

# CFWI NEWS

DECEMBER 2025



theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

### Chair's Chat

Welcome to the Christmas/New Year newsletter. I am finding it hard to believe that we are heading into the festive season – and 2026!

The second half of this year has been a bit of a blur for me, as I have been helping my partner with some health issues. This has meant that I have missed various meetings, events and outings, but I am hopeful that I will be able to make it to more activities next year as his health is starting to improve. I am very grateful to the Board for all the work they have done in my absence this year, with a particular “shout out” to vice chairs Elaine and Lesley for all their support. I would also like to mention Helen, Jules and the volunteers in the office who keep everything on track.

Looking forward, I want to mention the **NFWI Annual Meeting** which will be taking place on zoom on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026. We have plans to host the showing of the meeting in the office again. The Federation has been allocated 12 delegate places, so if you would like to be a delegate at the meeting, watch out for information which has been sent out via your secretary. More information about Observer tickets will be circulated in the New Year.

You may recall that in September this year, as part of the work on the new **WI Strategy**, NFWI launched their “Five Practical Pledges” for the future of the organisation. The first of these pledges was to review the percentage of the annual subscription kept by each WI. They have put this pledge into action by allocating two thirds of next year’s increase to be retained by YOU. The £3.00 increase will be split: £2.00 to WIs and 50p each to Federation and NFWI. This means that in 2026 WIs will keep just over half of the £54.00 subs paid by each member – a greater proportion than I can recall since I joined the WI 10 years ago.

This is good news for WIs – especially those who need the extra money to help run a varied programme of activities. However, if your WI is relatively “well off” you can choose not to pass on the whole of the WI portion of the subs increase to your members. This idea was introduced during Covid

and I know that a lot of WIs took advantage of the flexibility at that time, a recognition of the fact that you know what’s best for your WI.

I want to say a huge thank you for getting behind our **Tackling Domestic Violence Campaign**.

The donation list was circulated at the start of October and we are thrilled with all the donations and court bags. We will continue to welcome your donations until the end of January.

We also had a surprise donation this year – a WI member left the Federation a £1,500 legacy in her will. This came completely out of the blue and is a welcome additional to this year’s income.

And to continue the good news – I would like to **welcome two new Trustees** who are being co-opted onto the Board: Jane Stoner and Olive Swain. Jane is a member of Swavesey WI and Olive is a member of Over WI and both are also members of Combined Activities Committee.

In addition, vice chairs **Elaine and Lesley have recently trained as WI Advisers**. If you have time and are interested in playing a more active role in the Federation we would love hear from you – whether you are interested in being on one of the committees or would like to support in other ways.

Finally, if you are planning to do any of your Christmas shopping on line this year – checkout **our easyfundraising link**. We set it up at the start of the year – but I thought this would be a good time to remind you about it - because NFWI have recently followed suit. Retailers make a small donation to the charity of your choice when you make a purchase – and it doesn’t cost you a penny. The small amounts can really add up [cambridge wi easyfundraising](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/ca/cambridge-wi)

I think there are still a few places left at our final event of the year - our **Christmas Brunch on 15<sup>th</sup> December** – but if I don’t see you there, have a lovely Christmas and all the best for a peaceful New Year.

*Sue x*



CFWI Office, Oakington Road, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0QH 01223 234872  
[office@cfwi.co.uk](mailto:office@cfwi.co.uk) [cfwiwebsite.thewi.org.uk](https://cfwiwebsite.thewi.org.uk) [ticketsource.co.uk/cfwi](https://ticketsource.co.uk/cfwi) [cfwilottery.co.uk](https://cfwilottery.co.uk)

Office open Monday and Thursday 10am-1pm and 1.30pm-3pm. Tuesday contactable by email only.  
(Please call before visiting)

Christmas closure 1pm Tuesday 23 December until 10am Monday 5 January.  
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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS



### STAGE 3 SELECTIONS

The shortlist of resolutions has now been published on the NFWI Website, My WI and WI Life.

1. Accessible public toilet facilities to promote dignity, health and social inclusion.
2. Action on women's homelessness
3. Every child needs a friend
4. Nearer to nature
5. Love your vulva – self checking is your best defence against vulva cancer

Please let your secretary know your vote.

