



**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

**SIEnna 230 November 2024
President's Message**

What a warm welcome we provided for visitors to the SIGBI Edinburgh conference at the beginning of the month!



I cannot thank everyone enough for not only being there but in true Soroptimist style being around and about to just “say hello” to folk new to the conference and city and point people in the right direction for a coffee and cake!

Our welcoming gathering was a great success. Many women attending mentioned how much it was appreciated and how much even the small token of being given an “orange ribbon” overtly united us in raising awareness about the Orange the World campaign



We have, out of necessity, spent a considerable amount of time this year discussing the organisational arrangements and proposals for changes in those both at a national and regional level. This has not distracted us, however, from our aims to **EDUCATE, EMPOWER AND ENABLE** women and girls.

Our programme action schedule is one to be proud of as a small club. It includes building on our ongoing activities of support for and partnerships with:

- Kids Love Clothes
- The Women’s Refuge
- LinkNet mentoring scheme
- Orange cafes
- Edinburgh Art College Textile Department Sustainability Prize
- UN House Scotland

- Equally Safe VAWG Partnership Edinburgh City Council
- Beach cleans
- Plastic use monitoring & collections for recycling and proposed new initiatives that to date include:
- Safe travel project – SIGBI
- Women’s experience of the court process – project with SiSS to campaign and produce information booklet



I have no doubt that as we move into the New Year 2025, more ideas and opportunities will emerge!

I look forward to the discussion and debate about how to prioritise and make best use of all of our talents and expertise in support of women and girls worldwide.

President Liz
November 2024



Minutes of SI Edinburgh Business Meeting Wednesday 13 November

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 to all and to Susi prospective member on her second visit to our meetings.

Apologies: Edith, Gari, Irene and Judith.

Matters arising from October 9 Business Meeting: 16 days of activism - City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) producing a poster re Respect Her Space **ACTION:** Liz and Judith to continue to liaise with CEC. Minutes proposed by Dorothy and seconded by Nikki.

1. Future of Region

Nikki explained that in September 2023 no one stood for office and a new structure was needed. A Region Management Team is proposed. Reps will include Programme Action, Admin, Money, Membership (PAMM), a Federation Consultative Councillor and a coordinator. There will be short lived small teams for projects. The Regional Council (with a voting rep from each club) will remain. The coordinator will monitor that tasks are done. If agreed, an advert for the coordinator role will be put out to members. If approved, the new operating model will start immediately after the 30th November. It will run as a pilot for 2 years. with an interim review.

SI Edinburgh members voted in favour of the approach.

ACTION: Voting delegate for the Region meeting on Zoom on 30th November is Nikki. Liz may also attend.

2. Christmas outing

Will be 11th December at Canopy at the Edinburgh Futures complex at 7pm
Two courses are £26.00

ACTION: Anna to book and invite prospective members and others we usually include.

Club also discussed possibility of a Burns Supper on 25th January

ACTION: Pat to invite Friendship Link SI Cockermouth.

3. SIGBI Conference in Edinburgh reflections.

Meet and Greet at the Kimpton Hotel was very successful with over 60 guests, from Scotland, Ireland and the Caribbean.

Liz expressed thanks to members of SI Edinburgh for their help, support and input including stewarding and especially those who attended at 8 am on two days!

Edinburgh Evening News published an excellent article with a photograph on the front page and inside, with clear explanation of Soroptimism. PS Julie our contact on the News was sent information from SIGBI's PR person.

Pat has posted information on the Welcome at the Kimpton on Facebook. Thanks to Judith for the photographs.

Scotland South members thanked SI Edinburgh for our hospitality and for the orange bows denoting the campaign against violence to women. The Region kindly paid the bill at the Kimpton.

Other follow up: SIGBI is relaunching a "Safety on public transport" action.

n.b there is a UN initiative called Safer Cities. Mae East has previously spoken to the club and may be a useful contact.

Purple Teardrop Campaign re trafficking SI Poole action. Gari is contacting them with a view to inviting them to address the cross-party group in Parliament.

SIGBI General Meeting – voting direction outlined by Liz. A summary is included in this edition of SIEnna.

4. Programme Action

Orange the World/ 16 days of action (25th November to 10th December). Liz waiting for information from City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) re Respect her Space, which may be available for social media and for printing.

ACTION: Liz and Judith to liaise with CEC re safety on public transport.

ACTION: Elaine and Anna to visit shops in Bruntsfield and Morningside with explanatory leaflets and postcards. There was discussion about stand up cards re

social media dangers to be used eg with public library computers.

Pat has downloaded the relevant SI information and will add to SI Edinburgh Facebook page with a different image for each of the 16 days.

ACTION: Liz to send any additional information to Pat for Facebook. Elaine suggested that we visit eg Waverley Railway station and the bus station wearing orange to hand out postcards.

ACTION: Elaine to investigate re permissions.

Dominion cinema will place postcards on seats and hope to light up the facade in orange.

ACTION: Liz suggested that on 25th November we wear orange and hand out postcards to people in Bruntsfield and Morningside and meet up for coffee.

SI Scotland South Region PA group

A small group plan to follow up presentation from H, a survivor of abuse who took her accuser to court. This may build on the work of SI Poole described at Conference; the club produced a booklet "Fresh Thoughts" for survivors of abuse with useful information which could be adapted for Scottish users. President Liz facilitating this group. If interested in taking part in the project, please let her know.

Liz talked about a play 'Prima Facie' available from National Theatre live where a female barrister (brilliantly played by Jodie Comer) was sexually assaulted by a colleague; she had to confront her own actions as a defending barrister when finding herself in the same position as the victims she was used to cross examining. Liz suggested we might arrange a screening for region and invite members of the Faculty of Advocates.

Link Net No further update.

St Bride's women's group Elaine reported no current news.

The Welcoming Elaine will attend AGM on 9th December

Art College Prize Awaiting contact from Collette P.

Women's hostel Christmas Gifts Members are requested to bring a small wrapped present eg hat, scarf, (no

toiletries) to meeting on 27th November or to get them to Lindsey for early December.

5. Programme Speaker meeting on 27 November with Maureen Maguire speaking about her time as SI President. Nikki to invite other Scotland members to attend on Zoom.

6. Friendship links No specific updates BUT to note SIGBI President's Challenge to contact as many other clubs as possible this year and to record details.

7. Finance No further update. Note: need to move AGM date back to April 23rd 2025 to allow time for preparation and audit.

8. Membership Anna provided an update on meeting with a prospective new member Sue M.

8. SIEnna deadline for copy 22.11.24

9. Dates of forthcoming meetings

November 27th speaker meeting, Maureen Maguire, Youth Hostel and Zoom

December 11th Christmas get together

January 8th business meeting – ZOOM only

January 22nd speaker meeting, Mary Morton, ZOOM only

Women in Revolt! Art and Activism in the UK 1970-1990
Modern Two
Until 26 January 2025, £4.00 - £14.00

Discover

The Cold War and Scottish society

History and cultures, Science and technology, Scotland

Dovecot Studios
Stitched: Scotland's Embroidered Art

From 25 October until 18 January 2025, cost £12.00, reduction for NTS members. Features over 80 pieces covering a 200 year period, from National Trust for Scotland properties

**Edinburgh Evening News
Friday 8 November 2024**

Soroptimists enjoy milestone city conference

More than 500 members of Soroptimist International Great Britain & Ireland (SIGBI) were given the warmest of Edinburgh welcomes when they arrived in the capital for their 90th anniversary conference. The women's charity – which has consultancy status at the United Nations – took over the Assembly Rooms for the three-day event, with an agenda to “educate, empower and enable”.



Members of SI Edinburgh, founded in 1927, volunteered as “meeters and greeters”, as well as hosting a welcome cafe at the Kimpton Hotel on the opening morning, providing coffees for more than 120 people who attended.

After an opening address by former Edinburgh University Rector, Dr Deborah Kayembe, the conference marked the milestone occasion by relaunching its national railway safety project. First launched in 1996, the Future of the Railways was an investigation into personal safety on trains and in stations, which the charity's members used to lobby the Government into taking action to do more to protect women on public transport. They want to see how much has changed in the past 28 years, as well as

expanding its reach to include airports and bus stations and obtaining a more detailed picture of women's safety across the country.

In addition to panel discussions, and an address from Baroness Floella Benjamin, the charity also hosted its Best Practice Awards at the conference, a scheme which celebrates clubs' projects. There was also a collection for Edinburgh-based charity Smalls for All, with more than 2300 pairs of underwear donated for vulnerable women in the UK and Africa who can't access or afford pants. Smalls for All Founder Maria Macnamara said: "Giving pants and bras may seem like a small thing, but it can make a life-changing difference. Each month many teenage girls miss school, and women miss work, because of a lack of access to underwear means they're forced to stay at home during their period. "Demand remains huge in Africa, but, in recent years, has also increased significantly in the UK. We're so grateful to have been part of the SIGBI conference to share our message."

Ruth Healey, President of SIGBI, said: "We're so proud of the work our members have carried out over the last 90 years. "It's been incredible getting so many Soroptimists in one room to reflect on what we've achieved, as well as to look ahead to the next phase of some of our key projects. "It's only by working together that we can empower women and girls to achieve their full potential and eliminate barriers and discriminations that hinder women's progress." To mark the charity's nine decades, Soroptimists are also completing a '90 for 90 years' challenge—including everything from supporting foodbanks, to knitting for premature baby units, to donating items to domestic abuse charities, and more.

<https://sigbi.org/edinburgh/about-our-club/>

Book Review from Chris

I've just read a review of 'The Paris Peacemakers' by Flora Johnston. This historical novel is inspired by Flora's great aunts, Christina and Mildred, who travelled from Thurso to France to help the war effort.

Mildred typed documents for diplomats involved in the Paris Peace Conference and Christina was among the first women to visit battlefields once the fighting ended, in her role as a teacher to help soldiers find employment after the war.

While the novel does not directly tell her great aunts' stories, Flora wanted to explore the damage that war does to ordinary people.

Flora has a background of work in the museum field and has published Christina's memoir and her debut novel 'What you call free'.

AN INVITATION FROM UNHS

Invitation to attend and support UNHS Model UN event for Secondary Schools at Heriot Watt University on Friday 21 February.

Information from mun@unhscotland.org.uk



SIE meeting dates 2024 – 2025

Dates for 2024	Meeting type	Location
Nov 13 th	Business	Youth Hostel and Zoom
Nov 27 th	Speaker – Maureen Maguire -past president SI	“
11 Dec	Social	Meal at Futures Institute
Dates for 2025		
Jan 8th	Business	Zoom only
Jan 22 th	Speaker – Mary Morton – Make do and Mend - sustainability	Zoom only
Feb 12th	Business	Youth Hostel and Zoom
Feb 25 th tbc	Orange cafe	tbc
Feb 26 th tbc ??	Speaker tbc	tbc
March 12 th	Business	Youth Hostel and Zoom
March 26	Speaker - Ailsa Clark on Elsie Inglis	Youth Hostel and Zoom
April 9 th	Business	Youth Hostel and Zoom
April 23 rd AGM	AGM	Youth Hostel and Zoom



Summary of voting at the SIGBI General Meeting November 3rd 2024

For a resolution to be carried 75% of the votes had to be in favour. Abstentions were not counted.
For info – 245/249 voting delegates (representing their club) were at the meeting.

Resolution	% for	% against	Agreed/fell	Comment
1. SIGBI articles (as in proposal doc) replace all existing articles	74.3%	25.7%	Fell	Articles still have factual and typo errors that need amending
2. Bye laws changes (no. 21) including role of Associate members and FCC	32%	67.28%	Fell	Many amendments proposed - some carried but substantive motion not carried
3. UK clubs <u>have choice</u> of adopting unincorporated association club constitution (similar to now) or adopting charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) constitution	79.77	20.23	Agreed	
4. Clubs in England and Wales can choose to become a CIO. If agreed, the Board will be able to negotiate with suitable authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland to do the same.	89%	10%	Agreed	
5. Revised constitution for clubs outside of UK	96.34%	3.6%	Agreed	
6. Revised (more flexible) region constitution in the UK	79.29%	20.71%	Agreed	n.b regions cannot register as charities in the UK (club can)
7. National Association Constitution revised	95.24%	4.76%	Agreed	3 separate constitutions allows UK regions, National Associations and Networks independent governance arrangements
8. New Network Constitution	98.19%	1.81%	Agreed	Agreement to the above