STROUD EVENING WI
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 13 | MARCH 2026



NEXT MEETING

Tuesday **10th March**

19:30-21:30

Doors open at 19:10

Refreshments Served following our meeting

STROUD VILLAGE HALL

Ramsdean Road

Petersfield (Stroud)

MARCH

Louise Moorish, local author of "Operation Moonlight" will tell us all about the Women of the SOE, please join us.

The Power of Autism Assistance Dogs – A Visit from Alison

At our February meeting we were delighted to welcome Alison, who gave a moving and insightful talk on *The Power of Autism Assistance Dogs*.

Although she did not bring any dogs with her, her presentation was rich with photographs, case studies, and personal stories that brought the work of the charity vividly to life. Alison explained how these highly trained dogs provide safety, confidence, and emotional grounding for autistic children, adults and their families, often transforming daily life in ways that feel nothing short of extraordinary. For more, see the great recap written by **Sue Bloor** In February's meeting minutes.

Members were deeply engaged throughout, and the discussion that followed showed just how strongly her message resonated.

In our vote for this year's charity beneficiaries, there was enormous support for directing part of our annual donations pot to this remarkable organisation, whose work clearly makes a profound difference.

It was an inspiring and uplifting evening, reminding us of the power of partnership between people, animals, and community.

2026 BENEFICIARIES

In February, we voted on which of our local nominated charities would benefit from our annual donations. We work extremely hard raising funds to help our local communities. The results are in:

Votes from Stroud Evening WI are:

1. **Home-Start Butser (14 votes)**
2. **Autism Assistance Dogs (12 votes)**
3. **The Hub "Free Shop" Petersfield (11 votes)**
4. Winton House (10 votes)
5. The King's Arms (10 votes)
6. Age Concern Petersfield (7 votes)
7. Petersfield Food Bank (4 votes)
8. Men's Shed Petersfield (2 votes)

We will discuss award levels at our next committee meeting and monthly meeting.

KEEPING OUR WI ALIVE – ACT NOW!

As we look ahead to the fantastic programme planned for 2026, we must also face an important reality: without new officers and committee members, our WI cannot continue.

Our WI is more than monthly meetings. It is friendship, creativity, community, and the shared joy of learning and doing together. If we want this to continue, now is the moment to act.

We are delighted that **Christine Hayward** has already stepped forward to take on the Treasurer role, and **Jenny Milner-Smith** has kindly offered support with presidential duties. Their commitment gives us hope — but we still need more hands to keep our WI thriving.

If you value what we've built, please consider getting involved. Our future depends on it.

WOOLVERS VIP EVENING

We are delighted to share that Woolovers Petersfield has invited our WI to a special **VIP Evening on Wednesday 18th March.** Naomi and her team are opening the store exclusively for us, offering a relaxed and friendly opportunity to browse their beautiful collections at our leisure.

Guests will be welcomed with a glass of bubbly (or a non-alcoholic alternative) and a selection of nibbles, creating a lovely atmosphere to chat, explore the rails, and enjoy the colours and textures of their natural-fibre knitwear. Naomi will also share the story behind Woolovers — its heritage, its commitment to quality, and the values that have shaped the brand.

It promises to be an informal and convivial gathering, celebrating craftsmanship, community, and a little spring indulgence (with a special 20% discount!). We hope many of you will join us for this warm and welcoming evening.

Book here:
https://petersfieldeveningwi.simplybook.it/v2/#

2026 SUBSCRIPTIONS

The membership subscription for 2026-27 is **£54.00**.

The distribution of the 2026-27 subscription is:

- Stroud Evening WI share: £27.10
- Federation share: £12.55
- NFWI share: £14.35.

Please keep in mind that the subscription year now runs from April 1 – March 30. ***Payments will be due from members 1-14th April 2026 via BACS or SumUp.***

Account: STROUD EVENING W I REG CHARITY
Account #: 97175503
Sort Code: 09 01 51

STANDING WITH GIANTS

A heartfelt thank you to all our members who so generously contributed their time and talent to our poppy-making project. The creativity and care that went into every knitted and crocheted poppy truly reflect the spirit of our WI. It has been wonderful to see baskets of bright red blooms steadily growing over the past few weeks.

We are especially grateful to our fellow Stroud Evening WI member, **Christine Hayward**, who also serves as the *Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Regional Manager for North Hampshire*. Christine has kindly delivered our latest collection of poppies to the project, where they will be used to support this year's remembrance efforts. Even better, she has offered to continue receiving poppies from us throughout the year in preparation for the November appeal.

To make ongoing contributions easy, we will keep a basket on the side table at each meeting where you can drop off any completed poppies. You are very welcome to use the pattern included in the February edition of this newsletter, or feel free to follow any knitted or crocheted design you prefer.

