



Members News – Issue 51

October 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

Building on Strong Foundations – Growing Our Future

SWI Annual Office Bearers Event 2026
Friday 6 November, National Christian Outreach Centre, Perth
10.30am – 3pm (refreshments & lunch provided)

Join Federation and Institute Office Bearers from across Scotland as we launch our SWI Strategic Plan 2027–2032 and focus on one of our biggest priorities – growing our membership!

- How can we attract new members and keep existing members involved?
- How can we support our Institutes to thrive?
- What can we learn from each other?

A great opportunity to share ideas, hear from fellow members and help shape SWI's future. Together, we can build a stronger SWI for generations to come!

Project 1917 – Your Anniversary, Your Ideas, Your Celebrations!

Aberdeenshire members came together in Inverurie with our CEO, Diane Cooper, for another fantastic Project 1917 gathering, sharing lots of brilliant ideas for celebrating SWI's 110th anniversary in 2027.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us and contributed their thoughts and enthusiasm.

We've had gatherings in Edinburgh, Aberdeenshire, Stirling, the Isle of Arran, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, Roxburghshire, the Highlands & Islands and soon to be in Ross-shire & Sutherland.

Our 110th anniversary is a celebration of YOU, our members! It's your friendship, skills, stories and commitment that have kept SWI going for 110 years, so it's only right that you help shape how we celebrate this special milestone.

We want the celebrations to reflect what matters to members, with ideas coming from Institutes and Federations across Scotland.

Every idea matters, big or small, and every member deserves the opportunity to have their say. Together, let's make our 110th anniversary a celebration that truly belongs to our members!

Institutes Briefing – UK Supreme Court Ruling

There is time to return the feedback form to your Federation as part of the Membership consultation surrounding the UK Supreme Court ruling.

Institutes are encouraged to discuss the consultation at a meeting and submit any feedback by 18 November 2026. Members who are unable to attend a meeting can send their form directly to hello@theswi.org.uk.

All feedback received from members throughout 2026 will help inform the Board of Trustees' decision in December 2026.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to share their views so far. If you haven't yet had your say and would like to, there is still time. We also understand that some members may prefer not to share their views, and that is absolutely fine. Taking part is entirely up to you, and we respect everyone's choice.

Thank You for Making the National Raffle a Success

A big thank you to everyone who helped sell and purchase tickets for this year's National Raffle.

The raffle was a huge success, raising a grand total of £14,471. This made a major contribution to this year's Members' Gathering, covering the cost of speakers, judges, tutors and oot an' aboot activities. Once all costs were accounted for, we were left with a surplus of £62.72.

That leaves just the winners of our highest ticket sales competition to announce.

In the Federation competition for the most ticket sales we have joint winners. Congratulations to Perth & Kinross and Dumfriesshire, who each win a £200 National Event Voucher.

Cockburnspath SWI (Berwickshire Federation) takes the prize for the Institute with the most ticket sales, winning a £100 National Event Voucher. Congratulations!

Fancy a Day Out promoting the SWI

Volunteer with SWI – and enjoy a great day out!

Throughout the year and next year, SWI has the opportunity to exhibit at a range of partner events, including

- Creative Crafts
- East Neuk Knits
- The Ideal Home Show
- The Royal Highland Show
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Our national shows are a brilliant opportunity to share our love of crafts, meet new people, have fun and spread the word about SWI!

We're always looking for friendly volunteers to help at our stands. As a thank you, you'll receive a FREE ticket to the show, with time during your day to explore, shop and enjoy yourself too!

Volunteering times and roles vary, so there's something to suit different interests and availability. Fancy joining us? Email hello@theswi.org.uk to find out more. Come along, lend a hand and enjoy a lovely day out with SWI!

Save the Date – National Curling Competition

Sweepers at the ready! Following your feedback Dumfries Ice Bowl will host the SWI National Curling Competition on Friday 26 February 2027. We hope to see Institutes from across Scotland there for a day of friendly rivalry on the ice. More information, including entry details, will be on its way soon.

Evelyn Baxter Scholarship 2027

Are you a needle felting enthusiast with a love of sharing your skills? We're looking for SWI members to become Evelyn Baxter Scholars for 2027. This year's craft is Beginners' Needle Felting, taught by Lou Washington, SWI member and Royal Highland Show Handcraft Championship winner.

Successful scholars will receive two full days of tuition at SWI Central Office, with travel and accommodation covered if required. They will then share what they've learned by teaching Federation-level classes across Scotland from March 2027.

Applications close on 6 November 2026, apply on the SWI website.

National Membership Fee

As announced at our AGM in May, the SWI National Membership Fee will increase by £3, from £33 to £36, from 1 November 2026.

We appreciate that any increase in costs is important to our members, and the decision to raise fees was not taken lightly.

The SWI Board of Trustees has agreed a planned increase of £3 per year over the next four years to help secure SWI's long-term future. By introducing smaller, gradual increases, we hope to make it easier for members to plan ahead while ensuring that SWI can continue to support our Institutes, deliver valued activities and create opportunities for women across Scotland.

This approach also gives us a clearer and more sustainable financial footing as we work towards delivering our new Strategic Plan for 2027–2032.

While we cannot predict future economic circumstances, our intention is to follow this planned approach, provided circumstances allow.

If you pay your membership fee directly to SWI by Direct Debit, you will also receive an email notification closer to the time confirming the increase.

