



# Save our Sanity

SI:MK founded in 2015 with support from MK Community Foundation



31 January 2022

MK Soroptimists

Newsletter 35

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## Editorial Welcome

### Two special Happy Birthday's to celebrate



Two very special birthdays to celebrate this month.

Firstly, Happy birthday to Barbara, celebrating a very special birthday. Thank you for being our Friendship Officer, for all your kindness and for looking after us all.

And secondly, on 23 January Milton Keynes celebrated its 55<sup>th</sup> birthday when it was officially dedicated.



It was lovely to see so many of you in person at our first meeting of this year and to welcome our charities MK Act, YMCA MK and the Winter Night Shelter, along to tell us about the year they have had and what the challenges are ahead and how we can help them.

It was great to be able to thank our charities with a £100 donation each and one of "Clean Start buckets" for those residents about to make a new start in life.

I would also like to thank members for answering our call to help out with funds to keep the club going. Members donated over £200 and as Chair, I thank you very much. This will help us going forward to keep the club going but also help us develop more Fund-raising events for our linked charities.



Not long now till our planning day on Saturday 12 February. Don't forget to bring along food but also please do look at the supporting documents already sent round in readiness for the day. We will be looking at our Values work we did earlier in the year as this work will then help inform looking at issues in Milton Keynes and what type of project we want to do this year to support our community and our linked charities. Information including our charities strategic plans, where available, MK Community Foundation Vital Signs report and links to SIGBI website pages showing the national programme projects. Please do take time to have a look prior to our planning day.



And another celebration this month. A big welcome to our newest sisters from Trinidad and Tobago who received their official charter on 22 January.

More sisters joining around the world to help brighten the futures of women and girls

Wishing Trinidad and Tobago all the very best.

[Click here](#) to learn about our newest club

The 24 January was [#International Day of Education](#) and Soroptimist International President Maureen Maguire released a video. [Click here](#) to view the video.



**Tuesday 8 March – International Womens Day 2022.** Campaign theme this year is **#BreakTheBias**. [Click here](#) to learn about International Womens Day and [Click here](#) to learn more about 2022 theme.

Imagine a gender equal world.

A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.

A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

A world where difference is valued and celebrated.

Together we can forge women's equality.

Collectively we can all **#BreakTheBias**.

Individually, we're all responsible for our own thoughts and actions - all day, every day.

We can break the bias in our communities.

We can break the bias in our workplaces.

We can break the bias in our schools, colleges and universities.

Together, we can all **break the bias** - on International Women's Day (IWD) and beyond.

I hope at our Planning Day you will all join me in a photo supporting the theme that we can send into International Women's day.

We have a busy couple of month's coming up. It will be very interesting to get together to look at what special project we want to do to help our community but also to start looking at what type of fund raising events we can hold to raise much needed funds for our charities as they go into very challenging and uncertain times. Let's hope we can help in what ever way we can.

**Wishing everyone a Happy New Year and all the very best for 2022 to us, our linked charities and our community**

**Sue Key, Chair**

## Dear Diary updates

Dear Diary Dates	
Wed 2 Feb	<b>Friendship Lunch</b> – 1.00pm at the Barn, Central Milton Keynes
Sat 12 Feb	<b>Planning Meeting</b> 10am till 3pm. AT GT LINFORD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ROOM. More details to follow
Tues 22 Feb	<b>Branch meeting</b> 5.30 pm for tea with 6.00 pm start. <b>Venue to be confirmed</b>
Sat 5 March	<b>Sat 5 Mar – SILC Region Meeting/Conference and Celebration of International Women’s Day. 10am till 1pm via Zoom</b> - More details to follow
Wednesday 2 March	<b>Friendship Lunch</b> - To be confirmed
Tuesday 22 March	<b>Branch meeting</b> 5.30 pm for tea with 6.00 pm start. <b>Venue to be confirmed</b>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Special Days:</u> Women’s Day Tuesday 8 March – <b><u>look out for info on our event soon</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SIGBI Action Day TBC</p> <p>World Homelessness Day 10 October White Ribbon 25 November</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Regional Dates for Diary</u></p> <p><b>Sat 5 Mar – SILC Region Meeting/Conference and Celebration of International Women’s Day</b></p> <p><b>Sat 11 Jun 2022 – Face-to-Face – SILC Region Conference</b> Hosted by SI Slough Windsor and Maidenhead Club</p> <p><b>Sat 8 Oct 2022 – Zoom – SILC Region AGM/Conference</b> <b>27-29 July 2023 Soroptimist International Convention Dublin</b> “Challenge the Future” <a href="http://sidublin2023.com">sidublin2023.com</a></p>
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## UN International days and Awareness days- February 2022

