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1. Your Membership

1.1. Vision and Mission

As an International Organisation it is important that we have a common purpose so we have Vision and Mission statements.

Our Vision

Women and girls will achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

Our Mission

Soroptimists transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities by using awareness raising, advocacy and action.

1.2. SIGBI’s Fundamental Principles

SIGBI is a company limited by guarantee and registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales. Our charitable objects are to promote either directly or by the encouragement and support of others, including clubs:

1. the advancement of education;
2. the advancement of health and saving lives;
3. the relief and/or prevention of poverty;
4. the advancement of good citizenship and community development;
5. the advancement of equality and diversity;
6. the advancement of human rights throughout the world;
   for the benefit of the public and in particular for the benefit of women and girls to advance their status, position and role in society where currently unequal or disadvantaged.

In order to succeed we will demonstrate (Based on the Charity Commission’s Code):

1. Organisational purpose;
2. Leadership;
3. Integrity;
4. Diversity;
5. Openness;
6. Accountability.

In order to guide our behaviour and activities we will observe and apply the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and, in particular, the Convention to End all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action plus the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

In order to succeed in these endeavours, we will:

1. Treat all with dignity and respect;
2. Be non-sectarian;
3. Not have any party-political affiliation;
4. Work with all who share our objectives.

You can see all of Soroptimist International’s “Where We Stand” statements on the SIGBI Website.
2. Soroptimist International (SI)

2.1. SI Organisation

You are a member of an International Organisation that works in 115 countries worldwide.

The Headquarters of Soroptimist International is in Cambridge, UK. Soroptimist International has five Federations:

- Africa (SIAF)
- Americas (SIA)
- Europe (SI E)
- Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI)
- South West Pacific (SISWP)

Our Federation is SI Great Britain and Ireland, each Federation operates under the SI Constitution but has its own internal structure and policies and procedures.

You can see the organisation chart of Soroptimist International and read the biographies of all the current Directors of Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland on the SIGBI Website: https://sigbi.org/who-we-are/how-it-works/
2.2. **List of Countries in SI**

There are almost 3,000 Soroptimist Clubs in 115 countries throughout the world. Each Country is allocated to one of the Five Federations, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI Africa</th>
<th>SI America</th>
<th>SI Europe</th>
<th>SI Great Britain &amp; Ireland</th>
<th>SI South West Pacific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>Hong Kong SAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Guernsey</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>Camerão</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Isle of Man</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Dubai</td>
<td>Jersey</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Northern Mariana Islands</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>St Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Turks &amp; Caicos</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Togo</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
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<td>Liechtenstein</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.3. A brief history of Soroptimist International

The Soroptimist Name
The first question we are often asked about Soroptimist International is: "but what does it mean?" The name Soroptimist was coined from the Latin soror meaning sister, and optima meaning best. Soroptimist is perhaps best interpreted as 'the best for women'. From the founding of the first Soroptimist Club in Oakland, California, in 1921, through to the present day where nearly 3000 Clubs are flourishing throughout the world, Soroptimists have continued to strive to achieve 'the best for women'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>First Soroptimist Club founded in Oakland, California. Founder President was Violet Richardson Ward. First Venture Club founded in Bristol, UK. SI Bristol will celebrate 100 years in 2020, and was in existence before Soroptimist International. It was the first service Club for women in the world. See <a href="https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/">Si Bristol’s website</a> for more details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Chartering of first Soroptimist Club in the UK, SI Greater London. The Founder President was Viscountess Falmouth. Suzanne Nöel founded SI Paris, the first Soroptimist Club in Europe. She later became the first President of the European Federation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Foundation of American and European Federations. Soroptimist International Association created to provide link between the Federations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Venture Clubs amalgamated with Soroptimist Clubs and adopted their theme. This gives SI Bristol the distinction of being the longest established women’s category/service Club to become part of the Soroptimist network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Europe and Great Britain &amp; Ireland form separate Federations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>First Soroptimist Club in Sydney, Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Soroptimist International Association awarded Consultative status with UNESCO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>SI awarded category C Consultative status with ECOSOC. (Economic &amp; Social Council, United Nations.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Foundation of International governing body of Soroptimist International.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Inauguration of SI South West Pacific Federation. The Founder President was Mary Whitehead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>SI granted Category 1 General Consultative status with ECOSOC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>SIGBI becomes a Company Limited by Guarantee (Incorporated Company).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>SIGBI granted Category 2 Special Consultative status with ECOSOC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>SIGBI Trading Limited was formed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>SIGBI granted Charitable Status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Inauguration of SI Africa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information about Soroptimist International, our umbrella organisation, please visit [https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/](https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/)
3. Our Federation

