



# Save our Sanity

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



August/Sept 2023

MK Soroptimists

Newsletter 53

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## Editorial Welcome

### Soroptimists – Standing up for Women and Girls



**Bumper newsletter this month, reporting on our activities during August and September. Busy Busy.**

**And to start with we delivered to MK Act a full car load of bed linen, towels, glasses, crockery, cutlery and other small kitchen goods and bedding goods for those families moving out of MK Act. We wish them all the very best in their new lives.**



**On the 19 August we had our wonderful annual Fish and Quiz evening at Simpson Church, courtesy of Miss Quiz.**

We had a sellout evening, all raffles won, even our sumup card reader had a raffle ticket put on it and thank goodness Angela won it. We did let her choose another prize don't worry. The Fish and Chips were delicious, would recommend and our tables of quizzers did very well (we were up against some demon quizzers), but it was all good fun.

The evening raised over £500 and we have already donated £400 to MK Act towards their summer activities fund to pay summer activities for the children and families in their care during school holidays. They have an aim to raise £10,000 for next year. Sue Burke, from MK Act, was very grateful for the donation.

And a very big thank you to Miss Quiz for all your hard work in putting on such an entertaining event which we all enjoy and which is a fun and great way to raise money for our charities.



**On the 24 Aug the YMCA held their monthly Community lunch, which this month was sponsored by us and Tesco's.** Well done Mala for arranging.

The residents cooked up lovely meals from Jamaica, India and Africa with one of the residents making home made traditional fudge and ice cream

I certainly did not leave hungry after having at least two portions of curry and tasty mint ice cream and it was lovely to talk to the young chefs.



**I love this picture. Our meeting in August, or rather our summer party, is a time to just relax, have a good chat, eat lovely food and just be with good friends.**

And this year's summer party was all of that. We even dressed in Orange to get some practice in for when we start holding our Orange cafes to raise awareness about the UN campaign to End violence against women.

A big thank you Jean for being such a wonderful host and for everyone bringing such great food.

Vanessa and I visited the Winter Night Shelter (now known as UnityMK) new project in Wolverton. They have purchased a large premises and are planning on providing a comprehensive support service to their clients. This is a big project and will need much funding so watch this space as find out how we can help them in future.

We had a great meeting on 19 Sept and below I have put our dear diary dates up to Christmas to put in your diary because as you can see, we have a lot coming up and I would not want anyone to miss out. And please note the change of date for the November Friendship lunch from 29 November to the 22 November.

I want to make a request please, we do need volunteers for a number of these events to help out but also, we need help in getting numbers to attend, especially the Music event. If you can help and also come along to our events coming up that would be much appreciated.

Dear Diary Dates	
Wed 27 Sept	<b>Friendship Lunch</b> 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Sat 14 October	<b>Heart and Music Concert Event, The Mead Centre, 7.30pm</b> Hope you can come along and bring friends
Monday 16 October	<b>MK Can World Record Event, from 9.00am all day, Campbell Park</b>

	Volunteers are needed to help set up and promote us to the public
Friday 20 October	<b>Violet Awards for Women of Action, 6pm, MK Snap</b> Volunteers are needed
Tues 24 Oct	<b>Branch meeting. 5.30pm</b> , Acorn Training Centre, Westcroft
Wed 25 Oct	<b>Friendship Lunch</b> 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Fri – Sat 3-4 Nov	<b>SIGBI London Conference</b>
Tue 21 Nov	<b>Branch meeting. 5.30pm</b> , Acorn Training Centre, Westcroft
Sat 25 Nov	<b>Christmas Craft Stall at Newport Pagnell Xmas Light Switch on Mead Centre</b>
Wed 29 Nov	<b>Christmas Craft Stall at MK Snap, 1 to 6pm</b>
Wed 22 Nov	<b><u>PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE FOR NOVEMBER FREINDSHIP LUNCH</u></b> <b>Friendship Lunch</b> 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Tues 12 Dec	<b>Branch meeting. 5.30pm</b> , Acorn Training Centre, Westcroft
Thurs 14 Dec	<b>Xmas Meal, The Swan, Newport Pagnell</b> <b>Time to be confirmed</b>
Wed 27 Dec	<b>Friendship Lunch</b> 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA



One such event where we please need help, is MKCan on Monday 16 October. We now have over 600 tins, that is in addition to the 270 we have already passed to MK Snap to help them.

