



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

### **SIEnna 220 2023**

#### **SIE President's Message**

When I started to think about the content of this month's message I found it very difficult to know what to focus on and how best to do it. Recent world events have felt quite overwhelming.

Then I came upon this message posted by UNA – UK which is not only a call to action but a reminder of the necessity for global collaboration in the face of not only “man – made” but also climate related humanitarian disasters.

Soroptimists International (SI) absolutely embody this spirit through their world wide networks and representation at the UN. Irrespective of proposed adjustments to the structure of our Federation (SIGBI) let's keep talking loudly about what we do, what we can do and the positive impact that it has on the lives of women and girls.

.....  
UNA-UK, together with more than 300 organisations from 50 countries, is calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Israel to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and further loss of innocent lives.

We have witnessed unfathomable death and destruction in the Gaza Strip and Israel. Thousands of people have been killed, injured, displaced, and nearly two hundred remain held hostage, including children and elderly.

We urge the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General and all world leaders to take immediate action to ensure a ceasefire comes into effect. It remains our only option to avert further loss of civilian life and humanitarian catastrophe. Anything less will forever be a stain on our collective conscience.

October 24th is UN Day, marking the anniversary of the UN Charter entering into force in 1945. It's a day to celebrate not just the longevity of the UN, but the role that global collaboration has in establishing a better, more peaceful world.

But peace sometimes seems far away. This month we have watched the heartbreaking situation of conflict and violence unfold in Israel and Palestine. We invite you to join us in calling on the UK and its allies to use all tools at its disposal to avert another humanitarian catastrophe and urgently seek to secure a permanent ceasefire.

Marissa Conway CEO UNA-UK

.....  
On behalf of SIE I would like to express heartfelt condolences to any members and their families locally or in our world wide friendship groups who have been caught up in or affected by the conflict this month in the Middle East.

Our thoughts are with you.  
Liz  
President 2023 – 2024

## **SIE Business Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 7.30pm (at ECHS and on Zoom)**

**Present:** Liz was in the Chair, Nikki, Dorothy, Lindsey, Edith, Marjory, Anna, Winifred, Clephane, Alison, Judith

**Welcome ;** Liz welcomed Judith and indicated how pleased she was that Judith had joined the Club. Liz also thanked Anna and Nikki , and all who had participated in the Open Evening last month

**Soroptimist Vision & Mission:** read by Clephane

**Apologies** for absence were received from members Irene, Pat, Gari, Christine, Kathleen, Elaine

## **Minutes of last Business Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

### **Actions/Matters Arising:**

Liz had written to Francisca Mutapi, congratulating her on her film nomination. We received a very nice response apologising for not being able to attend any meetings, but that she hoped to see us all soon.

All other matters covered by the agenda or carried forward.

Minutes were proposed and seconded by Dorothy and Anna

### **Key Topics**

**Programme : Alison :** difficulty securing speakers for next few meetings. Hoping to get Thea (previous 3S participant to come and present to a future meeting) Suggestion for November meeting to attend the Art College in Lauriston Place, where a team are looking at growing and using flax as a sustainable product to make clothes etc. (this links in with the successful Joint Region event held this year re Sustainable clothing) Visit would include a demonstration. 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023. Full details to follow. October meeting : Anna suggested induction of two new members, plus presentations on all our Club Friendship Links. Possibly invite members from the Friendship Links to join

the meeting. Also an opportunity to agree details of our '16 Days of Activism' activity.

**ACTION:** Liz to liaise with Christine re full list of Friendship Links and connect with reps to prepare updates,

**ACTION :** room at ECH to be cancelled for 22/11/23 – Dorothy

**Update on 'Future of Scotland South Region': Nikki:** At recent Regional AGM the three proposals for the future direction/management of the Region were voted on. Unanimous decision for Option 3 which was - to continue the Region but recognise we need to operate in a different way. Follow up meetings are to be arranged to finalise new operating model. Very positive discussion.

**SIGBI Modernisation consultation: Liz :** Liz led us through the various aspects of the proposal and opened the floor for discussion. (see separate document of response from Club) View was that it is difficult to agree/disagree to proposals whilst there were so many questions still outstanding. Questions will be posed in the response. Members were encouraged to respond individually also – their response can be based on the Club response if they wish.

