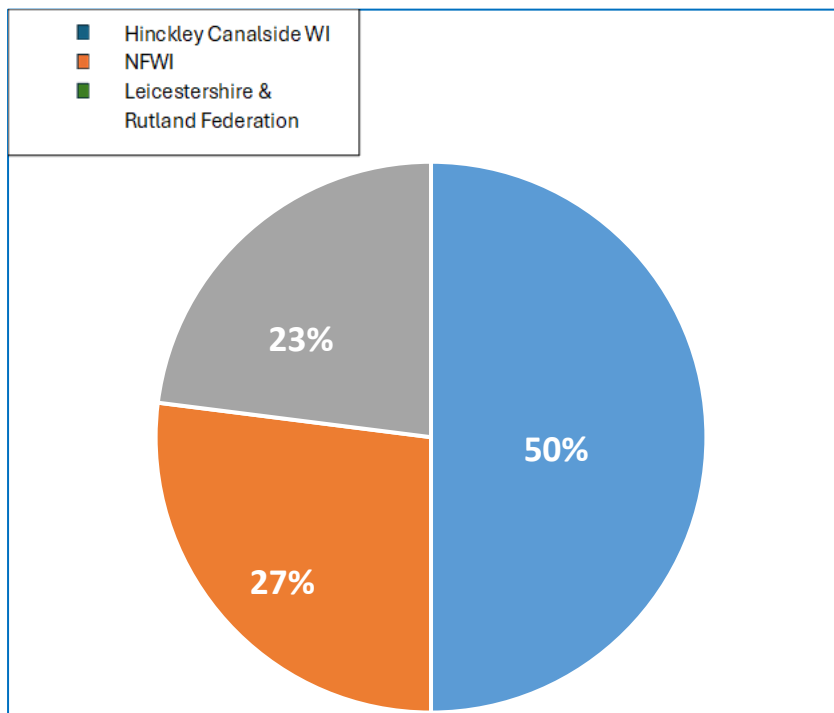
Because Canalside WI committee members have decided on a £2 reduction on the WI share, the membership fee will be **£52**.

Multi Membership: Therefore, multi members at Canalside WI will pay **£25.10**, a £2 reduction.

Canalside WI pro-rata subscription for new or returning members in their first year will therefore be reduced on the WI share, as follows:

Date of joining	Total subscription	WI share	Federation share	NFWI share
1 Apr to 30 June 2025	£52.00	£25.10	£12.55	£14.35
1 July to 30 Sept 2025	£39.00	£18.83	£9.41	£10.76
1 Oct to 31 Dec 2025	£26.00	£12.55	£6.28	£7.17
1 Jan to 31 Mar 2026	£13.00	£6.28	£3.14	£3.58

What does my membership include?



- ✚ A welcoming place to make friends and participate in activities
- ✚ 4 issues of The WI Magazine
- ✚ 11 meetings
- ✚ The opportunity to involve yourself in exciting local and national campaigns
- ✚ Bespoke member only events held virtually and at venues around the country
- ✚ Member's book of discount offers
- ✚ Training opportunities such as becoming a WI Adviser or Climate Ambassador
- ✚ The option to be a WI committee member, a federation trustee and/or an NFWI trustee
- ✚ Access to My WI
- ✚ Access to the VIA Learning Hub with many free courses
- ✚ The opportunity to meet like-minded women from different backgrounds.
- ✚ A place for self-expression – each WI is unique and shaped by its members.

Gift Aid



You will receive a WI Gift Aid Declaration Form – when you join or pay your subscription in April. If you are a taxpayer, please consider opting in.

This means that, for every £1 of your subscription, Canalside WI can claim 25p of Gift Aid – on the WI share - which on a year's membership could add an extra £6.28 to funds. **This is at no cost to yourself.**

Data Protection

Members' data is held securely by some committee members. If you want to find more information about the WI and data protection, then use the website link: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/essential-information/wi-policy-and-guidance#data-protection>

Photos: Personal data includes photos. We ask members to complete a consent form giving permission, or otherwise, for committee members to take photos of you and use these in our printed and online publicity. Our publicity officer, Gill Hannah, will normally be taking the photos.

At some meetings we try to ensure that a disclaimer reminding members that photos may be taken is publicized. Those members who have opted out are asked to withdraw before a photo is taken or, failing this, to inform the photographer before photos are published.

Please inform Pat McShane, our MCS rep, if you wish to update or delete any personal data (including your telephone number, email or address) held by us.

Annual Meeting

Our WI Annual Meeting is held in November of each year, when the president and committee for the following year are appointed. We have a maximum of 15 on our committee, who usually meet once monthly, to discuss and plan our meetings and other activities. Committee roles are decided at the next meeting of the new committee after our annual meeting. We are a friendly, lively committee and always encourage our members to get involved; you can join our committee at any time in the year if there are vacancies – we currently have seven. If you would like to observe a committee meeting, you are welcome to join us. Talk to a committee member if you would like to know more.

Additional Activities

Our committee members arrange a variety of optional trips and events for members throughout the year, which are self-funded (i.e., any cost is met by participants). Ideas are always welcome from members. Details are announced in our monthly newsletter and at meetings, and you can add your name to the relevant list on payment of a deposit or full payment. The trips/events table is on your right as you enter the main meeting hall.

Subsidy for members on a trip or a theatre visit 2026 - 27

Committee members have agreed to offer all members a £5 subsidy.

This can be used on one occasion to offset the cost of either a trip or theatre visit in the period January 2026 to December 2026.

Clubs

Hinckley Canalside has supported several groups of members with similar interests in arranging other regular meetings or activities. We currently have two Craft Clubs, a Book Club and a Drama Group (CADS), as well as a Lunch Club: their activities are publicized in our monthly newsletter, and organiser contact details are available from your committee. If you have an interest and would like to start a new group, please talk to one of the committee members about your idea.

We also have teams who meet and compete annually with other WIs in darts and skittles, details of which are announced in our newsletter and at the monthly meetings.

Charity Fundraising

As a charity, the WI's objectives are to advance the education of women and girls; to promote sustainable development; to advance health and to advance citizenship – all for the public benefit. WIs can raise funds for local, national and international charities **in line with the above objectives**. Each year members make suggestions about potential beneficiaries, and then a vote takes place. The committee works on ideas and organizes activities that will raise monies. Past ventures have included an abseil, aqua splash, sponsored walks, a bra walk, barn dance and beetle drive.

For 2026, after consultation with members, it was decided that we would support our Local Air Ambulance. You can learn more about this charity by following this link:

<https://theairambulanceservice.org.uk/your-local-air-ambulance/about-us/>

Their website explains this charity's work:



Your Local Air Ambulance

Saving lives across five counties fast.

Since launching in 2003, we've taken off with two local air ambulance services:

- **Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance (WNAA)**
- **Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance (DLRAA)**

Together, they cover five counties. Every day, our critical care paramedics, doctors and pilots respond to around ten emergency missions.

They land fast—at the scene of road traffic collisions, falls at home, strokes, cardiac arrests, sports injuries, industrial incidents. Wherever we're needed. Whatever the call.

Our **helicopters** fly at 185mph, packed with the latest lifesaving kit—and crewed by critical care paramedics, doctors and pilots trained to handle the worst, fast.

But we're not just in the air.

Our **Critical Care Cars** are a vital part of the fleet. They back up our helicopters for missions closer to base or when weather grounds the aircraft. They also run our night car service—keeping our teams ready to respond, 24/7, 365 days a year.

We don't get a penny from the government or National Lottery for our daily missions.

Each rescue costs around £2,500, and every pound comes from people like you.

Community Involvement

Hinckley Canalside WI has an excellent record of community involvement and in 2018 we were nominated for a Longstanding Achievement Award in the Making a Difference Awards run by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to acknowledge the work done by individuals in the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Trade Register

We have built up a folder of contact details of tradespeople, recommended by our WI members, which is available at every meeting on the Sales Table. Any personal recommendations are welcome.

Hinckley Canalside Bursaries

The number and value of bursaries are reviewed annually by the committee to ensure that we have sufficient funds to meet the cost. The bursary is to spend on a federation approved course or activity locally (including any costs of travel & materials). Those taking up a bursary should get their choice of provider approved by the WI committee before booking. There is a document on Canalside's website with suggestions of educational providers for bursary winners.



For 2026 there are two bursaries, each for up to £100, available. **The conditions** are that a course is booked in the same financial year, takes place within 12 months of the draw, and you cannot enter the

draw if you have been a previous winner for the preceding 5 years. In return we ask that winners provide some feedback on their bursary experience: this could be a brief written item in our monthly newsletter or a short talk at a monthly meeting,

Qualifying (full or multi) members simply add their name to a draw at our May meeting, for a chance to win a bursary.

WI Structure & Organisation Information

WIs – the membership belongs to about 5,500 separate WIs spread throughout England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Each WI is self- governing within the framework of the WI Constitution and Rules.

Ours is called **Hinckley Canalside WI**.

Federations – the WIs are grouped to form 69 County and Island Federations.

Every WI also belongs to a County Federation.

Ours is called **Leicestershire and Rutland (LRFWI)**, and has its headquarters at WI House in Leicester, which organizes several events annually which are publicized and booked through our own WI secretary.

Flyers and information about these events are distributed by our secretary by email at least monthly and publicized at meetings. Details are also in the federation's monthly publication 'County News', which is emailed free to members. A printed copy can be ordered for £1.50 each, plus P&P, via our secretary.

There is an annual council meeting (ACM), held on a Saturday in March in Leicester, for all Leicestershire WI members to attend. This is an all-day event with several speakers, craft stalls and displays of the year's achievements across the county. There are several competitions held too - details and tickets are available through our secretary.

Each WI is allocated a certain number of tickets. Each WI delegate has a free ticket and there is an additional free ticket for a WI member to accompany the delegate. The WI delegate, in return, is asked to submit a report for their own WI.

NFWI - together the WIs and County and Island Federations make up the **National Federation of Women's Institutes**. Each part of the WI is run by a committee of elected members including the NFWI Board of Trustees.

Head Office, 104 New Kings Road, Fulham, London SW6 4LY

Tel No. 0207 371 9300

Website address: <https://www.thewi.org.uk/> E-mail HQ@nfwl.org.uk

National Annual Meeting

This is held annually during late May or early June in different parts of the country or online, for all WIs throughout England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. At this meeting the National Resolution for that year is approved, National Business is covered, awards presented and there are always two excellent speakers. In 2026 the 2 speakers were Anne Boden founder of Starling Bank, the UK's leading digital bank, and Professor Michele Dougherty, CBE FRS FRAS, Executive Chair, Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), which is part of UK Research and Innovation.

Our WI is grouped with other local WIs, and one delegate represents this group at the National Annual Meeting. The delegate will report back on her experiences. A limited number of observer tickets may also be available, booked through our secretary. Online attendance at the National Annual Meeting is also possible.

Resolutions - NFWI Campaigns



The WI has campaigned on a huge range of issues in the past – from promoting women's rights and fostering health awareness, to encouraging sustainable development and building a fairer society.

Each year WI members are asked to submit, discuss and vote for resolutions that may ultimately become national campaigns. At Canalside WI we do this at our May meeting.



At this year's NFWI Annual Meeting, two resolutions were passed.

Accessible public toilet facilities to promote dignity, health, and social inclusion

This resolution is a call for accessible, clean, free public toilets which are fundamental to inclusion and wellbeing, especially for women, older people, disabled individuals, parents and carers. It invites WI branches to take meaningful action—through advocacy, partnership, and community

engagement—to support local authorities and civil society in reversing the closure trend and ensuring dignity for all.

2. Action on women's homelessness

The NFWI echoes the calls of homelessness charities and urges all levels of government to take action to reduce women's homelessness, reduce the number of women at risk of homelessness, and improve the quality of temporary accommodation. We call on WI members to support homelessness organisations in their communities and campaign to ensure that all women have a place they can safely call home.

The results of the resolutions voting were as follows:

Accessible toilets – Passed with 95% in favour

Women's Homelessness – passed with 92% in favour.

Both adopted topics will now transition into active [NFWI Campaigns](#) supported at both local institute and national levels.

The WI Magazine



This is a magazine produced by the NFWI. As part of your membership, every member receives copies of this magazine each year, delivered through the post.

This new magazine is published four times a year, in June, September, November, and March, each issue introducing the new season. There are new regular pages, including a WI advice panel, in-depth interviews with members about their own WI, and a section on how to live a more sustainable life.

My WI

My WI is the dedicated website for WI members. Here you will find everything you need to get the most from your membership – from essential information and advice for running your WI, to campaign action packs and special interest projects for you to try.

Website address: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/welcome-to-my-wi>

VIA



Via replaces the old WI Learning Hub. VIA is the WI's digital home for learning, bringing courses, talks and ideas together in an accessible, clear, welcoming space for everyone.

While WI members access the majority of learning for free, VIA welcomes all learners.

How do I access Via?

Simply type Via into your search engine (Google for example). You will see Via Learning Hub Home Page. Click onto this. You will see a home page which says: Welcome to VIA, what will you learn today? Here is the link for the Home Page if you prefer to simply click onto this:

<https://via.thewi.org.uk/>

I would now recommend that you go to the top right-hand corner of the page and click on Login.

Then click on WI Member Login. If you use My WI, it will already have your username and password – so all you have to do is click on Sign In.

If your details are not there, then use the email address that is registered on the MCS for you and create a password. Please ask either Pat McShane or Mandy if you need to check about your email address.

Then click View all Courses and you will see multiple course that you can access. The categories are on the left-hand side bar if you are looking for a specific topic - see below:

Wellbeing & Lifestyle(17)	Business & Finance(21)
Accessibility & Awareness(4)	Technology & Digital Skills(20)
Arts & Crafts(36)	Maths & Language(16)
Food & Home(2)	History & People(43)
Science & Environment(5)	Federation & WI(5)

Make the most of your subscription and enjoy! Mandy.