

HAUGHLEY WI: ANNUAL REPORT FOR PARISH MEETING
CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 32.

GENERAL REPORT for period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Haughley WI meets once a month in the Village Hall and over the last 12 months although we have said a few sad goodbyes we have also welcomed several newcomers. Monthly meetings include guest speakers, member-led activities, themed raffles, competitions, social time and refreshments. We have had a lot of fun and learned plenty: our guest speaker topics have included a surprising insight into the lives of wasps to singing for well-being, to a local family-run gin making operation!

Historically, the overall planning and running of things has been the sole responsibility of the committee, but we are working to increased members involvement and want more members to take the lead on the planning and running of some of the things we do. We are delighted to be able to report that individual volunteers and small teams have already started to assume the responsibility for some jobs, previously done by Committee officers. This is a good start and we will continue to modernise the way our WI works with the aim of ensuring that we can meet expectations and deliver real benefits for current and future members. We are grateful to our WI Adviser who is helping us do this.

So, what else did we do? Well, quite a lot as it turned out, although we admit that food and drink seemed to be a bit of a feature. Between 12 and 20 ladies attend the popular Lunch Club which meets at different locations (mainly pubs) every 4-6 weeks, 27 of us enjoyed a very nice Christmas meal together, we all shared a Fish 'N' Chip supper at our Summer Party, a group got together to have afternoon Cream Tea at Lavenham and a group were joined by friends and family on a Boat Trip with tea and scones on the River Deben. It wasn't all food and drink, although, looking back on these events, we concede that they all included refreshments! We attended formal events such as the annual federation event at Trinity Park, took part in an Officers' Training Day, participated in joint events held by our Gipping Valley group of 7 local WIs, and sent a team to the annual federation quiz in Needham Market.

We also support Parish organisations and events, with WI fund raising as appropriate: We

- have a member on the Village Hall Committee and provides a liaison function for us.
- have several members who support the playing field via membership of the Playing Field's income generation 50/50 Club, whilst another has helped to run their weekly café in the pavilion.
- provided three cakes stalls: at the Christmas Lights Switch-on event, at one of the two Saturday Haughley Community Cafés which we hosted, and at the parish event commemorating the 850th anniversary Siege of Haughley Castle
- We participated in the Parish Remembrance Service 2023, and representatives also attended the re-dedication of Haughley War Memorial in the Church grounds, with a WI wreath being laid on both occasions.
- One of our members runs the parish arts and crafts group and the group entered and won the Scarecrow competition at the Haughley Siege Commemoration event.

This year our President and Treasurer stepped down after many years hard work and inspirational leadership and new villagers have taken their place. There has been a move to become more involved with the wider community with the planning of the relaunch of Haughley Evergreens, an ABBA night to raise funds, the introduction of a new singing group, and a new walking group.

We look forward to moving the organisation toward its Centenary celebrations next year!