3.1. SIGBI

In 1920 the first Venture club was formed in Bristol, followed in 1927 by Croydon and in 1928 by Coventry. The first Soroptimist Club, SI Greater London, was chartered in England in 1923, when it became a member of Soroptimist International Europe. The Club President was Kathleen, Viscountess Falmouth. It comprised over 100 members from a diverse range of professions, including medical, legal and performing arts.

During 1929 the Venture Clubs in England became aware of the new Soroptimist Clubs and, after much discussion, the two organisations amalgamated in June 1930. The Venture Clubs took on the name of Soroptimist Clubs accepting their constitution and Bye Laws. The Venture Clubs' motto “Looking Further” was adopted by the British Clubs.

The Federation of Great Britain and Ireland was established in 1934 when Great Britain split away from the rest of Europe and became the third Federation, after America and Europe. Many new clubs were quickly established and in June 1935 9 Divisional Unions were formed in the UK. This structure remained in place until 1975 when they were replaced by 17 Regions.

The first President of SI Great Britain and Ireland was Maud Adams from SI Liverpool.

The SIGBI Headquarters was originally housed at 63 Bayswater Road and remained there until 1989 when the Federation purchased office accommodation in Stockport, Cheshire. The Federation sold the Stockport building in 2010 and moved to rented office accommodation in the same area.

SIGBI’s original structure was that of an unincorporated association. This changed in 2008 when it was registered as a company limited by guarantee with Companies House in England and Wales. In August 2018, SIGBI was granted charitable status and became a charity limited by guarantee.

SIGBI employs three full-time staff, the Executive Officer, Membership and Website Office and the Conference Liaison, Sales and Finance Officer, together with a part-time Administrative Assistant and a self-employed Communications Officer.

Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Limited
2nd Floor Beckwith House
1-3 Wellington Road North
Stockport
SK4 1AF

Company Number: 07058666
Charity Number: 1179433

Tel: 0161 480 7686
Email: hq@sigbi.org
Website: www.sigbi.org
Twitter: @sigbi1
Facebook: facebook.com/soroptimistsigbi
3.2. SIGBI Trading Ltd

The company was formed in 2017 for two purposes; it was necessary as part of the process of SIGBI’s application for charitable status and also to source and implement alternative income streams for SIGBI. Once SIGBI became a charity, all of its activities are of public benefit. Therefore, anything that relates to Members, for example conferences, development days, UKPAC study days and the sale of retail items now comes under the auspices of the Trading Company.

It has formed a partnership with Easyfundraising, an online commission-based Affiliate Scheme. Clubs register with Easyfundraising and can earn funds for their projects by purchasing goods and services with the 3,500 retailers who have signed up to the scheme. SIGBI Trading also earn a further commission on all completed sales.

The SIGBI Trading Board would welcome hearing from members about any new ideas they may have to further the success of the Company.

SIGBI Trading Ltd
2nd Floor Beckwith House
1-3 Wellington Road North
Stockport
SK4 1AF

Company Number: 11019781

Tel: 0161 480 7686
Email: hq@sigbi.org
Website: www.sigbi.org
Twitter: @sigbi1
Facebook: facebook.com/soroptimistsigbi

3.2.1. SIGBI Trading Board of Directors

Cathy Cottridge (Chair)  Ruth Healey (Director of Finance)  Judith Lewis  Jacqui Purnell
3.3. Programme Action

3.3.1. What we do

Soroptimist International is a women’s organisation which provides exciting opportunities to be of service to others and take part in projects through Awareness, Advocacy and Action; this is called Programme Action. These projects are carried out at all levels of the organisation. Programme Action is the life-blood of our organisation - it is the reason why many of us joined and became Soroptimists, to make a difference to women and girls.

The focus for Programme Action is projects relevant to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, grouped under the ‘5Ps’: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership.

These targets are set by the United Nations for achievement by 2030. They form a blueprint agreed to by all the countries within the UN and all the world’s leading development institutions. Soroptimist International is committed to using our considerable energy and ability to help to meet these goals. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
SIGBI has five main Programme Focus Areas, which each support a number of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Peace
- People
- Planet
- Prosperity
- Partnerships

All members are encouraged to put forward new ideas to your Club Programme Action Officer.

For any proposed work:

- Check your idea fits into one of the Programme Focus areas above.
- Research the project, establish a need and put together a budget plan.
- Decide if you are going to do a joint project; with another organisation (e.g. Rotary) or with another Club or another organisation such as another charity.
- Make sure it raises the profile of Soroptimism; perhaps a report in the local newspaper/ radio/TV?
- Write a Development Plan and set SMART objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time related.
- Conduct the project in a business-like manner with regular reviews and evaluations, as it may be appropriate to change the approach at some point.
- Try to involve all the Club members.

All Programme Action work is recorded on our online database in the Members area of the SIGBI website, on PFRFs (Programme Focus Report Forms). This information is then used to see how our organisation is benefitting women and girls and is used to report to the UN.

3.3.2. Partnerships

As a Club you may also like to become involved in a Regional/National project. You could find out about this when you go to a Regional/National Association meeting. In the UK, one project looked at the public’s knowledge of slavery/trafficking. This began in Northern Ireland and then was adopted across the UK and in the Caribbean.

Soroptimist International encourages working in partnership since there are many advantages to be gained in terms of added experience, economic support and developing new friendships, as well as obtaining publicity and recognition when carrying out joint projects.

Members also work in partnership with other organisations, e.g. Prison Reform Trust. This involved a survey of facilities and services for women caught up in the criminal justice system. This has led to influencing policy across the UK and has been of interest internationally.

Clubs can also raise money for the ‘Emergency Relief Fund’, which makes donations to agencies in response to devastating natural disasters e.g. floods, earthquakes, famine and hurricanes, or the Diamond Education Grant, which gives grants to help women to advance their education.

Clubs establish Friendship Links with other Clubs and become involved in joint projects in their countries. There are many ways that you could give service to benefit others and to raise funds in creative ways.

For additional ideas, look at the monthly blogs and the Programme Team pages on the SIGBI Website. These are produced by the Federation President, the Federation Programme Director and Assistant Programme Directors (APD’s). It is full of excellent ideas about current projects to inspire you in your work.
3.3.3 International President’s Appeal (December 10th Appeal)

In 1950 the General Assembly of the UN invited all states and interested organisations to observe December 10th as Human Rights Day and since 1956 SI has recognised this day.

In 1981 International President (IP) Catherine Salt asked that all Soroptimists mark that day with a personal sacrifice, so that money could be given at the IP’s discretion, to women in greater need than themselves and so it has continued.

Following the success of recent December 10th Appeals including See Solar, Cook Solar and Educate to Lead: Nepal, the board of Soroptimist International agreed that the 2017 - 2019 appeal, Women Water & Leadership should be recognised as an International Appeal, this was active for a period of 2 years to concur with SI biennium’s and the term an SI President serves. The current project is ‘The Road to Equality’ (https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/campaigns/roadtoequality/). Funds donated by members in the name of the International Appeal which are received after 01 October 2019, until 30 September 2021 will be assigned to the ‘Road to Equality’, promoted by SI President Sharon Fisher.

Where we stand: To support Soroptimists in their decision-making, there are statements available on the SI Website on all key issues e.g. human trafficking, climate change, etc.

Role in the United Nations: Soroptimist International sends representatives to the United Nations in Geneva, New York, Vienna, Paris, Rome, Bangkok and Nairobi and associated agencies. The role of the representatives is to support official Soroptimist positions in Programme Action areas and share information that can be used for advocacy efforts at all levels of the organisation.

What matters most as a Club is that you do something that makes a difference to women locally, nationally or internationally and that you develop friendships and have fun while you complete your Programme Action work. Enjoy it and remember, you have other Clubs and Regional/Federation officers to support you.

3.3.3. Programme Team

The Programme Director and five Assistant Programme Directors (one for each of the 5Ps), plus the UKPAC Chairman make up the Programme Team.

All their biographies are available on the SIGBI Website: https://sigbi.org/who-we-are/how-it-works/

3.3.4. UK Programme Action Committee - UKPAC

The UK PAC is a sub-committee of the Federation Programme Committee, dealing specifically with UK Clubs, their Programme work and UK issues. Representatives from all 17 UK Regions serve on the Committee and form links with the devolved governments of the UK and other decision-making bodies wherever possible.

To be most effective the committee encourages clubs to focus on issues of Violence Against Women.

- Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Prison Reform
- Domestic Violence and Honour-Based Violence
- Female Genital Mutilation

The committee meets 3 times a year in November, March and July and observers are welcome. A Study Day is held biennially focusing on one of the main areas of concern in detail.

You can read more about UKPAC on the UKPAC Website: https://sigbi.org/ukpac/.
3.4. Attending Region, National Association and Network Meetings

A Region is made up of Clubs within the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. A National Association is made up of Clubs within the Republic of Ireland or countries within Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. A Network is made up of Clubs, Countries and National Associations within a defined geographical area. Each Region/National Association/Network is run differently, but will have an Executive similar to the one that runs the Club.

They will meet regularly throughout the year, usually 3 times. Some Regions/NAs/Networks have a fixed venue, within good travelling distance for all Members; others move around to give all Members, who are further afield, an opportunity to attend.

There is often a charge for the venue, which may include lunch. Meetings are often held on a Saturday, enabling working Members to attend.

The day often consists of Business, when reports are received from the various Officers, followed by either training or Clubs reporting on projects or speakers.

3.5. Attending SIGBI Conference

The first Federation Conference was held in 1935 in London and a Federation Conference has been held annually since then.

The main purpose of the Federation Conference is to provide an opportunity for members from all Clubs in the Federation to come together to network, celebrate the success of SIGBI’s Programme Action work, listen to informed Speakers on important issues and engage in debate about plans for the Federation.

Through a varied programme of speakers, social events and, if appropriate, breakout sessions, the Conference aims to:

- raise members’ awareness of current global issues, particularly those affecting women and girls;
- inspire and motivate members to advocate for change and act to improve the lives of women and girls;
- showcase and reward examples of best practice in Soroptimist project and Club work;
- communicate organisational messages;
- motivate members about and showcase Programme Action;
- provide an opportunity to acquire relevant skills;
- share good practice in running Clubs, National Associations, Networks and Regions;
- invite partner organisations to participate/showcase partnership projects
- invite new/potential members;
- help start new clubs or to strengthen existing clubs.

The Conference also provides an opportunity to raise the public profile of the Federation and previous Conference programmes have included programme focus related events which have generated interest from the media, eg in 2006 a “Pink Bridge” was formed across the Millennium Bridge in Newcastle-Gateshead to raise awareness of Breast Cancer, in 2012 a “Stop the Traffic” Rally for Human Trafficking was held in Belfast, in 2016 there was a “Pink round the pool” event in Malta, and in 2017 the “Bras in the Bay” event in Cardiff.

The conference venue changes annually and moves around the UK, every eight years it is held outside the UK in one of the AACM Countries (Asia, Caribbean and Malta) or the Republic of Ireland. All members are encouraged to attend what is the highlight of the Soroptimist year.
3.6. Friendship Links

Friendship Links are important for all Soroptimist Clubs. They can be set up between Clubs in SIGBI or across the SI world. Clubs wishing to form a link, having agreed this in principle should contact the Federation Friendship Link Coordinator formally to set up the link. The friendship link will have many benefits and develop over time.

Soroptimist Clubs can form Friendship Links within their own Federation or any of the other Federations. To be useful and productive, they must remain interactive and dynamic at all times.

Joint projects can be established, an example would be the link between Southern England Region and South Africa where the members save their 5p coins to fund the education of AIDS orphans. There are many ways that you could think of to give service to benefit others and to raise money in creative ways.

Benefits enjoyed through Friendship Links:

- Getting to know the life of other Clubs;
- Appreciating different cultures;
- Establishing warm friendships;
- Sharing in Joint Projects and fundraising activities;
- Visiting and exchanging programmes;
- Enjoying holiday contacts;
- Practising language skills;
- Taking part in Special Events;
- Offering hospitality, house exchange (Open Heart-Open Door);
- Mentoring new Clubs and those in difficulties.
4. Our Charities and Associated Organisations

4.1. Benevolent Fund (charity number: 211840)

The Benevolent Fund came about because in 1939, Soroptimists in Exeter recognised that a younger Soroptimist, who was recently widowed, was experiencing financial difficulties. From this, the idea came about to create a Relief fund for the assistance of Soroptimists who had fallen on hard times, either through ill health, misfortune or advancing years, and needed financial assistance. It took until 1942 for the Benevolent Fund to be formed and incorporated into the Federation Constitution following a proposal by SI Exeter which was seconded by SI Plymouth. The capital fund at that time was £958 and an annual levy of one shilling was payable by every member in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland. The Benevolent Fund has its own Constitution and is a Registered Charity (No 211840).

Today the Benevolent Fund is funded by a levy per UK member. Members are encouraged, where possible, to sign up for Gift Aid, so that this can also be claimed.

Many years ago, a beneficiary may have retired on a modest salary which has not kept pace with the cost of living. The question to ask is why should women have to reduce their standard of living just because they have retired? The reasons given in 1942 are just the same today, ill health, disability, failure of business, matrimonial difficulties and the problems accompanying ageing.

Management of the Benevolent Fund

The Trustees of the Benevolent Fund are the regionally elected representatives plus one representative from the SIGBI Board, The Trustees elect their Chairman and Secretary. The portfolio of investments held by the Benevolent fund are ethically invested with the Trustees delegating the management of the portfolio to the Investment Committee (membership: Chairman, Treasurer, Federation Representative, Secretary and at least 2 other trustees). The services of professional financial advisors are retained to ensure that the portfolio is properly managed. The Investment Committee meets twice a year to review the portfolio.

The Trustees meet annually following the SIGBI Federation Conference, when all those who have received help during the past year are reviewed to ensure they are still getting the help they require and if appropriate to withdraw or reduce funding from a beneficiary. The Department of Work and Pensions website is consulted to review the income and capital a beneficiary may receive/hold before becoming eligible for help from the Benevolent Fund.

Confidentiality is key in the work of the Benevolent Fund, as it is important that our beneficiaries can trust that their personal business is not discussed with any other member of a club or a region. The Regional Representative is the link person between a beneficiary and the Trustees and they assist any would-be applicant in completing the application form and meet at least annually with beneficiaries to ensure that a fair report on a beneficiary’s needs is put to the Annual General Meeting of Trustees. The Regional Representatives do not discuss individual cases with any other member of a club or a region.

Eligibility

To receive help from the Benevolent Fund, an applicant must have been a member of a UK or Republic of Ireland Soroptimist Club for at least 3 consecutive years. Assistance is given in the form of grants, either as a one-off payment for a specific need, or as a regular quarterly grant to supplement the beneficiary’s income. The fund does not make loans.
To apply Application Forms for financial assistance from the Benevolent Fund may be obtained from your Regional Benevolent Fund Representative. You can get her details from your Regional Secretary, or from SIGBI HQ – hq@sigbi.org

4.2. Diamond Education Grant (charity number 1139668):

The purpose of this Fund is to make grants to help women to advance their education. The Fund Trustees concentrate on assisting recipients to update their skills, particularly after an unemployment break, or to acquire new skills, thereby improving their opportunities for employment and promotion. Applicants do not have to be Soroptimists (and usually are not); the only requirement is that they are female and resident in one of the countries of our Federation.

