



Save our Sanity

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



31 July 2023

MK Soroptimists

Newsletter 52

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Editorial Welcome

Soroptimists – Standing up for Women and Girls



What a great July branch meeting. We were very fortunate to have Sarah Flain to speak to us about the charity Mummy’s Star. Mummy’s Star is the only UK and Ireland charity helping women, partners and families diagnosed with cancer during pregnancy and/or within 12 months of giving birth.

They provide a holistic approach with support and advice working with all professionals from medical to local authorities to ensure their clients are able to access the right help, the right support and that the support they give is personalised to meet their needs. They do this totally relying on donations from individuals.

This year the charity is celebrating their 10th anniversary and were set up by Peter Wallroth in memory of his wife Mair in 2013. To find out more about this fantastic charity [click here](#)
[Click here](#) to view Mummy's Star Youtube link with a number of stories of women and families they have helped.



In the same week of our branch meeting, it was lovely to attend the Ukraine Appeals "Thank you, Britain!" event. 🇬🇧❤️🇺🇦 on the 22 July at Summerfield school.

On their last school day before the holidays the rain did not put the children off from enjoying the bouncy castle, writing the longest thank you letter, taking part in a quiz and just letting off steam. There was also a competition where they wrote individual letters/postcards of thank you and the best 5, picked out by yours truly, will be delivered to 10 Downing Street along with the longest thank you letter.

thank you letter.

A couple of the letters were very humbling but all were most grateful for the support and friendship people in the UK have given.

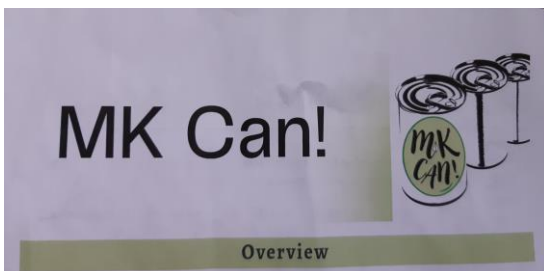


A quick update on where we are with the report on Specialist Domestic Abuse Courts (SDAC) which we as a group are proud to have taken part in.

We have sent this to both MP's who have responded back to us and are meeting Ben Everitt on 30 August.

Dame Ann Limb is organizing a conference called: **Report to Court: unseen journeys of victims of violence through the law enforcement agencies and criminal justice systems: a strategic conversation.** This will take place on Friday 24th November 2023, 10am-1pm at The Gateway and the list of invitees includes the Police, Law makers and support services.

The conference will hear the voices of 3 women who have experienced the Domestic Abuse Courts and will be presented with the Soroptimist report. Please keep this date in your diaries and we will let you know how many places are available for us to attend. To read the Executive summary and the full report [click here](#).



How we are getting on with collecting 350 tins for our 25 meter section supporting the MK Foodbank attempt to break the record for making the longest continuous line of tinned cans of food at 10km on Monday 16 October.

Thank you everyone for rallying round family and friends. And a thank you to our neighbouring Soroptimist clubs who have also said they will try and help. As at 27 July I think we are up to 200.

This is fantastic but we still have only 80 days to get to our 350. So please keep up the good work. Just a reminder all food tins need a long sell by date, should be 395 to 400g and MK Foodbank need the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Tinned Meat | Tinned Veg |
| Tinned Fish | Rice Pudding |
| Tinned Pulses | Soup |
| Tinned Tomatoes | Custard |
| Tinned Pasta (Hoops/Ravioli etc) | Baked Beans |

Volunteers are still needed on Monday 16 October, in the morning to help set up and in the afternoon, the public will be allowed to walk the line and that will be the time when we have the opportunity to tell people about

Soroptimists and what we do and maybe get some new members. Please do let Sue or me know what times on the 16th you can volunteer. Many thanks

This 2023 World Ribbon Day theme is #ChangetheStory. Culture change doesn't happen overnight, but we can all end violence against women and girls in our life time. White Ribbon UK are encouraging individuals and organisations to make daily choices and actions so that we can #ChangetheStory for women and girls to live their lives free from the fear of violence now and always.



The Facts:

- Nearly 1 in 4 girls in mixed sex schools have had experiences of unwanted sexual touching in school. (EVAW)
- 6 in 10 women have felt harassed in the gym by a man. (The Gym-timidation Report)
- 3 in 5 young women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. (Trade Unions Congress)
- 1.7 million women experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022. (ONS)

The sad reality is, that the majority of violence against women is perpetrated by men. Whether that is a partner, ex-partner, colleague, or stranger.

White Ribbon recognises not all men are violent but All men can end violence against women and girls by challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours.

