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Wimborne NWR dives into the virtual world during lockdown

Maryanne Pike, local organiser for the Wimborne National Women's Register, gives readers some insight into the organisation and how it is coping during the Covid-19 pandemic. She writes:

Yes, it was definitely the pill! It had been a lively discussion topic, 'The Most Influential Thing to Come out Of the Sixties', so many contenders: fashion, music, free love (possibly due to the aforementioned medical advance?) to name but a few. However, the new opportunity for women to control their own fertility was certainly the majority favourite.

It was also the decade that started NWR, the National Women's Register, formerly National Housewives Register, and it was the members of the Wimborne group of NWR that had been debating the topic as part of NWR's Sixtieth Jubilee this spring. All over the country members were celebrating the week when Maureen Nichols, the founding member, wrote a letter, with a brilliant suggestion, to a newspaper.

Maureen had been moving around the country with her young family following her husband's job moves. This was the era when greater mobility of the workforce

was becoming more usual. She thought how wonderful it would be to have a group of like-minded women, a register she called it, who would be readymade friends wherever you went.

The need for such an organisation was shown by the overwhelming response to her letter and NWR was born.

So there we were, 60 years later, and looking forward to our spring programme of discussions, visits, trips and talks, (not to forget the odd party). Then something shook the world and all our activities were put on hold.

It took a couple of weeks to come to terms with the situation and our disappointments. Then, like so many people and organisations, we decided we were not going to be beaten and we took a dive into the virtual world.

Our fortnightly meetings usually take place in each other's homes but now we meet in a virtual room and, instead of twice a month, it's twice a week. We have a weekly coffee morning (bring your own coffee), and a weekly evening get together (bring your own...whatever you fancy, most often it's in a glass).

Of course it's very different and there's

been a lot to learn, not least the etiquette of this new social contact. Many of us have also learnt that we are not as bad at technology as we thought. Each meeting has a topic, the discussion mentioned at the start of this article was at one of our evening meetings, sometimes we need to give it a bit of thought beforehand and, most importantly, it is giving everyone an opportunity to stay in touch.

We are very grateful to the National Organising Group too. They have stepped up to provide access for all members to the Digital Theatre resources and have organised webinars with interesting and entertaining speakers and quizzes for any members throughout the country that would like to take part. Their regular newsletters with useful links and ideas help us to feel less alone.

So, this remains a difficult and challenging time for us all but, being a member of NWR is helping to make it more bearable.

Membership of NWR is open to all women. Enquiries can be made by filling in the contact form on the website nwr.org.uk or emailing office@nwr.org.uk