**Secretaries please email votes to the WI Office by Monday 2 February 2026**

## Christmas Recipes

### Poinsettia Cocktail

1 serving

25ml triple sec

50ml cranberry juice

75ml Champagne or Prosecco

1 fresh bay leaf, to garnish



Chill the triple sec, cranberry juice, champagne or prosecco and a martini glass in the fridge until cold.

Pour the triple sec and cranberry juice into the chilled glass, then slowly top up with the champagne and garnish with the bay leaf.

Great to make up in a large, chilled jug for Christmas or New Year Parties. Don't add ice as it goes watery!

Can be made ahead by mixing the triple sec and cranberry juice and at the last minute add the fizz!

Non Alcoholic version – swap prosecco for unflavoured sparkling mineral water or tonic water.

**Elaine Bailey**

## Christmas Ginger Biscuits



350g plain flour

125g butter

175g soft brown sugar

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

2 tsp ground ginger

4 tbsp golden syrup

1 beaten egg



### Preparation

Set the oven to 190°C Gas 5

Line the baking trays with parchment paper

### Method

1. Put butter in a saucepan stir and melt over a low heat
2. Stir in syrup
3. Sift flour, ginger and bicarb in a bowl then add brown sugar
4. Stir in melted butter/syrup and beaten egg.
5. Mix it all together then knead into a ball
6. Wrap in cling film and chill in the fridge for about 30 minutes
7. Sprinkle some flour on the work surface and rolling pin and roll out to ½ cm thick
8. Cut out biscuits to required shapes using Christmas cutters and put on baking tray
9. Gather up left over dough and roll until used up.  
Bake biscuits for 10-15 minutes until brown. Leave to cool on wire rack.  
Decorate.

## Hidden Cambridge's Latest Walking Tour

Even a few surprise downpours couldn't dampen the spirit of Murray Jacobs' latest *Hidden Cambridge Walking Tour*, held on both Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd October. As always, Murray brought his signature blend of wit, knowledge, and storytelling to the streets of Cambridge—proving once again why his tours are so popular.

Throughout the walk, our group uncovered fascinating details often overlooked in everyday life. From the history of Cambridge's unique streetlamps to the legendary Senate House Leap, each stop offered a fresh perspective. We learned about the flowers embedded in the pavement on Bridge Street, explored the intriguing Cambridge Core and much more.

One attendee summed it up perfectly: "After 30 years living in Cambridge, I didn't know any of that!"

If you haven't yet joined one of Murray's tours, don't miss the next opportunity. I know that I'll be booking again.

**Jane Stoner, Swavesey WI**



## Cheese Tasting Evening

Pete from 'Cheese and Bees' entertained and educated 27 of us at CFWI with a selection of delicious cheeses from his independent cheese shop in Terrington St Clement (nr Kings Lynn). We were each presented with a box with 5 cheeses in, 4 British and 1 Italian. They ranged from Shropshire Blue to Red Fox, via Barber's 1833 cheddar, a firm Mozzarella 'Fresco', and Snowdonia Black Bomber. Peter shared stories from cheese makers, and we peppered him with questions! His passion for his work is palpable, and many of us, I am sure, are now inspired to venture into local cheese shops, and/or move beyond 'mature'/'mild' supermarket cheddar. It was wonderful to hear that the British Cheese industry is thriving and is a wonderful supportive community. Fun facts we learned included: Did you know that Yarg is so named as it is the surname Gray backwards (the recipe was found in the 1980s in an attic by Mr Gray and the cheese-wrapped-in-nettles revived)? Or that the most expensive cheese (£1,000 per kg) in the world is called 'Pule' and is made with a mix of Donkey and Goat milk in the Balkans? Or that the blue veins in Roquefort cheese are uniquely made by bread mould from a wheat and rye bread stored in the caves alongside it? A fun evening with laughs, wine (not red – rose or white is better with cheese), a lot of interesting information and of course, the star of the show, cheese. We may need to organise a trip to Terrington St Clements....

**Rachel Bruins, Early Birds WI**



## Autumn Literary Lunch with Local Author Phil Oddy



This year's Autumn Literary Lunch was a real delight! Guests tucked into a delicious spread of homemade Somerset Chicken and Blackberry and

Apple Cake - the perfect taste of autumn.

