

Women's Action Network Dorset | WAND

Strategy January 2022

WAND Mission Statement and Values

WAND Mission Statement

WAND is a network that unites women and enables them to collaborate over common issues through their collective strengths and actions striving to reach those most in need and reducing the gaps in inequality

So that we all rise together

We listen and we hear Women's stories . We learn from their experiences and we offer allyship to the issues that affect them.

We honour Women by sharing their stories, by shining spotlights on their issues and by including all of them in our conversations.

We create spaces for Women to rise: to heal if they need to, to grow if they want to and to connect in ways that benefit them.

We will do this together using our collective strengths and for the benefit of everyone.

WAND Values

1. STRENGTHS BASED

We base what we do on the premise that all women have strengths and that all women have the capacity to heal, grow, connect and contribute.

2. COLLABORATIVE

We work on the basis that our collective efforts can achieve greater results than any one of us working alone and that together we can tackle the 'big' issues that some women face.

3. INCLUSIVE

We include everyone in our conversations without prejudice. All stories deserve to be heard.

4. NEUTRAL

We do not offer opinion or align ourselves to political views other than when the safety of an individual or community is at risk.

5. SAFE

We protect the safety of everyone we work with above all else. No one will be harmed or victimised as a result of what we do.

6. FOCUSED

We prioritise our work to impact those people most in need of what we do . We use the evidence available to us to make these judgements and we are transparent about the decisions we make.

WAND Strategy 2022- 2027

Diversity and Difference Vs Commonalities and Connection

Women of Dorset are a diverse range of people. There are approximately 393,000 resident women and girls in the county.

These women vary hugely; there are more older women than young women and that number is rising. There is health inequality across the county and inequality of life expectancy is worse than the national picture. There is considerable wealth in some areas an extreme deprivation in others. There are groups of women experiencing unprecedented racism and others excluded or limited by disability or health conditions. Other women are experiencing a higher-than-average quality of life.

There is a growing community of women who identify as having LGBTQI+ characteristics and a higher-than-average number of young women with mental health difficulties and women experiencing substance misuse and self-harm. This is in contrast to other women thriving in certain areas of the county and a higher than average number of women offering therapeutic and health-related services privately to women with means to access them.

On average, the number of working women is falling whilst the number of workless households is growing. Yet in areas of affluence, female entrepreneurs are thriving and business networks are seeing rising numbers of women in leadership positions. The numbers of self-employed women in Dorset is higher than the national average. And yet the average wage in Dorset is lower and falling. The big employers in Dorset are in the areas of manufacturing, health, retail, education and hospitality making it more likely that there are more women in lower paid jobs than there are earning high salaries living in very specific areas of the county.

46% of Dorset Women live in rural communities and the rest in the urban conurbations of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Women living in the East of the county experience better access, therefore, to health services, transport networks and childcare opportunities.

There are women across Dorset at all ages and stages of womanhood ; adolescence, fertility, peri-natal, transition, health conditions, menopause, or navigating a huge range of female health conditions. There are women in and out of education, homeless women, traveller women, women who are carers or being cared-for themselves. There are women experiencing freedom and those who are trapped – whether physically or emotionally or whether through addictions or culture and society. There are working mums, community activists, isolated elders, faith leaders, night-shift workers, marathon runners, refugees, business owners, prison inmates, university lecturers, doctors and bus drivers.

In summary – the expression ‘women’ describes such a hugely diverse range of people that it raises the question of; What do all these people have in common?

Equally, it cannot be ignored that the word ‘woman’ is also no longer a binary definition and includes all people who identify as being female, feminine or identify with womanhood in its broadest and not-necessarily binary sense.

NB: Women’s Action Network Dorset | WAND embraces any person that identifies with the word Woman and the issues that relate to Women and all further reference to Women means and includes all these people.

Therefore, the WAND Strategy for 2022 focusses on the principles that underpin the commonalities of all these people and the connections they could make with one another for the greater good of everyone.

