

SI Midland Chase Programme Action Newsletter Autumn 2022

PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

As Regional President, this will be my final opportunity to write a preface for our newsletter.

Yet again, our clubs have shown just how much can be achieved individually, together and through forming valuable partnerships.

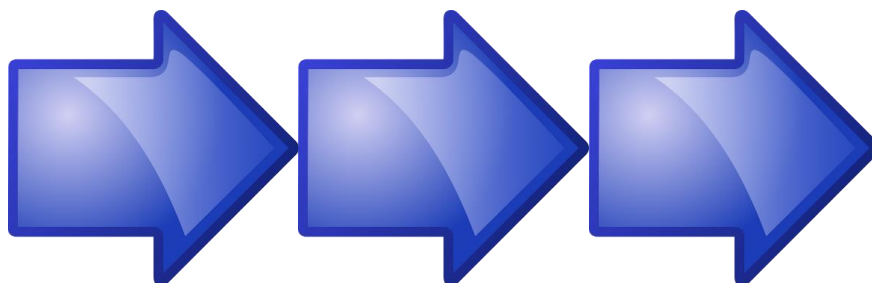
Not surprisingly, climate change is very much at the forefront, including recycling, sustainability and reducing single use plastics.

My message to everyone at the beginning of the year was to keep moving forward with the word PROGRESS firmly in our minds by setting ourselves achievable goals. The evidence for this is clear to see in our newsletter.

I wish Nichola Balmer every success in her new role as our PA Lead but would like to thank and pay tribute to Chris Corless who has inspired and encouraged us every step of the way.

Thank you very much everyone, I am so proud of all our clubs.

Please remember to celebrate your achievements and I encourage everyone to remember my strapline of 'Progress not Perfection' far beyond my presidential year.



**Progress not perfection is the key to tackling, as a team,
every new challenge as they unfurl**

Mel Wardle Woodend, Staffordshire Poet Laureate 2019-2022

A massive thank you from me for all the information provided by Club Programme Action Leads over the last two years or so which has enabled us to produce nine newsletters, from the first one on 'Keyworkers' after the first Covid lockdown to this one, helping to keep all members of Region informed as to what Programme Action our clubs are doing, sharing ideas and seeing the progress being made as highlighted in this newsletter.

Chris Corless, Midland Chase Regional Programme Action Officer

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Midland Chase Region

A number of our clubs have worked together on some projects and progress has been made in all of them:

Modern Slavery

- We have had speakers on various aspects of Modern Slavery at Regional Meetings and the Regional Conference to raise our awareness of this issue
- We have provided good quality clothes for men and women who are Modern Slavery Victims and who are being housed by St. John's of God, one of the Salvation Army's sub contractors
- We have received posters and flyers from UKPAC to be distributed/displayed in public [places in order to raise awareness of Modern Slavery and signpost people to the appropriate places for help.

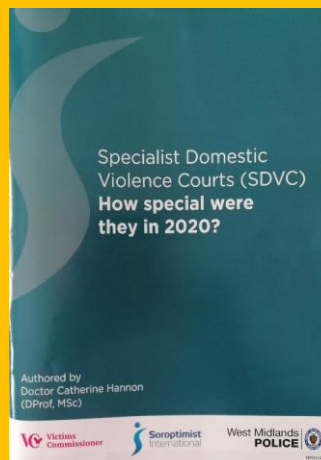


Specialist Domestic Abuse Courts Project

Following our Court Observations in 2020, we have finally received the report on our work. For various reasons, we've had to wait a long time to see it. Good that it includes a joint foreword by Dame Vera and Louisa Rolfe, an Assistant Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police and the DA Lead on the National Police Chiefs Council.

The report sets out 18 recommendations to remedy the shortcomings found and make the victim experience less traumatic.

Cath Hannon, the author of the report, has spoken to Regional Criminal Justice Boards in West Midlands, Staffordshire and West Mercia to discuss the report, the findings and the action required.



Orange The World

The UNiTE campaign has proclaimed the 25th of each month as "Orange Day", a day to raise awareness and take action to end violence against women and girls and many of our clubs have either used the material provided by UKPAC or their own material to highlight this day on social media.



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Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030.

The comments below are taken from the United Nation's website and show how we are not making the progress expected and required in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030. There is still much to be done. The infographics included in the report (link below) are particularly interesting.

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022



The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 provides a global overview of progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, using the latest available data and estimates. It tracks the global and regional progress towards the 17 Goals with in-depth analyses of selected indicators for each Goal.

