

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. 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. Advisers enjoy celebrating in the events and successes your WI has had during the past year.

WHAT DOES THE SECRETARY NEED TO DO?

1. The Secretary should request nominations for the Committee at least one month before the Annual Meeting. 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. 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.
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 should prepare the Annual Report (a requirement of the Charity Commission) which the Committee should approve before the meetings. 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.
4. The Agenda is set by the Secretary in conjunction with the President. Below 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 given to each member.

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. Training is also available at WI House for those Treasurers who are unsure of how to proceed with year-end accounts.

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 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 a 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 the Annual Meeting for each member to view.

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 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. 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 one year only. The Secretary should check the WI's own bylaws for limits on standing for the Committee and as an Officer. Only paid up FULL members may stand for election (unless your WI has a bylaw in place to allow Dual members to serve on the Committee). Only paid up FULL and DUAL members may vote for the Committee. Each WI's Committee can decide if they wish to allow proxy voting for members who cannot attend the Annual Meeting. In this case the member carrying the proxy vote should place the absent member's vote in the ballot box with her own. She must not disclose the proxy vote to anyone.
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 appointed by the Committee.

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 at the next Committee meeting there will be sufficient nominees willing to put themselves forward for the two Officer roles.

Still need help? Please refer to MYWI, or contact your WI Adviser.

This document was compiled by the HCFWI’s team of WI Advisers, November 2019.