Federation of Women's Institutes
WARWICKSHIRE
Inspiring Women Since 1918

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Warwickshire WI News
DIGITAL

November/December
2026



FREE

Message from the Chair

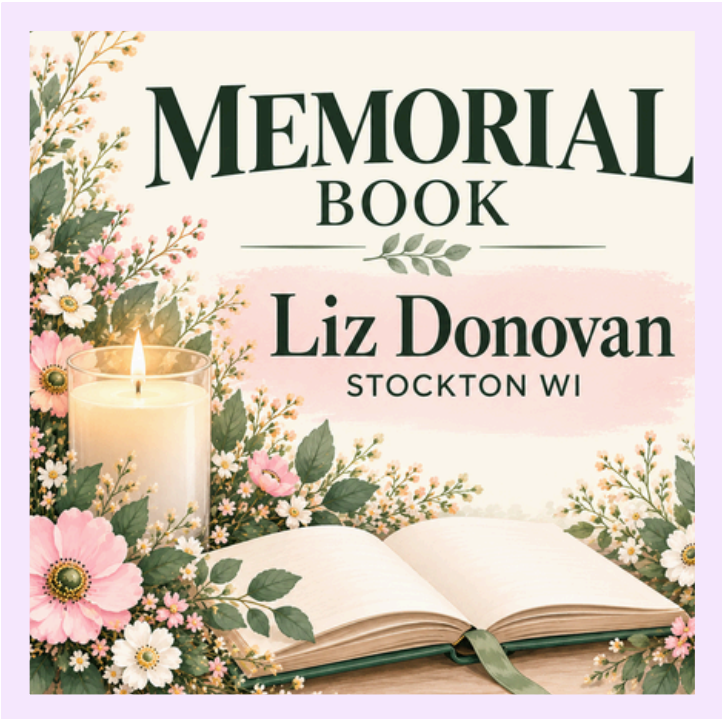
This, for me, is the start of the new WI year. Our Annual Meeting was on Saturday, as I write this, and our new trustees take over from then. We have one new addition to the board, Alison Selwa from Bishops Tachbrook WI and Heart of England WI, and we are delighted to have her with us this year.
The new arrangements for the Annual Meeting seem to have been received well by everyone who has spoken to me about it, and this has allowed us to have an extra speaker on the day. It was a very busy day but such a full and fun one. Major Lucy Lewis started the meeting with an explosion of fun, pardon the pun, with her tales of army life in the ’80s and as the first female bomb disposal expert in the country.

Lianne Kirkham updated us on the progress of the Esther Project. She was delighted with the money raised by everyone who has helped towards them starting a new facility in Warwickshire for many more women.

Thank you to everyone who helped raise £10,000 from the WI with your clever and enjoyable projects throughout the year.
Sarah Horne amazed us all with her incredible and beautiful flower arrangements, which were on display over the lunch break and then went into the raffle. Who knew you could recycle gin bottles in such an ingenious and beautiful way?
The afternoon with Adam Henson was a delight, with some family background and a vision of what the future holds for farming in general and also the Cotswold Farm Park.
Altogether, a wonderful day. If you didn’t make it this year, please put the date when it is announced in your diary, and we will try to make it another memorable day. I look forward to seeing you there.

On behalf of us all at Warwickshire Federation, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ruth

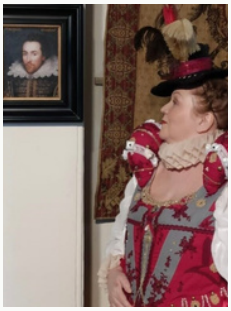




Events & Tickets

www.ticketsource.com/wfwi

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events

	Lesley Smith as Anne Hathaway £22	Friday 20th November 7.30pm	Binley Woods Village Hall Guests welcome
	Canva Training Workshop (Posters) £10	Wednesday 25th November 2pm	Federation House Warwick CV34 5HQ Members Only
	Christmas Cake Decorating (Decorating cupcakes & making toppers) £20	Thursday 10th December AM session 10am - 12pm	Federation House Warwick CV34 5HQ Guests welcome
	Christmas Cake Decorating (Making Cake Toppers) £15	Thursday 10th December PM session 1pm - 3pm	Federation House Warwick CV34 5HQ Guests welcome
	Joint Federation Weekend From £301 pp Deposits being taken	Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th April 2027	Staverton Park Hotel Choose from a range of activities

Afternoon Tea to Celebrate WI Day on September 16th



This year the WI is celebrating its 111th birthday. Rather an odd number I know but I think when you reach this age every birthday is worth remarking on.

