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Please send items for the newsletter to wanstead-wi@hotmail.co.uk



Please remember to bring:

- A mug and glass
- Money for the home stall and NFWI raffle
- Pennies for friendship
- Donations for the food bank
- Seeds for the seed swap

MEETING ON 21 DECEMBER

This month we will hold our Christmas and Winter Social – more details to follow. Please bring finger buffet foods that you would be happy to share with others in your table. Wanstead WI will provide mince pies.

Plus a discussion of the WI Resolutions before our vote at January 2024 meeting.

Upcoming events

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL MEMBERS!

On behalf of the Committee I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. Wanstead WI is now 100 members strong and we would like to thank everyone who has helped to make 2023 another interesting and successful year for us all with the many meetings, events, clubs, trips, outings and campaigning we have enjoyed. We hope to see as many of you as possible at the December meeting for a jolly and seasonal close to the calendar year but meanwhile send our best wishes for 2024 to everyone.

Kind regards

Denise Hitchens





JANUARY MEETING

Our first meeting of 2024 takes place on Thursday 18 January and is on the topic of “Make Do and Mend - History on the Move” Pat and Barbara Elliot will join us to share the experience fo a 1940s housewife’s daily life. Dig out those headscarves and pinnies! There will also be a chance to taste some ‘culinary delights’ and appreciate the sounds of the time. **Plus** Voting on the WI Resolutions 2024



REGULAR AFTERNOON TEAS

Meeting for a chat over a tea and coffee at The Bull and Cafe Belgique are well attended. It’s a chance for new members to meet and get to know others from Wanstead WI. No need to tell us in advance, just turn up. Look forward to seeing you soon. Angela K

- Thursday 28 Dec, coffee at The Bull, 11.00
- Thursday 4 Jan, tea at Cafe Belgique, 2.30





PROGRAMME FOR 2024

A reminder of the rest of the programme for next year. Angela K, Cathy U, Claire T, Gill W, Gladys, Maralyn, and Gill T who arranges our IT, are happy to announce your draft members meeting programme for 2024. **A couple of details still need to be finalised.**

Thank you to those who have suggested ideas – already there’s been a few suggestions for 2025! All will be kept to hand for next year, or in case of unavoidable last minute 2024 changes. As always, please check for updates on our webpage: www.wansteadwi.weebly.com

A Wetlands Walk is arranged for 23 May and there will be women’s events at Cody Dock to join in. **Please tell us about your ideas for e.g. coach outings, exhibitions, open gardens, theatre, walks and local events which members may wish to appreciate next year.**

15 February	<p style="text-align: center;">Swan Rescue – Louisa Green</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our local Snaresbrook ponds are home to these beautiful, majestic creatures</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hear how you, and your ‘old towels’ can find a new lease of life helping support their rehabilitation</p>
21 March	<p style="text-align: center;">Cody Dock – Simon Myers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Discover how the Dock (River Lee) was regenerated</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Details of their women’s events at Cody Dock will be available throughout the year</p>
18 April	<p style="text-align: center;">Spring Social</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our Spring / Easter get-together – a lovely, convivial time for Members to enjoy getting together</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bring a dish to share for the buffet or bring your own if you wish</p>
16 May	<p style="text-align: center;">Annual Meeting of Wanstead Women’s Institute</p> <p>Business reports followed by an enjoyable challenging quiz led by Kathy Moore, WWI member</p>
20 June	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Immersive story telling - Xania Gresham-Knight</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A previous programme presenter - we eagerly anticipate the subject of her performance...</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Be engaged, entertained and enthralled by her narrative</p>
18 July	<p style="text-align: center;">Blood, Sweat and Fears – Mary Newton</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Over 30 years spent in the field of Forensic Science</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We will hear about her involvement in some major London based scenes of crime</p>