International days/weeks are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity.

**UN International Days** - Just a few dates for your diary. **Click on each subject to learn more about each of these UN Days/Weeks via the UN Website.**

1-7 Feb	<b>World Interfaith week</b>
2 Feb	<a href="#">World Wetlands Day</a>
4 Feb	<b>International Day of Human Fraternity</b>
6 Feb	<b>International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation</b>
10 Feb	<a href="#">World Pulses Day</a>
11 Feb	<b>International Day of Women and Girls in Science</b>
13 Feb	<b>World Radio Day</b>
20 Feb	<a href="#">World Day of Social Justice</a>
21 Feb	<b>International Mother Language Day</b>

**Awareness Days** – dates for your diary. Click on each subject to learn more

Dear Diary Dates	
4 Feb	<a href="#">World Cancer Day</a>
7-13 Feb	<b>Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week - #It’sNotOk</b> 1.00pm at the Barn, Central Milton Keynes
February	<b>UK LGBT+ History Month – this year the theme is Politics in Art “The Arc is Long”</b> <b>Click here to learn more</b>
17 Feb	<a href="#">Random act of Kindness Day</a>

## Let's talk: womens health - 23 Feb event

healthwatch  
Milton Keynes

in partnership with



Healthwatch Milton Keynes are holding an event called,

### Let's talk: Women's health

23 Feb

Namji, Xscape

10:00- 16:00



"Let's talk: Women's health" – 23 February 10am till 4pm, Namji at the Escape.

So many women are used to putting others first and not taking time for their own health needs. Women, and particularly those from ethnic minority communities, are also highly likely to suffer from health inequalities.

This event offers mothers, wives, daughters, sisters and grandmothers the chance to access reliable, accurate health

information from trusted health professionals about the women's health issues that matter the most to them.

#### The details:

**Drop in, no need to book. Wednesday, 23 February 10:00 - 16:00 at Namji @ Xscape, 602 Marlborough Gate**

- WOMEN'S HEALTH ADVICE AND SUPPORT
- PRESENTATIONS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES AND INEQUALITIES
- FRIENDLY, WELCOMING FEMALE COMMUNITY
- INCREDIBLE FOOD FROM NAMJI, 'THE BEST INDIAN IN MK' (TRIPADVISOR)

There will be practical advice and support on issues including: gynaecological conditions, fertility, pregnancy, pregnancy loss and postnatal support menopause menstrual health, breast screening, mental health, diabetes and more.

Partners so far confirmed, although many more will be confirming next week:

- MKUH breast care team and diabetic eye screening,
- Terence Higgins MK,
- Mind BLMK
- Carers MK
- Central North West London NHS Trust (mental health service support)
- Diabetes MK
- SOFEA (community larder)
- Age UK- Live Life Social Prescribing

**Please share this with your friends. To find out more [click here](#)**

Let's talk also have an event <b>16 February on the Menopause</b>	The event is taking place at Bar Bar Black Sheep Cafe 16 The Square Wolverton MK12 5DG Time: 18:00- 21:00. Places need to be booked. <a href="#">Click here</a> to book a place
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## WOW Festival London 11 to 13 March at Southbank Centre



**The London Women of the World Festival 2022 is back in person 11 to 13 March at Southbank Centre**

**WOW** is the world's biggest, most comprehensive festival celebrating women, girls and non-binary people.

Across the three days, WOW London 2022's line-up of world class speakers, inspirational activists, musicians, artists and comedians will take over the Southbank Centre for discussions, workshops, performances and debates including everything from sex to politics,

grandmotherdom, divorce, sexual violence, childlessness, reproductive rights, career changes, poverty, resistance and resilience, girls education, love and relationships, football and how the pandemic has affected us all.