Thank you and all your friends. I am truly humbled by the efforts we have all made and what a difference this will make to families over the next 6 months.

Now comes the next hard part. We have to transport these cans to Campbell Park by 9am on Monday 16 October where we will have 3 hours to set our lineup. We need to have at least 5 people in the morning to help with the setting out of the cans and then we will need a similar number of volunteers in the afternoon, to talk to the public and hand out our leaflets. This will be an opportunity to tell people about ourselves and see if we can encourage new members. Most importantly volunteers are needed in the morning with the setting up please. All volunteers, be they members or friends welcome please. Please let Sue or myself know if you ca help or have a friend who can.

**It is not long now till 16 Days of Activism takes place from 25 November till 10 December. We are working closely with MK City Council, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council on actions we can take this year. Posters and a bookmark are currently in development and will hopefully be ready to send out soon.** We are hoping to send the posters to all Parish Councils, MK Dons and some key organisations. It is planned for the bookmarks to be sent to secondary schools. There will be a vigil at MK Rose on Saturday 25 November. Once we have a complete programme we will circulate the details.

And this month MK Snap very kindly hosted our first Orange Café. Thank you, the learners, for making wonderful cakes decorated in orange and beautiful orange themed flower decorations for the tables. One MK Snap volunteer took away some of the white ribbon cards to share with friends, which is what our Orange café is all about. Now let's see what we can do at the next one.



## Spotlight On: Vanessa Freeman Gwynn

Job Title: Trustee Director

Length of Service: 3 Years 6 Months

Hello, I'm Vanessa and I became a trustee director of Acorn Early Years at the February 2020 Board meeting - just in time for lockdown!

Before that I had worked in a variety of roles for MK Borough Council and then Milton Keynes Council, when we achieved unitary status. At the point I retired, I was the Children's Services Director for MK, which included the establishment of the council's day nurseries; I was of the original opening of Kent's Hill and Westcroft, for example. How old are you, I hear you ask?!!

Whilst my family are originally from London, I married Richard in 1980 and he was born at Woughton-on-the-Green and that's where my home remains - very handy for a stroll past Mulberry Bear with my dog Barley, who some of you have already met.



Barley Bear on his 6th anniversary in July

Having retired from accountability for the statutory sector, it has been a privilege to be able to stay in touch with early years settings, which I regard as crucial to a confident introduction to the world. To do this from a social enterprise perspective, is new for me and I'm very much enjoying it.

As a trustee, it is not my role to manage Acorn services directly, but to be a critical friend to the leadership team and to provide other experience, which helps us make better strategic decisions for all Acorn children - present and future. I have just completed my 3-year term as one of your Safeguarding Trustees.



Vanessa with the then Children's Minister at an opening on Galley Hill

I am inspired by women from all over the world raising the next generations and it is a little-known fact that I am a Soroptimist - an international movement dedicated to the advancement of the interests of women and girls. The local branch currently meets monthly at the Training Centre, Westcroft and I'd be very happy to take you along as my guest - just contact me via the office.



Soroptimist friends of the MK Charter event



And what a lovely article about our Vanessa in the August Acorn Oakleaf staff newsletter for the Acorn Early Years Foundation.

Just highlighting how Soroptimists are a multi-talented group of women out there to help others.



This Summer we had the sad news that Jaff Newton, a long-standing champion of the Cancer Centre, and Soroptimist friend, sadly passed away.

Here is a photo of Jaff with Vanessa and Sue when we were helping in the fundraising for the Cancer Centre and Jaff was a friend of SI MK.

Vanessa, a friend and fellow supporter and volunteer at the Cancer Centre had these kind words to say which perfectly sum up a remarkable lady.

