



**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

SIEnna 204 January 2022

SIE President's Message

Happy New Year and welcome to our first edition of SIEnna for 2022.

It is with sadness that I start our newsletter with acknowledging the recent death of our long serving member Mary (B). Many of you remember her significant contribution to the club and it was lovely for those of us that had never met her, that she remained in touch with club activities through a number of members – interested and curious to the end. Thank you Mary for your years of service and support. (Please read her Obituary in the Scotsman 19/1/21 which reflects an amazing life and a life of significant service and achievement in a male dominated environment)

Just when we thought we were getting back to more face to face meetings, unfortunately the Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel made the decision that they will not be open to public meetings until March. However, on a cold winters night when the weather is not at its kindest, being able to connect with friends from the comfort of your own sofa is no bad thing. We will be back together (physically!) before too long! It is great that there is much more positive news re COVID,

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and whilst we are not 'out of the woods' we are hopefully through the worst of the latest variant which will all play into a more sociable 2022.

Our 'Christmas get together' was a great example of the benefit of spending time with friends/colleagues – it was a very enjoyable and relaxing day, with some of us meeting up at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (with a personal insight from Anna about her famous relative, recognised in the Gallery, who was instrumental in the founding of the Free Church of Scotland – ask her about him ! Fascinating!) and then more of us gathering for a meal up in Fairmilehead. There was lots of chatter and catching up – it was a great atmosphere and a lovely evening.

So as we start our hard work for 2022 and head towards our new Soroptimist year in April, I hope this edition of SIEnna gives you food for thought, inspiration, motivation and pride & confidence that we continue to do well and continue to do good.

Nikki

**SIE Business Meeting held on 12
January 2022 (on Zoom)**

Present: President Nikki(in the Chair) + Liz, Lindsey, Myint Su, Anna, Christine, Clephane, Gari, Marjory, Alison, Edith, Pat, Patricia, Trish (P),

and Dorothy plus Eva M (SI Dunfermline), Francisca M (SI Harare) and Thea O'S (3S applicant)

Soroptimist Vision & Mission – read by Christine.

Apologies for absence were received from 7 members: Irene, Morag, Hilary, Trish M, Kathleen, Winifred and Marianne.

In remembrance There was a short period of reflection in remembrance of Mary Bell (SI Edinburgh) and Jean Young (SI Falkirk and a past President of Scotland South) who both died recently.

News of members Edith reported that Morag is well but is confined to her room. Irene has limited mobility but is otherwise in good form.

Pat advised members of the recent death of the husband of Tina Chapman (SI Dunfermline, and a past President of SI Scotland South).

3S application – Thea O'S Marjory introduced Thea, who is a pupil at Mary Erskine School and is planning to spend a year in China, from August 2022, with Project Trust. She will be teaching at a school in rural China. Thea gave a brief summary of her current activities, and her fundraising and also highlighted what she hopes to achieve while in China. Members agreed to support the application. (ACTION: Marjory to progress)

Minutes of last Meeting 10 November 2021 – Accepted (proposed by Lindsey and seconded by Clephane). There were no matters arising.

Actions: Trish (P) updated members on what she had found out about LinkedIn. She indicated that she was unsure as to whether or not it was the best platform for SIE but will find out more from clubs who have been using it and will report back.

Anna completed and returned the voting form as agreed at the November meeting.

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

Treasurer's Report: Myint Su

- Speakers' fees paid were: £20 to Edinburgh City Mission and £20 for the Bonobo charity.

- £1,000 has been sent to AfghanAid from the Charity Fund.

- An acknowledgment has been received from Empty Kitchens Full Hearts for £30 donation (see minutes of November meeting). (Trish(P) reported that they have moved to new premises. She thanked Anna and Myint Su for organising the donation).

- 200 shares in No.63 were purchased, as previously agreed, and Myint Su has retained the confirmation with the shares paperwork.

- Irene has made a donation to the International President's Appeal. Members who wish to contribute may do so by paying direct into SIE bank account or by giving Myint Su a cheque – either by post or when we resume face-to-face meetings in March. All contributions should be clearly labelled as intended for the IP appeal.

- Myint Su has obtained some centenary stamps from SIGBI. They are decorative, and Myint Su has used them to send cards to fellow Soroptimists.

