

Our last WI meeting was on 11th March this year

Foreword

When we last met coronavirus was beginning to sweep the world, having made its first appearance in Britain in January this year. In WI we were mindful of infection, taking extra care when washing our hands, but less than a week later the Prime Minister advised the country that transmission of the virus was escalating, so we shouldn't meet in large groups and we should keep 2 meters apart from each other.

The following week Britain was put into 'lockdown'; schools, pubs and restaurants were shut indefinitely and we were all asked to stay at home apart from essential trips for food and medicine. Some people, who have extra health needs, were asked to shelter indoors for at least 12 weeks.

Sadly, our President, Joan Baram, had no option but to cancel our meetings.

But we are not beaten - read on to see how we're keeping in touch, keeping fit, keeping busy and doing our bit.



We've kept in touch

As we went into lockdown our President (Joan Baram) sent a written message to all of us wishing us well for Easter and telling us how she had packed a bag, 'just in case'



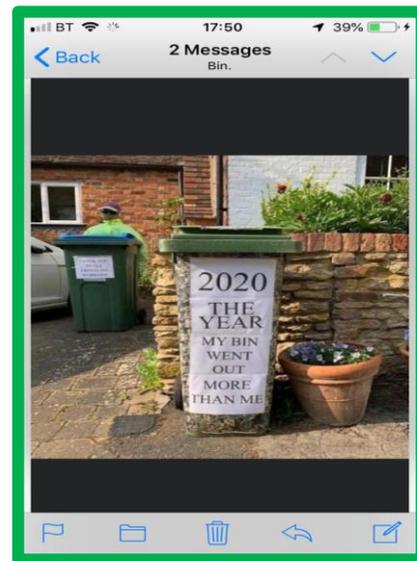
"I thought about this very carefully.

If any member were to be taken ill (fingers crossed you don't). Would your other half / partner/ friend who looks out for you know where you keep your PJS, toiletries, and many other personal things you would like with you, if you were ill? So, I've done a 'Just in Case Bag' I'd rather have my own PJS than a Hospital gown."

We set up a WhatsApp Group....



Through our WhatsApp group we shared Easter messages, home hairdressing successes and disasters, book recommendations, takeaway menus from the village pub and lots of humour



For those members without access to the internet we kept them up to date with printed information and Pam Marlow telephoned people for a chat and to give them the news. Jean Macrae, who is 'sheltered', has enjoyed catching up.



When the date of our May meeting came around, Joan, our President, sent us another written message presenting the month's talk and gifting us a virtual bunch of flowers.

"I do hope that you all are keeping well and safe. Well, all I can do is stand in for the month of May. The talk will be. – 'What I've been doing to stay Safe and Sane'. (No Fee Required) Each day I get my bike out and ride round the lanes in Tollerton. That's my exercise for the day out of my house. Back at home, here we go again, cleaning everything that moves and all that's stays still. I've painted fencing and the garage door. Not the green house yet. (ha) I've done two 1,000-piece jigsaws. I guess your days are very similar, but nobody gets to see your clean home. I have been very lucky living on a corner, I can watch people walking past with their animals"

We've been Keeping Fit

The range of activities our members are enjoying during lockdown is fantastic



Joan Baram, Helen Taylor and Nancy Burch have 'got on their bikes' to enjoy the local country side. Joan Baram is riding round the village; as she greets the regular dog walkers, they shout "how many more times round will you do today?" to which she calls back "I'm still going round since yesterday"



Nancy has been borrowing her son's cycle for her rides, but has enjoyed it so much she has now ordered her own.

Pam Marlow is clocking up the miles on her exercise bike - she's managed 9 miles, but the scenery has stayed the same.

Gill Charlton is power walking as she walks the dog, finishing with yoga stretches.



Pam Marlow and Helen Taylor are making the most of the good weather to use the garden for their workouts

- ❖ Gill Charlton, Pam Marlow and Diane Hunter join Jo Wicks for lockdown PE on YouTube.
- ❖ Maggie Bond, Gill Charlton, Pam Marlow and Irene Clark are using Zoom to Aqua Zumba (without water!) twice a week
- ❖ Irene Clark and Diane Hunter are doing Pilates on line with Gemma Darley, but Irene has more resolve to do the weekly sessions than Diane

I'm enjoying it and trying not to skip any bits I don't like!!!!!! The warm weather contributed to random effort but back on track now
Irene Clark

We've been Keeping Busy

We've cleaned everything that moves and then cleaned it again, cooked, baked, knitted, read dozens of novels, completed umpteen jigsaw puzzles, walked our dogs -even the lazy ones and folded plastic bags Marie Kondo style ... yes really!!

Some of us have become proficient at DIY and hairdressing



Sue Ward has...

...learnt how to rip up decking, push a wheelbarrow without overfilling it (not as strong as I once was), assist fitting outside lights and generally be George's apprentice, I'm aspiring to earn a dust coat so that I can be the foreman and not just the labourer! I've also become a barber 🧑🏻 getting better each time! Not mentioning my hair dying attempt 🧑🏻 . I have had the time to research birds by their song as well as by sight that I hear & spot on my dog walks. I'm now looking forward to the safely seeing everyone. 😊

Sue Ward

Diane Hunter has spent lots of time at the allotment and Jean Yorston has "spent hours and hours and even more hours" working on her extensive garden.

Jean said

.....gardening is my favourite occupation so apart from the creaking joints it has been a pleasure. Recently during the strong winds, we were working at the side of the road weeding and repairing the fence when a loud crack made us "freeze" and a large branch from one of the horse chestnut trees in front of the churchyard wall broke off, crashed down and completely blocked the road. It missed us and landed very close to two teenagers walking their dogs. We were able to drag the branch up our drive to clear the road and had traffic been normal it's quite likely a car could have been hit.

Never a dull moment in Alne!

Jean Yorston

Irene Clarke does an online baking session with her grandchildren every week.....

Sadly, I am not a baker and their stuff usually turns out better than mine. We made a ginger loaf; however, I then discovered I didn't have any ginger, or self-raising flour so I improvised. Not a good idea as during the cooking it just kept rising, poured into the oven and left me with the equivalent of a cake case – just half an inch of sponge around the edges of the tin!

Irene Clark

We are 'doing our bit'

We help with the Alne Village lockdown support effort for those in the village who are sheltering or self-isolating.

We've made knitted hearts for patients in York ICU and ear extenders for local carers to protect their ears from the face mask elastic.

Marion Roberts and Nancy Burch were our star knitters



Patricia Stafford also made beautifully stitched face masks and ear extenders.

Looking to the future

As soon as we are able to restart our meetings, we will make them as safe as possible - observing social distancing rules.

Once the Government think it's safe for more than six people to meet together outdoors, weather permitting, we'll try to get together in the open air. We'll have a varied and interesting programme that works in this new world we are now living.

We had planned an outdoor summer cocktail evening in June, which sadly we missed, but hopefully this is something we can still do later in the summer.

We might use the occasion to dress up, we might wear hats, I'm sure we'll sing Jerusalem, but whatever, it will be good to see each other again.

Keep well and Keep Safe

Afterword

Being WI President during this strange time in the world has really brought home to me that it is a very talented group of ladies that make up Alne WI. Not only have they entertained themselves through the long days, they've also found time to reach out and help others. I'm very proud of them all.

Joan Baram (President)