



**Soroptimist  
International  
Edinburgh  
news  
notes  
anecdotes**

Issue 175

January 2019

**President's New Year Message**

Welcome to the New Year and to a busy New Year for us at SIE. I was thinking of the months ahead when I was in Kolkata in December. Those of you who attended our Summer Social (and assisted with the marquee arrangements for my daughter's wedding!) will recall the Indian wedding was to be in Kolkata in December. Well, it did happen and I was delighted to meet my Indian in-laws. Had I had more time I would have looked up connections with SI Kolkata. Instead, I was wearing a face mask and worrying about the extremely high levels of pollution.

I have heard that Kolkata and New Delhi rank highest on pollution scales in India: I would suggest they may attain global status. It is very worrying that such a poor environment continues to attract so many people and - especially - so many vehicles. What can be done about this?

Many years ago I was with the now-married daughter when she lived for a year

in Syria, in Aleppo. We were returning by train from Damascus to Aleppo and looking out the windows at the plastic bags alongside the track, blowing wildly from villages near the railway lines. She said she'd like to establish a charity to get rid of plastic bags in Syria. Now we think, how naive and ... if only. Maybe the same is the case with Kolkata. But without the benefit of 2030 hindsight, we must try and find ways to reduce carbon emissions, pollution and the enormous dangers to health.

These issues will be part of the presentation by our March speaker, Claudia Beamish MSP. Claudia has been extremely active on challenging the Scottish Parliament to take forward more ambitious targets on climate change. We look at the world's weather and see hurricanes, earthquakes, fires and droughts and know that our planet is being irrevocably damaged by human actions. Claudia will address these concerns as she introduces us to a 'day in the life of a female MSP in the Scottish Parliament.' I am sure we will be interested not only in her day-to-day professional life but also in the issue that is closest to her heart.

So, as we start the year, I send a welcome and hope to see you at our Business and Speaker meetings throughout the year.

## *President Gari*

### **SIE Business Meeting held on 9 January 2019 at Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel**

**Present** President Gari (in Chair) plus 14 members plus Aurora plus Flossy and Alison (3S Fund applicants).

**Apologies** for absence were received from 6 members.

**SI Vision and Mission statement.** This was read by Christine.

**3S Fund** Flossy gave a brief presentation on her planned trip to Honduras where she will work with a group of 39 ex-street children, under the auspices of Project Trust. Flossy is interested in music and art and hopes to use these in her work with the children.

Alison described her planned trip to Namibia with a group of Scouts. She will be away for 3 weeks and will be helping build latrines and shower blocks. While there, they will hold a jamboree for Scouts in Namibia and Alison hopes to teach yoga and bike maintenance skills.

It was agreed to support both applications to 3S Trust.

**News of members** Morag has now left hospital and is at home. Lindsey has had her hip replacement operation and is making good progress. Carolyn sends best wishes.

**Treasurer** (report given by Isabel) A collection is to be taken for the International President's Appeal (for Women, Water and Leadership). President Gari indicated that Taru had agreed to act as independent examiner for SIE.

**Correspondence** (Christine) \* SI Hamilton – 70th anniversary lunch on 31 March.

\* SWC event at Scottish Parliament on 2 February on issues relating to the menopause.

\* Reminder that members can apply to have the Benevolent Fund part of their subscriptions subject to Gift Aid.

**Press & Publicity** (Christine) Christine drew several articles to members' attention. Also, she advised members that any photographs submitted for publicity purposes have to be "crisp".

**Programme Action** (Alison) Alison advised that she had delivered Christmas parcels to Cranston Street and thanked members. She has not yet received an official acknowledgement.

**Club programme** (Isabel) Isabel explained that we have 13 club meetings planned for the year, of which only 4 are speaker meetings. She suggested that a group be set up to consider how best to use our 13 meetings to attract members, ensuring that necessary business is covered but fitting in interesting and relevant speakers. Isabel, Gari and Nicky (plus, possibly, Clephane) volunteered to be involved in this.

Anna mentioned her interest in training on "mental health first aid" and it was agreed that the programme group might consider including a speaker who can provide a "taster".

**Growing our brand** Anna advised that she has ordered 48 jars of jam (at £3.25 each) and 48 sauces (at £2.50 each) from Meru Garden Project, which she plans to sell at a stall at RBS Gogarburn during a lunch-time in February. Clephane volunteered to check prices on similar items at the One World Shop, with a view to setting the selling prices. The exercise is hoped to raise awareness of Soroptimism, with a view to attracting new members.

Tying in with this, Isabel showed 3 different styles that could be used for a club poster. It was agreed that, initially, the version downloaded from SIGBI website, with appropriate additions, would be best.

Lucy, who is going to Chile, was given her cheque just before Christmas.

