



**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

SIEnna 198 April 2021

Not one but two messages from the Presidential Team. As they move to handing over the ‘presidential reins’ Clephane and Lindsey share their thoughts on looking back and looking forward to the year ahead.

Now that we are at the welcome introduction of increased freedom to move around and catch up with friends, it has become the trend to announce what we have failed to achieve during lockdown. Probably some of us have indeed failed to learn Greek, run a marathon each week, etc, but it does seem a shame not to acknowledge what we have succeeded in doing. Both individually and as a club.

The AGM will provide reports on the latter, but perhaps we could share some of our individual experiences – finishing a patchwork bedspread that has languished for a considerable number of years, made bread..... At our April social event, Prue and Noel were quite impressed by our baking skills and creativity in respect of Easter bonnets was definitely alive and well. So how about a pat on the back?

Of course, it has been hard not being able to see family and friends, but we have been resilient and are now not lacking in ideas for how to move forward.

And as we do so, we can be appreciative of our vaccinations and general quality of life in contrast to the news reports of natural and man-made disasters in other parts of the world.

The cherry blossom is just bursting out at the time of writing this and although the earlier arrival of

that demonstrates the reality of climate change, we can enjoy the sight, undiminished by vapour trails.

So let’s proceed into another club year with optimism.

Clephane

PS. Despite the frost, the garden naturalist can report that the frogspawn has been followed by the presence of tadpoles.



What do you watch on the telly of an evening? I’m reminded of that as I consulted my diary this morning – it’s been exactly a year since I discovered M.A.S.H. – translated as ‘mobile army surgery hospital’ – a programme that first appeared from the US around the 1970s telling the story, sometimes quite funny and sometimes tragic, of doctors on the front line during the war in Korea. I won’t go into the storyline – the point is I am now watching the repeats of the repeats that I watched this time last year!! Very few storylines are new to me but I watch nevertheless. The weather will improve and the nights will get longer and I’ll be off on a walk or back in the garden or something new will be on offer at that time of the evening. We are not dissimilar in the club. We have no choice now to ask members to repeat a role they may have taken on the executive many years ago. We are a small club – we have almost all ‘been there and done that!’ We must allow newer members to ‘bed themselves in’ to our club but they have skills that we are desperate for and very soon we will be calling on them to take office. This past year two of your Team Presidents have covered two roles on the executive, the other working almost full-time, so we ask that you be prepared to share any role that you can even if you organise just one thing, do the minutes just once, find out if we can advertise SI Edinburgh in the libraries, due to open now, or take the chair while we are still using Zoom. You have been wonderful members over this last year sticking with your club with the expectation of good times returning – and they will! Our motto for SI Edinburgh is **looking forward** – we’ve done that for over ninety years – let’s keep going!!

Lindsey

SIE Business Meeting held on 14th April 2021 on Zoom.

Present: Lindsey (in the Chair) + Clephane, Patricia, Edith, Nikki, Pat, Myint Su, Gari, Marjory, Christine, Lindsey, Kathleen, Alison, Liz, Dorothy. Lindsey welcomed everyone.

Soroptimist Vision & Mission – read by Alison.

Apologies for absence were received from 8 members: Anna, Winifred, Trish, Irene, Carolyn, Morag, Mary, Hilary.

News of members: Anna's brother is quite ill and she is spending time at his home. We have sent good wishes and indicated to her that we will cover any responsibilities here and that we would want her to concentrate her time and attention on her family.

Minutes of last Meeting 10th March 2021 – Accepted. (proposed by Gari and seconded by Clephane) No amendments. No matters arising.

Correspondence: Christine – we have been requested to vote on the Regional President election (this will appear later in the Agenda)

Membership: report submitted by Anna – SIGBI have requested, via the Region, for volunteers to make a short video of why they joined Soroptimists. In view of short timelines Nikki has responded and apologised for no input from SI Edinburgh and Region are OK with that.

Programme Action: Lindsey – The trees for the school have been planted and Lindsey is liaising with the school regarding an opportunity to take photos, hand over and hand out leaflets about the gift and the Soroptimists. Agreed to place a print order of 200 for the leaflets (circa £102) We can use any surplus for promotion/giving to potential members as an example of projects we are involved in. Final tweak of the leaflet to add in SIE Facebook link. Lindsey will visit the site to consider suitability for a dedication plinth – we are aware that the children have asked if they can underplant the area with a wild flower meadow so that may be slightly restrictive for positioning a plinth. Agreed to maintain contact with the school and understand their plans before making a final decision re the plinth.

Centenary Celebration: Christine has been following up on the possible refurbishment of the SIE Bench in Princes Street Gardens. She has been advised that the bench could be refurbished for free. We can have the existing plaques (2) refurbished also at a cost of circa £50 or we could purchase a new plaque (circa £300). Agreed that

to retain the historic connection of the existing plaques we should have them refurbished. ACTION: Christine will request the refurbishment of the bench and obtain a quote for the refurbishment of the plaques.

Treasurer's Report: Myint Su – Full report will be available for the AGM. Myint Su has calculated possible subscription levels for 2021/22 and is recommending a reduction to £120 (from £130 last year) recognising the reductions indicated from Region and SIGBI. Christine asked if this would give us any spare funds to donate to charity. Nikki suggested we use the subs to finance the year ahead and any funds surplus at the end of the year we consider donating that to the Charity Fund. New subscription levies proposed by Edith and seconded by Kathleen. Agreed.

Report on Commission on the Status of Women (CSW): Pat Black (Special Advisor to Soroptimist International Board and member of SI Edinburgh!) - In March each year Pat heads off to New York to attend the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Last year she arrived, and the very next day they closed down the UN due to COVID, and then closed down New York! A hasty struggle to get back to UK ensued! But she made it and was ready this year to explore the challenges of the UN CSW taking place virtually! This is the biggest annual event that the UN hosts, with participants usually numbering 8-9 thousand! This year with the opportunity to join remotely the participants topped 25 thousand! With representation from every part of the globe. SI had 200 participants across the 5 Federations (we are usually restricted to 100) with lots of younger people invited to participate/attend. Since the CSW in March this year a number of young women have joined SI clubs. In her role as Special Advisor to Soroptimist International Board, Pat follows the main meetings of the Commission plus attends a number of the high-level Governmental sessions. At the event Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are able to showcase the work they do and SI was able to highlight the work we have done across all Federations. (details are available via a U Tube presentation – <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/the-road-to-equality-preparing-women-and-girls-to-lead-csw-parallel-event/>) The priority theme and the review theme for this year (linked to Sustainable Development Goal 15) were - Priority theme: Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender

equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development. Pat started her preparation for this event in September 2020 presenting written statements about these themes. She then followed the report from the General Secretary of UN to see what has happened and what will be included in the 'agreed conclusions'.

The UK government works closely with eg SI representatives to compile the correct wording for the response document for the UK. Pat as SI Rep also works with other SI attendees from other countries to help put together their country's response. All countries provide a response – in previous years there have been challenges getting agreement from eg US but this year got agreement and support from the US although other countries provided resistance eg Russia blocked nearly everything. This year there was so much resistance that the 'agreed conclusions' were written and member states were given the option to 'take it or leave it'. Many member states agreed with most of the agreed conclusions but registered non-agreement to sections of it.

[UN commission pushes equality for women in decision-making | UN News](#)

Feedback from the 25k participants was that 'virtual' was great! Although the best bit for Pat of meeting face to face was the opportunity to meet very inspiring women and chat about the amazing and transformational things they are working on. The decision was made that future events would be part face to face and part remote. Negotiation on wording (which can result in participants staying up all night) is much easier face to face!

Lindsey asked Pat if she felt that there were outcomes from these events. Pat said absolutely, eg FGM was previously described as a cultural traditional practice, it is now seen as a health issue which has allowed a number of African countries to put legislation in place to ban the practice. Many thanks to Pat for a very interesting and insightful update.

AGM April 2021: Alison - 2nd Official notice has been sent out along with a note of the club positions that are vacant. Nominations for vacancies should be received by Alison by 24/4/21. One nomination form received so far, and Lindsey completed nominations for re-election of eligible members. Minute Secretary and President Elect positions still require nominations. The option of President Elect role being a shared role was discussed, with president

for 2021/22 (Nikki) sharing the role or acting as mentor/support for the year 2022/23. Alison agreed to be the Minute Secretary for the AGM

Regional Rep: Myint Su – Scotland South Region initiated a meeting on 13/4/21 on the topic of 'Future of Region' Myint Su and Pat Black attended on behalf of SI Edinburgh. 9 clubs were represented – the feedback from one club was quite negative re the purpose of Region and whether Region was an outdated idea. Myint Su submitted the thoughts of SIE again (email from Myint Su refers). Ideas discussed – the viability of Scotland South as a Region with only 271 members: a possible pan Scotland Region which could have more power representing the whole of Scotland: possibility of splitting the Region East & West for eg Programme Action activity: Meetings via Zoom are ok: officers staying on in role beyond the 'standard criteria' if they were prepared to: reduction of activity at Regional level to make the roles less demanding and possibly more appealing: reduce the number of presidential positions ie currently a nominee will serve for 4 years – Vice President: President Elect: President: Past President. Ideas will be discussed at next Region Exec meeting and thoughts shared post that meeting.

We have one nomination for President Elect for Scotland South Region – the role will commence immediately (ie mid-year) and the successful candidate will take over as President at the AGM in September 2021. Nominee is Aileen E: all members agreed to vote yes for Aileen's nomination. ACTION: Myint Su will respond accordingly.

SIGBI Website: Pat – Quite a lot of activity on webpages and Facebook. (thanks Pat and Patricia!) Pat asked if there were any photos of the Easter Fun Friendship Evening? If so, please send to Pat so she can post an article on our SIE Website.

SIEnna – next edition due circa 25/4/21. Items for inclusion to Gari and Nikki by 22/4/21.

AOCB:

Programme: Nikki & Alison – Looking at speaker for 'virtual speaker meeting' in May - will be linked to one of the Sustainable Development Goals. Suggestion for June is to try for a face to face 'coffee, cake and chat' meeting potentially to be held at the Church – St Peters, Luton Place – with appropriate social distancing and precautions if still required. Majority of members agreed with the suggestion. Further suggestion (dependent on

COVID restrictions) to visit the Great Tapestry of Scotland in its new location in Galashiels.
ACTION: Nikki and Alison to progress the two ideas and update the club in due course.

Violence at Home: Clephane – Clephane became aware today of a universally recognised signal that indicates someone on eg a video link/ zoom meeting/Facetime is in need of help as being subjected to violence at home. Hand is held up to camera, palm up, thumb is dropped across palm and fingers folded down over thumb. Please be aware and vigilant for this sign. Lindsey also was aware of a code that can be used in Pharmacies to indicate help is needed.

Date of AGM: 28th April 2021. Zoom meeting at 7.30. Attendees to join at 7.20pm
Date of next Business Meeting: 12th May 2021
Zoom meeting at 7.30. Attendees to join at 7.20pm.

Behind the scenes of the 3S Fund Liaison Officer

PUROPOSE AND ROLE: to act as the Edinburgh club's contact for applicants for funding from the 3S Fund of Soroptimist International Scotland South Region, liaising with the applicant, the Edinburgh club and, through Scotland South Region, the Fund Trustees.

Full information on the Fund can be found on the Scotland South Region web site at

<https://sigbi.org/scotland-south/scotland-south-3s-fund-page/>. This gives links to the 3S Fund Handbook (Version 5, May 2019) and the application and personal profile forms.

The aim of the Fund is to support projects which improve the lives of women and girls to achieve their potential in line with the objects of Soroptimist International. Individuals and groups can apply and must do so through a sponsoring Soroptimist club in Scotland South Region.

The objects are:

1. Sponsor a person willing and able to offer professional expertise in a specific field overseas or in the United Kingdom, on a voluntary basis.
2. Sponsor a person who is going to participate in voluntary work overseas or in the United Kingdom and can demonstrate a benefit to themselves and the local community in which the project is taking place.
3. Sponsor a person from outwith the UK to come to Scotland for study or training, all of which would benefit the country or community or both, of the person sponsored.
4. Provide funding to support, in whole or in part, a specific project nominated by a club focused on empowering, educating

or enabling women and girls, which would benefit a country or community. A separate application form is available for this.

In recent years applications for assistance with funding under objects 1 and 2 have usually come through the Edinburgh SIGBI website. The liaison officer checks to see if the project is likely to fit one of the criteria for support from the Fund and then contacts the applicant by email. The applicant is asked to return completed application and personal profile forms. Arrangements are then made to meet the applicant at a café to learn more about the applicant and the project and go through the forms. (During Covid-19 restrictions this may be replaced by a Facetime telephone call). At this stage it may be discovered that the project should come under object 4, for example if a Scottish guide or scout group is undertaking a project overseas.

It is then arranged for the applicant to speak to the Edinburgh Club at a Business Meeting about their project and, if the club members agree to support the application, the relevant documents are sent electronically to the Secretary of Scotland South Region, who passes them to the Trustees for consideration. The decision of the Trustees is conveyed to the applicant through the liaison officer.

Successful applicants are asked, if possible, to provide updates to the club during their project, but some may be in very remote areas with no internet access. On their return to Scotland they should provide a written report and, if it can be arranged, speak to the Edinburgh Club about their experiences. Past talks have been fascinating and the increased maturity and self-reliance of young volunteers has been most inspiring.

Marjory

A very fond farewell to Carolyn!

As one of our most stalwart members moves on to pastures new, we couldn't miss the opportunity to say thank you Carolyn, and all the very best in your new home and your new club SI Kirkintilloch. They are getting one of the best!



Carolyn dressed for action - collecting for Marie Curie at the local supermarket.

Paths for Everyone

Many years ago, SIE members used to go for long walks in summer. Edith, Isabel and I once started on the Union Canal from Edinburgh to the Falkirk Wheel, walking 4 to 5 miles at a time. It took about 6 or 7 walks to complete the 30 miles of the canal. Scotland has such a good transport system that each time, we were able to map out bus and train journeys so that we could pick up where we left off on the previous walk very conveniently.



Then there is the wonderful Water of Leith. Very close to St Mark's Park is this sculpture by Antony Gormley. There used to be more than one Standing Man in the Water of Leith near where I live, but only this one is there now – he came back after disappearing for a time. May he endure!



Clive and I don't take the car at all except when the starting point for a walk is too far from a bus stop. Taking the car means having to walk back the same way to where the car is parked instead of starting off at one point, ending at another and taking the bus back home, a very satisfying occupation during the time when one cannot see friends, visit anywhere outside of Edinburgh or go to a concert!

I have been surprised at how much green space there is in and around Edinburgh. You can be in quite a thickly wooded park like Moredun Wood; walk along Niddrie Burn or Braidburn or Burdiehouse Burn and you'd never know you're in the middle of a capital city. There is such lot of birdsong in such places that to a wild-life nut like me it is paradise. The song of the blackbird alone could keep me rooted to a spot for minutes on end and I just find the little robin so enchanting. Folklore is right and robins really are friendly and sometimes I feel that one is keeping me company by hopping along from one tree to another as I walk on.



Maybe we could do that one day on the John Muir Way.

During lockdown, I've been exploring the walking and cycling paths that crisscross Edinburgh. "Paths for Everyone" as provided by Edinburgh Council is very well laid out, well signposted as you can see from the pictures and totally accessible, again due to the excellent transport system provided by Lothian Buses.



The paths also have such attractive names – around Cannonmills where I live, we can take the Chancelot Path, the Goldenacre Path or the Hawthornvale Path, to name just a few.



Some of the bird life seen on Edinburgh's Paths for Everyone.



An Anti-Vandal KC Bench Seat - a welcome sight for weary legs!

When Clive and I started walking on the cycle ways a few years ago, there were very few benches (like the one pictured) on the paths. I began to think it would be nice for SIE, or those of us flush enough to

think of helping fellow aged walkers, to donate one or two along the pathways. That was until I asked the company whose name is on the

small brass plate on the side of the bench. One of these costs around £1900 and that is before paying for the installation. These days the Council must have more money because quite a few have started appearing in parks and paths.

Scotland is opening up cautiously. This is April and we can now meet outside in groups of 6. Let's think of meeting up somewhere outside, wrapped up warmly, with sandwiches and flasks of tea and appreciate our luck in living in such a beautiful city.

Coincidentally, the physiotherapist at our GP practice sent us the following link just this week-

Paths for All
 If you enjoy walking, Paths for All has information on health walks in your area: call **01259 218888** or visit **www.pathsforall.org.uk**

If you'd like to know more about support services and where to go to be active, visit **www.aliss.org**

A timely reminder?!

Myint Su

Do you have a head for figures?

Can you sign your name(😊)?

Myint Su is looking for a volunteer to be part of the SIE Finance Team – a small but beautifully formed team that keeps us on track and signs our cheques. Please let Myint Su know if you are able to assist.

A snippet for SIEnna

For those with cars who might just shop at Morrisons for petrol - check out your receipt - at the bottom it gives some information to people experiencing domestic abuse. Abuse helpline - 0808 2000247

Download - Brightsky app - free to download. It provides support and information to anyone who may be experiencing domestic abuse or is concerned about someone they know. The app offers information about issues around domestic abuse such as online safety, stalking and harassment, and sexual consent.

Every little helps.

Human Trafficking – Child exploitation

The SIE meeting on 24 April was in two parts: first we attended the Scottish Government Cross Party Group (CPG) on Human Trafficking and then we discussed the issues raised at our own SIE zoom meeting. The presentations at the CPG were extremely interesting with Daljeet Dagon from Barnardo's Scotland speaking on the sexual exploitation of children in the Children's Hearing System; Moira McKinnon and Sheila Miller of Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, giving an overview of National Work on Child Sexual Exploitation. Both presentations provided the basis for our SIE discussions when thoughts and ideas were exchanged. In particular, Liz drew attention to a book which is extremely relevant to these concerning issues: The Protectors' Handbook: Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse and Helping Children Recover by Gerrilyn Smith (Synopsis Books)

Liz had referred to the book over many years of dealing with such issues in her professional capacity, and she recommended it as a good book to explain the issues and help individuals to recognise child exploitation and understand how the victims can be supported.

SYNOPSIS

Publisher: CoramBAF
 ISBN: 9781905664474
 Number of pages: 196

The Protectors' Handbook: Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse and Helping Children Recover (Paperback)
 Gerrilyn Smith (author)

See us to write a review

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Quantity: **ADD TO BASKET**

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Programme of SIE Club meetings 2021

All meetings commence at 7.30 and are currently being held on Zoom.

A Zoom meeting invitation will be sent circa 2 days before the meeting to enable you to join from 7.20pm.

28 April – SI Edinburgh AGM

12 May - Business Meeting

26 May - Speaker Meeting (Speaker tbc)

9 June - Business Meeting

23 June – Coffee, Cake & Chat (Face to Face - location/ details to be confirmed)