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International
Edinburgh
news
notes anecdotes****SIEnna 234 April 2025
President's Report**

This AGM marks the end of my two years as SI Edinburgh President. It is hard to believe that the two years are already over. Time has flown, much has been achieved, and we are in the midst of a time of turbulent change in the world order.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of the club for their energy, enthusiasm and enduring commitment to our goals. Each of us do what we can, when we can to contribute to standing up for women and girls locally, and worldwide. It has been a privilege to try to keep us on course and to be part of a growing group, thank you!

The approach I took this time last year was to combine the President's remarks with the programme action report and I propose to adopt the same stance this year. Programme action is what we do. It seems appropriate to use this report to reflect on and celebrate some of the things we have achieved through our two strands of advocacy and action over the last twelve months.

It is important to remind ourselves of the context in which we have been meeting and planning this year. A considerable amount of our energy has been spent in getting to grips with and responding to the proposed organisational changes in SIGBI, getting used to the alternative

arrangements for running the Region and to ensuring that SI Edinburgh and Scottish clubs featured in the SIGBI conference held in the city in November. We tackled it all in a calm and professional manner and came away with our collective heads held high!

Advocacy

- **Attendance at and liaison with the Edinburgh Equally Safe Partnership Group.** Support for their safe travel campaign during the 16 days of activism
- **Ongoing tracking of the progress of the proposed Misogyny Act (Scotland)** Progress has been stalled whilst the Scottish government waited for a Supreme Court ruling on the definition of a woman in the Equality Act 2010. This ruling has now been made. Next steps are to contact Baroness Helena Kennedy to seek her views on how we might support sympathetic MSPs in taking her recommendations forward.
- **Joint project with other clubs,** a survivor of sexual assault and Police Scotland to develop more up to date and accessible information about support for survivors from the point at which they seek support/report the crime through the court process and what happens when their abuser (if convicted) is released on parole.

Action**Ongoing activities**

- **Christmas Gifts to the Women's Hostel, Leith**
These were again delivered early December for about 20 of their clients. This year the preferred gifts were gloves, hats, scarves or brollies. We discontinued toiletries.
- **Marie Curie Daffodil Appeal**
While we no longer do this as a club group out on the weeks of the appeal,

we had four members, who were involved in February.

- **Kids Love Clothes**

We continue to support the sorting and packing of clothes for children at Ratho and plan to offer our help again this Summer. The clothes 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.

- **Orange the world**

The Orange cafes are held every second month 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 interest continues and we plan to apply for a Best Practice Award to highlight their success, this Summer.



Members distributed leaflets and posters to a selection of city libraries, café hubs and many of the shops in Bruntsfield and Morningside in time for sixteen days of activism in November into December. A successful social media campaign was run, with new posts on every day of the 16 days.

- **Sustainability Art Prize**

This will be the second year of our prize being awarded. We have refined and agreed the criteria with the art college and will be hearing from the shortlisted candidates on May 21st. Judging will take place on the 26th May.

- **LinkNet mentoring**

We continue to be available to mentor women who seek support through LinkNet for thinking about work, drafting CVs and applications or interview practice. One member meets with a mentee regularly.

New projects

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

Members have now established a rota to support the work of The Welcoming. They have agreed to join the conversations on the first 3 Friday afternoons of each month.

- **Orange the World**

Proposals for action during 2025 include; an orange ribbon campaign, social media campaign based on SIGBI materials, educational session for an older less heard demographic of women on financial abuse.



- **New partnership with Words and Actions 4 Peace**

At the beginning of April we changed our meeting venue to no 58 Ratcliffe Terrace, the base for Words and Actions 4 Peace. We look forward to considering how we might work together with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), who also meet there, on a future project.

What an impressive list! I look forward to our next year with confidence that SI Edinburgh will continue to flourish and grow. With very best wishes and in friendship,

Liz

President 2023 - 2025

Minutes of SI Edinburgh Business Meeting held on 9th April 2025 at 7.30pm at Words & Actions 4 Peace, Ratcliffe Terrace, Edinburgh and on Zoom

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATES FOR MAY MEETINGS – NOW FIRST AND THIRD WEDNESDAY- 7TH AND 21ST MAY 2025.

Liz welcomed visitor Vicki who joined us on Zoom
Apologies – Chris, Susi (P) and Gari

Minutes of the last business meeting 12th March 2025 – acceptance proposed by Alison and seconded by Elaine

1.Feedback from UN / CSW in March (Pat plus 2 UN interns Luisa and Elena)
Excellent update received from Luisa and Elena covering their insights from attending the United Nations New York, third meeting of State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons. The treaty is gender sensitive so it specifically speaks to the impacts on women.

