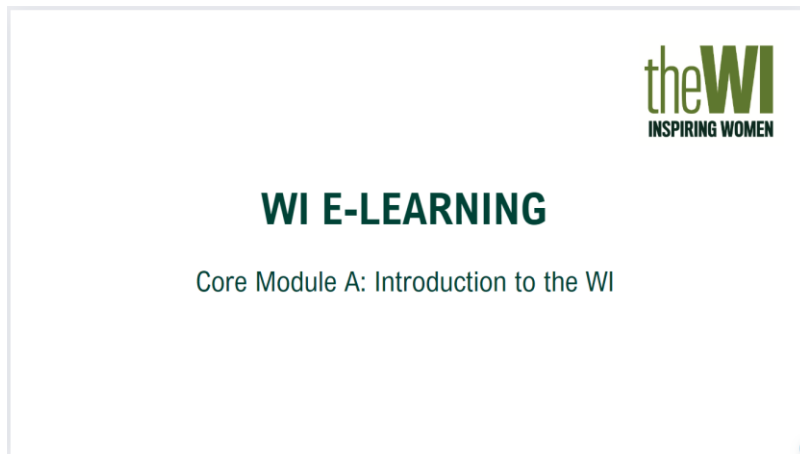


# WI E-Learning Transcript – Core Module A



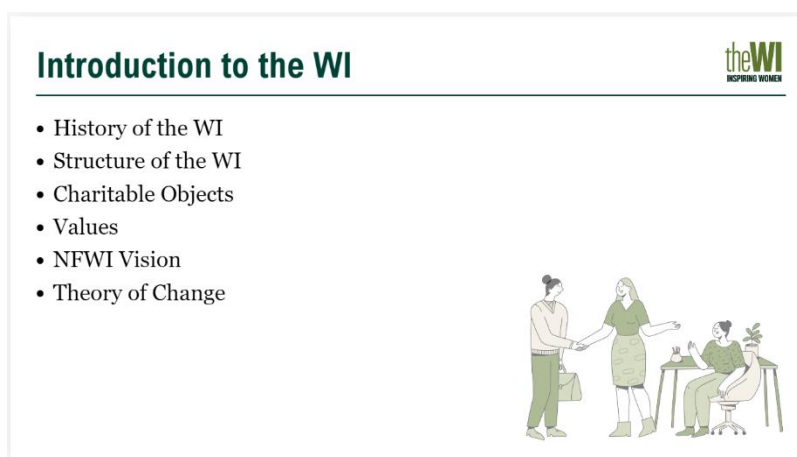
## Slide 1 – Welcome



Welcome to WI E-Learning! We're excited to guide you through this series of core modules, designed to give you an in-depth understanding of the WI as an organisation. In this introductory module, you'll learn about the WI's history, structure, constitutional framework, and how we work together to make a difference.

A transcript is available for easy reference. To earn a certificate, simply complete a short knowledge test at the end of each module. Thank you for joining this journey to become more informed about the WI—let's get started!

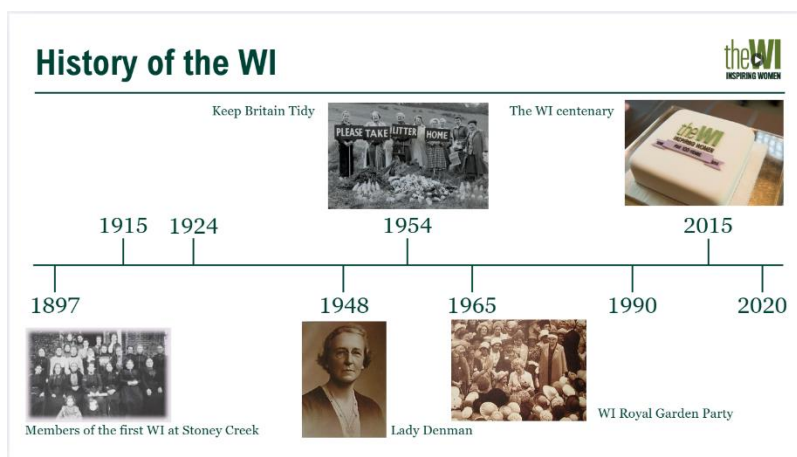
## Slide 2 – Introduction



This module will cover the WI's history and structure, highlighting the three levels of our organisation and how they interconnect. You'll also learn about our charitable objects – this is our charity's purpose and an important part of our governance; values – the NFWI's core beliefs that set the tone and approach of our organisation; the NFWI's vision and the theory of change, which sets out our framework for driving the organisation forward and delivering our charitable purpose.

