



Members News – Issue 48

July 2026

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

The results are in: Here's what you told us in the Membership Experience Survey.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our 2026 Membership Experience Survey with over 2,000 responses from Institutes across all 28 Federations, this is the biggest picture we've ever had of what it's like to be an SWI member today.

The Summary Report is now available to download from the SWI Website, covering what's working well, where we need to focus, and what happens next.

Keep an eye out for the "You Said, We Did" icon, it marks the ways your feedback has shaped what we're doing and what comes next.

A new chapter for the SWI

The newly formed Board came together for a productive two-day strategy session, laying the groundwork for SWI's next five-year plan. We're delighted to announce Clare Greig as National Vice President and Rita Storr as National Treasurer, joining the Board of Trustees as we build on the progress made over the last four years.

The two days gave Board members the opportunity to get to know one another, build strong working relationships, and begin shaping a strategy that reflects what members told us through the Membership Experience Survey.

Using your feedback as a guide, the Board is focused on creating a sustainable organisation that is fit for the future, one that delivers what members value most while continuing to grow and strengthen SWI.

Work to finalise the strategy is underway, and we'll keep you updated as it develops. We look forward to sharing more with members in the coming months.

Planning a special celebration, AGM or Institute event? Members can request a visit from a Board Trustee or the CEO by emailing hello@theswi.org.uk (<mailto:hello@theswi.org.uk?subject=&body=>)

Forres success story: New group sparked by open evening!

Facing the closure of her own Institute due to falling membership, Moray & Nairn Federation committee member Zena decided to act. She organised an open evening to recruit new members locally, hoping to spark a new group in Forres.

The event last month was a roaring success, chairs were brought in twice to keep up with arrivals, and the room buzzed with enthusiasm several Committee members went home hoarse from talking up the SWI all evening.

Thank you to Zena for organising, Davie at Erskine North Centre for hosting, Lesley for her make-and-take table, and to everyone who helped the session be a success.

The central office is on hand to provide support to members and Federations looking to organise events to help grow their membership, reach out to Membership Coordinator Roz for more information.

Rosalind.Galloway@theswi.org.uk

Help us build a National Directory of tutors, speakers, demonstrators and judges

You told us you'd like a national directory of talented people who can support and inspire Institutes across Scotland. Whether they've visited your Institute and left a lasting impression, delivered a fantastic Skillshare session, or have expertise to share, this directory will help connect members with speakers and specialists across our network.

Know anyone who would be a great addition? Click the form below to let us know who they are and we'll contact them to confirm they're happy for us to include their details. We'll only hold and use their information with their consent, in line with UK GDPR.

National Directory Form: www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y9CN63H

Member Meetings: Planning Our 110th Anniversary

In 2027, the SWI will celebrate 110 years, and we want members to be part of planning how we mark this fantastic milestone.

Join fellow members for a relaxed two-hour ideas session over a cup of tea. It’s a chance to chat, share your thoughts and help shape celebrations that reflect everything we love about SWI; friendship, community and making a difference.

We’re holding five workshops around the country, so choose the location that’s easiest for you and click to book your free place.

- **Edinburgh** (McDonald Road Library) – Saturday 15th August at 12:30pm
- **Stirling** (Raploch Campus) – Saturday 22nd August at 10am
- **Aberdeen** (Garioch Heritage Centre)- Friday 2nd October at 1pm
- **Ross- shire & Sutherland** - more information to come soon...
- **Stewartry of Kirkcudbright** - more information to come soon...
- **Highlands & Islands** - more information to come soon...

Book online via the SWI Website.

If you can’t attend, but want to give us your ideas, please visit:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/M9DTSBP

Book your place at the Annual Office Bearer Event

Friday 6 November – 10:30am – 3:00pm

National Christian Outreach Centre, Perth

Join us for a day of discussion and collaboration as we think about how we can help our Institutes grow and thrive in the future. Each Federation can send up to three representatives in person, Institute and additional Federation Office Bearers are kindly invited to join online.

Whether in the room or online, your voice matters in shaping SWI's future.

Book your place via the SWI Website.

