



**Sotonettes Ballot:  
National Federation of WIs  
Resolutions 2016 Shortlist**

*A Guide for Sotonettes Members*

theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN



## **The Resolutions Process:**

### **Turning your concerns into national campaigns**

#### **Have your say – Member led campaigning**

- The WI is renowned for taking on tricky issues. Much of this reputation stems from the WI's resolutions process and the innovative campaigns that evolve from it.
- Every WI campaign - from Equal Pay to Honey Bees, from Keep Britain Tidy to More Midwives - would not have happened without the initial idea being submitted by a concerned member to their WI.
- The resolutions process allows the whole membership to debate these ideas and choose the next campaign for the WI to tackle.

#### **The Resolutions Process**

- Resolutions go from an individual WI or federation, through a WI-wide debate and selection process, onto the Annual Meeting, where delegates vote whether or not they become the next WI campaign.
- There are four stages to this process:
  - Stage 1 – WIs and federations submit resolutions
  - Stage 2 – Federation representatives decide a shortlist
  - Stage 3 – Members select which resolutions to take to the Annual Meeting
  - Stage 4 – Delegates at the Annual Meeting vote for the next WI campaign/s

#### **Key Dates in the Resolution Process**

- Early September – Closing date for resolution submissions
- Early October – Federation representatives meet to decide the shortlist
- Early November – The shortlist is distributed to WIs with the selection slip
- Late January – Closing date for selection slips to be returned
- March – Final resolutions for debate at the Annual Meeting are sent out to all WIs to decide which way to vote
- June – Vote taken at the Annual Meeting

**Make sure you have your say – complete a shortlist  
ballot form and return to any member of the**

**Sotonettes Committee by**

**Wednesday 20 January 2016**





## 1: *Ban the microbead*

**“Beach litter and floating plastic debris is more than just an unsightly problem. Scientific research shows that plastic microbeads, found in cosmetic and personal care products, are polluting the oceans and causing long- term health risks for both aquatic life and people. We call on WI members to take action to reduce use of plastic microbead-containing products in their own homes and communities; to raise awareness of the problems associated with plastic microbeads; and to lobby manufacturers, retailers and see the UK Government following in the steps of the Netherlands and other countries in proposing a ban on the use of these products.”**

### What are microbeads?

- Microbeads are micro plastic particles that are found in many commonly used cosmetic and personal care products such as shampoo, toothpaste, lipstick, baby care products, and facial scrubs.
- Most commonly, they are tiny plastic pieces designed to remove dry cells from the surface of the skin. Did you ever wonder what those tiny gritty bits were in your exfoliating scrub or in your toothpaste? Well, they're microbeads!

The proposer's intention is to highlight the impact of microbeads on marine ecosystems, encourage behaviour change, build consumer pressure on companies to change their practices, and work towards a ban on the use of microbeads in the UK.

### The arguments for the resolution

- While microbeads are only one aspect of marine litter, due to their presence and quantity in products and their resistance to degradation, their abundance in the ocean is assumed to be increasing. This type of pollution is avoidable - we can stop it.
- This resolution has a strong role for consumer action, both by bringing pressure to bear on companies who refuse to act and also by showing support through the power of the purse for those that have.
- This resolutions fits within the WI's longstanding concern for healthy and sustainable living.

### The arguments against the resolution

- There are still gaps in research and understanding around the precise impact of microbeads on marine ecosystems.
- This resolution may be too narrow - micro plastics are found not only in cosmetic and personal care products, but also in other products such as fabrics, paint, and sand-blasting.
- While there is a lack of consumer awareness, there are other campaigning groups- such as Beat the Microbead- that are solely dedicated to fight this problem and those groups are growing in success. Is there more for the WI to add?



## 2: *British fruit: reviving our heritage*

**“This meeting calls on the WI to spearhead a national campaign that creates a fruit revival in local communities, celebrates our WI roots, promotes health, addresses food security, and reduces the carbon footprint.”**

The proposer’s intention is for the WI to get back in touch with our roots by leading a national campaign to revive the consumption, harvesting, and growing of British fruit. The proposer believes we import too much fruit from abroad while British fruit goes to waste and further, that we lack the skills to grow and preserve our own food meaning that Britons are losing touch with British fruit. This resolution seeks to address those gaps while also promoting food security, healthy eating, responsible environmental stewardship, and community cohesion: core WI values.