There will also be the return of WOW Speed Mentoring, WOW Bites, WOW Big Ideas and the WOW Marketplace.

**Sign up to our newsletter** to stay in touch about the stand-alone ticketed events and digital programme to be announced later this year.

At WOW, there's space for discussions ranging from sex to politics, grandmotherdom to divorce, childlessness to career changes. It's a chance for both the most difficult discussions, and workshops that have you in fits of laughter.

**Click here** to see what's on over the 3 days.

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## Thames Valley Police Commissioner Dec newsletter



In Matthew Barber's Dec newsletter, as Thames Valley Police Commissioner he looks at Tackling violent men who harm women and Streetsafe – is there somewhere you feel safe.

**Click here** to view the newsletter in full.  
See below specific article on Streetsafe pilot scheme

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## Is there somewhere in your neighbourhood you feel safe?

StreetSafe is a pilot scheme aimed at identifying area, where the public don't feel safe. Launched earlier this year by the Home Office and the National Police Chief's Council, the new online tool allows the public, particularly women and girls, to pinpoint areas on a map where they feel unsafe and say why. The information can then be used by the police and local authorities to improve local safety.

Streetsafe allows anyone to anonymously tell the police about public spaces where they have felt or feel unsafe, because of environmental issues e.g street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism and/or because of some behaviours e.g being followed or verbally abused.

It is recognised that there are some areas in our communities where women in particular can feel less safe and now there is the ability to report this online and anonymously using Streetsafe by visiting [www.thamesvalley.police.uk/notices/street-safe](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/notices/street-safe)

Streetsafe is anonymous and it cannot be used for reporting crime and incidents will not be investigated. If something has happened to you or someone you know (including in public spaces online) you can call the police on 101 or [report online](#). In an emergency if a crime is taking place always call 999.

Please help and raise awareness of this scheme with your friends.

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## Women's Safety on the streets - Strut Safe helpline



Women's safety is once again in the spotlight - and walking home at night is often when their fears are most acute. Now a telephone helpline called Strut Safe, launched in Edinburgh last year, is keeping people company when they walk home alone.

To read more and listen to stories of women who have used the helpline **click here**

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## UK Says No More - Safe spaces for those experiencing domestic abuse



**UK SAYS NO MORE** is working with Boots UK, Morrisons, Superdrug and Well pharmacies, TSB banks and independent pharmacies across the UK to provide Safe Spaces in their consultation rooms for people experiencing **domestic abuse**. You can use a Safe Space in whichever way works for you. They provide a safe and discrete way to reach out to friends and family, contact specialist support services and start your journey to recovery. [Click here.](#)

**UK SAYS NO MORE** also works in partnership with Royal Mail Group to provide Online Safe Spaces to help victims assess their safety right now, understand their situation better and seek specialist support, all in one place. [Click here.](#)

[Click here](#) to learn more. There are Safe Spaces in Milton Keynes. Another initiative that we can help raise awareness about.

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## Barking Bags of MK grab a Dragon on Dragons Den



Congratulations to Barking Bags partners Debbie Greaves and Rob Angell, who appeared on Dragons Den on 27 Jan and won themselves a Dragon.

Barking Bags are specially designed dog walking multifunctional bags that have a place to store everything you need for your walks out with your dog friend.

Most of the bags are all handmade in India in a small artisan workshop. Many of the bags are packed at MK Snap, which helps the learners with genuine work experience. And not only do Barking Dogs Bags help the learners gain work skills and much more, they are donating £5 for every sale when the purchaser uses the MK Snap code.

