

PARISH MEETING 12TH APRIL 2023

Ashendon WI Report

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting the WI to address this meeting.

First, I think it's worth reminding ourselves that there has been a WI here in Ashendon since 1939 and, in fact, at our March meeting we celebrated the 84 years of our existence. Memories handed down tell us of the exploits of former members first meeting in which was fondly known as "The Hut" which was next to the Pub.

While we are proud to uphold the traditions and values of our WI we like to think we are a modern forward-thinking group of women who enjoy the opportunity to get together regularly for a couple of hours each month.

With this in mind our aim is to plan our meetings to be constructive and meaningful with members interests at the heart. Meetings encompass a wide range of Speakers and topics which have an engagement in education and awareness as well as fun.

Since the last Parish Meeting we have been enthused by our own member, Fiona who talked with passion about music.

Carers' Bucks affirmed that support is available, at any age, when needed.

Catherine Jones told us how she become an Army Captain (in a man's world) and has since gone on to write 23 books.

Truly inspirational.

We made Wreaths which adorned members' homes for Christmas.

Heard at our last meeting about the decline in Swifts and the initiative to improve numbers with nesting boxes. A truly informative talk and captivating speaker.

We've surprised our families with our flower arranging capabilities in teacups.

Engaged in the fascinating topic of GM Crops. Thought provoking.

And had items valued by an Auctioneer.

We are planning a supper in June with the return of the Auctioneer to which **you are invited** with the chance to have your precious items valued.

A highlight of last year was when we welcomed Barry Stringer MBE Yeoman Warder of The Tower of London as part of the Jubilee celebrations. He gave an illuminating talk about his life and work after which we had a fun time, joining his wife Justine playing her electric violin, with us singing and dancing with enthusiasm - some more than others, I enjoyed it!!!

Obviously, the stalwarts of our membership provided an excellent supper.

BUT....there is even more to the WI than this!

With the uplift of restrictions we have been once again going out and about with trips to Waterperry Gardens and a guided tour of the frescos. We learnt first-hand how mattresses are made at the Hypnos factory. Had a tour of Home Farm Flowers at Dorton, lunched at Quainton Railway Station, and visited Camphill at Milton Keynes where members witnessed the warm support and the meaningful working life given for adults with a wide range of learning difficulties. WI organised holidays have been enjoyed.

We celebrate our members; Claire who represented us by queuing for 10 hours at the Laying in State of our late Queen. We were able to follow her on WhatsApp. She sent some amazing photos which meant we were able to encompass the great atmosphere and envisage what she experiencing.

Through our membership we are affiliated to larger umbrella bodies including the Bucks Federation and a National Federation. The Public Affairs Department at National oversee our annual Resolution Process. It was through this process Ashendon WI submitted an attempt this year to develop better communication within the NHS Unfortunately and sadly, it didn't proceed to our AGM but we felt it was a very well worth the exercise..

We are always ready to support our village; at the recent "Love Your Church Service" we were proud to be acknowledged for the poppies we display for Remembrance in November and our Christmas Angels.

We arranged the planting and nurturing of flowers on the bank outside the Church to honour the remarkable achievement of our late Queen's 70 years on the throne.

We were pleased to be asked to help and be represented at the forthcoming Coronation celebrations.

We are now looking forward to our Coronation Celebrations. We are very excited that a fish and Chip Van will call and be on this Village Hall Car Park at 8 pm on 9th March the Tuesday evening after the weekend of celebrations. Everyone is welcome to come and buy fish and chips AND if you would like to join us in the Village Hall to eat them, you would be very welcome.

AND finally, as you all realise, I am a great advocate for our Organisation so could go on about its virtues but I will finish by saying - We welcome all new lady members so please come on the second Tuesday of the month and see what we are all about.

I do have copies of our Programme for the rest of the year.

Susan Rand
Secretary,
Ashendon WI.