According to the Report, cascading and interlinked crises are putting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in grave danger, along with humanity's very own survival. The Report highlights the severity and magnitude of the challenges before us. The confluence of crises, dominated by COVID-19, climate change, and conflicts, are creating spin-off impacts on food and nutrition, health, education, the environment, and peace

and security, and affecting all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Report details the reversal of years of progress in eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health and education, providing basic services, and much more. It also points out areas that need urgent action in order to rescue the SDGs and deliver meaningful progress for people and the planet by 2030. [SDG REPORT 2022](#)

Key Findings and Messages

- The COVID-19 pandemic wiped out more than four years of progress on poverty eradication and pushed 93 million more people into extreme poverty in 2020.
- Disrupted essential health services resulted in a drop in immunization coverage for the first time in a decade and a rise in deaths from tuberculosis and malaria.
- More than 24 million learners- from pre-primary to university level- are at risk of never returning to school.
- One quarter of the global population are now living in conflict-affected countries. A record 100 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide. The war in Ukraine is creating one of the largest refugee crises of modern time.
- To stave off the worst climate-related impacts, global greenhouse gas emissions will need to peak before 2025 and then decline by 43 per cent by 2030. Current national commitments point to a nearly 14 per cent increase by 2030 and greater ambitions are needed to meet the 1.5 °C target.
- Developing countries are battling record inflation, rising interest rates and looming debt burdens and many are struggling unsuccessfully to recover from the pandemic.
- Investment in data and information infrastructure should be a priority of national governments and the international community.

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SI Burton on Trent & District

Climate change

Although we are only a small club, we have made Progress in our PA work and have done this by choosing a theme we can all do work on individually which, when put together, makes a difference.

Individually and together we have been recycling a lot of items - the standard plastic, paper and cardboard. Other items - we are recycling clothes to charity shops and the region appeal, bras, printer cartridges, stamps, spectacles, blister packs where possible and other items. One member took part in the Greenpeace big plastic count.

One of our Soroptimist's husband has grown vegetable plants which have been given to some members so we have grown our own vegetables during the summer.

Three of us took part in a litter pick on Burton Washlands in partnership with Burton Civic Society.



Partnerships



A fund raising activity we also took part in was a bucket collection for the YMCA which took place at Burton Albion's football stadium.

We have made progress in partnerships - SI Lichfield recycling, Burton Civic Society Litter Pick, YMCA fund raising and climate change. Not perfection but striving for it.



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SI Cannock & District

Recycling For a Greener World

To mark SIGBI Day of Action for 16th July SI Cannock & District have started to collect and re-cycle soft plastics.

Soft plastics are lightweight plastics that often cannot be placed in recycling bins at home: items such as plastic film lids on yoghurt pots, soft fruit punnets and ready meals, as well as plastic crisp packets, pasta bags and chocolate or biscuit wrappers. The easy way to tell if plastic is soft or hard is the scrunch test. If it scrunches into a ball, it is soft, if it holds its shape, it's hard. They are also collecting Tetra packs which are now not accepted for household recycling by many local authorities.

One of our newer members, Marion, has a passion for recycling as well as other environmentally friendly practices. She makes her own cleaning products and volunteers at a zero waste Eco shop in Stafford called Roots Larder. They provide a wide range of products sold by weight without unnecessary plastic packaging. They also have a refill station supplying household cleaning products made with natural ingredients.

Like many shops, including most of the large supermarket chains, Roots Larder accepts and recycles soft plastics. Marion has volunteered to collect the soft plastics from our members at each meeting and take them to Roots Larder.

SI Cannock are hoping that this will prove as successful as the collection of blister packs from medication has become; something the club introduced many months ago.

In an ideal world, all products would be packaged in environmentally friendly recyclable materials, but until that happens, finding a way that we can recycle our waste is progress towards a greener world. For more information of Roots larder contact <http://www.rootslarder.com>



We ask for progress, not perfection. Just do your best.

James Frey

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SI Cannock & District

Cannock Soroptimists Welcome Refugees to Town!

SI Cannock and District have extended the hand of friendship to the Ukrainian refugees who have found a home in the area, a safe haven from the war currently going on in their country.

Families now living with hosts in the area are invited to attend weekly coffee mornings held in Cannock Library on Monday mornings.

