



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

### **SIEnna 227 June 2024 President's Message It is award season!**

Alison, Elaine, Winifred, and I had a fantastic morning viewing and judging the work of the final year textile design students who had been shortlisted for the SIE Sustainability Prize. It was a pleasure to meet all 4 of the students and to hear from them directly about the inspiration rationale and ambition for their designs. It was a very difficult decision, as all 4 of the students had produced thoughtful and creative designs that addressed our criteria in different ways. However, our winner, Tallulah Judd, was selected for this year's prize for her innovative work reusing material left behind as waste (including tents, cans and tent poles) at festivals into new garments and materials for festival goers.



Some of work of the students in the textile department and the graduate show can be seen on their ECA Instagram account.

<https://www.instagram.com/ecatextilesdepartment/> Or at the new Designers Show at the Islington Design Centre, in London this month.

This month, our very own members, Anna, Edith, and Lindsey celebrate a staggering 105 years of service between them as Soroptimists. (Anna, 30 years, Edith, 45 years and Lindsey 30 years.)

Their contribution to Empowering, Educating and Enabling women and girls over the years is both awesome and humbling. It was a great honour to be able to present each of them with long service certificates in recognition of their achievements at our last business meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

We are fast approaching the UK general election on July 4<sup>th</sup>. The outcome is not a foregone conclusion but one thing we can be certain of is that it will be a time of further change. Soroptimists across the country contributed ideas to SIGBI about what questions we would like to ask of prospective MPs. These have been condensed and collated into a few key areas that cover

- poverty – children and women pensioners
- violence against women
- women's safety
- gender equality in parliament

The questions are included in this edition of SIEnna and I would encourage you to have them at the ready should there be an opportunity to raise them with local parties canvassing on the doorstep or with local MPs, hoping for re-election.

As we start our Summer recess we are all desperate for some signs of sunshine and warmth. Wishing everyone a good break and to coming back rejuvenated and brimming with ideas for the Autumn.

Liz SIE President 2023 - 2025

## Minutes of SI Edinburgh Business Meeting 12/06/2024

### Our vision

**“Women and girls will achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.”**

Welcome from Chair, President Liz  
Welcome to visitor Eva from SI Dunfermline

**Apologies** from Clephane, Elaine, Gari, Irene

**Minutes** of business meeting of 08/05/2024..

### Matters arising

Thanks to all who helped with the Grange Fair.

Visitors included:-

Local MP Ian Murray, MSP Daniel Johnson, and Councillor Simita Kumar, who offered her support.

Francesca Mutapi, a member of SI Harare, resident in Edinburgh; she works on improving health in Africa, according to the wishes of Africans.

Also Napier University lecturer who raised the possibility of us speaking to students regarding eg on line abuse

Edith proposed and Nikki seconded the minutes.

### 1. SIGBI Conference

Liz has been asked for a list of local cafes  
ACTION Liz and Nikki to refer organisers to Visit Scotland with the suggestion of discounts to delegates.

Discussion of an orange cafe on Friday am ideally at the Assembly Rooms.

ACTION: Liz to follow up with conference organisers. (Post meeting note – Assembly Rooms will NOT be possible as a venue for this)

Scotland North and South get together on Friday evening when there is already networking or Sunday afternoon. Proposed to hold a debrief sessions after the Conference on Sunday at the Scottish Cafe

at the National Gallery or the café at the Portrait Gallery

Resolutions to GM at the Conference - we may tweak the wording but not reject the 8 resolutions before 28/06/2024

ACTION Liz asked for volunteers to look at resolutions before September for discussion prior to the AGM. Anna, Liz, Nikki and Pat to look at the content of the resolutions. Note they have no reference to regions or Federation Councillors, which changes the constitution.

The resolutions can be rejected at the GM. 'Smalls for all' will be collecting at the conference.

### 2. Summer outing

Evening meal at Ciao Roma on Wednesday 26/06/2024 at 7pm. ACTION: Liz to book

### 3. Membership

Long Service awards presented to Edith for 45 years and to Anna and Lindsey for 30 years.

We now have 18 members.

Judith has her membership badge.

Alison, previous PhD student of African studies at Edinburgh University was supervised by Gari. She is not yet in a position to join SI Edinburgh.

She will meet with Gari, Anna and Edith on 19/06/2024.

