

## President Barbara's Briefing



Thank you all for your support during the three months of my Presidency of SI Cirencester. It has certainly been busy as well as varied, enjoyable and, at times, challenging.

There have been several opportunities to meet the people of Cirencester and to raise our profile at Hunters Care Home Open Evening, World Peace Day, Anti-Slavery Day and the Combined Charities Christmas Fayre.

It was good to celebrate the completion of the Lego Abbey and to recognise our Club's contribution of over 300 enjoyable hours of stewardship during this successful six month Community Project. Even greater celebrations were enjoyed at the Annual Literacy Awards evening at the RAU. I am particularly pleased to have been President for this happy and rewarding occasion for the Club.

Of course a major event in October was the SIGBI (Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland) Federation Conference in Cardiff, attended by 12 members of SI Cirencester. Both Elizabeth and I were first time Conference attendees and were asked by Daphne Dowsing, SW Regional President, to give feedback of our impressions at the following Regional

Meeting. We did a double act to give our impressions "warts and all". The National Conference is an event I would recommend as a way of seeing the bigger picture of Soroptimism worldwide as there are impressive projects and events to hear about and excellent inspirational speakers. Next year's conference will be held in Liverpool and I hope to be there with many of our Club members.

We were sad to say 'Goodbye' to our dear Member and friend Pat before she jetted off to live in Australia but we gave her a very jolly send-off and are already looking forward to seeing her here again in May by which time we expect that she will have begun a Soroptimist Club in her area!

From the events reported in this issue of Signal it is clear that we have a vibrant club with many activities to join in with and I hope that all our members can continue to support the working of the club using our various talents and energies in 2018. I know that Jackie will lead us into the New Year with her usual energy and enthusiasm.

Have a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Yours in friendship

**Barbara**

## The Literacy Awards 2017



Cirencester Soroptimists were delighted to welcome children from 11 local primary schools to their Annual Literacy Competition Awards Evening on 17th November 2017 at the Royal Agricultural University. The children, with their families and teachers, were welcomed by Barbara Banks, President of SI Cirencester and District and enjoyed an entertaining reading and song by the children's author John Dougherty. Awards were presented by John Dougherty and Councillor Nigel Robbins, Mayor of Cirencester after which refreshments were served and books were signed.

The Literacy Competition was established by the Club seven years ago in pursuit of its objective to "Educate, Empower and Enable" women and children worldwide. All primary schools in the Cirencester District are welcome to enter as many children as they wish in age categories from Year 1-6. It has grown in popularity each year and this year attracted over 1,000 entries, all of which were read and assessed by four club members with final adjudication by an experienced English teacher. The standards of handwriting and illustration were high and each story was full of imagination and exciting ideas.



## Projects and Awareness Raising



### Lego Build



Members of Cirencester Soroptimist Club have enjoyed acting as stewards for the building, using 70,000 Lego Bricks of model of the Lego Abbey model, now completed. Friday mornings, from April to October, have been a stimulating combination of meeting, greeting and informing members of our local community of all ages, as well as visitors from many parts of the U.K. and the world, whilst following the building instructions for the Abbey to keep it growing. 12 club members have been delighted to give a total of 300 hours of their time to the Project and have made many new friends during these past six months.



At the start of the Abbey 900 celebration year Cirencester Soroptimists provided some of the sponsorship to enable rare and beautiful Medieval Manuscripts to be returned to Cirencester, where they were originally written at the Abbey, and to be displayed in the Corinium Museum.

It has been a privilege for [SI Cirencester](http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk) to support the 'Abbey 900' Festival, an outstanding Community Project.

<http://abbey900ciren.org.uk>

Barbara

## Young Carers Project

It had been agreed, as one of the results of the Club's research last year, that contact would be made with Gloucestershire Young Carers to discuss areas where support was needed and members could potentially help. Project lead Kathy and Club member Joanna initially visited the Young Carer's Head office in Twigworth. Gloucestershire Young Carers (<http://www.glosyoungcarers.org.uk>). The staff were very enthusiastic and welcomed the Club's offer to help in specific areas that will be of benefit in raising opportunities for young girls especially. The average age of a young Carer in Gloucestershire is 12yrs. Subsequently a number of members attended a very informative meeting with Jane from Young Carers. They were taken through a Power Point Presentation that informed them about stark details pertaining to Young Carers.

It was agreed that the first area help was needed was to visit GP Surgeries in the Cotswolds to see how much information and support was available, through GPs, for Young Carers. Are there referrals from GPs to 'Gloucestershire Young Carers' provide support for Young Carers? How many GPs are aware of children accompanying an adult to the surgery are actually young carers and what needs they themselves may have? Post meeting the Club were advised that, in the year 01/10/2016 to 30/09/2017, there was only one referral by a GP surgery in Gloucestershire! There are 16 surgeries in the Cotswolds which need visiting and Club members are volunteering to undertake these visits.

Each volunteer member is to be provided with introductory letter from Young Carers to take to Surgeries and they will also complete the Volunteer form and the Data Protection forms are being finalised. It is anticipated that this Project will be launched at the January Business meeting

In addition, the operational key worker for the Cirencester area is also looking forward to discussing the possibility of some Soroptimists mentoring teenage girls who need empowering support. A Trustee from Gloucestershire Young Carers and also an NHS lead who are both interested in the proposed Project will be introduced to the Soroptimists.