We are meeting with Milton Keynes City Council and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council in August to look at what our campaign can be this year to raise awareness within our community. One possible way will be at Xmas time in Newport Pagnell Church. They have a weekend around 10 Dec time where charities set up a Xmas tree to promote their causes. We are hopeful we have an opportunity to display a white xmas tree with orange hearts and postcards to promote Orange the World and White Ribbon campaigns. Watch this space for future updates.

PLASTICFREEJULY.ORG
2023
JOIN THE CHALLENGE

Joining 31 Days of Plastic Free Choices

1. Choosing a small step
2. Using what you have
3. BYO shopping bags
4. Choosing reusable drink bottles
5. Ditching disposable coffee cups
6. Skipping the straw
7. Choosing reusable utensils
8. Choosing loose produce
9. Storing food in reusable containers
10. Avoiding bottled soft drinks
11. Choosing plastic free packaging
12. Choosing loose tea
13. Hosting a morning tea
14. Staying and enjoying
15. Choosing plastic free cleaning products
16. Switching to plastic free stationery
17. Choosing plastic free laundry products
18. Making homemade snacks
19. Reducing plastic in the bathroom
20. Reducing plastic with pets
21. Picking up and avoiding litter
22. Making personal care products
23. Choosing natural fibre fabrics
24. Choosing reusable menstrual products
25. Switching from bottle to bar
26. Choosing plastic free toys
27. Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
28. Learning more
29. Reducing plastic when travelling
30. Reducing plastic when celebrating
31. Small steps, big difference

PLASTIC FREE JULY | Join millions of people worldwide choosing to refuse single-use plastic

Supported by the Minderoo Foundation

We can't forget our Soroptimist environmental roots.

July is Plastic Free July. This year we have been tweeting the many ways you can make a difference and reduce your use of plastics to help save the earth. These include:

- Buy your own and reuse your own shopping bags
- Ditching disposable coffee cups
- Choosing plastic free packaging
- Reducing plastic in the bathroom
- Reducing plastic when travelling
- Making homemade snacks
- Choosing loose tea
- Choosing loose products
- Skipping the straw
- Switching to plastic free stationery

There are many ideas on the Plastic Free July website. **Click here** to learn more and see what you can do.

And after July, what have we got coming up. Really looking forward to our summer fundraising event, **Fish and Chip Quiz on 19 August at Simpson Church**. Hope you have let Jean know you want tickets. Should be a great evening and all funds raised will go to our linked charities. Our summer party is on Tuesday 22 August, kindly being hosted by Jean at her house at 6pm. Thank you Jean. Dress in Orange and bring food or drink. Don't forget to let Jean know what you are bringing. We must not forget that we also have the YMCA Community Lunch at 12 on Thursday 24 August at the YMCA. We have sponsored the purchasing of the food and the residents are to treat us to an Around the World theme. It's going to be a great August. Soroptimists in friendship having a great time.

And breaking news. The Soroptimist International Convention has been taking place this last weekend in July and a new emblem for all Soroptimists was launched during the opening ceremony.



Click on the left image to watch the video played in the opening ceremony at Soroptimist International Dublin Convention to launch our new emblem.

If you click on the left image, click on watch in you tube in order that it does not get stuck in a loop.

You can also view the video on our twitter, **click here**.



Happy reading everyone.

**Soroptimists standing up for Women and Girls
Sue Key, Chair**

Dear Diary updates

Dear Diary Dates	
Sat 19 Aug	Fish and Chip Quiz Night , 7.00pm, Simpson Church, Simpson
Tues 22 Aug	Summer Branch party meeting. 6.00pm at Jeans House. Bring food and drink.
Wed 30 Aug	Friendship Lunch 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Thursday 24 Aug	YMCA Community Lunch, 12pm, theme is Around the world , hosted by Bea, YMCA Youth Ambassador for Cultural Inclusion.
Tue 19 Sept	Branch meeting. 5.30pm , Acorn Training Centre, Westcroft
Wed 27 Sept	Friendship Lunch 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA

Our Fish and Chip Quiz Fundraising evening - 19 Aug 2023



Don't forget everyone to put the 19 August in your diary. It is our great Fish and Chip Quiz night. 7pm at Simpson Church, Simpson.

Another of our annual favourite fundraising events. Please share with friends and try to encourage them to come along to help raise funds for our good causes. More details will follow in future newsletters.

Winter Night Shelter events in Aug and Sept to look out for



Two lovely summer events are being held to raise much needed funds for the Winter Night Shelter. They are:

MK Fun Fest – 19 August 10 till 5pm at the Tattenhoe Sports Pavilion
Varied acts, live DJ's rides, trampolines, face painting, food and beverages

Family Fun Day Sun 3 Sept 11am to 3pm at Middleton Pavilion with food, drinks, fairground attractions, games, stalls, football tournament.

