

## SHOTTISHAM WI ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

At May 2024 , Shottisham WI have 24 members. Membership fees are currently £48.00 per annum.

We have held 12 monthly meetings. Generally held on the second Wednesday of the month during the afternoon, with an average attendance of 10 members, sometimes additional guests join us too.

During our monthly meetings, subjects from some very interesting speakers, have been enjoyed. We have heard about A Cycle Round Britain, The Red Rose Chain Theatre Group, Woodbridge Salvation Army and food bank. The Hamilton Bloodhounds visited with 2 hounds, who enthralled us all. We enjoyed another evening of Shanty Singers that we all clapped and sang along to, with others from the village.

We discussed the Coronation of King Charles 3<sup>rd</sup>, with a toast of bubbles and slice of cake to celebrate the historical event. Stephanie Mackentyre from Radio Suffolk told us tales of My Life Behind The Mike. Jo Ashton from the charity Footsteps, based in Woodbridge, explained how they help with the mental problems of young people. Sue Thompson, an author and poet, gave us anecdotes and read poems of her life in Suffolk. This month Pattie from Lilac Thyme florist in Woodbridge, demonstrated how to achieve the best from supermarket flowers and foraged foliage. We try to choose interesting and educational speakers, with a wide diversity of subjects to entertain and educate us.

After a group yoga session with Amanda Dufour at our meeting in January, it was decided we would like to have weekly Yoga classes at the hall. These are now held every Tuesday lunch time at 12.15 and everyone is welcome to come. The cost is just £5.00

There were numerous theatre outings. "The Ungodly", "Mr Todd" and "A Winters Tale", Ipswich based Red Rose Chain Theatre Group productions, were all enjoyed. "Stones In His Pockets" by The Eastern Angles took 12 of us to the Seckford Theatre at Woodbridge School, to see a captivating performance.

Visits to places of interest included Christchurch Mansion, Landguard Point and Orfordness.

We also enjoyed walks to Orford , Hollesley Marsh, Captains Wood and other local places.

A day in Woodbridge with a walk along the river, lunch at the tea hut, a river trip to Kyson Point, followed by a coffee and visit to the Longship workshop was also enjoyed members, managing to miss some very threatening looking clouds!

A delicious Lunch at Martha's barn, Otley Hall , followed by indoor Kurling at Earl Stonham with other WI groups, was enjoyed by 8 members. Who knew we could be so competitive!

To celebrate Christmas, in December a group of us had lunch at the Hollesley Shepherd and Dog. An evening Christmas party with food and games was also enjoyed by members in the decorated Trust Hall.

Some members attended group SEFWI 13 meetings as guests at both Melton village hall and another at Butley too. Good entertainment was arranged and we were all made to feel very welcome.

In October there was a speakers showcase at SEFWI headquarters Orford Street Ipswich. We listened to 7 speakers, 3 of them we really enjoyed and have invited to speak at Shottisham WI meetings.

The members of the book club have shared some lovely evenings at the Coach House. We have read a wide variety of books The books received mixed reactions from members and have sparked some

very heated and interesting discussions! Other members are welcome to join us. We also enjoy the odd glass of wine during these evenings too!

We are very pleased and proud that we have enabled The WI Trust Hall to have a long awaited makeover this year. We finally had the toilets updated to disabled facility standards. Previously last updated in the 1960's! The work had to comply with restrictions imposed by East Suffolk Council for a Grade 2 listed building. The improvements made are much in keeping with our lovely hall.

One stipulation from the council was that we had to retain the brick flooring.

Concrete patches were cut out and replaced with more bricks. These were scoured from a salvage yard in Norfolk and came from an old Suffolk Barn built in the same era as our hall.

We obtained a grant from the Lottery to complete this work.

The external wooden window frames and doors have been repaired and repainted to protect against deterioration, also making the hall lovely and well cared for.

For this work a grant was obtained from East Suffolk Council with the help of councillor James Mallinder.

From the Street facing wall, the old WI Shottisham Trust Hall sign has been renovated and is no longer faded and peeling. A new notice board has also been purchased.

To enable easy access between the middle hall entrance and the new toilets entrance, avoiding any steps, a smooth concrete path has been made. We are very grateful to David Backhouse and Robin Pendle for their time volunteered to install this facility. They also cut the grass, clear gutters and maintain hall fixtures and fittings etc, at no extra cost too. Thank you both. Your help is much appreciated.

We also thank Rod Cardnell for his help overseeing any IT problems and issues with equipment we encounter. Also for his baking and cooking skills, that we sometimes get to sample.

The Orchard did not produce so much fruit last year. Members took some, but the remainder was offered, via the monthly village news letter, to people in the village. Any remaining fruit was sent to the Woodbridge food bank, none went to waste.

At our meetings, we have a collection of items for the food bank, these are sent to Woodbridge Salvation Army regularly, who distribute food parcels.

Our largest expenditure for the hall each year is the insurance. Our recent plant and cake sale was once again well attended and enjoyed by many from the village on a lovely sunny day. Thanks to everyone who came, contributed and helped, making the day a success. We hope that once again the takings of just over £1,200.00 on the day, will cover the cost of the Trust Hall insurance. The WI members proved on that day that we work very well as a team to produce an event for everyone to enjoy.

We sadly lost two members of Shottisham WI this year. They had been an important part of our group, both had been members for a very long time. We will miss Audrey Morgan and Liz Mark. Some of us were able to attend their funerals and sang Jerusalem for them both, in the memory of them both being WI members and our friends.

We have space for a new flower bed at the front of the hall. One of our new projects will be to make a memorial garden here for past WI members we wish to remember, including Audrey and Liz and also Margeret Haines, lost in recent times. We are also contemplating a memorial bench.

The fruit cages in the orchard now need enlarging, and maybe trees that have not survived could be replaced. It would also be nice to have an insect and wild life area. With our new Yoga classes we would also like to improve the pine floorboard surface, to make it nicer to be close to the ground when laying on our yoga mats!

Sometime in the near future we will also look into improving the kitchen. This will need to be done within grade 2 listed building regulations. These improvements will all need money and funding grants to be found.

The WI Trust Hall only has its Shottisham WI members to raise this money, we are not automatically given funding from any other source. We obtain some money when the hall is hired out, and from any social events we organise.

The building is an asset to the village. For meetings, fitness classes, parties, music events, educational talks, as a polling station etc. It is used by all members of the village at sometime throughout the year. Visitors, without fail, remark how lovely and unique our hall is when they come to visit. We really want it to retain that special feeling and enhance it even further.

We are optimistic that with the help of East Suffolk Council, James Mallinder will be able to assist us with some guidance and funding. But we still need further funds. We will also be applying to other providers for grants.

In the coming 12 months we will continue to show care and support between Shottisham WI members enhancing old friendships and making new ones too. We will hope to provide an interesting mix of speakers, entertainment, outings and walks and that there will be something for everyone to enjoy. We will also continue to care for our hall, entrusted to us by the Quilter family.