

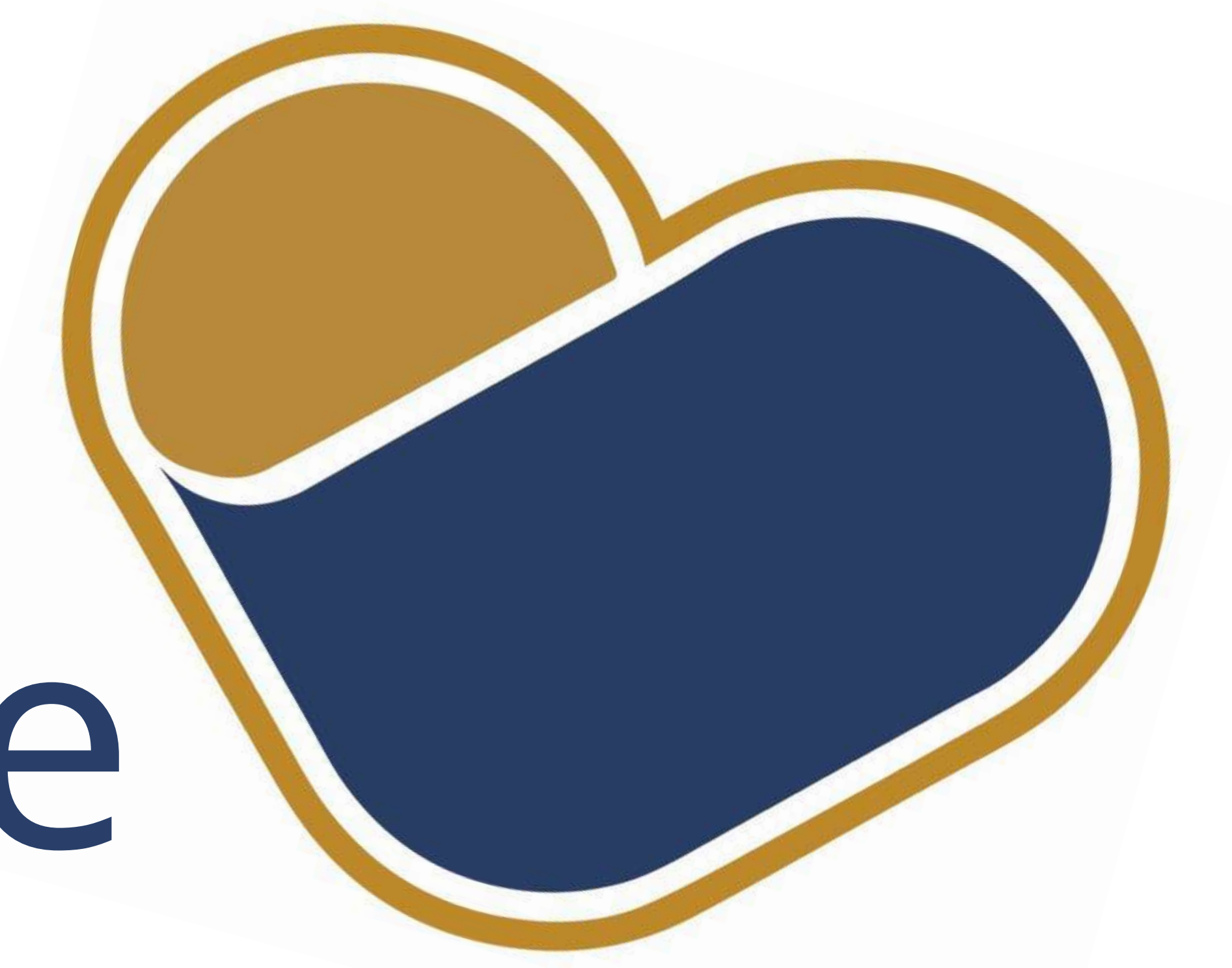


Scottish Women's Institutes

# Changing the future together

Strategic plan 2024-26 update

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## Introduction by National President, Mary Burney

### Who we are

Established in 1917, Scottish Women's Institutes is an inclusive and inspirational membership-based organisation, standing out among other women's organisations around the world.