We are very grateful for your continued membership and support. Every member plays an important part in SWI, and these changes will help us build a stronger organisation for the future.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Central Office team at hello@theswi.org.uk. We're always happy to help.

A fantastic day of fun, friendship at the SWI National Ruralympics!

Fun and plenty of laughter at the successful National Ruralympics!

A huge thank you to Ross-shire & Sutherland Federation for hosting such a brilliant event at Dingwall Academy and bringing together 17 teams from across Scotland for an afternoon of friendly competition, games and giggles!

A big congratulations to our winning teams:

- 1st place – Dunbartonshire Federation (Jane Scott, Connie Cathie, Fiona Haddow & Fiona Moffat)
- 2nd place – Dumfriesshire Federation (Diane Hope, Nicola Donald, Elizabeth Kinstrey & Maureen Dinwoodie)
- Joint 3rd place – Aberdeenshire Federation (Maureen Sim, Yvonne Gray, Lynne Smart & Lorraine Murdoch)
- Joint 3rd place – Stewartry of Kirkudbright Federation (Andrea Irving, Marion Gourlay, Liz Green & Elizabeth Smith)
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Well done to everyone who took part and helped make the day such a success. Events like this really do show what the SWI is all about – bringing members together from across Scotland to enjoy friendship, fun and a little healthy competition!

A special thank you to all the organisers, volunteers and helpers who worked so hard behind the scenes to make it happen

Institute Spotlight – Kyleakin

Congratulations to Kyleakin Institute on the Isle of Skye, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in September 2026!

From fundraising for the old community hall to knitting socks for local lads in World War 2, Kyleakin SWI has plenty of stories to tell, and members shared them over afternoon tea to celebrate their 100th anniversary. The Ross-shire Federation President, Secretary and Treasurer were guests of honour, as President Margaret Govier spoke about the Institute's achievements over the century.

Today's members are just as busy, catering for local events to fund a Christmas dinner for the village's senior citizens and other worthy causes. The craft group's recent work took pride of place beside the 60th anniversary tapestry and a print of the Spirit of the Highlands panel.

Well done to everyone who helped organise a fantastic celebration, here's to the next 100 years.

If you'd like to be featured in an upcoming issue of Members' News please send an email to hello@theswi.org.uk

Benefits of becoming an ACWW member

As all our Institutes throughout Scotland are now busy with their various activities, may I take this opportunity to introduce myself in my current role of Scottish Co-ordinator for the Associated Country Women of the World.

I am writing to ask all our Federations and Institutes, as part of your ongoing activities, to consider becoming members of ACWW.

In Scotland, at present, we have two Federations and three Institutes who have already taken the step and become members. It would be good to see that number grow thereby giving our European President, Anne Kerr (Past President of SWI) the support she needs in what is a demanding role.

You will no doubt ask, what are the benefits of becoming members. ACWW was founded in 1929 to bring rural women and their organisations all over the world together to address the challenges they faced because of isolation, discrimination, and lack of standing. Since then, much has been achieved to bring about equality and fairness throughout the world but there is still much to do. Your membership and support of ACWW can go a long way to find practical solutions to strengthen education, health, and sustainable livelihoods throughout the world.

While I fully appreciate the financial constraints that we all live with at the present time, group membership for an Institute or Federation would cost £41 or if you would like to consider individual membership, that is £30 per annum. Full information on the work of ACWW can be found on their [website](#) or feel free to contact me directly.

Ann McGhee

Ann can be emailed directly at ahmcghee@btinternet.com

Looking Ahead to an Exciting 2027

Our Skills and Events Committee is busy putting together an exciting programme of national events for 2027, including Summer School, the National Study Tour and our popular national competitions in Spoken Word, Golf, Outdoor Bowling and Curling.

There will also be plenty of opportunities to learn something new! Our Evelyn Baxter Scholarship Programme will see trained scholars travelling across Scotland to share their skills with members, while our new SWIFTS learning pathway will offer a range of learning opportunities at different levels, helping members build their skills, confidence and knowledge.

And with 2027 marking SWI's 110th anniversary, we're planning some extra special national activities and opportunities to bring members together to celebrate, learn and have fun!

We aim to have dates and locations confirmed and shared with members by the end of December, giving everyone plenty of time to plan ahead.

There's lots to look forward to in 2027 – another year of friendship, learning, new experiences and, of course, plenty of fun!

Christmas Ideas from the SWI online shop

A special treat for SWI members – signed copies of Sarah Rankin's Feast!

The fantastic Sarah Rankin was a wonderful addition to our recent Members' Gathering in Dundee, where her live kitchen demonstration went down an absolute treat with everyone attending!

We were delighted when Sarah personally popped into the SWI National Office to sign a limited number of copies of her latest cookbook, Feast, especially for our members.

Packed with delicious recipes and inspiration, Feast would make a lovely gift for the foodie in your life – or a well-deserved treat for yourself!

We have a limited number of signed copies available for SWI members to order directly from the Central Office, so don't miss out!

SWI 2027 Calendar at £9.99

The 2027 Calendar is now on sale filled with members' photography and tasty recipes to try throughout the year!

SWI 2027 Diaries at £9.99

The 2027 Diary is now on sale!

Stock is very limited, so order yours today to avoid disappointment.

Visit shop.theswi.org.uk to purchase these fantastic gifts

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.