



Save our Sanity

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Community Foundation



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MK Soroptimists

Newsletter 58

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Editorial Welcome

Soroptimists – Standing up for Women and Girls



We started February off meeting the MP for North Milton Keynes, Ben Everitt, to discuss the recommendations from the Soroptimist Specialist Domestic Abuse Courts (SDAC) report, published last year.

Ben agreed to submit a written question on our behalf to the Ministry of Justice and we wait to hear the response back. Ben was very interested in the work we are doing on the Orange the World campaign and our latest projects, our Orange the World Helps at Hand posters and White Ribbon. We hope we can work with him on this in future.



A big thank you must go to everyone who has collected and dropped off toiletries to our collection points at MK Snap, The Mead Centre in Newport Pagnell, Great Linford Parish Council offices and the Red House Surgery in Bletchley. As you can see, at the beginning of February, we spent quite an afternoon sorting out the large amount donated and these have already been gratefully received by YMCA MK, Unity MK and MK Act for their clients. Please do thank your friends but do keep them coming as we know they are much needed.



I hope everyone enjoyed our branch meeting at Parks Trust listening to Victoria Miles, CEO of Parks Trust and the work they do to manage the parks, woodland and open spaces of Milton Keynes.

It was interesting to learn about the work they are now undertaking as a result of a Leeds University Study to look at how they can make the parks and open spaces more accessible and safer for women to feel safe to use. We look forward to hearing more about this work. It was lovely to welcome two guests, and we hope new members in Scottie and Vivian.



This month we held our first Orange Café at MK College in Bletchley.

We are hoping to run another Orange Café there in September with the hope of being able to make this a regular 2 yearly venue for us to raise awareness amongst the students.

It was lovely to have Vivian, who came to our branch meeting come along to see what we are doing. Vivian comes from Libya and has worked with the UN on a number of projects. She is quite interested in the work Soroptimists do and is hoping to learn from us to take back ideas for when she returns to Libya.

Our next Orange Cafés are on Tuesday 26 March and 30 April, 10am to 2pm at Dobbies, Bletchley. If you can come along for an hour or two that would be much appreciated. We will certainly need some more volunteers for the April date please.



24 February is the day the Ukraine War started. It is now into its 3rd year.

Sue and I were privileged to represent Soroptimist Miltyon Keynes at this event and to see how the strong women and children are being supported and are supporting each other.



Over 8 million Ukrainian women and girls will need humanitarian help in 2024 and so what ever help we can give is important.

Thank you, Barbara and her friends, for donating some much-needed books. Barbara and Mala delivered these educational books to the Ukrainian children at their Summerfield School and said they were most grateful.



Friday 8 March is International Women's Day. At our planning day, we made the #InspireInclusion pose, which is the UK International Women's Day theme for 2024.

When we inspire others to understand and value women's inclusion, we forge a better world. And when women themselves are inspired to be included, there's a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment.

Collectively, let's forge a more inclusive world for women.
Will you inspire inclusion?

The United Nations International Women’s Day 2024 theme is “Invest in Women: Accelerate progress”. Achieving gender equality and women’s well-being in all aspects of life is more crucial than ever if we want to create prosperous economies and a healthy planet. However, we are facing a key challenge: the alarming \$360 billion annual deficit in gender-equality measures by 2030. Here are five key areas needing joint action:

- **Investing in women, a human rights issue:** Time is running out. Gender equality is the greatest human rights challenge, benefiting everyone (**Sustainable Development Goal 5 SDG 5**):
- **Ending poverty (SDG 1):** Due to Covid pandemic and conflicts, 75 million more people have fallen into severe poverty since 2020. Immediate action is crucial to prevent over 342 million women and girls living in poverty:
- **Implementing gender responsive financing:** Conflicts and rising prices may lead 75% of countries to cut public spending by 2025, negatively impacting women and girls and their essential services;
- **Shifting to a green economy and care society (SDG’s 3,10, 12, 13, 14, 15):** The current economic system disproportionately affects women. Advocates propose a shift to a green economy and care society to amplify women’s voices:
- **Supporting feminist change-makers (SDG 5):** Despite leading efforts feminist organisations receive only 0.13% of official development assistance.