Phil writes stories about how to cope in a confusing world, cleverly disguised as sci-fi/fantasy adventures. After the meal, Phil shared his journey from IT analyst to published writer, revealing that fan conventions were his gateway into the literary world. His talk left many of the audience inspired to read his books and perhaps even pick up a pen themselves!

**Jane Stoner, Swavesey WI**



## Ceilidh

Whittlesford Village Hall  
20 March 2025, 7pm start

Come on ladies. Dust off those dancing shoes or simply enjoy watching others tie themselves in knots!



Our planned Ceilidh on Friday 20th March at Whittlesford Village Hall is another first for CFWI. The first time we've organised a Ceilidh. Whittlesford Village Hall is a superb facility.

This is an evening made for getting a group of friends together. For those who have never tried and those that can show everyone else the ropes. Ceilidhs are renowned for bringing fun and dance together.

With an excellent university band and caller, along with a delicious supper this promises to be a great evening.

If you can support this event it would be great to see the hall full to capacity.

## Booking CFWI Events

Please book via



[www.ticketsource.co.uk/cfw](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cfw)

Members who prefer not to make a booking online have two other options.

**TicketSource Telephone Box Office Service** – by calling 0333 666 3366 or

**By Post** - Cash or cheque sent to the CFWI Office with written contact details.

## NEW EVENTS

**MAGPAS COFFEE MORNING**

**A FUTURE FOR THE FENS TALK**

**SPEAKERS SHOWCASE**

**ST PATRICKS DAY COFFEE MORNING**

**BOOKING STARTS MONDAY 1 DECEMBER**

For further information please see attached flyers.

## CHRISTMAS QUIZ

It's all about the Music!



1. According to Frank Sinatra, what is the weather like outside?
2. 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' was first introduced in which musical?
3. Who sang 'Last Christmas'?
4. According to the song, how many times does Santa Claus check his list?
5. What did my true love send to me on the 6th day of Christmas?
6. Which artist sang 'Blue Christmas'?
7. In 1965, which Christmas song did astronauts play from space?
8. According to the song, who was a 'jolly happy soul'?
9. What is the worldwide best-selling Christmas song of all time?
10. How many 'las' are after the 'fa' in 'Deck the Halls'?

Answers on page 7

## OTHER EVENTS AVAILABLE TO BOOK

(See back page for closing dates)

**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION WITH BRUNCH**

**WINTER WARMER LUNCH**

**SLOW COOKER DEMO**

**JIGSAW CHALLENGE**

[TicketSource Link](#)

## PLAY THE CAMBRIDGE FEDERATION LOTTERY

The WI Lottery is an exciting weekly fundraiser drawn every Saturday Night. Support the WI with 40p from the sale of each ticket coming back to the Federation.

Each ticket has a **1:50 chance** to win a prize each week, with a top prize of £25,000.

A winning ticket is potentially a week away, we thank you for your continued support. If you haven't signed up yet visit our page -

<https://www.thewilottery.co.uk/support/cambridge-federation-of-wis>

# Out & About



## HISTON & IMPINGTON WI

Our September meeting found us enjoying our second annual Flower and Produce Show. The items entered were judged and points given for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places. The overall winner with the most points was Sophie, our President. Sophie was presented with an Emma Bridgewater personalised mug. The evening ended with members enjoying a cup of tea and some of the delicious cakes from the competition.



In October we celebrated our 98<sup>th</sup> Birthday with a meal at the Tawa Lounge in the village. To round off a tasty and interesting meal we enjoyed cup cakes in lieu of a birthday cake. The delicious cakes were made by Helen, our secretary.

**Mary Law**

## DUXFORD WI

Following on from our July talk about Sawston's Challis House and Gardens, in August we held a wonderful afternoon tea in their grounds. Our food was provided by Footprints Café at Sawston Free Church, with lovely crockery, cake stands and teapots organised by a committee member. It was all very lovely!

In September we had Ralph Jackman, first seen at a speakers showcase, to talk to us about how to become a Roman Empress. Ralph has Masters Degree in Creative Writing and is a published author, so he knows his stuff. He set out, in a humorous manner, the ten characteristics, traits and skills required to be a Roman Empress by following the life of Agrippina the Younger. There were tales of plots, exiles, poisonings, murders and incest. While the details of the Roman family trees was a bit hard to get one's head around in a short space of time, the general thrust of the story could be followed with interest and amusement without prior knowledge of the Roman dynasties. Well

worth booking.

For our October meeting Duxford WI invited Susan Buckingham from Friends of the Cam to speak to us about the precious chalk stream that runs through our village. Susan gave a really informative talk about the River Cam and the problems it is suffering from, including over-abstraction, agricultural run-off and sewage discharge. At the same time the area is in the midst of a dash for growth in building houses and offices which is putting further strain on natural water flow and preventing the restoration of an already depleted system. A lot of this is probably well known these days, but there were many eye-opening and head-shaking moments for us.

**Lesley Hale**

## COMBERTON WI

We have had a number of interesting speakers. In June Fran Saltmarsh entertained with her talk 'Fig Leaves to Feather Boas'. She is always a lively and informative speaker. In July 'From Crowbar to Crocosmia' gave us an insight into the creating of a really exciting garden from a piece of really neglected ground. The use of the crowbar was very evident in his pictures of the work involved. A garden to visit soon, hopefully.

In September we were quite fascinated by the Mystery and Magic of Egyptian Hieroglyphs. Our speaker, Nicholas Da Costa, had actually spent years working out the translations for himself and gave us an introduction to this language system. He was a complete enthusiast about his subject and encouraged us to try to interpret the symbols. A talk with excellent colourful illustrations.

In August some of our group had a delightful visit to the garden of one of our members. A hot day, but we were greeted with a delicious non alcoholic fruit punch and an opportunity to relax and chat which set the tone of the whole afternoon. The visit ended with afternoon tea and a tour of the delightful garden.

**Wendy Timbs**

## MELBOURN WI

The human body is indeed a very complex structure., one thing goes wrong and it may send off a chain reaction. Dr Edward Coulstock gave a very in depth look into our immune system explaining how we make drugs, how our immune system works and the working of DNA. A DNA cell is like a spiral staircase and no two are alike. He showed graphs of how the systems work and how the laboratories have changes and are able to show changes in a much more detail It was a very detailed talk and went over some of our heads at times ...mine included!! Ed as he is referred to obviously loves and enjoys his work and has over the years worked and studied very hard to get to his present position of lecturer. He enjoyed mixing with the members and answering questions and especially enjoyed the refreshments.

October was certainly a 'Blue Peter sticky back tape' meeting at Melbourn. Members made the decorations for their tree at Meldreth Church Christmas Tree Festival. This year it was decided to have a heart theme to coincide with this year's resolution. This yearly event is very popular with a display of decorated trees donated and dressed by local organisations. The finished products looked very decorative indeed, also it was nice just to sit and talk generally while doing them

**Kath Thompson**

### **STETCHWORTH WI**

Amanda Sutherland is a very talented woman with an inspirational success story of a journey through fashion studies, costume design and then onto running a creative accessories empire. Amanda came to talk to us about the importance of identifying body shapes and choosing the best clothing styles to make the most of your appearance. At the end of Amanda's talk she had a variety of clothes, hats, scarves and her hand-made eco jewellery for members to buy at a WI discount.

Lindsey gave a very entertaining and funny account of her experiences as a selected member of the audience for 'Live at the London Palladium' with Bradley Walsh, and 'Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway'. On both occasions she ended up winning a holiday. Lindsey gave us a fascinating insight into the world of recruiting studio audiences and encouraged anyone interested to give it a shot. As she summed it up: You've got to be in it to win it!

**Sue Durrant**

### **HEYDON & GREAT CHISHILL WI**

Our members were pleased to welcome Martin Sykes, an author, computer, and AI expert. The title for the evening was "Did you know?" In short, the answer was 'no we didn't'. Martin took us through changes in technology from 1968 up to the present day. Martin is an excellent speaker and is very knowledgeable on his subject.

For our October meeting we got our dancing slippers on. The whole evening was spent smiling and happy. We hosted the Great Chishill Scottish country dancing group. The dancers demonstrated dances, walking them through before adding music. Members were then invited to either join or remain watching and clapping along with the music.

It was a really fun evening for all.