By the end, you'll have a strong understanding of the WI's mission and how it supports your role.

### Slide 3 – History of the WI



The first Women's Institute was formed in Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada in 1897 as a branch of the Farmer's Institute. The movement brought women from isolated communities together and offered training in home economics, child care and the aspects of farming that were traditionally done by women, such as poultry keeping and small farm animal husbandry.

It wasn't until 1915, during the First World War, that the Women's Institute movement began in Britain. Under the guidance of the Agricultural Organisation Society (AOS), it was formed to encourage countrywomen to get involved in growing and preserving food to help increase the supply of food. The first WI was set up in Anglesey, North Wales, on 16 September 1915 and the National Federation of Women's Institutes was formed on 16 October 1917 when Lady Denman was elected Chairman and Grace Hadow, Vice Chairman.

In 1924, Jerusalem was first sung at the Annual General Meeting, held at the Queen's Hall. By this time there were 3,223 WIs across Britain. Jerusalem was a hymn which was adopted as a song of the women's suffrage movement. The song's composer, Hubert Parry, was a suffragist who conducted the song at a women's suffrage rally in 1917. The singing of Jerusalem is a tradition which continues to this day.

During the 1920s and 1930s resolutions were passed to improve public health education to prevent venereal disease, request better medical supervision for pregnant women in rural areas and to support local efforts to deal with unemployment and distress amongst men and women.

Key campaigns from then on have included:

- A resolution passed in 1943 stating that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work.
- In 1954 the AGM passed a resolution to start a national anti-litter campaign and the NFWI called a conference of 25 other UK organisations; and the Keep Britain Tidy Group was formed.
- In 1986 the WI supported a campaign set up by the Department of Health to raise awareness of the true facts concerning AIDS.
- In 1992 the WI was one of the several organisations who founded the Fairtrade Foundation. Members had been campaigning throughout the 1970s and 1980s for global food security and agricultural self-sufficiency in developing countries.

In more recent history, during the 2010s key campaigns were launched focusing on environmental and social issues such as domestic violence against women, mental health, climate change and microplastic pollution. And in 2017, the End Plastic Soup campaign called for the Government and the industry to research and develop innovative solutions to stop the accumulation of microplastics in our Oceans.

You can read more about the Resolutions from 1918 to present by clicking on the link below: [https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/309338/NFWI-Mandates-from-1918-to-date-2021.pdf](https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/309338/NFWI-Mandates-from-1918-to-date-2021.pdf)

In 1948 the WI's centre for learning, Denman College, named after the first NFWI Chairman, first opened its doors to students.

1965 was a memorable year for the WI, in celebrating its Golden Jubilee with celebrations including a specially commissioned poem from the Poet Laureate C. Lay Lewis and a special WI Royal Garden Party held at Buckingham Palace, hosted by Queen Elizabeth II. At this time the rule limiting the forming of WIs to places with a population of below 4,000 was rescinded, this saw a move to WIs being set up in larger towns and cities as well as the rural communities they began in.

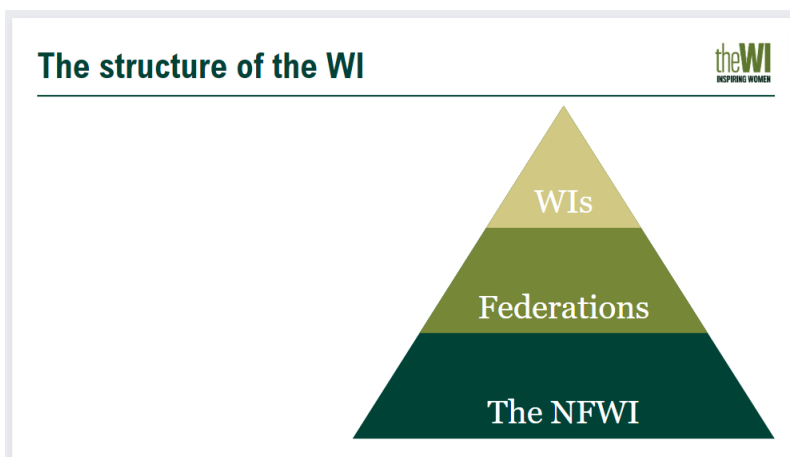
Her Majesty the Queen also addressed the AGM as the WI celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1990.

