



## **Soroptimist International Edinburgh news notes anecdotes**

### **SIEnna 201 September 2021**

Welcome back! It was lovely to see so many of you at our first meeting after our summer break and it was fabulous to welcome 2 new members – Trish and Marianne. I hope you were all able to enjoy some of the good weather we appeared to have had and also the slow, but encouraging, return to a bit more freedom. If our discussions at the meeting were anything to go by, everyone seems refreshed, re-energised and raring to go.

We have a fair amount to look forward to in the coming months – a possible return to face to face meetings, the SIGBI 'virtual' conference being hosted in Llandudno at the end of October (last years 'virtual' conference was amazing and a brilliant way to participate in, and learn about, the wider Soroptimist agenda, without getting off your sofa!) and of course Soroptimist Internationals 100th birthday – an action packed 'international' weekend 1-3 October.

I have reflected quite a lot recently on our '100<sup>th</sup> birthday' – I was just accepting it as a milestone and an excuse for celebration, but latterly I have seriously thought of the 100 years of service, the 100 years of speaking up for women and girls for the many and varied

issues that have impacted them through the years, and 100 years of progress. We have an amazing legacy ....and we have a phenomenal responsibility to continue that work, service and support for another 100 years.

A very current and real issue that we can and are tackling as a club, is the situation in Afghanistan. The enthusiasm and commitment from members to gather information, to build our knowledge and to identify opportunities to help has been palpable and action has already commenced. It is wonderful to have Pat Black (International Adviser to Soroptimist International) in our midst to give us insights into the bigger picture and to ensure our actions locally are the most effective and most sensible to help address this very worrying situation. Watch this space re SIE's ACTION FOR AFGHANISTAN!

PS: don't forget the opportunity to recognise SI 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with our Candle Lighting on 29<sup>th</sup> at the Scottish Parliament building (email from Lindsey 20/9/21)

PPS: all details and joining instructions for the 2021 SIGBI Conference can be found on the SIGBI website [Conference Home Page - SIGBI Conference - Llandudno 2021](#)

## **SIE Business Meeting held on 8 September 2021 on Zoom**

**Present:** Nikki (in the Chair) + Clephane, Patricia, Edith, Pat, Anna, Lindsey, Christine, Myint Su, Marjory, Gari, Alison, Liz, Dorothy and new members Pragna (Trish) (who was inducted at the social evening at Gari's on 25 August) and Marianne (who is still to be inducted). Nikki welcomed everyone and thanked members for their support following her recent bereavement.

**Soroptimist Vision & Mission** – read by Anna.

**Apologies** for absence were received from 7 members: Winifred, Trish, Irene, Kathleen, Morag, Mary and Hilary

**News of members:** There was no news of current members but Carolyn, now a member of SI Kirkintilloch, sends best wishes and Clephane advised that former member Jane is having chemotherapy so members agreed to send best wishes to both.

**Minutes of last Meeting** 9 June 2021 – Accepted (proposed by Liz and seconded by Lindsey). There were no matters arising.

**Actions:** Membership 3-year plan – Anna is to set up a virtual meeting to progress.

Obituary for Isabel – Anna is to submit this.

Stitches 4 survival – Clephane has the knitted sections produced by members and will photograph as requested by Region, probably with Edinburgh Castle as backdrop, Donation for SI Centenary celebration (to fund free place for member from Developing Country to attend) – this was not made but it appears that it was not, after all, required.

**Action for Afghanistan:** Nikki mentioned the recent email correspondence on the events in Afghanistan and drew attention to the statement produced by SI. She expressed satisfaction that SI was involved at a high level and that clubs were being updated. There was then some discussion as to how SIE might be involved. Possible actions mentioned were: donation to relevant organisations; befriending/mentoring refugees

in Scotland; providing/collecting/sorting donated goods; lobbying/campaigning; speaker meeting on Afghanistan. Pat noted that, based on what was known at present, it would be very difficult for organisations operating within Afghanistan to make progress and so she suggested that it would be best to look at what we could do to help support refugees from Afghanistan. She recommended lobbying to support a more welcoming attitude from the UK Government, practical support and befriending.

