Women's Forum NI Report for 2021

A year like no other – what more can I say – meetings cancelled and events postponed – Women's Forum NI was no different from many other organisations due to Coronavirus!

With restrictions easing, June saw the first of our 'in person' meetings; although informal, Season's Restaurant Belfast provided the ideal venue for an excellent cup of coffee or tea and a delicious selection of scones and traybakes not forgetting the 'catch up'.

The first of our formal meetings was in October when Ms Helen Crickard, currently coordinator at 'Reclaim the Agenda' gave an inspirational presentation on issues affecting women. Disturbed by ongoing misogamy and outdated ideas about sexual harassment and consent, Helen wanted to change the public's attitude to the treatment of women. She said that many women felt they had to downplay their experiences of harassment. “Change needs to come from within communities”. Helen helped set up the Belfast based campaign group 'Raise Your Voice' project.

The second of our formal meetings was in November when 3 members - Kerry Whitehouse (Assistant Unit Commander), Stuart McChesney (Assistant Unit Commander Belfast) and Linda Picken (Assistant Unit Commander Antrim) gave some insight into the work of the **C**ommunity **R**escue **S**ervice. CRS is a charitable search and rescue organisation operated by volunteers from communities across Northern Ireland who provide the primary response on behalf of the police in searching for high risk missing persons across Northern Ireland in lowland areas. The dedicated volunteers are trained and accredited to national standards to enable each one deal with whatever eventuality he/she encounters.

December saw our final meeting of the year. As the year was drawing to an end, and events such as the biennial luncheon and Friendship Evening had to be deferred, it was felt that another informal meeting at Season's Restaurant for 'coffee and a catch up' wouldn't go amiss! This again was well supported.

Members attending the events enjoyed the opportunity to re-engage after many months of being unable to meet in person.

Hopefully 2022 will be a better year for everyone.