



Drinkstone WI Report for Annual Parish Meeting 8th May 2017

Drinkstone WI has been going for over two years now and although we haven't grown in numbers we have grown in strength, knowledge and friendship.

At the beginning of this year we agreed to change the day on which we meet with most members finding the change to their liking. There have also been changes to the programme during the year, for various reasons including the announcement of the General Election for Thursday 8th June our meeting night! We are still meeting that night but in the small meeting room.

Our Speaker Programme has brought us farm food tasting and making gingerbread houses, we have shared our experiences of places that we have visited, learnt about the workings of Fairtrade and the importance of well-fitting underwear. The gardeners amongst us found Graham Watts talk particularly interesting, with lots of hints and tips. It was a pity more visitors didn't come to that meeting as it was open to all! We have also been shown the background of English Gypsy Caravans and the Magistrates Court. Our "pot luck" Christmas Lunch proved a very enjoyable end to 2016.

The competitions provide plenty of amusement at our meetings and everyone is encouraged to take part in these - the more entries we have, the more entertaining they are. Entries are always anonymous (except to the lady organising them) and the members choose the three they think are best by putting coins in a pot in front of each entry, one for third, two for second and three for first. The money collected from the competition is given at the Federation Annual Meeting to the ACWW (Associated Country Women of the World) which is a charity supported by the WI nationally to help provide much needed finance for projects which help women in the developing world. Congratulations to Jean Bowen on her success in being the overall winner last year.

We have organised some good fundraising activities - a stall on the Sale Trail in May 2016 and in the Autumn, a Fun Evening at Palmers, where we

were given free rein in the ladies' fashion store to try on anything we wanted, culminating in a walk down the catwalk by some braver souls. There are plans for a Jam Jar Tombola at Nowton Park in July and a Pudding Evening on 4 October - I hope Drinkstone folk will do everything they can to support Drinkstone WI in these fund-raising activities.

Several of our members have taken advantage of events which have been run by Suffolk West, including the Carol Concert, trip to Albertopolis, the Living Crafts Show and the musical "An American in Paris". We fielded a team in the Federation Quiz - coming first in our heat at Woolpit and second overall. The Federation also hosts an Annual Meeting and an Autumn Meeting both of which are open to all members and several members went to both this year. At the Annual Meeting held at The Apex we were entertained by a talk given by Giles Brandreth as well as informed by reports from the various committees that make Suffolk West an interesting, caring and inspiring Federation.

Members recently formed a Walking Group with the first outing this month, visiting the Bluebell Woods in Haughley Park. We hope to follow this with monthly walks, mainly local and circular with a lunch to complete the outings.

With the continued support from the Education Charity the Stitch & Craft Group continues to thrive. We have a core of five ladies with several visitors every month. During the last year, we have undertaken projects for charities as well as working on ours. We have stitched quilts for the Premature Baby Unit at the local hospital, made and filled toilet bags for use at the Bury St Edmunds Women's Refuge and our present project, also for the Refuge, is making small knitted toys for each family who needs them.

Overall, we have had another very full year aiming to provide Drinkstone with a fulfilling Women's Institute. We hope this encourages more ladies from the village to join us in the future.

Helen Cooper
President
May 2017