Thanks to Elaine for her suggestion re SI Edinburgh taking a stall at the Grange Fair, which raised awareness of Soroptimism.

Anna ordered orange t shirts which helped Anna and Alison to raise awareness of Orange the World at a recent Orange Cafe at the Portrait Gallery.

Dishi, SIGBI membership officer, has stabilised membership between resignations and joinings. She aims to have an ambassador in each region to replicate her work. (this is happening in Scotland South Region).

This link is to her webinar held on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4UGLv0WQaY>

Anna distributed SI leaflets, postcards and business cards for members to use over the summer

Publicity material needs to be reviewed. ACTION approach Victoria in September for help; Victoria has worked as a graphic designer.

#### **4. Programme Action**

##### **ECC VAWG**

Judith attended a meeting of the VAW (Violence Against Women) group of City of Edinburgh Council.

They are in the early stages of working on a national campaign 'Imagine a Scotland without VAW',

Also 'Imagine a Scotland without pornography'.

Also discussion on the 16 Days campaign. More clarity is needed on the potential audience.

At work, Judith is a rep on a government working group on domestic homicide.

Violence against older women - there is little representation eg in Womens' Aid - we may wish to sign up to 'Take the oath' to raise awareness as individuals or as a club. ACTION: Liz/Chris to circulate information.

##### **LinkNet**

Linknet helps women into work with CVs. Confidence building, interview skills, befriending etc Update:-

Liz has a potential mentee

Dorothy has submitted a form

Nikki has to submit a form

Other members are welcome to support Linknet

##### **St Bride's**

Elaine and Liz have met a community support worker from ECC at St Brides centre with a view to making connections and support for women's group.

##### **Kids Love Clothes**

Volunteer sorters are required on Tuesday 3/09/2024.

The organisation is aware of 'Smalls for all' which also accepts children's underwear.

16 days of activism

In September to work on 16 days of action ACTION Liz to pursue Bruntsfield traders association (see previous Slenna), Lindsey to check cost of bunting, members to suggest ideas for shop decorations

Orange cafe - to meet at Book Festival on 25/08/2024

#### **5. Treasurer**

Dorothy has made returns to Scotland South and to SIGBI

The auditor will sign off the finances soon.

Dorothy has suggested another auditor for 2025

#### **6. Slenna deadline 21/06/2024**

#### **7. Region**

Nikki reported that meeting on 08/06/2024 was most successful.

Attendees heard from Hannah a survivor of abuse who waived her anonymity to campaign for better treatment in courts for victims of sexual assault.

Scotland South Region is happy to support her.

See Sienna of May 2024 for more detail. Marion spoke about 'Smalls for all' and the countries which are recipients including the UK.

#### **AOCB**

- SIE Sustainability Art Prize

Liz, Alison, Elaine and Winifred enjoyed selecting the winner; all the candidates were most creative

Tallulah Judd met the criteria; she crafts new outfits from tents and camping equipment left behind at festivals

The College of Art will publicise the SI Edinburgh prize on their Instagram account where examples of the work of the textile design students and their graduate show can be seen.

- Kirkintilloch 50<sup>th</sup> birthday lunch on 06/10/2024 - see invitation which was sent

#### **DONM**

26<sup>th</sup> June 7pm – meal out at Ciao Roma

25<sup>th</sup> August 11am – Orange café at the Bookfest

11<sup>th</sup> September - business meeting. Liz may not be present, so Nikki will chair.



**STANDING UP**  
for Women and Girls

SIGBI Federation vacancies & other info - sent by Chris 03/05/2024

Big Plastic Count proforma letter to send to MSPs/ MPs - sent by Lindsey 08/05/2024

Save the date - Kirkintilloch 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration on 6<sup>th</sup> October - sent by Chris 09/05/2024

Region membership papers - sent by Anna on 30/04/2024 - forwarded by Chris on 09/05/2024

Links from Judith's meeting with Violence Against Women Group (VAWG) Coordinator - sent by Judith 09/05/2024

UNHS Round Table on Sustainable Cities - sent by Liz 15/05/2024

Death of former member - sent from SIGBI 16/05/2024

Slenna - sent by Gari 19/05/2024

Questions for UK General Election - sent by Chris 30/05/2024

The Club Awards a Prize at Edinburgh Art College

It all began last August when I saw a piece on the BBC Scotland website, describing a project at Edinburgh Art College, where they were growing flax on some waste land and then converting it into linen. This was of particular interest since only 2 months earlier SI Scotland North & South had held a conference on Sustainability in the Fashion industry, which certainly exposed a lot of waste. I then contacted Ms Colette Paterson, who was Head of Textile at the Art College, who invited the Club along there one evening last November, where we had a hands-on workshop, where she brought in some raw flax and by twisting it some of us managed to turn it into linen.

Instead of giving the usual honorarium of £30.00, the Club decided to give it as prize to one of the final year students. Ms Paterson was asked to nominate one, Erin Macleod, and she duly received this prize and gave the Club a presentation on her work on 22 May. In February, Liz and I went to meet Ms Paterson, to discuss the creation of a prize to be awarded to a final year student, which would be funded from the Club's Legacy fund. Initially it was going to be for 5 years but due to a kind donation to the fund, it has now been extended to 10 years.

On 28 May Liz, Winifred, Elaine and I went to the Art College to judge the four shortlisted final year students' work. They each gave us a presentation showing us their work. I made out a sheet for each student where I wrote down the criteria by which we were going to judge their work, for which we gave them scores. We decided to award our prize to Tallulah Judd, who worked on a project re-using/recycling tents, which had been left behind at the end of festivals such as Glastonbury, and making up the material into clothing, even using guy ropes for embroidering motifs on to them. It then transpired that she had already been awarded a prize by the Incorporation of Dyers and Bonnet makers, who were using different criteria – great minds think alike!

Finally, I was invited to the Preview of the Graduates' Exhibition at the Art College on 30 May. This lasted until 9 June 2024. I found it a most interesting experience and certainly intend to go next year and recommend it to anyone else. Alison

### **Long Service Award to Edith**

At the club's final meeting on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June prior to our summer break, President Liz presented a Long Service Award to Edith for her 45 years membership.

The award recognises her outstanding service to Soroptimist International Great

Britain and Ireland though not all of those forty-five years have been spent in SI Edinburgh.



Edith's profession was as a dietitian working first in Scotland in her home city of Edinburgh followed by spells in Kirkcaldy and London. But it was to Nottingham to continue her career where she first joined Soroptimists at SI Nottingham in 1979, returning, on retirement, to Edinburgh in 1997, and transferring to SI Edinburgh.

In a very short time her skills were recognised and Edith served as club secretary from 1998 to 2001. In 2002 Edith took on the role of President for a year and vividly remembers Christine - the president of SI Leith - which was then closing due to lack of numbers, presenting the beautiful president of SI Leith's chain of office to the Edinburgh club and has now been worn by Edinburgh's vice-president.



Over the years here in Edinburgh, Edith has joined in and offered her experience in many of the club's groups and committees, only too willing to pull weeds from Holyrood Park or sort clothing at Kids Love Clothes.

Edith has attended and enjoyed many of the SIGBI Conferences over the years. We in the club, have appreciated her hard work, dedication and friendship and hope it may continue in the years ahead.

## Edinburgh SIGBI Conference 2024

Join us for our Edinburgh Conference 2024 at the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms. The Conference will take place over three days 1-3 November 2024.

Visit the Conference website for full details: [www.sigbi.org/edinburgh2024/](http://www.sigbi.org/edinburgh2024/)

We look forward to seeing you there.

### Questions for UK Clubs to ask their MP candidates

The UK General Election will be held on 4 July 2024.

To enable Soroptimists in the UK to have one voice at such a key time, the following bank of questions can be used when speaking with prospective MPs during any political activities and speeches in the run-up to the election.

We would like to see Soroptimists following up the conversations with the newly appointed or returning MPs once they are in situ.

In recognition of the variations across the four home nations, please refer to additional information provided:

**Wales Women's Rights Manifesto for the UK General Election** produced by the Gender Network, a policy forum of 80 third sector representatives, activists and academics administered by the Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales.



The questions focus on the following areas:

- Poverty
- Violence against women
- Women's Safety

#### Questions:

1. There is a need for the government to address the inequalities in incomes and economic opportunities. What will your party do to help reduce child poverty and improve social justice in the UK?

For further information see <https://equalitytrust.org.uk/scale-economic-inequality-uk>

There is a useful presentation on the topic at

<https://equalitytrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/SpiritLevel%20slides.pptx>  
from

<https://equalitytrust.org.uk/resources/the-spirit-level>

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/overall-uk-poverty-rates> The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have said that 1 in 4 children in the UK are living in poverty which equates to 3.9 million children, with the North East of England and London having the highest rates. This can be attributed to poor wages, low benefit payments, soaring rent costs and a cost of living crisis. Parents who rely on food banks, going without heating and electricity are all indicators of poverty. Poverty is also higher in some ethnic minority groups

2. There is an increase in women pensioners not being able to live on the pensions currently provided.
  1. What would your party do to address this issue?
  2. How will your party support WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) women?
3. *The following link gives information and a list of suggested actions that the Government should introduce to tackle the gender pension gap*  
<https://prospect.org.uk/article/what-is-the-gender-pension-gap/>
4. [https://www.waspi.co.uk/waspi\\_ask/](https://www.waspi.co.uk/waspi_ask/)  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-66751474>
5. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2024-03-12/debates/295CE461-0397-4037-9B8A-A8C94E9B10F9/StatePensionChangesWomen>
6. It is very worrying that the projection of the male 'macho' image prevails across all media/social media providers.
  1. What would your party do to address this?

2. Would you advocate greater investment in relationship education (PHSE) in schools at an earlier age to engage boys in how to be more caring men? How would that be funded?

*Materials currently available for PHSE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) within schools* <https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-5/addressing-misogyny-toxic-masculinity-and-social-media-influence-in-pshe-education>

*Detailed article on this topic (whilst this article is from the USA, the internet crosses geographic boundaries; the issue affects women globally and the article refers to various nations:* <https://gehweb.ucsd.edu/social-media-sexist-Online-gender-based-violence/>

4. *Women make up 51% of the population but currently account for only 35% of MPs. There have been calls for a gender equal parliament by 2028.*
  1. *What will your party do to achieve this?*
  2. *How will your party support women, those who are disabled and those with*

*children and/or caring responsibilities to overcome the economic barriers that are impacting on this aim?*

5. <https://centenaryaction.org.uk/>  
<https://centenaryaction.org.uk/our-campaigns/challenge-economic-inequalities/>  
<https://www.parliament.uk/about/parliament-and-women/>

6. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is now legislation [in England]. However, the End

Violence Against Women Coalition has recently reported that ‘charge rates are low, support services are underfunded,

and cases face lengthy backlogs in the courts system’. What would your party do to improve the situation? <sup>1</sup> From <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-uk/> (scroll to the bottom of the article for the exact quote).

Factsheet summarising the aims of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet>

Wales – the position relates to Live Fear Free [legislation passed in 2015] - <https://www.gov.wales/live-fear-free/domestic-abuse-wales>. The WenWales manifesto provides a steer on this issue in Wales.

7. ONS Census data (2021) from across the four home nations suggests that the number of unpaid carers across the UK is 5.7 million. This means that around 9% of people are providing unpaid care. However, Carers UK research in 2022 estimates the number of unpaid carers could be as high as 10.6 million. Many carers live in poverty or face financial hardship as a direct result of providing unpaid care. 58% of carers are women and 42% are men.

1. What will your party do to address the financial impact of being a carer?
2. What will your party do to help carers continue in their education or employment?

<https://www.employersforcarers.org/about-us/>

<https://www.carersuk.org/> - many useful pages, in particular for this project:

<https://www.carersuk.org/policy-and-research/key-facts-and-figures/#:~:text=The%20most%20recent%20Census%202021,the%20UK%20is%205.7%20million.>

<https://www.carersuk.org/policy-and-research/our-areas-of-policy-work/money-and-finance/>



Anna and Alison at the May 25 Orange the World event at the National Portrait Gallery!!

Former UN SecGen Ban Ki-moon on the 17 SDGs (2015):

“They are our shared vision of humanity and a social contract between the world's leaders and the people,”

“They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success,

**SDG17 Collaborative Partners**

**UNHouse Scotland is delighted to have a Collaborative Partnership with SIGBI clubs in Scotland.**



**UNHS Executive Director, Gari, will be addressing SI Grangemouth on Thursday 10 October. All are welcome!**



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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