

W.I. Report for May 2019

For those of you who think we just drink tea and scoff lovely cakes every month at our meetings, be assured that - yes we do, but we're also up for changing the world. Well, not all of the world admittedly, but adding our voices to many others in order to make a difference.



The NFWI is the largest women's organisation in the UK with some 212,000 members in over 6,000 Women's Institutes across England, Wales and the Islands. The NFWI has a long history of undertaking educational work and campaigning on a diverse range of issues. The first NFWI mandate was passed in 1918, and since then the organisation has accumulated a wide-ranging portfolio of policy concerns which are discussed at every W.I. in the land before they reach the highest political levels. The NFWI resolution process means that members play a central role in defining policy and bringing issues onto the national agenda.

So: from the six ideas nominated for the resolutions of 2019, two were debated at our meeting last week before going forward to county and national levels: A call against the decline in local bus services' and 'don't fear the smear' . You may have thought that the second of the two would be most popular with members, but it wasn't. Not because women's health isn't important, but because the fault is in the wording of the actual resolution put forward: cervical screening is desperately important but so are other health issues, and therefore the first idea was the one our group chose to support.

Interestingly, when the WI passed a resolution in 1964 calling on the NHS to provide comprehensive and routine smear tests for all women in order to detect cervical cancer, it kickstarted a national conversation about women's cancer screenings of the campaign. As a result the Screening Service was inaugurated in 1966, which routinised smear tests every three to five years for women as part of general medical practice. Today, screening saves an estimated 4,500 lives each year and over the last 20 years the incidence of cervical cancer in England has almost halved.

For those of us with cars, declining bus services may seem a less important issue, but of course we all know that we should use our cars less. According to research, 63% of WI members use public transport to varying degrees, 46% of members said that their use of these services could improve as part of efforts to reduce environmental impact at household level. Where public transport services and infrastructure are well organised, WI members were found to take full and frequent advantage. There is no doubt that we all need to take note of this finding and support the resolution fully.

Indeed during the day of said WI meeting 3 of our members took the bus from Winslow to Aylesbury in order to attend then Buckinghamshire Federation of WIs Annual Council meeting. For paying passengers it's £6 return and for 50p more one can buy a one day rover ticket valid for much further afield.

Well, that's what we agreed at the meeting, before we ate cake and had a cup of tea. We were then entertained by our very own Janet Glew who gave a most engaging talk about her vast perfume bottle collection. A trip down memory lane for many, taking us from Avon to 4711. So many shapes, sizes and styles of bottles to be seen.

Details of our next WI meetings can be found on our website (address below). Visitors are always welcome. We meet at 7.30pm in Thornborough village hall on the first Wednesday of every month. And that happens to be the evening after the monthly community café so there's always lots of cake. Did we mention cake???

Our W.I. website address is: www.thornboroughandthorntonwi.org

You can contact us via our email address: Thornboroughandthorntonw@gmail.com