



**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

SIEnna 213 January 2023

SIE President's Message

Happy New Year and welcome to our first edition of SIEnna for 2023. This is a packed and informative edition for the start of the year, so I will keep my welcome short.

It was great to see almost a full house at our January business meeting resulting in good discussions and positive actions agreed for a number of issues our communities are facing and for which we want to help make a difference – from Edinburgh city centre to Afghanistan and to Ukraine.

The success of our Orange the World monthly coffee catch-ups and the positive response to the Stalking and Spiking posters shows that even small actions make a difference if we remain constant, consistent and persistent. Perhaps this is a good mantra for us in our projects in the year ahead.

Here's to a year of great teamwork and a busy, constructive, successful and productive 2023.

Our letter to MSPs

Dear (MSP)

I am writing to you on behalf of Soroptimist International Edinburgh (SIE). <https://www.facebook.com/SIEdinburghScotland/>

On the 25th of every month Edinburgh Soroptimists draw attention to the worldwide UN campaign "Say NO - UNiTE to end violence against women and girls by 2030. The campaign known internationally as "Orange the World".

We meet in a public place and wear something orange! A simple but visible message.

Many of us were able to view and encouraged by the strength of the Scottish Government Debate led by Christina McKelvie on November 30th 2022 to mark the 16 days of Activism, a core part of the campaign.

We would like to encourage you to keep the momentum going in support of this campaign by also wearing something orange on the 25th of each month.

To find out more:-

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/orange-the-world>



SI Edinburgh Business Meeting

January 11th 2023 on Zoom meeting

Present : Nikki (in the chair) Anna; Lindsey; Myint Su; Marjory; Winifred; Gari; Clephane; Edith; Alison; Christine; Dorothy; Pat; Liz.

Nikki welcomed Jessie – a prospective new member

Apologies: Irene

Soroptimist Vision & Mission read by Myint Su

News of Members

A minutes reflection on Morag's life was held - all thoughts and memories on her long life to be sent to Edith asap for inclusion in February SIEnna.

SI Caldwell passed on best wishes via Irene. Nikki received message in thanks from Irene for birthday card sent.

NB – The Friendship Link with SI Maribor, Slovenia, has now been completed by both clubs

Minutes of last meeting (9th November)

- Action for Nikki re progressing eClub with UN House to be carried forward
- Invitation to UN House interns to be followed up Nikki
- Outstanding action ongoing awaiting info from Margaret Mowat – keep under review
- Women in Custody – Gari as a JP remarked that there were very few women held in custody over a weekend in Edinburgh – there may be further developments from SSSR

Agreed: Gari proposed; Myint Su seconded

President's Remarks Successful Christmas Bash held on 14th December which was enjoyed by all present including 2 past members and 2 visitors.

Treasurer report

No update

Myint Su advised members that she would pay for hire of Youth Hostel to end of March – 2 meetings in February and 1 in March. Payment is made in cash so Myint Su will reimburse herself from the Club's account.

Programme Action

(Cranston Street) Women's Hostel Christmas Gifts delivered – thank you Lindsey

NB – We might wish to consider changing the name as the hostel is now in Leith – new address sent to Secretary and PA

16 days of Action 25th November-10th December 2022

Poster campaign – 'Stalking' and 'Spiking' posters were successfully delivered to all university campuses in the Edinburgh area. Positive responses received and interest shown. Gari received a couple of enquires about SI as a result. There are postcards available to be given to prospective members.

The cost of printing posters has been taken by Liz's company thus freeing up our assets for charitable donations.

UNiTE Orange the world – 25th of the month

Next meet up National Portrait Gallery on 25th January wearing orange.

Proposal to attend Parliament when they are addressing these issues wearing orange – grow momentum build up over the months – possible focus on the 25th. Invite Women's Aid/Refuge to join. Note to every women MSP reminding them of our interest in these issues and highlighting our organisation. Action: Liz to draft email and run past advocacy group.

Gari to ask someone to keep us posted and check the Parliamentary website for pertinent debates and dates. Possible opportunity to link in to key debates e.g. consultation re Misogyny Bill.

Chris will send photo back to Evening News for 25th January coffee meet up

Conversation cafes. The Welcoming is organising conversation groups for female refugees living locally - includes coffee and cake and warm clothing - next steps – find out how they run just now. Join in with one of their groups – connect with Gosia and Chiara again and establish when and where groups are running and when it might be appropriate for us to take part in/visit a group.