**Ann Crawford**

### **LANDBEACH WI**

Katie Lynn came to enlighten us about her work and techniques using glass. She brought with her a wide variety of glass objects that she had created. She spent her early years in Saffron Walden and then went to the Chelsea School of Art and studied mural design and photography. She has travelled extensively, trekking and hiking, meeting lots of people. She set up

her own studio in Essex called 'Molton Wonky'. We all enjoyed her talk and some of us purchased examples of her work.

Jeanette Moser was born on 25th December 1938. Her Jewish parents had escaped from Nazi Germany to South Africa in 1937. Jeanette told us that writing is a form of therapy, suggesting we write down our feelings and thoughts on paper somewhere, so that when we die our loved-ones can find them and understand more about us. Jeanette is one of the oldest speakers we have had. We were able to purchase one or two of her books and look at several of her photographs.

**Christine Ayres**

### **BALSHAM WI**

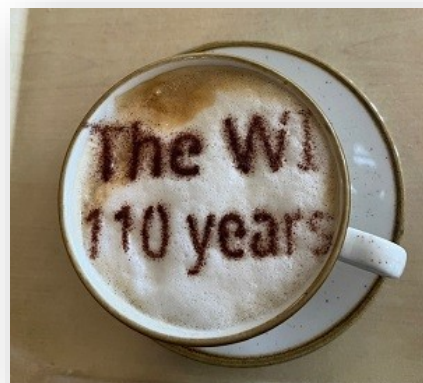
Our September meeting featured the 1990s which was a decade which saw much conflict in the world. During the 90s the WI was a founding member of the Fair Trade Foundation and celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1990.

The October meeting covered the Noughties, during which Balsham WI celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

**Debbie Mower**

### **THE CHESTERFORDS, ICKLETON & HINXTON WI**

Several of our members attended the WI birthday event at Audley End House on the 16<sup>th</sup> September. This was a most enjoyable day and we appreciated the work of the volunteers and the planning that had gone into the event, including the celebration cappuccinos!



At our September meeting, Dr Mimi Booth spoke to us about The Biology of Dentistry. This was a very interesting talk. Mimi used props and humour to make this quite complex topic engaging, we all learnt a lot!

We held our annual Craft Morning one Saturday in early autumn. This year we learnt the art of screen printing. We were pleased to welcome not only our members but other local WI groups, a local art group, friends and family as well as members of our village. It was a very successful morning; we practised first on paper and then onto a fabric bag.

**Jayne Greenwood**





### EARLY BIRDS WI

Our September meeting, we had a wonderful insight into the making of different types of cheese, given by our President Rachel. We had a cheese quiz and we learnt the technical word for a cheese lover is known as a Turophile!

At our October meeting, we had an insight into photography, a talk given by Kevin Pigney. Kevin took up photography about eight years ago. Through his interest his knowledge grew and was keen to learn all techniques of photography. With the knowledge Kevin has gained he has now turned it into an income. His photos mainly involve wild life. Kevin has now branched out in taking photos of people's pets. Kevin brought many large photos to see from his collection. The photos can be bought at talks, country fairs etc.

*Gillian Taylor*

### BARTON WI

Amanda Harrison, though dyslexic, managed to reach the educational standard needed to qualify as a First Officer on commercial jets. Inspired by Amy Johnson's 20 day flight from the UK to Australia, she decided to try to do that in a Tiger Moth. There were many highs and lows on her journey before she reached Beirut where she called a halt and had her aircraft ferried back to the UK. She had had two engine failures and the political situation on the next leg of her route looked increasingly ominous. Our members found Amanda's talk completely engrossing.

*Ann Killen*

### OVER WI

We enjoyed a delightful river cruise aboard *The Georgian*; a 30-metre river cruiser complete with an upper viewing deck and a charming restaurant below deck where we enjoyed a Prosecco afternoon cream tea. We were fortunate to have calm, mild weather, allowing us to spend time on the viewing deck. We spotted kingfishers, cormorants, herons, red kites, and admired the stunning riverside homes along the famous "Millionaires' Row."

*Rachel King*



### HARDWICK

We held a "Dabble Day" evening meeting recently where members were encouraged to try their hand at old and new skills. These included Sign Language, making felted poppies and folding paper Christmas trees – all of which were completed with great skill and enjoyment.

Over the past year, members of our WI and our villagers and other clubs have been madly knitting or

crocheting red poppies for our Village Sign. A group of us spent a cold afternoon attaching the poppies.