Membership : Anna

Anna expressed her pleasure that Eva and Francisca had both joined our meeting this evening. At her request, they each gave a brief summary of their current work activities. Each indicated her hope to attend our meetings when she can.

Anna said that she would send information on the club programme to other contacts who might be interested in joining.

Programme: Alison

- 26 January 2022 – May East from UN House will speak on Gender, Climate and Cities.
- 23 February 2022 – Dr Kay Richmond (SIGBI) will talk on Programme Action changes.
- 23 March 2022 – Morag Smith will talk on Glasgow Womens Library

(NOTE : Update post Business Meeting : Speaker for 26 January 2022 will be Cathy Cottridge, SIGBI President and May East's talk will be rescheduled for another date)

Programme Action: Lindsey

Liz gave an update on Refugee support. She has a network of connections now, viz Scottish Refugee Council, Scots Contact Forum – a database of groups interested in being involved with refugees in Scotland, and Edinburgh City Mission. Liz indicated that it was not clear how best SIE can help but she will continue to monitor the situation. A lobbying email is being drawn up by Nikki and Liz and will be made available to members in due course. There was some discussion about how many families from Afghanistan were already in Edinburgh. Liz has already made contact with the Housing Dept and hopes to get some information from them in due course.

Lindsey asked for volunteers for a sorting session at Kids Love Clothes. Anna and Edith volunteered.

Lindsey advised that some of the Stitches for Survival panels were available for display and asked if anyone had ideas about how these might be used. The Parliament was ruled out as a possible venue because of current restrictions.

Communication: SIEnna - Items for inclusion to Gari by 22 January 2022, please.

AOCB:

SIGBI General Meeting –Nikki reported that the resolution amendment voted

on at the November meeting had been rejected. She recommended that SIE vote in favour of the resolution to change the term of office of SIGBI President to 2 years. This was agreed unanimously. (ACTION: Nikki to complete and return the voting paper). SIGBI Director of Finance - Members agreed to vote for the sole nomination. (ACTION: Nikki to complete and return the voting paper)

No. 63 – SIE now holds 277 shares. It was agreed that Nikki would represent SIE at the virtual AGM on 22 January. She advised that she expected there to be a resolution to retain the current Executive as Covid has prevented progress in the past year and will vote in favour. She intends to alert members if there are any contentious issues advised to her prior to the meeting.

Centenary event at Parliament – Those members who attended were asked to submit a few notes on the event. Clephane volunteered to edit these for SIEnna.

Great Tapestry of Scotland – Christine reported that “Antiques Road Trip” on BBC on 10 January had included a visit to the Tapestry and the SIE panel had featured. It can be watched on BBC iPlayer. Myint Su indicated that she had a book on the Tapestry, signed by the authors, which she was willing to donate for a raffle.

Enquiry re Sarah Creswick – Nikki advised that no record had been found in SI Edinburgh or SI Leith files of this lady having been a member. She was thanked by the enquirer for having investigated.

Advisor to W7/G7 – we are very pleased to confirm that Pat Black, through Soroptimist International, has been appointed as an Advisor to next year's W7. This group works to ensure gender equality is on the agenda for international G7 discussions. Congratulations to Pat.

**Date of next meeting : 26 January 2022
at 7:30pm on Zoom.**

**Date of next Business Meeting:
9 February 2022 on Zoom.**

**7th December 2021.
SI Centenary at the Scottish
Parliament**

One hundred years since the first club was founded in California and Soroptimism is still flourishing - that's a pretty amazing achievement in this day and age when choices in fashion, style, television, the arts etc seem to change regularly and blow away in the wind. It is an achievement that our own Scottish Parliament was willing to applaud with a small reception at Holyrood a month or two after the candle lighting ceremony that our club took part in to mark our centenary. It might all have been taken for granted but look how 'old' our own club is and look how many amazing women have passed through our membership leaving behind a better world for women and girls.

Invitations were sent to all 15 Scottish Clubs and we were fortunate to receive 3 enabling Nikki, Anna and Lindsey to represent SI Edinburgh. Pat also received an invitation in view of her Regional and International roles.