Refuge campaign signed and sent on behalf of club by Liz

Police Survey for March 2023

<https://consult.scotland.police.uk/strategy-insight-and-innovation/your-police-2022-2023/>

Suggest that our response has a clear focus on women and girls' safety in the City if possible

Feedback to Liz by January 31st Liz will collate response.

Education in Afghanistan

Update from Nikki from Linda Norgrove Foundation. Nikki to keep in touch and find out how we can best support. Donation considered and agreed of £450.00.

Membership

Potential new members – Anna is in touch.

Anna to provide update for SIEnna on national picture and new “hub” having attended a Scotland North/South joint meeting with Dishy - sigbi membership chair, who wants to focus on Associate Membership.

Key updates

- No 63 AGM – awaiting information before 21st January. Nikki to represent the club. Agreed voting delegated to Edith and Nikki
- Winifred received email message from Natalia in Ukraine. Will be sent

out through SIEnna. Winifred trying to keep in touch with Kyiv

- Christine to chase up Sight Village correspondence re volunteering

SIEnna. Items for next edition of SIEnna to Gari and Clephane by 19th January

AOCB

Feb 3rd Conference ACERT – information to be circulated

SIEdinburgh programme 2023

11 January 2023 Business Meeting

25 January 2023 Patricia Cacho on “Casa Serene La Joya, Agua Amarga, Almeria”. Zoom Meeting only

8 February 2023 Business meeting

22 February Sharon Cameron, NHS Lothian ‘Scottish Government Plan for Women’s Health’

8 March 2023 Business Meeting

22 March Speaker Meeting – Kate Alexander on “The Scottish Detainees’ Project” Zoom Meeting only

12 April 2023 Business Meeting

26 April 2023 AGM

10 May 2023 Business Meeting

24 May Professor Yvonne McEwen “The ‘green’ electric car: the tragic human and environmental costs”

Marie Curie: sign up for Saturday 18th March 10 am – 12 noon at Craigmyle Retail Park. There is usually plenty of parking space, outside Sainsbury’s and in the middle of the other end of the area. Edith

UKRAINE

A powerful, practical and poignant update from Ukraine – Nataliya, a fellow Soroptimist from SI Dnipro corresponding with our member Winifred.

Dear Winifred

I want to believe that you are healthy and are in a pre-holiday mood. Soon you have the greatest holiday of Christmas. I was lucky to be on the eve of this holiday in Germany and Scotland. It's great!

I'm fine. Now I am with my mother, but tomorrow I will go to the Dnieper, because I will have classes from Tuesday to Friday, and here the lights are turned off very often. In Dnipro, where I live, they also turn off, but, as a rule, I have time to conduct classes. The students who live in the area suffer greatly without electricity. They contact me by phone if there is a connection, but there is no electricity. But, you know, I have never heard any words of discontent from anyone.

The main products in the store are, only the price of them is growing rapidly. Many drugs are not available. Prices have gone up on everything. There are lonely people; it is very difficult for them.

But we understand that in a military situation it cannot be otherwise, it can be even worse. There was no electricity, water, communications in my apartment for 4 days, but there was gas. Well!

Olga received help for members of our club. Therefore, for all the members of the club who are in the Dnieper, they bought warm underwear, sleeping bags, power packs. This is a great help for us. Natalya (this is our president now) received help to pay for medicines for club members.

Money was also allocated for refugees. For some of them, we purchased power

banks and paid for the purchase of medicines and products.

My daughter-in-law and granddaughter returned from Germany. Now it is difficult for them, because everything in their apartment is connected to electricity. The daughter-in-law seizes every moment - she cooks food at night, they dress warmly. They are great, because they find a way out.

This is all the information about me, about our club. The letter had to be written for several days, because the electricity was often turned off.

I congratulate you and our friends on the upcoming holidays, Merry Christmas!.

Thank you for your understanding, sympathy and support

With warmest wishes to you and friends.

P.S.I will attach a photo - this is the homework of my student, which she sent me. She wrote it by candlelight, because there is no light.

Love, Nataliya

What resilience, determination and hope are reflected in Nataliya's words. Regrettably we cannot reproduce the photo Nataliya refers to (technical issues!) but it showed a page of handwritten notes, next to a lit candle embossed with the words 'enjoy the little things'. Incredible strength of character being shown by so many people. Inspirational and humbling in equal measures. Nikki



SI SCOTLAND NORTH AND SCOTLAND SOUTH MEMBERSHIP FORUM

ZOOM MEETING 5.12.22

Present: Aileen SISS President, Pat SISON past President, Dishy SIGBI Director of Membership, Iris SI Crieff, Anna SI

June 2023 Business Meeting

Edinburgh, Brenda SI Glasgow, Edith SI Edinburgh, Susan SI Falkirk, Fiona SI Dunfermline

Apologies: Janice SI Aberdeen, Audrey SI Falkirk, Marilyn.

Aileen welcomed everyone and especially Dishy, SIGBI Director of Membership.

Dishy spoke about the new plans for the SIGBI Board and the changes that would take place. She will be working closely with Lindsay Director of Programme and Anne Director of PR and Marketing. Women today have very different lives, and the traditional soroptimist club model is not for them. Dishy has been working with women's business networks, which meet in the mornings, do not involve selling and above all are very friendly. They have speakers and do fundraising but there is no record of this – whereas we link our data to the UN. Linked In is another community of women that she has tapped into.

Feedback from these women about the SIGBI website has been mostly negative. It is elitist, out of touch, white middle class and dull. They don't want mission statements they want to know eg how much money we have sent to Ukraine.

Dishy described Facebook as an "echo chamber". Posts are circulated round other soroptimists and do not spread out with. There is a need to spread our

message out to non-soroptimists, there needs to be a clear message as to what Soroptimism is. "We Stand Up for Women". We need to give examples of our work and we need to appeal to people's emotions so that they want to be part of the story. Dishy described getting to know other women through other networks as a "slow burn", they get to know you, they trust you, they then want to know more about Soroptimism. This approach does work but we need to take everyone with us. Invite other women to meetings to hear the speaker, **not** business.

We must cut back our processes, eg keep minimal working notes. We must market Soroptimism as a brand not as clubs or regions. There should be no negative messages. We need different styles of membership – linked membership, associate membership (especially as a way of introducing women into the organisation), virtual clubs etc. Take away boundaries! Have speakers that make us feel good about ourselves.

The Board will be working on simplifying processes, the Hub launches in January, and this will be a positive development. Our website must capture readers and we must compete with the business networks. Allowing monthly payments of fees is crucial - £6 or £7 a month seems much more acceptable and reasonable. There will be new leaflets, banners, and shared information.

We must come back to the objects of Soroptimism – we are a volunteering organisation, and our projects must have an impact on women. It is not enough to raise money – we need to say what the money will do for women. Instead of "we raised £500 at a coffee morning" we say instead "£500 was raised which will pay for 10 starter packs for women"

We must also remember we are a charity – this will appeal to businesses and their corporate social responsibility. Our brand shows we have integrity and humanity – we are about empowering women and girls.

Dishi then answered a variety of questions including working with young men, collaborating with other women’s organisation e.g., around International Women’s Day, schools, and campus clubs.

Everyone found Dishi to be inspiring and it was encouraging to hear of the changes that will be taking place. Dishi advised that Board members had committed to be directly contactable by members. She reminded us also of the need to treat everyone first of all with kindness.

Dishi was thanked for joining the meeting and sharing her vision for the future.

Next Meeting: This would be arranged by Aileen for late January

Soroptimist International - International President’s Appeal - donations welcome

Each January, it has been tradition within the SIE Club to raise the profile of the International President’s Appeal so members can consider individual donations. This year’s appeal is to support an initiative within our own SIGBI Federation. The programme proposes to train and upskill 100 Women and Girls from across three countries in the Caribbean (Trinidad & Tobago, St. Vincent & The Grenadines and Grenada)

It is with an organisation called Restore a Sense of I Can (RSC), a non-profit organization working, in part, on the development and support of technology clubs in schools, tertiary institutions and communities throughout the Caribbean. The vision is to have a common digital education community supporting each other’s goals, enabling greater individual achievement with existing resources. Full details

<https://sigbi.org/members/files/Opening-Doors-to-a-Bright-Future-fourth-project-announcement-3-January-2023.pdf>

Any members wishing to make a donation can transfer funds to our Club account (please annotate your payment with your Surname and ‘Int Pres App’) or send a cheque to Myint Su. Thank you. Nikki

