THE HARBOUR WI

56 members and 5 guests were welcomed by President Diane Beere to the September meeting of the Harbour WI. It was the first meeting after the summer break, so lots of chatting!

Diane went on to introduce Stephanie Gaunt, a member of Hastings Ore WI – and also an author! She had moved from Birmingham to Hastings and, needing a way of meeting people, joined her local WI. Within 18 months she was President, becoming a Trustee of the Federation and editing the East Sussex Federation News for about 5 years. During this time she entered a poem in the National Federation's annual competition for the Lady Denman Cup – and won! It was in 2015 which was the Centenary of the WI and held at the Royal Albert Hall with the late Queen Elizabeth II in attendance, so she was presented her cup by the Queen! This encouraged her to publish a book of poems on her 70th birthday.

In lockdown she joined a Book Club on Zoom. Not enjoying the books that they were reading, Stephanie thought she could do better – so she did! She wrote a whole book during lockdown. There was no socialising so it was easy to write; but it was difficult to get it published. She hawked it around about 12 publishers, took it to Hastings Book Festival and eventually it went to Amazon.

Stephanie told anyone who was thinking of writing a book to write what they knew about. Her books are about an imaginary village, the WI and poisoned knitting needles! She sold signed copies of her books 'Death is a Desirable Property' and 'Death Deceit and Cake' for a reduced price to members.

Jacquie Frost told members about various upcoming theatre trips that she is organising for the next few months.

The following dates were noted:

Craft Club	Monday 21st 28th September at Nicky's house.
Coffee Morning	Tuesday 22nd September in Seasons.
Knit and Natter	Wednesday 30th September at the Maris View Care Home.
Family History Club	Monday 28th September at Sue Howes house.
Book Club	Wednesday 7th October at the Maris View Care Home.

After tea, the President distributed birthday cards and thanked the tea ladies and raffle organisers, and the raffle was drawn. This was followed by a 'Getting to Know You' game devised by Nicky Clifford which led to some laughs and plenty more discussion!

The next meeting is on the 12th October at 2pm in the Sovereign Suite of the Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club. It is the 19th Birthday of the Harbour WI and Tony Flood will be giving a talk on 'My Life with the Stars – Sizzling Secrets'. There will also be refreshments and an 'Autumnal' dress code. Information on the Harbour WI can be found on our webpages on the SHRA website: www.shra.co.uk/wi