

Dear W.I. Secretaries,

There is nothing like blue skies and sunshine to lift our spirits but now that the weather has taken a turn for the worse our members may be feeling a little down hearted. Please try to inform our members that this update is available on our website as this could be the distraction needed to refocus the mind and let them know we are all in this together and we hope they are all staying safe.

**A change to issuing these Weekly Federation updates** Since Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April a weekly update has been emailed out to all WI Secretaries, to be forwarded out to all members, to ensure that we keep regular contact with every member and so we can share with everyone any news that we may have. Updates will continue to come out every Thursday but starting with this issue (30<sup>th</sup> April - Update No. 4) the updates will be posted onto NY West Federation's website, where members can directly access the information. Updates can also be downloaded for onward circulation if required. If any member has missed any of the Weekly updates, please contact your WI Secretary for a copy, or alternatively these can also be seen on the website.

**Federation Office Staffing** On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the Federation Office was closed, and staff began working from home. However, from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April, with much workload reducing, and in the interests of reducing costs and remaining financially sustainable for the future, our staff were furloughed on the government Job Retention Scheme. To maintain continuity and for the duration of lockdown, our office staff will remain on furlough, working one week in four, safe at home, until the government directs that normal working can resume. Any emails that are sent to the office will still be received and actioned at the first opportunity in the next work period which is w/c 18 May 2020

**Refunds Progress** We are working hard to process all of your refunds, for both WIs and individual Denman refunds, while also navigating the challenges of homeworking and the furloughing of our staff in line with the government restrictions. The first dispatch of refunds was made last week, and the others will be completed in the coming weeks, hopefully during w/c 18 May.

We are also aware of some postal delays in some areas, and would like to ask for your continued patience, and your trust and understanding that we are doing all that we can to ensure that your refunds will reach you as quickly as possible.

**Bulbs Orders** WI Bulb scheme Autumn catalogues were sent to WI Secretaries in February. Don't forget that May (meeting) is the last opportunity to complete orders as forms are due back to Alma House by 1<sup>st</sup> June with payment cheques made out to NYWFWI.

**Yorkshire 2020 Centenary Bags** As it was not possible to display and sell these as planned at Spring Council meeting, we now have a lot of bags left over. They are a lovely commemorative gift marking 100 Years of Yorkshire Federation and can still be purchased from Alma House. It would help Federation funds if each WI could purchase one bag, and WI Secretaries have order forms (including details of postage & packaging costs).

**WI Life Audio Service for visually impaired members** Kent Association for the Blind, who produce and send out the audio version of WI Life, has had to temporarily close its office due to Covid-19 and are unable to replicate studio/CD production facilities in a homeworking set up, and so the audio version of WI Life will not be available until further notice. WIs are asked to advise any of their members that they know receive the CD.

**Self-Isolation** Did you know if you are self-isolating because of a health issue but you did not get an NHS letter, that gives advice and help with shopping, or food ordering on-line etc., it is apparently ok to ask your GP to register you so that you can access this.

**Red Hearts** The website for the Helping Hearts Campaign is <https://www.hdft.nhs.uk/news/helping-hearts-campaign/>.

**VE Day 8<sup>th</sup> May** At the time of writing the information is that all celebrations are to be carried over to 2021. HM The Queen will address the nation on the original date. If any members are planning their own tributes during lockdown please email your stories and photos to [nywfw@btconnect.com](mailto:nywfw@btconnect.com) by the end of the month and we will share them on our website.