At the first meeting, there were ten refugees including a six year old plus three of the host families that have welcomed them into their homes. It was a great opportunity for the ladies to meet each other and share their stories. Many had left husbands, sons, daughters, other family and friends in Ukraine not knowing when they will be together again.

At the second meeting, to celebrate Ukraine's Independence Day on 24th August, each of the attendees were given a sunflower, Ukraine's National Flower and one of the Soroptimists baked a delicious Ukrainian Honey cake, all very gratefully received!

The main issue they have is learning to speak the language; this is hindering their chances of finding work, which they all want to do, to support themselves and their families. Specific English language courses are being offered by Cannock Chase Council for adults and children to hopefully help.

In the meantime, in partnership with Cannock Rotary Club, SI Cannock are looking to help in any practical way they can to make them feel more comfortable and secure in their temporary homes. The Coffee mornings are certainly a good start! It is hoped that they will continue for as long as they are needed!



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SI Lichfield & District

Project Starfish



Lichfield & District Club has a Planet sub group to lead on the environmental strand of its work. The group wanted to develop an activity to help individual club members reduce their personal carbon footprints.

It all started at the very successful online Planet Conference held via Zoom in June 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic. One of our speakers was Colin Hastings of the Carbon Buddy Project who, while generally supportive of our work in planting trees, public gardening and litter picking, felt we should be doing more in terms of key areas like travel, energy consumption, and what we purchase. In other words - areas we can control (primary areas).

This led us to focus on our individual activity using the Carbon Buddy Manual as a guide. What we found was that while the Carbon Buddy Manual was an excellent tool, it didn't suit all members, many of whom wanted something more "bite-sized" and accessible.

So we developed Project Starfish out of the "The Star Thrower" from 1969 (!). [You can see a video here.](#)

We simplified the concept to a simple starfish template. Each leg of the starfish can represent any area of an individual's carbon footprint, such as waste disposal, air miles, gardening for wildlife, approach to travel etc.

This allows each member to focus on areas which suit them and where they can make a real difference e.g. not everyone can use public transport easily - at least 40% of our members live in rural areas where public transport is poor, so focussing on that is de-motivational. Better to make "greener" purchasing decisions perhaps?

We aim to "report back" very informally each month, but haven't managed to embed that effectively as there are other priorities too; but we are making progress, even if we're a way from perfection yet!

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SI Lichfield & District

Healthy Relationships

On 27th September we had our first session with local community group Brereton Million and its new Youth Section called "Vysions". Sue Merriman who runs the group works with schools throughout Staffordshire and has identified a problem the schools are not currently able to fill - what constitutes a healthy relationship.

Jenny McLelland delivered the talk to a mixed group of teenagers enabling them to recognise a bad relationship and the importance of understanding what it should feel like to have a healthy emotional connection with another person. It was very well received, and another session has been arranged for next year.



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SI Stafford

HMP Drake Hall Women's Prison Eccleshall

From the beginning of August 2022, we resumed our volunteering role, greeting visitors and providing refreshments on the regular visiting days of Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday. Many visitors have had long journeys and Drake Hall is not in the most accessible of spots, so drinks and biscuits have been very gratefully received. We now have a well-established rota with around 16 club members giving time when they can.

We were also able to have a fascinating tour of Drake Hall recently. It was good to see the emphasis on rehabilitation and preparation for release.

We have started to collect donations for their food bank, which is used to support women on their release from prison. We have continued to collect yarn for the many projects in which the women are involved and also sent them 'distraction' activities such as crosswords and puzzle books. The former helps women make a real contribution to our community, for example through knitting garments for the premature baby units and hats for rough sleepers.

With Christmas approaching, we are once again supporting the prison chaplaincy service in providing gifts for children whose mothers are in prison. These are specially selected for them. This supports and strengthens family links. Special thanks to SI member Zena Lear for leading on this important area of work.



Book of Condolence, St Mary's Church, Stafford

We were delighted to be approached by St. Mary's to support them in opening a book of condolence in the Church, for all those who wished to sign following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Over a period of ten days, 17 of our members were involved on a rota basis in assisting people. We felt privileged to join in conversations and hear many personal remembrances of her Majesty.



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SI Sutton Coldfield

Lunches at the Domestic Violence Refuge

SI Sutton Coldfield members have supported a local refuge for decades in many ways from donations, Christmas parties and taking the children strawberry picking, but the most regular support has been by putting on monthly lunches for the women and children.

