



Institute Office Bearer Handbook

print friendly version

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

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Welcome

Welcome and thank you for stepping into your role as an office bearer. Whether you're in a rural village or a busy town, you are part of a vibrant network of women working together to build friendships, share skills, and strengthen communities.

Since 1917, when Catherine Blair founded the first institute in Longniddry, the organisation has brought women together to connect, learn and support one another. What began as a space for rural women has grown into a modern movement that welcomes women from all walks of life, across Scotland's rural and urban communities alike.

Today, that spirit remains the same, creating opportunities, encouraging learning, and making a positive difference locally and nationally.

As an office bearer, you play an important role in keeping this tradition alive. You are a leader, organiser, and ambassador for your institute. This handbook will guide you through your role, provide practical support, and help you make the most of your time in office.

We're delighted to have you on board, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

The Role of President/Vice President

As the President, you're the captain of the team! You'll guide your Institute towards goals. Think big, dream big, and inspire everyone along the way! You're the face of your Institute! Whether it's representing us at events, or speaking with members of the public, you'll be out there spreading the word about our amazing organisation and building relationships that matter.

As the President, you'll chair meetings, lead discussions, and make sure everything is staying on track, keeping everyone focused and motivated. Big decisions? You'll be right in the mix, making sure you have all the information needed to make the right choices. No pressure, but you'll be a key player in keeping everything running smoothly. You'll encourage open dialogue, ensure all voices are heard, and supported. Strong communication will be your superpower as you keep everyone in the loop.

You're the go-to person for the rest of the team when they need advice, help, or encouragement. Being approachable, supportive, and understanding will help you lead with confidence.

Leadership isn't just about getting things done, it's about building a team, including a Vice President who all enjoy working together. Make sure the atmosphere is positive, inclusive, and full of energy. A little fun goes a long way! Finally, be the driving force behind the growth of the Institute. Look for new opportunities, explore innovative fundraising ideas, and make sure we're constantly evolving to better serve our community.

The Role of Treasurer

As the Treasurer, you're the guardian of your Institute's finances. You'll ensure you have the funds you need to achieve your goals while keeping everything transparent, ethical, and in tip-top shape.

You'll be in charge of tracking every penny. Keeping an eye on all incoming donations and outgoing expenses ensures we're always in the loop and on the right financial path.

Financial transparency is key! You'll ensure that all our financial practices comply with regulations and that records are always accurate and up to date. Your attention to detail will keep us in the clear.

While you're not the lead on fundraising, your role is vital in helping to ensure funds are managed properly once raised. You'll help assess the financial feasibility of any fundraising efforts and ensure everything aligns with our long-term goals.

Keep meticulous records of all financial transactions, whether it's donations, grants, or expenses. A well-organised financial system means we're always ready to share info with our members. Ensure bills are paid on time, keeping the Institute running smoothly, and managing cash flow so we're never in the red. You'll also work with banks when necessary to manage accounts.

The Role of Secretary

As Secretary, you'll be the backbone of the Institute, making sure everything runs smoothly by keeping records, notes, and documents in order. Your organisational skills will keep everyone on track!

You'll handle correspondence, whether it's sending emails, letters, or managing official communications. You'll also be the point person for keeping everyone informed and making sure the right people get the right info at the right time.

You'll capture the key details and decisions made at meetings. Your minutes will serve as the official record of what's been discussed and agreed upon – so clear, concise notes are your superpower!

You'll organise meetings, catch-ups, and special events, ensuring everyone is on the same page. Your coordination skills will keep everything running like clockwork.

You'll keep track of important documents. Whether it's paper or digital, you'll ensure everything is filed properly and easily accessible when needed.

Whether it's helping the President prepare for meetings, coordinating with the Treasurer on financial paperwork, you'll be an indispensable help to the leadership team.

You'll help keep the vibe positive and productive by ensuring that all team members have the tools and information they need to succeed. A good communicator and team player, you'll help bring people together and make sure everyone's on the same page.

Thank You!

At the SWI, we believe that our success is a result of the collective effort and dedication of every member. Your contributions and commitment to upholding our values play a significant role in our continued growth and success. A special thanks to Aberdeenshire Federation for sharing the initial draft of the handbook which has been adapted into the version you have read.

Contact Us

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Institute Notes

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