### What we do

Our principal aims are set out in our constitution. They are to:

- **Build inclusive, diverse communities**
- **Advance education and skills**
- **Provide a platform for social activities and networking**
- **Promote the preservation and development of our cultural heritage**
- **Campaign and work with like-minded organisations at home and abroad**

Since we launched the **2022-2025 strategy**, we have delivered on many key strategic priorities which were endorsed by SWI members through a Scotland-wide membership consultation.

These priorities include reducing organisational costs, growing the membership through collaborate efforts, preserving our heritage, updating internal systems and processes and enhancing the governance structure. As we lead the SWI in the 21st century, our focus remains on modernising, investing in our heritage and providing member value.

The overarching goal of this updated strategy remains unchanged; we want to preserve the past and involve the present in shaping the future.

As we update the **Strategic Plan**, we are happy to acknowledge the pivotal role members have played in helping us achieve the following milestones:

- Increased membership by 3%, marking the first growth since the 1950s. This achievement stems from ongoing recruitment efforts in existing Institutes and the development of 17 new Institutes in previously underserved areas, enabling opportunities for women to connect, learn, and have fun.
- Successfully delivered a new-look 'Women in Scotland' SWI National Conference featuring a showcase of member exhibitions, activities and speakers. The event drew 300 members from across Scotland for the two-day conference.
- Through the triennial review process, appointed a new Board of Trustees with the skills and experience to strategically direct the SWI towards a period of growth, opportunity, and sustainability. In addition, committees were streamlined to better align with member events and lead the national events and competitions review, ensuring any changes made, are in members' interest and are financially viable.
- Engaged in numerous national skill-sharing workshops, hands-on sessions, and online events, championing the SWI motto of 'If you know a good thing, pass it on!' and ensuring it's always there for future generations.
- Strengthened interaction and communication with Federation office bearers across Scotland via annual gatherings and peer group meetings, enabling deeper engagement and collaboration.
- Staff secured two successful fundraising applications from the Rural and Island Communities Ideas into Action, each amounting to £5,000, supporting rural initiatives with members for the North Neighbours project and the New Rural Groups project. Additionally, we obtained £4,000 from the CEO's participation in the 2023 Heritage Trade Up program supported by Social Entrepreneurs Scotland.
- We initiated the curation of SWI heritage craft tems, collaborating with members to draw on their experience and knowledge, laying the foundation for the upcoming archiving process in preparation for the heritage project.





- With the approval of members from the membership consultation, we successfully sold the Heriot Row Headquarters, raising £1.6 million for future investment. The new office, tailored to our needs and staff size, is now leased under a 3-year contract, with a 2-year breakout clause for added flexibility.
- We've reduced operational costs by reviewing all expenditure, contracts, and resource-heavy systems and processes. Additionally, we've introduced cloud-based IT systems for staff, a new financial system and a new membership management system, all of which are secure and cost effective. Our members have been instrumental in providing us with this crucial membership information, ensuring the national body has the correct data for effective decision-making and reporting.
- We remain committed to demonstrating value for money by prioritising inclusivity and accessibility for all members across Scotland. This commitment is evidenced through initiatives such as free online events, e-magazines and e-newsletters, occasional member discounts, and ongoing support and training for both federations and individual members.

- Additionally, we have continued to provide Action Appeal support and Lifeline support to Federations in need.
- We've undergone a digital transformation by transitioning various member offerings, including events, competitions, communications to online platforms. As a result, there has been a notable increase in members directly receiving national news and communications. In addition, growing attendance of both members and non-members at online events is a shift which has been facilitated through extensive use of SWI media channels such as e-newsletters, online magazine, and social media.
- We have achieved success in the application to OSCR for transitioning the national SWI into a SCIO, which means we are a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation which significantly reduces the personal liability for the Board of Trustees. This milestone marks the initial phase of the process. The subsequent phase will involve implementing a new flexible constitution incorporating Federations and Institutes into the entity with minimal change to their current structure and activities. Furthermore, obtaining SCIO status positions us to explore significant funding opportunities for the organisation's future development.