Following lengthy discussion the following **ACTIONS** were agreed:

- Alison and Patricia to liaise re a speaker. Alison has already made contact with the Community Development Worker from St Peter's Church and Patricia has a contact at the Scottish Refugee Council. Between them they will agree on a suitable arrangement, possibly for the October speaker meeting.
- Liz will register our interest with Scottish Refugee Council. It is expected that once refugees arrive in Scotland this will be a means of identifying how we might become more involved practically.
- Pat, Liz and Nikki will lobby.

**Future meetings:** Members agreed that it would be good to return to face-to-face meetings at ECYH, but that provision should be made, if possible, to have access by Zoom available as well. It was agreed that if this is possible then we might return to ECYH in October but otherwise this would be deferred. (ACTION: Alison will advise Myint Su of meeting dates for the remainder of this session and Myint Su will check out availability of room plus necessary technology for zoom at ECYH.

### **Correspondence: Christine**

- Items received from SIGBI have been circulated to members by email.
- The SIE bench in Princes Street Gardens has been refurbished by the Council (at no cost to SIE). Christine will obtain a photograph and circulate it.
- Invitation from SI Cockermouth to charter dinner on 26 September – please let Nikki know if you wish to attend.

### **Treasurer's Report: Myint Su**

- Thank-you letters have been received from 3S Fund and Frances Lynch (Electric Voice Theatre).
- £250 is still to be sent to Benmore. (ACTION: Myint Su)
- Myint Su will liaise with Nikki re purchase of shares at No.63. (ACTION: Myint Su and Nikki)

### **Membership : Anna**

Anna welcomed again the 2 new members, Trish (Pragna) and Marianna. She indicated that Marianna would be inducted once information is received from SIGBI. She asked Trish to say a little about her volunteering at Empty Kitchens Full Hearts in Leith and Trish described how between 1,000 and 1,200 meals are provided daily to people in need.

Anna is also following up on some other contacts.

### **Programme Action: Lindsey.**

- Stitches 4 Survival – a craft project in connection with COP26. See above – a section has been completed by SIE volunteers.
- Kids Love Clothes – the next date for sorting at KLC is 28 September. Trish, Liz and Anna have volunteered to join Lindsey.

- STORM at Edinburgh Botanic Gardens in late October – event to watch out for in connection with COP26.
- Deposit Return Scheme for cans and bottles – this is due to be introduced in Scotland in 2022. Lindsey is concerned about possible slippage and feels that we should be pushing for introduction of relevant legislation. Trish offered to check on the situation in schools, as she knows that some already operate deposit return schemes. (ACTION: Trish to check on situation in schools)
- Blister Packs – Myint Su knows a chemist who will accept used blister packs for recycling.

### **Programme: Alison**

Alison advised that she has a speaker lined up for the meeting on 22 September and will email once the October speaker is organised (see earlier re Afghanistan). (ACTION: Alison to advise members of speakers)

### **Reports from Representatives: deferred until October business meeting**

### **Communication: apart from SIEnna, deferred until October business meeting**

**SIEnna** – next edition due circa 21/9/21. Items for inclusion to Gari by 19/9/21, please.

**Friendship Links:** Myint Su will send a pack of Region playing cards to SI Madurai.

**Centenary issues** Nikki mentioned the celebration weekend on 2-3 October, for which some SIE members have registered. It has been suggested that clubs organise a candle lighting ceremony to highlight the event. It was agreed that a small group would meet for a photo shoot at a suitable venue (possibly outside the Parliament). (ACTION: Nikki, Lindsey and Edith will agree a date and then email members, with a view to anyone who is available attending)

### **AOCB:**

**SIGBI General Meeting** – It was agreed to vote For each of the three Resolutions for which ballot papers were to be returned by 10 September.