To commemorate this about 40 Warwickshire WI members met for a cream tea in Hatton Village Hall. Many had taken the hint from NFWI and had turned out in shades of lavender and purple and the hall was soon filled with lively chatter. We spent the afternoon mixing with members from around the Federation, drinking tea and eating large amounts of cake. A big thank you to NFWI for their recipe for lemon and lavender cakes in WI Life as they were agreed to be a great success and worth trying.

Gillian Crisp had kindly had a look through the archives and brought a selection of items which took us down memory lane with the Warwickshire Federation memorial books from 1918-1993 and the 2018 version. The early versions were lovely filled with hand-drawn and painted versions of the villages the WIs came from; and then further into the past with pairs of gloves from the Dunchurch and area glove making project, the stitching was perfect, even and precise, and even a wartime canning machine.

We all had a chance to look through early record books from WIs and were amazed that there was no mention of which WI it was. I expect at the time they never imagined that they would leave the village, but we are far more aware of the need to archive our records now so hopefully everyone has the name of their WI in the front of their books today!

Thank you to all the members who joined us to celebrate as we finished with Happy Birthday to the WI and wished it many more years to come along with a slice of birthday cake.

See you all next year to celebrate 112 years.

Ruth McCartney
Federation Chair












Photo credit: Claire Whitehead-Wall & Sue Steel

An Interesting Visit to Finham Wastewater Sewerage Farm

Ever wondered where it all goes? Well, a small group of us now know!

By way of background, the Works treats the waste of a population from Coventry and Kenilworth, plus sludge from Rugby and satellite sites in South Warwickshire. The Works is Severn Trent's fifth largest. The surprisingly large site is really huge and may give the impression of being very old, which, in fact, is true, since the plant was first opened in 1939. Over the years, there have been many changes, probably the most significant being the replacement of settlement beds with the bio-digester plant.

We took in the full process from the main entry sewers to the freshwater exit into the River Sowe. On the way, we saw the huge stormwater retention tank, once the largest in Europe, and the first process, the screens taking out the 'rag' from the incoming sewage – the stuff we should never put down the drain in the first place: wet wipes, nappies, sanitary items and cotton buds. Grit gets removed at this incoming stage.

We passed many of the settling lagoons, which physically separate sludge and liquids before the sludge enters the huge 'golf ball' anaerobic digester, where heating the sludge to high temperatures encourages bacteria to break down the waste. This produces methane (biogas), which generates electricity to power much of the Wastewater Works, with surplus gas sent into the National Gas Grid. The residual inert residue – 'cake' – is sold as farmland fertiliser.

The wastewater is then aerated and passes through final filters before being returned to the natural environment. So, the whole process is very much a modern circular economy.

Members who missed out should look out for public open days when they too can be surprised by the sequence of processes to return Coventry's liquid wastewater to augment the flow of the River Sowe.

Federation Event Report



Anne Bloxham – Public Affairs Sub-Committee

November & December Word Scramble

Can you unscramble all 20 words?

All the words are connected with November and December.

1	EONEMBVR	11	EVOLGS
2	ERMBEECD	12	EIMNTST
3	EMCBREEAMRN	13	ASCHSMRTI
4	YOPPP	14	NILETS
5	OFNIRBE	15	THERAW
6	OWRSKFERI	16	NDCEAL
7	UATUNM	17	YEURKT
8	SFORT	18	EIPINCEM
9	WINRET	19	OMSNANW
10	CSAFR	20	SEEPSTRN

Answers are on ♡ Page 23 ♡

Annual Federation Meeting 2026

Our Annual Federation Meeting was a wonderful day of inspiration, celebration, shopping and friendship, with a fantastic range of stalls keeping everyone busy. Many ladies were soon laden down with bags filled with gifts, clothes and even gin!