2015 saw the Women's Institute marks its centenary with a year of festivities, including the WI Centennial Fair and Her Majesty the Queen addressing members at the Annual General Meeting at the Royal Albert Hall.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the NFWI offices temporarily closed and WI meetings were unable to take place in their usual format. WI members worked together to show their resilience and collective strength by keeping their communities connected and supporting those in need. The spirit the WI was founded on continues to thrive.

You can explore more about our history on the WI website, including viewing a timeline, before taking a digital quiz to test your knowledge. See the useful links section below this video for a direct link: <https://www.thewi.org.uk/about-us/history-of-the-wi>

#### Slide 4 – Structure of the WI





The WI is a federated charity with three distinct levels. This means that although there is one central brand, one set of charitable objects and one mission (and that we are all ‘the WI’), these are delivered through a network of individual charities (approximately 5,500). The NFWI is the central charity, and it works in partnership with regional/county charities (federations) and local charities (individual WIs). The federated structure ensures that the charity’s mission, brand and message is amplified and can operate consistently across a wide geographical area but with flexibility to meet the needs of members and the community.

Since the early days the WI has operated this structure successfully, to ensure a high-quality membership experience while also using the power of solidarity between the national network of members to increase the overall influence of the charity. The federated structure is used by many of the large national charity brands that operate in communities, for example Mind, Samaritans, Girlguiding, RSPCA and The Scout Association.

## Slide 5 – Working together

### We work together at all levels




The WI works in partnership at all three levels of the organisation, each one playing an integral part in achieving the charity's purpose, and this structure offers a balance between national presence and grassroots involvement, but supported by a strong well-known brand where our voices can influence societal change locally and nationally.

Let's look at the 3 levels of structure.


## Slide 6 – WI level

### WIs



WI level

- Individual charities
- Within local communities
- 5,500 WIs



WIs are individual charities based in communities (in-person or virtual), that offer a specific programme of activities within a defined area or community. While each WI follows legal and policy guidelines, activities are shaped by members' interests.


Each WI is led by a committee of elected trustees, including a President, who is voted in by WI members. You can learn more about WI governance in the WI Handbook. Today, we have over 5,500 WIs across England, Wales, and the Islands.

## Slide 7 – Federation level

### Federations

Federation level

- Individual charities
- Within the regional area
- 69 Federations



theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN

Federations are regional charities that provide leadership, resources, and support to local WIs within their area. Their work includes sharing regular updates, hosting events, providing insurance cover and giving practical assistance to enhance the membership experience.

Each federation has an elected board of trustees, and some employ paid staff. Currently, there are 69 federations supporting WIs across England, Wales and the Islands.

## Slide 8 – NFWI level

### The NFWI

NFWI level

- Campaigns & Membership
  - Communications & Campaigns
  - Events
  - Membership & Engagement
- Finance & Commercial Services
  - Finance
  - WI Enterprises
- Learning & Development
- People & Culture
  - Digital Services
  - Facilities
  - HR



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The NFWI is the national charity which provides national leadership, legal infrastructure, governance, and policy for the organisations across England, Wales and the Islands. The NFWI provides direct support to federations, WIs, and individual members whilst maintaining processes and resources that ensure members are able to play an active part in the development of the organisation as well as enjoying local activities. The NFWI also provides opportunities for members to engage in a wide range of national activities and events.

The national charity is led by an elected Board of Trustees voted for by the members across the entire national federation via national election every two years. It is supported by a professional staff team. The NFWI Board of Trustees work in partnership with the charity's consultative body, the National Council (attended by the Chair and Treasurer – or two representatives- from each federation) to make key decisions on the future of the organisation.

