**The Year Ahead**

*As we don’t have a President for 2021-22 Exec are working together sharing the Regional work between us. The first task is to decide on the focus for the year and I am honoured to be allowed to share with you the ideas your Regional Exec have come up with for our Regional Focus and for the way we plan to manage the year ahead.*

*At the SIGBI Conference you will hear that Regional Exec have chosen to call ourselves*

*“The London Chilterns Challengers”*

*And the Theme we have agreed for this year is*

*“Soroptimists Respecting Differences, Celebrating Similarities”.*

*With COP26 and the Climate crisis we will maintain our focus on climate change and tree planting , we will be encouraging clubs to buddy with each other to support growth (of which I will tell you more later), we will continue to work on diversity and, with the impact of the Sarah Everard conviction, we will continue to look for ways to work together to eliminate gender-based violence for all women and girls. Pam and Jen would be very interested to hear of any plans you have for the 16 days of Activism against Gender-based Violence beginning on 25 Nov and ending on Human Rights Day. Please send any plans or ideas you have to Rita so we can share them in the next Newsletter.*

*So those are the general themes, how will the year work in practice?*

*We have dates for the meetings next year which we will include in the Newsletter which will come out shortly after this meeting however some of the locations have yet to be confirmed. COVID and other things permitting we are planning to have half of the meetings face to face and half on Zoom: having found that more members are able to attend when we have met online we felt it was important to maintain the online option. Our December Human Rights Day meeting will be on Zoom and SI Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead have kindly agreed to host in a wonderful venue in June 2022. However the locations of the other two meetings in March and October 2022 aren’t yet fixed as we are looking for a new London venue for one of them.*

***How will we manage*** *– We have allocated two Exec Leads who will co-ordinate each Regional meeting. These two Exec members will also Chair the Exec meetings leading up to their Regional event and, during that quarter of the year, will pick up any issues which arise working with others on Exec to manage things.*

*We have also been looking at* ***how we can support clubs better and maintain communication.*** *As President I really appreciated visiting Clubs during my year and Clubs also valued my visit because it gave them chance to raise their own questions and challenges and seek information and advice. So we will maintain visits to clubs and have allocated an Exec Officer to each Club to enable this.*

*With COVID Clubs have all done a great job of keeping in touch with their members and as far as possible keeping their programme action going but in membership terms some Clubs have done better than others. Some Clubs have acquired new members and energised their existing ones to take on new challenges whereas others have had to work hard to keep their existing members engaged and haven’t had much time or energy left to look for new ones.*

*In developing the partnership of London Clubs and some more recent discussions between SI Bedford and SI Hertford we have found that clubs working together locally can be really valuable. Arranging a joint speaker or other event saves time and energy, immediately enlarges the audience and makes the event more successful and enjoyable. Just talking can help too and often brings up new solutions. And if one Club has been lucky enough to acquire a new member or two they will be only too willing to share ideas and support others in finding members for themselves.*

*With this in mind we are proposing that Clubs try buddying up to support each other. We have allocated Exec members to Clubs in partnership so they can work with you on membership and on any other areas you wish to develop. The intention is to share ideas and enthusiasm, to support each other to achieve growth and enable all Clubs to be stronger as a result.*

*We will send the list of Buddying Clubs and their Exec Officers partners out in the next Newsletter. The Exec Officers will then get the ball rolling by contacting Clubs individually to discuss the idea and, if both clubs are agreeable, to arrange a get together meeting to take it from there.*

*One of the other support mechanisms we are hoping to maintain are the Club Calls which I have been holding about every 6 weeks on Saturdays. You told me at the last meeting in September how valuable they have been and so we will look to issue a timetable for calls very soon.*

*You will be aware that together we do need to find new Regional Exec members for next year and we will no doubt hear more about the challenges and opportunities ahead for us and the organisation from Maureen Maguire in the second half. However I am confident that our strong and supportive London Chilterns Region is well placed to continue transforming the lives of women and girls in 2021-22.*