All Women have strengths.

All Women have internal resources to give, as well as to receive.

All Women have the capacity to heal, learn and grow.

All Women have something to contribute and at times have the need to receive support

WAND Priorities

We are living at a time of unprecedented opportunity for Women as we begin to depart from patriarchal constructs and a legacy of inequality for many. But there continue to be many issues that Women face that must be addressed in order that everyone can thrive.

Every year WAND will identify three specific groups of women with certain characteristics to be their areas of priority. They will select these groups based on evidence of particular needs either nationally or locally. As WAND carries out its work it will ensure that Women from these priority groups are given particular focus, attention, access of specific opportunity. WAND will also focus its fundraising activity for charities working with Women from these identified groups.

In 2022/23 these priority groups will be:

1. **Women from minority or marginalised backgrounds particularly those from racialised communities.**
"If you are from a minority in a county where there are few minorities, that makes you even more of a minority. Not many people really get that" Natalie Sherring CEO Dorset Race Equality Council April 2021
2. **Young Women experiencing difficulty with their mental health.**
"The number of young women repeatedly attempting to end their lives by suicide is at an alarming and tragic all time high" Public Health Dorset October 2021
3. **Women who have experienced gender-based violence, domestic violence, abuse or modern day slavery.**
"Many survivors of domestic abuse are unable to access specialist help or are delayed in doing so for a long time" Women's Aid Domestic Abuse report early Release January 2022

WAND Aims

The Aims of the WAND Strategy are divided into three clear pillars of work. LISTEN | HONOUR | RISE

1. We ask questions and we **Listen** to Women
 - a. We aim to understand the Women of Dorset and the issues they face
 - b. We aim to understand Dorset Women from different angles and perspectives
2. We **Honour** Women by sharing their stories, their strengths and their challenges.
 - a. We aim to amplify the voices and stories of women to ensure they are heard – to inspire others and to create opportunities for us all to learn
 - b. We aim to bring the issues of Women to the attention of decision makers, game changers and influencers.
 - c. We aim to be and inspire role models and leaders by honouring ourselves and prioritising our own wellbeing
3. We create opportunities for Women to **Rise**
 - a. We aim to curate events for Women to **CONNECT**
 - b. We aim to create networks and opportunities for Women to **GROW**
 - c. We aim to create networks and opportunities for Women to **HEAL**



2022 Principles

WAND is run entirely by volunteers. The Strategy will be underpinned by the following principles to ensure that all those involved can prioritise their own wellbeing and to ensure that we are transparent about what we do.

1. We will start at the rate at which we have capacity – and build as our numbers increase
2. We will be transparent about where we are and what we hope to achieve this year
3. We will communicate regularly with our growing numbers
4. We will start to build our partnerships and networks as and when we are able to do so
5. We will work hard to increase our income at the rate at which we are able

2022 Targets

1. Transition from a Voluntary Community Group to a Social Enterprise Organisation with a Board of Trustees and a legal framework for governance.
2. Increase our readership to 1000 people, our social media reach to 1,000 followers and our active volunteers to 30
3. Appointed key people to lead different areas of work
4. Have created the foundations of our 3 pillars and 5 areas of work – Listen | Honour | Rise (Connect) Rise (Grow) Rise (Heal)
5. Have raised sufficient funds to employ one paid member of staff to coordinate our work
6. Have established solid relationships with charities supporting women from our priority groups.

Resources

By the end of Spring 2022 WAND will have a clear Income Generation Plan. Most of the work of WAND is voluntary and relies on EXISTING resources within the county. Our networks of Growth and Healing offer resources 'in kind' to women who need them based on our values and our priority areas.

Other income will come from:

- Trading – a Business Plan will set out how we will generate income from trading including:
 - o Charges for events
 - o Selling of merchandise
 - o Training
- Grants – we will seek grants for specific projects
- Fundraising – we will undertake fundraising activities to raise funds not only for ourselves, but primarily for the charities who support women from our priority areas.