

Report for the Annual Parish Meeting

Monday 13th May 2024

Thank you for inviting the WI to address this meeting to give our annual report.

Firstly, I think it is worth celebrating that there has been a WI here in Bacton for 105 years. We are very proud of our group and the events that we put on for the women of our village and the surrounding area. We want to continue to grow and are always looking at ways to further develop, especially to welcome members from the new homes being built in our village. The aim is to always to keep the interests and needs of women of all ages at heart.

Our monthly meetings have encompassed a widerange of speakers to engage, educate and have fun. In summer 2023, we had a fascinating talk about forensics by Mary Newton that was really popular; creating spin off talks in the local area. Members really enjoyed a talk about different types of bees and wasps, encouraging members to go back to their own garden to check the placement of their bug hotels. Members enjoyed a fabulous afternoon tea at the Red House Farm despite the windy weather listening and joining in with old time music hall songs. Every year, we have a birthday meal to celebrate another busy, successful year. This year, we supported a local village business by having the meal at the Bacton Bull with entertainment provided by sketches from a group using old Suffolk humour and dialect. We welcomed Swallowtail Preserves to talk about their pickles and jams, enjoying tasting their products and making a few purchases. Our Christmas meeting was led by Alison Weston, a champion of singing for well-being, who got us singing a range of Christmassy songs really tunefully. We learned about the experiences of Suffolk Bevin Boys and also how a TV comedy goes from the sketch stage to the screen. We also welcomed Patrick Barker who told us all about how he farms sustainably so that his farms are both productive and havens for wildlife.

As part of our activities, we like to support local charities. This year, we have given a donation to the Tower Fund for St Mary's from funds raised at the Friends of St Mary's Fete. We were at Bacton Fayre in the rain running our very successful cake stall and helping to run the flower, craft and cake competitions in the tent.

WI Day in September was a real highlight for us. This was a day to showcase what we do to the community. We held an activity day in the church that included a knit and natter as well as craft events and games. This was followed by an open meeting where we had a very entertaining talk from an ex Bluebell Girl.

In the Autumn, we once again ran our very popular Soup and Puds. Everyone enjoyed the tasty soups and fabulous desserts as well as taking part in a quiz and visiting the Bring and Buy stall.

We do like to get out and about a great deal. We visited the Suffolk Archives at the Hold in Ipswich where we looked at local documents including tithe maps and the school log books from the First World War. We went to the Yum Yum Fudge Factory in Woolpit and enjoyed hearing about the production process and buying samples. We saw The Nutcracker ballet at the Regal in Stowmarket, Barbie and the Miracle

Club films and enjoyed two film nights at Bacton Manor courtesy of Diana and David Chambers. We certainly have had a very full calendar.

Through our membership of Suffolk East Federation and the National Federation, Members have taken part in local competitions with some success; winning first prize in the Dove Group competition at the Mendlesham Flower Show. We attended the AGM of SEFWI in force, enjoying a wide range of speakers. The keynote speaker was Jago Cooper from the University of East Anglia. His inspiring talk was about his work on cave art in the Caribbean linking it to the Spanish Conquest. We also listened to the Mayor of Ipswich, Lynne Mortimer, about what is like to be a mayor of a large town. At national level, we attend the AGM and look to promote the annual resolutions. This year we are fighting to ensure that provision for NHS dentistry is improved across the country whilst still continuing to champion the improving the cleanliness of our rivers and seas.

Finally, we look forward to a successful 106th year at Bacton and District WI with another full programme including a successful visits, our book group, games club and Film events. We welcome all new women members of all ages and backgrounds on the first Monday of the month.