The event was hosted by MSP Rona MacKay who had taken the trouble to do her homework and was happy to laud the work done here in Scotland. How pertinent that there was a delay in the event beginning due to a debate in the chamber on Violence Against Women!

We were fortunate that Soroptimist International President Elect Maureen Maguire, and SIGBI President Cathy Cottridge were able to be present and

speak to the assembled Soroptimists and guests including some MSPs. There was a video presentation from Shona Robinson, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government. One speaker reminded us that every generation of women had to fight for their rights.

It was a great opportunity to showcase the work of Scottish Soroptimists club members, to speak to members in person after the lockdowns, and to speak to MSPs directly one to one.

There were posters and videos from Scottish Clubs displaying Programme Action Activities showing tree planting and banners of stitches for survival which were knitted for COP26. Thanks to Lindsey and Liz for pulling together a great video showing the work undertaken by SI Edinburgh- it was also great to see Pat up there on the screen sharing her thoughts and encouragement for the work done in the name of Soroptimism

Despite the challenges of extreme weather and a pandemic, it was a very special evening and a fitting tribute to '100 years of Soroptimism'

A huge thank you to everyone who organized and facilitated the event. Sending out invitations, dealing with the cancellations. Lugging all the posters and banners, liaising with the Parliament officials and putting together powerful 'goody bags' for the MSP's and guests.

There is an article and photos of the event on the Scotland South website www.Sigbi.org/Scotland-south

Nikki, Lindsey, Anna.



An opportunity to join a programme of training in vocal ensemble techniques through the music of Women composers. Open to YOUNG SINGERS aged c.15-25 of any gender and at varying skill levels.

Contact -

Frances M Lynch

Artistic Director

electric voice theatre

39 Birnam Rd, London N4 3LJ

07831 238743 / 020 7281 0672

Orange the world – meeting to review ideas Dublin, December 2021

Attendees from Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and the UK

Food for thought.....?

What people achieved during the 16 days of activism:

Dublin

“Shoebboxes” for women refugees

Public buildings and churches floodlit orange. This was a first for Dublin whose engagement with the City Council got the City Hall, Mansion House and Obelisk lit up.

Campaigning with girl guides

Display of posters in shops and banners on display. Flags (provided by Belgium)

Social media campaign and public speaking competition

Wexford

In Wexford they ran a “follow the flag” campaign. Using posters and photographs to highlight the issues.

Flag on display at the County Council building.

Partnered with Rape Crisis, Girl Guides and have the Hairdressing Federation now involved.

Antwerp

Ran an “orange shoe” campaign. Orange dyed shoes exhibited in local shop windows with messaging about where to seek help or report concerns. Group had discussion about whether we could persuade one of the multinationals –

Mango/H&M/M&S/John Lewis/Next etc to support this. Could also be through online based stores such as ASOS.

Netherlands based company Tony Choclonely produced a specifically designed chocolate bar wrapper. All sale profits go to O the W campaign.

In France and Belgium, a similar campaign was run on bread wrappers.

Liz

Keeping SIE alive and kicking! Nothing like planning and being prepared!

We are now well over halfway through our 2021/2022 Soroptimist year!

Which means in just over 3 months we will be looking for members to volunteer for the roles within SI Edinburgh that keep us going, keep us working, keep us motivated and keep us doing good!

The maths are –

- we have 18 roles within the club, ranging from the officer roles we require to be legitimate (President, Treasurer, Secretary etc) to roles that we have introduced that help the club function (eg SIEnna editor)
- a number of roles require support/back-up/ teams
- we have 20 members who could take on a role

Mmmmmmmh! It's tight!

We need every member to take on a role plus to act as support for other roles

But never to shirk away from a challenge – we need to aim to have 'names in the frames' in readiness for handover in April 2022. Those incumbents who will come to the end of their tenure in 2022 (some having served for 4 years and in multiple roles during that time!) are willing to coach and show their replacement 'the ropes' and, no doubt, mentor going into the new Soroptimist year.