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**Soroptimist Residential Club ('No. 63')**

(Edith) Edith reported that the AGM is to be held on 19 January 2019, but there are to be 2 additional Special General Meetings relating to the future of No. 63. It was agreed that Edith should be proxy for SIE and is authorised to vote as she sees fit on SIE's behalf as regards the AGM.

Edith explained that the agenda for the first of the SGMs involved a tidying up of rules relating to, amongst other things, the transfer of shares and the communication methods acceptable. There appeared to be nothing controversial and so Edith was authorised to vote in favour, unless there is more information at the meeting to suggest otherwise.

The second SGM will involve a vote on the resolution to sell No 63 that was raised last year but deferred. The current Board recommends that shareholders vote against this resolution and it was agreed that Edith would do so on SIE's behalf. However, it was also agreed that more transparency on the ongoing financial situation would be beneficial for clubs (and members) holding shares, and Edith was asked to express this view if she has the opportunity.

Finally Nicky agreed to be No 63 contact for SIE to assist with dissemination of any information supplied.

**Next meeting:** This will be held on 13 February 2019 at Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel, at 7:30pm.

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**Update from 3S Trust**

Martha, who was due to go to Nepal in January with Project Trust, emailed to say that she was going to the Solomon Islands instead and left on 22 January. She will not have access to WI-FI, but will try to keep us updated on her experiences.

**Letter to MP and MSPs on Victims of Crime**

Dear (Ms Cherry)

I recently read that victims and witnesses of crime, including domestic violence, are frequently referred to the Home Office if there are questions over their immigration status. This potentially allows criminals to use their victims' immigration status to deter them from speaking to police. This may mean that victims stay in situations where they continued to be abused, or are forced to participate in crime.

The deterrent effect of data-sharing goes beyond the target group of people with uncertain immigration status.

Criminals who are not reported are not investigated and thus free to commit crimes against other members of the public

I know that Southall Black Sisters are concerned about this and are planning a super-complaint against the police practice of sharing data with the Home Office immigration officials; according to their website this is made possible in part by discriminatory exemptions in data protection. Is this the sort of action that is appropriate for you to support?


Is there a similar situation in Scotland i.e. police referring victims and witnesses of crime to the Home Office if there are questions over their immigration status?

I'm also writing to my MSP Gordon MacDonald.

Very best wishes for the festive season.

**3S Trust Applicants**

The papers for Flossy (going to Honduras with Project Trust) and Alison (going to Namibia with Forth Region Scouts), who spoke to the club on 9th January, have been passed to the Trustees.



Preparatory Conference for the United Nations Commission on  
the Status of Women

Sustainable Infrastructures in Health and Housing

Iona, who is going to Honduras with Project Trust, will speak to the club on 13 February.

Rebecca, who is going to Malaysia with Project Trust, will speak to the club on 13 March.

my fundraising and progress throughout the year on my Facebook page. Thank you again for your help.

Yours Sincerely, *Lucy* (3S Trust applicant)

**Commission on the Status of Women  
CSW63 New York March 2019**

**We are delighted that members of SIE and interns at UNHS will be attending CSW63 in March. Prior to the events in New York, Pat Black, Dorothea Vincent and a team of young interns at UN House Scotland, helped to organise a Preparatory Conference in Edinburgh! This is on Friday 1 February at the School of Education, University of Edinburgh.**

**The main theme for CSW this year is focused on aspects of social protection, especially Health and Housing. The Prep Con builds on the Scottish Women's Convention work on women's housing and health provision in Scotland. It is clear there are many improvements in these areas to be made in Scotland, and the issues also resonate with the position for many women and their families around the globe. The Communiqué - written on the day - will be submitted directly into the discussions at CSW63. This is a really exciting new venture for everyone**

Soroptimists,  
Thank you very much for your kind contribution towards my year away volunteering with Project Trust. Your help is greatly appreciated, and will not only benefit me, but also those I am going to teach. I believe that during my year away I will have a positive impact on the people I meet and in turn I will become a better person for taking part in this life changing experience. I am looking forward to my year in Chile and will be giving updates on

**INVITATION TO SI PAISLEY**

S.I. Paisley is holding an event to mark 100 years of Inspiring Women, in the Glynhill Hotel, Paisley Road, Renfrew, 7 pm, Thursday 21 March.

Cost £13 including a buffet supper.

The programme for the evening will include a short drama performance by pupils from Castlehead High School, Paisley and a 'debate' involving four speakers who will each talk about a

woman from the last century whom they think is inspiring.

Further details to follow, however we hope that you will come along and join us on the evening.

*Jenifer A. McFarlane*  
*Membership Convener*  
*S.I.Paisley*

### **Directors Without Portfolio (DWP)** **Report to the FCC**

### **Meeting of the SIGBI Federation** **Management Board (FMB) January** **2019**

The first board meeting of the Federation year 2018/19 was held in London, 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

The FMB wishes to bring the following matters/issues to your attention and asks that you report these back to your clubs/Regions/National Associations/Countries:

### **Governance**

#### **SIGBI Strategic Plan**

The Board completed an overview of the SIGBI Strategic Plan 2018/19 and accompanying Work Plans which had been updated based on the conclusions reached at the October 2018 FMB meeting.

