

# Reclaiming the Women's Institute for Women

 Use your current location

- [Wales](#)
- [The Islands](#)

We also have virtual WIs, [click here to find out more.](#)



### Become a member or Supporter

Be part of a fellowship of more than 180,000 women. Forge friendships, learn new skills and make a difference in your community by joining the largest women's organisation in the UK.

[Join the WI](#)



### WI Profiles

"Every member is there because they want to be. There is a huge feeling of support from every member – it's just like a sisterhood!"

[View WI profiles](#)



### Our Campaigns

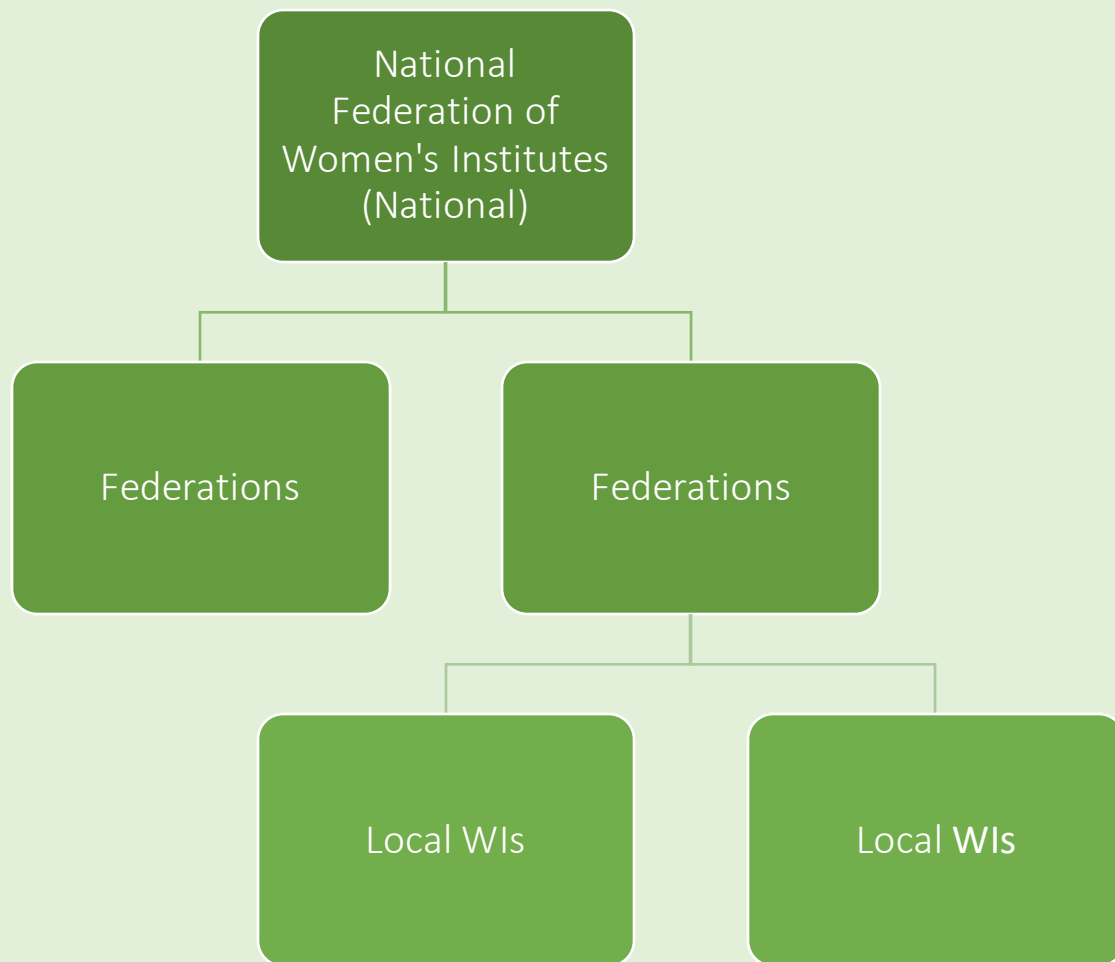
WI campaigns address issues that matter to members, from equal pay to climate change and mental health to microplastic pollution.



