



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WI

#INSPIRINGWOMEN

INTRODUCTION: THE WI SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

The NFWI has developed these guidelines to help federations, WIs and WI members with advice and tips for running their WI social media pages.

Social media is a powerful tool which can be used for connecting with people around the world, raising awareness of important issues and sharing fun or inspiring stories. However, social media is a fast-paced and often reactive environment, which can seem daunting to someone unfamiliar with it. By providing simple guidelines to support members within the WI, we are aiming to protect people online and ensure they have the correct tools and knowledge to use social media effectively.

This booklet will outline why social media is important in the WI, what it means to represent the WI online and how to deal with challenging situations that may arise on social media. It includes tips for maximising the effect of your online presence to get the word out there about your WI, and what it can offer to women in your community.

Why is social media important for the WI?

Social media becomes increasingly popular every year and as a modern and relevant organisation it is very important that the WI maintains an active presence. Social media offers WIs the chance to:

- Connect with existing members – an easy and instant way for members to ask questions or give feedback.

- Share news and updates instantly – e.g. if there is a last-minute change to an event or WI meeting, or exciting news to share.
- Promote online discussion – get input and ideas directly from members.
- Recruitment tool to attract new members: by giving a taster of the activities you have available and the relevant information about how new members can join.
- Get your identity and personality out there and show what you are doing in a relevant and immediate way.
- Connect with local organisations and community groups.



REPRESENTING THE WI

It is crucial to remember that everything on social media is taken at face value and social media etiquette is key.

The WI is an inclusive, non-sectarian charity working to educate and inspire women, and this must be represented in all your social media activity.

A WI affiliated page cannot be seen sharing:

- **Party-political posts:** This includes any content shared by a page affiliated with a political party – always check the source of the content you are sharing.
- **Advertisements for businesses:** Local businesses may ask their local WI to help them with promotion, but this cannot be offered via social media because of the organisation's charitable status.
- **Promotion of national charities:** WIs and federations can make their own decision about the charities they support, in line with the organisation's charitable objects, including support for national and international charities. Please see the fundraising guidelines on My WI for more details on this.
- **Religious content:** The WI is a non-sectarian organisation and in order to make all women, regardless of their religious beliefs feel welcome, nothing related to religion should be shared on a WI page.

If you are using your WI or federation social media account, you should not show any personal opinions or express any views that would not be the view of your WI or federation. We do not have a strict rulebook for WIs and federations regarding what can be posted on social media as each WI and federation is different, and this is what makes the WI unique, but this means that WIs and federations need to take responsibility.

It is important to remember that online, nothing is considered private. Even if you are communicating over a social media platform's private messaging function through your WI page, your replies could be made public at any time. External parties or the media can easily pick up anything that is posted on social media and share it more widely.

TOP TIP:

Read other people's posts carefully before liking, sharing or responding to them. Even if the content hasn't originally come from you, it can still be viewed as an endorsement.

Personal social media accounts

Personal social media accounts are those operated by individuals in their private lives and outside their official roles within the WI. Social media platforms always give users the option of making their profiles private so the content they share can only be viewed by friends or approved followers. However, if you have a personal social media account and do choose to have more public settings, it is important to be mindful of what you are posting, particularly if you are affiliated

with a WI or federation, such as being a trustee or on a committee.

If you are a trustee of a WI or federation, and have people from your WI as friends on social media, please think carefully before posting any personal or political views. While you can make it clear your views are your own and not that of the WI, it is important to ensure all women feel welcome in the WI, irrespective of their views or beliefs.



Official NFWI accounts

The NFWI operates three official social media channels, all of which are administered by the NFWI PR team. If you would like the NFWI to shout out about your WI on its page, get in touch at pr@nfwl.org.uk.



Facebook @thewi

The NFWI's Facebook page is a great resource for sharing news and information with members and the wider public. It has a large following made up of primarily WI members and supporters. Follow the page for inspiring member led stories, WI campaign achievements, new recipes and more.



Twitter @WomensInstitute

The NFWI's Twitter page maintains a slightly different follower base to that of its Facebook page. Twitter is a fantastic resource for engaging with partner organisations, other charities, politicians and journalists to discuss issues relating to WI campaigns and activities. Follow the page for the WI's views on a range of issues from climate change to mental health and women's rights.



Instagram @womensinstitute

With ever-increasing popularity as a social media platform, the NFWI maintains a smaller but growing following on Instagram. It is a brilliant tool for showing of the best of the WI – crafts, food, WI meetings and campaigns. Follow the page for a snapshot of what the WI has on offer.



YouTube @WomensInstitute104

NFWI uses YouTube to share recordings of meetings, webinars and the occasional recipe or how to guide for anything from craft to what you can do to take part in our campaigns.

CREATING WI PAGES

It is the choice of your WI which social media platform you want to get started with. There are differing features and benefits across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. You might want to have a presence across all three platforms, or you might just choose to get started with one and see how it goes.

Facebook

Facebook might be the most obvious place to start when getting social media set up for your WI. It is certainly the most popular platform among WIs and there is a wide network of WI activity on Facebook ranging from WI Facebook pages to special interest groups for WI members to join.

Facebook has useful tools such as event pages which are helpful when publicising WI meetings or events. It can also act as a communication tool for prospective members to contact your WI if they are interested in joining. All public Facebook pages have a private message function which will allow members of the public to get in touch.

If you do choose to start with Facebook, you might be wondering whether to create a page or a group. Pages are more public facing and will work better if your intention is to show off your WI, gain members through Facebook and publicise what you are up to with the wider community.

Groups can be open or closed to members only and may be more useful if your sole purpose for using Facebook is to communicate with your current WI members.