So, if you are a dog walker or have friends who are, let them know about this local MK company helping dog owners and helping the learners at MK Snap. Win win. [Click here](#) to learn more about Barking Dogs

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## Milton Keynes could get a Youth Mayor in 2022



New Youth Mayor could be appointed to represent the Young People of Milton Keynes in 2022. This would be building upon the Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet which is made up of 36 elected members of young people aged between 11 and 18.

To learn more [click here.](#)

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## Walking 56 miles in February for Refuge



Refuge opened the world's first safe house for women and children escaping domestic violence in Chiswick, West London, in 1971. Women and children flocked to their doors because, for the first time, someone was saying it was wrong to beat your partner. Back then, domestic violence was seen as a "private matter", to be dealt with "behind closed doors". Society turned a blind eye. Now we support over 6,000 women and children on any given day.

February is "Walking 56 Miles" month to raise much needed funds:

- £15 could give a woman arriving the essential items she needs for her first night
- £25 could buy food supplies, toiletries and cleaning products to help a family stay safe and healthy
- £45 could buy a cot mattress and protector for a baby in a refuge
- £52 could buy a mother and her children a safe night stay in a refuge
- £185 could help fund the running of the Domestic Violence helpline for an hour
- £250 could buy a school uniform for a child

Our member Bee, is taking on this challenge. Please help her to raise some funds for this important cause. As soon as her just giving page is available, we will circulate it via an email. Thank you.

## MK Council to give more funding to female entrepreneurs



**In the week that a national report has placed Milton Keynes in the top ten cities for business start-ups and productivity, MK Council has announced it is to invest a further £55,000 to support female entrepreneurs, having already committed £35,000.**

The Council is providing the funding to the 'Hubs Nesting Programme' run by the Love Local Hub based in the Centre:MK.

The Love Local team provide mentoring, support and a start-up space for female entrepreneurs, and a city centre showcase where business owners can highlight their products and services. The team have helped 50 new businesses in the last year through its 'bootcamps', many of which are now developing an online presence and even considering opening their own premises. The new funding will continue this support and bring new businesses onboard.

The Love Local Hub is part of the Council's commitment to helping women get back into work, as research suggests they've been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and have been almost twice as likely as men to lose their jobs through the crisis. The project falls within the Council's £3.1m Economic Recovery Plan to support businesses and provide training to help local people find work.

**Deputy Leader of MK Council, Cllr Robin Bradburn** said: "The Love Local Hub has been fantastic in helping new businesses get up on their own feet and I'm delighted that we're strengthening our partnership with them through this new funding. The pandemic has left many people struggling and we know women, and particularly those in the retail sector, have had it the toughest. It's partnerships like these that will help us deliver a fair and prosperous recovery. I'd strongly encourage new businesses to get in touch to see how the Love Local Hub might be able to help them."

**Samantha Poole, co-founder of Incubation Nation and the Love Local Hub**, said: "Through our continued support for women owned businesses within Milton Keynes and as part of the Covid recovery agenda, we are delighted to be able to offer our valuable business bootcamp courses in store, which makes our supportive and creative hub and shop more able to support women locally in developing and growing great businesses. The result is shoppers also get a great shopping experience and a chance to support local in a top 10 UK shopping centre. "Our mission is to support women post-pandemic to achieve equal opportunities to grow their business successfully. With our mentoring programme and business bootcamps, women can confidently build and grow sustainable businesses whilst supporting their family and the economy."

Those interested applying should contact [join@lovelocalhub.com](mailto:join@lovelocalhub.com). Please share this if you know of anyone looking to start up their own business.

## MK YMCA Hospital Navigation Scheme - MKUH



Nationally, there is an increasing number of young people involved in gang activity and violent crime. To help navigate individuals away from gang culture towards a more positive path, intervention is crucial. At YMCA MK, we have the staff and support services needed to help local vulnerable young people lead a safer and healthier life. That is why we launched our Hospital Navigator Scheme in 2021.

