

SWI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: 16th May 2026

Held: via Zoom

In Attendance (Trustees):

National President: Mary Burney

National Vice President: Susie Finlayson

National Treasurer: May Tosh

Trustees: Anne Kerr, Linda McTurk, Karen Johnson, Clare Greig & Sybil Stuart

Skills & Events Convenor: Anne Howatt

In Attendance (Staff): CEO Diane Cooper, Jacqui McGuire, Beth Spencer, Anna Bain, Roz Galloway & Bobby Veitch

101 Members: Including incoming Board Trustees & Committee Convenors/ Members

Member Facilitators: Maz Thorn & Kath Hewson

Advisors: Jacqueline Whyte, Thomson Cooper Accountants

Guest Speaker: Ailsa Stephen

1. Opening, Welcome, Apologies, Declaration of Interest

National President, Mary Burney, welcomed members to the AGM, and provided an overview for the AGM. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of AGM held on 24th May 2025

The minutes of the AGM held virtually on 24th May 2025 were proposed by Anne Kerr and seconded by Karen Johnson.

3. National President Annual Report 2025

National President, Mary Burney introduced the National President's Annual Report for 2025, supported by fellow Trustees. Mary reflected on the work and achievements of the Scottish Women's Institutes over the past year. She highlighted the continued importance of SWI in supporting women and communities across Scotland through friendship, learning, cultural engagement, and heritage preservation. The organisation's ongoing delivery of the "Changing the Future Together" strategic plan was noted, with focus on strengthening membership engagement, improving organisational efficiency, ensuring financial sustainability, and developing the SWI Heritage Project.

www.theswi.org.uk

1 Carmichael Place, Suite 8, 4th Floor, Edinburgh EH6 5PH

Tel: 0131 225 1724 | Email: hello@theswi.org.uk

Scottish Women's Institutes SCIO is a registered Scottish Charity. Charity No. SC011901

Board Trustee, Clare Greig reported on organisational growth and development, confirming that membership had remained stable throughout 2025. She noted the continued strength and resilience of Institutes across Scotland and welcomed the growth of new Institutes. She also highlighted the successful launch of the new SWI website, which improved accessibility, communication, and engagement, alongside increasing social media reach and the development of intergenerational initiatives such as Junior Dippers.

Board Trustee, Julie Cribb reported on prioritising members, emphasising the importance of listening to and acting on member feedback. She referred to the membership survey results and the transparent communication of findings to members. She highlighted the establishment of the Federation Presidents' Assembly as a key development in strengthening collaboration across Scotland. She also reported strong engagement levels, including over 1,200 volunteer hours contributed to the Heritage Project and approximately 1,900 members participating in national events and competitions.

National Treasurer, May Tosh presented the financial sustainability update, outlining the organisation's continued focus on careful financial management. She highlighted reduced costs through increased use of digital systems and online meetings, improved efficiency through online payments, and a move towards break-even performance in national competitions. She confirmed that reliance on investments had reduced and that a phased membership fee increase had been introduced to ensure long-term sustainability.

Vice President, Susie Finlayson presented the update on the Heritage Project, reporting significant progress in digitising archival materials including magazines, cookery books, and historical records. She highlighted the success of volunteer engagement, including the training of volunteer historians and the introduction of remote volunteering opportunities. The oral history programme was also noted as a key achievement. Although funding from the Crichton Trust had not been secured, she confirmed that new partnerships with cultural organisations had been developed and that work to identify a sustainable future for the collection would continue.

National President, Mary Burney then opened the meeting to questions. There were no questions.

4. AGM Financial Accounts 2025

National Treasurer, May Tosh, introduced auditor Jacqueline Whyte of Thomson Cooper, who presented the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Jacqueline confirmed that an unqualified audit opinion had been issued, confirming that the accounts gave a true and fair view of the charity's financial position. She reported an increase in income during the year, largely due to National Lottery Heritage Fund grant funding, alongside strong investment performance and increased income from events and activities. Expenditure also increased, reflecting delivery of charitable activities and the Heritage Project. The auditor reported no significant concerns regarding financial controls,

www.theswi.org.uk

1 Carmichael Place, Suite 8, 4th Floor, Edinburgh EH6 5PH

Tel: 0131 225 1724 | Email: hello@theswi.org.uk

Scottish Women's Institutes SCIO is a registered Scottish Charity. Charity No. SC011901

governance, or the charity's ability to continue as a going concern and confirmed that a clean audit opinion had been issued.

Members were invited to ask questions. One question about the Heritage Project timeline was raised, Auditor Jacqueline Whyte answered. No other questions were raised.