### Food security

- Food security is a growing concern
- The UK is only 68% self-sufficient in foods which can be produced here
- For fruit the situation is particularly dire – we are only 12% self-sufficient for this, importing 88% of all fresh fruit.
- Britons are losing touch with British fruit as indigenous varieties are relegated to extinction or are reserved for the small minority that might be able to afford to pay a higher price for them.

### The arguments for the resolution

- There is a growing shortage in the agricultural and horticultural industry, which will have a growing impact on the UK’s food security in the long-term. The NFWI is best placed to promote a revival of education and engagement in the sector.
- One of the principle outcomes from the WI’s Great Food Debate was the realisation that people have lost their connection to food. This resolution addresses that.
- This resolution is a return to our roots in more ways than one. There is potential for WIs across the country to mobilise their extensive local networks to bring community members together to teach new skills in food production and harvesting, learn about healthy eating and environmental stewardship, and contribute to the nation’s domestic food supply.

### The arguments against the resolution

- This resolution encompasses a number of issues (food production, food security, healthy eating) that the WI is already working on or has worked on in the past. Is this resolution redundant?
- The complexity of this resolution has the potential to confuse and/or alienate members and engaged stakeholders.



### ***3: Free sanitary protection for homeless women***

**“We call upon WIs to campaign for homeless shelters to be provided with a funding allowance to enable them to provide sanitary protection (tampons and towels) for homeless women.”**

The proposer’s intention is to ensure that homeless shelters adequately provide for the needs of homeless women with respect to menstruation in the same way they do for other items deemed essential and in doing so address a great inequity in how the needs of homeless women are currently assessed. While items such as condoms and razors are routinely provided to homeless shelters, sanitary ware is not consistently offered, meaning that women in shelters are often forced to choose between spending their limited income on food or sanitary towels. This resolution seeks to mobilise WI members to campaign for national and local authorities to make provisions within their commissioning arrangements to provide free sanitary protection for women accessing homeless shelters.

#### **Homelessness in the UK**

- **Between 2011-12 the number of homeless people grew by 10%**
- **Between 2010-2015 the number of rough sleepers rose by 37%**
- **Most services for the homeless are catered for men, who are the majority of those homeless or sleeping rough**
- **In 2013, women comprised 26% of the homeless population**
- **Many more women are ‘hidden homeless’**
- **Only 8% of funding for the homeless is directed at women**

#### **The arguments for the resolution**

- If WI members don’t speak up for vulnerable women, no one will. Members have shown through past campaigning for women’s refuges that the WI can make a tangible difference in the lives of women displaced from their homes due to violence and abuse.
- The reality of menstruation for homeless women is often demeaning because their needs are not fully taken into account. This resolution seeks to rebalance the services shelters provide to better reflect the needs of women, while also educating members of the public that sanitary ware items should be donated to shelters along with other items
- In addition to national campaigning, there is scope for local WIs across the country to support efforts to ensure their local shelters provide tampons and towels for those in need.

#### **The arguments against the resolution**

- There is already a national campaign- the Homeless Period- that is calling for the same thing. Their petition for free sanitary products for homeless women has already received 100,000 signatures.
- In the current fiscal climate, with cuts across the board, is now an appropriate time to call for this?



## *4: Prevention of sudden cardiac death in young adults in the UK*

**“Every week in the UK at least 12 apparently fit and healthy young people die suddenly from undetected cardiac abnormalities. The majority of these deaths are preventable. This meeting urges Her Majesty’s Government to put in place a national strategy for the prevention of young sudden cardiac death to ensure that all young people between the ages of 14 and 35 have access to heart screening by appropriately qualified professionals to identify any potentially life-threatening conditions.”**

### **What is Young Sudden Cardiac Death?**

- **YSCD: ‘death occurring within one hour of the onset of symptoms in a young person without a previously recognised cardiovascular abnormality.’**
- **YSCD is one of the biggest killers of young people in the UK.**
- **12 British people between the ages of 14 and 35 die every week from these ‘hidden’ heart complications**

The proposer’s intention is to prevent sudden cardiac death in young people through the implementation of a national prevention, treatment, and research strategy. This includes providing access to heart screening technologies.