It was agreed in October 2018 that a number of Working Groups would be formed to help deliver the Strategic Plan, overseen by a Strategic Plan Monitoring Group. These have now been set up as follows:

Growth Plan Working Party; Stakeholder Working Party; Grants Working Party; Mediation Working Party; Governance Working Party; Soroptimist News Working Party; Partnerships Working Party; Patrons Working Party; Annual Report Working Party; Centennial Celebrations Working Party; Database Working Party.

**SIEnna 175** Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI)

### **Finance**

Finance Director Ruth Healey presented her 2019/20 Budget for approval.

Ruth reported on her proposal to allow clubs to pay their capitation fees monthly by standing order.

Further information will be going out to members in February to allow the process to be set up in time for the new financial year in April.

***Action: Please draw this to the attention of club treasurers/secretaries***

### **Gift Aid**

A letter from Ruth has been sent out to members, together with a new Gift Aid form, through the club mailing. Now that SIGBI is a registered charity it can claim gift aid on members' capitation fees. Members are therefore being asked to complete another gift aid form if they are a UK tax payer. This new source of Gift Aid will make a significant positive impact on SIGBI's budget. This is an additional mandate and is separate to any forms members may have submitted in the past for the Benevolent Fund and the Diamond Education Grant Fund. The form is also available to download on the SIGBI website.

***Action: Please draw this to the attention of club treasurers/secretaries to encourage members to complete the forms by April 2019.***

### **SIGBI Trading Ltd**

54 clubs have signed up to Easyfundraising and clubs have reported that they are already raising money for their projects. The winning club from the December prize draw was S.I St Albans. The club decided to spend their £100 Amazon voucher from Easyfundraising on pants for the organisation 'Smallforall'.

Many congratulations and well done to S.I St. Albans!

December saw the launch of the affiliate scheme being operated on our behalf by Thoughtmix. There is now a 'Reward Portal' on the SIGBI website where members can take advantage of offers from major retailers. New retailers are entered into the Portal every two weeks.

When members take advantage of the offers, SIGBI Trading will earn commission on any purchases made.

It is anticipated that the second phase of the scheme will come into effect at the end of February, with approved advertisers displayed on the SIGBI website.

**Action: Please urge your clubs/members to sign up to the Easyfundraising Scheme through [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/sigb](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/sigb) and to check on a regular basis the Reward Portal offers.**

### **Organisational Development**

President Elect and Director of Organisational Development, Isobel Smith, reported that the third phase of the Growth Plan will be launched at the Development Day on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019.

The responses received from the 'Way Forward for Regions' survey have been analysed by the Organisational Development committee and a summary presented to the Board.

**Action: Federation Councillors to report back to their regions detailing the agreed recommendations.**

### **Programme Action**

**Federation Project 2019/22:** Programme Director Kay Richmond presented for approval the Memorandum of Understanding for the new ChoraChori

project. A request has gone out to members to apply for the posts of a Federation Project Lead and for regional project ambassadors.

### **The UN 5 'Ps' and the SDGs**

The UN 5 'Ps' are listed as People; Planet; Prosperity; Partnerships; Peace.

This initiative was discussed at the October FMB meeting when it was felt that due to a previous directive from the Charity Commission, SIGBI wouldn't be meeting the objects of its charitable status if it adopted the word 'Peace'. It was agreed therefore to substitute 'Prevention' for 'Peace' for the 5<sup>th</sup> 'P'. Kay reported that following clarification SIGBI will now revert to using the original word 'Peace'.

Kay had compiled a very concise table which mapped the UN 5 Ps, SIGBI's Charity Commission Objects and how they fit within the UN SDGs. This will form the basis for clubs' future programme action reports. The database will need to be updated to accommodate the changes in the reporting process.

The next FMB meeting will be held in Stockport, 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2019. If you have any matters you would wish us to raise, please notify your designated Director Without Portfolio by Friday 22nd March 2019, so that we can prepare our report for 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Cathy, Shirley, Judi

14/01/19

### **Winterthur-Dumfermline Connection**

Eva Tyson (SI Dunfermline) has written of her search for the origins of 'Winterthur Lane' near her Fife home. As the story unfolded a member of SI Winterthur said

her father had been MD of a silk mill in Fife 1932-38. The link continued and the story can be read in Eva's booklet!

See also SIEnna 174

**Finally:**

An enquiry came from an Edinburgh University student-run charity, the Edinburgh Global Partnership (EGP), about their project in Kerala, India to build fish-ponds for disadvantaged families. They are not looking for funds to cover the expenses of the student volunteers, but directly towards the cost of the fish-ponds. **They have been asked to speak to the club about this project at the meeting on 13 February.**