Applications for help mainly come from the United Kingdom, but have also come from other countries in SIGBI. Assistance has been sought for courses as diverse as furniture upholstering to an MSc in primate conservation.

The Committee concentrates on those applications where the grants would make a real difference and where the prospects for a successful outcome are good.

4.3. Emergency Relief Fund (charity number 211231)

The Emergency Relief Fund was initially registered as a Charity in 1963, having emerged from work done in post conflict Europe. The Fund is used to help those people in immediate need of relief due to disasters throughout the world and is primarily relief only, for example, for food, shelter and immediate medical aid.

Individual members, Clubs, Regions, National Associations, Networks and Countries can recommend that funds are provided for particular situations. The Trustees then consider the appropriateness of the recommendation and, where applicable, the amount of the grant.

Any grants are always carefully placed in the areas of great need and where they can be administered through a tried and tested partner or by Soroptimists themselves.

The Emergency Relief Fund relies on Clubs and Members to maintain a sufficient level of funds.

4.4. Memorial Fund Award

SIGBI’s Memorial Fund was created to facilitate the attendance of Soroptimists at their first SIGBI Conference outside the country of their residence and to increase their knowledge of SI as an international organisation. It was originally funded by Clubs wishing to commemorate the life and service of a Member by donating to the fund which included inserting the Members’ details in the Book of Memories.

Historically the Book of Memories was on display at 63 Bayswater Road. However, the 63 Committee decided this was no longer appropriate and it was returned to Headquarters. Subsequently donations reduced and in 2014 the Book of Memories was closed.

The Fund is now supported by donations and bequests to it in memory of past Members, but also by a donation from any surplus from the previous year’s Federation Conference. This is currently under review.

To apply, go to www.sigbi.org/members/membership/memorial-fund-award/ (log into the members’ area before using the link).
4.5. Number 63

Number 63, which is open to everyone, is situated in Bayswater Road in London and offers three-star Gold AA rated guest accommodation. The house, which was built in the 1870s, is a listed building overlooking Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. It is virtually in the heart of London and is an ideal venue to stay whether you are visiting London for business or pleasure.

It is owned by shareholders of Number 63 (Soroptimist) Limited all of whom must be Soroptimists and is run and maintained by a Board of seven Directors who must be shareholders. There are also 12 members of staff including a Manager, Deputy Manager, reception staff and domestic staff.

There are 9 single rooms, 5 twin rooms and 1 family room all with en-suite facilities and the room rate includes a substantial breakfast.

The meeting room and dining room are used by a wide variety of organisations for meetings or small conferences. The meeting room has a capacity for 32 people when set up theatre style and a capacity for 24 people in boardroom style. There is also free wi-fi.

Number 63 is a safe, inexpensive and friendly place to stay for everyone. You can book on-line by using the website or by telephone or email.

Number 63 (Soroptimist) Limited
63 Bayswater Road
London
W2 3PH

Telephone: 020 7723 8575
Fax: 020 7723 1061
Email: info@number63.co.uk
Website: www.number63.co.uk
5. Glossary of Soroptimist Terms and Acronyms

‘63’
The Soroptimist Residential Club - 63 Bayswater Road, London provides comfortable accommodation for members, family and friends, visiting London for business or pleasure. It is a separate company not owned by the Federation.

AACM Countries
This refers to the areas within Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Ltd, which are outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland i.e. countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Malta.

Articles of Association
The Articles of Association of a UK Company (often just called ‘Articles’) contain the rules for its internal regulation and management and deal with such things as meeting procedure, powers of Directors, members’ rights, winding up procedures etc.

Assistant Programme Director (APD)
We have five main Programme Focus Areas (5’P’s) which are each supported by an APD, she is the centre of information for her programme area in the Federation. She answers questions, suggests courses of action, channels causes for concern both "up" and "down" and collects and collates information from Programme Focus Reports. Each also works with cluster groups of countries outside the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Awareness, Advocacy and Action
This is Soroptimist International’s approach to its Programme Action work. Be aware of a problem, get all the facts to know that it exists, think carefully as to how the problem can be tackled to alleviate it - and then take ACTION!

Benevolent Fund
A Federation Charity established in 1942 to help Soroptimists (or ex Soroptimists) who find themselves in financial difficulties.

Byelaws
Byelaws are defined as a set of rules adopted by an organisation in order to manage and govern its own affairs and the behaviour of its members. Byelaws within SIGBI Limited are also approved by its members at a Federation General Meeting.

Cambridge Office-Headquarters
The Headquarters of Soroptimist International, our world-wide organisation, is in Cambridge.

Capitation Fee
This is the amount that is levied by Federation (SIGBI) to contribute to its administration costs and a contribution to the running costs of SI – our international organisation. Added to this, is the Benevolent Fund levy (UK and Republic of Ireland members only). In addition, UK Clubs pay public liability insurance and fees to the Region. Clubs in the Republic of Ireland and AACM countries do not pay public liability insurance or Benevolent Fund contributions. Clubs within a National Association or Network may contribute to its running costs.

Clubs
It is the Clubs and their members that are the cornerstone of our organisation. The Clubs and their members deliver the Mission of Soroptimist International – “Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships”. It is Clubs which vote on constitutional and financial matters and elect Federation, National Association, Network and Region Officers.

Club committees
Only three officers are required to run a Club, but Clubs may decide to have Committees supporting the post of Programme Action Officer and the Executive to aid the running of the Club.
**Club name**
Clubs are always referred to as SI Anywhere, usually a town name or district. In conversation we often refer to Clubs by just their town name or district, but the SI prefix should be included on all other communications.

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**Club Representatives on Region/National Association/Network Council**
These are elected at a Club’s Annual General Meeting but take office at the start of the Federation, Region, and National Association/Network year in November. These members represent the Clubs at the respective National Association, Network or Region meetings.

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**Club/Region/NA/Network Constitutions**
A Constitution is a set of “laws” that defines and governs the functions of Clubs, Regions, National Associations and Networks within SIGBI Limited. Most important is the fact that a Constitution is approved by the members it governs and therefore Constitutions may only be amended at a Federation General Meeting.

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**Club year**
Runs from April to March, ending with the AGM. This is different from the Federation and Region, National Association and Network year - which runs from November to October, ending with conference.

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**Diamond Education Grant**
The Diamond Education Grant is a registered charity and was established from funds raised by the membership during 1968/1970 (to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Soroptimist International), to assist women in advancing their education. The name of the charity was changed in 2010.

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**Emergency Relief Fund**
A charitable fund of the Federation. Donations are made to major disaster areas, normally through our partner organisations.

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**Executive Committee**
The elected officers of the Club, Region, National Association or Network who meet to discuss business, consider business proposals and to take executive decisions on behalf of the Club, Region, National Association or Network.

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**Federations**
Soroptimist international has four member Federations:
- SI of the Americas (SIA)
- SI Europe (SIE)
- SI Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Ltd
- SI South West Pacific (SISWP)

Our Federation includes not only Great Britain and Ireland but other countries from Africa, Asia the Caribbean and Malta (AACM Countries).

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**Federation Consultative Council (FCC)**
This consists of one elected Councillor from every Region, National Association and Country in the Federation. Councillors are consulted on matters of principle and policy by the Federation Management, as appropriate, and are a means of two-way communication between the Federation and Regions, National Associations and Networks.

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**Federation Management Board (FMB)**
Now just called the SIGBI Board. Meets four times a year face-to-face, and from time to time holds electronic meetings, and manages the Federation on a day to day basis. It consists of seven Federation Directors: President, President Elect, Finance Director, Governance Director, Membership Director, PR and Marketing Director and Programme Director.