### **The arguments for the resolution**

- Many of the barriers that the National Screening Committee have identified can be overcome; now is the time to act before the 2018/2019 review of screening policies to build the robust evidence base and treatment and care pathway that the Committee identifies as necessary
- These tragic deaths are preventable; is doing nothing really an option?
- Other nations like Italy and Israel have instituted screening programmes. Even though the United States does not have mandatory screening, it does have a system in place for detecting at risk individuals involved in athletics. The UK must explore options along these lines to prevent the needless deaths of young people.

### **The arguments against the resolution**

- The National Screening Committee has just recommended against a national screening programme to detect SCD in July 2015. This resolution directly contravenes current government policy that will not change until the 2018/2019 review
- Although these deaths are tragic and senseless, they are miniscule in comparison to those who perish from other heart diseases. Might the WI have a greater impact campaigning on wider heart health issues?



## 5: *First aid to save lives*

**“The NFWI considers that suffering could be minimised and lives could be saved if more members of the general population were trained in first aid. We propose that HM government should promote first aid training in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace. Furthermore, that all WIs should support and encourage first aid training and volunteer first aiders in their communities so that we become a safer and better informed country ready to help save lives.”**

### The importance of CPR training

- According to the British Heart Foundation (BHF) approximately 30,000 people each year in the UK have an out of hospital cardiac arrest in which the emergency services attempt resuscitation. Of this number, only 1 in 10 people recover to leave hospital.
- Evidence shows that in some cases, CPR can double the chances of survival.

The proposer’s intention is to increase the number of people with emergency life support skills, and to increase the number of people with the confidence to use those skills to respond to an emergency situation. Acknowledging that a number of national organisations offer training and support in first aid, the proposer would like to see the promotion of first aid training and time allocated for it within schools, colleges, universities and workplaces. The aim would be to minimise the ill effects of a sudden illness and save lives.

### The arguments for the resolution

- Increasing the first aid skills of the population can double cardiac arrest survival rates and help save many lives.
- The campaign to get first aid skills taught in schools is backed by the Red Cross, the British Heart Foundation and St John Ambulance. These organisations would be excellent for partnerships.
- Members can get involved on a very local level through training to be a community first responder and promoting first aid training to local schools and workplaces.

### The arguments against the resolution

- The government currently encourages schools to teach PSHE and first aid, but its not mandatory. This resolution doesn’t call for a mandatory approach, so can the government do any more?
- The Emergency First Aid Education Bill was recently blocked by Conservative MPs in Parliament, would that mean it would be difficult to achieve such momentum again?
- Schools, colleges, universities and workplaces are all under pressure. Would it be feasible to ask them to add first aid training to their programmes?
- Three other large charities currently offer first aid training and encourage people to take it up. Can the WI give them enough extra reach to make a difference?





## *6: Mind or body – equal funding for care*

**“The National Federation of Women’s Institutes calls upon the government to ensure that the care of people with poor mental health receives funding and respect equal to that provided for people with physical health problems.”**

The proposer is concerned about under-funding for mental health services, citing news reports of mental health budget cuts, long delays for patients seeking treatment, and paucity of resources and research. If the resolution is successful the proposer would like to see the WI campaign for shorter waiting times, more research into mental illness and its treatment, and more financial support for patients and families.

### **Demand for Mental Health services**

- Mental health problems account for **23% of the total burden of disease. Yet they receive only 13% of NHS expenditure.**
- The Mental Health Policy Group estimates **two million more UK adults will have mental health problems by 2030.**
- **More than one in ten women experience mental health problems during and after pregnancy.**

### **The arguments for the resolution**

- Poor mental health is a big, and growing, problem in the UK. It can lead to a range of physical health problems and increases the risk of dying. Achieving funding equal to that spent on physical health will help treat many people, save many lives, and increase efficiency in the long-term.
- Many mental health problems are hidden, especially those suffered by new mothers in the postnatal period. A WI campaign can extend the reach of mental health awareness, help improve attitudes toward mental health and encourage people to seek help.
- This resolution fits nicely with the NFWI’s previous resolution on Care not Custody, calling for liaison and diversion services for people in the criminal justice system with mental health problems.

