

Report of Stapleford WI Committee - 2022/23

Stapleford WI is doing well with 46 members, one dual member and good attendance at meetings.

It has been good to put lock-down behind us and get back to meeting regularly and I believe everyone has enjoyed this.

April saw the planting of our Centenary Tree on the recreation ground on Haverhill Road. We purchased a Sorbus Sunshine and Liz Hodgkins had the honour of planting the tree. Thanks go to Keith Dixon and Bill French for preparing the ground and digging the hole. What followed was the hottest, driest summer for years, but fortunately Helen and Geoff Hale live opposite the tree and did sterling work watering it and I am pleased to report it is still alive.

We were fortunate to have some excellent speakers throughout last year, thanks to Yvonne Allison. Shirley Scotcher from Deaf Blind UK told us about the life of a deaf and blind person and who will forget Barbara Kettel wearing an eye mask and ear defenders trying to identify money and Liz Houghton and Joyce Dobson trying to make sandwiches wearing eye masks. The Resolution was Women and Girls with ASD & ADHD - under-identified, under-diagnosed, misdiagnosed and under-supported. Sue Clark's daughter Wendy Suter, who is a champion for neurodiversity, came and told us of her experiences in this field and there was a unanimous vote for the Resolution. We were all very impressed with Fran Saltmarsh's talk on 'Here Comes the Bride' and the beautiful wedding dresses she brought to show us, several of which she had made. Joan Munden told us about her distant cousin Lilian Vera Rolfe. Lilian had been recruited as a radio operator into the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during WWII and, sadly had been caught and executed. We learnt all about Fen and Molly dancing from Alison Giles, from the Burwell Museum, and six of our members had a go. Following Carol Pook's talk about Coco Chanel, several members remarked how clearly she spoke. I still think of Peter Ievins who spoke on 'How Criminal Law Sometimes Works' when I hear of criminals being sentenced. We finished the year with the harvest supper of creamy chicken and pumpkin stew or the vegetarian option of Persian Stew, served with jacket potato and mixed leaf salad followed by pudding/cake made with apples.

The Book Group continues to meet via Zoom, although we are trying for in person meetings at the newly re-opened Rose pub. We have read some amazing books and our membership is now at 12. The Craft Group has met throughout the year hosted by Margaret Beavis and have produced some stunning work. I have even finished the jumper I have been knitting for at least five years.

Members served refreshments at the annual Nachingwea Fair in early December at Great Shelford Memorial Hall and on the same day the Committee ran a coffee morning at Cox's Close - both events went well.

The annual BBQ in Tony Smith's garden was a highlight of the year with 34 members and partners attending. Tony Hore helped with the cooking and we were glad of the shade in Tony's garden as well as the ladder he had placed so members could look over the garden wall at the new houses being built. Another food event was the curry evening, in September at the Pavilion. The menu included Kashmir Chicken, Rogan Josh, Sweet

Potato and Coconut Curry, Bombay Potatoes, Rice, poppadoms and chutneys, followed by fresh fruit. Members did enjoy this event.

As mentioned earlier, our harvest supper meeting was very well attended and Yvonne Allison won the Produce Cup for a pudding/cake made with apples and members enjoyed trying all the different entries. Other competitions throughout the year were: the Janet Smith Rose Bowl for a button-hole which was won by Gillian Pett and the Craft Cup for something made from a recycled item which was also won by Gillian Pett. We started a new photography competition to be held in August each year in memory of former member, Rose Humberstone. Liz Hodgkins commissioned her niece to craft a ceramic plaque of the pasque flower that Rose drew for our centenary broach as the prize for this competition. The first winner was Pat Hughes.

At the Village Show we ran the jam jar hoopla stall again and we were so popular, that there was always a queue of children waiting for a turn. We have already started collecting jam jars for this year's event. Following the Village Show, we purchased a promotional pennant to publicise ourselves. It has been present at each of our meetings since and we are looking forward to flying it at this year's Show.

Another new initiative was 'Stapleford Cares' donations to Cambridge Foodbank. Celia Weir is a volunteer and since speaking to the meeting early in the year, each month we have had a collection. The response has been overwhelming. We ask members to bring one item, but some months we have struggled to carry the donations back to the car.

We have supported Federation events throughout the year including the Quiz, Curtain Up and the Annual Council meeting, where the main speaker was Sarah Slater who is a guide at Hampton Court Palace. You may recall her talk to Stapleford WI via Zoom during lockdown. Other Federation events supported included a trip to Christchurch House in Ipswich, tour of Madingley Hall, and several lunches and coffee mornings.

I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say we are looking forward to more of the same this year.