

**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

SIEnna 221 November 2023

SIE President's Message

It is extraordinary to think that already we are coming to the end of 2023 and that the next edition of SIEnna will be published in 2024! I would like to extend my thanks to everyone at this point in the year for their energy, enthusiasm and enduring support for the work of SI and SIGBI in Standing up for Women and Girls worldwide.

In recent weeks we have been kept very well informed about the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza, through UNWRA briefings. In the New Year we may wish to reach out to women's organisations in the region.

The changes in the arrangements to the coordination of the work of SISS region are taking shape well with offers of help provided for each of the teams taking this forward. However, more support is needed, please see the minutes of our business meeting for further detail.

We are very pleased to be working with a young women's movement, Phoenix Pledge. It aims to enhance the visibility of the 16 Days of Activism. Phoenix Pledge was created by a group of young women who wish to tackle the culture that enables gender based violence.



Part of the campaign is going to be the wonderful song by Amelia Underwood King called Phoenix, which they are producing a video to go alongside the song. The song is about gender-based violence and has been released in aid of the charities Refuge and Strut Safe.

For our own part, we are looking forward to several gatherings with a more informal feel to them, notably the talk about the flax/linen project at the art college on the 22 November.

We are also meeting at the Orange café at the café in the Parliament building on the 25 November to mark the first day of the 16 days of Activism. And, of course, we have our Christmas event – dinner out, at Charwood restaurant on the 13 December.

I am looking forward to moving our projects on in 2024 and to getting our “feet under the table” with The Welcoming conversation cafés for newly arrived migrant women in Edinburgh.



Please remember! We are meeting at the cafe of the Scottish Parliament on Saturday 25th November at 11.00 for “Orange the World” to highlight eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls.

Minutes of SIE Business Meeting November 8th 2023

Vision & Mission - read by Marjory

Apologies- Irene, Kathleen

Guest - Eva

Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 11th October. Proposed and seconded.

Key issues:

Federation Consultative Councillors

FCC minutes 2nd November circulated to club for info. To note:- responses received to the modernisation proposals, open meetings for members week beginning 6th December, FAQs to be produced (280 questions were submitted)

SI Scotland South Region (SISS) future Constructive meeting with strong consensus about the way forward. Next meeting - January or February - volunteers available but others needed:- Finance team - volunteers needed Admin team - volunteers needed Edinburgh is second smallest club and has contributed well to region Proposal to have fewer meetings and focus less on business and more around an event. Possibly an AGM plus one regional meeting each year.

Christmas outing - Charwood on 13th December – Nikki will check if Christmas menu and daily menu available. 8 members and 2 online; auditor will also be invited - Nikki will book for 10-15.

16 Days of Action

Think about distribution of posters A3, A4 plus postcards and table top info - theme is Speak Out - online abuse

Distribute to churches, libraries, Fresh Start

Local Universities and Colleges

Agreed to print about 100 A4 posters

Match funding from region up to £100.

SI Scotland South Region PA has Read the Signs online packs on Domestic Abuse - SIE can use on social media.

Distribution can be over the winter, not just round about 25th November

Anna said Police Scotland website has lots of useful information. as has Edinburgh council website

INEQUE charity founded by Jim Gamble who spoke at the Dublin Conference is a charity focussing on online abuse.

Liz to put together a leaflet explaining sextortion and listing helpful organisations. Judith has contacted Angela Voulgari the Council coordinator for the equally safe partnership of Edinburgh Council - mostly online activities – there is a link to a Toolkit we can use.

Liz to contact her and send her the Region online pack plus links for our social media Edinburgh City Chambers may be lit up in orange

SIGBI Conference 1st to 3rd November 2024 in Edinburgh at the Assembly Rooms – we will keep in touch with the organisers and think about what support we may be able to offer

SIGBI Mailings

Discuss in 2024 how we tackle the many emails which are sent from SIGBI HQ and other sources

Membership - Anna

Elaine has received her badge, and Judith is awaiting hers

Anna contacting Yasmin who enquired via SIE website

Anna attended a Scotland wide membership meeting which is a good support network. Nikki will be meeting Kathleen a prospective member and invite her to the Christmas Social

3S – No update

Treasurer

Donation to Childline who help re online abuse - this could be part of our pledge for the 16 Days of Action – Dorothy to send £50

Programme - Alison

November 22nd - hands on demo at Art College on growing flax to make linen.