### Projects & Activities

Whether you're interested in cooking, crafting or want to get active – we are here to inspire every member.

# The WI



# Annual Resolutions

- Members submit what they wish to campaign on.
- Scrutinized by Federations.
- Passed to National.
- Three or four selected.
- Information produced.
- Members vote on what they wish to campaign on.
- Final campaign selected.
- Briefing documents produced, members vote.
- Final vote at the Annual Meeting.

# Previous Campaign Examples

- End VAWG (multiple years).
- Female genital mutilation.
- HIV education (1986).
- Equal pay (1943).
- Women to be included in the 1946 Peace Convention (1943).
- Cervical and ovarian cancer screening (multiple years).
- Environmental such as micro-plastics (2017).
- More women police officers (1922).
- The late Queen not to overwork herself (my favourite from 1952).

# Joining Options

- Full member - £44, access to meetings, the magazine, events, education courses, member access to the website, climate change activism.
- Supporter options:
  - £5 - anyone: campaign updates, e-newsletter, participate in surveys and research.
  - £18 - 'for women': emails, supporter plus access to the website, the magazine, 2 online courses.

# Types of Women's Institutes

- In person – 11 meetings per year.
- Virtual – Online meetings.
- Linked to other organisations: Prisons, hospices and work places

# History

- Started in Canada – first meeting was in 1987.
- Spread throughout the Commonwealth.
- First UK meeting 16 September 1915, in Anglesey Wales:
  - Revitalise rural communities
  - Encourage women to produce food during the First World War
- In 1918 first campaign for "convenient and sanitary houses"
- 1924 members first sing Jerusalem, the anthem of the National Women's Suffrage Movement. Members still sing this.
- Early leaders included Lady Denman, Grace Haddow, Lady Isobel Margesson and first female MP Margaret Winteringham.

# Me!

- Join the WI in 2013.
- Join the committee in 2015.
- Policy changes from asking questions to a free for all (possibly 2017).
- 2020 pandemic forces a change in the constitution.
- 2021 new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is sent out.

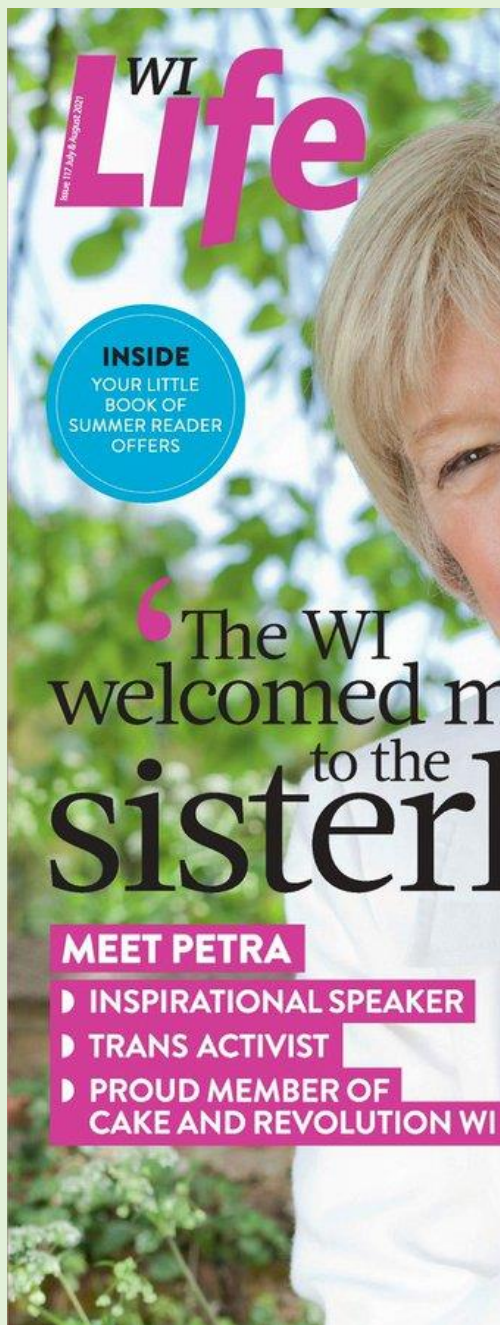
# So What?

- The WI has historical links to the suffrage movement.
- It was a "feminist light" movement.
- It has a long 100 years+ of campaigning.
- It is very well organised when it comes to membership voting.
- Even during 2020 it managed to organise a change in constitutions.

Late 2022 – I wake up!

How on earth did I miss it?

I listen to the Today programme  
(that's probably the problem).

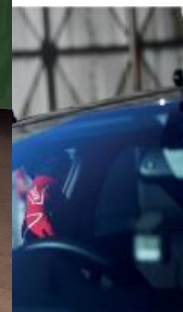


Portraits photography: JOHN ARON; JACOB EBBEY PHOTOGRAPHY (FORMULA WOMAN PRESS SHOTS)

## ‘Sport isn’t macho’

...e of driving classic cars has seen her through more than  
...airpin bends – including transitioning at the age of 70

Words ELEANOR WILSON



**Y**ou really have to *know* classic cars, which is why I love driving them – I have to know how to use the gears and balance the clutch with the gear and steering. On top of that, you’ve got to be able to keep them going. Part of the enjoyment is to take them to pieces and put them all back in again, and then look after them.

I just enjoy the fact that I can get into my Porsche 912 and actively drive it and listen to all the noises it makes, instead of being in the quiet cocoon of a modern car.

I grew up in Kenya in the late 1950s, when the East Africa Safari Classic Rally used to scream through our little village. I loved watching the spectacle as they rushed right past my school. When I grew up I moved to Ireland, and then to the UK and joined the RAF. I didn’t really get into motorsport until I was posted to Malta – more than 50 years ago now. Since then

# "Paulina"

Hiya,

Many thanks for the quick response, and thank you for making me feel so welcome.

I was a bit worried that as a non-transitional trans women (I present in male clothes. I don't plan on presenting female despite being a trans woman) that I might be not invited to join.

=====

Dear Paulina

Thank you for your email.

The WI is a place for all women, including trans women. For more information about who can join the WI, please see the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy [here](#). For more information about what WI membership is, please see our website [here](#).

# The Questions (apologies for wording)

- When did the membership criteria change from women only, to inclusive of trans women after asking a series of embarrassing questions, to accepting anyone who states they are a woman?
- Was the membership consulted?

# Eureka Moment

- Constitutions says that women who have reached the age of majority can join.
- 2021 EDI policy:
  - "WI lawfully restricts membership to women only".
  - Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic.
  - "Transgender women are welcome to join and to participate".
- No definition in the glossary of a woman, but there is one for "transgender women".
- The policy and constitutions conflict.

**Moratorium. Debate. Vote**

# Timeline Reclaiming the WI

- December 2022 - contact the WI to clarify policies.
- 7th February 2023 – first letter is sent.
- 4th March 2023 – attend End VAWG seminar.
- Contact Jo
- 15th March 2023 – receive response from National/Board of Trustees.
- 23rd March 2023 – send second letter.
- 25th to 31st March create website, Twitter & Mumsnet accounts, and an email address.
- 17th April....

← Tweet



Women's Institute Declaration

@WomensIns\_Dec



1979 @NFWIWales & @WomensInstitute had a mandate to campaign for single sex hospital wards.

2023 they say definition of a woman is "not relevant" to women's rights.

We believe otherwise. Thanks @WomensRightsNet for this research

[#StopHospitalRapes](#)



[dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk)

**Shocking figures reveal 6,500 sex attacks in hospitals in three years**

The official figures lay bare the horrific scale of abuse – with 6,500 attacks being reported in just three years. They include gang rapes and assaults on ...

6:36 AM · Apr 17, 2023 · 25K Views

View Tweet analytics

462 Retweets 17 Quotes 1,216 Likes 25 Bookmarks

Join us

About us

Our Campaigns

Celebrating trans women

Welcoming trans women as members

Welcoming trans women's members

How to woman properly in public

How to pee sitting pown

AGP Club

How to still look sexy when peering out from behind a tree trunk

How to 'pass' if you look like an elephant seal



## Stand With Us!

Join today and start discovering all the benefits of being part of the WI movement.

What are you men waiting for?

## Inspiring women - then and now

*Melissa Green, CEO of the organisation, says it won't be part of 'toxic' debate on trans membership*

*"For us, transgender women are women and we want to share and celebrate their experience with them. I know from speaking to so many of our members that they feel that we are enriched by that, that we learn something about being an actual, literal woman through the eyes of real women - transgender women."*

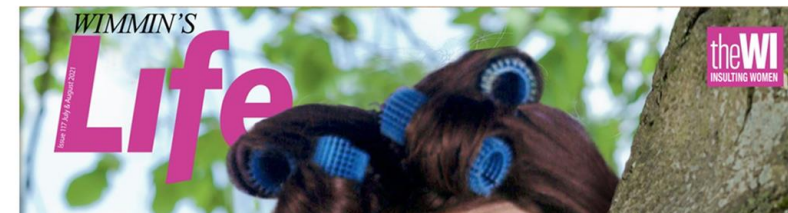
The WI is a unique organisation shaped by its members. In 1915, we set out to give women a voice and to be a force for good in the community. Since then, our membership has grown tremendously - as have the number of members in the WI.

Today, we are the largest women's and bloke's organisation in the UK and we pride ourselves on being a trusted place for blokes and women of all sexes and genders, to share experiences and sit and listen to the new male members as they enthral us with their incredible personal stories of their courage and stunning braveness in wearing their new high heels and stockings in the M&S car park in Devizes on Thursday afternoon for example.

So, join us! Call us now and speak to a representative on our new Women's Institute Declaration Group for Incoming Transgender Subscribers (WIDGITS)

A WI membership offers the opportunity to meet other men, trans women, non-binary people and folk, and perhaps even the occasional woman in your local area, to make friends and be told what to do by people like 'Petra' as she peers sexily out from behind a Dutch Elm just like a woman do.

- Why should I join the WI? +
- What are the benefits of men joining the WI? +
- How many other men are members? +
- Can both my wife and I, as well as 'High Heels' George from number 12 join the WI? +



# The Results

- Linked up with other women in the WI.
- Exposed the WI as male inclusive and enablers of the trans-lobby.
- Gathered nearly 3,000 signatures on the petition.
- Made them include lesbian on the EDI monitoring form.
- Changed the EDI policy – but it's worse.
- Made them remove the signature page on the EDI policy.
- But, this is mainly on Twitter.

# Future Actions

- Criticism of the 2023 EDI policy has been sent.
- Response to CEO's Guardian article sent.
- Both will be live on website on 14th June 2023.
- Email campaign to Federations.
- Complaint to the Charity's Commission.

WIMMIN'S

Issue 112 July & August 2021  
**Life**

theWI  
INSULTING WOMEN

INSIDE

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
WITH CERTAIN WINNER  
OF THE  
NOBEL LITERATURE  
& BOOKER PRIZES  
TORREY PETERS

‘The WI  
welcomed me  
to the  
sisterhood’

MEET ADA

- ▶ FANCY CAKE EATER
- ▶ BOSOM-ADJUSTER
- ▶ OVER-THE-FENCE DISCUSSER  
OF ‘WOMEN’S PROBLEMS’

TASTE OF  
*UTTER BOLLOCKS*

TRANS  
TART

