

WI Adviser Online Training Transcript - Module 3

Slide 1 – Welcome



Welcome to the WI Adviser Online Training, we hope that you find the programme inspiring and that it supports you in your role as a WI Adviser.

If you haven't already done so, we recommend completing the WI Core Modules before beginning the WI Adviser training, as they provide helpful context and serve as a useful refresher. You'll find the link to these modules just below the video.

This module has been designed to give you the knowledge of how to run the various types of WI meeting.

All resources referenced in the modules, as well as a transcript, are available under the 'Helpful Links' section below the video.

At the end of the module, you'll complete a short knowledge test. Upon successful completion of all four modules, you'll receive a certificate recognising your achievement.

Thank you so much for volunteering your valuable time as a WI Adviser as your support is critical to WIs and federations in creating an enriching experience for our members and for the generations to come.

Please don't forget to refer to the WI Handbook which has a lot of additional guidance.

Slide 2 – Introduction

Introduction to WI meetings



- WI meeting
- WI governance meetings



Photo credit: West Kent Federation, by Izzi Jones

A WI will have different types of meetings, for all members and as specialist groups, but regardless of the nature of these meetings, they should always be welcoming and inclusive, where members feel they can participate fully and enjoy the experience in whatever capacity. As a WI Adviser you provide valuable insight and guidance on the best way to run these meetings to ensure they reflect the requirements under the constitution and to ensure effective team working.

In this module we will share some information about how to support WIs to run their meetings. We have split these into two, the familiar WI meeting and the different governance meetings.

We hope that by the end of the session you will have a good understanding of how best to run a WI meeting to support you in your role.

Slide 3 – The WI meeting

The WI meeting



Photo credit: Peckham WI, by Bilal Seyhan

The first meeting we will talk about is the WI meeting. This is at the heart of what the WI is and is where everyone comes together to enjoy a stimulating programme. It is a place where members feel they belong, so it is important when developing an agenda for the meeting that the WI's identity and values of truth, tolerance, justice, and fellowship helps shape it, so members engage well with each other and feel part of the collective movement.

Each WI will cover standard items, but they can put their own personality into the agenda through speakers and activities, but as a WI Adviser you can make a real difference in ensuring the committee develops a programme for everyone in line with our vision to be relevant, flexible, inspiring, and inclusive, but that it also reflects its constitutional obligations.

Slide 4 – Standard WI meeting agenda

The WI meeting



How to create a standard meeting agenda

- Welcome
- Record
- Matters arising
- Correspondence
- Financial statement
- Reports
- Reminder of upcoming events
- Next meeting information

As you will know the constitution requires that WIs offer a minimum of 11 meetings in a year. These can be offered in person or virtually depending on the WI and what its members want.

In the WI handbook there is a standard meeting agenda that provides guidance on what to include, but here are some of the highlights:

- there should be a welcome to all members and a special mention of new members or visitors.
- the record of the last meeting should be agreed and signed where necessary, but also picking out any outstanding items from the last meeting that needed a discussion or an update. These are commonly known as *matters arising*.
- any correspondence that has been received or shared with members should be highlighted. This is important as this is a good way of ensuring members know about their federation, NFWI and the activities that are going outside of their WI that might be of interest.

- it is important to share a summary of the financial statement by the Treasurer (best practice is at least every three months) so members know how their membership fees are being used.
- a WI may choose to share any updates from any sub-committees, delegates or working parties etc.
- any volunteering opportunities available or roles which the WI is looking to fill. These will often be roles for the monthly meetings, such as a rota for welcoming, refreshments etc. This helps build a team approach and ensures that members feel part of the running of the WI, regardless of whether they are on the committee. It also supports the Officers by reducing their workload.
- it is useful to remind everyone of upcoming events (along with the election of a WI delegate if required), and information about the next meeting, dates, speakers, or any deadlines for responses.

Slide 5 – Support to attend a WI meeting

The WI meeting

How can we enable more women to attend a WI meeting?




