

## **CHARTER CEREMONY**

### **1.0 Planning the Event**

#### **1.1 Date**

A provisional date for the Charter Ceremony is one of the items of information which must be included on the Petition before it can be accepted for consideration by the Federation Executive Council. If the club wishes the Federation President to be the chartering officer, she should be consulted before the date for the ceremony is fixed. If she is not able to visit that Country or Region during her year of office, she may appoint another Soroptimist (eg another Federation Officer or Director or a National Association or Region President) to charter the club.

#### **1.2 Venue and Type of Event**

Once the petition has been accepted by ballot of the Federation Executive Council, a suitable venue should be chosen dependent on the format of the occasion. Functions vary from a short formal meeting, followed by a reception, to a very formal banquet. The choice should be that of the new club's members. When setting up the room/space for the event, remember to have table available for the signing of the charter. Make sure that there is a photographer there to record the event (or a member of friend can do this) and the new club may also want to start a club visitors book on this occasion.

#### **1.3 Costs**

Soroptimists and their guests should pay for their own tickets for the event. The cost of tickets for official guests of the Club, including the Chartering Officer, should be met from the Club's budget for the event. Please consult Federation Office about the rules for the payment of travel, accommodation and any expenses of the Federation President or other Chartering Officer.

#### **1.4 Invitations**

Invitations should be sent in good time to local and national VIPs, representatives of other Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. Rotary, Lions), Soroptimist Federation, Region, National Association or Network Officers and members of local Soroptimist Clubs.

#### **1.5 Publicity**

Contact should be made with local/national newspapers, radio and television to alert them to the event and the formation of the new club. Remember to include the website addresses of Soroptimist International, SIGBI and the website and or email contact details of the new club in the press release provided for them. If the new club has a Media Officer, she should act as liaison with the media or this may be done by the Region, National Association or Network Media Officer.

#### **1.6 Insignia for the New Club**

It is not essential for a new Club to have a Presidential chain of office at the time of chartering. The Region, National Association or Network may be able to provide one which has been returned by a Club which has closed. Federation Office may also be able to help with this.

#### **1.7 Badges for Members of the New Club**

The Club should obtain badges for each of its new members from Federation Office. Sufficient time should be allowed for the order to be processed and delivered prior to the Charter ceremony. It is advisable to consult Federation Office about this. Individual members should be responsible for paying for their badges.

## 2. The Charter Ceremony

2.1 All members of the new Club should attend the Charter ceremony. VIPs should be greeted by a member appointed to look after each individual. She should introduce them to Federation, Region or National Association or Network and Club members attending the event. It is helpful if pictures of Federation and other guests can be provided ahead of the event so that their hostess can recognise them.

2.2 The ceremony should include the following:

- i) A welcome by the President of the new Club including a mention of all VIPs.
- ii) Reading of the Objects of Soroptimist International
- iii) The presentation of the Charter by the Chartering Officer, on behalf of the Federation, to the President of the new Club.

2.3 The Chartering Officer may make a short speech and will then use the following words:

"In the name of the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, I welcome you to the fellowship of Soroptimist International. I charge you to:

maintain high ethical standards  
work for human rights and the status of women  
encourage friendship between Soroptimists of all countries  
give service to the community and  
promote international understanding and friendship.

Madam President, I give you the Charter of Soroptimist International of.....I wish you all joy in your membership of our great organisation".

2.4 The Charter is then signed by the founder Club President and the Federation Chartering Officer. The founder members of the Club are then inducted, using the following words, and receive their badges and a 'New Member's Pack'.

"It is with pleasure that I welcome you as members of Soroptimist International of..... joining the women worldwide who are bound together in service and friendship. I now offer you the right hand of fellowship signifying your entry into this Club and linking you with Soroptimists everywhere. We hope that you will find friendship and a sense of achievement in your membership of our Club."

Each new member shakes hands with the Chartering Officer, who then says:

"As Soroptimists, your duties are to maintain high ethical standards, work for human rights and the status of women, encourage friendship between Soroptimists of all countries, give service to the community and promote international understanding and friendship.

Sister Soroptimists, I commend to you our new members and charge you not to fail in your duties towards them."

A roll call is then taken with the assembled Club members standing in turn to introduce themselves by name and category.

- 2.5 The Club President may then make an inaugural speech. Greetings received from those unable to attend the event should be read out. Soroptimists attending the event may wish to present greetings/gifts from their Clubs, Region, National Association or Network.
- 2.6 There should be a vote of thanks on behalf of the new Club by one of its members to include: VIPs, Chartering Officer, Extension and Membership Officer involved with the formation of the Club, sponsoring ('Mother') Club, Region, National Association or Network, other Soroptimists attending and the function/catering staff. This should be brief and simply thank any of the above who have helped with the formation of the club and or with the charter ceremony. It is usual to start by naming the most important Soroptimist present. (The order of precedence for this, as for all other things, is: International, Federation, Region or National Association or Network and then club.) If, for example, the International, Federation and Region Presidents are there, the speech would start:

“Madam International President, Federation President ‘Julie’, Region President ‘Anne’, distinguished guests and Soroptimist sisters.....”