Venue is 74 Lauriston Place - meet at 7.20 pm and proceed to studio at 7 30

Lucia Santana from S America was based at Social Bite housing in Granton (She was helped by Patricia a former SIE member.) has been back in touch.

She is now working for Love to Ride which aims to get more women into cycling - she is doing work for 16 Days
Possible speaker in 2024

Programme Action – other items

Lindsey to take Christmas gifts to the women's hostel – all to deliver to Lindsey or ask Liz to uplift by end November

UN House Round Table on Human Rights recently had some excellent local speakers on the subject of poverty. Young women from Leith help empower families in the 'Banana Flats'; they have a community garden growing their own veg; also regular book sales and craft classes. We will contact to ask what type of books they may need

Alanya from UN Creative Kids Challenge will contact us in 2024

Kids Love Clothes - Lindsey waiting to hear re ironing opportunities

Misogyny Bill - Liz contacted Patrick Down re progress - no reply as yet

The Welcoming - do we pursue this project to converse with women refugees? Do we attend their regular Friday afternoon meeting or set up another venue eg Youth hostel?

Eva suggested contacting Helen of SI Dunfermline who has experience

Elaine has been involved with the Welcoming - women may feel more comfortable with a familiar venue

Clephane suggested we need 2 people initially with commitment

Dorothy, Elaine, Liz, Nikki are interested.

Liz to reconnect with Gosia re visiting on a Friday to see the set up

Gaza situation

In response to correspondence sent to local MPs re the situation in Gaza, Anna has received a very good reply from Ian Murray MP as has Liz from Joanna Cherry MP.

Friendship Links

SI Kirkintilloch - Liz happy to be link

SI Scarborough asked Liz at the Belfast Conference re a Link - to pursue in 2024

SIENNA

Articles to Gari by Sunday 19th November

Date of next meetings

Wednesday 22nd November at the Art College

Wednesday 25th November at 11am in cafe at Scottish Parliament

The meeting closed and members then wrapped Christmas presents for the women at Hill Place.

From Perth SI

I am pleased to share with you the Programme for the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**. I am delighted that **SI Perth's Silent Vigil** has been incorporated into the Programme as part of our collaboration with the VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Partnership with the Perth and Kinross City Council.

The 16 Days of Activism is a vital global campaign aimed at raising awareness about gender-based violence. As Soroptimists, our mission is to advocate for women and girls, and it's crucial that we use our voices to push for more action against this appalling violation of human rights.

I am making an appeal to all of you to attend the **SI Perth's Silent Vigil on the 25th of November** and attach the leaflet for your information. Kindly circulate amongst your friends and family – the invitation is open to everyone. We will have T-shirts that says "Soroptimists Say

No To Violence Against Women” available for you to wear on the day.

Please also register if you haven't done so already for the **Universal Story on the 25th of November**. We will leave from the Silent Vigil to the event. Spaces are limited so please do book via the attached links.

Please do register for the events, especially the **Opening event on the 24th of November** as the Soroptimists have been allocated a table to showcase our work. Let me know if you are coming along. Similarly, I will be attending the **Reclaim the Night March on the 6th of December** and will happily collect anyone from Blairgowrie, Scone, and Perth on Route.