### **The arguments against the resolution**

- Parity of esteem requires the health service to deliver joined up care, tackling both mental and physical health together in a holistic approach. Is separating mental health helpful towards this? Is it even possible to effectively separate the treatments and funding streams for physical and mental health?
- Whilst this is a worthwhile resolution that all members can take action on, it may not be a campaign that allows for hands on involvement in local WIs and local communities. It is not obvious how WIs can get involved and therefore might fail to engage our core audience: WI members.





## 7: *Avoid food waste, address food poverty*

**“The WI calls on all supermarkets to sign up to a voluntary agreement to avoid food waste, thereby passing surplus food onto charities thus helping to address the issue of increasing food poverty in the UK”**

The proposer is concerned by the amount of edible food that is thrown away by supermarkets annually, especially in light of the growing numbers of people struggling to afford food, as well as the environmental consequences of food waste. The proposer’s intention is reduce food waste by supermarkets by encouraging them to redistribute surplus, usable food to charities and food banks. This would have the twin benefits of alleviating the growing problem of food poverty in the UK, as well as reducing the environmental footprint of wasted food production.

### Supermarket waste

- 200,000 tonnes of edible surplus is thrown away by supermarkets annually.
- Only 2% of this is being collected and redistributed, with 98% turned into compost, energy or disposed of in landfill.
- Doubling this redistribution (which would still only be 4%) would save the voluntary sector £160 million.
- It is currently cheaper for retailers to dispose of food by anaerobic digestion or as animal feed.

### The arguments for the resolution

- While food has been a longstanding concern for the WI, the NFWI has no mandate to address food poverty. This resolution would empower the NFWI nationally and WI members locally to lead on reducing food poverty.
- In this current economic climate, we cannot afford to continue such wasteful practices where good food is wasted, families go hungry, and the environment suffers. Now may be the time for the WI to add its voice to those calling for innovation in not only how we eat food, but how we dispose of our food.
- This resolution harkens back to the WI’s historic roots in food production and feeding the nation – it would be a fitting resolution to carry us into our second century.

### The arguments against the resolution

- The WI has already done significant work on food waste. Additionally, while national work on food poverty has not been possible due to a lack of mandate, a number of WIs have been working locally to support food banks. Is a national mandate necessary?
- Is the voluntary approach that this resolution calls for the best approach? Consumers, advocates, and charities have already tried to voluntarily persuade supermarkets to address food waste, thus far with limited success. Should the WI call for legislative or mandatory action on this issue instead?



## ***8: Appropriate care in hospitals for people with dementia***

**“We call upon HM government and the NHS to provide facilities to enable carers to stay with people with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia that have been admitted into hospital”**

The proposer’s intention is to improve the hospital care of those suffering from Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia (but who may have been admitted to hospital for an unrelated condition) by calling for hospitals to provide facilities to enable their carer to stay with them for the duration of their hospitalisation. This, the proposer argues, will improve the health and wellbeing of patients both with and without dementia, reduce long-term financial burdens on the NHS, and ensure that institutional dementia care is person-centred.

### **Dementia by numbers**

- **850,000 people in the UK have dementia**
- **Leading cause of death among women**
- **1 in 3 people who die after the age of 65 have it**
- **21 million people in UK have close friend or family member with the disease**
- **550,000 people in the UK care for someone with it**
- **New case globally every 4 seconds**
- **By 2020 there will be 70 million people worldwide with the condition**

### **The arguments for the resolution**

- It is clear from the evidence that not all hospitals have taken steps to be dementia friendly and vulnerable patients with dementia are suffering as a consequence. Now may be the time for the WI to urge more action to achieve the important goals set out in the Prime Minister’s Dementia Challenge to create dementia friendly spaces
- As this campaign does not call for a national right, but rather for facilities to enable carers to stay with patients, there is scope not only for the NFWI to lobby on the issue nationally, but for individual WI’s to work with their local wards up and down the country to help hospitals voluntarily achieve the aims of the resolution. This approach can foster innovation in how hospitals create dementia friendly wards
- Just as the WI led the campaign for parents to be able to stay with their sick children in hospital with a 1950 resolution on that topic, the WI can again take the lead on transforming hospital care practices for the better.

### **The arguments against the resolution**

- There are already campaigning groups lobbying on this issue and hospitals are starting to adapt their practices for carers; is there really more for the WI to add?
- Hospitals face a very challenging care climate at the moment, with the financial environment forcing hospitals to make difficult efficiencies. This resolution may be an unreasonable and unfeasible ‘ask’ at this time
- An unintended consequence of this resolution is that hospitals displace the burden of adequately caring for their dementia patients onto family members and carers.

