

Notes for applicants

National Conference Committee member 2025-26

We are currently looking to recruit the following positions:

- National Conference Committee (6 vacancies)

Closing date for applications to the National Conference Committee positions is Friday 28th March 2025. Applications to be emailed to diane.cooper@theswi.org.uk or posted to SWI Central Office, 1 Carmichael Place, Edinburgh EH6 5PH.

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Introduction

Scottish Women's Institutes SCIO is an incorporated membership organisation. The organisation was first established as the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes in 1917 and currently has 8,600 members across 460 local institutes in Scotland. The organisation, a registered Scottish charity (SCIO) is governed by a Board of Trustees.

Eligibility

You must be a member of the organisation to apply for a committee position.

Selection process

The National President and Chief Executive Officer will consider all applications and conduct an interview process, if required.

Time commitment

National Conference Committee members are required to attend monthly meetings starting early 2025 until the month after the 2026 National Conference, which last for approximately one hour each. These will be a mix of hybrid and in-person meetings.

Terms of office

Your tenure length will be until the month after the National Conference in 2026. Committee members may apply for the committee in future but must re-apply.

General committee profile

The committee is collectively responsible for ensuring the success of the Scottish Women's Institutes through:

- Setting, monitoring and evaluating the aims of committee objectives
- Ensuring effective risk management and monitoring are in place
- Assisting and providing guidance to SWI Events team
- Acting as ambassadors for the charity at events

Personal responsibilities

- Be in alignment with charity's strategy, vision and values
- Exercise respect and value the skills and experience of staff
- Commit to attend committee meetings
- Act as an advocate on behalf of the charity and communicate a positive attitude to the workings of the charity
- Act with integrity and honesty in all dealings with the SWI
- Maintain good understanding of the range and scope of activities offered by the committees
- Maintain general business, and financial understanding
- Be respectful of confidentiality at all times.

Guidance notes

It is important that SWI committees reflect the diversity of the charity's activities and have the correct skills mix and expertise to enable the committees to make decisions which are in the best interests of the charity while ensuring that there is a high standard of committee work.

When considering whether to apply to be a member of a committee, please draw on the skills that you have learned and developed and consider how best these fit into the committee's work. As an example, you may have gained practical and transferrable skills within your working life that can be incorporated into the decision-making for the committee.

Terms of Reference

National Conference Committee, SWI

Purpose

To oversee the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the SWI National Conference, ensuring it aligns with the organisation's mission and objectives, promotes engagement, and provides a valuable and enriching experience for members.

1. Responsibilities

1.1 Conference planning and delivery

1.1.1 Collaborating with SWI staff to design and deliver a well-structured conference agenda that appeals to the diverse interests of members.

1.1.2 Suggesting external speakers, workshop facilitators, and panellists to ensure a high-quality programme.

1.1.3 Ensuring the conference is inclusive, accessible, and represents Scotland's heritage, culture, and values.

1.1.4 Overseeing logistical arrangements, including venue selection, catering, and technical support for in-person or hybrid events.

1.1.5 Establishing and monitoring a budget for the conference, ensuring cost-effectiveness and financial accountability.

1.1.6 Developing strategies to promote the conference, encouraging wide participation across all Federations.

1.2 Evaluation and continuous improvement

1.2.1 Reviewing post-event analysis, including attendee feedback and financial reports, to assess the conference's success.

1.2.2 Recommending improvements for future conferences based on evaluation findings.

1.2.3 Identifying opportunities to incorporate new trends, technologies, or formats to enhance the conference experience.

2. Structure and composition

2.1 The committee shall be composed of:

- Member representatives selected through an interview process conducted by the Board of Trustees.
- The CEO and relevant SWI staff as ex-officio members without voting rights.

2.2 From the elected representatives, a Convenor and Vice Convenor will be appointed.



2.3 The committee may establish sub-committees or working groups as required to address specific aspects of the conference.

2.4 Membership of the committee will typically be for a one-year term.

2.5 The quorum for committee meetings shall be five members, including at least the Convenor or Vice-Convenor.

3. Meetings and proceedings

3.1 The committee shall meet monthly, with additional meetings scheduled as necessary to support the conference timeline.

3.2 Meeting frequency and agendas will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

3.3 The Convenor will provide updates to the Board of Trustees and submit a detailed post-conference report.

3.4 Minutes of all meetings shall be documented and made available to the Board of Trustees.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Convenor:

- Ensures the committee's smooth operation and adherence to its objectives.
- Acts as the primary liaison between the committee and the Board of Trustees.

4.2 Committee members:

- Actively contribute to the planning and delivery of the conference.
- Report back to their respective Federations on committee activities.

4.3 Assigned SWI staff:

- Provide administrative support, ensuring timely distribution of agendas, papers, and minutes.
- Implement the committee's decisions and action plans.

5. Reporting and accountability

5.1 The Convenor, or in her absence the Vice-Convenor, shall report to the Board of Trustees on the committee's progress and activities.

5.2 A full report on the committee's work and the outcomes of the National Conference shall be presented at the AGM.

6. Financial oversight

6.1 The committee is accountable to the Board of Trustees for financial management.

6.2 Committee representatives will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses, subject to budgetary limits and the production of receipts.



6.3 Expenses for members requiring flights or ferry journeys to attend meetings will be covered by SWI Central Office.

7. Review process

7.1 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the committee's purpose and the evolving needs of the organisation.

Last updated: January 2025