Hospitals are one of the key settings to identify and signpost young people involved in gang activity, as there is a growing number of individuals presenting at emergency departments due to incidents of assault and serious

violence. This is a trend that has been identified in Milton Keynes, and one of the main factors for this is violence within the under 25s.

Funded by Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit and in partnership with Milton Keynes University Hospital (MKUH), our Hospital Navigator and team of volunteers provide support to young people who present at MKUH A&E due to assault and serious violence.

Through this initiative, we can support young people and navigate them back into the community, building resilience and offering mentoring to prevent further incidents that could lead them back into hospital.

If you're over 18 and would like to make a difference by becoming a Hospital Navigator Volunteer, complete the form below to apply.

Meet Alex our YMCA Hospital Navigator volunteer.

As part of National Mentoring Month, we want to introduce you to one of our Hospital Navigator Volunteers, Alex. The Hospital Navigator Scheme is run from the A&E department at Milton Keynes Hospital and enables our team of volunteers to support young people aged 13-35 who are experiencing gang activity, serious violence or domestic abuse. Our volunteers act as mentors, providing support and signposting to help young people move towards a more positive pathway.

To read more about Alex's story as a Hospital Navigator Volunteer, [click here](#).

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## Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) - 14 to 25 March



The sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place from 14 to 25 March 2022. Due to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSW66 will take place in a hybrid format. All side events and parallel events will be fully virtual.

Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world are invited to contribute to the session.

Themes are:

- **Priority theme:** Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes;
- **Review theme:** Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work (agreed conclusions of the sixty-first session);

Here's your chance to join the virtual 66th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women! Dates are March 14 to 25, 2022. [Learn more:](#)

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## Vulnerable women leaving prison to become homeless



A report this month shows that 77% of women from the UK's largest prisons faced homelessness. London Prisons Mission this month urged the Ministry of Justice to stop thousands of vulnerable women leaving prison to homelessness. Their declaration, signed by over thirty charities and organisations, shows the scale of urgency of this crisis.

To read more [click here](#). **#Safe Homes for Women leaving Prison**

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## Milton Keynes author has her first book published by Penguin



A female Milton Keynes author has had her first novel up by publishers at Penguin. Lizzie Damilola Blackburn's book is called Yinka, Where is Your Husband? and has already received rave reviews and been chosen in a string of 'best of 2022' press round-ups. One big fan is Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai, who had chosen it for her [online book club](#). The novel is about a young British Nigerian woman's quest for love and self-acceptance. In Bridget Jones style, chapters open with WhatsApp screenshots and details of Yinka's online search history.



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## Send your old stamps to support the RNIB



And something to remember. When you receive a letter with a stamp on. Don't throw the stamp away. There are a number of charities which can resell the stamps and use the money for their charity. Soroptimist Bristol collect stamps for the Royal Institute for the Blind. You can also collect stamps for "Against Breast Cancer". [Click here](#) for their website details.

[Click here](#) to see a link giving you a fuller list of charities that use old stamps to obtain much needed donations.

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## Inspiring Women - Be Inspired



On This Day – January 6 1946, artist Laura Knight began three months observing the Nuremberg war crimes trials. The resulting paintings, one of which is the left-hand painting above, joined a body of work which made her one of the most successful and popular painters in post-war Britain. Dame Laura Knight was the only women to be given War Commissions during the two World Wars and in 1936 became the first woman elected to full membership of the Royal Academy.

The painting on the right is "Storm over our Town – Malvern". I connected with this painting because I have walked off the Malvern hills down that lane and because I have never seen a painting depict so well a rain storm with lightening.

The Laura Knight Exhibition is on at MK Gallery until 20 February and I would highly recommend you visit. If you live in Milton Keynes and have an MK postcode you get in Free on Tuesdays.

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## Our Twitter feed and web page - don't forget to have a look



[Click here to see our Milton Keynes Soroptimists Twitter feed and what we are currently talking about](#)



[Click here to see our Milton Keynes Soroptimists web page and what we are currently talking about](#)

[Click here to go Back to the top](#)

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## SI:MK support these local charities:

