



Soroptimist International Edinburgh news notes anecdotes

SIEnna 225 April 2024

President's Report 2023 - 2024

It's been a busy year! What with our consideration of and responses to the proposed SIGBI modernisation agenda, getting used to different ways of working across the region through PAMM whilst all the time continuing to cement and build on our work to empower, enable and educate women and girls both as a club and in partnership with others - we have covered a lot of ground!

The focus of the work of clubs is their programme action so the focus of my remarks this year are to celebrate and reflect on some of the things we have achieved through our advocacy and action and what we propose to do – always with the UN sustainable goals in mind.

Advocacy

- Participation in the 'Eradication of Child Poverty' webinar and seminar in Parliament where we were proactive in asking questions and mentioned in the first report writeup.
- Sharing information from Suzy Lamplugh Trust - some members attended the training session on 'Stand up against harassment' to give us confidence in

intervening appropriately if someone appears to be being harassed.

- Through the Linda Norgrove Foundation, supported women students in Afghanistan through lobbying Parliament re changing the criteria for migration to allow women to come to Scotland to finish their medical studies and qualify. Plus made a donation to help fund their work in Afghanistan.
- Supported the Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) campaign to eradicate misogynistic and discriminatory behaviours in Police Scotland.
- Appointed partner of the month in June by UNHouse Edinburgh.

Action

Ongoing activities

- **Christmas Gifts to the Women's Hostel, Leith**

In November members packed toiletries into 18 small white carrier bags topped with orange paper, with a selection of shampoos, body wash, soap etc and a donation from 'Joe Cool' of warm socks. To this we added a grand total of 30 Christmas wrapped seasonal presents from members of the club – warm hats, gloves, scarves etc and other donations for the clients at the Hostel – all were safely delivered in good time for Christmas.

- **Marie Curie Daffodil Appeal**
While we no longer do this as a club group out on the weeks of the appeal, we had three members, Christine, Anna and Edith, contacted by Marie Curie Edinburgh Branch to ask if they would offer their services. This is now the preferred way both for us and for the charity as it allows individual members to collect on a day and at place that suits them. The three members were at different collecting points in the city and all reported back that this was a successful way to do a collection.



Christine

- **Kids Love Clothes**

We continue to support the sorting and packing of clothes for children at Ratho. These are beautifully laundered and distributed by social care and other charities to families with children who otherwise may not be able to attend school or take part in everyday activities because of lack of warm, suitable or waterproof outfits.



Dorothy, Elaine, Nikki

- **Orange the world**

The Orange cafes are still held regularly at a variety of locations around the City to raise awareness of the campaign and provide information about organisations that can support women who are affected by abuse. The international interest continues with there now being several cafes run across Australia.

We drafted our Phoenix Pledge to support that organisation in their publicity of the campaign and were able to complete most of the actions listed on it.

New projects

- **Big Plastic Count in March 2024**

Several members took part in the challenge which was to collect and record plastic use over one week. We await more members returning their numbers but at present we have Liz with 20 items and Lindsey 19 items over the week. We also await the collated results that were returned to the organisers of the event.

- **Sustainability Art Prize**

Established an annual art prize to be awarded to the final year student whose work shows most innovative and sustainable use of materials. The first award will be presented at the final year graduate show in May.

- **Supporting refugee and asylum seeking women arriving into Edinburgh with their English language learning**

We continue to explore how best to get involved in this area. Members have met with groups at The Welcoming several times to seek their views and arrangements are in place to link up with the City Council community officer and LinkNET mentoring. This will enable us to be clear about where there may be gaps in support and for the club to decide how and whether we can help e.g. through our own conversation cafes or mentoring..

- **Orange the World**

Proposals for action during 2024 include “oranging” a parade of shops in Edinburgh during the 16 days of activism, engaging with the VAWG coordinator in the City Council to consider how we might work together, following up on the proposals for a Misogyny Act and exploring how we might raise more awareness about the issues of domestic homicide e.g. commemorative benches

A **massive thankyou** to everyone for your commitment, energy and enthusiasm for our work and ensuring that we move forwards on projects where we are confident we can make a difference however small.

Next year is the 30th anniversary celebration of the Beijing declaration 1995 that aimed to mainstream women's rights as human rights. It is signed up to by 189 states. Next year, the Convention on the Status of Women (CSW) will be chaired by Saudi Arabia – not known for its positive record on women's rights! Other governments too are rolling back on commitments to the human rights of women and girls. In 2024 – 2025 let's keep a close eye on the local and global context and take every opportunity, with our partners and link to the UN to highlight concerns and advocate for better life outcomes for women and girls.

Liz
President 2024 - 25

Minutes of 96th AGM of Soroptimist International of Edinburgh held on Wednesday 10/04/2024 at Edinburgh City Youth Hostel and on Zoom

Liz welcomed members

SI Vision and Mission read by Nikki
Apologies - Elaine, Gari, Irene

Minutes of AGM of 26/04/2024
Proposed and seconded
Matters arising

- Alison asked that the draft accounts be approved formally
- Nikki reminded members that various Soroptimist items, including the Charter, are stored in her house and that she will receive any other items that members may have.

