

# Window on Berkshire

Well, there's no doubting the interest of Berkshire Federation members – the October Speaker Lunch sold out very quickly! There is now a waiting list for tickets, so if you have a ticket and can't come, please get in touch and we'll contact the next person on the waiting list. We are also in the process of setting up more Speaker Lunches – and Speaker Coffee & Cake meetings – with a Speaker Lunch in January and a Speaker Coffee & Cake meeting in February. We're looking at some lovely venues, and some great speakers! When the final details have been confirmed for 2026 Speaker Lunches and Coffee & Cake meetings, they will be released on Trybooking and we'll also send round an update to WI secretaries by email. If you're the person who receives the Bulletin or the BFWI emails for your WI, please don't delay in sending round this information – it's a real shame if someone misses out because they didn't get the information as quickly as others in the county.

As a reminder, there are three ways in which you can book onto events:

- TryBooking: click on [the Search for Events page on Trybooking](#) and type BFWI into the left hand box before clicking on the Find Events button. This will show you all of the BFWI events which are currently on offer. (Or you can click directly on the link to individual events, as given in the links below). This will take you through the booking process so you will be paying to get your ticket, using a card or alternatively using ApplePay, GooglePay or PayPal, if you have those set up.
- Use the Event booking form available [on the BFWI website](#) which you can download and complete on your computer, then email to us: you will then need to do a BACS transfer to pay the required amount to the BFWI bank account
- Print out the form, or ask your secretary to give you a form, and send that completed form with a cheque to WI House

Please remember that applications for events are accepted in the order in which they arrive, and that we can't book anyone unless they've also paid for their booking.

## Federation events

**Autumn Mix and Mingle!** A reminder - come and meet some of the board of Trustees at Henry Street Garden Centre, RG2 9JY, any time from 10.30 to 12.30 on Friday 3 October. We'll be in the café area and will make ourselves obvious. No need to book, and come for as little as ten minutes or for all of the two hours – and then have a browse round the garden centre! But if you do know you're coming, it's visible on Trybooking so [please book in](#) so that we know to look out for you.

There will be regular Mix and Mingles at different garden centres throughout 2026.

**Speaker Selection:** the Autumn meeting will be held at Woolhampton Village Hall on Friday 17 October from 10.30 till 1.00. Doors open at 9.45. Spaces are limited to three members per WI, at a cost of £6 per person. Bring your own mug and bring change for the raffle. Please lift share if possible. <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FFQG> to book or via the BFWI paper form.

**Savile Row and Jermyn Street workshops: a tour:** We are setting up a group guided tour, led by a professional expert, exploring the renowned workshops at the heart of British craftsmanship in St James. Go backstage in the tailoring, shoemaking and perfumery ateliers and learn about the skills, the quality control and the inspirations that lead to British tailoring and craftsmanship being world-leading. The tour will last up to four hours and will take place in early 2026. Numbers are strictly limited so please keep an eye on Trybooking: further details are on the way and will also be sent round by email.

Next **Speaker Lunch:** we're finalising details on this so can't release booking yet: but it will be on January 26 at The Caversham, Chazey Heath. We'll email out when we can tell you more, and the Trybooking link will go live.

## All things financial

It's not too late to book on the **Treasurer's Workshop** for those who are either old hands at being a Treasurer but would like a skills top-up, or for those who are new to the role, or even for those considering what the role might involve and wanting to find out all about it. This is on Saturday 11 October from 11.00 to 15.30 at St Paul's Parish Rooms, Wokingham

RG41 1EH. Refreshments will be available but bring your own packed lunch. Contact WI House for more information or to book in.

## Craft courses



The **Patchwork Club** continues to make beautiful quilts for bereaved parents. Come and join in at WI House – you don't have to have come before, and you don't need to have patchwork or quilting experience. We meet monthly on Mondays, from 10 till 12.30, at a cost of £5 a session which covers materials, teaching and the use of the machines. The dates up until Christmas are 6 October, 3 November, 1 December. Book at <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FDZU>

A **Rag Wreath** workshop was announced by email last month and sold out almost straight away: we're looking at options to run something similar in the spring, perhaps linked to Easter.

**Make a silk poppy** on variegated silk ribbon: it's not as hard as it looks to make and would make a perfect embellishment for a card, gift, bag or box. Come to a workshop at WI House and meet new people while stitching this delightful poppy! The class is on Wednesday 5 November at WI House from 10.00 to 12.30 and costs £15 including tuition, materials and equipment (and tea and cake!). TryBooking reference is <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FDZY>



## Around the WIs

**Bracknell Forest & Chavey Down WI** are holding an Open meeting on Monday 20th October. The speaker is Antony Wood, giving a talk on Pamela Churchill Harriman - Socialite or Courtesan. Antony has given very interesting and entertaining talks in the past and they look forward to welcoming him again.

The meeting is at St Pauls Church Hall, Lowbury, Harmans Water, Bracknell, RG12 9HY. Doors open at 7.30pm for a 7.45pm start, and visitors are very welcome at a charge of £3 including refreshments. There is plenty of parking.

Please contact [bracknellforestandchaveydownwi@berkshirewi.co.uk](mailto:bracknellforestandchaveydownwi@berkshirewi.co.uk) if you would like to come along or if you have any questions.

Email us on [bulletin@berkshirewi.co.uk](mailto:bulletin@berkshirewi.co.uk) to publicise your events in the Bulletin!

## Helping WIs support the community



Are you ready for the Christmas Fair season?

Shop local – support one of the local WIs who are working flat out to organise these. We learnt about these two fairs but if you are also having one, please let us know and we'll publicise it.

You will know that you will get a great slice of cake and cup of tea at both!

## Health Matters: from Margot

### Loneliness

The definition of loneliness is sad in itself: *“sadness because one has no friends or company”*. It is easy to imagine that this state is specific to those living alone but it can also be experienced even when surrounded by a crowd of people. Indeed, just the opposite, many people who are alone may never actually feel lonely.

The different types of loneliness are:

Social i.e. when we lack a social network

Emotional i.e. lack of a close intimate relationship be it a spouse or a special friend

Existential i.e. a feeling of isolation from people or the world in general

Loneliness can affect our mental health with depression or anxiety as a result. Some studies also link loneliness with poor physical health such as disrupted or poor sleep, and stress. Socially, people become more isolated which in turn results in poor attendance at activities and a worsening of a desire to participate in clubs or outings.

Certain people are at particular risk. These are those who are experiencing a bereavement or relationship break up; those with routine changes such as retirement, changing jobs or becoming redundant; those moving to a new area; those who are looking after someone; those with less money to engage in activities; and those who have no local family.

Whilst some people will only experience loneliness for a transient period, for others it is an issue for prolonged periods. When a cause is identified, support can be available from a variety of sources. Please remember that contacting online mental health charities, as well as talking to health care providers, is the start of trying to feel better. As WI members, we should be looking at those who are members in whom a change has been noted. Look at our neighbours and friends. **It is alright to ask people if they are OK.** Try to support people when their circumstances change even if they say they are fine and appear resistant to your input. Too many people feel that they are lonely even when in a room full of people. Let's work towards changing that with a simple “hello” and “how are you”.

*Professor Margot Gosney writes on health matters for Berkshire Federation: to contact her, you can reach her on [m.gosney@berkshirewi.co.uk](mailto:m.gosney@berkshirewi.co.uk).*

## Calendar

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| <i>Please see details of all events elsewhere in this bulletin, with booking details</i> |  |
| <b>Friday 3 October</b> , 10.30 to 12.30, Henry Street Garden Centre, RG2 9JY            |  |
|  | <b>Autumn Mix and Mingle – meet the Trustees</b><br>No need to book, just turn up: come for friendly coffee and chat |
| <b>Monday 6 October</b> , 10.00 to 12.30, WI House                                       |  |
|  | <b>Patchwork Group</b><br>£5 pp  |
| <b>Saturday 11 October</b> , 11.00 to 15.30, St Paul's Parish Rooms, Wokingham RG41 1EH  |  |
|  | <b>Treasurer's Workshop</b><br>£10 per WI (cost paid by your WI)<br>Bring a packed lunch. Tea/coffee & cake provided |
| <b>Friday 17 October</b> , 10.30 to 13.00, Woolhampton Village Hall                      |  |
|  | <b>Speaker Selection Meeting</b><br>£6pp, maximum of 3 attendees per WI  |
| <b>Monday 27 October</b> , 12.00 for 12.30, <b>SOLD OUT</b>                              |  |
|  | <b>BFWI Lunch &amp; Speaker</b> , 'Fashion on a Ration'<br>£32 pp including two course lunch                         |
| <b>Monday 3 November</b> , 10.00 to 12.30, WI House                                      |  |
|  | <b>Patchwork Group</b><br>£5 pp  |
| <b>Wednesday 5 November</b> , 10.00 to 12.30, WI House                                   |  |
|  | <b>Make a silk poppy</b> Using silk and embroidery, make a beautiful card with a stunning silk poppy on it.          |
| <b>Saturday 15 November</b> <b>SOLD OUT</b>  |  |
|  | <b>Rag Wreath Workshop</b><br>Advertised by email and fully booked already.  |
| <b>Monday 1 December</b> , 10.00 to 12.30, WI House                                      |  |
|  | <b>Patchwork Group</b><br>£5 pp  |
| <b>Coming up soon</b>  |  |
| <b>8 Dec</b>   | <b>Christmas crackers – make your own</b>  |
| <b>26 Jan 2026</b>   | <b>January Speaker Lunch</b>   |
| <b>Early 2026</b>  | <b>Trip to Jermyn Street and Savile Row</b>  |
| <b>Feb 2026</b>  | <b>Speaker coffee meeting</b>  |
| <b>March 2026</b>  | <b>Spring Mix and Mingle</b>   |