

## SIGBI President's January 2017 Blog

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you all enjoyed the festive season and are looking forward to whatever 2017 brings to you personally as well as from your membership of Soroptimist International of Great Britain & Ireland.

It is only a few weeks since I wrote my first blog on our return from the Malta Conference. Much of my time since then, and before the Christmas festivities started and my family time took priority, was taken up by emails and teleconferences from both a Federation and Soroptimist International perspective.

I also attended a meeting in Stockport with Andrew Dewhurst of Affilius Ltd to discuss elements of our Growth plan work particularly the roll out of the Club Growth Plan across the Federation. The feedback from the pilot Clubs was very positive with 100% stating that the workshops were beneficial and 94% saying that the workshops had enabled them to implement a strategy for Club member recruitment. Thank you to the Clubs who took part – without your commitment the Board would have found it much harder to make the decision at its meeting in November to roll out the content of the workshops across Federation. We are currently working out the logistics of how it will work so will be in touch again as soon as this is decided.

Whilst my only visit since conference has been to Soroptimist International of Yorkshire, it is clear from social media that many of you have been busy with project activities particularly to mark the 16 days of activism to end Violence against women. I was pleased that my own Club SI Cwmbran took part by dressing in orange at a Club meeting (*pictured below*), and I know that many of you did something similar.





*SI Northern Ireland & the White Ribbon Campaign*

I congratulate you all on observing this event in the UN diary – it is important that we show solidarity with women and girls across the world. There are too examples to mention individually, but I do want to congratulate Soroptimist International Northern Ireland who implemented a successful and varied campaign during the 16 days to highlight the work of the white ribbon campaign to put a stop to male violence against women and girls. Not only was this great project work but it also raised the profile of Soroptimist International in Northern Ireland across several mediums and in different environments, and they demonstrated team work in creating their campaign which is great to see on the back of my speech at conference and my theme – **Step Up, Lead the Way**.

I also said that to help more women and girls and secure the future of our organisation we need to have good project work that meets the needs of all members, good publicity and awareness in the general public of who we are and what we do, and good membership recruitment and retention behaviours that allows everyone to feel involved and part of the Soroptimist family. Soroptimist International of Northern Ireland certainly achieved the first two, and I hope that their campaign will bring them new members who want to join them in their project work.

Please look at the white ribbon campaign online at <http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk> for more information. But more importantly join me at the Cardiff Conference in October when Michael Kaufman co-founder of the white ribbon campaign will be a key note speaker.

Yours in friendship

Ann Hodgson