Heart and Music Choir Event - 14 October



Heart and Music have kindly agreed to take part in our Music fundraising event on 14 October at The Mead Center, Newport Pagnell.

Please put this in your diary and share with your family and friends as we want to get as many people there as possible to raise funds for our charity/projects but to make it a great and a joyful evening.

Modern slavery gangmasters exploit care worker shortage



The number of modern slavery cases reported within the UK care industry has more than doubled in the past year.

Unseen, a UK anti-slavery says the rise in calls about the care sector in the past 12 months is because the government has made it easier for overseas social care staff to work in the UK post Brexit – and fill thousands of vacancies. As the supply

chain gets bigger, there's more chance of exploitation. To read the full BBC article [click here](#).

Numbers in temporary accommodation in England hit record



The number of people living in temporary accommodation in England has hit a 25 year high according to the latest official figures.

Almost 105,000 households were in temporary accommodation, including more than 131,000 children on 31 March this year. This figure is 10% up on the same day last year. [Click here](#) to read the full report. (BBC Images)

Baby loss in pregnancy: Pledge to store remains in dignified way



Women who lose babies during pregnancy have been promised improved care, including better ways for remains to be collected and stored with dignity.

In the past women have been told to retrieve baby- loss remains from toilets and store them in home fridges. Myleene Klass, musician and TV presenter, lost 4 babies during pregnancy and campaigned for the government to bring in these reforms. [Click here](#) to read the article. (Getty Images)

Did you know: Climate disasters make girls more vulnerable to child marriage?

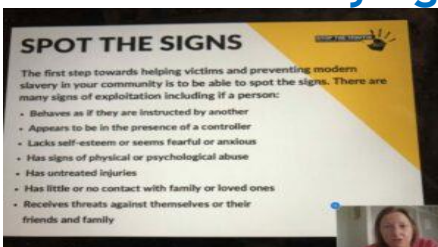


As if the devastation wrought by this year's Cyclone Freddy had not been enough, it also left Marry Harrison's parents with an awful decision to make. Having found themselves among nearly 700,000 people left homeless in Malawi by what was the longest-lived tropical cyclone on record, the family had no food or money.

As their desperation for food mounted, the Harrisons were forced to consider extreme measures – marrying off their 15-year-old daughter.

This is one of the unseen consequences of a natural disaster: a rise in child marriages. [Click here](#) to read the full article by the Telegraph.

World Day against Trafficking in Persons: 30 July



In line with the aim of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) to leave no one behind, the theme for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2023 is "Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind".

[Click here](#) to read the blog by Soroptimist International Medway and Maidstone.

Milton Keynes CAB: Latest newsletter



This is the 5th newsletter and includes a call for more volunteers with numbers still lower than pre pandemic and yet calls on their service are increasing. It also includes news of new services now available.

[Click here](#) to read the latest newsletter.

Help MKU Hospital Recycle Walking Aids

Milton Keynes University Hospital have set up a new scheme to reuse, refurbish or recycle unwanted walking aids like elbow crutches and metal walking sticks.

If anyone you know has an aid that's no longer needed, you can drop it at one of the collection points listed below. If everyone did this, the NHS would save £46,000 a year.

- New Bradwell Recycling Centre – Newport Road, MK13 0AH
- Age UK MK – The PearTree Centre – 1 Chadds Lane, PearTree, MK6 3EB
- Age UK MK Home and Furniture Store – 6 Burners Lane, Kiln Farm, MK11 3HA

Fawcett Study of Women in Politics



Milton Keynes Fawcett group have published their most recent report on gender representation on the council, following the 2023 elections.

Compared with the UK national average, the council compares favourably, but the report highlights differences between political parties, missed opportunities to select female candidates and most importantly the issue of attracting a more diverse range of candidates in order to be more representative of the borough's population. [Click here](#) to read this story.

Manipur: India police face scrutiny after women paraded naked



Questions are being asked about the role of the police in the ghastly incident where two women were paraded naked by a mob of men in India's Manipur state.

A video of the incident, which took place on 4 May went viral and cause global outrage. But many are asking why it took the police so long to open a case of gang rape and how the two women, allegedly were taking from police custody by the mob. [Click here](#) to read the full BBC report. (Getty image)

Italian uproar over judge's 10-second groping rule



Does it count as sexual harassment if an assault lasts less than 10 seconds?

