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 London Chilterns Region

**Regional Newsletter – November 2020**

Welcome to the second newsletter of Helen’s Presidential Year. Despite all the challenges presented by the

Covid-19 Pandemic Helen has made a great start to the year.

**Message from President Helen**

I hope you are managing in Lockdown 2 and are buoyed by the recent good news on the vaccine front. There is still a distance to go and plans for Christmas still look hazy but, at last, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Meanwhile we all continue to plan events on Zoom: if you haven’t yet booked for the **Regional Human Rights Day Meeting on 12 December** please take a look at the exciting programme in the flyer sent with this newsletter and click

 on the link to book your place through Eventbrite.

I know that you will all be doing what Soroptimists do best - working doubly hard to maintain your Programme Action work much of which, at the moment, aims to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. This work is vital but please don’t forget to fill in your **Programme Focus Report forms**too. As Johanna will no doubt remind us on 12 December the Programme database is the evidence of our work, enabling us as an organisation to prove we deserve to maintain that very important Consultative status with the UN.

At this time of year our thoughts usually also turn to the new year and the news of a vaccine gives us all more enthusiasm and confidence to plan for **2021, our Centenary Year.**

Building back better is going to take just as much commitment as facing the C-19 challenge but amongst your work plans do make time to celebrate. Being together is something we have all missed so let’s delight in getting to know each other again. Perhaps organise something like a **sharing session**where you discuss, remember and **celebrate past achievements**and members - how far have we and women come since 1921? And look for ways to use the outcomes of the pandemic and the Centenary as springboards for your Programme Action and as opportunities to **promote your club**in your community and to more and more women.

With the **climate crisis**, environmental topics are very popular so even if your club isn’t already involved in this work do take up my challenge and include at least 1 **tree planting activity**in your 2021 Programme. As some clubs are doing, you can fundraise and contribute to charities such as the Woodland Trust and Trees for Cities or organise a commemorative tree planting with a plaque. Or connect with other local groups like Friends of the Earth and work with them and your local council planting trees in places with little tree cover to benefit the atmosphere and the people who live nearby. Whatever your club choses to do, it’s a win win and might just find you some new members too.

I look forward to seeing you on Zoom on 12 December and working together to make 2021 a bumper Centenary year

**Yours in Friendship**

***Helen***

**Good News Stories from Across the Region**

* **SI Hertford & District: President Jenny Cobb**

**Friday Supper Evenings**

Not the frugal supper. For many years we have held a frugal supper during the autumn to raise money for an international project. I have hosted this for many years but obviously this was not possible this year. Instead my

husband and I have hosted a supper for two guests each Friday night since mid-February. We have had to stop during this lockdown but hope to start again in December. It has been great fun for us as we have had the chance to get to know our members and their partners or friends far better as we chat about anything and everything. Our guests have given donations in return for their supper and we are approaching about £200 raised so far. By having to do things differently we have found a new way of raising money and getting to know each other better.

**Charity Quiz Night with a Difference**

The Club also held their first virtual Quiz Night on Friday, 13th November in aid of two local charities, **The Living Room and Safer Places.** Participants joined the Quiz by Zoom which worked well.

One of our members, Val Seddon, drew together six rounds of six interesting questions for which she gave four possible answers. Participants met each other in breakout rooms after each round to compare answers and to chat with one another. Paul Kinsman, a regular participant of our Quizzes, won the Quiz. Some people were very well organised with nibbles and drinks!

It was a fun, relaxing evening which was guided through by our able Quiz mistress, President Jenny Cobb and managed by our technical team, Kate Belinis and Karin Weston. Jenny read the questions and these were also put on the screen.

We were pleased to be supported by S.I. St Albans and Adrienne Arthurs from The Living Room, now a member, and Lauren Taylor, from Safer Places.

With donations from those who took part and from people unable to join us, £850 was raised which will be divided between the two charities.

We thank everyone and look forward to organising another evening on Friday, 5th February. 2021.

If you would like to join us, please contact  contrannie@btopenworld.com

* **SI Thames Valley**

**A Fun Club Social Evening with a Difference: Federation President Johanna Raffan**

Ask all members to collect 12 assorted items from around the house.

Then ask each question in turn, members choosing the best fit to the question - but once they have used the item, they have to discard it!  As each item is chosen and held up by members, they explain why they have chosen it - gales of laughter!! The questions below are only a starter for 10 - there are loads more!

* The oldest item
* Which item can you not do without?
* A hat
* Something to drink from
* A game
* A present for a friend
* Something that will be around in 100 years’ time
* Which item would you take on a desert island?
* The most expensive item
* Which item shows you are a Soroptimist
* How many uses can you think of for the last item

The evening is great fun and can easily be adapted ~ so enjoy!

**SI Thames Valley: October Club Speaker Meeting**

**Our Speaker** was **Vicki Robertson, Founder and Chair of** **Kaleidoscopic UK**

The charitable organisation is of survivors for survivors of domestic abuse in all its form.
Visit their website <http://www.kaleidoscopic.uk/about/> to find out more

Vicki provided a lens on domestic abuse and how Kaleidoscope UK are supporting children and girls who have been exposed to domestic abuse. The excellent talk was both thought provoking and inspirational; it stimulated lots of questions, comments and offers of support. Including funding Video Doors Bells

In addition to club members, we were delighted to welcome members of SI Slough Windsor & Maidenhead, SI Bedford, a member of SI Weston-Super-Mare (one of our Friendship Links) and other visitors to this speaker meeting.

SI Bedford ~ Glad Bag Project

Locally we are involved with our colleagues from Inner Wheel and Rotary working together to support those with dementia living in a residential setting with the Glad Bag Project. The project is in co-operation with our local Methodist Home for the Elderly

When an individual goes into hospital, they often require a ‘drip’ with a cannula in their arm or back of their hand. For those with dementia (and other conditions) these provide the ideal ‘fiddling’ point and many are pulled out resulting in upset and distress, along with the need to replace the item. A ‘Fiddle Sleeve’ (as shown in the picture) is one way to give these individuals a different point of focus!

Following an easy pattern, the Fiddle Sleeves can be knitted and placed in a material Glad Bag. These are specially made material bags; the bags can then be delivered to the local Methodist Homes and Assisted Living facilities. The Glad Bag will also contain specific items that relate to the individual, including a change of clothes and relevant contact information.

At present the project in Bedfordshire is a pilot but once evaluated could be suitable to roll out to other areas

More information will be provided in the next Newsletter

Christmas Present Ideas!

Stuck for ideas, in her piece below Jane has suggested ordering the” No 63 Gin” here are more suggestions!



Want a great read? Forget the Booker Prize winner try **“A Beat from The Heart to The Heart of Power” written by Phyllis Sigsworth** is a member of **SI Slough Windsor and Maidenhead** writing about her long and very distinguished career in the Police Service

The book tells of her thirty years of service and shows social changes and changes in women’s role in law enforcement since 1950. The proceeds from the sale of this book will be given to our local women’s refuge organisation DASH – Domestic Abuse Stops Here.

The book was published on 27th August and is available at Waterstones or via Amazon, or direct from Phyllis, email phyllis853@btinternet.com The cost is £10.00

**SI Thames Valley: Kori Development Project**

**Rose Hutchinson, Member of SI Stratford Upon Avon**, is selling beautiful hand-crafted Christmas gifts and cards. All profit from sales will go to **the** charity, supporting women and children in Sierra Leone.  Please click on the links below to download the catalogue and the order form.

[**Kori Christmas Catalogue**](https://sigbi.org/london-chilterns/files/2020/11/Kori-Christmas-Catalogue.pdf)[**KDP Christmas order form**](https://sigbi.org/london-chilterns/files/2020/11/KDP-Christmas-order-form.docx)

And do not forget there is another other way you can easily help the project when Christmas Shopping on line that will not cost you a penny!

Each time you go on to amazon to buy something, please go onto [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) or [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) The site will ask what charity you wish to support and you can the nominate Kori Development Project Ltd.  This will result in Amazon donating 0.5% of their profit to Kori.  That sounds a really small amount but, if enough of us do it, a really useful sum will come to the charity which could help us build the borehole for the school – or help to build some latrines, both things essential for the health of the school children.

**News from your Regional Executive**

**A Reminder of Your Regional Officers for 2020/2021**

**President** ~Helen Byrne

 **Immediate Past President** ~ Denise Powell

**President Elect & Vice President** ~both posts are vacant

**Secretary** ~ Linda Shall continue as our Minute Secretary & Rita Beaumont as Secretary

**Treasurer** ~ Sylvia Watson

**Programme Action Officers** ~ Pam Robertson & Jackie Paling

**Regional Federation Councillor** ~ Rita Beaumont

**Membership Officer** ~ Denise Powell

**Communications Officer** ~ Jane Slatter continues in post but would like someone to take on being Dear Diary Editor

**Project Ambassador: Empowering Girls in Nepal** ~ Pauline Pinter

**63 Representative** ~ Barbara Diamant

**Benevolent Fund Trustee**~ Rita Beaumont

**Executive Member** ~ Jen Simpson

* **Rita's Ramblings! Notes from your Regional Secretary**

**A Reminder ~ SI Voices Podcasts & Webinars: No need to miss a Webinar or Podcast**



Hosted by Soroptimist International, the **SI Voices Series of Podcasts and Webinars** welcomes experts, renowned speakers, Soroptimists and friends, to take on many of the tough topics and challenges affecting the lives of women and girls today. The Series also takes a look back over 100 years of service; uncovering a vast range of Soroptimist International projects, programmes and people, whilst putting policies and practice under the microscope. The programme of Podcasts and Webinars are be available on **You tube @SoroptimistGlobal**.