This **International Women’s Day**, and every day let’s unite to transform challenges into opportunities and shape a better future for all!

Women’s Day is every day, remember to always celebrate women and girls every day, inspire everyday and support and give friendship every day.

I hope you all enjoy March and will look forward to the next edition of our newsletter which will include fabulous pictures, thank you Mala our photographer, from a great Afternoon Tea event. If anyone has any interesting articles they think the rest of us would like to learn about please send to me or if you want write an article for the newsletter, that would be most welcome.

Happy Women’s Day every day

As always, happy reading everyone.

Soroptimists standing up for Women and Girls Sue Key, Chair

Here are the next few months Dear Diary dates.

Dear Diary Dates	
Wed 6 March	International Womens Day Afternoon Tea and Cake 3.30pm till 5.30pm at MK Snap, 20 Bourton Low, Walton, MK
Sat 16 March	Soroptimist International London and Chiltern Regional meeting International Women’s Day celebration at Knebworth House Details and how to book click here
Tue 19 March	Branch meeting. 5.30pm, Westcroft Morrison Community Room (back of Café), Westcroft
Tues 26 March	Orange Café, 10 till 2.00pm, Dobbies, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley
Wed 27 March	Friendship Lunch 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Tue 16 April	Branch meeting. 5.30pm, Westcroft Morrison Community Room (back of Café), Westcroft
Tues 30 April	Orange Café, 10 till 2.00pm, Dobbies, Fenny Stratford, Bletchley
Wed 24 April	Friendship Lunch 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Tue 21 May	AGM meeting. 5.30pm, Westcroft Morrison Community Room (back of Café), Westcroft
Wed 29 May	Friendship Lunch

	12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
	2024 Regional and SIGBI Conference Dates
Sat 16 March	SILC Int Women's Day Celebration 12-4.30pm Knebworth House. Details and how to book click here
June	SILC Region Conference TBC
19 Oct	SILC Region Conference AGM/Conference. 10am to 1pm on Zoom. Details to be confirmed
1-3 Nov	SIGBI Conference Edinburgh Details to be confirmed

SIGBI Women Standing up for Women to Mitigate Poverty

Soroptimist International
Global, National & Local

Women Standing Up For Women to Mitigate Poverty

Lindsay Green SIGBI Programme Director and her Team invite you to join them as they travel around the Globe

Virtual Event Thursday 14th March 2024 at 16.30 hrs GMT (12.30 ET)

Come along and hear about the varied projects and actions that Soroptimist members have made across our Federation and globally to address the needs of women and girls to have a better life free from the effects of Poverty

Opening Address Ruth Healey President SIGBI

Education Projects
Presented by Meenakshi Ray and Debra Joseph

Health Initiatives
Presented by Eleanor Evans and Ayushi Kundu

Food Poverty Alleviation
Presented by Shukla Chattopadhyay and Anitha Rajarajan

The link to attend the event is
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/187970591216?pwd=YYVakZ3w6S42bkUkR0EvQxY58566L1.1>

STANDING UP for Women and Girls

SIGBI is holding a virtual event, parallel to the CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) event, which will be on Thursday 14 March at 4.30pm via Zoom.

The virtual event is called “Women Standing up for Women to mitigate Poverty”.

There is no need to register. Simply [click here](#) and just before the meeting is due to start.

The pioneering women ending all-male leadership of the land



In one Kenyan reserve, women are taking up roles that give them a say in community life and protecting the land they depend on – inspiring a new generation to follow in their footsteps.

Maasai societies are highly patriarchal, and governance of the conservancies has typically fallen to men. Now however, a new generation of women are taking up leadership roles and guiding jobs, and Ripoi is one of the few conservancies in the greater Mara ecosystem where women hold

administrative rights, making decisions on cattle grazing zones and financial matters and discussing employment opportunities, including whether jobs go to women. [Click here](#) to read the full Guardian article.

