

## **WI Annual Report to the Parish Council – April 2024**

It's been a good year for the Wickhambrook WI. We've welcomed many new members this year and it has been great to see the group growing.

Our monthly meetings have been diverse. We kicked off our year with lots of laughter and stick bashing as we took lessons from the Bury St Edmunds Green Dragons Morris Dancers – thankfully no one was injured, and we went home with some great memories and photos of the night! We followed this with a trip to the Suffolk Archives in Bury to look at their collection based on the village – members reminisced over school records, land maps and old newspaper cuttings, as well as the near 100-year archive of Wickhambrook WI programmes (which will be used as inspiration for our centenary events next year!).

Some meetings have challenged our thinking and increased our empathy. We met with survivors of domestic abuse, discussed women's health with Dr Kahn from the local surgery and learnt how our front-line service men and women cope with trauma and PTSD. We raised concerns around water quality and security with Anglia Water and felt positive by the action being taken by the WI Climate Ambassadors to raise the profile of local climate-based issues and small steps action available to us all to take.

Both chair Pilates and time spent with Holly, the therapy dog – gave us all new ideas to manage daily stresses, along with a craft evening (although it is fair to say the embroidery workshop was stressful for some!) and a colour therapy workshop – all designed to boost our moods.

Alongside our normal monthly meetings - we've had an active year of theatre trips, picnics, a rounders match, bike rides, pub lunches and a successful Christmas market, Wreath making workshop and Christmas meal for members. Our walking and reading groups are thriving and always open to new members to join in.

A highlight of our WI year has been seeing our hall so full of villagers, friends, family, and neighbours – not only at our monthly tea and cake afternoons, but also at our Saturday night autumn social, our Literary lunch (with local author Michelle Kidd) as well as our recent Friday night quiz night. We also celebrated the coronation, by having an amazing afternoon tea, complete with tiered cake stands, copious amounts of cake and joyous celebrations, following which we participated in the Big Help out by sprucing up the village phone box / free library and adding new planters to frame the new coronation bench outside our hall.

This year we've tried out new ideas, include everyone in what we do and opened our doors wide to future friends.

We continue to meet on the second Tuesday of every month in the WI Hall.

**Mitch Karunaratne**  
**Secretary of the Wickhambrook Women's Institute**  
**April 18<sup>th</sup> 2024**