Additionally, the SI Voices Podcasts are available via Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcast apps, and on Buzzsprout, simply search SI Voices – and keep up with our regular broadcasts, or catch up in your own time. **Visit: www.soroptimistinternational.org/podcasts/**

***Centenary - #PlantTrees for a Brilliant Future***

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Did you miss the first project webinar? Do not worry you can still watch this excellent event by visiting <https://sigbi.org/soroptimistcentenary2021/a-brilliant/planting-trees-for-a-brilliant-future/> on YouTube

Date for Your Diary: the next webinar will be on **30th January 2021 at 2.30pm** ~ look out for full details in the near future

There are Lots of ways to get started - from working with schools, collaborating with organisations like the Woodland Trust or your local authority on greening your local area, to organising a formal tree planting to celebrate your Club and the Centenary. All offer great opportunities for publicity!

If your Club already has plans we would really love to hear them - please email Programme Action Officers : Pam Robertson (pamelarobertson807@btinternet.com) and Jackie Paling (jackiepaling@hotmail.com) so they can share your stories to encourage other Regional Clubs and possibly some joint working between Clubs.

And if you haven’t yet got started, do take a look at the really comprehensive information on the Centenary website : <https://sigbi.org/soroptimistcentenary2021/a-brilliant/planting-trees-for-a-brilliant-future/>

* **Jane Slatter: Communications Officer**

**Inviting Members from other Clubs to Your Events**

There has been a massive increase in Club event invitations for sharing so make sure you get them into **Dear Diary** by sending an email to silondonchilterns@hotmail.com by the end of the month - this month by Sunday 29th November please. Rita Beaumont and I can't guarantee that any events in between issues will be **emailed** out to Clubs.

It's wonderful how many great ideas Clubs are having for online speakers - so please invite Members from other Clubs along by posting in **Dear Diary**.

In addition, don't forget to post on the Region's **Facebook** Page @silondonchilterns and share with us on **Twitter** @soroptimistlc and I can share from there.

**Christmas Greetings in Dear Diary - send by 29th Nov please**

Clubs are often deluged with emails at this time of year - let alone all the extra ones because of COVID-19 so please send your Christmas messages to share with all the Clubs and Region Officers to silondonchilterns@hotmail.com by Sunday 29th November and I can include in Dear Diary.

**Soroptimist Christmas Shopping**

Christmas gifts to support the Thames Valley Kori Project and more are on the SILC website - take a look at the shop on the Region's website:  [www.sigbi.org/london-chilterns/shop](http://www.sigbi.org/london-chilterns/shop)

**"No. 63" Gin**

Even if you can’t visit the Soroptimist hotel in London "Number 63" at the moment ([www.number63.co.uk](https://number63.co.uk/)) you can order the bespoke "No. 63" gin or a lovely gift or as a treat for yourself!

£30 plus £5 postage and packaging within the UK. C all or email to place your order (I think it's delicious - Jane 🙂x).

Telephone: 020 7723 8575

 Email: info@number63.co.uk

* **Pauline Panter: Ambassador Empowering Girls in Nepal**

On 20th November we were informed by SIGBI that the Empowering Girls in Nepal (EGIN) project that had been working in partnership with Chora Chori charity was terminated.

Please see the attached Factsheet from Federation President Johanna for detailed information

* **Denise Powell: Membership Officer**

During the year you will hear from President Helen about a number of initiatives that she is driving which are essentially membership projects (the WOW festival, the London Clubs project and the Virtual Clubs project). I do not propose to repeat that information and I look forward to working with Helen and the other participants in driving these forwards.

It is currently my plan that once these projects are established and running (and quite probably in the new club Soroptimist year, i.e. after April), to turn my attention to running a workshop for incoming Club Membership officers, using materials provided by SIGBI. Meantime, I am more than happy to discuss membership questions/issues with anyone from any Club in the Region, so do reach out to me if you think I can help,

* **SIGBI Benevolent Fund: Regional Trustee Rita Beaumont**

This has been difficult time for all of us and our families but for some members the sudden reduction in income has caused of extreme hardship, so just a reminder about the Benevolent Fund.

The fund is a totally confidential service available to help the financial difficulties of those who are eligible to apply.

The fund may be in the form of a quarterly payment or a one-off payment to pay for an unexpected item.

Examples of how Discretionary help that could be considered includes:

* Utility bills
* Telephone Bills
* Essential living expenses
* House maintenance

**Who is Eligible?**

You must have been a Member of a Soroptimist Club in the UK, including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, or

the Republic of Ireland for 3 years or more. The support given is subject to a simple confidential financial check

**How to Apply**

A member who might need financial help at this time can contact me so I can talk through the application process

Rita Beaumont

Email: r.beaumont3@ntlworld.com

Telephone: 10234 401475

Mobile: 0776 4511 006

**Why not share your club activities with your friends across the Region?**

**Send me your news on** **r.beaumont3@ntlworld.com**

**Copy Date for the January 2021 Edition of the Newsletter is 25th January 2021**