We began the meeting with the singing of Jerusalem, followed by the Chair's address from Ruth McCartney, who welcomed members and set the scene for a memorable day.

Our first speaker was Major Lucy Lewis, the Army's first female bomb disposal expert, who gave a very funny and fascinating insight into her remarkable military career and into her current role as the first female appointed Marshal at Cambridge University, with all the challenges and experiences she has encountered along the way.



updated us on the incredible success of this year's Chair's Challenge, which raised over £10,000. This fantastic achievement will help support the charity's work with women experiencing domestic abuse, exploitation and other forms of adversity.

Lianne also shared news of their latest project, The Esther Retreat, a beautiful seven-bedroom property and dedicated women's centre nestled in the Warwickshire countryside, offering a safe and supportive space for women to rebuild their lives.



After thanking Lianne, Claire Whitehead-Wall (one of our trustees) told us about OurJay Foundation and its important work, which links closely with the WI's national campaign, Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers. The resolution was passed by the NFWI in June 2025 and highlights the importance of equipping people with the knowledge and confidence to help save lives.



Annual Federation Meeting 2026

Claire highlighted how practising on female-presenting manikins can help overcome hesitation and uncertainty when providing CPR or using defibrillator pads on women. This important work helps build confidence, challenge stigma and ensure that more people feel prepared to step forward in an emergency. It was a valuable reminder that learning these life-saving skills could make a real difference when every second counts.



We were then treated to a wonderful live floral demonstration by Sarah Horne. Sarah created four very different arrangements, showcasing her creativity and skill using beautiful flowers, many of which she had grown herself. It was a real delight to watch her transform the flowers into such stunning displays.



After lunch, the focus turned to celebrating our WIs and their achievements. Adam Henson, alongside NFWI Chair, Jeryl Stone, presented winning certificates, anniversary certificates and cups, recognising the hard work, dedication and milestones of our member groups.



Our final speaker was television presenter and farmer Adam Henson. He entertained us with stories from his life and work in the Cotswolds, sharing his passion for sustainable farming, rare breed conservation, biodiversity and food production. He also spoke about the challenges facing the rural economy, his television career and his book, giving us a fascinating glimpse into life behind the scenes.



To close the day, Ruth thanked all our speakers and everyone who had attended and contributed to making the meeting and day such a success. We then finished with the National Anthem.

Katie Gabbitas

Annual Federation Meeting 2026

Some more photos from the day

















Hampton Lucy & Charlecote WI

One of our members, Elaine, decided after many years to get back on her bike and agreed to take up the challenge of a cycle ride to raise funds for the charity we are supporting this year, Cyclists Fighting Cancer www.cyclistsfc.org.uk, a local charity that provides bespoke bikes to help in the rehabilitation of children living with cancer.

The challenge was to cycle around Rutland Water. At the end of the first month's training, Elaine had managed to cycle from Wellesbourne to Walton Hall, approximately 4.5 km, but over the subsequent weeks she trained extremely hard, with the support of her husband, and had managed to cycle 19.3 km before doing the challenge on 20th July.

A very tired but elated Elaine completed the 26.23 km, which was a great achievement! Her hard work was recognised by so many kind people sponsoring her, and she raised a total of £410.00. This amount was added to the funds we raised at our Afternoon Teas earlier in the year of £210.62, making a total of £620.62 to be presented to Cyclists Fighting Cancer.

We are all very proud of Elaine; she has been an inspiration to us all.



Treacle Tarts WI

Treacle Tarts WI have been busy crocheting and knitting thousands of poppies in preparation for Remembrance Sunday. The poppies have created a stunning display covering the pillars at Nuneaton Town Hall, providing a beautiful and poignant tribute to those who have served and sacrificed. They would also like to extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported the Great Nuneaton Poppy Project.










From Our WIs

News, photos and stories from across Warwickshire



Grendon WI

Oh What a Night!

Grendon WI ladies had the best time at the Frankie Valli tribute afternoon tea at Planters Garden Centre. Great food, great music and great company.



Warwick WI

On Wednesday 16th September, members of Warwick WI were delighted to present a cheque to Phil Hewish from Warwickshire Search and Rescue, our chosen charity for 2025–2026.

Warwickshire Search and Rescue is one of over 30 Lowland Rescue teams whose purpose is to search for high-risk missing people, including people living with dementia and severe mental illness. Their teams are entirely made up of volunteers.

Our fundraising activities included a sale of cards made by our Craft Group, one member's marmalade making and sale of produce, and raffles. Additional individual donations brought our grand total to £410. Phil was so pleased that he stayed for the rest of our meeting, including a cup of tea and cake, of course!

From Our WIs

News, photos and stories from across Warwickshire



Ladbroke & Deppers Bridge WI

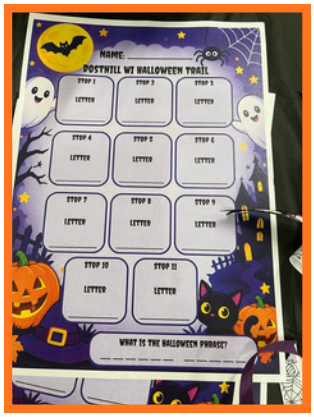
We had a coffee morning in aid of Ruth's Chairs Challenge, the Esther Project. We had an amazing raffle, wonderful home made cakes, books, bric-a-brac, teas and coffee. Our members had a lovely morning and raised £300 in 2 hours. WI at its best and raising money for this inspiring and worthwhile cause.

Dosthill WI

Thanks to a grant from Councillor Doyle, we were able to provide a free community activity day for children during the October half-term. Having previously supported DBC's Easter event with craft activities, we used the remaining funds to organise this special day.

We held two sessions, each welcoming 27 children and 14 adults. With a waiting list, sadly not everyone could attend. Activities included Halloween crafts, clay leaf prints, colouring and a sensory tray, followed by a Halloween trail around the park. Each child received a medal and sweets, and refreshments were available. Parents were incredibly grateful, with many offering donations. It was lovely to be able to offer families a fun day out without them needing to spend a penny!







Wishaw WI Book Club

Wishaw WI's book club started in January 2019, meeting bimonthly, including remotely during the pandemic. Everyone is very busy and meeting every other month enables us all to read a variety of books, even long ones and those that are more challenging!

Our book club gives us the opportunity to read a wide variety of books, many of which we wouldn't usually read and in genres we have shied away from previously, and our favourite authors have inspired us to read further books by them. We have some great discussions about the books (and the world at large!).

As well as reading books in a variety of media, we have a real fondness for listening to books and, where we can, we try to also watch any books made into films and TV adaptations and go to talks by authors. This has given us a very rounded view of what we read.
Our club members choose our next book and we challenge ourselves to read a wide variety of genres, old and new.

The book club has now become an integral part of our WI, enriching our experience of what the WI has to offer, and we all enjoy it immensely. Of the 66 books we have read so far, below are some high (and low) lights:

One of our most favourite books – The People on Platform 5 by Clare Pooley
The worst book we read – French Exit by Patrick deWitt
The best classic we have read – A Tale of Two Cities
Our favourite authors – Richard Osman, Clare Pooley and Agatha Christie
The hardest read – Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart.







From Our WIs

News, photos and stories from across Warwickshire

Kingswood & Lapworth WI

Kingswood and Lapworth have been busy with doing an afternoon tea and entering the scarecrow festival.





Harbury WI

Harbury WI enjoyed a lovely Harvest Supper, with a great turnout, delicious food and plenty of good company.

It was lovely to welcome some of our members' partners to join in the evening and share the friendship and community spirit.

We were also delighted to welcome Joe and Rebecca Fossett of Fossett's Circus and Joseph's Amazing Camels. They entertained us with fascinating stories about circus life, their adventures and their work in television and film.

A big thank you to everyone who helped organise the supper and make it such an enjoyable evening.







Event Highlights

Coventry's Victorian Murder Mile Walking Tour with Adam Wood – 30th September 2026

Members and guests joined Adam Wood for a fascinating walking tour exploring Coventry's darker Victorian past. The Murder Mile brought to life stories of crime, murder and mystery, as Adam shared intriguing tales from the city's history. A fascinating and atmospheric evening, with plenty of surprising stories along the way!









