**SI London Chilterns Regional Meeting: Saturday 11th March 2017**

**Club Development & Growth Workshop**

**Collated Feed Back**

**Group Work Session 1: Where are we now? ~ Identify present club approach to Recruitment of new members ~ who is responsible?**

**Membership Officer?**

* Varied

**Membership Committee?**

* Varied but agreed everybody’s job ~ executive plus club discussion approach
* One Model:

Membership Committee members follow up contacts, and liaise and organise mentors

Take out to coffee prior before committing to membership to ensure understanding of commitment including costs

Identify members to meet and greet at meetings: can be a turn off just walking into a meeting especially if there is an age gap

* Recruitment policy followed in a minority of clubs

**Part of Club Planning Strategy?**

* Use events as publicity opportunity e.g. stall at International Women’s Day Event: 700 women through in the day
* Always provide contact details
* Have cards with details to give out
* Opportunities to work with other organisations e.g. Rotary Stroke event
* Links with Girl Guide groups
* Cultivate speakers at meals/meetings ~ they may become members
* Use of local notice boards and papers in all locations covered by club however not all papers interested
* Use of local radio e.g. Radio Marlow
* How do we publicise ourselves?
* Positive use of website
* Timing of meeting to accommodate women from some ethnic groups
* Target age groups appropriate to club area
* Good speaker meetings, evenings with food needed to recruit and retain members ~ need to have something to invite prospective members to
* Informal New Members Evening to introduce and inform: identify interests and degree of commitment

**Do all of Members Buy in to Plan?**

* Via Social Events/Programme Action
* Challenge ~ meeting expectations of young members

**Does your Club Set Recruitment Targets for the Year?**

* Generally no
* Gradual recruitment helps to assimilate and support new members
* Tend to get short term interest
* Have an informal induction with a photograph
* Friends list help prospective members to be found and join when the time is right

**Other**

* Costs ~ need to demonstrate Value for Money; subscriptions vary from £75 to £100+
* Ways of getting people to meetings include a meal prior to meetings but this is an additional cost
* Question: Women’s Hour ~ all the talk re International Women’s Day ~ were we involved
* Need to raise our profile
* Problems in getting officers: successful job shares
* Organisations name can be an issue
* We need to do more to promote Associate Membership

**Group Work Session 2 ~ Retention of Members**

**Why do members join?**

* What to be part of the community & engagement in local projects e.g. Child Contact Centre, provision of toys
* Social reasons & friendship
* Way to make friends and learn about other people/professions/worlds
* Encouraged via word of mouth: friends and colleagues of members
* “Having something to do”
* Good varied programme and speakers including those from other clubs
* Good varied events e.g. Garden Party, Quiz Evening,
* Global context
* Opportunities to establish friendships abroad & work collaboratively
* “To make a change”
* Focus on Women & Children
* Working with other clubs
* Ethos of the organisation
* Attracted by Programme Action (on website & in papers)

**What influences members to stay?**

* Social Aspects
* Loyalty & Commitment
* Ethos of the organisation
* Friendship & support
* Involvement
* Interesting Programme Action Projects e.g. Talking Newspaper, Women’s Refuge, Sponsoring a child, Collections
* Involvement in overseas project e.g. Involvement in Action Aid, supporting schools
* Mentoring System and meeting individual needs ~ all different, some need to dive in at the deep end, some need time to absorb otherwise frightened off
* Buddy System
* World class speakers at conferences/ meetings
* Opportunity to go places have not been to before at conferences and study days etc.
* Become knowledgeable about issues
* Contently learning need things outside your narrow area of expertise

**What factors make them leave?**

* Illness
* Pregnancy
* Job commitments
* Moving away
* Unwelcoming Attitudes
* Unrealistic expectations
* Expense ~ WI is a third of the price, capitation to SIGBI ~ what is money spent on? Costs could be spread over the year or Direct Debit, Central London prices are very high for rooms etc.
* Other commitments and circumstances
* Not worthy of prioritising with already busy lives
* Programme does not fit with their lives
* Boring programme
* Lack of interesting programme and fun ~ we are too serious at times!
* Unreasonable expectation to keep giving money
* Elderly members unable to get to meetings
* Expectations not meet/ Not what they expected ~ do not do what we say on the tin!

**Other Comments**

* Could Head Office help with publicity?
* Major projects need proper publicity
* Lack of information on SIGBI website
* Appear on TV ~ even local could be set up