"I first met Jaff via my late husband Richard early in 2016 and I liked her immediately, even though she involved me in ridiculous things like gardening at the old Mac Unit, this was just the start of a fine friendship.

"Jaff was a brave and strong woman and I already miss her encouragement as a continuing member of the Green Team of volunteers she established at the new Cancer Centre - just to help everyone settle in, you understand!

"Thanks, Jaff, for all you did for everyone, you leave us all so many lovely memories."

Jaff will be missed very much by the Cancer Centre. She was a force for good and supported the hospital, the MK Hospital charity and fundraising so passionately and for many years.

To round off this month's rather long but I hope interesting editorial, I leave you to read this lovely thank you letter from our friendship link club in Krakow. We are currently waiting to have a Zoom meeting to share our projects and see how we can work together.



Krakow, 27 August 2023

Dear Soroptimists from SI Milton Keynes Club,

In Ukraine, a war is still going on, although the first dust has now died down and emotions have subsided. Nevertheless, several million Ukrainians have had to flee their country and seek refuge elsewhere. Some three million of them have found refuge in Poland and in Krakow too. They were mainly women and children.

From the very first moments, the First SI Krakow Club helped as best it could. We received tremendous support from sisters from other clubs in Europe and around the world. This help is constantly needed.

Therefore, on behalf of the First Krakow SI Club, we would like to express our immense gratitude for the donation of 1 957,21 PLN for the refugees from Ukraine living in Krakow. We have allocated this money partly for half-schools for Ukrainian children during the summer holidays and partly for the social activation of elderly people who are already outside the labour market. We would like to ensure that not a single zloty/euro/pound is wasted. These elderly people came with their children and grandchildren and have nowhere to return to.

We are extremely grateful for this help which will help to activate the Ukrainians living in Krakow and bring them at least a little bit back to "normality".

Wishing you all the best,

On behalf of the First SI Krakow Club,

Ewa Fabiszewicz  
President

Katarzyna Brykowicz  
Vice-president

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PIERWSZY KRAKOWSKI KLUB SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

President: Ewa Fabiszewicz: [efabiszewicz@op.pl](mailto:efabiszewicz@op.pl)

[www.soroptimist.krakow.pl](http://www.soroptimist.krakow.pl) <https://www.facebook.com/soroptimist.krakow>

Happy reading everyone.

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

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## 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, 7.30pm.

I hope you can all come along and bring friends along as we know are charities are in urgent needs of funds.

You have been sent copies of the poster and tickets which I hope you have been able to share with your friends. It should be a enjoyable evening and we will have refreshments, a raffle and craft stall table too for those early xmas presents.

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## New Youth Mayor receives her chain of office



This month, Milton Keynes' first Youth Mayor, Chloe D'Souza was presented with a chain of office by Mayor of Milton Keynes Mick Legg.

Chloe's role will be to raise the profile and voice of young people across the city.

Milton Keynes Youth Council now has a dedicated page on MKCC website. [Click](#) here to learn more.

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## Leah Williamson to speak at UN about Syrian refugees



Leah Williamson is the first England women's national team player to take the stage at the UN. Whilst injured she was able to visit a Save the Children and Arsenal Foundation project in Za'atari in Syria and at the UN she will be speaking of the up hill struggle in sport girls have for battling against gender inequality.

To read the full guardian article [click here](#). (picture The Guardian)

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## Alex Scott becomes a Domestic Abuse Ambassador for the Charity Refuge



Former England footballer and television presenter Alex Scott has vowed to use her platform to raise awareness of domestic abuse and help victims and survivors as she became a charity ambassador.

Scott has previously spoken about the domestic abuse she suffered during her childhood, describing her father's violent behaviour towards her and her mother. To read the full independent article [click here](#).

