

HCFWI

WI ANNUAL MEETINGS – HELPSHEET

WHAT IS IT? An Annual Meeting is a constitutional requirement at which the WI has the opportunity to review the previous year's programme of activities, events and make plans for the future and present the previous year's Financial Statement to the members for adoption.

WHEN IS IT? A newly formed WI must hold an Annual Meeting within 15 months of formation. An established WI in Hampshire Federation will hold their Annual Meeting in May each year. The Committee give notice of the Annual Meeting as it must be included in the WI's Annual Programme, or notice must be given to each WI member at least 21 days in advance.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO? Each WI in Hampshire is assigned a WI Adviser. You can invite her, or any other Adviser of your choice, to attend your Annual Meeting to conduct the election of the Committee and President. If you choose not to have an Adviser attend, you must have two members from another WI (Tellers) to oversee the election. If the committee and President are staying the same the Tellers will conduct the committee election and the President's nomination process the same way as an Adviser. (Page 4) Part of an Adviser's role is to attend Annual Meetings; it gives the Adviser an opportunity to meet WI members and ensure that the WI has sufficient Committee members and Officers for the WI to continue.

WHAT DOES THE SECRETARY NEED TO DO?

1. The Secretary should request nominations for the Committee at least one month before the Annual Meeting and establish with the WI Committee if proxy voting will be permitted/ required this year. It is recommended that the nominations are in writing or email. Members can self-nominate or nominate another WI member for the Committee; the Secretary should check that the nominee is willing to stand. Nominations to be on the committee may be taken at the annual meeting. The Secretary should check the eligibility of those willing to stand against the criteria in the WI Constitution. All members of the Committee become Charity Trustees (each WI is a charity in its own right regardless of whether it is registered with the Charity Commission) and must be willing and able to sign the Declaration of Eligibility for Charity Trustees. It is also possible to ask the members at the Annual Meeting if anyone is willing to come onto the committee.
2. The Secretary should invite an Adviser to the Annual Meeting. Please do this by the end of March at the latest as the Advisers do get booked up very quickly, or alternatively two tellers to attend the meeting. The tellers can be members of a neighbouring WI, or representatives from the Federation.
3. The Secretary, in consultation with the committee, should write a report to be delivered at the annual meeting which the Committee should approve at the March committee meeting. This report **looks back** at the achievements and highlights of the WI during the past year, but does not have to be a chronological list. This written report should be included with the other financial documents to be examined.
4. The Agenda is set by the Secretary in conjunction with the President. On the following pages is a guide to the Annual Meeting Agenda which can be adapted to each individual WI, but points 1 to 8 must be incorporated into the meeting. The agenda should be available for each member.
5. After the Annual Meeting, the secretary should complete either, Annual Meeting forms A,B and C and return them to the federation along with a copy of the financial statement **or** the **on-line** End of Year Officers' Form and keep a copy of the financial statement and Trustees report in the records.

WHAT DOES THE PRESIDENT NEED TO DO?

The President chairs the Annual Meeting until the Adviser or Tellers take over for the election of the Committee and President. If there is a change of President the new President takes over after the close of the meeting.

The President gives a report to the members at the meeting which **looks forward** to the coming year and includes thanks to all those who contributed to the running and support of the WI in the previous year.

WHAT DOES THE TREASURER NEED TO DO?

The Treasurer should close the WI's books on the 31st March (year-end), ensuring that all outstanding invoices and expenses have been paid and monies banked. The Treasurer should refer to the Hampshire Federation's Treasurer's Handbook.(Available on the Hampshire Hub)

We strongly recommend that WIs use Hampshire Federation's IFE scheme (Independent Financial Examiner). This is an external examiner (eg someone with a financial background or interest in accounting) who is trained by the Federation to examine WI accounts. The Treasurer will have been contacted prior to the year-end by their appointed IFE and the two parties will agree a date on which the books are handed over, or shared electronically to the IFE for examination. If your WI does not use the IFE scheme but wishes to, please contact the Federation Office or your Adviser.

Those WIs who chose not to use the IFE scheme should pass the books to a person or organisation with financial examiner experience, along with an up to date copy of the WI Constitution which the examiner must refer to in order to confirm that the WI funds are being used appropriately.

A copy of the signed examined accounts should be made available at or before the Annual Meeting for each member to view. This may be done electronically.

