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Dear WI Member,

On behalf of the NFWI Board of Trustees, it is with great sadness that we announce our proposal to close Denman permanently.

We appreciate this will be difficult news for you, as it is for the NFWI Trustees and our staff. Most of all, this is a difficult time for the dedicated and passionate Denman staff team who are at risk of redundancy.

For a number of years, Denman has been operating without unrestricted reserves and operating a cash-flow model reliant on future bookings. This has always made Denman vulnerable to any economic changes and particularly so during this period of complete lockdown.

Since the beginning of lockdown, the NFWI Board of Trustees have been carefully examining the financial position of Denman and considering all possible options. In March, Trustees voted to provide financial support for Denman up to 1 July 2020, with the majority of staff being furloughed to reduce on-going running costs and minimise Denman's losses during the lockdown period. However, as we approached 1 July, it became clear that Denman would be unable to open and operate its full range of services, and that participants and visitors were uncomfortable visiting, which meant the scheduled courses were no longer viable. As such, if Denman were to formally reopen, it would be making a financial loss for at least the following three months; and without reserves, Denman would have relied on significant subsidy from NFWI. NFWI has already provided a significant temporary loan to Denman to cover its costs until 1 July, and further subsidy would put the organisation under impossible financial pressure. Therefore, the Board of Trustees have been left with no choice but to propose the formal closure of Denman.

This has been an extremely difficult decision and has not been taken lightly. Members will know that successive NFWI boards have worked incredibly hard to preserve Denman and keep it open for members. Significant work has been undertaken over the last 18 months to address Denman's financial challenges and rebuild its reserves position, including the introduction of a new business plan in June 2019 which opened up the opportunity to develop non-educational activities on site as a way of increasing income. This has been incredibly positive and we saw a significant reduction in deficit in the last financial year. Denman has also been helped enormously by the money received from the Saving Denman Appeal and Love Denman, as well as other donations and legacies that we have received over the years. However, Denman's lack of unrestricted reserves and the cash-flow

position meant that the College was left in an incredibly vulnerable position when faced with a minimum 3 month closure during the lockdown period.

I want to take this opportunity to pass on my thanks to all of you for your support of Denman over the years, and also to thank you for the enthusiasm and support for Denman at Home over the last few months. We are absolutely delighted that this programme has proved so popular, and in the short term it is our intention to continue to deliver and grow this offer to ensure that members can continue to access the high quality Denman activities that we have always prided ourselves in. You can sign up to these courses via the Denman website here: www.denman.org.uk.

You will find FAQs attached, and these can also be found on My WI (where they will be added to over time). These should help to explain the background and process in more detail; however please bear in mind that we do not have the answers to everything at the moment, as we are still within the consultation period and we have not yet fully explored some of the complex legal and financial practicalities. If the proposal is taken forward following the staff consultations, we will also be hosting a series of Zoom Q+A calls for WI members in September, where you will have the opportunity to ask any questions about Denman. Whilst we know how upsetting this news is for many WI members, please hold any questions for these calls. The priority for the NFWI Trustees and staff is to support the Denman staff in this incredibly difficult and stressful time, so please allow us the time and space to do so sensitively.

All members with existing bookings will be contacted separately and will be refunded in full within 30 days of this announcement. You do not need to contact us to arrange this as you will be contacted directly by the team.

Please note, this is being shared with you in the strictest confidence and it is important that you do not share this news with anyone else until NFWI have made the announcement public (we intend to post on social media at **2pm on 22 July**). We are managing this process within formal legal frameworks and following employment law and Charity Commission requirements. It is vital we ensure our messaging (and the sequencing of communications) is completely consistent in line with this process, and does not expose the NFWI or individuals to risk. As we have stated, our utmost priority is to support our Denman staff at risk of redundancy and ensure the entire process is completely fair, and any communications not made directly by NFWI could seriously conflict with this. As such, any breaches of this information will be fully investigated by NFWI.

We know the news we have shared is difficult and we share this feeling of loss and sadness with you. However we ask again that you please hold any questions for a more appropriate time, and allow us to explore this proposal with our Denman staff as priority.

Best wishes,



Lynne Stubbings
NFWI Chair



Jeryl Stone
Denman Chair
NFWI Vice Chair