Very interesting and informative with the observation that we MUST talk about this subject much more to improve action, ratification and greater research.

Pat then shared her thoughts from attending the Commission on the Status of Women. Main observation was that intention was to celebrate thirty years since the Beijing summit where 190 countries signed up to a declaration to improve things for women and girls. Have we really moved forward? $\frac{3}{4}$ of actions have seen good progress but $\frac{1}{4}$ not seen any progress or actually moved backwards.

ACTION Pat will include in SIEnna, a link to a short podcast she did summarising her observations of CSW 2025.

2.Programe Action

- SIGBI Cervical Cancer project – discussion on ‘what can we do to support?’ We appreciated the input from Vicki who has had previous experience of Cervical Cancer campaigns etc and her advice was that there are multiple agencies dealing with this topic, and we would be sensible to consider where we can plug any gaps rather than duplicate what others are doing.

We might try to understand why people are not going for their tests and take action to support them to go.

ACTION 1) do our own research and digest SIGBI research to understand what is being done, where and determine actions so as not to duplicate. 2) Promote the SIGBI ‘women’s health’ cards at Orange Cafes. 3) promote screening at partner events eg The Welcome/target key age group eg through STAR (Students Action for Refugees) at Edinburgh University.

- Orange the World – Best Practice Award submission. Liz thanked Pat for all the work done in researching the spread of Orange Cafes across UK and the Globe.

- ACTION 1) Pat to share her findings with SI and SIGBI for information. 2) Anna to work with Pat on preparing a questionnaire for Clubs to complete re their Orange Cafe origins and activity. To be sent to known Orange Cafe clubs plus ALL Scotland South Clubs. Responses will support our Best Practice Award submission.



- The Welcoming – Elaine explained the purpose of the organisation (See SIEnna) and confirmed Liz, Sue (M)

and herself would, for the first 3 Fridays of each month, be supporting the Conversation Cafes held at Gorgie Memorial Hall

- Region Project – provision of useful information for women survivors of Domestic Abuse going through the criminal justice system. This continues to progress and Scotland North Region have shown an interest to consider it being a Scotland wide initiative.
- Edinburgh College of Art Art Prize – date for judging is May 26th in the afternoon and shortlisted candidates will present their work to the Club on Wednesday 21st May. There is the offer from Words & Actions 4 Peace to display the winners work.
- 90th anniversary celebrations for Scotland North and Scotland South Regions 2026 - volunteers are sought to be part of a Regional 'short-life working group' to organise a celebration. ACTION: if you have the desire and /or the skills please volunteer and let Liz know.

3.Dates of Meetings for 2025 – (see SIEnna) NOTE – change of dates in May, now 7th and 21st :

June 25th meeting – ideas for Club social required.

4.Arrangements for Officers and running the Club after April.

ACTION please let Alison know if you are willing to take on President's role either solely or sharing. If no nominees we will need to consider rotation of meeting chair (on monthly or two monthly basis)

ACTION Please let Alison know if you are willing to be part of the rota. Anna has agreed to continue as Membership officer, Dorothy has agreed to continue as Treasurer and Chris has agreed to remain as Club Secretary for correspondence and as contact. Minute taking, PA named contact and PR/Marketing roles will need to be covered.

5 Membership – Anna welcomed Vicki to our meeting as a potential new member. We are hoping Susi(P) will complete her enrolment soon. Professor Mutapi (resident in Edinburgh and member of SI in Africa) is hoping to be able to attend some Club meetings in future. SI Kirkcaldy have connected us to another potential member Eilidh and Nikki is making contact to meet for a coffee and chat.

6. Finance – Dorothy reminded everyone subscriptions are due for 2025/26 – details emailed out. Annual Accounts are with the Auditor in readiness for AGM.

7. Programme – Next meeting 23rd April is AGM : May 21st is ECA Art Prize shortlisted candidates presentations

8. Comms and IT Connectivity – discussion around 1)improved IT connectivity at new meeting location and 2) awareness/use of Club gmail account. A small number of people have access to the gmail In Box to manage it and send out messages. Please ensure you read emails from Soroptimist International Edinburgh (soroptimistinternedinburgh@gmail.com).

