



**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

SIEnna 202 October 2021

SIE President Nikki's Message

Well, there were a couple of significant milestones in the last month!. SI brilliantly celebrated 100 years of success, service and commitment to supporting women and girls – the on-line celebrations over the weekend of 2/3 October were fascinating, inspirational and humbling in equal measures. Congratulations to all who co-ordinated, presented and attended.

And SI Edinburgh not only met face to face for the first time in 18 months, but also enabled the Zoom connection to allow those not able to/comfortable attending face to face just yet, to join in and remain connected. Congratulations to Myint Su for believing we could do it, and to our two new members Trish and Marianne, who rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in to making the technology work. It was a great success!

A number of members have happily reported their apologies for meetings! – that's good, because they are away having been able to reconnect with friends and family or just take a well earned break. All the things we have missed for so long and can now appreciate again.

This also seems to have recharged batteries with a lot of enthusiasm and activity underway to support and learn about eg Action for Afghanistan, Human Trafficking and exploitation in Scotland and planning to

support the local women's hostel and Kids Love Clothes. Don't forget our Christmas present packing for Cranston Street on 10th November (at the end of our Business meeting)–bring along/send gifts such as warm gloves, scarves, umbrellas or anything else that will help our female friends feel cosy and comfortable in the Scottish winter. (Please also bring any spare Christmas paper, Sellotape, labels and ribbons.) It's not long now!

We have a number of meetings before this, but any ideas for our Christmas Social (8th December) would be very welcome – one option is 'Mince Pies and Christmas Wreaths' (in aid of NSPCC) - maybe a repeat of Bake Off earlier in the year and an opportunity to learn a new skill and create your own Christmas door adornment – all thoughts welcome!

PS Keep your eyes out for outcomes from COP26 – fingers crossed some serious decisions/ commitments will be made.

PPS Gari notes that our collaborative partner, UNHS, is hosting a COP26 event on Sustainability and Business at RBS Gogar, with their partner, the Scottish Leadership Institute. The theme of the day (9/11/2021) is to engage business leaders on how to achieve the SDGs. Do contact Gari if you'd like more information or if you'd like to attend.

SIE Business Meeting held on 13 October 2021

Present: Nikki (in the Chair) + in person: Edith, Lindsey, Myint Su, Marjory, Liz, Trish (P), Marianne and Dorothy; (on Zoom) Trish, Kathleen, Winifred, Gari, Pat and Alison.

Soroptimist Vision & Mission – read by Marjory.

Apologies were received from 8 members: Anna, Clephane, Christine, Patricia, Irene, Morag, Mary and Hilary

Induction of new member President Nikki inducted Marianne as a new member and welcomed her to the club.

News of members: Myint Su has visited Morag several times; she is still collecting toiletries.

Minutes of last Meeting 8 September 2021 – Accepted (proposed by Lindsey and seconded by Liz). no matters arising.

Actions: Trish (P) updated members on what she had found out about deposit return schemes in schools. Progress on these has been affected by Covid and other developments, but they are still under consideration and a further update may be obtained in early 2022.

Myint Su confirmed that she has sent £100 donation in memory of Johanna Raffan.

Correspondence: Everything has already been circulated to members by email.

Treasurer's Report: Myint Su

- The evening hire charge (£40) at ECTH is now to be paid by cash each meeting. Any evening when Myint Su is unable to attend she will arrange for someone else to make the payment and reimburse them thereafter.
- A letter of thanks has been received from Benmore for the £250 donation.
- Myint Su has received a donation of £250 from Carolyn McVey as a thank-you for the friendship and support she received while a member of SIE. (ACTION: President Nikki will write to thank Carolyn).
- SIGBI have requested photographs of all new members who joined in the centenary

year. This applies to Trish (P) and Marianna, if they wish to be included.

Membership: report given in Anna's absence

Anna has been in touch with a potential new member and has also been following up another lead. President Nikki also advised that Anna takes every opportunity to talk about Soroptimism, citing a recent encounter with policemen at the Scottish Parliament.

Programme Action: Lindsey.

Lindsey has already circulated her report. She highlighted the following:

- Cranston Street Christmas presents – there will probably be about 15 residents, and gifts of gloves, scarves and warm hats would be appreciated. Also, new toiletries would be welcomed. Trish (P) said she had a contact and may be able to obtain a donation. It was agreed that gifts should be brought to the meeting on 10 November, when they could be packaged up and a photograph taken. (ACTION: All members to provide gifts, if possible).
- Period poverty and foodbanks – Lindsey updated members on provision in Scotland, which appears to be very good. It was agreed that no action is required from SIE.
- COP26 Green Zone – see Lindsey's recent email about tickets..
- Stitches 4 survival – there has been some publicity about this recently. Thanks were expressed to Clephane for putting together SIE's section.