If anyone is interested in learning more about this Project, including Members of other Soroptimist Clubs, please contact, in the first place, Publicity Chairman, Barbara Banks in confidence: [Barbara@banks31.myzen.co.uk](mailto:Barbara@banks31.myzen.co.uk)

Kathy



## Development of Group(s) for Companionship/Meeting up now renamed 'Loneliness'

The Project Group has been provided with details re the local Churn Project's activities and CDC (Cotswold District Council) Research and other clubs and activities that have been identified within Cirencester and surrounding areas. The group is questioning the following:

- Are there enough groups locally? Is there a need to form another? It was felt that the Cirencester area had groups to cater for the over 65s, but maybe not for other age groups (young mothers, singles, bereaved, separated, etc.). The Churn Project is under threat through withdrawal of funding. Probably the role of the Club is to support and publicise existing groups or encourage the filling of gaps by others better qualified.
- Before progressing, what further information is needed?

To help looking into the above the members of the Project Group plan to look into the following:

1. 'Campaign to end loneliness' have produced a video and a TedX talk on their website [www.campaigntoendloneliness.org](http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org). This website will be researched further and see what this campaign can offer.
2. *Community facilities*. The Community Hall funded by 106 money at Watermoor School is underused by the new developments. Is transport an issue?
3. C.D.C. Report 2014. What has happened since this was published? An update is being sought and It may be that the Club can support what others are doing.
4. How can we build on others' success? Members will be talking to individuals and the leads of other established community projects to establish what makes them successful.
5. What signposting do other organisations do? Are there already sufficient suitable leaflets/newsletter available? The CAB and CCSC will be asked if they offer advice to clients presenting with depression, loneliness and what this is.
6. GP Surgeries – a part to play as lonely people tend to visit their GPs more often, another area to be followed up on.

If any readers have anything they would like to offer on this subject please, in the first instance, Publicity Chairman, Barbara Banks in confidence: [Barbara@banks31.myzen.co.uk](mailto:Barbara@banks31.myzen.co.uk)

Maggie

### Sanitary Products for Girls in Schools

Action was agreed after an article that: *'Freedom4Girls was contacted by a school in Leeds after it became concerned about teenage girls' attendance. The group provides sanitary products to women in Kenya – but is now doing the same in West Yorkshire.'* Club Members that visit and help in schools are presently, and sensitively, asking if this is an issue in our area. Depending on the outcome further action/awareness raising may be required.

To date, Primary Schools visited are handling this situation very well and some are including boys on talks on this subject. There are still some responses awaited from the Secondary Schools and the views of those running the Food Bank are also being sought re the level of request being received for sanitary products.

**NB** if you are reading this or are concerned about this issue please contact the Publicity Chairman, Barbara Banks in confidence: [Barbara@banks31.myzen.co.uk](mailto:Barbara@banks31.myzen.co.uk)

### UN/SI Days and related issues

The Club held Awareness activities on 'World Peace Day' (21 September) and, although not technically an UN Day, Anti-Slavery Day (18<sup>th</sup> October). Members also supported SI Poole at a *Purple Teardrop Event* on Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Awareness event on 5<sup>th</sup> October, which was attended by 1,300 delegates and also the *Railing Against Abuse* event organised by SI Weston-Super-Mare and SI Bristol on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November. Both events included talks by inspiring Speakers. The final message common to both these events was 'Do Something', however small, to change attitudes and to raise awareness that victims need to be believed.



We are also aware, as a Club that, whilst supporting Refuges whenever we have been able that more are being closed through lack of funding, yet the need appears to be rising

**Shirley and Barbara**

## Fund Raising

Our congratulations must go to our Fund raising coordinator Anne Croft and her team for the following:



Our **Charity event in the Corn Hall (13<sup>th</sup> November)** very successful £444 to be added to other monies to be distributed to local Charities Christmas. The knitted Christmas Puddings and Father Christmas hats, Ferraro chocolate, proved to be very successful.



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We held a Christmas Stall in the Parish Church on Saturday 9th December to raise funds for our Friendship Weekend 2018. We would like thank everyone who gave items to sell or knitted the very popular Christmas Puddings and Father Christmas Hats. At this point we have to thank and make a very special mention of member Jennie Beadle who knitted over 800! Amazing achievement

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December a successful and enjoyable **Mulled wine and Coffee morning** was held at the home of one of our members, in aid of CHYP raised the fantastic sum of £540!

Watch out for announcements in February/March when we will be holding an event will be held in support of 'Water Aid'.

## President Elect Jackie's Jottings



A welcome from our next incoming President! In the Summer Newsletter we asked if you could work out how our Club Presidency was going to be working over this year! Have you got it? There is a hint in Jackie's Jottings below.

Well, my Presidency has arrived, and it is going to be difficult to follow the good organisational skills and leadership of both Maggie and Barbara, but it is only for a couple of months! Much of our club Christmas celebration had to be arranged prior to my trip to Cologne Christmas Markets - I have never had a Christmas tree or house decorated by the end of November before! Our Literacy Awards evening was such a fantastic success that anything following that can only be a shadow, but, as I intend to fill you with food and wine, I am sure we will enjoy the evening together.

In January I shall be sharing the chair of our Business Meeting with Marietta, as my deafness might defeat me. At the dinner meeting those of us who went to Iceland will be telling you about our trip to this interesting country, showing slides prepared by Graham. As the holiday was organised by our Icelantic Soroptimist sisters, who plan it biannually, I think this is of special interest. I shall then be handing the Presidential role to Anne Croft and Jennie Beadle. Thank you all for your support.

**Jackie**

## Birthdays

December

14<sup>th</sup> AB

January

2<sup>nd</sup> Jacky S



February

22<sup>nd</sup> MM

March

7<sup>th</sup> EW

23<sup>rd</sup> Jo S

25<sup>th</sup> PW

**Feedback** We hope that you have enjoyed reading this edition of SIGNAL, and thank you for all those who have contributed. We would appreciate any feedback and suggestions to improve further editions.

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