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**Federation Office**
The Headquarters Office for our Federation (SIGBI) is in Stockport, Cheshire. This office should not be confused with the Soroptimist International Headquarters Office, which is based in Cambridge.
Federation Programme Action Committee (FPAC)
Federation Programme Action Committee consists of the Programme Action Officers for every country in the Federation and the Programme Director, Assistant Programme Directors and meets once a year before conference. It promotes SI’s Programme Focus and programme work throughout the Federation.

Federation President
The Federation President takes office at the time of the SIGBI Annual Conference in October/November, and is in post for one year.

Friendship Link
Each Club may have one or more Friendship Links. The Club takes responsibility to write to another Club to keep them up to date with Club activities, and to share projects, news and enthusiasms throughout the year. When you become a Soroptimist you automatically receive a hand of friendship from any Soroptimist in the world. Wherever you travel you will always find a Club who would be glad to welcome you to their meetings. The strength of SI is in its International connections – through email and the Internet you can communicate with Clubs around the world and be part of this International dimension.

Grant of Friendship (GoF)
Certain Federations and Regions worldwide offer a GoF to promote multicultural exchange between Soroptimists.

International Convention
This takes place every four years, and the venue changes each time. At the SI Board meeting prior to the convention; the work that has been carried out in the previous four years is reviewed. New programme focus areas are agreed and decisions made that affect our International organisation.

International President (IP)
The IP represents the whole of Soroptimist International. Her term of office is two years, and each successive IP is selected from a different Federation. Therefore, the IP comes from SIGBI every 8 years.

Memorial Fund
A charitable fund of SIGBI, used to assist Soroptimists, who are first-time attendees at Conference, to pay their travel expenses. A per diem is also given to aid accommodation expenses.

National Association
Countries in SIGBI, which are outside the UK, and which have five Clubs or more, may form a National Association. They have the same status as UK Regions, and have Officers, including a National Association President.

NGO
Non-Governmental Organisation. (Organisations which have aims and objects which coincide with one or more of the programmes of the UN).

Network
A Network consists of a geographic area which includes National Associations and Countries with one or more Clubs. Currently, there are currently two Networks – the Caribbean Network and the Southern Africa Network.

Objects of Soroptimism
These have traditionally been read at the start of Soroptimist meetings and conferences. More recently, the Mission, and Vision have been read. Members usually stand when these are being read.

Programme Action (PA)
Programme Action is the name we use to describe the projects we do at local, national and international levels and includes all the activities of SI designed to give service to the local, regional, national or international community. Programme Action is why we exist.
Programme Focus Reporting Database
Clubs report their activities in the Programme areas, describing each project, the objectives, and achievements made, and lessons learnt. This database can then be used to search for activities by Programme Objective, Club, and Country etc. In this way, a picture builds up of the work being done which is vitally important to assess the progress we are making and enable effective marketing of the organisation to prospective members. It also enables lobbying and maintains our status at the United Nations.

Programme Related Statements
These are policy statements which set out the agreed Soroptimist International view on specific topics (e.g. the rights of the child). The statements are drawn together into a publication available from SI website, called “Where We Stand”.

Region
Clubs in the UK are grouped into Regions, which have their own Officers who oversee the work of the Clubs in that Region. Regional meetings are held, at which all Clubs should be represented.

Region Council Members
Each Club in a Region elects a Member and a Proxy to be their Regional representatives. They attend and represent the Club at Regional Council meetings and are empowered to vote on the Club’s behalf. They report Regional activity and actions required back to the Club.

UK PAC
The United Kingdom Programme Action Committee sets policy and implements Programme Action activity for Clubs and Regions in the UK and is particularly well-placed to lobby UK government about current issues.

UN Status
Soroptimist International holds General Consultative Status (Category 1) with ECOSOC and SIGBI holds Special Consultative Status (Category 2). SI and SIGBI have representation at UN centres in New York, Paris, Geneva, Vienna and Rome with UN agencies which have granted the organisation recognised status as an international Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). It is also recognised by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).