Action for Afghanistan: President Nikki and Liz have had a teach-in session with Pat on how to lobby. Nikki will now prepare an email to go from SIE to the Scottish Parliament asking for support for our campaign for refugees; information on what they will be doing for refugees; and asking them to ask questions of the Home Office about the delays in processing refugees. Members can then follow up with letters to their MSPs. We will also contact Edinburgh Council about what they will be doing for refugees, viz housing, provisions for children, trauma counselling etc.

Liz has made contact with Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) about what is needed and what SIE might be able to offer. Further contact with SRC is planned and it is hoped to have a speaker from a contact who has dealings with refugees and understands their real needs, in October.

It appears that there may already be some families here, so might we be able to help with activities, eg teaching knitting, tennis sessions? It was agreed that care would have to be taken as individuals could be suffering from trauma and members may not have the skills to deal with this. (ACTION: Liz and Nikki to speak with SRC and establish the actual immediate need).

It was noted that Pat had recently made a statement to the UN about education for girls in Afghanistan. Pat indicated that in the past week both the UN Secretary General and the head of UN Women had highlighted access for education for girls in Afghanistan as critical.

Programme: Alison has arranged for a speaker from her church who has been involved with refugees and may bring a refugee from Syria to the October speaker meeting.

The only meeting in December will be a social one. January meetings may be on Zoom. It was agreed that Alison and Trish should produce a programme showing the dates of future meetings. (ACTION: Alison and Trish to prepare a programme showing meeting dates)

Reports from Representatives:

Scotland South: President Nikki referred to the recent email about the future of Scotland South region. There was discussion on the options put forward and members agreed that they would support SIE if the offer were made to help organise region meetings (Option 2). It was also suggested that by making use of Zoom, Scotland-wide meetings could be easily accommodated.

SI President-Elect Maureen Maguire will be speaking at the Scotland South meeting on 6

November on her theme and project for her term as International President.

Communication: SIEnna – Items for inclusion to Gari by 21/10/21, please.

AOCB:

SIGBI General Meeting – President Nikki and Liz will liaise as to who will be SIE Representative at the SIGBI General Meeting.

SI Centenary – Congratulations were expressed to Lindsey on getting a photograph of the candle-lighting ceremony into the Evening News.

Liz had participated in the SI Centenary online and indicated that she had found the project reports inspiring.

It was noted that the Scottish Parliament Members' Room would be made available to SI Scotland South and North on 7 December for a centenary celebration.

Californian redwoods – Liz recently joined a meeting of the Scottish Redwoods Trust. She asked if the original redwoods planted by Soroptimists in California had been affected by the recent fires there, and was advised that they had almost certainly survived.

COP26 Meteorological Society meeting – Marjory and Edith attended and recommended that others interested check on Youtube as a recording may be available there.

Visiting Soroptimist – President Nikki and several other members are due to meet Marie Antoinette Westra, from Netherlands, for lunch on 19 October.

Latha – (who visited SIE previously) sends her best wishes to SIE, via Edith.

Date of next meeting : 27 October 2021 at 7:30pm at ECYH (Zoom access also available)

Date of next Business Meeting: 10 November 2021 at ECYH (Zoom also!)

Benmore Redwood Trees

In the course of a rather wet holiday on the west coast, I had the opportunity to visit Benmore Gardens. So needless to see I made a beeline to the trees we have been fundraising for.

The avenue is cordoned off while work is carried out but the scale is obvious. The person in the photo is about 5ft 2, which gives an idea! My wee camera couldn't cope with the full height.

The main avenue



The machinery for aerating the trees

The gardens must be lovely in spring but despite the rain, the autumn colours were beautiful.

And I was heartened to discover that a good number of my fellow travellers were already aware of Soroptimist International.

Clephane

PROGRAMME UPDATE

On Wednesday 27 October, the Club is having a presentation from Kristee Boyd, Community Development Worker at St.Peter's Church, Luton Place, who will speak about refugees and their needs on arriving in the UK.

She is also hoping to bring a Syrian, to describe his experiences of arriving in Edinburgh as a refugee.

I am sorry not to have arranged the programme of speakers for this year in advance, but it has been difficult with all of the uncertainty about whether or how or when the Club would be meeting this year.

Alison