

The power of the WI

With 212,000 informed and active members, the WI is widely recognised as a powerful force for positive change. Since the first mandate was passed in 1918, the WI has been campaigning and raising awareness on issues of local, national and international concern. The WI has campaigned on important issues such as equal pay, the provision of rural services, the plight of the honeybee, and also international concerns such as global warming and the trafficking of women and children. These issues show WI members' concern for social and environmental justice, combined with their willingness to take action to achieve it.

The resolution process

WI members are part of a unique organisation which gives every member the opportunity to campaign and make a difference on the issues that matter to them.

The WI is democratic and member-led

Members are right at the centre of policy and campaign development with every issue that the WI campaigns on, stemming directly from resolutions put forward by WI members and adopted at the NFWI's Annual General Meeting each year.

Sometimes the big issues we face can't be tackled on our own. The WI exists to give women the opportunity of working together, and of putting into practice those ideals for which it stands.

Every year the NFWI receives a large number of resolutions, but only a few can be taken forward for short-listing. The shortlist is compiled by federation representatives, facilitated by NFWI Trustees and staff at a shortlisting meeting.

To give your resolution more chance of success, please bear in mind the following points:

A strong resolution must meet the objects of the NFWI, and combine some or all of the following elements:

- **Topical** – it should fit with current areas of public interest or debate and with current issues within the NFWI calendar.
- **Timely** – the time must be appropriate for looking at the issue, it is not 'yesterday's news'.
- **Targeted** – it must have a clear objective.
- **Achievable** – it must call for something meaningful and sensible which can be achieved.

- **Partners** – the NFWI's work should add value to the work of other organisations.
- **PR potential** – there should be a potential to gain positive media coverage for the WI and perhaps challenge rather than reinforce media and public stereotypes about the organisation.

Tips for putting together a strong resolution:

- *Allow plenty of time — the best ideas take time to research and develop.*
- *Make sure that the issue needs to be tackled at a national rather than local level.*
- *Talk the issue over with friends and family — how do they react? Is it an issue that people are (or could be) passionate about?*
- *Think about time scale — will the resolution still be relevant in a year or is there a risk it will be superseded by events?*
- *Think about other successful campaigns — consider whether your issue lends itself to a good campaign.*

A resolution must adhere to the following criteria

- It should not be a repeat of an existing mandate. Check your copy of *Speaking Out – A Public Affairs Handbook*, which lists all of the mandates passed by the NFWI since 1918.
- It should not be a statement or comment – “We believe that GM crops should not be grown in the UK until they have been proven safe” is not appropriate wording for a resolution, “The NFWI urges Her Majesty’s government to introduce a minimum five year moratorium on the commercial growing and import of genetically engineered foods”, has a specific objective to which government or other agency could respond.
- It should require action by a specified body. This could be a national or international body, like the UK government or the United Nations, a private corporation, or the NFWI Board of Trustees or all WI members.
- The NFWI and WI members should be able to have an impact on the issue and to take action. Resolutions can deal with international issues, but the NFWI and WI members must be able to take action on the issue covered by the resolution, perhaps by lobbying the UK government to take a particular position in international negotiations.
- It must, for example, call for the right type of action from the right body. Can the government bring about the change needed, or is another organisation or body better placed to take it up?
- It has to be accurate – please make sure that you check your facts and reference your evidence base in the notes!
- It should address a single issue, though it can focus on several dimensions of the issue.
- It must be supported by a paragraph arguing in favour of the resolution.

Submission of resolutions

Federation Representatives (Federation Chairmen and Treasurers), WIs, and the NFWI Board of Trustees may submit resolutions in accordance with the by-laws of the WI.

These guidance notes are intended to assist members as they work on their resolution submissions for the NFWI AGM. They are by no means a comprehensive guide, but should provide members with enough guidance and information to submit a strong and well-researched resolution. The guidance notes should be kept on file in the federation office and by WI Advisers.

Please consider as many of these questions as possible when putting together your resolution. The answers to these questions should be included in your supporting notes.

Note: *It is advised that federations continue to hold their resolution selection meetings. This will allow members to discuss the issues in more detail with others and share the information sent to federations from the NFWI.*

What is the problem the resolution is designed to address? Will this require legislative or policy change, or both? Does the government have plans to address the issue in a satisfactory manner?

You may be able to answer these questions by contacting the relevant government department to ask about the current status on legislation and policy, and about future plans.