### **Other Updates :-**

**Programme Action :** Lindsey had visited the Women's Hostel to seek views on Christmas Gifts. They confirmed they are very appreciative of the gifts and similar content to previous years- toiletries and a wrapped gift (hats, brollies, gloves, scarves). Agreed to continue this year - awaiting numbers but suggest we collect and wrap items at the Business meeting in November. Lindsey also mentioned the Shoe Box Appeal (a number of local Churches are collecting filled shoe boxes) Suggestion was that information be posted in SIEnna and people respond individually. Lindsey can assist with locations for collection. Liz confirmed she had completed her 'weaving' square and had despatched that to SOHTIS as part of the 'Weaving 1000 Scarves' campaign

**Treasurer's Report :Dorothy** : Nothing to report. Edith asked if we were planning to give a gift to SI Kirkcaldy on their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Agreed that as they were our granddaughter Club it would be appropriate. Donation of £70 for them to use for their charity work was agreed.

**Membership: Anna** : Thanks to Pat and Alanya for their presentations at the Open Evening. Mentors agreed for new members Judith and Elaine.

**Friendship Links** : updates to be presented at October Speaker Meeting 25/10/23. Full list to be obtained from Christine and noted in next SIEnna

**SIEnna** : items for next SIEnna to Gari/Clephane by Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October

**Orange Café : Clephane** : October - as this falls on our next speaker meeting date, decision made not to hold the Orange Café but we ask members to attend the Speaker Meeting wearing Orange. November – proposal that we attend the Cafe at the Scottish Parliament. Details to be confirmed.

**AOCB:** Lindsey and Dorothy would like to reinstate the friendship coffee meetings for all members to meet up socially, for a coffee and a chat. Dorothy will host first one at her house on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 10.30-12.30 – invite to be sent to all members.

**Date of next speaker meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023** face-to-face at ECH and on Zoom.

**Date of next business meeting : 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023** at ECH and on Zoom

**Notes from SIGBI Modernisation discussion at SIE 11/10/23**

#### **General commentary/questions**

1. How will we know this approach/change has worked? What are review dates? Feedback options? Target improvements/measures?
2. How will this solve the problem(s) the Board believe we have? Where is the evidence of the problem(s)?

3. How will this attract new/ younger members? How will this retain existing members?
4. How will feedback come back to us at member level?

Feedback : presentation of proposal not great, no numbering, no clear articulation of problems/issues (poor communication/too much red tape/not attracting younger members) and how this proposal would solve those problems/issues, no clarity on evaluation of proposed changes

#### **Proposed changes:-**

- 1) New Asst. Programme Director(APD) Advocacy
  - Sounds helpful
  - Promotes advocacy
  - Need good spread of representatives on the team
  - Need Scottish voices to be heard/considered in any debate
- 2) Disband UKPAC
  - Join with Malta and Republic of Ireland to form Europe Cluster
  - UKPAC has 1 rep per Region ie circa 20+ geographical reps. This will be reduced to 6/12 generic reps to including Malta and ROI. Dilution of voices/representation
  - OK to connect with Malta and ROI to create Europe Cluster
  - Need for Scottish voice to be heard/considered in any debate
  - This removes layer of UKPAC, and hence direct communications to UK Regions. In line with direction of travel BUT will this improve communications ?
- 3) Disbanding Federation Consultative Committee (FCC)
  - Role not being seen as valuable as indications are that people are not turning up to meetings. Not our experience – we have found great value in our FCC rep and the two way communication. How many other Regions are saying that the FCC add no value or that they do not have appropriate representation at the meetings? (have we just been very lucky!???)
  - Anyone can attend the Board meetings (by application), but no need for

individuals to feedback (!! ) – how can this help communication? How do members/Clubs input to the Board meeting/Board decisions. Are the members attending ‘observers’ or ‘participants’?

- This consultation was a great example of how the FCC would have acted as an excellent conduit – had they been engaged in the Board discussions or consulted with by the Board.
- If no FCC, will the Board introduce a Non Exec Board , similar to many corporate bodies. If not who will hold the Board accountable?

#### 4) Benevolent Fund

- Proposal for an expert panel of 6 (instead of Region/National Association/Country reps = 31) – what are the advantages of this? How will ‘expertise’ be defined/determine? How compensate for geographical expertise/knowledge?
- Fund Secretary indicated she was not aware of the concerns flagged by the Board. There are other ways of dealing with anyone who does not wish to speak to someone local. Experience indicates that face to face and local knowledge is a significant benefit when dealing with beneficiaries.
- Has the Benevolent Fund Committee actually agreed this proposal?
- This feels like the role of the committee is being seen as a ‘distribution of money’ – ie financial and not pastoral. Pastoral is a key requirement and a measure of the success of the fund.

#### 5) Safeguarding

- Intention that there would be no regional officer and that Club Safeguarding Officers would be helped by SIGBI Board. It is good to be able to go to an expert when any relevant situation arises but why don’t we just go to SIGBI Safeguarding expert/officer? Why do we need an expert panel?
- Scottish representation/knowledge is required if expert panel is established

#### 6) Charitable Status

- This looks like this is a transition that can happen anyway and is simply a new opportunity for Clubs to consider (Not

relevant at present for SIE. It looks like the opportunity will be there in future if we changed our minds)

### The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women Saturday 25 November

Femicide or feminicide is a hate crime which is broadly defined as "the intentional killing of women or girls because they are female", with definitions varying based on cultural context.



**From UN Women:** Gender related killings (femicide/feminicide) are the most brutal and extreme manifestation of a continuum of violence against women and girls that takes many interconnected and overlapping forms. Defined as an intentional killing with a gender-related motivation, femicide may be driven by stereotyped gender roles, discrimination towards women and girls, unequal power relations between women and men, or harmful social norms. Despite decades of activism from women’s rights organizations as well as growing awareness and action from Member States, the available evidence shows that progress in stopping such violence has been deeply inadequate.

With the aim of galvanizing global action against this all too pervasive crime, in line with the vision of the Generation Equality Forum action coalitions, UNODC and UN Women have joined forces to produce the second edition of a report on gender-related killings of women and girls. Released ahead of the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**, the report’s chilling findings add heightened urgency to an existing global emergency.



## **1. Women and girls are most likely to be killed by those closest to them.**

In 2021, around 45,000 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members (including fathers, mothers, uncles and brothers). This means that, on average, more than five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family. Current and former intimate partners are by far the most likely perpetrators of femicide, accounting for an average of 65 per cent of all intimate partner and family related killings.

The numbers of intimate partner and family related killings have remained relatively stable over time—indicating that the world is failing to stop deaths that could be prevented through early intervention, gender responsive policing and justice, and access to survivor centred support and protection.

## **2. Femicide is a universal problem.**

Like all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, femicide is a problem that affects every country and territory across the globe. According to the new report, in 2021, Asia recorded the largest number of female intimate partner and family related killings with an estimated 17,800 victims; followed by 17,200 in Africa; 7,500 in the Americas; 2,500 in Europe; and 300 in Oceania.

Adjusted for total population size, the available data shows that, in 2021, 2.5 women and girls per 100,000 were killed by an intimate partner or family member in Africa; compared with 1.4 in the Americas; 1.2 in Oceania; 0.8 in Asia; and 0.6 in Europe.

## **3. The true scale of femicide is likely much higher.**

While the numbers presented in the report are alarmingly high, they are the tip of the iceberg. Too many victims of femicide still go uncounted: for roughly four in ten intentional murders of women and girls in 2021, there is not enough information to identify them as gender-related killings because of national variation in criminal justice recording and investigation practices.

In many cases, only gender related killings perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member are counted as femicides—yet we know that gender-related killings take place in many contexts beyond the private sphere. They can be related to rape or sexual violence by someone unknown to the victim; linked to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation or so-called “honour”-based violence; a result of hate crimes linked to sexual orientation or gender identity; or connected with armed conflict, gangs, human trafficking and other forms of organized crime.

Ensuring the availability of comprehensive disaggregated data is critical to strengthening femicide prevention, protection and response measures, as well as access to justice. To help move beyond the current limitations in data collection, UNODC and UN Women recently developed the [Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killing of women and girls \(“femicide/feminicide”\)](#), approved by the United Nation’s Statistical Commission in March 2022.

## **4. Marginalized women and girls face greater risk.**

There continue to be significant limitations in data and information on gender-related killings of marginalized groups. For instance, the women’s rights organization MundoSur analyzed data portals of 12 Latin American countries and found that only one country collects information on whether the victim had a disability or was pregnant; two



countries collect data on the victim's ethnic identity; and three countries record whether the victim was a migrant.

Despite data limitations, the available evidence from Canada and Australia suggest that indigenous women are disproportionately affected by gender related killings. At 4.3 per 100,000 women and girls, the rate of female homicide in Canada was five times higher among indigenous than among non-indigenous women and girls in 2021.

To prevent femicide, it is crucial that national authorities record comprehensive data on victims. By identifying women and girls at greater risk, countries can better inform prevention and protection mechanisms.

## **5. Femicide can and must be prevented.**

Gender-related killings and other forms of violence against women and girls are not inevitable. They can and must be prevented through primary prevention initiatives focused on transforming harmful social norms and engaging whole communities and societies to create zero tolerance for violence against women; early intervention and risk assessment; and access to survivor-centered support and protection as well as gender responsive policing and justice services.

National experiences, for example in South Africa, strongly suggest that substantive and sustained decreases in femicide can be achieved through comprehensive laws and policies aimed at preventing gender-based violence against women, firearms control legislation and activism of women's rights and community-based groups.

More research is required to better understand what is driving increased femicide in certain contexts, and what factors have enabled decreases in others to better inform prevention strategies. Women's rights organizations play a crucial role in preventing violence against women and girls, driving policy change, holding

governments to account, and providing critical survivor centred services. Strengthening financial support to and partnership with women's rights organizations is critical in reducing and preventing gender related killings and all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls.

In the face of a global pushback against women's rights, protecting women and girls from violence is getting even more challenging. From regressive laws exacerbating impunity for domestic violence perpetrators to the use of force against femicide and gender-based violence protestors and the growing marginalization of women's rights organizations, women and girls are often being denied justice, protection and support.



Against the pushback, we push forward. **This 16 Days, we're calling on everyone to join us in the fight against gender-based violence.**

**From amplifying the voices of survivors and activists to supporting women's organizations and strengthening feminist movements, here are 10 ways you can act now:**

**<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2022/11/push-forward-10-ways-to-end-violence-against-women>**



## Red Benches Against the violence on women

**"Forget me not"**  
in memory of Vanessa Simonini

***"The red bench in a thread of green  
Is for you, a young life shattered:  
Charm enduring, a flower cut off,  
To remember your story, your face"***

*Maria Grazia Forlì*

Serchio Valley Antiviolence Centre "Forget Me Not"



My sister Anne has a home in Albiano, Tuscany which is a little village across the valley of the River Serchio from Barga, the birthplace of many Italians who settled in Glasgow between the wars.

The village square has red shoes beside a red bench and a plaque in memory of Vanessa Simonini who was murdered by an acquaintance because she rejected his advances. Vanessa's body was found beside the River Serchio.

Vanessa's mother has founded the association 'Forget me not' and campaigns for the elimination of discounts on imprisonment for those guilty of voluntary homicide.

In Italy The Red Shoes have become the symbol against femicide and violence against women in general.


On November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women,


many Italian squares welcome hundreds of red shoes. The silent march of red shoes has become a symbol of protest and information around the world.


My husband and I last month visited Castellamare Di Stabia, a seaside town near Sorrento. I think because I have become aware of red as a colour of protest, I noticed a red plaque on the sea wall placed on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017 by the municipality of Castellamare Di Stabia against femicide. "In memory of all the women killed by those who said they loved them so that their stories do not sink into silence." Chris

## Remembrance Day Sunday November 12th George Square Glasgow.

**Join us at the parade!**  
Meet at George St/John St, behind City Chambers, by 9:50 AM. Soroptimists, wear your sashes, and poppies are welcome. Let's make this a special day together!

 Meet at: George St/John St

 Sunday, November 12th 2023

 Time: NO LATER THAN 9:50 AM

**Come and join us!**

**Community and heritage**



**Our UNHS and SI SSR delegation to the Remembrance Day 2022 in Glasgow. Please join us again this year on Sunday 12 November at 9.50 at George Square.**





*AUGUST P.56: Member from Soroptimist International of Edinburgh, Scotland, is honored at club luncheon*

**Our friendship links are so important and we are privileged to have a number of really wonderful connections with other SI clubs, worldwide.**

*Visit from Friendship Club SI Caldwell, Idaho.*

*Following their attendance at the Dublin SI Convention, our soroptimist friends from Caldwell visited Edinburgh. Irene Smith was delighted to be able to welcome them. They presented club members with "buttonhole" badges, seen being worn here by Nikki, Dorothy, Lindsey, Marjory, Edith and Anna at our meeting on the 11th October at the Youth Hostel.*



#### **SIE FRIENDSHIP LINKS!**

**Caldwell - Irene**

**Sioux Falls - Clephane**

**Riverside – Anna**

**Cockermouth – Pat**

**Scarborough – Lindsey**

**Maribor – Nikki**

**Madurai – to be filled**

#### **SI Riverside Southern California**

SI Riverside was chartered in 1948. The club is in district 1 of the Golden West region of the USA. The friendship link between SI Leith (Edinburgh) and continued by SI Edinburgh goes back many decades.

Riverside is situated in Southern California, about three and a half hours inland from Los Angeles. The population is 300,000 approx(2021). SI Riverside have 22 members, and are a very active club. They have service projects and awards. The main theme is "Live your dreams education and training award". They give grants to women who are the head of their households, who are in education or training, and in need of financial assistance. The main fundraiser is the Valentine Dessert Auction, and the battle of the bakes in February each year.

[www.SoroptimistRiverside.org](http://www.SoroptimistRiverside.org)

Our total membership fell to 22 members by the end of last year but we've already inducted 2 new members this year and are working on recruiting more.

**I can't wait to read to your next newsletter.**

**Have a great day! Pam**

Caldwell, Idaho - Irene writes:

In advance of the Dublin conference their Friendship Link correspondent wrote to tell me that two of their members (no names) were attending the conference. I telephoned Edith to give her that information and wrote to Caldwell with the news that three of our members, Edith, Pat and Liz, were booked to attend. Unfortunately it proved impossible to meet each other.

A few days later my flat's security bells rang. My visitors were two charming Caldwell Soroptimists, Kelli and Laurie, who presented me with a delightful bouquet of flowers.

They were spending a few days in Scotland having planned their visits so there was no opportunity to meet Edinburgh Soroptimists.

They left Idaho lapel badges (brown potato!) which Edith has agreed to bring to our next meeting.

Of course I have written to my Friendship Link, Marlene, and to Kelli and Laurie thanking them sincerely for the visits.

The card with the flowers says 'sorry for the fast stopover. We want to stop in and say hello and brighten your day.' They did



## **SI Edinburgh**

### **Schedule of meetings 2023-2024**

**October 25th Orange cafe cancelled**

**October 25th at 7.30 pm Induction of New members; Friendship links; discussion on UN 16 days of Action or speaker from WONDER**

**November 3-4th Sigbi Conference Friends House London**

**November 8th at 7.30 Business Meeting + Wrapping Christmas presents for Women's hostel**

**November 22nd at 7.30 pm. Speaker Meeting at the Art College on Flax (sustainable fabrics)**

**November 25th 16 days of action "Orange the World" at the Scottish Parliament cafe at 11.00**

**December 6th Social tbc**

**January 10th 7.30pm Zoom Business Meeting**

**January 24th 7.30pm zoom Speaker Meeting**

**January 25th at 11.00 Orange cafe tbc**

**February 14th at 7.30 Zoom Business Meeting**

**February 25th at 11.00 Orange cafe tbc**

**February 28th at 7.30 Zoom Speaker Meeting**

**March 13th at 7.30 pm Business Meeting**

**March 25th at 11.00 Orange Cafe tbc**

**March 27th at 7.30 pm Speaker Meeting tbc**

**April 10th at 7.30 pm Business Meeting**

**April 24th at 7.30 pm AGM**

**April 25th at 11.00 Orange cafe tbc**

**May 8th at 7.30 pm Business Meeting**

**May 22nd at 7.30 pm Speaker Meeting tbc**

**May 25th at 11.00 Orange cafe tbc**

**June 12th at 7.30 pm Business Meeting**

**June 25th at 11.00 Orange cafe tbc**

**June 26th social event tbc**

**Club meetings held at Edinburgh**

**Central Youth Hostel, 9 Haddington**

**Place EH7 4AL + zoom**

