

Dear Derbyshire WI members

Firstly, I do hope you are all well and doing as much as you possibly can to stay that way- whether it's singing "Happy Birthday" twice whilst washing your hands, being able to go outside for a walk with plenty of space around you, or getting on with some unfinished craft work, please remember that we are all in this together. Life is totally different than what it was two weeks ago and I'm afraid it will be a long haul. Everyone's health and safety during this covid-19 pandemic is our main priority which is why Derbyshire Federation Trustees reluctantly not only cancelled the recent Spring Council Meeting but all events in our diary for the foreseeable future. We are extremely fortunate in our federation, due to many years of careful planning, that we are able to return all your costs for this although we do expect some loss; much of our outlay can be deferred. Please look out for how to do this in your April Link, as there is a specific claim form with clear instructions. We cannot repay everyone in one day, so please give us time, as we too have to adhere to governmental advice for our safety.

I know you have had to make cancellation decisions yourselves in your own WIs, which is understandably sad, but absolutely necessary, as, I make no apologies for repeating, our health and well-being is paramount. The National meeting also has had to fall by the wayside for exactly the same reasons, and I know how special a meeting is at The Royal Albert Hall. As soon as it is safe to do so events at all levels will resume and perhaps this occurring at the start of spring and summer might make it less onerous for ourselves, our friends and families.

If you know of anyone who is more affected such as a self-isolator or someone who becomes ill, please try to keep in touch, if safe to do so, by phone or email to lessen their feeling of isolation. I'm sure many of you have these systems in place already, but it is really important that it is maintained for as long as necessary.

At the end of my address in Chesterfield I had planned for a few verses of Tina Turner's "Simply the Best" to be played as Derbyshire members are just that, so what's stopping you now from virtually joining in? As you are simply the best!

Chrissie Booth DFWI Chairman 18.3.2020