Being inclusive matters to us and that means being available to all women. However, accessing WI meetings may not always be easy for some, especially if they have a disability that requires a carer or if they have caring responsibilities for young children, both of which may inhibit their ability to attend a meeting. So, our aim is to support all women to enjoy great moments with their WI friends. As a WI Adviser, your guidance on this will help your WIs enable more women to attend and to remove any barriers to participation.

NFWI provides policies on Carers or children/young people attending meetings and so WIs should be made aware of these policies to help them make their meetings as accessible as possible, there is more information about this in Core Module C.

These are aspects of running the WI that you should discuss with your WIs so that they have considered these in advance and are able to respond supportively to anyone who wishes to join the WI but may find it more challenging to attend.

Slide 6 – Governance Meetings

WI Governance



- Annual meetings
- WI committee meetings
- Special meetings
- Sub-committees
- Quorum & voting majority


As well as WI meetings (where all members attend to take part in WI activities), WIs will also have 'governance meetings' that they will need to arrange. These can be divided into the following categories:

- Annual Meetings
- WI Committee Meetings
- Special Meetings
- Sub-committee Meetings

These meetings shape the formal constitutional framework by which the WI charity operates, and each has its own sets of procedures. As a WI Adviser it is important to understand these and to be able to explain them so you can ensure your WIs have a strong governance framework in place.

Slide 7 – How to hold an Annual Meeting

WI Annual Meeting



How to hold an Annual Meeting

- Within 15 months of formation or if established, once every year
- Elect 3 committee members and a President
- The committee must be made up of members


So, let's start with the Annual Meeting.

A new WI should hold an Annual Meeting within 15 months of formation and established WIs should hold an Annual Meeting once in every calendar year (and it does not have to be the same month every year). At the Annual Meeting, the committee would present an Annual Report and signed statement of accounts and the financial statement is presented by the Treasurer. The committee would decide the date and time of the Annual Meeting which should then be agreed by the Federation Board. It is important members have at least 21 days' notice of the Annual Meeting, so an idea would be to include the arrangements in the WI's annual programme.

A key part of the Annual Meeting is the election of the Committee. WI members must elect at least three committee members, including a President, from its membership. It is your role to support the WI to conduct the nomination and election process to ensure all members have a chance to stand for election and that the roles are filled. Remember three is the minimum number and the more Committee members elected the more the tasks can be shared.

Slide 8 – Preparation for the Annual Meeting

WI Annual Meeting



The WI Annual Meeting preparation

- A Statement of Accounts should be independently examined
- Invite nominations and check who is willing to stand, and ensure it meets the constitution criteria
- Independent tellers to count votes
- Prepare an agenda for the Annual Meeting

There is a lot to think about when preparing for the Annual Meeting. At a newly formed WI's first Annual Meeting, you will play an important role in making this process simple and stress-free for your WIs. As a WI Adviser, you will support the committee with this process, especially the WI Secretary, explaining what needs to be done or organised and then keeping a watchful eye that things are in place. You will also need to be in attendance at the first Annual Meeting to answer any questions and oversee the processes. WIs should be able to carry out subsequent Annual Meetings but may get in touch with questions beforehand. As a WI Adviser you may also be invited to subsequent WI Annual Meetings, it is up to you if you are able to attend, but please inform your federation of the request and whether you are able to go or not.


Activities will include:

- Financial Information: the WI Treasurer should ensure the preparation of a statement of accounts for the last financial year which has been independently examined.

- **Committee Election:** the WI Secretary should request nominations for the committee (at least one month before the meeting) and check whether those nominated are willing and eligible to stand. If there are more nominations than places on the committee, an election must be held. They will then draw up the ballot paper for the meeting. Please note the committee sets the nomination process for candidates to stand for election as committee members. The committee may also decide to hold a secret ballot, but it is no longer mandatory for the voting to be secret.
- **Election arrangements:** the WI Secretary should arrange two tellers (to verify the election process and outcome), usually members of a neighbouring WI, WI Advisers, or other people independent of that WI (e.g. Federation Representatives).
- **Election processes:** the WI should also have agreed the actions needed in the event of a tied vote for committee roles.
- **Annual Meeting agenda:** the WI Secretary must also prepare the agenda for the Annual Meeting and the Annual Report for presentation to the committee for approval and ensure these are circulated to all members of the WI.

