



Three Region's Meeting Saturday 20th June - Report from Midland Arden Region

Pre Covid 19

The Region had a successful meeting in March with Dame Vera Baird as our keynote speaker, who gave an excellent presentation on her work as Victims Commissioner. President Isobel was also in attendance and we had a wonderful 'purple' member photograph shoot to celebrate International Women's Day.

Regional Membership

Membership now stands at 261 with 18 Associate members. SI Central Birmingham has now closed. After the Club made the decision to close ROC supported with encouraging members to transfer to other Clubs within the Region or to transfer to associate members. Jean Nutt was a member of this Club and her project Love's me Love's me not will continue as Jean has transferred to Associate member.

Response to Covid 19

When lock down occurred ROC took the following steps to ensure communications amongst ourselves and to support Clubs:

- Set up a WhatsApp group for ROC – this has been remarkably successful ensuring for both formal and informal communications
- Used Zoom for additional Regional meetings
- Regional President Rose participated in conference calls with President Isobel and other Regional Presidents and found this useful and helpful
- Allocated a 'buddy' from ROC to Regional Clubs not represented on ROC to ensure we had an insight as to what was happening at all Clubs in the Region , also to offer assistance if necessary particularly with electronic or virtual meetings.
- Regular newsletters to Clubs including Regional President's Easter message, shared examples of how Programme Action was continuing during lockdown.

Regional Cancelled Events

There was also a need for the cancellation of the Regional Public Speaking Competition and Change of Insignia events. All incoming Presidents were sent a congratulation card by President Rose.

Programme Action

Many Clubs have been involved in sewing for the NHS, laundry bags, scrubs, masks etc. Some Clubs are donating the money they would normally spend at supper meetings to their charities, lobbying is taking place with letters being written and petitions signed. Foodbanks have continued their work with the help of Soroptimists from many different clubs. Clubs are holding virtual coffee mornings, quiz events and question time on hair care, paying a £1 a question to go to charity!!

To recognise World Environmental Day, everyone at SI Kidderminster has been challenged to do something positive to encourage the bee population in their gardens, adding another bee loving plant, providing a bee hotel or encouraged to buy local produce, reduce use of packaging etc.

We are aware that there have been Regional entries into the “Empowering Girls in Nepal - Big Story” with quite impressive amounts raised in sponsorship.

Club Virtual meetings including Speaker meetings

There has been positive feedback on how many members have embraced Zoom and the success of virtual meetings. One Club reported its highest ever attendance at a virtual dinner meeting and a request for future dinner meetings to be zoomed to allow more members to hear the speakers.

Also, some Clubs are inviting other Clubs to use Zoom to hear their speakers.

Regional AGM September 2020

The meeting will be a virtual meeting and currently progressing the following:

- what Zoom package will be most suitable
- how to make the meeting engaging and interesting for members
- An electronic voting options
- Mapping the usual meeting agenda to a virtual one
- Ideal length of time for the meeting
- Online fund-raising activities including a virtual raffle
- Virtual speaker options.

Regional Website

With a lot of work and perseverance the MAR Regional website is now up and running and work is in hand to link through to our social media accounts. After research and discussion an electronic system agreed for storing Regional electronic records and photographs using Gmail at no charge.

<https://sigbi.org/midland-arden>.

Programme 2020/21

A draft Programme has been prepared It has been agreed that there should be a dual approach of planning a “virtual” year as well. Also, that there should be no risk with deposits for bookings in case events need to be cancelled. Speakers must be prepared to present and engage with a virtual audience

The Programme reflects the feedback received from a consultation exercise with Clubs as to what events they would like to see included for the Centenary Year. MAR is planning a Centennial Concert Celebration with all Regional Clubs invited to attend. SI Kidderminster are leading this event.

National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) - Sculpture Appeal

In the 5th June Bulletin President Isobel launched a passionate appeal to raise funds to pay for a sculpture for the Soroptimist plot at the NMA.

Also included a link to a Virgin Just Giving page which is now also available on the SIGBI website. Individual members or clubs can make donations either by bank transfer or by sending cheques to SIGBI HQ. There has been a strong link between the NMA and our three regions since 2002 so hope Clubs in our regions will give their support.