



# National Assembly of Women

## Annual Report May 2019 – April 2020

*The National Assembly of Women was founded in 1952 to work for full social, economic, legal, political and cultural independence and equality for women irrespective of age, race, religion, philosophical belief, sexual orientation or nationality. These aims, of course, can only be fully achieved in a world at peace and to this end we campaign for an end to nuclear weapons and militarism.*

### National Assembly of Women Officers and Executive Committee 2019-20

**President:** Anita Wright

**Secretary:** Sandra Durkin

**Treasurer:** Carolyn Simpson

#### Executive Committee

Mollie Brown, Megan Dobney, Siobhan Endean, Bernadette Keaveney, Rose Keeping Liz Payne, Yvonne Washbourne.

#### Vice Presidents

Vera Baird QC, Rita Donaghy CBE, Pat Hawkes MBE, Alice Mahon, Gloria Mills CBE, Frances O'Grady and Anne Scargill.

#### Executive Committee Meetings

The EC has met 12 times (including 7 virtual meetings) since the last AGM.

#### SISTERS

Four editions of Sisters were published this year carrying reports of events and activities including the campaigns against hospital privatisation; charging pregnant migrant women; Sanctuary for Refugees; women in Iraq, Iran and Rojawa; health & safety for working women and articles from Claudia Webbe MP; TUC General Secretaries: Frances O'Grady, Savannah Taj, Rozanne Foyer and Patricia King. SISTERS can be viewed in colour at [www.sisters.org.uk](http://www.sisters.org.uk)

#### Website

The website covers NAW activity; progressive campaigns especially the People's Assembly against Austerity; various Labour movement demonstrations and events that members may wish to attend. NAW reports, submissions and documents are also posted on the website including those from the Women's International Democratic Federation.

Join up with other sisters on the NAW facebook group:



<https://www.facebook.com>

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#### Setting the scene

The National Assembly of Women Executive would like to thank our members for all that you have done over the past year and particularly what you are currently doing to support our communities through this difficult time of the pandemic.

The Government is clearly out of touch with the realities of life for women who have borne the brunt of austerity; already working long hours, and longer since their pensions were stolen, without job security, often in two or three jobs, juggling child care and elder care and relying on universal credit which provides little relief or support. The current Government has not published equality impact assessments on its measures to deal with COVID19 and the measures they have put in place, have failed women at every turn.

It is so important that the NAW uses the full force of our collective strength as the lock down is eased to ensure that no woman is left behind. We must demand quality childcare; a decent income through the provision of secure, stable jobs or a fair benefit system; access to education and training and well-funded public services including the NHS. The NAW has already been campaigning hard to address these issues. We responded to the Women and Equalities Select Committee inquiry on the impact of COVID19 on women and we are working to ensure that there is a lasting recognition in pay and equality at work, particularly for workers in those front-line sectors which have long been undervalued and underpaid.

Our Charter for Women has never been more important, or relevant, in setting out the changes that are needed to our economy, work, and political spheres to ensure that women have equality and quality of life. As women, we have always known who the essential workers are, and we are working hard to make sure that we get lasting justice and equality for all women.

**Anita Wright, President**

#### NAW Activity over the past year

**AGM Motions 2019** focussed on the climate emergency; child poverty; gambling; women's Health & Safety; Sudan; Iran and the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. NAW members, including EC members have been actively engaged in these campaigns. Reports and articles on these issues have regularly appeared in *SISTERS*.

#### NAW Conference Birmingham 26/27 October 2019

The annual weekend conference was an opportunity to relaunch The Charter for Women. Speakers included Prof. Mary Davis; Cllr Lia Eldret from Derby and Ruth Serwotka from Women's Place UK. The Charter and full report was carried in *SISTERS* and is on the NAW website.

## West London NAW Branch Report

As with everyone, our Branch members have been unable to meet together, in person, since mid-March this year. But, with lucky timing, we held our International Women's Day celebration lunch on March 8<sup>th</sup>. At our pre-meeting we had an update on the Mary Wollstonecraft activities, the NEU delegation to Nablus and the worsening situation in the Yemen – as reported by MSF. Dr Susan Shonfield then hosted the delicious lunch which added to our regular fund-raising.



During the year 2019 until March 2020 we held our regular bi-monthly meetings with a focus on speakers, discussion and campaigning. In May 2019, we had a report back from our 2 delegates at the NAW AGM 2019, which was held in London. Margaret Laird and Mary Stephens gave us full details and commented on the exemplary standard of speakers and discussion. Described as convincing, informative and rousing. Our thanks to National NAW – and also a donation!

