

SIGBI President's April 2019 Blog

Dear Friends,

As I write the spring flowers are in abundance, leaves are bursting forth and nights are getting lighter. I recognise that this is not the case in all parts of our Federation and our thoughts are firmly focused on members in Zimbabwe and Cameroon who face difficult economic challenges at present. We wish them well and hope that they feel supported by the 7000+ members across our Federation as we hold them in our thoughts.

As I have had the privilege of travelling around our Federation visiting Clubs, attending events such as SI Midland Arden's public speaking competition and joining charter celebrations for SI Aberdeen, Stafford and Leicester, for example, I have been struck by the positivity in which members are receiving the suggested changes your Federation Management Board (FMB) will be proposing. Members, both from the Board and volunteer members, are working very hard to ensure that we fulfil our ambitious strategic plan priorities. A strategic group is monitoring progress towards our targets and you can read how these are progressing in the [minutes of the Go To Meeting held 7 March 2019](#).



A task that has fallen out of our strategic monitoring group is the need for a Strategic communications plan, a draft of which will be shared with Past Federation Presidents and Regional Presidents for comment and further ideas to begin to ensure that we are no longer the worlds best kept secret! I know that President Elect Isobel Smith is committed to working to that goal too! We will share the

strategic Communications plan with every member once it is agreed by your FMB. I would welcome your comments at that stage.

This year, as members, we have some significant decisions to make. Resolutions have been drafted and will be discussed by your Board in April before coming to Clubs for discussion. Please do read and debate the ideas behind the resolutions. We are proposing significant changes to our Board structure to make it more effective.



We want to ensure that every Soroptimist who has the skills, and knowledge to support our organisation has the chance to joining a working party, standing committee or indeed the Board rather than join through a 'time served' route as is the case today. In proposing a new structure to the Board, we are also suggesting that the Federation President stands for two years, with a very different role to meet our objective of getting our name known externally. It is likely at our Bournemouth conference that standing orders at the GM will be suspended to provide an opportunity for a detailed presentation around the new Board structure to take place. This is such an important decision for us all that we consider this unusual step to be warranted. The decision will then be yours as to our future direction!

Not only will we be guiding our Board as to the direction it takes next on our behalf but we also have the opportunity to decide via a ballot who will be the next Soroptimist international President from our Federation. All members who attend our conference in Bournemouth will hear the candidates answer questions submitted by Clubs in advance. Those not attending conference will be able to view video presentations by the candidates before the ballot.

By now you will have received the first of our new fortnightly extended news briefings. I hope you like the new format and that they provide you with sufficient information to keep you informed about what is happening in all aspects of our organisation.

Our new Soroptimist News is going to be online in May. Sally Higgins has been working very hard to refresh its look and to ensure the focus is on our project work. We want to ensure that our new online presence really does provide us with an opportunity to get our work more widely recognised so we encourage you to share this publication as widely as possible with your partners, networks, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Please do continue to share your projects and stories with Sally at sally@sigbi.org.

I appreciate that this is a lot to consider and I know that there will be strong feelings and opinions on our Boards proposals. Please do send any comments to hq@sigbi.org or directly to me at president@sigbi.org. I look forward to hearing from you and to continuing to work with you to ensure that our wonderful organisation becomes a household name.

In Friendship

Sue Williams

SIGBI President 2018-2019