To shed a light on the severity of gender-based violence, here are a few statistics from the Perth and Kinross Council on VAWG:

1. Globally, up to 38% of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner.
2. In the EU, 45 to 55 per cent of women have experienced sexual harassment from the age of 15.
3. Domestic abuse costs the Scottish public purse £2.3 billion while VAWG costs Scotland £4 billion (according to Equally Safe).
4. VAWG creates barriers to employment and other economic resources by negatively impacting women's health and wellbeing.
5. Police Scotland report that dealing with incidences of domestic abuse is the greatest single demand on their time, with an average incident being reported to them every nine minutes.
6. Disabled women are twice as likely to experience men's violence as non-disabled women.
7. An estimated 3.8 million adults and 1 million children worldwide were victims of commercial sexual exploitation in 2016. **99% of the victims were women and girls.**

Let us stand together and make a difference during the 16 Days of Activism. Your participation and support are greatly appreciated.
In friendship
Gameeda



The Phoenix Pledge – notes from Teah
We are The Phoenix Pledge and our mission is to tackle the culture that enables gender based violence. This involves different communities coming together to host conversations about gender-based violence and then pledging to take action based on these discussions, as well as creative activism and cultural discourse.

At The Phoenix Pledge, we're all about exploring alternative means of dialogue and encouraging people to express themselves through different mediums in order to have a more constructive and inclusive conversation that genuinely rewrites the culture.

Please find our website for info about us: <https://thephoenixpledge.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thephoenixpledge/>

The Phoenix Pledge has been given the opportunity to host a UK Parliamentary Reception to mark the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in collaboration with the National Alliance of Women's Organisations. We've been given the chance to open this up as a hybrid event for select special guests being invited to attend online in recognition for their outstanding work in gender equality. And I'd love to invite you if you'd be interested? We at The Phoenix Pledge really admire how you raise awareness of gender equality and it would be wonderful to have you there.

The reception will be taking place 6.30-9.00pm GMT on Wednesday 29th

November. There will be a panel discussion hosted by ITV journalist Ranvir Singh featuring the MP Jess Phillips, the campaigner Helen Pankhurst, and Atonte Semira from UN Women UK amongst others.

We would be delighted to have you join our event online. This will give you the opportunity to listen to the panel conversation and network with other organisations present for the online version of the event.

Please use this link to register for the event:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/16-days-of-activism-reception-at-the-houses-of-parliament-online-tickets-748106184737?aff=oddtcreator> (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/16-days-of-activism-reception-at-the-houses-of-parliament-online-tickets-748106184737?aff=oddtcreator>)

SIE - Our Phoenix Pledge

For the 16 days of activism, and beyond, SIEinburgh pledge the following actions in support of the eradication of violence against women and girls:-

- A poster and social media campaign to raise awareness about online abuse and sextortion and the agencies who can be contacted for support. Posters will be offered to local libraries and community venues as well as to all colleges and Universities locally.
- An "Orange café" event to be held in the Parliament building café with an invitation to local MSPs to join us in marking the start of the 16 days of activism. We will continue to raise awareness of the campaign through our cafes on the 25th of each month and by seeking publicity from the local press.
- To develop a connection with the Edinburgh Voluntary Association of Women Partnership group with a view to supporting their 2023 campaign and

to developing collaborative events for 2024.

- A financial donation to Women's Aid as well as Christmas gifts for the women resident at the hostel.
- To raise awareness about the frequency of femicide in Scotland/Edinburgh and to begin a campaign in 2024 to highlight the issues. We propose to build on an Italian initiative and plan for the distribution of red benches with red shoes next to them to commemorate women who have been killed and to highlight this issue.

President Liz



SI members join UNHS & UNAScotland in Glasgow for Remembrance Day 2023

Membership Meeting - Zoom - 23-10-23
Present -Aileen Susan Iris Anna Pat
Fiona Janice Marilyn Gameeda Audrey
Lexi

Apologies - Nikki Jenifer Annette

Pat chaired.

1 Membership and Development Officer
Forum. Nothing available for update
2 Open Evening. 'Friendship Evening'
All present keen to hear Anna's update.
Brilliant evening! Very educational for
all those attending.

Two new members acquired.
International friendship groups were
celebrated.

Those attended were mainly friends of
the club membership. Encouragement

to join for a project. Fiona suggested a gin evening - she joined after one.

3 How to share our vision? Iris suggested local sharing of information, such as posters, to encourage recruitment from other local organisations.

Asking friends, what would make them join? Then target those needs.