If you are in a key federation role, you will require a good understanding of the way the national federated charity operates at the different levels in order to support WIs to access the benefits for their charity and their members, to play an active part in the long-term development of the organisation as a whole and to ensure that you and your WIs can access any support needed from federations and the national charity via the NFWI team. You will also need a good understanding of what is required by the WI in terms of legal and regulatory requirements and NFWI policies, and which elements can be tailored to meet the differing needs of members in your geographical area.

The relationship between the NFWI and federations is one of mutual support and partnership. Federations should always feel able to contact the NFWI to access support or guidance on all aspects of the management and leadership of your federation.

Federations are separate charities and will, at times, need to seek independent advice on technical areas such as legal advice, financial management and insurance. The NFWI can provide guidance to support your decision-making but also put you in touch with other federations. You can always access initial advice and guidance from the NFWI by emailing [HQ@nfw.org.uk](mailto:HQ@nfw.org.uk)

## Slide 9 – Charitable objects

### What are the charitable objects?



- To advance the education of women and girls for the public benefit in all areas.
- To promote sustainable development for the public benefit.
- To advance health for the public benefit.
- To advance citizenship for the public benefit by the promotion of civic responsibility and volunteering.

A charity's governing document will include a statement of its charitable purposes, known as its objects. A charitable purpose is the reason a charity has been set up, and what its activities work towards achieving. These objects define the scope of



what our charity can do and all of our charity's activities must further its charitable purposes. It helps those running the charity and others (such as volunteers, donors and government agencies) to understand why the charity does what it does, but it should also act as a reminder to those invested in the charity of what activities we should be doing and what doesn't fall within these objects.


The WI objects are:

- To advance the education of women and girls for the public benefit in all areas.
- To promote sustainable development for the public benefit.
- To advance health for the public benefit.
- To advance citizenship for the public benefit by the promotion of civic responsibility and volunteering.


These are known as our charitable objects.

## Slide 10 – WI values

### What are the WI values?



- Truth
- Tolerance
- Justice
- Fellowship

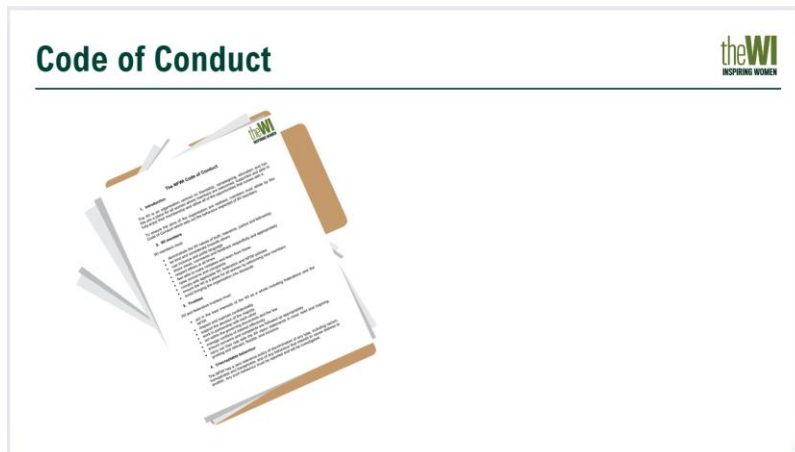


Values are a set of core beliefs held by an organisation. They act as guiding principles that provide an organisation with purpose and direction and set the tone for its interactions. They guide our actions and attitudes, fostering a shared understanding of what is important in practice. This creates a sense of unity and cohesion among everyone associated with the organisation.

The WI was established based on the values of truth, tolerance, justice and fellowship. Since then, the number of WI members and the ambitions of the WI have grown tremendously. Today, the WI is the UK's largest women's organisation.



## Slide 11 - Code of Conduct



The [NFWI Code of Conduct](#) should be read along with the [NFWI Charter](#). The Code of Conduct sets out our shared expectation in terms of behaviours whereas the NFWI Charter outlines the principles of partnership between the NFWI and its members and explains what members can expect as being part of the NFWI.

The NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is also essential reading alongside the Code of Conduct. We will look at this Policy in Core Module C – Policies & Procedures.

## Slide 12 – NFWI vision


The vision is an inspirational statement describing an organisation's long-term ambitions. What impact do we want to make in the world?