Treasurer's Report - see report sent out with AGM papers
Dorothy stated that the accounts have not yet been audited due to the early date of the AGM

Charity Fund has £591.87

Legacy Fund has not been used this year but money allocated for Art prize

Report proposed by Alison and seconded by Judith

Accounts for 2022-2023 signed off and proposed by Clephane and seconded by Nikki
ACTION: Dorothy will check if current auditor is happy to continue - if not, she has a local contact

Allocation of Funds

Liz suggested we do not touch the Legacy fund at the moment as a sum of money from that is allocated to the Art prize. Suggested a small sum to a charity concerned with domestic homicide given its high profile at the moment.

Discussion about possible donation to Womens' Aid as pertinent to domestic violence.

Judith suggested there are other charities in this field where a small donation may have a bigger impact

ACTION - Judith to contact City of Edinburgh Council violence against women co ordinator for suggestions of relevant charities

There was a suggestion that we quantify what a donation would achieve eg £x.00 will pay for 1 hour of counselling - this will help when submitting Programme Action information.
No other funds to be allocated at present in order to support other needs over the year.

Membership - see report sent out with AGM papers

Anna thanked members for their support
Edith will be presented at a later date with her 40 years membership award - congratulations were given to Edith

Report proposed by Alison and seconded by Dorothy

Attendance - see report sent out on 09/04/2024
Report proposed by Dorothy and seconded by Nikki

3S - see report sent on 10/04/2024 after AGM
3S has been wound up and money remaining will go to the SI Foundation Fund
Paperwork has been sent to Region
Liz thanked Marjory for her work with the 3S Fund.

President's Report and Programme action - see report sent out with AGM papers (above)
Liz spoke about the President's and Programme Action reports.
The club has had a focus on local activities, working with partners such as UN House and on responses to SIGBI's proposals re modernisation, and also on new ways of working across Scotland South Region.
Liz highlighted Advocacy and Action and new initiatives including the Award to a student of Edinburgh College of Art.
She thanked members for ensuring we make a difference.

Noted: This year is the 30th anniversary of the Beijing declaration that womens' rights = human rights.

The Convention on the status of women (CSW) 2025 will be chaired by Saudi Arabia.
Report proposed by Alison and seconded by Anna

Vacant posts

No nominations were received.
In 2023 - 2024 mini teams were set up for Programme Action and Membership.
President Elect - can be more than 1 person - Nikki volunteered to work with another 1 or 2 people - the club will discuss this over 2024 - 2025

Programme Action mini team of Lindsey, Liz and Nikki - there are around 6 regional meetings to share. Other members are liley to be involved around specific advocacy or actions.

Membership - Anna will continue in a mini team with Nikki and Pat (she is first contact via website) and possibly Elaine.
Liz thanked Anna for her work with membership.

Region representative to 3 meetings a year - Pat can attend if hybrid or online - she is happy to share - Judith is happy to help with other members' support re background information.

There was discussion about approaching Scotland North Region re joint working or amalgamation as we face similar issues - there are already joint North/ South meetings on membership

Minute Secretary - Chris is happy to continue
Correspondence Secretary - Chris is happy to continue.

Social Media - Pat asks for support with posting information and photographs and suggests a mini Social Media team - Liz is happy to support.

Pat explained that eg for 16 days of action she prepares an entry for each day, so requires support for this and also asks that members share all the posts she puts on Facebook.

ACTION: Liz suggested that at the next Business Meeting there is discussion on the practicalities of Social Media.
Liz thanked Pat for her work.

Programme - Alison is happy to continue and asks for suggestions of speakers .

Number 63 - Nikki will be rep.

Attendance - Marjory is happy to continue.

SIEnna - Clephane is happy to co-edit.

ACTION: Liz to confirm if Gari is happy to continue.

Rep to UN/UNA - Liz is happy to continue.

AOCB

- Dorothy encouraged members to send Gift Aid for to SIGBI. Note of 12/04/2024 - Dorothy has forwarded form to Christine, who has sent to members.
- Grange Fair on 18th May - Anna has submitted a form to the committee -

Anna, Elaine and Liz to discuss what is needed for the day. To investigate borrowing the Region banner. There was also discussion on the purchase of club banners, both table top and standing; SIGBI has designs available. Dorothy informed the meeting that there is finance available from the general fund.

- Link Net - opportunity for club to support asylum seekers and refugees with mentoring to improve English language skills and employment skills. Involvement would be 2 hours a week, by Zoom or in person for up to 6 months. Dorothy, Liz and Nikki are interested.

ACTION - Liz to contact organisers re matching skills of volunteers to recipients.

- On 28th May President Liz and other Soroptimists are invited to the Edinburgh College of Art Graduate Show to present the SI Edinburgh award for sustainability.

Future meetings

08/05/2024 - Business meeting

22/05/2024 - Speaker meeting with Professor Collette of Edinburgh College of Art and the student recipient of the SI Edinburgh award.

ACTION - Chris to invite clubs in Scotland South Region to meeting in person or by Zoom.

Conclusion

Nikki proposed a vote of thanks to Liz for her leadership over the year.



Myint Su's tree is growing – photo by Lindsey

Dates to June	Meeting type	
April 24	No meeting	
May 8	Business	Youth Hostel and Zoom
May 22	Speaker	See above
May 25 th	Orange café	National Portrait Gallery
June 8th	SISS region	Grangemouth
June 12	Business	Youth Hostel and Zoom
June 22nd	Summer social	Visit to the Botanics and meal