So plenty of support available – we just need the volunteers now! These are the roles we have to enable us to run the club. Some incumbents will be eligible to/wish to remain in role – and that is fantastic – but we will have a number of roles unfilled and filled roles will need support. **Please consider a role you would be interested in engaging in & let me know!**

President

President Elect

Treasurer

Programme Action

Membership

Correspondence Secretary

Minute Secretary

Communications – Press and Publicity

Communications – Social Media

Communications – SIEnna Editor

AGM Secretary

Attendance

Programme

Zoom meeting host

3S Coordinator

Region Representative

Friendship Links

UNA Representative

To get the ball rolling, Liz and I have been discussing our roles as President and President Elect and we would like to put the following proposal to the Club (to be voted on at February's business meeting)

- I would be prepared to stand as President for a further year
- Liz would be prepared to stand as President Elect for a further year and postpone taking on the President's role until April 2023
- Liz would consider standing as President for two years.

NOTE : This will NOT set a precedent for future members who wish to become President – the tenure would be 1 year (with the option to offer to increase that to two years if they so wish)

Your Club Needs You

President Nikki

Resume of exploration of areas where support may be most effectively provided for Afghan families in Edinburgh

- contact with Annick at the Scottish Refugee Council
 - Club sign up to their forum where information about work going on/support needed is posted - I am happy to circulate these messages but am getting more than 3 a day so provided the Club is content I will continue to only share anything that I think may be of direct interest
 - Email contact with Edinburgh City Council officers in housing/resettlement – no response yet from Alistair D, to be followed up
 - Speaker presentation from Kristee and Syrian family (**)
 - Attendance at seminar run by AfghanAid
 - Agreement to send a donation of £1000 to Afghan Aid as they are still able to operate on the ground in Afghanistan - sent
 - Email letter sent to Edinburgh City Mission regarding their work - response awaited
 - Draft email letter to lobby government regarding the restrictive rules around asylum seekers working in this country in process
 - Contact with Dunfermline - Helen L has provided ESOL input for refugee families through her work. Her daughter Joy is linked into the City Mission. Liz
- **PS Mouaz Hadil and their son Bachir visited UNHouse Scotland. Hadil will make cakes for events and Mouaz will create graphic flyers! All orders considered xxx**

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**You've heard of the G7: Now the W7!
The W7 brings together women's rights advocacy groups from the G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, USA, UK) and from countries around the world committed to women's and girls' rights.**



I attended my first meeting of the W7 on January 20th which was very exciting. It started off with a major international launch of the work of the G7 and the supporting work of the W7. For those who want to find out more check out the website at <https://women7.org/>.

I will be working on a paper looking at recommendations for the improvement of lives of women in the post COVID recovery. We have been placed in Working Groups with themes identified by German's Government as President of G7 for this year. They take over from the UK who held the Presidency for 2021. One of the areas we will be lobbying on will be pressing Governments to indicate how they have implemented the

recommendations and agreements from the 2021 process.

The schedule of work is intense with first drafts of reports to be completed by 21 February and lots of meetings to get there. Looks as though I will have my time taken up for the next few weeks, and that is in addition to the preparations for the Commission on the Status of Women in mid March.

I will try to write something for SIEnna each month to let you know of our progress. All our work will be aimed at a W7 Hybrid Summit in Berlin 24-25 May so I'm hoping some of you will be able to join me there.

Pat Black

A message from Alison

Would any Club office holder, who either knows that their term of office is due to come to an end at the AGM or feels that they are unable to continue or would like to have a change, be so good as to let me know by 31 January 2022. However, if any office holder would like to be re-elected for their position and are eligible, I should also be most grateful if they would let me know. I should greatly appreciate this, as I want to be able to say what positions are going to fall vacant at the AGM at the February Club Business meeting.

UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons



Us doing our bit - Pat and Gari at the stall to provide information and a Celebration of the One Year Anniversary of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The TPNW makes nuclear weapons illegal in countries ratifying the Treaty. So far there are 58 States Parties ratifying. Let's try for 59!

Programme

26 January 2022

SIGBI President, Cathy Cottridge, to speak on the changes which are being proposed for SIGBI

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23 February 2022

Dr Kay Richmond, SIGBI Programme Action (PA) Officer, to speak on the planned PA programme

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23 March 2022

Morag Smith to speak on the Glasgow Womens' Library

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25 May 2022

May East from UN House Scotland to speak on Gender, Climate and Cities.