**Individual Feedback**

**Why did I become a Soroptimist?**

* Because my sister was a Soroptimist and she seemed to have so much fun!(didn’t know there was a group in St Albans)I wanted to meet people who were not associated with childcare and meet new people
* I was persuaded to join by a work colleague. I was interested in fund raising activities and meeting other women
* Because I wanted to be part of a women’s organisation giving back something to those less fortunate than myself
* Just returned from abroad and wanted to get to know people locally and support the local community
* Invited by a work colleague who I respected and was inspired by other members of the club and their work
* In 1962 I saw a photo of members of the new Slough club in the newspaper and was very impressed! 22 years later I met a local Soroptimist and was invited to join but I had to be interviewed! I was accepted and delighted to join!
* Because I always wanted to!
* Just moved into an area where there were some friends and so it happened
* To help my community and get involved in international projects. To make new friends
* Because what Soroptimists stood for was exactly how I felt about the women & girls in the world. It gave me an opportunity to help to educate, empower and enable
* My friend was a Soroptimist and I attended at her house; I decided to join my local group to see more of Soroptimists in general
* Rita said I would like it!! Friendship; “Doing something: making a difference”
* A friend suggested I come to a meeting. It was a challenge!!
* Approached by a member who invited me to attend a meeting; attended our “Christmas Boxes” evening for Women’s Aid. I was very impressed by the friendship, commitment and community involvement, and wanted to join a group of lovely like-minded ladies
* A friend was invited to join and she said I know someone else who might interested – and that was that!
* Looking for women’s group in newly moved into area
* Invited to attend a meeting shortly after moving into a new area. I liked member’s activities, projects and international aspects. Encourage members to attend regional, federation and international
* conferences
* Interested in projects to improve women’s lives with different and diverse communities
* Working and socialising with like-minded sisters
* Introduced by a very passionate member who was very involved and keeps on ensuring the growth of Soroptimism
* It was an opportunity to do something practical for people in need. They were friendly group of people to join
* As an active citizen a friend said “you need to be a Soroptimist” and she was right!
* Because I wanted to support an organisation that focuses on women and girls
* I was introduced to the club by a colleague at work ~ now club Membership Officer
* I believe in the objectives and mission of SI
* To meet new people when I came to a new place
* I was asked to join; also a family friend was an enthusiastic member who spoke about her Soroptimist events
* An existing member invited me and a neighbour to attend a talk (I can’t remember the topic) They seemed to like a nice group of welcoming women so I joined
* Taken to a meeting by a member and found it interesting
* Was invited by a close friend and it looked to be “my sort of thing” (however waited until I retired as didn’t have time before)
* To support ladies and girls globally; to support poorer country; to promote equality between men/women worldwide ;to ensure my childhood friend’s wishes came to pass
* Word of mouth; friendship; sense of achievement
* Friendship and commitment to a cause; teamwork working for others
* Encouraged by a friend who was a Soroptimist. Coming up to retirement looking for socialising and volunteering role; family commitments allowed
* Because my Aunt said it was about time I joined; I was about to be divorced and it seemed a good idea. (my aunt was an Irish Soroptimist; she contacted a member who she used to travel to international conferences with)
* I was asked to give a talk on “Working as a Midwife in Pakistan” Following this I asked to become a member

**Why do I continue to be a member?**

* We continue to help the local community
* I want to continue meeting new people and present myself with new challenges; travel to different places (Kenya next year); have visited Poland, Munster and Holland with Soroptimists; spread the word of how people can be involved
* Interesting projects and loyalty to other members. I enjoy the friendship. We have introduced mentors for new members and a focus on friendship and mutual support for each other by occasional “hygge” evenings which are held in members’ homes and involve food, wine and chocolate
* Group very “comfortable” and supportive, takes care of members and involvement in many and varied areas
* The aims and objectives of Soroptimism in particular educating girls are very much in line with what I believe to be needed both in UK and abroad
* Interest; things that we achieve ~ ongoing commitments
* To start with I offer the thought “what am I doing here?” Then because I like the aims and values and enjoy working with like-minded people
* Very interested in the well-being of women & girls; great group of women; leadership; getting together
* Great travel opportunities; friendship; worthwhile projects; making a difference
* Made much good; creative friends; “do thinks”
* I appreciate the necessary changes across the years. Focus of Programme Areas etc. and ways we can work toward goals & projects. Believe the work of SI still relevant. Like members friendship, fun and achievements. Want to make a difference for women/girls worldwide
* Mainly for friendship; feel it is worthwhile but not as enthusiastic as used to be
* When we are able to help and support a group or organisation it can be very worthwhile; also the friendship that I have made
* Because I cannot “throw a six” i.e. I have not yet found a reason to leave
* I have a job to do; there are some interesting speaker evenings; opportunity
* I enjoy helping with the projects and the friendship is good
* Fun & friendship; enjoy the challenge of events and helping the community and girls and women
* I stayed as a Soroptimist because I believe the main principles to be challenging. The more I have become involved the more interesting the ideas & activities have become and differences can be made even if small
* I continue to be a member because I am interested in the work of Soroptimists. I enjoy meeting other women; like the idea of helping the less privileged
* Each meeting I enjoy social contact and getting involved in local activities
* I believe in the projects we are involved in; friendship & social contact; some good speakers
* To help make a difference and spread the word to address issues; meet interesting & wise women; speaker meetings; I have made friends; potential to debate issues
* I have made friends & got involved in Programme Action; volunteered to be President Elect
* For social side and helping with Programme Action
* I continue because it is good to be with a group of like-minded women; I enjoy most of the talks; fund raising events
* It has been even better than I expected it to be; I have got so much out of it; friendship/knowledge/awareness/a sense of purpose
* I am continuing learning about issues and projects; I have found friendship & support in progressing projects and actions
* The work we do and friendship and support
* To continue the great work; to empower & educate; introduction of a new officer to look after new members on their first visit; opportunity to keep in touch
* Because I like Soroptimism and the international element
* Friendship; believe in the aims; like the fact that it is international organisation and have made friends abroad through Soroptimism
* I continue to believe in supporting those less fortunate than ourselves
* The ethos of the organisation; resonates with me and I enjoy events particularly regional meetings and conferences, wonderful speakers and inspiring women
* Meet new people; some social events; some educating (for me) events
* I want Soroptimist organisation to work but I do despair sometimes but I want to continue to help women and girls