Slide 9 – Elections Annual Meeting

WI Annual Meeting



The WI Annual Meeting elections for committee

- If there are more nominations than places on the committee – arrange an election
- Elections are done by ballot and before the first item on the Annual Meeting agenda
- Results are given to the WI Adviser to announce, if present
- New committee members only become active after the Annual Meeting

The committee election is an important part of the democracy of the WI and so your WIs should actively encourage members to stand and to nominate individuals. Ideally you will have more candidates than the minimum number to ensure there is an election and to have a committee that can share the workload. Without the minimum of three committee members a WI cannot continue to operate. It is also worth noting that nominations for committee elections may also be accepted from the floor on the day in addition to those submitted in advance.

As mentioned previously, the WI Secretary should ensure that all nominees have been asked for their willingness to stand and eligibility to become a charity trustee. If this isn't

done in advance then it can cause difficulty at the annual meeting so you should liaise with the WI Secretary to check this has been done.

Committee elections should be held by ballot and therefore a process must be in place for this at the meeting to manage it sensitively and fairly.

It is best to open the ballot ahead of the start of the Annual Meeting so that the voting is completed before the start of the meeting. Only WI members who have paid the relevant subscription for the year and are present at the Annual Meeting may vote.

Once a result has been reached, the tellers write the names of those elected, in alphabetical order, and give the results to the WI Adviser (if present) to announce. If not, the committee will do it before the Annual Meeting business begins.


Any new committee members only take office once the Annual Meeting has ended.

The number of votes gained by each candidate must never be revealed and the voting choices of members should remain private.


Tellers must be made aware of the number of votes required for an overall majority to be achieved. This is a minimum of three committee members including a President from those who are elected. More on this is in the WI handbook.

Slide 10 – Annual Business Meeting

WI Annual Business Meeting



- President should confirm everyone has voted in the election
- President to present the Annual Report and seek adoption
- Treasurer to present Financial Statement and seek adoption and seconder
- Appointment of an Independent Examiner



The President manages the Annual Meeting and ensures that all the required business is conducted. This includes:

- Ensuring that the committee election process has taken place and all eligible members have voted.
- Chairing the Annual Meeting, only handing over the chair to the WI Adviser (or tellers) during the election for a new President. More information on this part of the meeting will be covered later in this module.

- Ensuring the presentation and proposal of the Annual Report. No seconder is required. Members vote by a show of hands.
- Presentation of the signed statement of accounts and adoption and their proposal by the Treasurer. A seconder is required. Members again would vote by show of hands. Please note that the financial statement should be formally presented by the Treasurer and copies of the statement should be available to members. A copy of the reconciled bank statement should also be on display for members to view.
- Recommendation of the appointment of an independent examiner for the following year. This is proposed by the Treasurer and no seconder is required. Members once again vote by show of hands.
- Proposal and adoption of any new byelaws which may have been made in addition to the WI Constitution. In addition, any pre-existing byelaws may be rescinded. Both processes require a vote at the WI Annual Meeting. A two thirds majority of those present is required. Please note that the WI constitution clarifies where byelaws may and may not be added and further information can be sought from your federation or the NFWI if you are uncertain.

Slide 11 – Election of a WI President

The Election of a WI President



- The WI Adviser manages this process
- Newly elected committee is announced
- Members are asked to nominate the President from the new committee
- Nominees confirm their wish to stand
- Members vote
- Result is announced
- New President takes over after the Annual Meeting

Once a WI has elected a committee, it must elect a WI President from that number:


- At the first Annual Meeting of a newly formed WI, this is best done by a WI Adviser to avoid any conflict of interest. If not, it can be carried out by the tellers. At subsequent Annual Meetings the tellers carry out the process.
- The members of the newly elected committee must have been announced before this process takes place.
- Each WI member should then be handed a slip of paper and asked to nominate the President for the coming year from the newly elected committee.