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## Homeless families forced to live in tents and hotels as temporary accommodation runs out



IN an ITV investigation it was reported that 97% of councils and 85% of English councils report an increase in the number of homeless families needing support

ITV news has previously reported, local authorities are increasingly turning to the private rented sector to try and house low-income households, but the Homelessness Monitor finds record-high rental prices and fierce competition for

properties is making it near impossible to house people experiencing homelessness in some areas of the country. 97% of local authorities say they have struggled to source private rentals over the past year. [Click here](#) to read the full report. (ITV Images)

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## Women's World Cup: 3 events that show the gap between men and women's football



The Women's World Cup was one of record attendances, huge global audiences and teams breaking new ground. But it was also one marred by incidents which detracted from momentous achievements on the pitch and which illustrate the gap between the men's and women's game.

When Spain's football team stepped on to the podium to collect their trophy after winning the Women's World Cup, adoring crowds cheered their historic achievement. Hours later, a viral video clip of Spanish federation chief Luis Rubiales kissing player Jenni Hermoso on the lips became a global talking point. [Click here](#) to read the full article. (BBC Images)

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## In Ukraine, activists step up to support conflict related sexual violence survivors



On the 19 June, the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Un reports on the women and women led organisations at the front lines in Ukraine to support survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable.

[Click here](#) to read the full UN article.

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## Newport Pagnell's Afghan refugees thank friendly community



A group of Afghan refugees who spent two years living in a hotel have thanked the friendly community that welcomed them.

They fled Afghanistan in August 2021 and arrived in Newport Pagnell where a group of volunteers offered them support and friendship. To say thank you they held an exhibition at the Mead Centre, Newport Pagnell to share their story.

[Click here](#) to read the BBC article. (picture BBC).

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## AI generated naked child images shock Spanish town of Almendralejo



A sleepy town in southern Spain is in shock after it emerged that AI-generated naked images of young local girls had been circulating on social media without their knowledge.

The pictures were created using photos of the targeted girls fully clothed, many of them taken from their own social media accounts.

[Click here](#) to read the BBC article. (picture BBC).

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## Honour-based abuse: Govt rejects calls for a legal definition



The Government has rejected calls for a legal definition of honour-based abuse. The Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) recommended the definition in its report into hour-based abuse in July.

The Government recently responded by saying it already has a working definition used by the Home Office and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

[Click here](#) to read the BBC article. (picture BBC).

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## Stalking - a person's story of their experience is a pattern of repeated, unwanted and fixated behaviour



Stalking is a pattern of repeated, unwanted and fixated behaviour that causes you to feel alarm and distress.

Stalking can happen over a number of years, this is the story told by a victim of her experience which started through social media.

[Click here](#) to read the Guardian article. (picture Guardian)..

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## Many teens feel unsafe and anxious, but are positive about the future



Many teenage girls say they experience sexual harassment in their day to day lives and do not feel safe on the street alone.

A survey of 2,000 young people aged 13-18, more than a quarter of girls (27%) said they experienced sexual harassment in some form

The survey also asked teens about body image, anxiety, and vaping, and reveals concerns about n line safety.

[Click here](#) to read the BBC article (picture is BBC).

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## Online Safety Bill will have failed if harmful content not stopped - Ian Russell



A new law aimed at policing the internet will fail if it does not stop harmful content, online safety campaigner Ian Russell has said.

Mr Russell said the test of the Online Safety Bill will be whether it prevents the kind of images his daughter Molly saw before she took her own life.

[Click here](#) to read the BBC article (picture is Russell family).

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## Easyfundraising - sign up before end of Sept



Help Milton Keynes Soroptimists WIN a £500 donation prize in the #easyfundraising Big September Sign-up giveaway! Sign up to support them on easyfundraising and not only will you raise FREE donations for them with your everyday shopping, but it will count as an entry into the giveaway. Sign up today:

[Click here to sign up](#)

Please share with your friends

There are thousands of brands to choose, from travel agencies, rail tickets, car insurance, food shopping to your favourite clothes store

[Click here](#) to join and raise funds without donating.



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## International Day of Peace - 21 Sept 2023



Each year the International Day of Peace (IDP) is observed around the world on 21 September.