A week in the life of Beth

You asked for more information about the staff and the work that goes at the Central Office. These new 'A week in the life' articles give you an insight into just that. Keep an eye on future newsletters for more of them

Beth Spencer, is our Events & Administration Lead at the SWI. Having been part of the SWI staff team for four years now, Beth can confidently say in the role there's no two days that are ever the same!

To learn more about what a week in the life of Beth looks like, click the button below.

Read a week in the life of Beth: www.theswi.org.uk/news/a-week-in-the-life-of-beth/

Make the most of your time in Dundee

Planning on extending your stay in Dundee for the Members' Gathering?

Here's 5 things you can do while exploring Dundee:

- Visit V&A Dundee – featuring permanent displays and changing exhibitions showcasing the very best of design from around the world
- Step into history by visiting Captain Robert Falcon Scott's Antarctic ship, RRSDiscovery.
- Venture onto the tranquil paths of the Angus Glens, the gateway to Britain's largest natural haven – the Cairngorms Natural Park.
- Experience a night out at one of the many restaurants or take in a show at DundeeRep in Dundee's cultural quarter
- Visit Glamis Castle, legendary inspiration for Shakespeare's Macbeth and child hood home of the Queen Mother

Dumfriesshire members master the art of calligraphy

A warm and welcoming weekend was had in Lockerbie, as members of Dumfriesshire Federation gathered for the Evelyn Baxter Broad Edge Nib Calligraphy course, led by tutor Arwen Yuill.

Twelve ladies took part, each learning a new skill from scratch. Over the two days, they progressed from first strokes to beautiful finished pieces, leaving with a real sense of achievement and some lovely examples of their new-found craft to take home.

A well-deserved congratulations to all who took part, and a big thank you to Arwen for sharing her expertise.

Celebrate an inspiring member

Do you know an inspiring SWI member who goes above and beyond?

The annual Margaret Whiteford Award celebrates those outstanding members whose passion, dedication and commitment truly reflect the values of the SWI. If there's someone whose contribution deserves recognition, we'd love for you to nominate them and help us celebrate the difference they make.

The winner will be announced at the SWI Members' Gathering on 11 September 2026 at the Apex Hotel, Dundee. Please get your nominations in before Friday 31 July.

Submit your nominations via the SWI website.

Online Talk: Marie Stopes: Complicated Campaigner

Wednesday 5 August – 7:00pm – 8:00pm

Come along to this exciting online talk with returning speaker Susan Morrison, who explores the remarkable and controversial life of Marie Stopes, a pioneering yet divisive figure in the history of women's health and birth control.

Susan has previously hosted an online talk for SWI, and her engaging, well-researched style made for a memorable session, so we're delighted to welcome her back.

Whether you're already familiar with Stopes's legacy or completely new to her story, this promises to be a memorable session.

Book your place via the SWI website

1 Day Scone Masterclass

Saturday 1 August | 10am – 4pm

Fancy mastering the art of the perfect scone? Join SWI member Helen Williamson for a hands-on baking workshop dedicated to sweet and savoury scones, as part of the SWI Skillshare programme.

This one-day masterclass is designed for everyone, whether you're picking up a rolling pin for the first time or you're a confident home baker looking to refine your technique. Helen will guide you through making plain, fruit, and cheese scones, plus a batch of homemade raspberry jam to go with them. The day begins with a live demonstration before you bake along step by step, picking up plenty of tips and tricks to take home and use again.

We're developing garden centre partnerships and are looking for members across West Lothian, Fife, Dundee and Angus who would like to share their skills and enthusiasm with others. We'd love to hear from anyone with experience or interest in floral arts, flower arranging, gardening, potting, seasonal planting, or other creative and horticultural activities.

Tutors are paid the current agreed rate, with travel expenses covered.

Email Anna to arrange a chat: Anna.bain@theswi.org.uk

Member Discounts

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

CODE:SWI5

Rydale: 10% off country clothing – limited to non sale items only

CODE: SWI10

Bloom & Wild: 15% off flowers & Gifts

CODE: THESWI15B&W

Willowberry: 10% off skincare products

CODE: 10offSWI

The Edinburgh Woollen Mill: 20% off all clothing products

CODE: SW25

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

CODE:SWI20

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.