*The NFWI vision is "To create a world where women come together to learn, share skills and work together to become active citizens, influencing change to improve lives in their local, national and global communities."*


The vision is accompanied by a set of declarations or vision statements to help you move towards these ambitions. “What do we want to be in order to achieve this?” These will change over time as the organisation develops.

### Slide 13 – Vision statements

#### What are the vision statements?



- Bold and Inspiring
- Growing and Relevant
- Inclusive
- Flexible



For our organisation, there are four different vision statements that inspire us to drive the WI. These form the basis of the NFWI’s current strategic plan (2025-2030)

We want to be...

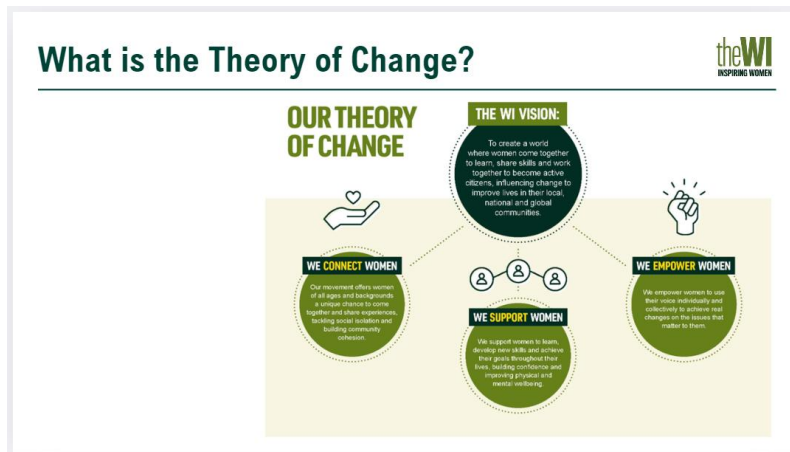
**Bold and inspiring** because we believe that we will be a bold voice representing all women and the communities in which they live.

**Growing and relevant** because we will work together to continually promote the achievements of our organisation, reach more women, and grow our membership.

**Inclusive** as our membership will reflect our local communities and we will represent women from all backgrounds through the work we do.

**Flexible** because we will remove any practical barriers to women supporting us by offering flexible ways, they can engage with what we do.

## Slide 14 – WI Mission



So, our vision reflects our aspirations and long-term ambitions, a 'Theory of Change' explains our method and how we will achieve our impact. In other words, why do we exist?

We exist to:

**Connect Women:** *Our movement offers women of all ages and backgrounds a unique chance to come together and share experiences, tackling social isolation and building community cohesion.*

**Support Women:** *We support women to learn, develop new skills and achieve their goals throughout their lives, building confidence and improving physical and mental wellbeing.*

**Empower Women:** *We empower women to use their voice individually and collectively to achieve real changes on the issues that matter to them.*


This simple graphic may be useful when talking about the WI to members, potential members, funders or potential partners. In other words, a 'Theory of Change' is the WI's 'elevator pitch', explaining succinctly what we do.

A link to view this image is available in the useful links section below this video:


<https://www.thewi.org.uk/about-us/wi-key-messages>

## Slide 15 – Summary of Learning

### Summary of Learning




- Our Structure
- Our Charitable Objectives
- Our Values
- Our Vision
- Our Theory of Change




For those in key federation and WI roles, it is important that you understand the different parts of the charity that makes us who we are. This is made up of how we are structured and the responsibilities of each tier. Our charitable objects, which gives us purpose and governance framework. The values and behaviours that shape our culture. Our vision and the theory of change, which is our common approach to moving our organisation forward and having an impact. Together these promote a unified and cohesive culture that will ensure the long-term growth and sustainability of the organisation, in order to pass it to the next generation of women as it has been passed to us.

## Slide 16 – What does it mean for me?

### What does it mean for me?





Please read the summary below this video which details how this module relates to your key role.



Each role within the WI has unique responsibilities. Below this video, you'll find summaries for specific roles. Please take a moment to review these to understand how the information in this module applies to you.

## Slide 17 – Knowledge Test

### Knowledge Test



Congratulations on reaching the end of the module! Complete the five-question test to reinforce your knowledge. If needed, you can revisit any slide to review the topics.

Thank you for your commitment to learning more about the WI.