

LAUNTON WI – SECRETARY'S REPORT 2020-2021

This certainly turned into an extraordinary year: starting when our President, Helen Aris, fell on the day of our Annual Meeting in March 2020 (which was just a couple of weeks before lockdown) breaking her femur. Obviously, we were not to know that this misfortune would set the tone for the whole year as that evening was the last we saw of normality.

In the pandemic restrictions to come it was probably fortunate that the retiring Committee had been voted back in as this may have stood us in good stead, working to our advantage in keeping things ticking over during these extraordinary times.

The Committee has worked hard to keep on top of the increased volume of correspondence, via email (with a buddy system for those of our members not on-line) and we actually managed to hold a couple of face-to-face Committee meetings, albeit al fresco.

We have kept in touch through emails and telephone calls and have held two zoom meetings, which attracted attendance of around 50% of our membership. (Our total is just under 40.) The first of these meetings was an enjoyable Christmas Quiz compèred by Father Christmas and then in February we had an interesting, thought-provoking talk by Robin Stafford Allen on "Sustainable Energy". We have also maintained our presence in our Village magazine by submitting an article every month for publication

News of the closure of Denman College came as something of a shock but we have been kept informed by the regular event schedules, now arriving weekly, showing the details of the offerings under the new "Denman at Home" banner. We have also disseminated all the various opportunities open to our Members with Zoom sessions sponsored by NFWI, by OFWI and by neighbouring WIs and have received some positive feedback on these events.

We have been very fortunate in the help received through our Parish Council who offered us the use of their Zoom account to enable us to gauge the interest in such meetings before committing our WI to our own subscription: our thanks go out to Jane Olds, our Parish Clerk, who gave freely of her time as an "honorary" Member!

Just before Christmas we suffered a sad loss when Liz Colyer passed away very suddenly: we miss her on so many levels – her bubbly company, her wonderful craft evenings and also her home-made birthday cards for members, these taking the place of the usual delightful posies whilst we have been in lockdown.

The Committee has been struck by the amount of work we have had to cover during this year as well as the significantly greater administrative costs we have experienced – the actual logistics have been truly challenging!

Celia Manderson
March 2021