



Welcome to Issue 41 - Members' news

This is a print-friendly version of the Scottish Women's Institutes monthly member newsletter.

Scottish Women's Institutes was established in 1917 and is an inclusive and inspirational membership-based organisation. We are here to build an inclusive community, to have fun and form friendships, to campaign, to learn, to share and to socialise. We provide a platform for social activities and networking, and champion women's issues.

Find out more about us at **www.theswi.org.uk**

Scottish Women's Institutes is a SCIO, SC053058

A Message from our National President

Dear SWI Members,

As we draw the curtain on 2025, I want to take a moment on behalf of myself and the board to reflect on a remarkable year for Scottish Women's Institutes, and to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for being part of this incredible community.

This year has shown once again why SWI remains Scotland's largest and most vibrant women-led movement. Through our network of 8700 members, we have strengthened bonds of friendship, learning and support that stretch right across the country.

As National President, I am proud of the dedication and creativity shown by so many of our members. Whether you've joined a new group, helped run a Federation, shared your skills, volunteered for the heritage project, or simply brought warmth and friendship to Institute meetings, you have helped make SWI what it is.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Triennium offers a rewarding way to help shape SWI's future, share your skills, and make a meaningful impact. If you're passionate about supporting women and our Institutes, we would love to see you step forward and apply for the Skills & Events Committee, Finance Committee, or Board of Trustee roles.

Wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful festive season, and a New Year full of friendship, learning and fun.

With best wishes,

Mary Burney
National President, Scottish Women's Institutes

Members' Gathering 2026 - Book Your Accommodation

Travel & Accommodation

To help you plan your trip and make your visit to Dundee as easy as possible, please visit our Travel & Accommodation page, where you will find a wealth of information including how to get to the Apex, booking your accommodation, exploring Dundee and more!

Book your accommodation - <https://dacbres.bzon.uk/event/swi-members-gathering-2026/>

Location: View the [Apex City Quay Hotel & Spa, Dundee on Google Maps](#).

Accessibility Guide - <https://www.accessable.co.uk/dundee-city-council/access-guides/apex-city-quay-hotel-spa>

Competitions Are Now Open

Vaughan Nash Competition

The Vaughan Nash is a national handcraft competition. Each entry must include five handmade items, displayed together as one exhibit.

Sign up - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5X59ZX6>

National Golf Competition 2026

We're delighted to confirm that this application has been rescheduled for June 2026 and are now re-open for entries, with the same great rate as before.

Sign up - <https://www.theswi.org.uk/events/national-golf-competition/>

National Level - Baking

The Anne Wallace Sugar Sifter Trophy returns at this year's Members' Gathering. This year's entry is a traditional Dundee cake, showcasing craftsmanship, flavour, and attention to detail.

Sign up - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X7SL6GH>

National Level - Preserves

The Mary Aitken Trophy returns at this year's Members' Gathering. This year's entry is a jar of marmalade, showcasing clarity, colour, and depth of flavour.

Sign up - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X7RT7HJ>

Reminder:

Only Federations are able to enter at National Level, but if you are a keen, get in touch with your Federation to find out if there's Institute level heats you can take part in!

Have You Visited The New Website?

Join our Marketing & Comms Lead Bobby for a friendly online walkthrough of the newly updated SWI website!

During this Zoom session, he will guide you through the new layout, show you where to find key information, explore upcoming events and resources, and share tips to help you get the most out of the site.

Whether you're confident online or just getting started, this relaxed session will help you feel right at home with the new SWI website.

Book now -

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/swi-website-walkthrough-tickets-1977265229528?aff=oddtcreator>

Supreme Court Ruling Update

Dear Members,

You may be aware of the statement released by the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) regarding the recent UK Supreme Court ruling.

The NFWI has confirmed that, in light of the ruling, it will no longer legally offer formal membership to transgender women from the start of the new membership year on 1 April 2026. To continue operating legally as the Women's Institute (NFWI), the organisation must comply with the Supreme Court's judgment and restrict formal membership to biological women only.

We are currently taking legal advice regarding the implications of the UK Supreme Court decision so that we can ensure that Scottish Women's Institutes operates in an appropriate and lawful manner. As part of this process we are also reviewing our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

We will continue to keep members informed and will share an update when we have more information to provide.

President Mary Burney, Board of Trustees and Diane Cooper CEO

Photography Competition Winners

1st + 2nd Place - Heather Kerr, Auldhouse & East Kilbride SWI, Lanarkshire Federation

2nd Place - Jackie Bethell, Cogsmill SWI, Roxburghshire Federation

3rd Place - Hazel Hood, Cortachy SWI, Angus Federation

President Mary Burney's Choice - Aileen Gillies, Ford SWI, Argyll Federation

Congratulations to our top three photographers and the recipient of the President Mary Burney's Choice award! Judged by Board Trustee Clare Greig (thanks Clare!)

Make An Impact – Join The Board

Members can now submit applications for Skills & Events Committee, Finance Committee & Board Trustee roles for the new Triennium.

Joining the Scottish Women’s Institutes Board of Trustees is not just an opportunity to lead, it’s a chance to shape the future of a historic organisation rooted in community, creativity, and connection. As a trustee, you play a vital role in empowering women, preserving Scottish traditions, and ensuring the SWI continues to thrive for generations to come.

You’ll bring your skills and experience to the table, helping to guide strategic decisions, and advocate for the voices of women across Scotland. It’s a deeply rewarding way to give back, grow personally and professionally, and be part of a group that values education, friendship, and progress.

DOWNLOAD THE COMMITTEE APPLICATION PACK - <https://www.theswi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Triennium-Committee-Application-Pack-2026-3.pdf>

DOWNLOAD THE BOARD TRUSTEE APPLICATION PACK - <https://www.theswi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Triennium-Board-Application-Pack-2026-2.pdf>

Members’ Gathering 2026 Evening Entertainment

SWI’s Got Talent is a fun, feel-good variety showcase celebrating the amazing hidden talents of our members. It’s not a competition – just a chance to take the spotlight and share what you love, whether that’s singing, acting, magic, comedy, or something completely unexpected! From seasoned performers to first-timers, everyone is welcome to apply, cheer each other on, and enjoy an evening of creativity, laughter, and community spirit.

Sign up - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WFWWZDS>

Evelyn Baxter Craft Scholarship

Applications have reopened for the 2026 Evelyn Baxter Craft Scholarship with a brand-new focus: Traditional Broad-Edged Calligraphy. We're seeking members with existing skills who want to develop and pass them on.

Devised in honour of Evelyn Baxter, a prominent SWI member and advocate for craftsmanship, the Evelyn Baxter Scholarship Programme promotes traditional crafts and skills among women across Scotland. Each year, scholars receive expert tuition and then share their knowledge with SWI members and communities, helping preserve Scotland's cultural heritage.

Successful scholars will:

- Receive two full days of tuition
- Travel expenses and accommodation if required
- Learn to teach and deliver lessons on traditional broad-edged calligraphy
- Represent the Evelyn Baxter Programme throughout 2026 by teaching Federation-level classes across Scotland

Apply now - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SYZL28H>

Happening Soon - Don't Miss Out

Christmas Quiz & Fizz

December 11th, 7:00pm - 8:30pm

It's that time of year again! Roll on the SWI's Christmas quiz, hosted by SWI members!

This will be open to members and non-members, there will be lots of surprises and excitement on the night. The winning quizzier will win a £50 Marks & Spencer voucher!

Sign up - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/swi-christmas-quiz-fizz-tickets-1684371603809?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Heritage Volunteer Celebration Event

December 15th, 11:00am - 1:00pm

As the National Lottery Heritage Funded Project reaches its half-way point, join us for a special celebration of all we've achieved so far.

Together, we'll reflect on our first year, look ahead to 2026, and enjoy inspiring talks and creative activities.

Sign up - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-joyful-celebration-of-swi-heritage-project-with-our-amazing-volunteers-tickets-1916250108659?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

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Volunteers Wanted – Creative Crafts 2026

We're looking for tutors to lead make & take sessions & member helpers for the Creative Craft Show at the SEC in Glasgow, 5th–7th March 2026.

If you've got a craft you'd love to share, or would be interested in chatting to prospective members about all the amazing benefits you get as an SWI member we'd love to hear from you.

We'd need two hours of your time and you'll receive free access to the Creative Crafts Show on the day you volunteer.

Email Anna.bain@theswi.org.uk for more information.

2026 Competitions

We're excited to share that plans are underway for:

- National Spoken Word Competition (Variations on a Theme)
- National Outdoor Bowling
- National Ruralympics
- Additional SWIFTS opportunities (more classes & new subjects to be revealed)

More information will be released in the New Year!

#StitchedWithLove

We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who took part in our #StitchedWithLove campaign in collaboration with Home-Start Scotland, your hats will help families in your own communities who may struggle to stay warm this winter.

We donated an amazing amount of hats, alongside mittens, booties and other items of winter clothing.

Campaigns like #StitchedWithLove show the real power of partnership, creating opportunities, strengthening communities, and amplifying SWI's impact across Scotland.

A special thank you to Louise Pritchard from [Bow Fiddle Yarns](#) who created the exclusive patterns as part of the campaign.

East Neuk Knits Festival

We attended the very first East Neuk Knits festival at the end of November, it was a pleasure having the opportunity to chat all things knitting and SWI, with current and prospective members.

Thank you to everyone who helped out over the weekend and who stopped by to say hello!

Fabric Fandangos – Recording Available

Our Fabric Fandango craft-along was a hit! The session, led by Maz Thorn, Powmill SWI member and 2023 Member of the Year, was a relaxed and creative way to unwind, connect, and make something beautiful for the season.

Participants were guided step by step to create their own fabric fandangos, decorative pieces perfect as festive ornaments or gifts.

Learn to make your own fandango – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUeKyCSOUXY>

Reminder:

SWI Central Office will be closed from 22nd December until 5th January 2026. The last day for placing shop orders to guarantee delivery before Christmas will be Monday 15th December.

Member Discounts

Wendy Wu Tours: 5% off all tours, can be used in conjunction with other offers

CODE:SWI5

Take a look – <https://www.wendywutours.co.uk/>

Bloom & Wild: 15% off flowers & Gifts

CODE: THESWI15B&W

Take a look – <https://www.bloomandwild.com/>

Willowberry: 10% off skincare products

CODE: 10offSWI

Take a look – <https://www.willowberry.co.uk/>

The Edinburgh Woollen Mill: 20% off all clothing products

CODE: SW25

Take a look – <https://www.ewm.co.uk/>

The Crafty Kit Company: 20% off craft kits, supplies and gifts

CODE:SWI20

Take a look – <https://www.craftykitcompany.co.uk>

Please Note that all discounts are only available online and are not for in store use.

Member Support & Benefits

National Benefits:

- Take part in national events – From the SWI Summer School and Study Tour to the Members' Gathering and competitions.
- Learn new skills online – Enjoy free online events, a library of YouTube "how-to" videos, and scholarship opportunities.
- Use the membership toolkit – Access ready-made templates and ideas to promote your Institute and celebrate members' achievements
- Enjoy exclusive discounts – Take advantage of great savings and special offers just for members.
- Stay connected – Receive our monthly members' e-newsletter and quarterly Heritage Project updates.

SWI Member Insurance

Members are covered through SWI public liability insurance when working with non-members (children and adults) such as the Junior Dippers workshops.

Please note: It's important to ensure that any event involving non-members (adults or children) is branded as a SWI event, and it is recommended to confirm that any event venue you use has public liability insurance.

Access to SWI events

Keep up-to-date with the exciting range of in-person and online events [here](#).

Communities on Facebook

Don't miss out, join us on Facebook and keep abreast of what's happening for the SWI and across the membership in Scotland. Follow us [here](#)

Do you want to receive event alerts?

Subscribe to SWI's Eventbrite page and never miss a thing.

Do you want general news?

Visit www.theswi.org.uk for updates.

Contact us for any further information at SWI, Unit 8, 1 Carmichael Place, Edinburgh EH6 5PH or hello@theswi.org.uk or call 0131 225 1724

Alternatively, if you have a grumble to share, please follow our complaints procedure to ensure that you receive an appropriate and timely response.