- Each nominee is then asked to indicate in writing whether or not they are willing to stand for election. A final list of names is then announced.
- All members then vote in writing choosing between those willing to stand for election.
- Voting papers are collected and counted by the tellers and the WI Adviser announces the result if they are attending. When there is no WI Adviser present a teller announces the result. In the event of a tie, the vote is continued until one person is elected and using any pre-agreed arrangements regarding what happens in a tied situation.
- If a committee member is unable to be at Annual Meeting but is willing to be nominated for election for an office, they should state their willingness in writing in advance.
- If a new President is elected, they do not take office until the Annual Meeting has ended and the previous President chairs the remainder of the Annual Meeting.

You can find an example Annual Meeting agenda for an election in the WI Handbook. This will guide you and your WIs on the preparation for the meeting.

Slide 12 – WI Committee Meetings

WI Committee Meetings



- The committee should **meet as soon as possible** after the Annual Meeting
- Questions on policy or finance need time to prepare and therefore are required to feature on a **formal committee agenda**
- The committee **votes** on all proposals but the President has an additional **deciding vote** if results are equal


Next up are WI committee meetings...

A WI committee is responsible for managing the affairs of the WI and ensuring it is run in accordance with the Constitution and other legal and financial requirements. A committee meeting should be held as soon as possible after the Annual Meeting of the WI to elect the Officers and attend to any other urgent business. Ideally the newly elected members will get together to schedule this meeting immediately after the Annual Meeting has been concluded.

For more information on the details for conducting Committee meetings please see the WI Handbook. As always, it is important that your WI is aware of the handbook as this will provide them with a constant guide to managing WI business and running their charity.

Slide 13 – Special Meetings

Special Meetings



- The removal of a committee member
- Passing a resolution on the enlargement of a WI
- Passing a resolution on the transfer of WI property
- Passing a resolution on the closure or suspension of a WI
- Making, repealing or altering byelaws

Now we'll move on to Special Meetings...

Outside of scheduled committee meetings and WI Annual Meetings, there may be occasions where more immediate business comes up which requires formal management. As WI Adviser you need to be aware of the circumstances for such a meeting and support the committee if they need guidance. Examples of when a Special Meeting may need to be arranged include:

- the removal of a Committee Member.
- passing a resolution on the enlargement of a WI.
- passing a resolution on the transfer of WI property.
- passing a resolution on the closure or suspension of a WI.
- making, repealing, or altering byelaws

So, who can initiate a Special Meeting?

These can be called by the committee or at the written request of at least one quarter of the WI Members who have paid their subscription for the current year. Special Meetings are open to all paid members of the WI. The WI Secretary would give at least 10 days 'notice' of a Special Meeting to each WI member setting out the date, place and time of the meeting and a note of the reasons for the meeting.

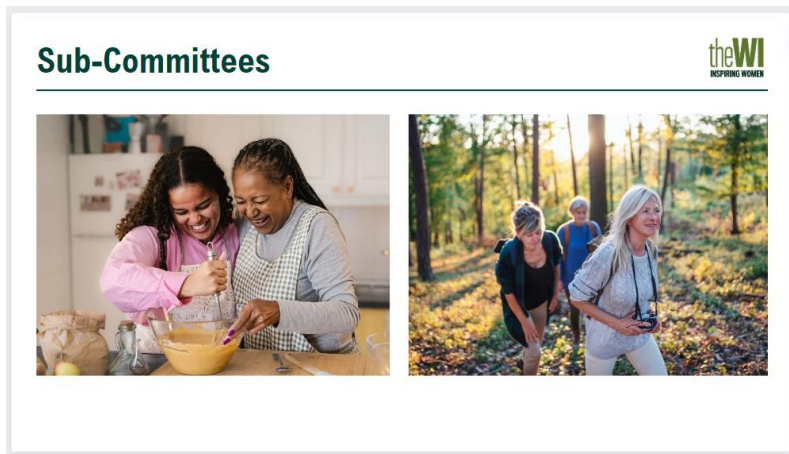
Please note that at Special Meetings called for the purpose of:

- passing a resolution on the enlargement of a WI
- passing a resolution on the transfer of WI property
- passing a resolution on the closure or suspension of a WI

The vote must be decided by a secret ballot. Voting in advance by post, electronic means and by proxy must be allowed. Please see the WI Handbook for more information. There is

also a guide to voting in advance on My WI: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/members-resources>

Slide 14 – Sub-Committees



Next is sub-committees...