<p>25 August</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Summer Social</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Enjoy an ice cream, <i>maybe female Morris Dancing (?)</i> and an outside picnic (weather permitting!)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">And the bonus of an earlier evening start time</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bring a dish to share for the buffet or bring your own if you wish</p>
<p>19 September</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A Turkish Valentine – Jenny Gibbs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Find out about her encounters and maybe relive your idyllic Mediterranean holidays</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pashminas and Turkish gifts for sale in time for early Christmas presents</p>
<p>17 October</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Polymer Jewellery Craft workshop - Jade Holt</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Try your hand at making delightful jewelry whilst enjoying sociable tête-à-tête</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Further details are awaited</i></p>
<p>21 November</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A Taste of Italy – Vincenzo (More Italy)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A local Wanstead High Street business owner's insight on all things Italian</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sample typical Italian treats, popular delicacies, with a chance to buy for the season</p>
<p>19 December</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Christmas and Winter Social</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our end of year seasonal get-together - Bring a dish for the buffet or bring your own if you wish</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Possible Light Entertainment – music, activity</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plus a discussion of the WI Resolutions before our vote at January 2025 meeting</p>



News and campaigns

WHIPPS CROSS, MARGARET CENTRE PETITION HANDOVER

A few of us together with members of Stone Rangers WI and Action 4 Whipps delivered the petition on 16 November to the offices in Stratford of the Integrated Care Board. There were well over 6000 signatures from locals - an amazing effort!. Sadly Zina Etheridge, current CEO of the Integrated Care Board didn't come down to receive it. Ann Brown delivered a speech outside the office, pointing out the necessity of the Margaret Centre before handing in the box of signatures to the ICB. Through Action 4 Whipps, the petition was mentioned on a phone in on BBC Radio London and there have been articles in the local press including the Waltham Forest Echo.

Ann Brown and myself have been attending a fortnightly workshop on End of Life and palliative care over the last few months at Whipps Cross. The work will be incorporated into a report to be handed to the Joint Hospital Scrutiny Committee to discuss at their next meeting on 23 January. Unfortunately, the issue of beds away from home (including the Margaret Centre) hasn't been discussed yet! We're hoping to push the discussion in January before the report is published. Once the report is out then we'll seek a meeting with Zina Etheridge in the new year.

FOOD BANK COLLECTION AND DELIVERY 2024 - DRIVERS NEEDED

There will be a sign up sheet circulating at the December meeting.

Monthly meeting dates: Jan 18, Feb 15, March 21, April 18, May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, September 19 October 17, November 21 and December 19 2024.

If you're not going to be there but can offer to drive our food bank collection to Eat or Heat please let me know. Frances S - 07910 318474 or email frances.simmons@ntlworld.com





2024 RESOLUTIONS

We will be voting for the Resolution of our choice at the January meeting: Dental Health, Poor Housing Conditions, Say no to Gambling Advertising, Improving outcomes for Women in the Criminal Justice System. See November WI Life for details.

Members will be able to cast their vote by:

- a) voting on a sign-up sheet at the meeting
- b) using voting slips from WI Life and giving them to Angela
- c) sending a message to the Wanstead WI email address.

Please see below for more information about the Resolutions. Please speak to me if you need further information about the Resolutions and the voting Process.

Many thanks, Angela K

Next year's resolutions

1. Dental Health Matters

There is a chronic shortage of NHS dentists and people are suffering health issues as a result. The NFWI calls on the Government to increase investment in the training and retention of dentists and to review the current inadequate NHS contracts in order to ensure everyone can access an NHS dentist wherever they live.

2. Impacts of poor housing conditions

Poor housing can have a deleterious effect on human health and wellbeing, safety and quality of life and can disproportionately affect the most vulnerable groups in society.

The NFWI calls on the UK Government to boost housing standards and regulations, increase funding for housing renovations, increase the supply of affordable and secure housing and strengthen collaboration with local authorities, housing associations and other relevant stakeholders to develop strategies that address local housing challenges.

3. Say 'no' to gambling advertising

Harm caused by excessive gambling is a global problem. Some countries are already addressing this by banning advertising. The NFWI calls on members, the government, regulators, the NHS, educationalists and gambling charities to work together towards achieving a complete ban on gambling advertising. This will reduce gambling harm, save the NHS money, protect family relationships and decrease the number of suicides, around 400 per annum at present.

4. Improving Outcomes for Women in the Criminal Justice System

There is an urgent need to radically reform decision making in respect of women in the criminal justice system and in particular, pregnant women and women with children. We urge cross government collaboration to the deliver on the 2018 female offender strategy by setting goals, robust governance and performance measures to reduce the number of women who have committed non-violent offences from being imprisoned.