In May 2019, we also had a report from Diana Mills on her work with the AMOS Trust. She told us about this grassroots human rights organisation and about her 6<sup>th</sup> visit to Palestine helping to rebuild houses on the West Bank. The Israeli government not only demolishes houses in the occupied territories, it forces the inhabitants to pay for the demolition. Diana illustrated her report with personal photos and heart-breaking stories, and this was followed by questions and discussion. See [www.amostrust.org](http://www.amostrust.org)

At all our meetings we share information received from progressive organisations; Global Justice, Medical Aid for Palestine, Medecins Sans Frontiere, Cuba Solidarity, CND and many others. We also have a bring and buy sale to raise money for urgent causes, particularly relating to families and children, as well as global issues we agree to prioritise.

In July, we had speakers from WASPI (Women Against State Pension Injustice). Debbie and Diane gave the history of the Pensions Act which now affects 3.8 million women. WASPI was set up in 2015 to campaign and increase awareness. As an example, Debbie and Diane have lost £100,000 between them. They talked of their silent masked protests at Westminster – with purple Umbrellas(+ slogans). See <https://www.waspi.co.uk>

In September, Susan Shonfield reported on the Mary Wollstonecraft Conference, celebrating the 260<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Mary published 'The Rights of Women' in 1794 and became a foremost human rights campaigner. A



campaign is underway to support an education programme. See [www.maryonthegreen.org](http://www.maryonthegreen.org)

In our November meeting we had a discussion about bias against the Labour Party in the media and about anti-Semitism. We also distributed material from Extinction Rebellion and hope to have a speaker from our local branch next year. Our fund-raising, under the guidance of our treasurer, Joan Danvers, has enabled us to send donations to support those working on the ground in desperate situations, including Palestine and the Yemen. Our regular support for Global Justice is to prioritise their campaigning against the Trade Treaty with the USA. Our information sharing, fundraising and donations continue in lockdown.

**Roz Carter. Branch Secretary.**

## Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Lecture 2019



The lecture took place on 10<sup>th</sup> August at Wortley Hall with a presentation on RED CLYDE - the Battle of George Square by Jennifer McCarey, Chair of Glasgow Trades Council.

## Conferences and Stalls

The National Assembly of Women had stalls at a number of local events including the South Yorkshire Festival, at Wortley Hall.

## Affiliations

NAW is affiliated to: Abortion Rights; Campaign Against the Arms Trade; CND; Cuba Solidarity Campaign; National Pensioners Convention; Palestine Solidarity Campaign; Women's International Democratic Federation and is a shareholder of Wortley Hall and the Morning Star.

## Membership

We have 37 affiliates, the majority being union branches and regions and 138 individual members. That is 37% and 15% increase respectively on last year.



| <b>NAW ACCOUNTS for 1/1/19 to 31/12/19</b> |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>General Fund</b>                        |                 |
| <b>INCOME</b>                              |                 |
| Carried over from 2018                     | 12802.82        |
| <b>INCOME</b>                              | <b>6538.05</b>  |
| Membership                                 | 3952.00         |
| Affiliations                               | 435.00          |
| Donations                                  | 280.00          |
| Seminar                                    | 1597.55         |
| Sales                                      | 273.55          |
| Bank transfer                              | 0               |
| Charter for Women                          | 0               |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b>                         | <b>3967.23</b>  |
| Bank Charges                               | 36.00           |
| EC Travel                                  | 613.55          |
| Post                                       | 472.88          |
| Stationery                                 | 303.39          |
| Printing                                   | 617.16          |
| Website                                    | 108.00          |
| Affiliations                               | 135.00          |
| Stalls                                     | 150.00          |
| Adverts                                    | 100.00          |
| Seminar                                    | 1431.25         |
| <b>Balance at bank</b>                     | <b>15373.64</b> |
| <b>Val Duncan Fund</b>                     |                 |
| Balance from 2018                          | 2927.25         |
| Expenditure on 2019 Seminar                | 1431.25         |
| <b>Balance at bank end 2019</b>            | <b>1496.00</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL c/f to 2020</b>                   | <b>16869.64</b> |

#### **Treasurer's Comment**

The Val Duncan fund was used to subsidise the costs of 2019 NAW weekend conference in line with the decision to use this money to support education and training.

#### **Auditor's Report**

I have audited the NAW 2019 accounts provided by the Treasurer, Carolyn Simpson and find them accurate and in order. **Brian Clarke Auditor**

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2020**

Nominations were requested by the closing date of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2020. The result is as follows:

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Eight nominations were received for seven places on the Executive Committee. One nominee declined so the following are elected unopposed:

**Megan Dobney  
Siobhan Endean  
Bernadette Keaveney  
Mollie Brown  
Liz Payne  
Yvonne Washbourne  
Anita Wright**

#### **OFFICERS**

One nomination was received for each of the officer posts so the nominees are elected unopposed as following:

**President – Rose Keeping  
Secretary – Sandra Durkin  
Treasurer – Carolyn Simpson**

The NAW Executive would particularly like to thank Anita Wright, who is standing down as President, but has accepted nomination to remain on the Executive Committee.