What should WI members be calling on the government to do to address this issue?

In addition to your own thoughts and ideas on these questions, you could also contact organisations already working on the issue, or who represent those affected by the issue. This could include NGOs, charities, membership organisations (clubs, unions), etc.

Is there an established campaign on this issue? If so, who are the lead organisations?

If an established campaign exists, who is it run by? What could the NFWI and WI members add to this campaign?

Is there anything that WI members can do at a local level on a campaign around this resolution?

What do you think that WI members can do to complement the work done by the NFWI? For example, members can complement the work that the NFWI does to promote Fairtrade by choosing Fairtrade products, and by organising awareness raising events.

What is the situation in Wales? Is it the same as in England? If not, what are the differences?

This must always be considered, to ensure that the resolution is as relevant to Wales as it is to England and vice versa. The Welsh Assembly will be able to advise you on this.

What makes a good campaign?

If a resolution is to make a strong campaign, it needs to be based on a thorough and clear understanding of the issue, an understanding of the decision-making process that could achieve the desired results, an awareness of who else is already working on the issue and why, and an awareness of the type of campaign techniques that may be effective for the issue. If you can clearly establish your aim, it will also help you to draw up a clear, powerful and well-worded resolution. An aim does not have to be a long complicated statement; in fact, it is often better if it is a short and simple one. Think back to some of the most successful WI campaigns. The 2000 Mandate on Post Offices, “This meeting urges upon HM government the importance of allowing people to continue to collect their pensions and benefits in cash at the Post Office beyond 2002.”, has allowed the NFWI to campaign hard to ensure that people can continue to collect their pensions and benefits in cash at post offices and to ensure that the post office network as a whole has a viable future. The resolution was clearly worded, had a clear goal, and was clear about who (HM government) needed to be influenced if the target of the resolution was to be met.

NFWI Resolution submission form 2013/14



The form must be carefully checked, verified and signed by the Federation Resolution Adviser or Federation Representative (Federation Chairman and Treasurer). The completed form must reach Kerri Le Roux-Marx at the NFWI, 104 New Kings Road SW6 4LY by **16 September 2013**. It is advised to use recorded mail to ensure delivery. Resolutions received after this deadline will NOT be accepted. Please note that no exceptions can be made. The NFWI cannot take responsibility for submission forms not received. If sending electronically, please ask your resolutions adviser to email k.leroux-marx@nfwl.org.uk, to confirm that it has been approved. If completing by hand, please use block capitals to complete this form.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF THIS FORM IS NOT SIGNED OR INCOMPLETE IT CANNOT BE ACCEPTED

(Please ensure that you have read all the guidance notes before completing your submission form. If you are submitting the form electronically in order to meet the deadline, a signed hardcopy will also need to be sent to the NFWI as soon as possible)

Title of resolution: _____

Wording of resolution: _____

***NB.** The Resolution Shortlist Selection Meeting may decide to short-list a resolution subject to amendment of the title and/or wording, to make it clearer and/or easier to achieve. The NFWI will consult the proposing WI about any proposed amendments.*

Submission on behalf of a WI

This resolution was passed by a majority of the members of _____ WI,
in _____ Federation, at a meeting held on _____ (date)
WI Secretary's name _____ Address _____
_____ Post Code _____ Tel. _____
Email _____

The Federation Resolutions Adviser (FRA) or Federation Representative (Federation Chairman or Treasurer) has seen the above resolution and the format approved. *(Signature of FRA or other Federation representative)*

Name: _____ Position: _____
Signed: _____ Date: _____

Submission on behalf of a federation

This resolution is being submitted on behalf of _____ Federation,
at a federation meeting held on _____ (date)
Federation Representative's name _____ and position _____
Postal Address: _____
_____ Post Code _____ Tel. _____
Email _____

Name of proposer who will speak at the AGM _____

Please note: Members involved in developing a resolution will be asked not to participate in discussions on the resolution at the shortlist selection meeting to avoid any conflict of interest.

please turn over

1. THE PROBLEM

Please use this space to set out the problem your proposed resolution addresses. Consider the following points: what the problem is; whom does it affect and how; which government department or body is responsible.

2. OBJECTIVES

If this resolution is successful, what do you hope a campaign will achieve?

3. PARTNERSHIPS

Please list established campaigns and organisations working on this issue where relevant and any contacts that you have used for researching the issue.

Please use additional sheets if necessary