

Easy stages guide to Charter Ceremonies

Stage 1: Planning the Event

1.1 Date

If the club to be chartered wishes the Federation President to be the chartering officer, then they should consult with her via Federation Office regarding provisional dates for the ceremony before they finalise the date. If the SIGBI President 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 tables available for the signing of the charter and for each of the new members to receive a badge and sign the charter attendance sheet.

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. There are no travel expenses to pay for the Chartering Officer to attend the event, but accommodation must be paid for by the Club to be chartered. Home hospitality is an acceptable alternative. Any arrangements that are made must be communicated to Federation Office as soon as possible.

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. Many Clubs 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

Badges for founder members of a new club will be provided by Federation Office, and brought to the event by the Chartering Officer. The Club must confirm all the names (and spellings) of their founder members when requested, to allow Sufficient time for the order to be processed and delivered prior to the Charter ceremony. Any members who are missed off the list by the Club, or who subsequently join, will have to pay for their own badges, which should be ordered through Federation Office.

1.8 Club Charter

The Club Charter is an official document, which is signed by the SIGBI Executive Officer, the SIGBI President and the founder President of the Club. It will be ordered by Federation Office and brought to the event by the Chartering Officer. It should be signed as part of the ceremony and should then be kept in a safe place. It can be displayed at official events, but care should be taken that it is not damaged or lost.

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 recognize 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 As Soroptimists we hope that you will adhere to the Vision and Mission of Soroptimist International and work to promote its Values."

2.6 **Each new member** shakes hands with the Chartering Officer and receives her badge

The Chartering Officer then says:

'You are now members of Soroptimist International, a worldwide organisation of members with a common goal in transforming the lives of women and girls. We hope that in joining us, as we work towards our objectives, you will find a sense of purpose and achievement, as well as the friendship and support of your fellow members.'

Optional extra:

'As a Soroptimist you are now entitled to visit any club throughout the world and to receive a similar Soroptimist welcome'

The wording in 2.5 and 2.6 can be adapted where two former clubs are merging to form a new club.

2.7 **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.

2.8 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."