Thank you once again for helping us support such a meaningful cause. Your handiwork will make a real difference.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Mar

3 – Committee - 7⭐@ 1800

10 – "Women of the S.O.E." with author Louise Moorish

18 – VIP event at Woolovers, Petersfield @1730

19 – Orchestra Teas (afternoon only) - Festival Hall @1430

24 – Spring Council Meeting – Southampton

Apr

4 – GIANT charity Easter Market - Festival Hall @830-1500

7 – Committee - 7⭐@ 1800

14 – Growing Old Disgracefully with ex-vicar Jill Bentall

14 – April 2026/27 **Subs DUE**

29 – Queen Elizabeth II - Her Life in Style Trip 1000-1700

May

5 – Committee – 7⭐ @1800

12 – AGM and "The Balloon Man" and £200 Denman Bursary draw

June

2 – Committee - 7⭐ @1800

4 – NFWI AGM – Virtual Only

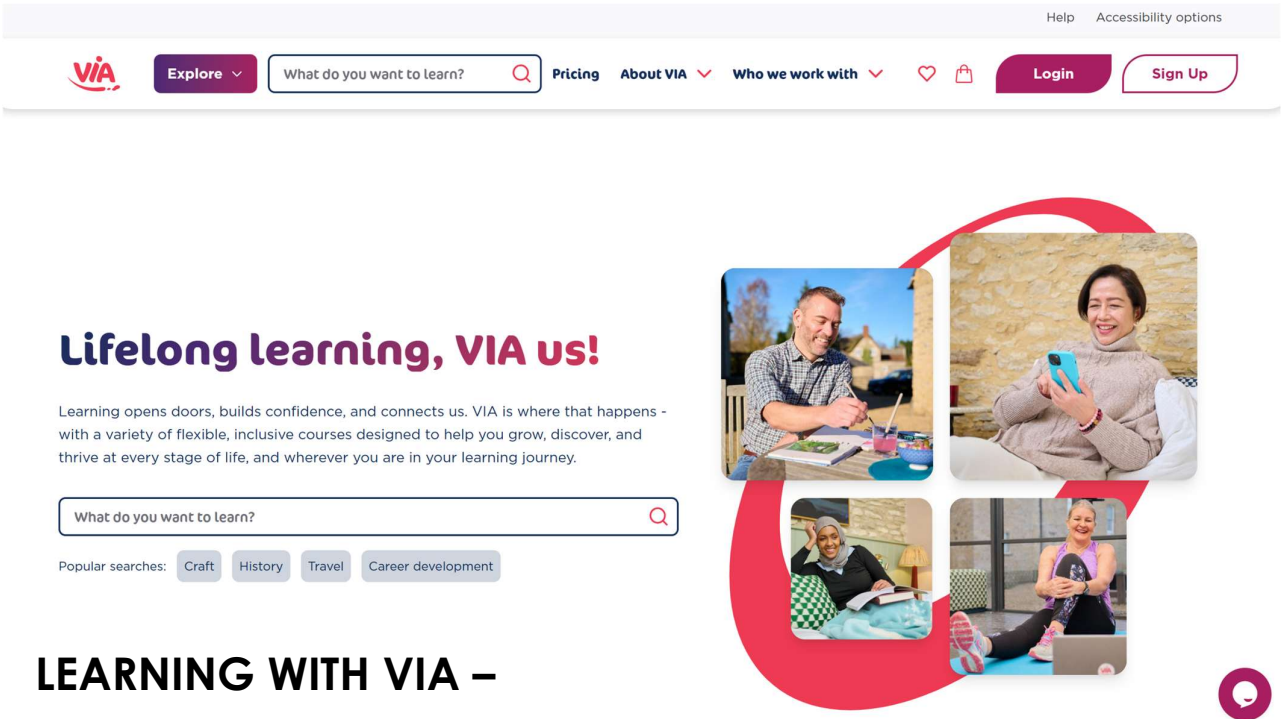
9 – "Something for Everyone" celebrity speaker Rowan Suart

18 – Orchestra Teas (afternoon only) - Festival Hall @1430

July

7 – Committee - 7⭐ @1800

14 – "Shanties and Sea Songs" OPEN MEETING, Blue & White theme!



LEARNING WITH VIA – OUR NEW WI LEARNING HUB

We are delighted to share that the brand-new *Learning with VIA* platform has officially launched, opening up a world of courses, workshops, and resources designed especially for WI members. Whether you're looking to build new skills, explore creative hobbies, or deepen your knowledge on a favourite topic, VIA brings everything together in one easy-to-use space.

You can access the hub directly at the Via Learning Hub, or simply visit the My WI homepage and scroll to the bottom, where you'll find a link labelled *VIA*. The platform is open to all members, offering a growing library of live sessions, on-demand learning, and expert-led content.

It's important to log in using the email address registered to your WI membership. This ensures you are recognised as a member and not charged for sessions that are free to WI users. If you're unsure which email address you originally registered with, don't worry — just contact stroudevesec@hampshirewi.org, and we will be happy to confirm it for you.

We hope you enjoy exploring this exciting new learning hub and all the opportunities it brings. It's a wonderful way to learn, connect, and be inspired.

This new platform is much more user friendly. What are you waiting for?

