

**The Women's Council  
Chairman's Newsletter - February 2024**

Dear Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and that the year has begun on a positive note for each of you.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your unwavering support and dedication to our cause. Your contributions are invaluable and continue to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve.

It is with deep sorrow and a heavy heart that we shared the news of the passing of our beloved Honorary Patron, Baroness Shreela Flather. Her loss is deeply felt by all of us at The Women's Council, and indeed, the world has bid farewell to a truly remarkable and invaluable individual.



Baroness Flather was not only a dedicated supporter of our organization but also a beacon of inspiration and a tireless advocate for the causes she held dear. Her unwavering commitment to promoting inclusivity, equity, and empowerment has left an indelible mark on our hearts and in the communities we serve. In recognition of her extraordinary contributions, we prepared a Tribute to Baroness Flather which was shared with Members. Our heartfelt condolences are extended to her family.

We started off the year with the highly anticipated Community Initiative in Inclusion (CII) course at ADAPT in Mumbai. It was truly heartening to see 21 participants from a diverse range of countries, including Bhutan, Cambodia, India (Mumbai), Nagaland, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Tajikistan, Tibetan Government in Exile. I am delighted that this year we welcomed a participant from Kyrgyzstan, and a delegate from Kenya, coming together with a shared goal of promoting inclusivity and understanding.



CII 2024 Participants at the Mumbai Marathon



I am pleased to share that Honorary Training Advisor Rachel Tainsh visited Mumbai and conducted teaching sessions in Early Childhood Care and Development, as well as a Child and Family Centred Approach. Her expertise and guidance were invaluable, and her presence was deeply appreciated by all. Additionally, Rachel had the honour of attending the Inauguration Ceremony, where participants expressed their gratitude to The Women's Council members for their unwavering support.

The course in Mumbai will continue until April 2024, during which time the participants will learn vital skills in the field of disability and inclusion, including a session on the importance of oral healthcare which I will have the pleasure of delivering online. We are committed to keeping you updated on their progress and the impact of their initiatives as they return home to complete their Action Plans.

Following the success of the Pan Arab course in Community Based Inclusive Development held in Jordan last year, the positive impact and outcomes of this course have been truly inspiring. We are delighted to stay in touch with one of the participants from Jordan who continues to make difference to the lives of other people living with disability, despite her own visual impairment. We eagerly await news from Dr Alaa Sebeh at SETI and UN ESCWA for another course this year.



SETI participant from Jordan

Given the current circumstances, we understand the challenges of hosting an in-person course. However, we remain hopeful that an online alternative can be arranged to continue our mission and foster learning and collaboration, even in these unprecedented times.

Last year, we had the pleasure of celebrating a festive Christmas lunch at The Army and Navy Club, where we were treated to a delightful performance by the Wellington College Jazz Band under the direction of Mr. Heeley and Dr. Heathcote. We were also honoured to welcome our Honorary Patron for the House of Lords, Baroness Angela Browning.





Baroness Angela Browning with Celia, Rosina and Louisa



Wellington College Jazz Band

In November, we were delighted to be hosted by Patron for Nepal, Madam Sunita Acharya for a cultural afternoon at the Embassy of Nepal. It was a memorable event filled with delicious cuisine, national dance performances, and an inspirational speech by Guest Hari Budha Magar, the first double amputee below the knee to summit Mount Everest. We were also privileged to have Mira Rai, Nepal's renowned trail runner and sky runner, in attendance.



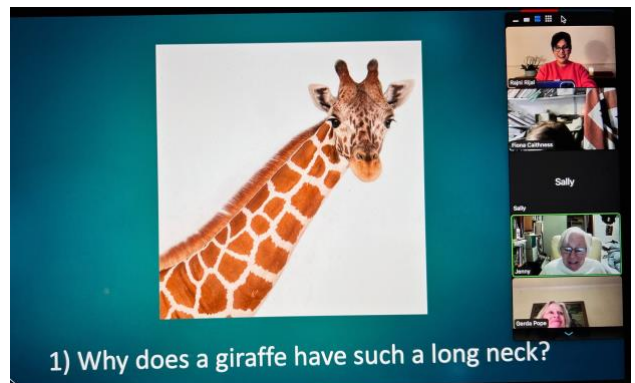
Madam Sunita Acharya, Patron for Nepal and DCM Roshan Khanal



Hari Budha Magar

Our events for 2024 have already begun with the ever-popular quiz on Zoom hosted by our enlightening Quizmaster Jenny. The theme this time was Fauna, and it was wonderful to see everyone sharing their own wildlife adventures. We were delighted to be joined by guests from the Victoria League.

Next up is the Leap Year Lunch organised by Lamees at the Mandarin Kitchen in Queensway on February 28th.



Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) is scheduled for Tuesday, 25th June. We are looking forward to be joined by Dr. Mithu Alur Founder and Chairman of ADAPT, along with Malini and past Community Initiative in Inclusion (CII) course participant, Atu. This will be an opportunity to share insightful discussions, reflections on past achievements, and exciting plans for the future. Please do let us know if you prefer to receive the AGM papers by email only rather than hard copies, ensuring your convenience in participating in this pivotal event.

We invite you to join TWC's Closed Facebook group or WhatsApp group to stay up-to-date with the latest news, events, and opportunities for involvement. For those interested in joining these platforms, please reach out to me at [chairman-twc@outlook.com](mailto:chairman-twc@outlook.com), and I will be more than happy to assist you.

As we embark on another year filled with exciting opportunities and meaningful initiatives, let us continue to work together towards our shared vision of a more inclusive and compassionate world.

Thank you once again for your continued dedication and support to our cause. I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to meet you at our upcoming events and initiatives.

Warm regards,

Dr Rajni Rijal  
Chairman, The Women's Council

**Save The Dates:**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June – AGM.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 – Joint Commonwealth Organisation Annual Event

Please email TWC on [events-twc@outlook.com](mailto:events-twc@outlook.com) if you prefer to receive Notice of the AGM by email only.

**Please visit our updated website at: <https://www.womenscouncil.org.uk/>  
for further information**