Training is available for all Officers of the WI in February to give more support to running an Annual Meeting.

EXAMPLE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA: (first two columns)

		NOTES
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence	
2.	Review of bylaws	The President should read out the bylaws of the WI. If any are no longer relevant, take a Proposer, Secunder and vote to rescind or amend as necessary. Details of each new or amended bylaw must be sent to the Federation Secretary at WI House, the Federation Board of Trustees must then approve each WI bylaw before it can be implemented by your WI.
3.	Treasurer's Report	Treasurer gives a summary of the Financial Statement, any significant items of expenditure or income are explained, then ask for questions from the Members. The Treasurer then Proposes the Adoption of the Accounts, asks for a WI member to Second it and the vote for and against is recorded.
4.	Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner for the following year	The President (or Treasurer) asks for a Proposer, Secunder and vote for and against is recorded.
5.	Annual Report	The Annual Report is read by the Secretary. The President asks for adoption of the Annual Report (no Secunder required as the Chair of the Annual Meeting is the Proposer) and the vote for and against is recorded.
6.	President's Report	This report is more informal, thanks the Committee including the Officers, the members etc for their contribution to the WI and makes reference to the coming year.
7.	Election of the Committee for the next year If there are sufficient nominations to fill the Committee then no election needs to take place, but the whole committee is voted in en masse. If there are more nominations than places on the Committee, there must be a Committee election by secret ballot.	<u>Hand over to the Adviser or Tellers for this part of the meeting.</u> Each Committee member and Officer is elected for <u>one year only</u> . The Secretary should check the WI's own bylaws for limits on standing for the Committee and as an Officer. All paid up members may vote and stand for office. If the Committee has agreed, WI members may vote/ nominate by post or by electronic means (email) to make a decision on matters that are being decided. (R60) The Adviser or Tellers should be informed of this at the start of the meeting. NB. The number on the committee is part of the decisions when a WI opened but could also be altered as part of the Byelaws.
8.	ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT	<u>Conducted by the Adviser or tellers.</u> Please see separate notes on how to conduct this election.

How to run the Election of the President:

The election process which the WI uses nationwide can be confusing unless you are used to the way it works.

If you follow these guidelines it will become clear how to conduct the election process.

1. Once the new Committee have been elected, ask each member to come to the front of the meeting, or to stand if they are able so that they are easily identifiable to the members present.
2. Each member present, including the Committee members, should be given a small piece of paper. On this they are asked to write the name of the person they wish to NOMINATE to be the President for the coming year. No prior consent of the nominee is required.
3. Explain the nomination process using the following:
“You can now nominate ANY member of the new Committee to be your President for the coming year. Do not presume that anyone will accept or decline as each member who is nominated will be asked to make the decision if they wish to stand or to decline the nomination.”
4. The nomination papers are collected in by the Adviser or Tellers. There is NO counting of the number of nominations each person has received.
5. Each person who has been nominated is then asked discreetly by the Adviser or the Tellers ‘Are you willing to accept the nomination of President for the coming year? Please write yes or no on the nomination paper.’
6. If only one person accepts the nomination of President they are elected unopposed to the position of President for the coming year.
7. If more than one person accepts the nomination as President a secret election is held. Members are given another small piece of paper by the Adviser or Tellers and are asked to write down the name of the person they wish to VOTE for as President.
8. The voting slips are collected and counted discreetly by the Adviser or Tellers. The member receiving the most votes is elected as President for the coming year. The number of votes each person received is NEVER disclosed. The Adviser or Tellers retain the voting slips for a short time after the meeting in case a recount is requested.
9. The new President takes over at the end of the Annual Meeting.
10. If no Adviser is present at the meeting and no one will accept the nomination as President, please refer immediately to your Adviser or Federation Office for assistance.

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY AND TREASURER

The Secretary and Treasurer are selected from the committee members.

A good practice to adopt at the Annual Meeting is for the newly elected Committee (including the President) to meet together briefly – perhaps during the refreshment break – to ensure that the either the existing Secretary and Treasurer are willing to remain in post for another year or that someone is will to be the Secretary and Treasurer for the coming year. If more than one person wishes to stand for these posts then a secret ballot is conducted by the Teller or Adviser with the committee members. If no Secretary or Treasurer can be found (and no Adviser is attending) then please contact WI House and your Adviser as soon as possible.

Still need help? Please contact your WI Adviser.