## **NFWI Resolutions Process FAQs**

### **When can we start researching a resolution for submission?**

The NFWI sends out submission forms in early July, and they need to be completed and returned by early September. However, this does not mean that members cannot start researching their resolution before July – They can spend as long as they want deciding what their WI's resolution/s will be, the only constraint is that they must be submitted before the deadline at the start of September.

### **Does our federation need to approve the content of our WI's resolution?**

All WIs can submit any resolution, as long as the WI has voted on and approved it for submission. Submission forms need to be seen and signed off by the federation resolutions adviser, however this is only to say that they have seen the resolution and that it is strongly worded and is therefore a viable resolution. The federation do not get to prevent the submission of any resolutions based solely on a decision about the content.

### **Can I submit a resolution as an individual member?**

Resolutions are submitted on behalf of a WI, and must be voted for and agreed by that WI. However, it is necessary to name a proposer from within that WI; this will be a person who will speak for the resolution and will be the point of contact for it. In this way, the resolutions do come from the WI, but the individual member who proposed the idea will get credit as well.

### **Who chooses the resolution shortlist?**

The resolutions shortlist is decided at a meeting of federation representatives who vote for which resolutions they believe should be put on the shortlist. The NFWI has no say over which resolutions are put on the shortlist.

### **Can the NFWI change the resolution wording?**

Resolutions are all member-led, meaning that they are written by members and voted onto the shortlist by members. Any changes to a submitted resolution can only be made with the permission of the original proposer. During the shortlist selection meeting, federation representatives will often agree to put a resolution onto the shortlist following a change in wording. At this point the NFWI public affairs team will work with the proposer to make the wording stronger.

### **Does the NFWI take legal advice on any proposed resolutions?**

Once the shortlist is decided the NFWI sends the list to a solicitor who will check that all proposed resolutions meet the WI's charitable objectives as stated in its constitution. The solicitor will not check the grammar, or the strict wording of the resolution itself, just whether or not it meets those objectives.

### **How are the resolutions that are debated at the Annual Meeting chosen?**

Once the resolution shortlist is published, all members can select the resolution that they support the most by completing the selection slip found in the November/December issue of WI Life. The resolution/s selected by the most members will be put to the Annual Meeting.

## NFWI Resolutions Process FAQs Continued

### **Our WI can't meet during the shortlist selection stage – Can I still make a selection?**

Once the shortlist is published every member has the opportunity to make a selection individually. It is best if WIs can hold a meeting so that its members can learn more about each resolution, however, if this is not possible members can research the issues themselves and make their selection.

### **How many resolutions can be debated at the Annual Meeting?**

Once all members have made their selection, the results are counted and the Board of Trustees of the NFWI decide how many to put to the Annual Meeting. If one resolution is a clear favourite among members then it will be put forward alone, however, if two or more are closely tied, then multiple resolutions will be put forward.

### **Why are we asked to vote again at the Annual Meeting when we've already submitted our selection slips?**

At the shortlist stage, all members get to individually select the resolution they support the most and would like to see go to the Annual Meeting. At the Annual Meeting every WI gets to cast a vote as a WI. These two stages allow members to narrow down the shortlist with their individual selection, and then allow WIs to come together to debate whether or not they agree with the final resolution/s and cast a vote for it. The resolutions process is member led, and these two stages allow members to have a fair input into choosing the next WI mandate.

### **How are Annual Meeting delegates expected to vote?**

Delegates at the Annual Meeting represent a number of WIs. They are given a vote per WI that they are representing. Before the Annual Meeting they need to make contact with each of these WIs who will tell them which way they would like their vote to be cast. WIs can ask them to vote for the resolution, against the resolution, or they can give them discretion, meaning that the delegate can decide which way to vote depending on the debate at the meeting.

### **Why do we need to vote in only one resolution is being debated at the Annual Meeting?**

Delegates vote for or against a resolution. This means that, if there were two resolutions, delegates can in fact vote for both – it is not a case of which one of the two they would like to vote for. When there is only one resolution, delegates will still vote for or against, and it is therefore important for WIs to cast a vote in this process.