Many young people in Italy are expressing outrage on social media, after a judge cleared a school caretaker of groping a teenager, because it did not last long enough. [Click here](#) to read the full BBC report. (Paolo Camilli/Instagram image)

Rape reform programme extended across England & Wales



Women who have made rape complaints have told the BBC News that police and court systems are still “weighted in favour of the accused”, despite a new programme piloted by 19 Police forces. Operation Soteria is being extended to all 43 police areas in England and Wales from 10 July. But women have told the BBC they find the process tough, even in the pilot areas. [Click here](#) to read the full BBC report. (Getty images)

Rise in vulnerable women dying early in north east England



Shocking new report reveals that women living in the North East are likelier to live shorter lives, citing the “triple shock” of Covid, austerity and cost of living on public services. A growing number of disadvantaged and vulnerable women living in one of the poorest parts of England are dying prematurely because public services are not meeting their needs, according to a report. [Click here](#) to read the full Guardian report. (Alamy image)

“I was on a mission to stop this man”



Three women have spoken of their relief after the man who had repeatedly raped and coercively controlled them was given a 32-year sentence. The judge praised the women for their amazing courage. He also stated that at one point during the trial, jurors passed him a note saying they found it distressing to hear the way the victims were being blamed by the defence. [Click here](#) to read the full BBC story. (BBC image)

Legal aid cuts denying vulnerable women access to justice



Legal aid cuts denying vulnerable women access to justice, says thinktank. Women’s Budget Group says changes have disproportionately affected women and cut critical lifeline in England and Wales. Vulnerable women in England and Wales, including survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, are being denied justice because of cuts to the civil legal aid budget. [Click here](#) to read the full Guardian report. (Getty image)

McDonald’s workers speak out over sexual abuse claims



A toxic culture of sexual assault, harassment, racism and bullying has been alleged by more than 100 current and recent UK staff at outlets of the fast-food chain McDonald’s. The BBC were told that workers, some as young as 17, are being groped and harassed almost routinely. [Click here](#) to read the full Guardian report. (BBC image)

The Family Court and Domestic abuse



This month the Domestic Abuse Commissioner calls for wide reaching reforms to ensure safety of children in the Family Courts and accelerate government plans.

This month, the DA Commissioner released a report highlighting ongoing concerns about the traumatizing experience of the Family Court for victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

The report amplifies calls to centre the experiences of children as victims of domestic abuse to ensure that their voices are clearly heard during proceedings. The voice of the child has been all but lost in the Court, and the Commissioner hopes that this report will bring it into the forefront of family law proceedings. [Click here](#) to read the full report

SIGBI latest News/blogs



[Click here](#) to read all the latest news articles and blogs. [Click here](#) to see the latest blogs.

Soroptimist International Blogs - read the latest



Read the latest Soroptimist International Blogs including:

- Opening of the Soroptimist International Dublin Convention 2023
- Gender Responsiveness in Partnership for SDGs
- Conclusions of the 111th International Labour Conference
- UN Report: Inequalities cause Hunger, Change is needed
- The United States obtained their Reintegration into UNESCE, 5 years after their departure
- Hunger Hotspots and early warning on acute food insecurity
- Together let us shape the global framework on culture and arts education
- Sisterhood on the road: How a coach trip made the Dublin convention a breeze
- Harmonising Menstrual Hygiene with caring for the environment
- Environmental advocacy and impact

[Click here](#) to see all the blogs.

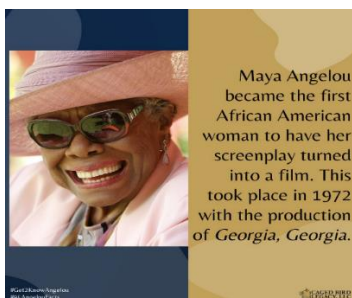
Soroptimist International Voices Webinars and Podcasts



Soroptimist International Voices of webinars commenced in 2020, established to recognised 100 years of our global organization. [Click here](#) to listen to the latest SI webinar from SI President Maureen Maguire on “Empowering Women in a changing world”.

The SI latest Podcast is on Gender and Climate. To listen to this and previous Podcasts [click here](#).

Inspiring Women - Be Inspired



This month we pay tribute to Maya Angelou. Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words leave a lasting impact on the people around us. This much is true in the life of Maya Angelou, who served as a voice



The first freedom' by Hollie Chastain, contemporary US artist who works with collage Brought by WomensArt1, Twitter page link is <https://twitter.com/womensart1>

for minorities throughout her life. She fervently defended the rights of women as well as the youth, despite the backlash she faced in a white-dominated world. Even long after she was gone, Maya Angelou left a lasting legacy that communities still draw strength from. Learn more about her life's work with these Maya Angelou facts. To **learn more** [click here](#).

UN International days and Awareness days - August 2023

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 Aug	World Breastfeeding Week
8 Aug	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
12 Aug	International Youth Day
19 Aug	World Humanitarian Day
21 Aug	International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism
22 Aug	International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief
23 Aug	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (UNESCO)
29 Aug	International Day against Nuclear Tests
30 Aug	International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances
31 Aug	International Day for People of African Descent

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

SI:MK support these local charities:

