

Saxilby WI Annual Report 2021

Saxilby WI had just concluded our Annual Meeting in March 2020, with the Committee selected and the President voted for, when the country succumbed to the global pandemic of Covid-19. Everything ceased, including the WI, as we went into a national lockdown. It took a while before we properly understood the implications for us as a WI, but not holding meetings was quickly evident, and April, May and June passed before we rallied and decided that we needed to Do Something. The Committee had been making 'Buddy Phone-calls', in an effort to keep everyone connected, but there was now hope that some form of a gathering could take place in the Village Hall. Much preparatory work undertaken to ensure everyone's safety, but by the time we were ready to meet indoors again, it was no longer permitted.

In July, the Committee met (in a member's garage!) and discussed how the WI could resume. An outdoor Garden Party was selected, and in August, nine intrepid members gathered for a DIY picnic and some carefully selected, seated games. By September, it again was not permitted for groups to meet up, but the Committee had discovered Zoom! To ensure members remained engaged, it was decided to pick up the Buddy Phone calls again, to start monthly meetings by Zoom, and to create a Newsletter for members, keeping them informed of WI activity and including biopics of members, a free raffle ticket, an activity and sundry pieces of information. This has proved popular with members, and suggestions for different items to include have been helpfully forthcoming. Our Pass-It-On Story, to which nearly every member of the WI had contributed, was well received at the Federation, and was serialised in WI News. We are very proud of our literary efforts!

Subsequent monthly meetings have included crafting, a quiz, a trip round Eastern Europe with Paul Stafford, and the delights of running a B & B.

Along with Group meetings, the Lunch Club and monthly meetings in the Hall, we were obliged to forego our Christmas Party in December. The Committee didn't want our members to miss out, so pooled our skills and efforts and created a gift bag for each member, delivered personally, which we hoped brought a little cheer at a difficult time.

We are currently facing some interesting changes in the WI: subscription changes; using online platforms for meetings (how many of us have learned how to communicate with family and friends using this type of medium?); how and whether to hold Annual Meetings; how to cope with the drop in finances this year has brought. Here at Saxilby, we have worked hard to keep you, our members, entertained and informed. We have missed being able to see members in person, and whilst it has undoubtedly been a difficult year, we have also enjoyed the challenge of keeping in touch in other ways.

Bron Williams