Wire Wrapping Workshop - October 24th 2026

Members and guests enjoyed a creative wire wrapping workshop at Federation House, where they learned how to make their own beautiful heart and moon pendants. With plenty of creativity and patience, everyone had the opportunity to create a unique piece of jewellery to take home. It was a lovely opportunity to learn a new skill, share ideas and enjoy an afternoon of crafting together.

Make it for Christmas

A pretty teacup sewing kit

Turn a charity-shop teacup into a beautiful pincushion and sewing kit – a thoughtful handmade gift or a lovely treat for yourself. It's an ideal project to use up scraps of fabric, lace and trimmings, and it looks charming on a dressing table or sewing corner.



You will need:

- A teacup and saucer (charity shop or one you already have)
- Scraps of fabric (plain or patterned)
- Toy stuffing or polyester filling
- Glue (fabric glue or a glue gun)
- Lace, ribbon or trim (optional)
- Pins, needles and small sewing items to fill the cup (e.g. thread, scissors, buttons)



Prepare your teacup

Make sure your teacup and saucer are clean and dry. A charity-shop cup works perfectly and adds to the vintage charm.



Make the pincushion

Cut a circle of plain fabric (about 15–18cm diameter). Place a small amount of stuffing in the centre, pull the edges together with a running stitch and secure tightly.



Fit the cushion

Place the stuffed fabric shape into the teacup. Add a little glue underneath if needed to keep it in place.



Add decorative trim (optional)

You can leave the teacup plain for a classic look, or add lace, ribbon or trim around the top of the cup. A touch of glue will keep it in place.



Fill and enjoy

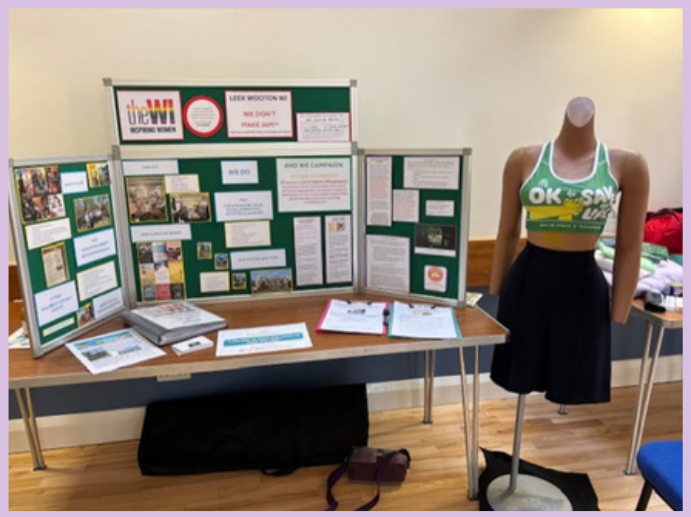
Add pins, needles, a small pair of scissors, a tape measure, threads or buttons. It makes a lovely gift or a pretty addition to your sewing space.

Top tips:

- Look for unusual teacups in charity shops or car boot sales – mismatched sets work well.
- Use fabric scraps, old clothing or Christmas napkins.
- You can add wadding underneath for a firmer cushion.
- Personalise with initials, a charm or a special button.
- Fill the cup with useful sewing items to make it both beautiful and practical.
- It's a lovely project to make with friends at a WI craft session.

Campaign Update

Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers – Making a Difference in Our Community



Leek Wootton WI has been putting the WI's "Bystanders Can Be Lifesavers" campaign into action, with impressive results.

Following their 2025 Resolution meeting, members wanted to raise awareness of the importance of being confident to perform CPR, particularly the concerns surrounding giving CPR to women.

As part of their community activities, the WI created an eye-catching display for Community Live! in September 2025, featuring a specially designed CPR bra from the St John Ambulance campaign "It's OK to Save My Life". The display helped to start conversations and encouraged local residents to take part in CPR training.

Leek Wootton WI had already been active in this area. In 2024, member Joy Morgan organised CPR training for local residents to coincide with Restart a Heart Day, with 38 people attending, including 16 WI members. A further training session in 2025 saw another 10 WI members take part.