Sub-committees give members the opportunity to develop their specific interests and help to share the Committee workload amongst the WI members. It is a great way to involve more members in leading on specific activities. A WI will agree what sub-committees it has and there is no set model or format for this as it will depend on the type of activities a WI's members want it to offer.

Sub-committees may not hold funds or have the power to dispose of the funds of the WI. This means that a sub-committee cannot act separately from the WI committee. The budget of the sub-committee would be part of the WI's overall budget and would be accountable to the WI committee. At all times the WI committee holds the legal responsibility for the management of the charity and its funds.

Sub-committees are a great opportunity for members to become more involved in shaping WI activities so as a WI Adviser, you should encourage committees to develop these as a way to increase the WI membership experience for everyone, but also to provide members of the sub-committee with a taste of committee experience. This experience of governance may give them confidence to put themselves forward for more leadership roles in the WI in the future.

Quorums...

For all committee meetings it is important that there is a quorum of members for a vote to take place. A quorum is the minimum number of WI members who must be present and vote at a meeting in order for any decisions taken to be in accordance with the WI Constitution. Anyone sending a proxy vote (where this is available) is not counted towards the quorum.


Please refer to the WI Constitution and WI Handbook for more information on quorums.


Slide 15 – Summary of Learning

Summary of Learning

- WI meeting
- WI governance meetings

We hope you have learned something new or refreshed your knowledge!





As a WI Adviser you will be guiding and supporting WIs through different types of WI meetings, which we have typically divided into the WI meeting and Governance meetings, each with its own set of conditions. Hopefully we have given you a taster of some of the constitutional requirements of each situation to help those in leadership roles run their WI, feel they have a clear idea of what to do under each set of circumstances and feel comfortable applying each set of conditions.

There are a lot more resources for this section in the WI Handbook and WI Constitution and it is well worth familiarising yourself with these.

Slide 16 – What does it mean for me as a WI Adviser

What does it mean for me as a WI Adviser?

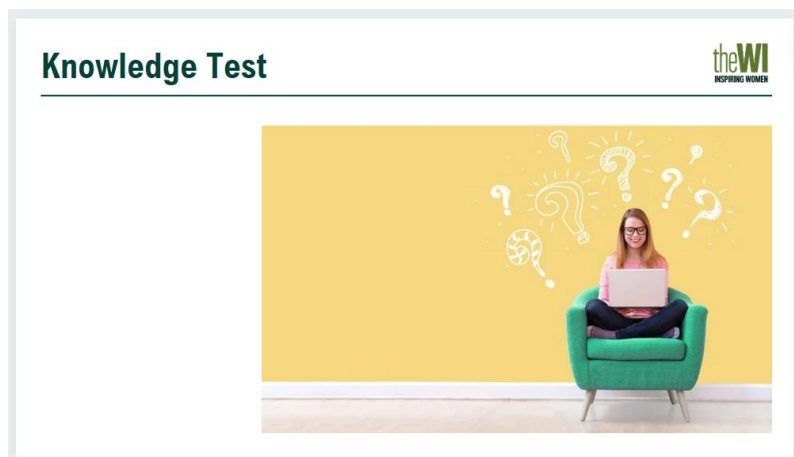
Helping to build a strong committee and well run WI





As WI Adviser, it is important to encourage participation from members in all of these meetings. This means making sure WI committees manage the WI well with an engaging programme to appeal across the board and that they have strong stewardship through a robust and transparent committee that operates in the best interests of its members. You also play an active part in promoting interest in leadership roles, and providing a reassuring voice to those that may well want to try it but do not feel confident. Your role is very much inspiration matched with process.

Slide 17 – Knowledge Test



Well done, you have reached the end of this module. Now, it's time for the knowledge test. There are five questions based on the material covered. If needed, feel free to review the slides to refresh your understanding.

We appreciate your time and commitment in this role.