

## **SIGBI Guidelines for Working with High Profile People**

***These Guidelines are applicable to Regions, Clubs, National Associations and Members taking the Lead on Specific Projects***

### **1. Introduction**

SIGBI believes their programme action projects can benefit by working with celebrities and influencers who are sympathetic to our aims and have a local or national profile. This note provides a framework to work within by suggesting how to identify and approach suitable people, establish and maintain the relationship and avoid pitfalls.

### **2. Purpose of Seeking High Profile Support**

There are a variety of reasons why we might wish to work with a high profile local or national individual including:

- Enhancing the public value and benefit of our work
- Improving the visibility of SIGBI and its projects both on and offline
- Seeking support from the followers of the individual
- Reaching new people and potential members
- Raising awareness of the issues supported by SIGBI
- Obtaining support for SIGBI campaigns

### **3. How to identify a high-profile supporter.**

The first step is to consider what role you wish the high-profile individual to fulfil. There are a range of models to consider such as:

- **Celebrity:** someone with fame and public attention, often through sport or the media
- **Influencer:** passionate about, or an expert, on a subject with a network of like-minded people likely to advocate a project or campaign on a topic
- **Supporter:** well-known individual who supports a particular area of Soroptimism, for example, preventing violence against women
- **Patron:** high profile individual likely to support Soroptimist aims more broadly

High-profile individuals are likely to have many calls on their time and their willingness to engage with a Soroptimist project/s or campaign/s may vary.

All counties, cities and towns have local high profile individuals who have a regional and local focus including mayors (who will be apolitical during their year of office), Lord Lieutenants and their Deputies, regional radio and TV presenters. There will also be local NHS, education, police and other public service leaders; those from the voluntary sector; individuals from the arts living nearby and many others which the local knowledge of clubs will be able to identify.

### **4. Matters to consider**

Whether the person:

- has a real passion for Soroptimist projects and causes, sharing our values

- has a track record of supporting projects and campaigns similar to those championed by Soroptimists
- appreciates SIGBI is a charity for public benefit
- is likely to appeal to potential new and existing members

In addition, it could be appropriate to undertake limited due diligence to identify possible historic or unfavourable publicity and to check for overt political affiliations which is not necessarily the same as single issue campaigning.

## 5. Making Contact

After identifying the individual and what you wish them to do, points to consider are:

- Establishing who will make initial contact. Going through the agent of a celebrity might incur charges and a personal approach through a contact might find more favour
- Determine arrangements for managing the relationship and who is responsible
- Customise the template letter provided. \*
- Estimate the costs involved. This will vary depending on the role required and what you are asking the high-profile person to do. Agree at the outset with the relevant Treasurer what is feasible and appropriate if funding will be required.
- Decide the form of the initial approach – perhaps use a mutual contact or write a letter. Be succinct.

## 6. Making it work

- Consider establishing a break clause after 6 months and a review about how the relationship is working on both sides
- All anticipated expenditure must be agreed in advance
- Do not disclose the personal contact details of the person without their written consent and ensure only one or two members have access unless otherwise agreed.
- Be clear about expectations, whether the partnership is open-ended and whether fundraising is involved. Involvement in fundraising might be the purpose of the approach or it might be a side effect of the person becoming engaged. Similarly, be clear about whether media exposure is required and its likely extent.
- Experience elsewhere suggests the busier the high-profile individual, the longer the lead time to meet requests. For example, 3 months: short film or voiceover; over 6 months: event attendance or photoshoot. Inevitably, additional delays occur during July, August and December.
- Look after the high-profile individual to enable the relationship to flourish; regular contact (but not too frequent depending on preference) to update and highlight how their support is adding value. Christmas cards provide a good opportunity to express thanks.
- Write thank you notes and provide feedback after a contribution such as interview, appearance or event attendance

- Keep the Communications Officers in the loop to maximise coverage and highlight public benefit
- Be very clear at the outset about the use of social media and be sensitive to the possibility of abuse.
- Monitor the position and assess impact as far as possible, for example, publicity for projects and campaigns; new members joining.

## **7. Conclusion**

Engaging a high-profile individual can add value by furthering the aims and objectives of Soroptimism, projects and campaigns in a variety of ways. Identifying and approaching an individual must be carefully thought through, planned and managed appropriately if potential benefits are to be realised.

## **\*Appendix: Letter Template**

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