

National Federation of Women's Institutes

A WI Guide to Raising Funds for Projects, Causes or Appeals



Introduction

In today's world, everyone is only too aware of the needs of our world—locally, nationally and internationally. Newspaper, television, postal and internet appeals bring disasters home to us all and touch our hearts. The immediate reaction tends to be “*what can I do?*” or “*what can my/the WI do?*”

This leaflet provides guidance on ways in which a WI can respond to appeals either for funds or for practical help. It reflects advice given by a firm of solicitors.

WIs and charitable status

Each WI is a charity, governed by the model constitution and rules for WIs. The assets of a WI, including any funds held by the WI, may only be used for the charitable objects set out in the constitution.

Under the constitution, the main purposes of the Women's Institute organisation are:

- (a) to advance the education of women and girls for the public benefit in all areas including (without limitation):
 - (i) local, national and international issues of political and social importance;
 - (ii) music, drama and other cultural subjects; and
 - (iii) all branches of agriculture, crafts, home economics, science, health and social welfare;
- (b) to promote sustainable development for the public benefit by:
 - (i) educating people in the preservation, conservation and protection of the environment and the prudent

- (ii) use of natural resources; and
 - (iii) promoting sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration;
- (c) to advance health for the public benefit; and
- (d) to advance citizenship for the public benefit by the promotion of civic responsibility and volunteering.

In Rule 3 “sustainable development” means development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The Women’s Institute organisation seeks to give women the opportunity of working together through the Women’s Institute organisation in their communities, of developing their capacity and skills, and of putting into practice those ideals for which the Women’s Institute organisation stands.

Every WI, Federation and the NFWI has the power to raise funds for and donate funds to causes/appeals that further these objects, and carry out activities furthering the charitable objects themselves.

What kind of projects/appeals fall within the objects?

The WI objects are flexible and do not restrict the WI to running and raising funds for its own programme of events. There are many types of projects, causes or appeals that fall within the WI objects. Examples include:

- Raising funds for bursaries or scholarships to study arts, crafts and sciences associated with both rural and urban life.
- Improving or otherwise supporting a village or community hall or other facility for the benefit of a local community.
- Raising funds for an events day where women are given the opportunity to carry out arts and craft activities, and attend talks and workshops on culture and citizenship.
- Providing facilities or equipment at a local hospital which will avoid the need for patients to make long journeys.

- Raising funds for and organising a home economics and health and safety summer school.
- Raising funds for an appeal to rebuild a local community centre that has been damaged by flooding.

These are examples of ways of advancing education or improving conditions of both rural and urban life. WIs may support these projects by raising funds or donating funds to them, or by carrying out activities to support or further such projects themselves.

Public Benefit

It is important to remember that in all projects, appeals or causes supported by a WI, they must *also* benefit as wide a section of the public as possible. WIs should not support projects or causes that only benefit one individual or unnecessarily prevent groups of people from benefiting.

What kinds of projects/appeals can WIs *not* support?

There are many projects, appeals or causes that WIs cannot support because they do not further their charitable objects, and supporting them would cause the local WI to not comply with the rule all charities must comply with (to only act in furtherance of their charitable objects). The types of projects/appeals WIs cannot support include:

- A project to create better facilities for animals or prevent cruelty to animals.
- A generic appeal to financially help refugees.
- Raising funds to help an individual rebuild her house which has been damaged.
- Raising funds to help an individual pay for hospital treatment.
- An appeal to help rehabilitate soldiers injured in action.
- An appeal to send parcels or provisions to soldiers abroad.

What if I am not sure if my WI can support a project or cause?

If you are still uncertain, you should contact the Central Secretariat Department at the NFWI who will be able to help you with your query.

Acting as an individual

There may be causes that WI members want to support but which are outside the scope of the objects. There is nothing to prevent a group of WI members, acting as individuals, from organising fundraising events for the purpose of providing funds, support or assistance. However, they must do so as individuals and not in the name of the WI. They should not use any WI or NFWI trade mark in relation to such projects, and there should be no costs to WI funds.

What information should I give members of the public if I am raising funds for a cause or project?

Legislation applying to charities requires any registered charity with a gross income in the preceding financial year of £5,000 or more to state that it is a registered charity on all notices, advertisements and other documents inviting contributions to the charity whether in cash or in kind, and also on all cheques, orders, invoices and receipts. Gross income includes subscriptions, interest from investments and proceeds from fundraising activities.

Can our WI use the NFWI trade marks in relation to the projects/causes we support?

Before using any NFWI trade marks, you should first consult our [Trade Mark Guidelines](#) which are available to download from the My WI.