Janice suggested we see Iris marketing tools. She commented re cost of this type of marketing. Maybe use of a QR code to take those interested to the website or facebook pages. Easier and cheaper to change the pages than the marketing tools.

Gameeda supported a brief overview and local information sharing. Maybe a colourful newsletter? Surveys carried out do not support using leaflets as a recruitment tool, rather we should take a more visible/verbal approach. Keep it simple - 'An Organisation that Supports Women'.

Fiona - her club use a businesscard and a bookmark. They target the local community, finding out what is on and attending there. Building local contacts.

She stressed the importance sharing that we are providers of service. Banners are in use at their Orange Cafe.

She pointed out that the website still has historical and inaccurate information,

Very out of touch.

Marilyn commented that her glory hole , her garage, encourages neighbours to donate all sorts to her. Visibility.

Susan - thinking of ways to encourage youngsters into the fold, hoping

eventually that they will become full members.

Aileen summarised our thoughts. Visibility. Talking to people about us. Marketing - building local networks.

Change is a fact of life - if we dont evolve, we will die.

Suggestion that clubs are reminded about the Code of Conduct. Perhaps an exercise at meeting to localise this
Next Meeting - 15-01-2024.



Scottish Soroptimists are taking action and calling for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Edinburgh Soroptimists took this photograph at our recent meeting to publicise the campaign.

On the 25th of every month Scottish Soroptimists draw attention to the worldwide UN campaign "Say NO - UNiTE to end violence against women and girls by 2030.

The campaign is known internationally as "Orange the World".

Violence against women and girls, from sexual harassment to abuse and femicide needs to be stopped!

Our action, "Orange cafés" is simple but conveys a powerful and visible message.

The "Orange cafés" were set up by Edinburgh Soroptimists in the Summer of 2022 and they are spreading!

On the 25th of each month, Soroptimist groups across Scotland are meeting up in a public café, wearing something orange, to raise awareness and spread the word about this important campaign.

The action has attracted interest from as far afield as Barbados!

Women are welcome to join us for a chat, to find out more or to find out about support provided locally for women and girls affected by violence.

To find out more take a look at our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SIEdinburghScotland/> or contact us through our website <https://sigbi.org/edinburgh/contact-us/>

Soroptimist International is a leading global women's voluntary organisation. It has more than 70,000 members in over 100 countries around the world. Soroptimists focus on transforming the lives of women and girls, locally, nationally and globally, through education, empowerment and enabling initiatives.

Soroptimists make a difference to the lives of more than half a million women and girls in the world every year.



Following on from response to the modernisation proposals, the Board has compiled Frequently Asked Questions and the proposed Programme Action structure documents for your information as below. All documents are in the Library under Governance/SIGBI Modernisation, and are also below

[Ruth Healey - Letter to Members - SIGBI Modernisation - 14 November 2023.pdf](#)
[SIGBI Ltd Restructure 2023 - Frequently Asked Questions - 14 November 2023.pdf](#)
[SIGBI Modernisation Proposals - Programme Update - 14 November 2023.pdf](#)
[SIGBI Ltd Restructure 2023 - Glossary of Terms - 14 November 2023.pdf](#)

Next Meeting:

November 22nd - hands on demo at Art College on growing flax to make linen. Venue is The Hunter Building, 74 Lauriston Place - meet at 7.20 pm and proceed to studio at 7.30

The University buildings are only accessible with a pass, so meet on the steps at the entrance to the Hunter Building

From the Secretariat of the Cross Party Group on Human Trafficking:

Dear Members and Friends of the Cross Party Group on Human Trafficking,

This is a friendly reminder that the next CPG meeting will be hybrid, and take place on Tuesday 6th September at 6 pm in Committee Room 5 at the Scottish Parliament, and on Teams.

We are pleased to host Ms. Siobhan Brown MSP, the Minister for Victims and Community Safety, at the meeting. She will speak on the Government's general overview of Human Trafficking policy.

As usual, this will be followed by a Q&A/open discussion.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 322 458 059 83

Passcode: vgJ7jq

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