This year's theme is Actions for Peace: Our Ambition for the #Global Goals. It is a call to action that recognises our individual and collective responsibility to foster peace.

[Click here](#) to read the SIGBI Blog article.

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## SI Global Voice - September Newsletter is now out



The September 2023 issue of Global Voice is now available.

This issue contains a round up of the Dublin 2023 Convention, details of the webinar explaining SI's brand transformation, news on International Literacy Day, SI Youth Forum.

It also includes the Soroptimist International Foundation, launched at the Dublin Conference, which replaces the President's Appeal. [Click here](#) to learn more about the new SI Foundation, which is a Charitable Trust.

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

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## SIGBI Programme webinar for ALL members



Programme Director Lindsay Green invites us to join her via Zoom on 28 October 1 till 4pm.

**Registration is via The Hub. Just go to Events/List Events and click on Programme Webinar.**

**Here about our projects, celebrate our impact, take away ideas for your club.**

The programme includes projects with:

- Antenatal under 5's
  - Children aged 12 - university age
  - Older Women
  - Adult Women
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## Voices for Women: Latest newsletter



[Click here](#) to read the latest mid month newsletter. Articles include:

A new report on the Census and Feminism

Come and Celebrate with Afghan women on 9 September

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## SIGBI latest News/blogs



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

Includes:

- International Day of Peace
- Charter of new club, SI Srinagar (Kashmir), India
- SI Quadrennial Report 2020-2023

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

## Soroptimist International Blogs - read the latest



Read the latest Soroptimist International Blogs including:

- In celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Congo
- President Elect Siew Yong Gnanalingham's speech
- The First ever Global Gender Equality Conference in Africa
- Share your Dublin Convention Experience: take the survey
- SI 2023 Dublin – After Movie

- International Literacy Day 2023  
**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

"The idea that a wife by marriage consents in advance to her husband having sexual intercourse with her, whatever her state of health or however proper her objections... is no longer acceptable. It can never have been other than a fiction, and fiction is a poor basis for the criminal law.... It seems to us that where the common law rule no longer even remotely represents what is the true position of a wife in present day society, the duty of the court is to take steps to alter the rule."

House of Lords ruling, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2003



This month we pay tribute to appellant known only as "R" who in 1991 won a rape case against her husband for rape of his wife.

Previously it had been argued that a wife effectively gave her consent for life, upon marriage.

Brought by OnThisDayShe Twitter page link  
<https://twitter.com/OnThisDayShe>

Hungarian artist Agnes Herczeg started creating intricate, lace artworks from 2013. To read more about her **click here**

Brought by WomensArt1, Twitter page link is  
<https://twitter.com/womensart1>

## UN International days and Awareness days - October 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 Oct	<a href="#">International Day of Older Persons</a>
2 Oct	<a href="#">World Habitat Day</a>
2 Oct	<a href="#">International Day of Non Violence</a>

4-10 Oct	<a href="#">World Space Week</a>
5 Oct	<a href="#">World Teachers' Day (UNESCO)</a>
7 Oct	<a href="#">World Cotton Day</a>
9 Oct	<a href="#">World Post Day</a>
10 Oct	<b>World Mental Health Day (WHO)</b>
11 Oct	<b>International Day of the Girl Child</b>
13 Oct	<a href="#">International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction</a>
14 Oct	<a href="#">World Migratory Bird Day (UNEP)</a>
15 Oct	<b>International Day of Rural Women</b>
16 Oct	<a href="#">World Food Day (FAO)</a>
17 Oct	<a href="#">International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</a>
24-31 Oct	<a href="#">Global Media and Information Literacy week</a>
24-30 Oct	<a href="#">Disarmament week</a>
24 Oct	<a href="#">United Nations Day</a>
24 Oct	<a href="#">World Development Information Day</a>
27 Oct	<a href="#">World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (UNESCO)</a>
29 Oct	<a href="#">International Day of Care and Support</a>
31 Oct	<a href="#">World Cities Day</a>

## 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:

