



SFWI News Bulletin

Issue 70 May 2026

Find us on:



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Hello everyone

The "Here Come Spring" event was great. Huge thanks to the Events Team for once again providing such enjoyment. This is one of our member only privilege events for you, our special members.

Congratulations to Doveside WI and The Women of Uttoxeter WI on each winning a bursary for their WI at this event. Again, we are rewarding our WIs for their support and making Staffordshire WIs so great.

Another plug for the NFWI Annual Meeting watch party which is at Stafford Rugby Club on June 4th 2026. Observer tickets are now available at £10; this includes lunch. Look out for the application form this month. The meeting itself is online, but we wanted to make it a special day for us in Staffordshire where we can meet and enjoy the meeting together.

The County Show is on 27th and 28th May, do come and visit us in our marquee. We will have some amazing entries in our competitions and a very special raffle for an afternoon tea on the River Thames. Excitement is building!!

See you soon

Helen



Welcome to

Happy Hive WI

This is our newest WI based in Stoke. Many congratulations and we wish them every success!

Upcoming Events

Check out what's on [here](#)

Committee News and Activities

Calendar 2027 - Hidden Gems of Staffordshire

When you are out and about in the lovely spring sunshine, please have in mind the SFWI Calendar for 2027 and take photos of the Hidden Gems that you come across - anything that is of interest but not widely known. Examples are architectural features, secret gardens, statues or anything with an unusual story attached to it

The only criteria is that needs to be in Staffordshire, taken by a WI member, in landscape format with no people or cars in view - and in focus ! Please avoid zooming in as this affects the sharpness of the image.

Photos can be emailed to admin@sfdwi.org or directly to sfdwipressofficer@gmail.com with details of the photo, the photographer's name and WI and the month it was taken. Thank you!

Women's Aid

We would like to thank the two ladies from Staffordshire Women's Aid who spoke at the Here Comes Spring event. Charlotte Almond is the CEO and she was accompanied by a WI member who has personally suffered domestic abuse. The impact of both speakers was felt by the audience, some of whom shared their own experiences with the Resolutions Officer later in the day.

SFDWI have also agreed to advise on a survey of older women being formulated by Staffordshire Women's Aid due to be shared during 2026.



Crafts, Art and Design Shield

Congratulations to Mavis Ballard of Brocton WI, the winner of this year's competition with her piece of art in the style of Clarice Cliff. Second place was awarded to Carrie-Anne Smith of The Ridwares WI and third place, Dawn Wakefield of Eccleshall WI.



EVERY ACTION COUNTS: -

Great Big Green Week is the only mass moment for nature and climate in the UK, and it belongs to everyone.

Every June, thousands of events take place in towns, cities and villages across the country. From repair cafés and nature walks to community clean-ups and film screenings, people everywhere come together for good and make a real difference.

In 2025, more than a million people took part. In 2026, let's make it even more. Whether you organise something big, join something local or simply encourage a friend to get involved, every action counts.

Start thinking about what you could do between **6th and 14th June 2026**.

For inspiration, visit www.greatbiggreenweek.com

THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK



Here Comes Spring! Our Memorable Day

Charlotte Almond from Women's Aid opened the morning session, speaking about violence against women. With her was Megan Pitwood, herself a survivor, telling us about how she had escaped from an abusive relationship. Megan's very emotional and heartrending talk evoked a standing ovation from the audience.

Then, Sarah English gave a fascinating presentation highlighting the collection held in the Staffordshire Archive. The most valuable was a nightcap, which belonged to Charles I, given to him by his son Charles II. There were lovely photographs of the exhibition put on by SFWI to celebrate 110 years of the WI, which Sarah had curated. Miles of maps, within the archive need special bags to conserve them. WI members have signed up to make map bags. Sarah and her colleagues also brought a small collection of artefacts, which were displayed for everyone to see.



Dr Gareth Williams, arrived in character as Charles II, wearing a beautiful costume. His talk was really interesting, as he delved deep into the character of the Merry Monarch. We were transported to the 17th century and the English Civil War and its aftermath.

Members then enjoyed lunchtime and had a really good shop at the stalls inside and outside the hall. Our keynote speaker, Julia Bradbury, an inspiring woman, talked about her life and her lifestyle. She is a cancer survivor, who has written books about the changes she has made to her lifestyle. Walking backwards is very important to Julia, as well as drinking virgin olive oil every day. Julia talked about her various expeditions and ended with getting the audience to their feet to dance, as dancing is so good for our wellbeing!

The day was rounded off with the drawing of two bursaries of £100, won by Doveside WI and The Women of Uttoxeter. Each winning WI can use the money towards an educational event for the benefit of all their members.

Thank you to the 500 members, who attended our Event. It is lovely to meet so many of you. The Events Team worked so hard to put on a meaningful, enjoyable and interesting day.

Verity Conner Chair Events Committee

Be Kind to Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs need water (never milk) - and in dry weather, without any puddles, they could be tempted to drink from ponds where they might drown or drains where they might get trapped. Please leave a shallow bowl of water out for passing hedgehogs - and remember to clean out and change it regularly.



SUPPORTERS CLUB

Congratulations to the April winners who each win £25

No 81	S Morrison, Waterfall WI
No 103	V Hillier, Haughton WI

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Congratulations to Moreton Outwoods and Bromstead WI who have joined forces with Gnosall Jambusters WI. A huge welcome was given to them by Gnosall Jambusters and we all wish them many congratulations. This has only happened because of many positive discussions on both parts and means that a WI has not been lost, we just have a newly enlarged WI.



The newly enlarged Gnosall Jambusters WI

Reminder—Please send in your entry forms for the County Show no later than 14th May for processing. Your entry should be taken to the WI Marquee on Tuesday 26th May for judging between 8.30am and 11.30am.

Let's Read!

Did you know 2026 has been designated The National Year of Reading by the Department of Education, in collaboration with The National Literacy Trust?

This is in response to a profound decline in reading for enjoyment in the UK and a decline in reading proficiency. In the UK 1 in 6 adults have very poor literacy skills, which is approximately 8.5 million adults, a staggering figure in 2026 in a Western Country. Literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, speak and listen, enabling more effective communication and enhances the interpretation and rationalisation of the World in which we live.

The National Year of Reading is the biggest campaign in a generation to help more people discover or even rediscover the joys of reading and make it part of their everyday lives. This in turn creates a more relevant and immediately rewarding experience. Reading is an effective tool that expands minds, builds confidence and fuels creativity. However, it is in decline. This National Year of Reading aims to change this by reconnecting reading with everyday culture. The ambition is to make a lasting change to the reading habits of the Nation and reverse the decline in reading for pleasure. This will open one of the most powerful tools for equality and opportunity for all that will last a lifetime.

The Vision of the Year is : to (re) connect people of all ages with reading as a meaningful, modern, and social activity. Activities will be taking place in schools, libraries, educational establishments and in communities. It has been taken up by Radio 4 and other Institutions.

So this is a Call to Arms; join, visit and use your local library, read to your children and grandchildren, join a Book Group, Volunteer to listen to reading at your local school or just pick up a book or magazine, find a comfortable spot and read.