*Naomi Roy*

### MILTON WI.

1925-2025 We have had a very enjoyable year with very interesting speakers and lots of outings. The monthly lunches and coffee mornings continue with good attendance at both events. We also have social darts once a week. Yes we are 100 years old! The first meeting was held December 8th 1925 and the 100th meeting is December 9th 2025. Looking forward to a great celebration.

*Lorraine North*

### STAPLEFORD

An extremely enjoyable highlight was our Harvest Supper in September, which celebrated friendship, food and the changing seasons. Members enjoyed fish and chips, provided by a local business. The dessert was bread and butter pudding baked by members as entries for the Produce Cup, which was awarded to Diana Sage.

The previous month members were invited to submit a horticultural photograph for our competition. This was judged by our speaker, Kevin Pigney, a local professional photographer, and the Rose Plaque was presented to Ed Ridgeon. We can highly recommend this speaker who gave an illustrated talk about his photographic journey.

*Joyce Dobson*

### CHRISHALL

In September we welcomed Lindsey Crawley to our meeting to talk about Sports Therapy and Massage. She started her career with massaging her family and then learnt different methods of massage. She demonstrated her techniques on her volunteer. It was a very interesting talk.

In October, Jeff Miles, gave a very enjoyable talk about bee keeping. He brought along parts of an unoccupied beehive and a smoker to illustrate his talk. Taster jars of Jeff's honey were passed around and honey was available to buy. Again, a very enjoyable talk.

*Jane Gravett*

**Thank you for your reports this month.**

**Please can you send items for the February newsletter to [office@cfwi.co.uk](mailto:office@cfwi.co.uk) by Thursday 8 January 2026.**

### Answers to Christmas Quiz

- 1.Frightful
- 2.Meet me in St.Louis
- 3.Wham
- 4.Two
- 5.6 geese-a-laying
- 6.Elvis Presley
- 7.Jingle Bells
- 8.Frosty the Snowman
9. White Christmas
- 10.Eight

## Dates for your Diary

DATE	EVENT AND TIME	VENUE	CLOSING DATE
<b>DECEMBER</b>			
4	Thursford Christmas Spectacular	Thursford	CLOSED
15	Christmas Celebration with Brunch - 10am-1pm	Oakington Pavilion	4 December
<b>JANUARY</b>			
15	"The Red Shoes" Ballet	Sadler's Wells Theatre	CLOSED
20	Winter Warmer Lunch - 12.15pm	CFWI Office	6 January
26	Slow Cooker Demo - 10am-12.30pm	CFWI Office	12 January
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
17	<b>MAGPAS Talk</b> - 10.30am-12pm	CFWI Office	2 March
23	Jigsaw Challenge - 10am for 10.30am	Oakington Pavilion	2 February
<b>MARCH</b>			
6	<b>A Future for the Fens Talk</b> - 10.30am start	CFWI Office	13 February
7	<b>Speakers Showcase</b> - 10am-4pm	Oakington Pavilion	16 February
10	Japanese Rice Bags Day School	CFWI Office	TBC
17	<b>St Patrick's Day Coffee Morning</b> - 10.30am start	CFWI Office	2 March
20	Ceilidh - 7pm start	Whittlesford Village Hall	20 February
<b>APRIL</b>			
10	Fashion Show	Oakington Pavilion	TBC
15	Tour of Downing College Gardens - 10.30-12.30pm	Cambridge	16 March
22	Spring Lunch	TBC	TBC
27	CFWI Annual Meeting	TBC	TBC

**There will be no Craft, Coffee and Chat session during December.**

Events in bold are new on TicketSource this month. TBC stands for to be confirmed. Further information can be accessed from the events page on our website using the following link [view CFWI events](#) here.



### 200 Club Winner

November winner of £25.00 is

Anne Bullman - Landbeach WI



#### CFWI Helpline for December

Valerie Ridgman - 01223 207335

#### Safeguarding Officer

Lesley Challands - [cfwisafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:cfwisafeguarding@gmail.com)

#### Independent Financial Examiners Contact Numbers

Anne Bullman 01223 860692  
Ann Fletcher 01223 564716  
Val Neather 01763 244914  
Valerie Ridgman 01223 207335