

Lydeard St Lawrence Women's Institute – Annual Report 2024/25

2024/25 has been an exceptionally busy year for our small WI; we continue to meet on the second Thursday of every month for approximately two hours and cram so much fun, laughter, and business into our time together. We are a proactive group with a diverse membership of women from across the local area.

This year has seen a full programme of local activities, including talks from Ursula Franklin on the Fauna and Flora of the Quantocks, local artist Emma Duke on Exmoor and the beauty of trees, as well as Somerset Heritage Centre who gave a fascinating talk on the historical women of Somerset, and the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Service.

A wonderful day out last summer saw us heading to Mapperton House and Gardens, just over the border in Dorset. A fabulous day was had by all, spending time with the head gardener and having a private tour of the house including the American Heiress collection, plus as always, a wonderful lunch and plenty of tea and cake!

We are fortunate to have been involved in lots of business to support the National Federation of WI's, including giving feedback on the WI constitution and governing documents, Trustee elections, the five-year Strategy consultation and researching and voting on the shortlisted resolutions for next year.

We have also had delegates attend the National Federation Annual Meeting last summer and the Somerset County Federation Annual meeting in October, where they flew the banner for Lydeard St Lawrence WI in the annual parade.

Our fundraising and community activities have continued apace this year, and have included making blankets, oncology cushions, twiddle muffs, hats, and gloves, as well as organising the packing and distribution of over six hundred shoeboxes from across the County at Christmastime, as part of the Somerset County Federation Shoebox Appeal. This is no mean feat, and I would like to extend a special thanks to our members for their involvement again this year in supporting this appeal, particularly Jo Stewart, our outgoing Secretary who has overseen this activity on behalf of the County for the last few years.

A special thank you also goes to those members that have opened their homes to us over the last year for our annual events such as our Garden Party, and Christmas celebrations, as well as helping us to celebrate a special birthday with one of our members.

I would also like to give the Committee a mention for their essential help and support behind the scenes, all of which helps to make our work possible.

Our membership continues to grow, and I have been proud to serve as Lydeard St Lawrence WI President this year, and be involved in supporting our WI, the Somerset Federation, and the National Federation of WI's

This coming year looks to have as much variety again, with a fabulous programme planned with lots of different and varied activities for our members to enjoy. If you would like to find out more about what we do or are interested in joining us, then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Carolyn Leech

President | Lydeard St Lawrence WI | Somerset Federation

Why not join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7.30pm at Lydeard St Lawrence Village Hall, Lydeard St. Lawrence, Taunton, TA4 3SE.