



EASY STAGES GUIDES

CHARTER CEREMONY

Stage 1: 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 Management Board. 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 will appoint another Soroptimist (for example, a member of the Federation Management Board, Federation Councillor or a National Association, Network 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 Management Board, 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.

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, National Association, Network or Region Officers, Federation Councillor 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, the Federation 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 National Association, Network or Region 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 National Association, Network or Region 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. Many Clubs now choose to have a 'chain' which is representative of the craft skills of their particular area, for example, bead work.

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. When the new club is outside the UK and the Chartering Officer is travelling from the UK, she can be asked to bring the badges with her as long as sufficient notice is given and with her agreement.

Stage 2: The Charter Ceremony

2.1 **All members of the new Club should attend the Charter ceremony.**

2.2 **VIPs** should be greeted by a member appointed to look after each individual. She should introduce them to Federation, National Association or Network or Region 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.

2.3 **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 Mission and Vision 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.

2.4 **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.

President....(insert first name of founder Club President), I give you the Charter of Soroptimist International of.....I wish you all joy in your membership of our great organisation".

2.5 **The Charter is then signed** by the founder Club President and the Federation Chartering Officer. The Chartering Officer then inducts the new members(as a group) saying the following words :

"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. In a few moments, I will offer you the right hand of fellowship signifying your entry into this Club and linking you with Soroptimists everywhere. I hope that you will find friendship and a sense of achievement in your membership of this Club."

- 2.6 **Each new member** shakes hands with the Chartering Officer and receives her badge and membership pack. The Chartering Officer 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.”
- The wording in 2.5 and 2.6 can be adapted where two former clubs are merging to form a new club.
- 2.7 A **roll call** is then taken with the assembled Club members standing in turn to introduce themselves by name and category.
- 2.8 **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, National Association, Network or Region.
- 2.9 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, National Association or Network or Region, 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, National Association or Network or Region and then club.) If, for example, the International, Federation and Region Presidents are there, the speech would start:
- “ International President.....(insert first name), Federation President....(insert first name), Region President.....(insert first name), distinguished guests and Soroptimist sisters.....”