Remember when setting up a page or group, you need an existing Facebook account to do this. The account used to set up the page or group is known as the 'admin'. On pages, the admin account used to manage the page is not shown publicly whereas on groups it is.

Twitter

Twitter is an instant news source and widely used by media outlets, journalists, celebrities and politicians to share opinions and breaking news. While social connections can be made on Twitter, it may not be as effective in making connections among local communities. However, it is a great tool for campaigning on important issues, and could be very useful if you're interested in connecting with local businesses, charities, journalists and actively supporting WI campaigns.

Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video sharing app and is great for showing off high quality photos of your WI. Whether it's some beautiful craft projects by your members, or group photos from a fun WI meeting, Instagram can be a brilliant recruitment tool for your WI.

Instagram has several features such as 'stories' where you can post a series of photos or video clips which then expire after 24 hours.

Instagram stories are useful for live coverage of events. Instagram TV is another feature which allows you to post longer videos than the standard 60 seconds.

Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Instagram started as an app and it needs to be downloaded from the app store on an iPhone or Android for full use. While you can access Instagram from a desktop computer or laptop, you will not be able to post photos from there.

YouTube

YouTube is a global online video sharing and social media platform. It is great for sharing longer videos which could be from meetings or events your WI puts on. These can be made private and only available to those who have a log in and then can be shared on your other social media groups. You could even put together a little advert to promote your WI which can be shared on other social media groups. There are also many different video tutorials for other ways to use the platform.



RUNNING YOUR WI'S SOCIAL MEDIA

Once you're ready to go with your chosen platform, there are a few things to always bear in mind to make your social media presence run smoothly.

Respecting others online

The WI was founded on democratic ideals over 100 years ago and this commitment to equality and inclusion is still central to our ethos today. The WI is an inclusive, supportive and progressive organisation for all women. These values are laid out in the NFWI's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, available to download from the WI's website.

A WI's social media page must reflect this policy and should be a positive and supportive space for learning, sharing news, raising awareness of important issues and building connections.

While some discussions online can be emotionally charged and naturally lead to debate, you have a right to delete comments on your page that are offensive or discriminatory toward others. Equally if an individual is repeatedly posting offensive comments on your page, you maintain a right to block them.

Responding to criticism

In any open forum on the internet, criticism will happen. Criticism may take the form of comments on a Facebook post, negative reviews or tweets tagging your WI.

Responding appropriately is the most important thing. Firstly, try not to be defensive and remember that criticism of your organisation isn't a personal

attack. Listen, respond in a calm and reasoned manner, and take it offline to a private message or email if necessary.

Data Protection

Please keep in mind that all social media is a public forum, so whatever you share in comments on posts can be viewed by everyone. If you are sharing information or photos of another person, make sure you have their consent before doing so. Do not share personal data such as contact details publicly on social media.

Copyright

When posting images or videos on social media, ensure you have the correct permission to do so. Most images found online through search engines like Google will be subject to copyright and you may not have permission to share them. Be mindful of this as using a photo without permission can lead to fines. To find copyright free stock images, websites such as Unsplash or Pexels can be helpful. Check the terms and conditions of the image before downloading it from these sites.

TOP 10 TIPS AND IDEAS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE



1. Use social media to introduce members of your WI:

Let your followers get to know you. Perhaps you could start by introducing a member of your committee each week with a short Q&A along with their photo. This is a great way to show your supporters and potential new members what a friendly bunch you are!



2. Create events for your meetings:

Facebook has a feature which allows you to create events, which specify the time, place and details. You don't have to do this for every meeting, but you could consider it if you have a special event coming up. Encourage your followers to share the event once you've created it to reach more people.



3. Posting in local community groups:

Let the local community know you're there! Most areas have a community group on Facebook where residents can share updates about what's happening. Why not post to let them know about your WI, and invite women in the group to come along to your next meeting?



4. Adding your social media handles to print publicity:

If you're making newsletters, leaflets, flyers or posters to display around your area, remember to add your social media handles, which is the username associated with your social media accounts. You can do this by adding the social media symbol, followed by the username. This will enable anyone who reads your promotional materials to find your social media accounts and follow you. For example the NFWI's social media handle for Instagram is **@womensinstitute**.



5. Following other WI pages and connecting with the WI community:

Lots of WIs have a social media presence across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Start off by connecting with others in your federation and soon enough you'll start discovering more WI and federation accounts to follow. Don't miss out on the many WI-affiliated Facebook groups to join as well!



6. Using Canva to create social media graphics:

If you want to create pretty or branded graphics to advertise an event you have coming up, canva.com is a brilliant resource. It's free to join and allows you to create amazing social media graphics of different sizes, posters, presentations and more from easy-to-use templates.



7. Keep it short and snappy:

Posts on social media should never be too long. When scrolling through their timelines your followers may be put off by a post that looks more like an essay! If you have a lot of information to share, consider putting a fuller length article on your website/blogsite and linking to this through the Facebook post. On Twitter, tweets have a 280 character limit so you will have to cut any information down to fit this length.



8. Use photos and videos as much as possible:

Social media is all about the visual, and your post or tweet is far more likely to get higher engagement if you have a good quality image to accompany it to catch the reader's eye.



9. Make sure your social media pages are listed:

Link your social media pages on websites, such as your area on the NFWI website, your own website (if you have one), and other local community websites.



10. Set up a social media calendar:

If you want to keep track of special events and awareness days to post about, or just keep a general calendar to remind you to post content, a social media calendar could be a useful tool for you. You can create this on your emails, or on any online calendar tool that you're familiar with.



We hope this guide has provided some useful information and tips to get you started with your WI's social media presence. Remember, if you have any specific questions relating to social media, the PR team is on hand to help, get in touch at pr@nfwl.org.uk

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