Finally, after extensive external engagement, we have significantly made progress towards securing a home for the SWI Heritage and a collaborative effort in developing a long-term SWI Heritage project that chronicles the transformative journey of women's rural life from 1917 onwards, highlighting their activities, challenges, and resilience. Members play a vital role in the ongoing success of this project through their invaluable contributions via volunteering, active participation, and knowledge sharing.

**Mary Burney, SWI National President**

*Mary Burney*



Mary Burney, SWI National President





## 2024-26 Executive Summary

There has been significant progress in achieving key organisational goals outlined in the **2022-2025 Strategic Plan** over the past two years, however, there are still many goals ahead.

To ensure our future, we propose to:

1. **Maintain organisational growth and development**
2. **Prioritise members**
3. **Achieve financial sustainability**
4. **Protect and preserve SWI Heritage**

### The key to success

Continuing to progress and involve members who have the enthusiasm, skills, experience, and knowledge will enable us to create a sustainable future together.

## Strategy, planning and performance

### Vision

All women can find opportunities with the Scottish Women's Institutes, an internationally recognised and sustainable membership organisation which is ambitious, relevant, and inclusive.

### Mission

Scottish Women's Institutes continues to add to its rich history in Scotland's communities, promoting education and connecting women locally and nationally to improve their quality of life through friendship, education, sharing and having fun.

### Our aims

Advance organisational growth and development while prioritising member's needs, achieving financial sustainability, and safeguarding SWI heritage.

We work towards the following strategic priorities:

### Maintain organisational growth and development

- Consistently focus on expanding the organisation's membership and enhancing its capabilities

### Prioritise members

- Ensuring members' needs, interests, and contributions are valued and supported

### Achieve financial sustainability

- Ensure long-term financial stability and viability through sound financial management and develop new revenue streams

### Protect and Preserve SWI Heritage

- Through strategic efforts and membership participation, protect, preserve, and secure a home for the SWI heritage

### Our values

The values we hold dear describe how we want to work and what is important to us, we want to be Inclusive, Educational, Empowering, Cultural and Ambitious.

### Reporting on performance

Our strategy is delivered through a set of strategic objectives which form the core of our internal operational plans. We will review operational outcomes quarterly with the Executive team and Board of Trustees. Each year we will report annual progress and performance through the Annual Report and Accounts presented at AGM.





## Our four key priorities for the next three years

### 1

#### Maintain organisational growth and development

##### Objectives

- Implement benefits of SCIO status and new constitution
- Grow our membership and promote equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion
- Develop a communications strategy to improve SWI communications
- Work towards Healthy Working Lives accreditation
- Enhance the membership journey
- Develop a new SWI website
- Partner with university student placements and interns
- Make improvements to our environmental sustainability

### 2

#### Prioritise members

##### Objectives

- Engage members in shaping the future collaboratively
- Organise national competitions and events, or social gatherings for members across Scotland
- Establish and actively seek feedback from members through dedicated communication channels
- Improve attractiveness and relevance to potential members
- Implement a membership programme focused on recognition and appreciation
- Develop membership benefits, including discounts
- Provide support and guidance to members
- Evaluate member feedback to remain responsive to their interests and aspirations

### 3

#### Achieve financial sustainability

##### Objectives

- Build and develop income generation streams
- Improve financial transparency for members
- Maintain a review of operational costs and contracts
- Develop a fundraising strategy for SWI
- Manage realistic membership fee increments
- Manage financial risk
- Designate funds for development

### 4

#### Implement a successful SWI Heritage project with members

##### Objectives

- Develop a two-year Heritage project plan involving the archiving, oral history, SWI story and securing a home for SWI heritage
- Build a volunteer team to collaborate on the successful execution of the Heritage project
- Develop a comprehensive Heritage project communication plan emphasising the importance of member efforts for the preservation of Scotland's heritage and environment
- Engage, influence and partner with relevant partners to achieve objectives
- Manage capacity, and resourcing for Heritage project
- Continually communicate, consult, and involve members throughout the Heritage project



**Scottish Women's Institutes**

# Changing the future together



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