The WI's work has continued beyond raising awareness. In June 2026, the Parish Council launched a major fundraising campaign to provide additional defibrillators for the local community. WI members have supported the fundraising, including helping at a school versus village cricket match.

The campaign has now raised enough to provide two additional defibrillators with cabinets, as well as a cabinet and funding for electrical work to make the defibrillator at the local school available to the community 24/7. A further defibrillator has also been generously donated.

The branch continues to support the community campaign, which aims to ensure that residents across the local hamlets can access and use a defibrillator within four minutes.

Leek Wootton WI has shown how a Resolution can become meaningful action at local level – raising awareness, encouraging lifesaving skills and helping to make their community safer. We are delighted to recognise the commitment and hard work of Joy and the members involved.

- **CPR training:** 38 local residents trained in 2024, including 16 WI members.
- **Further training:** 10 WI members trained in 2025.
- **Community fundraising:** enough raised for 2 new defibrillators and cabinets.
- **School defibrillator:** funding provided to make it available 24/7 to the community.
- **Another defibrillator:** generously donated.

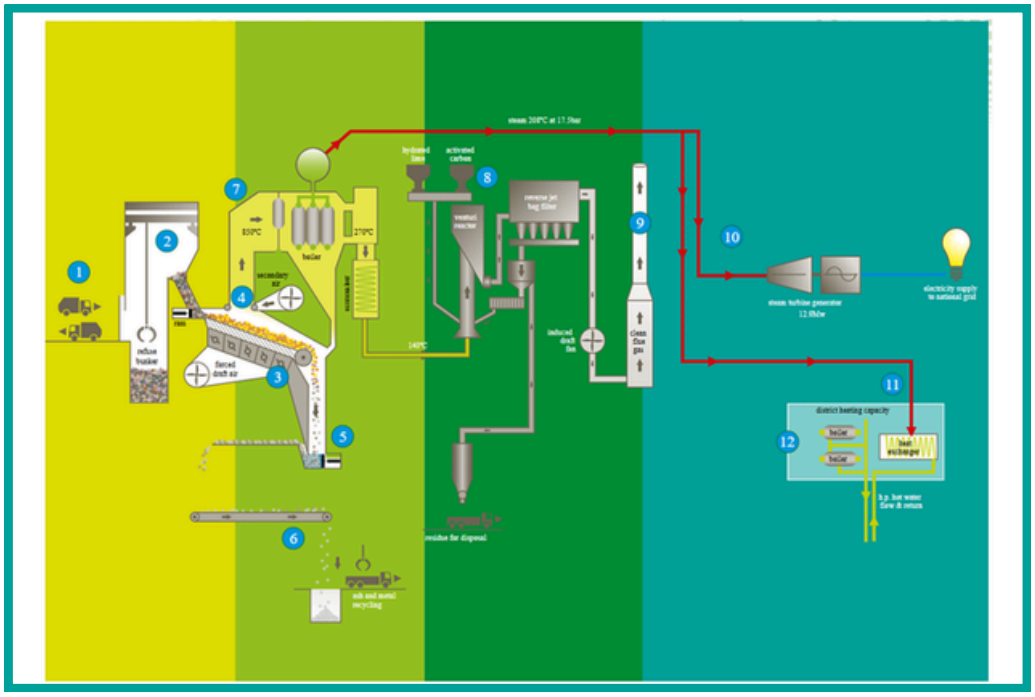
WFWI Visit to Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company

You'd be forgiven for thinking this might be an odd choice of event for the WFWI to undertake but we all produce waste and finding out what happens to it was actually really interesting.

The Coventry & Solihull Waste Disposal Company (CSWDC) is an independent waste management company whose main business is extracting energy (heat and electrical power) from municipal and commercial solid waste. Based to the south of the City, they have been operating in Coventry since 1975, and can process 300,000 tonnes of waste a year. CSWDC also operates a Household Waste Recycling Centre on behalf of Coventry City Council, where residents in the city are able to bring their household waste for recycling and disposal as well as kerbside waste collected coming into the site, not only from Coventry but also Solihull and some from Leicestershire too. All operations are tightly controlled under UK and EU Regulations and the company is licensed to operate by the Environment Agency.

We started the tour with a presentation which led us through how waste is processed and turned into energy before being taken out into the plant itself. The presentation was very informative and so well presented by our tour leader Carla, who made it all relatively easy to follow and is obviously passionate about her role in the company; lots of questions were asked and answered so well. CSWDC provides heat to the Coventry District Energy Company (CDEC) which provides heat via a 6.6km network of buried pipes to consumers in the city centre, delivering significant carbon savings.

Federation Event Report



Key Facts:

• More than 44MW of energy-from-waste capacity
• 77MW of total plant thermal capacity
• Incorporates a 600,000-litre thermal storage vessel for additional resilience
• Gives customers a carbon saving of approximately 89% compared with a conventional stand-alone gas-fired system
• Could save up to 25,000 tonnes of carbon if the system's full capacity is utilised

After the presentation it was hard hat and health and safety time and then out into the plant with the first stop being the control room. Who'd have thought a waste plant could be so automated and tightly controlled?

Every stage of the operation is carefully monitored with the vast majority of the process being fully automated. The incinerators are huge and emissions are monitored at every stage with very sophisticated controls and set limits to everything from dust levels (particulates) to levels of sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, hydrogen chloride and Volatile Organic Compounds. All in all an excellent and informative tour.

If you are interested further please visit the CSWDC website and maybe sign up for a repeat tour sometime in the future (as this is very much a working site, tours are only open to 10 people per visit, so booking early is advisable).



Anne Bloxham - Public Affairs

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT.

CAN YOU BELIEVE, IT HAS BEEN A YEAR,
IT FEELS LIKE WEEKS, SINCE WE WERE HERE,
MISTLETOE & HOLLY WE DECK THE HALLS,
GIFTS TO BUY FOR BIG & SMALL,
CHRISTMAS CARDS TO WRITE SO MANY,
EVERYTHING COSTS A PRETTY PENNY,
CAKES & PIES TO BAKE, PUDDINGS TO BOIL,
DECORATE THE TREE IN LIGHTS & FOIL,
TONS OF FOOD TO BUY & CHOOSE,
BEERS , WINES , AND LOTS OF BOOZE,
ALL OF THIS IS FOR OUR PLEASURE,
BUT ITS FAMILY & FRIENDS WE REALLY TREASURE
AS LADIES OF THE W.I,
WE MAY MOAN & WE MAY SIGH !
BUT WE WILL MANAGE & WE WILL COPE,
AS NEW YEAR BRINGS US ALL NEW HOPE,
SO WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS WITHOUT
(A TEAR!

TO YOU AND YOURS A HAPPY & PEACEFUL
NEW YEAR.

by Norma Bicknell - Southam WI

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November & December Word Scramble

ANSWERS

1	NOVEMBER	11	GLOVES
2	DECEMBER	12	MITTENS
3	REMEMBRANCE	13	CHRISTMAS
4	POPPY	14	TINSEL
5	BONFIRE	15	WREATH
6	FIREWORKS	16	CANDLE
7	AUTUMN	17	TURKEY
8	FROST	18	MINCE PIE
9	WINTER	19	SNOWMAN
10	SCARF	20	PRESENTS

Note from the Editor

Welcome to our November/December issue of *Warwickshire WI News!*

Where has this year gone? It doesn't seem five minutes since I took over as editor in May, and here we are already at our final issue of 2026!

It has been a real pleasure putting together the magazine and seeing just how much is going on across our Federation. From creative workshops and interesting visits to fundraising, special celebrations and all those wonderful WI get-togethers, there is certainly never a shortage of things to share.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has sent in articles, photographs and news throughout the year. Your contributions make the magazine what it is and help to showcase the amazing variety of activities happening in WIs across Warwickshire.

Please keep your stories and photographs coming in for 2027. You don't have to have done anything extraordinary to feature – sometimes it's the little things, the friendships made and the fun you've had together that make the best stories.

This is our last digital issue for this year, and we'll be back with a printed magazine in January. In the meantime, I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas, enjoy some well-deserved time with family and friends, and have a happy and healthy New Year.

Katie

Editor, *Warwickshire WI News*



December 1st is the deadline for the January edition.

Please send articles, photos and news to **editor@wfwi.co.uk**



Printed magazines available to order from your WI Secretary

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