IMPACTS OF POOR HOUSING CONDITIONS – PROPOSED BY CLAIRE THOROGOOD

Charles Booth the Victorian social reformer mapped out our London streets. At that time it was estimated that 35% of Londoners lived in poverty. Today a lower but still significant 21% live in poverty in London. Some of you may think that poor housing is restricted solely to social sector housing but in fact it may surprise you to know that generally some of the highest levels of poor housing conditions are found in the private rented sector. Rogue and poor private landlords still do exist. The housing charity, Shelter, has recently reported that over 167,000 people will spend Christmas without a proper home in London.

You may wonder why I am keen to support this particular resolution? Well, I have spent my career as a social housing manager, probably influenced by my Father having been a local councillor for many years for a large council estate with its above average share of housing problems. This meant from an early age I was very much aware of how people's lives are affected by poor housing conditions.

To give you some examples of the poor housing conditions we have in the UK, according to Shelter over a million households are on waiting lists for a home. In Tower Hamlets over 20,000 people are on the waiting list and some of these people are unlikely ever to be rehoused or will have a significant wait period of many years. The last housing organisation I worked for had a fairly small stock of about 8,000 homes. We received on average about 400 calls a day with the majority being repair related. We also had a high number of disrepair cases usually as a result of damp, mould or structural defect issues. In any given year we usually received over 1000 formal complaints, over half of these relating to repairs and poor housing conditions.

During lockdown, it really hit home to me the extent of the current housing problem. We had to quickly rethink and prioritise our repairs and day to day services and ways of working, ensuring our most vulnerable customers were prioritised. We set up a helping hand fund for essential food supplies, furniture and clothing for our residents who were struggling financially - including mobile phones and laptops for their children to do their homework. I recall ringing up one gentleman with a serious health problem who had not had a flushing loo for 6 months. When I asked him why he hadn't contacted us he said to me, "You probably have more pressing concerns than mine!"

I also remember helping a family with four children, one of whom was severely disabled who lived in a small 2 bed home ownership flat. They couldn't move to a larger home because the Council prioritised people who were renting meaning social homeowners got put to the bottom of the waiting list, which in reality meant that they would never get rehoused. They couldn't afford private rented housing or buying a bigger property as they were on a low income and had a very substantial amount of credit card debt. In the end there was good news for this family, as with some multi-agency working, I got them re-categorised as an exceptional rehousing case. I vividly recall the sheer joy and delight when they heard that they were likely to get an offer of rehousing within the next 6-12 months.

Fire safety issues following the tragedy at Grenfell, also revealed that even some of our recently built housing by private developers is not fit for purpose, with some blocks requiring a 24-hour fire safety waking watch. During my last few years in housing, I was heavily involved in meetings and discussions with homeowners who were faced with massive bills to correct fire safety defects which shouldn't have been there in the first place.

Thankfully, the Government and developers have now accepted liability for the majority of these bills which otherwise would have cost homeowners tens of thousands of pounds.

Poor housing has always been with us and there is not going to be a single perfect resolution or golden ticket but governments, local authorities, developers, private landlords and housing campaign bodies (including the WI), can and should work more collaboratively towards a common goal of providing decent and fit for purpose housing for all across all housing tenures.

Hopefully the above helps you decide which one of our very worthy resolutions you would like to support.

Claire.

Recent events

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR THE MAGPIE PROJECT

Just some of your very generous donations of presents for the women who access the Magpie Project. Over 240 collected and more still arriving. They will be delivered in time for their party on Monday 18th December.

Thank you so much, an extraordinary response.

Maggie





WHO'S WHO ON THE COMMITTEE

Committee Member	Officer or Committee Role
Denise Hitchens (DH)	President
Gladys Shuckard Rowe (GSR)	Secretary & 2024 programme co-ordinator
Patsy Whiteside (PW)	Treasurer
Gillian Thackray (GT)	Website Manager
Vicki Ensor (VE)	Newsletter Editor
Nicola Hayes (NH)	Committee meeting minute secretary
Angela Kane (AK)	National resolution co-ordinator and members meeting recorder
Pamela Morgan (PM)	External Communications & Refreshments
Frances Simmons (FS)	Wanstead Campaigns & local WI liaison
Claire Thorogood (CT)	New member liaison
Maggie Widdecombe (MW)	Membership & charity co-ordinator