There have been some issues with distribution of messages

ACTION Nikki to consider defining some Email protocols

9. Friendship Links – SI Perth Australia has now been officially confirmed. Update received from SI Maribor, Slovenia – member will be visiting Edinburgh this year and Lindsey has agreed to liaise with her re dates and meeting up.

10.SIEnna – copy for next edition to be with Gari/Clephane by Monday 21st April. (Note: in view of Bank Holiday and AGM next edition may be delayed until next month)

11. AOCB

- Club Ballot for SIGBI articles and bye-laws : insufficient Clubs responded to the ballot earlier in the year and so

the ballot has had to be resent. We did reply however we need to respond again.

ACTION Liz will reply with same response as last time.

- Dunfermline 75th Anniversary – Anna suggested that as Dunfermline Club was our daughter Club it would be nice to mark their anniversary with a gift. Agreed to £75 donation towards their work in the community.

Next Meeting; AGM - 23rd April

Business Meeting - 7th May



The Welcoming

A Scottish charity dedicated to supporting asylum seekers, refugees and migrants - they are now referring to these people as 'New Scots in Edinburgh'. Their vision is to make everyone feel welcome and support them to learn English, find jobs and access local services. They offer opportunities for friendship, sustainable living, creativity, health and well being. They also aim to connect locals and New Scots through social and cultural exchange and encourage them to collaborate with others to share knowledge and influence positive change

Conversation classes for mixed groups are held every Friday afternoon in Gorgie Memorial Hall, 2.30-4.00pm. Tables are set up and attendees chat about various topics. Sometimes there are themes or focus subjects or prompt questions provided by the co-ordinator.

SI Edinburgh attend the sessions for the first three Fridays of each month and participate in the conversations.

STAR Student Action for Refugees. Edinburgh University

Charities and various organisations organise educational and fundraising events and campaigns to improve the lives of refugees, and to educate people about refugees and the asylum process. Lots of events are arranged in partnership with local organisations. SI Edinburgh may find opportunities to partner with STAR.

Elaine

CSW69 Follow Up on The Political Declaration – from Pat

I said at the last meeting I would let you have the link to my blog on the SI website which reiterates what I described as some of my involvement in CSW69 this year. I followed the development of the text for the Political Declaration and was involved in contributing to that text.

<https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/cs-w69-political-declaration-2/>

Overall, as I said at our meeting, it was a disappointing outcome with several Member States declaring at the end of the meeting that their country would not be implementing several of the paragraphs which had been agreed on. The USA was one of the leading objectors and issued a clear statement that they would not agree to text on issues such as sustainable development and the UN2030 agenda (SDGs), and climate change. The full text of their objections can be found at this link

[Explanation of Position on the CSW Political Declaration - United States Mission to the United Nations](#)

I did get involved in other areas of work at CSW69 but the wording of the Political Declaration and the various interpretations of that wording by Member States is what interests me and dictates the work I do for SI at CSW each year.

Link to the final agreed Political Declaration

<https://docs.un.org/en/E/CN.6/2025/L.1>

Report from Elena and Luisa at the SIE Business Meeting on April 9

At the beginning of April we had the pleasure of sharing our experiences attending the 3MSP to the TPNW at the UN Headquarters in New York in March with Soroptimist Edinburgh.

As part of the UN House delegation, our role at the 3MSP was to report what was happening both at the Chambers, but also the role of civil society and NGOs, that hosted insightful and informative side events. We had the chance to both learn more about impacts of the production of, withhold of, and use of nuclear weapons, specifically the disproportionate harms against women, children and most vulnerable persons and communities.

As we are both from different countries, Germany and Norway, we also felt disappointment given that our countries did not attend the 3MSP, and hope that “Global North” countries can take inspiration from the great engagement and encouragement from “Global South”



countries as well as Austria and Ireland.

As part of the Climate Justice and Gender team at the UNHS, we also made great connections with brilliant and inspiring speakers from the events, that we are hoping to invite to our podcast series “Feminist Perspectives on Nuclear Disarmament” over the next couple of months.

It was very interesting to be welcomed by the longstanding members of Soroptimist Edinburgh and we hope for continued collaboration to stand united in our fight for a world free from nuclear weapons.

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Nuclear Disarmament 15 May 1pm

The recently appointed research/director with the Nuclear Information Service (NIS), Okope Ajonye will join us to present a new NIS briefing on Faslane/Coulport. Hard copies of the report will be available and Okope will be interested to meet Scottish campaigners as well as MSPs