Talking therapy may help menopause mood



Mindfulness, group and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) could effectively treat menopause symptoms such as low mood and anxiety, analysis suggests.

The University College of London research, examined 30 studies involving 3,500 women in 14 countries. The UCL researchers say “empowering women” to develop positive thinking would probably have benefits beyond those of HRT, with CBT the most cost-effective as results can be achieved in a shorter timeframe. [Click here](#) to read the full BBC article (picture – Getty Image).

Firms must help menopausal workers, or face being sued



Menopausal symptoms can be considered a disability and employers face being sued if they do not make “reasonable adjustments” a watchdog has said.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued the guidance to clarify the legal obligations to workers going through the menopause. Failing to make “reasonable adjustments” amounts to disability discrimination under

the Equality Act 2010 if the symptoms have a long term and substantial impact on a woman’s ability to carry out their usual day to day activities, the EHRC said. [Click here](#) to read the full BBC article (picture – Getty Image).

Health emergency: 15% of UK households went hungry last month



Millions of people, including one in five families, have gone hungry or skipped meals in recent weeks because they could not regularly afford to buy groceries, according to new food insecurity data.

According to the Food Foundation tracker, 15% of UK households – equivalent to approx. 8 million adults and 3 million children experienced food insecurity in January, as high food prices continued to hit the pockets of low-income families. To read the full Guardian article [click here](#). (picture Yui Mok/PA Images)

Labour to help schools develop influencers to combat Tate misogyny



Labour would help schools to train young male influencers who can counter the negative impact of people like Andrew Tate, the shadow education secretary has said. This February, the Labour party announced plans to help schools develop young male mentors and to teach pupils how to question the material they see on social media from people like Tate. Young male mentors within schools would be a powerful counterbalance to some of the negativity that young men might

be exposed to online. Under the proposals Labour would send regional improvement teams into schools to train staff on introducing the peer-to-peer mentoring programme. To read the full Guardian article [click here](#). (picture Caiaimage/Chris Ryan/Getty Images)

Drink spiking: “Men who spiked my drink brazen” says presenter Kate McCann



Journalist and presenter Kate McCann has revealed that she has been the victim of drink spiking while at a bar.

The Times Radio political editor said her drink was spiked by a “group of men so brazen they didn’t care who saw”. She had thought she would be okay as she had one sip but sadly it was enough. It was awful but she said she was lucky.

Spiking is the action of putting a drug into someone’s drink, or into their body through another method, without her consent. Between May 2022 and April 2023, the first year drink spiking data was collected, police received 6,732 reports of spiking, including 957 reports of needle spiking, according to figures from the National Police Chiefs Council. To read the full BBC article [click here](#). (picture PA Media)

Two-thirds of women get harassed while running



A new study by the University of Manchester says more than two-thirds of women experience harassment while running. Only 5% of cases are reported as victims say it has become an “everyday occurrence”.

And the study showed this harassment was made by varying age groups. To read the full Guardian article [click here](#). (Peathegee Inc/Getty/Tetra images)

Mel B revealed she underwent painful brain electric therapy to beat suicidal thoughts after ending abusive marriage



The star says the electro cranial magnetic therapy “renewed, rewired and shocked” the neurons in her brain that had been battered after ten years in a physically, emotionally and financially abusive marriage. She described how the treatment was targeted at specific points of the brain that deal with “trauma, emotions and depression”. To read the full Sun article [click here](#). (picture Oliver West)

Mel B was so broke she was shopping at Lidl and sleeping in same bed as her kids after first leaving her abusive marriage



Mel B revealed a year her divorce she returned to Leeds in 2019, but she was so drained of cash, she had to move in with her mum at her bungalow with her 3 children. When she walked out of her 10 year marriage in 2017 she had just £700 in her bank account.

Mel B is a Domestic Abuse ambassador for Women’s Aid and now spends a lot of time speaking to abuse survivors and she wants to show abuse, including financial abuse, can happen to anyone, and you can build yourself back up.