The financial accounts were proposed, seconded, and approved. May Tosh then announced that the Board of Trustees had approved a phased national membership fee increase of £3 per year over the next three years, with fees increasing to £33 in 2027, £36 in 2028, and £39 in 2029.

5. Federation Annual Reports 2025

National President, Mary Burney, presented a summary of Federation Annual Reports for 2025, highlighting the wide range of activities delivered across Scotland. These included workshops, competitions, shows, talks, and community events, all of which contributed to learning, friendship, and engagement at local level. She noted strong participation in national programmes and continued collaboration between Federations. While some challenges were acknowledged, including membership decline in certain areas, the overall picture was described as positive, resilient, and forward-looking.

Trophy winners were then announced. The Barbara Brookshire Trophy was awarded to Largs in Ayrshire for the highest number of new members. The Stoneycreek Trophy was jointly awarded to Alloway in Ayrshire and Gartocharn in Dunbartonshire for the second highest membership growth. The Retson Family Trophy was awarded to Largs in Ayrshire as the newest Institute with the highest membership. Congratulations were extended to all recipients.

6. Skills & Events Committee Report 2025

Outgoing Skills & Events Convenor Anne Howat presented the committee report, outlining a year of extensive activity. She reported that approximately 50 events had been delivered, engaging around 1,900 participants, alongside national study tours and competitions, and Summer School. She highlighted continued development of the SWIFTS learning pathway, a refresh of national competitions, and a focus on financial sustainability and accessibility. She then formally handed over to incoming Convenor Margaret Dick.

Margaret Dick thanked Anne for her leadership and contribution and outlined future priorities for the committee, including expanding learning opportunities, developing beginner-friendly activities, strengthening financial sustainability, and ensuring continued responsiveness to member feedback.

7. AGM Special Business - Triennium 2026

National President, Mary Burney, presented the results of the Triennium elections for 2026–2029. It was confirmed that Susie Finlayson had been elected National President. Five

trustees were elected to the Board, alongside four continuing trustees, forming a full Board of ten members. Appointments to the Skills & Events and Finance Committees were also confirmed.

The newly elected National President is Susie Finlayson - Roxburghshire Federation

The following five members have been appointed as Board trustees for the next triennium 2026-2029.

Elected Trustees:

- Karen Harrison - Shetland Federation
- Heather Coutts - West Lothian Federation
- Elizabeth Hay - SC&WP Federation
- Rita Storr - Ross-shire Federation
- Ann Henderson - Dumfriesshire Federation

The following trustees continue their current terms into the new triennium:

Continuing Trustees:

- Clare Greig - Dunbartonshire
- Julie Cribb - Ross-shire & Sutherland
- Sybil Stuart - Moray & Nairn
- Jane Hogg - Dumfriesshire

We can confirm we have a full Board of ten Trustees who will go through the induction and training process in the coming months.

The following members are appointed to serve on National Skills & Events committee:

Skills & Events Committee Members:

- Margaret Dick - Dunbartonshire Committee (Convenor)
- Kay Smith - Perth & Kinross
- Helen Williamson - Perth & Kinross

- Ann McGuchan - Ayrshire

Finance Committee Members:

- Gwen Foster - West Lothian
- Rosalin Sivija - Selkirkshire
- Elizabeth Farr - SC&WP

Mary asked for adoption of the motion. The motion was proposed by Julie Cribb and seconded by Jane Hogg. Mary then proceeded to ask members to ratify the Triennium results. With a vote of hands, the motion was carried forward with no objections.

Following this, the outgoing President, Mary Burney, formally handed over leadership to the incoming National President, Susie Finlayson. Both Presidents offered remarks reflecting on the transition, expressing gratitude to members, trustees, staff, and volunteers, and looking forward to the new Triennium.

8. Celebrating Leadership

A commemorative booklet celebrating past and present National Presidents was introduced. Members were informed that it would be available in both printed and digital formats. A video presentation followed, showcasing reflections from former and current leaders and marking the contribution of women who have shaped the organisation.

9. Interview with Ailsa Stephen

New National President, Susie Finlayson, welcomed guest speaker Ailsa Stephen, who was interviewed by outgoing Trustee, Karen Johnson. The discussion focused on Ailsa's experience on *Game of Wool* and her wider crafting journey. A Q&A session followed, after which thanks were extended to both speakers for their contribution.

10. Vote of Thanks & Close of Business

In closing remarks, the New National President, Susie Finlayson, thanked all members for their participation and engagement throughout the AGM. Appreciation was extended to Maz Thorn and Kath Hewson for their facilitation support, to the guest speakers for their contributions, and to trustees, staff, and volunteers for their ongoing work. Special thanks were given to outgoing President Mary Burney for her leadership and service to the organisation.