

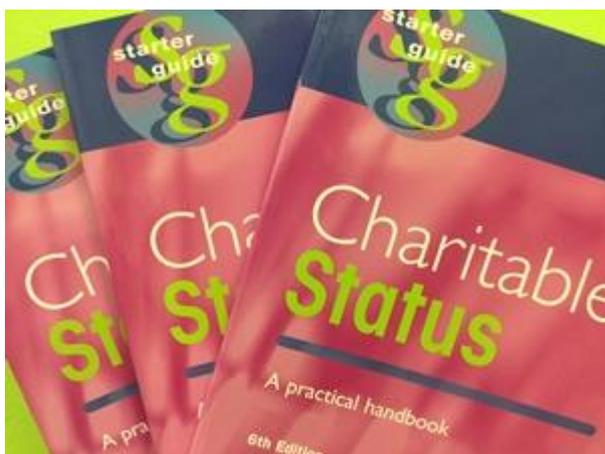
SIGBI President's January 2019 Blog



Think on It!

Can it really be 2019 already, where do the months and years fly? A new year means a new, well not so new now, President and new members to your Federation Management Board. This year we welcomed 5 new members and together with the existing members we have been beavering away to put into practice the promises we have made to you through our strategic plan in Liverpool. [See our website should you wish to review the plan in detail](#). Our Federation Directors and Councillors will be sharing the plan with you when they visit as part of the 'rota of visits' but if you are interested the PowerPoint is available for you to view and use in your club meetings.

What is vital this year is that we continue to position ourselves positively to meet the challenges of being a charity. That is why we have been reviewing all of our policies and why we have been considering how we restructure our Board to ensure that we attract the best people to lead our organisation into the future, a skill based slimmed down Board in other words! We will have 9 new Board members, each selected for the skills they can bring to the running of our organisation. They will no longer have had to 'come through the ranks' holding office but will be women who have the skills, knowledge and time to make a difference to our organisation. Making it fit for the next 100 years. We will send you more information as this unfolds via the mailings and on the website and there will be frequently asked questions available to help answer any questions you might have. In the meantime, if you would like to contact me with any queries please do so – president@sigbi.org or alternatively please let me know if you would like to take part in an electronic meeting to ask any questions or to suggest any ideas for the way forward.



We also intend to apply for charitable status in Scotland and in the fullness of time Northern Ireland. Many clubs have asked if they are now a charity because SIGBI is, and can they use the charity number on correspondence and to apply for grants. The answer to these questions is no. However, to help clubs we will be providing guidance as to how clubs can, if they wish, apply to become charities in their own right, so do look out for this.

A new Board like a new year means change. With Club's approval at Bournemouth our new board will still consist of our President but she

will not lead the Board, although she will be a voting member. Her job will be to promote our organisation by visiting Clubs and speaking to members but also by attending focused external events that promote us as an organisation with important messages to deliver about women and children's issues (based around SDG 1,3,4,5,6,and 8). Instead, the Board will be led by a chair who will provide continuity over more than one year of tenure.

Even though we are proposing that we will have fewer Directors on the new style Board doesn't mean that there will be less work to do! The new Directors will have bigger portfolios of work. They

will need lots of help to carry out the tasks outlined in the strategic plan and in their work plans. We are trialing the use of working parties this year to fulfil our plans to develop communication. Each of these working parties are working to tight terms of reference and time scales. The working parties are made up of Directors, past Federation Presidents Councillors and members. We see this as the way to go, utilising all the skills we have available in our organisation rather than narrowing down the expertise to a few members who happen also to be Directors! In moving forward, it is hoped that we will learn from this trial and empower members to offer their skills to help to take our organisation into the future. We will advertise in the mailings when we are looking for members to join us on working parties. If you have the skills and are interested please do come forward to help.

It is sometimes difficult to keep the national and international picture of Soroptimism in our minds as we attend Club meetings and are involved in local projects. However, every piece of service or volunteering we do – whether it is for the women’s local refuge, for girls’ education in our schools, for raising awareness of mental health issues through the theme ‘Think on it’ or in conjunction with other organisations, makes a difference. It makes a difference to women and girls certainly, that is our goal but it also makes a difference and adds up to our continuing credibility to our role nationally and internationally, with governments and the United Nations. That is why I am really proud of the women who give their time and commitment, both financially and through their efforts, to attend the Convention on the Status of Women each year. This year, as in the past, we have a strong team representing SIGBI. We wish them well in their endeavours to highlight the issues facing women and girls today and look forward to hearing about their achievements later in the year.

Finally, thank you for the members who have taken the theme ‘think on it’ to heart and have raised the issue of mental well-being amongst members and the general public. There will be an article in the next edition of the Soroptimist News to inspire you to act. Please do send in articles and pictures for the May edition. There are also new tools on the website to support you in your plans. If your Club has not done anything yet, there is still time to plan something into your calendar from April as your Club President changes. Why not, as they have done in Yorkshire, join together other Clubs to promote the theme.

We plan to highlight World Mental Health Day in May as one of two focus events in support of the theme, which is “Body Image – how we see ourselves and how that makes us feel”. **Green** is the colour identified to highlight the issue of mental health. Wouldn’t it be great if every member could wear something green at their Club meetings in May, what a montage of photographs that would make! I am looking forward to seeing how inventive my sister Soroptimists can be across our Federation in sporting green in the environment in which we live and highlighting it via photographs on social media to highlight World Mental health day. So, get your thinking caps on and come up with some great ideas!

In Friendship,
Sue Williams