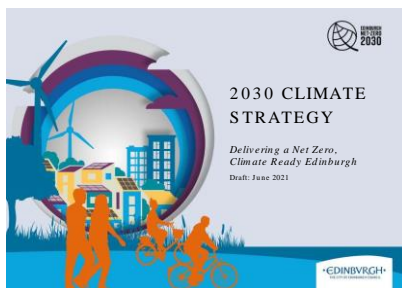
**Donation in memory of late SIGBI President Johanna Raffan** – Nikki advised that SI Thames and District were hoping to create an orchard in Sierre Leone, where they already have projects, in honour of Johanna. It was agreed to donate £100 (having noted that we had not had to pay anything for the bench

refurbishment). (ACTION: Myint Su to send the donation).

**Soroptimist request** - Anna advised that she had been able to help with a request from a European Soroptimist for help in finding accommodation in Edinburgh for her son, by putting them in contact with someone who has property for let.

**Date of next meeting** : 22 September 2021 at 7:30pm on Zoom

**Date of next Business Meeting:** 13 October 2021 Zoom meeting at 7.30. Attendees to join at 7.20pm.



Edinburgh City Council consultation meeting (July 30th 2021)

2030 Climate Strategy: Delivering a Net – Zero, Climate Ready Edinburgh.

The consultation was hosted by Beth Hall, Council Sustainability manager and her colleagues. Interestingly, they were all women. About 20 people joined the meeting, one of three planned over the Summer. The draft Strategy document is extensive and its content ambitious. It is planned to publish the Strategy in time for the COP 26 summit in Glasgow. The consultation period ended on September 12th.

This is a snapshot summary taken from notes of the discussion by Liz Malcolm.

The Strategy is proposed within a context not only of a climate crisis, but of a city that has many historic and protected buildings and a

population that is predicted to grow. Significant growth is forecast:

- An increase of 21% in the number of households by 2025
- Population growth of 6% by 2030

It is estimated that there will be a need for 50,000 new homes by 2045.

The approach being taken by the Council emphasises the need for collaboration and partnership working to achieve the goals as well as the need to encourage individual commitment. Several key partnerships have already been established and are described in the draft Strategy.

The 6 key principles underpinning the strategy are:

- Ensuring a just transition: eradicating fuel poverty/ensuring that no one is unavoidably

disadvantaged by the changes/creating positive impact for everyone

- Preventing future emissions and adapting to unavoidable change
- Place based 20 minute neighbourhoods: all services needed local and accessible
- Energy efficiency: need for new energy infrastructure/idea of retrofitting properties
- Electrification first: clean energy use/increase in use of renewables/currently only 2% of the city's electricity is generated from renewable sources
- A progressive policy: development of new areas of expertise and a skilled workforce

Many questions were asked and the attendees, several of whom were architects or from the industry, generally thought that the Strategy needed to be ambitious but was over reaching itself if hoping to achieve the changes outlined within the next 9 years. Some of the questions posed and the responses given are as follows:

Q: Is a zero-carbon city realistic for a historic city?

A: We are looking at examples from elsewhere and at the design of the buildings. Skills will be needed to adapt.

Q: Which emissions are being included?

A: It is territorial. All within the city boundary.

Q: Thinking travel – does the expense of the City Car club currently mitigate against more people getting rid of their cars?

A: We will look at this more.

Q: How will the costs of home energy be kept affordable?

A: We are asking the Scottish Government to assist with costs and UK government is looking at energy prices. We are also exploring local energy generation.

Q: Will a single heat network be feasible?

A: Work is underway with Edinburgh University exploring approaches e.g. use of waste and sewage. Also, to clarify energy demand.

It was acknowledged that any Strategy will not succeed without excellent communications and buy in from the community, a point raised by several participants. Reference was made to the "Spaces for People" project and again it was acknowledged that there had not been "clear communication" about it purpose.

This is the draft Strategy – more of a statement of intent at this stage. It will need a clear action plan that has a clear focus on delivery if the goals are to be achieved.

**These are the most recent messages from SIGBI –**

**1. urgent message regarding Conference - sent 07/09/2021**

We would like to apologise to all our members for the continued outage of the members' area of the website and ability to register for conference. When the system went down last week, the issue was that two key people were on leave so although our IT company tried to get the system up and running they were unable to.

This week, we believed that it would not take long to restore the system when these people were back from leave. However, the communication from the IT company has been very poor and we have not been kept informed of the status of our server. We have just found out that it will not be worked on again until tomorrow. We do not have an estimate of when the service will be restored, but will try to keep you informed.

I can only apologise for this delay and sincerely hope to be able to give you better news later this week. Please note this has nothing to do with our web provider, or our database provider, it is the failure of our office server that has caused the problem.

Regards

Sally

**2. SIGBI - urgent - members area of website and conference - sent 12/09/2021**

Thank you for your patience as we try to restore access to the Membership and Programme databases via the website.

This is taking a long time, so please allow me to give you some background information to the issue. The SIGBI Server, holding all our files and also the databases and website pages related to updating the databases online by Members, is at the end of its life,

and we have already experienced several downtimes before this latest incident.

We had already been planning a migration to a new server, which would have been taking place at this point in time, but we knew it would take time to migrate the database and re-point all the webpages to it. It was intended that this would all take place while members were still using the system on the old server, and that the final up to date copy of the databases would be copied over once the infrastructure was in place.

Unfortunately, the old server which housed the database completely crashed before this “seamless” migration could take place. Our files had already been copied to the new server, so we’ve got access to that now, but the migration of the database, which has had to be restored from the latest backup, has now had to take place in “real time” rather than behind the scenes. This is a complex piece of software so would always have taken longer to set up.

I hope that this explains why the downtime has been so extended. We realise that this has caused a great deal of inconvenience to our members, for which we apologise. Once everything is working on the new server, the system will be more stable going forward.

The point that we have now reached is that **the members’ area is now working**, so you can access the online documentation you need.

The membership and Programme databases are also available, and the Conference Registration forms. At the time of writing they are showing as “insecure” because they are not recognizing the SSL Certificates, but these have been installed so the IT people are looking into this. It should be working properly by 5.30 tonight.

Thank you for your continued patience.

Regards Sally Higgins

**SIGBI Membership and Website Officer**

### **3. SIGBI - SIGBI Ltd and SIGBI Trading Ltd accounts - sent 12/09/2021**

Please find attached the SIGBI Ltd and SIGBI Trading Ltd Accounts for 2021, together with a letter from SIGBI Director of Finance, Ruth Healey.

Please note, members will be unable to ask questions of the accounts at the SIGBI Ltd Virtual General Meeting 2021. However, if you do have any questions, please send them in the first instance to Gina Coad at [hq@sigbi.org](mailto:hq@sigbi.org) by 24 September 2021.

To: Clubs, Regions, National Associations and Networks Copy: SIGBI Board Federation Consultative Council Federation Programme Action Committee

Dear Members, SIGBI Financial Statements 2021

Please find attached the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 for: • SIGBI Ltd – 31 March 2021 SIGBI Trading Ltd – 31 March 2021 As per normal procedure, the SIGBI Limited and SIGBI Trading Limited statements will be filed at Companies House, and SIGBI Ltd will be filed with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Please note the accounts for the three small charities will be sent under separate cover. Both companies have made a surplus this year though for different reasons. SIGBI Ltd's surplus arose from a reduction in meeting and travel costs due to the pandemic as well as continued efforts to keep costs down. Once again savings have been made due to taking advantage of reduced costs available to charities.

The Board of SIGBI have agreed to use this surplus by creating three new designated funds to support Membership, PR and Programme work across the Federation as well as increasing the amount available in the Reorganisation Fund. SIGBI Trading made a small operating loss but this was mitigated by a substantial profit on the sale of the investments during the year.

The company suffered a little from the conference being a virtual one in 2020 and the same will be the case in 2021 as surpluses that might arise from a face-to-face conference have not been realised. During the year, however, SIGBI Trading opened its on-line shop which has been hugely successful and continues to contribute significantly. Further products will be added to the shop in the coming weeks and the Trading Board continues to focus on ensuring its products are ethical, sustainable and profitable!

If you have any further questions regarding the accounts, please do not hesitate to contact me, copied to Gina Coad, SIGBI Executive Officer, by Friday 24 September 2021. This will give me the opportunity to respond before conference. ....and finally, are you a qualified accountant that would like to use your expertise to contribute to the development of our Federation?

If so, why not consider standing for the position of Finance Director of SIGBI Ltd? The post is advertised at the moment and the closing date for applications is 1st October 2021. We look forward to hearing from you!

In friendship, Ruth Healey



'Following permission from Head Teacher Clare at Castlevew Primary School, a visit was made during the holidays to photograph our little orchard. Amazingly one little tree had an apple on it - hope for the future that our project will bear more fruit in the years to come'.



*Morag and Myint Su in front of her care home when restrictions were lifted*

**Member News - Summer of 2021**

In the past few months, Morag has been phoning me to come and collect some personal hygiene wipes and lotions as well as books. I went round to the charity shops to ask if they would accept such donations, but apart from one shop where they took one box of wipes, they declined.

Fortunately, whilst speaking to a neighbour, I discovered that she volunteers at The Yard, a local adventure play centre for disabled children, just across from our street and they gratefully accepted such donations. The books I have taken to Gari's summer gathering and will also bring to SYH when we meet in person, to see if anyone would drop a few coins into our collection cup in exchange for anything they might like to read. Morag would very much like SIE to benefit from any fund-raising we could do with her donations. I can later take any remaining books to St Columba's book shop which is also in the neighbourhood.

***On a lighter note :***

What a relief when we were allowed to be in each other's houses again and not be confined to our own small bubbles.

I thought I would record Edith and myself 'working hard' for SIE, producing the address book and then relaxing in the sun afterwards. It was only about 11am but we thought we deserved something more stimulating than a cup of coffee or tea!!  
Myint Su





**Stitches for survival** This is a craft project devised to draw attention to COP26 – the climate change summit to be held in Glasgow. In keeping with the 1.5 degree temperature global warming target agreed in Paris, a scarf measuring 1.5 miles is being created for display around the country and at the meeting. Panels measuring 1m x 60cm are being knitted and will be stitched together. This is the combined effort of Nikki, Dorothy and Clephane. It will be sent to the organisers saying it comes from SI Edinburgh. After the Summit, pieces will be given to refugees and those in need of warmth.



<https://stitchesforsurvival.earth/>



Our bench is in a line with Boots chemist shop.

#### Friendship Links

Caldwell club held their first in person meeting in mid July when the members enjoyed examining our playing cards and booklet. The club, now 75 years old, is thinking about future fundraising events. Although the number of covid infections is rising, many people have not been vaccinated but restrictions have been lifted eg fairs and concerts are being held and restaurants are open.

Some of the club's recent donations went to the Nampa Family Justice Centre, Idaho Anti-trafficking Coalition, Valley Women and Children Shelter and Live Your Dream, which is the signature project of SI clubs in the USA. Marlene, our correspondent, hopes the club is staying stable and that as vaccination rates are greatly improved we can again see friends.



BRIGHT PAST  
BRILLIANT FUTURE

On behalf of Club President Nikki

Members of SI Edinburgh are invited to celebrate the

**CENTENERY OF SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL** at our candle lighting ceremony on

**Wednesday 29th September 2021 outside the Scottish Parliament Holyrood at 2pm for 2.15pm**

Four candles will be switched on to mark our commitment to

Soroptimist International SIGBI

Soroptimist International Scotland South Region

Soroptimist International Edinburgh

RSVP

to Edith, Lindsey or Nikki