



Evenley WI report for the Annual Parish Meeting 15th April 2019

When I first saw a tiny poster in the village shop asking if anyone was interested in re-starting the Women's Institute in Evenley, the old group having closed 3 years ago, I had no idea it would prove so popular.

We held a coffee morning on 5th January this year to gauge interest, hoping for perhaps 15 ladies to come over for a free cuppa and a biscuit and were amazed when more than 50 appeared, over 20 of whom joined the organisation there and then! We had seriously underestimated the number of chairs and biscuits needed that morning. With our WI Adviser, Anne Seckington, who has a wealth of knowledge and experience at all levels of the organisation, we agreed to take it on: after some discussion we came up with the rather imaginative title of Evenley WI.

The officers are:

Maggie Hicks, Secretary,
Alison Atkins, Treasurer,
And myself, Alison Kendall, President.

We asked (or arm-twisted) another three ladies to join us and form a committee – Rosemary Bell, Wendy Freestone and Trisha Mackway just couldn't say no - and we were in business.

We held our first members' meeting of the newly re-formed Evenley WI on 4th February and again severely underestimated the number of chairs we would need – but we were learning our lesson. Our first speaker was Carole Wood who told us about Patchwork and Quilting and showed us her amazing work – and at our second meeting Jacky Alder gave a talk on 'Looking good, feeling great'. Our third meeting had a very interesting talk from Waitrose on healthy eating with plenty of delicious samples – we got the number of chairs just right that time.

In the future we will have a talk on tracing a family tree with 'live' research during the meeting using the Village Hall's new wifi facilities and later in the year a talk on life behind the scenes at theatre, as well as demonstrations of gift wrapping, Christmas wreath making and sampling of cheese and wine – I'm expecting a full turnout for that meeting.

The County WI organisation offers opportunities for members to go on trips and training courses and at the WI College, Denman near Abingdon members and non members may take courses in art and craft, cookery, dance, drama, history, music and many many other subjects.

The WI is also a campaigning organisation: it was formed in 1918 and over the past 100 years WI members have campaigned on a huge range of social policy, health, food, agriculture, education, environmental and international issues.

At our 29th April meeting, after presentations and group discussions, we will be voting on this year's resolutions. The two resolutions are:

'a call against the decline in local bus services' and 'Don't fear the smear'.

If agreed by the membership these resolutions will go forward to the WI Annual Meeting in Bournemouth in June.

We are keen to receive feedback from our members as we want them to be fully engaged in the group - at each meeting we ask them for suggestions for speakers, discussions and outings.

In conclusion, The Evenley WI are very proud to join the long list of organisations and interest groups in Evenley which together keep the Village vibrant and help in the fight against rural social isolation. We are looking forward to offering our members a wide range of activities and interests, as well as the chance to make new friends and meet up with old ones.

Alison Kendall
President
Evenley WI
9th April 2019