While perfection would be a life without abuse or violence living in the comfort of their own homes, times spent with the women gives them the opportunity of chatting and talking to someone who is not a professional within the system in a relaxed setting over lunch. The lunches had to be postponed during the COVID pandemic but we have now been able to resume them once again. During the pandemic, the local Council suspended showing houses for the women to be moved on to and time spent in the refuge was significantly longer than usual and creating a risk of the women feeling institutionalised. However, turnaround is much quicker now and this month saw a new intake of mothers and children from last month.

Medical Blister Packs

Members are committed to recycle many items as part of our aim to be environmentally friendly and minimise waste but the most prolific recycling project has been the recycling of Medical blister packs with the Superdrug and TerraCycle partnership.

Many members, their families and friends contribute regularly. Every 6 weeks we have delivered a minimum of 4 large shopping bags to Superdrug for recycling throughout the year.

Perfection would be for the medication to be packaged in more sustainable packaging and if not, for the programme to be more widely available.



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SI Tamworth



We raised £191 for Breast Care UK by holding a tombola in Ankerside while handing out literature on Breast Care.

Always remember that it is progress, not perfection, you should be looking for

The Arbinger Institute



SI The Wrekin

Eco Friendly Gardening

Climate change has been shown to have a disproportionate impact on women and girls. We can all make a difference by cutting down on food miles and growing our own vegetables in an eco-friendly, way no matter how small the space. Gardening has a positive effect on mental health and planting for the environmental benefits insects, birds and even a cheeky squirrel. We joined a local street event 'Pride in our High Street' to show how grow your own can be fun.

Everyday items were adapted to make plant pots to grow plants to sell at low cost. Seeds were shared for free and children planted sunflower seeds, harvested from our 'Plant a Little Sunshine' project the previous year. They filled cardboard toilet roll centres with peat free compost, planted the seed and promised to water it every day. We were even visited by a friendly dinosaur keen to ensure we will protect our environment and not suffer the same fate as him!




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SI The Wrekin

SI The Wrekin rise to the Challenge of reducing plastic in our Community.

Climate change is affecting the whole planet. Plastic production and waste is having a significant impact across the world. Inspired by SIGBI Plastic free Day of Action, SI The Wrekin decided to join in with The Plastic Free Foundation, a global social movement, who initiated the **Plastic Free July Challenge**, so together we can 'turn the tide, one choice at a time'.

The aim was to replace 3 single use plastic items with an ecological friendly alternative. All our members took part, and the results were brilliant so much so that we have now pledged with our local council to continue to work with them towards a Plastic Free Community recognising that it's not about removing all plastic it's about kicking out the single-use and changing the system that produces it.



Join SI The Wrekin Plastic Free July Challenge

| Item to be replaced | eco alternative | Eco Tips |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Plastic bottles of liquid soap | Boxed bar of soap | A soap saver bag is useful |
| Plastic bottles of hair shampoo | Bar of soap for hair | You can re fill your empty bottles for many things at your local eco shop |
| Plastic bottles of hair conditioner | Bar of conditioner for hair | |
| Plastic bottles of cleaning solution | Refill with sachets | |
| Clothes wash tablets | Choose boxed powder | |
| Clothes wash conditioner | Recyclable sheets or refills | |
| Food plastic packaging | Buy loose fruit and vegetables using reusable bags | Reusable bags are available in most supermarkets some are free |
| Food plastic packaging | Buy loose dried food such as Pasta, Rice, Lentils, Flour, Spices etc. | All available at local eco shops and stalls. Take your own reusable containers |
| Food plastic packaging | Use shops, market stalls, Farmer's markets with deli, meat, fish counters. Only take prepacked food that can be recycled . | Take your own reusable containers. Refuse as much packaging as possible that says do not recycle |
| Cling Film (tricky!) | Reusable stretch silicone seals / plastic containers | An easy solution use lids, plates, saucers as covers |
| Drinks plastic bottles | Get a reusable plastic bottle for your water, juice | Many places offer a free refill |
| Drinks plastic Cups | Get your own reusable hot drink cup | Some places give discount or free refill |
| Plastic straws | Paper straws | Are they really necessary? |

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SI Wolverhampton

Tree Planting

President planted two trees in our local park. Several more planted in various sites in Wolverhampton.



Trauma teddies and syringe driver bags

Our Craft group have provided local hospice with trauma teddies and syringe driver bags. Twiddle muffs have been made for local residential homes and bonding squares and hearts for New Cross and Manor Hospitals.

Nothing was purchased, all materials were from recycling.