[Click here](#) to read the full Sun article. (Oliver West Image)

UK Charities warn of devastating council cuts to women’s services



Those dealing with violence against women most at risk as local authorities try to balance budgets, experts say.

Domestic Abuse charities and centres dealing with sexual violence say council budget cuts will have a devastating impact on support for women, warning that entire services will have to close as local authorities strip back to basics. [Click here](#) to read the full Guardian (pictures – kieferpix/Getty/istockphoto Images)

Humanists UK - latest newsletter



[Click here](#) to read the latest Humanist newsletter with articles including:

- New UK helping dedicated for people who have left high control religions and cults
- UN – 20 Humanist proposals for a more equal society
- Rishi Sunak promises to allow time for assisted dying bill

To read the newsletter, [Click here](#)

MK: City Council offers residents household items to borrow



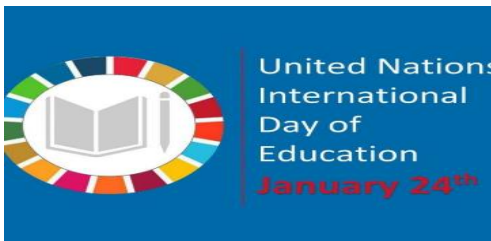
Milton Keynes City Council has launched a “Library of Things” scheme to allow people to borrow household items for free.

DIY tools, baking kits and vacuums were among the items available from the project based at the Frank Moran Centre in Bletchley.

The Council has worked alongside Foodbank Xtra and local charity providers to purchase a limited number of items that would be available to borrow.

The “Library of Things” is a great option for people to borrow, mend and make do and will help to ease some of the financial pressure felt by vulnerable residents impacted by the cost of living crisis. [Click here](#) to read the BBC article. (picture BBC Images).

SIGBI latest News/blogs



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

- International Day of Education – 24 January
 - World Braille Day – 4 January
 - Human Rights Day – 10 December
-

Soroptimist International News and Blogs - read the latest



Read the latest Soroptimist International News articles including:

- SI at the 15th UNESCO International Forum
- International Day of Education 2024: Stories of Challenge and Triumph
- Visible and Vocal: Celebrating Young Orators
- SU UN Representative Recruitment: Geneva

[Click here](#) to see all the Soroptimist International blogs, including:

- SI at the 15th UNESCO International Forum
 - Displacement through a Gender Lens: Progress, Challenges and advancing Partnerships
 - All roads lead to Nairobi, Kenya
 - Youth Voices Resonate: Global Youth Environment Assembly 2024
-

Soroptimist International Voices Webinars and Podcasts



[Click here](#) to listen to the latest SI Voices webinar from the SI Youth Forum, which was set up in 2023 as a way for younger Soroptimists to meet and engage. This webinar is “Green Horizons” looking at how climate change is impacting on your work and advocacy and what are your adaptation or migration strategies.

The SI also publish Podcasts. To listen to these Podcasts [click here](#).

Inspiring Women - Be Inspired



Helen Keller 1880 - 1968 (photo from Wikipedia)

Having lost her sight and hearing at a young age, Helen Keller defied expectations to achieve a bachelor's degree and inspired generations as an activist for disability rights. Keller refused to live life as a typical invalid. In her own words: "Life is either a great adventure or nothing". To learn more [click here](#).



Celebration of Peach by extraordinary painter Betty Acquah

Born in 1965, in Cape Coast, Betty Acquah is one of the most exciting artists emerging from a diverse and vibrant contemporary African arts scene in Ghana. Producing work which combines a pulsating style and delightful colour palette, with thought provoking themes on social issues, requires extraordinary talent and Acquah is simply joyously gifted.

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

UN International days and Awareness days - March 2024

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 March	World Seagrass Day	
1 March	Zero Discrimination Day (UNAIDS)	
3 March	World Wildlife Day	
5 March	International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness	
8 March	International Women's Day	
10 March	International Day of Women Judges	
15 March	International Day to Combat Islamophobia	
20 March	International Day of Happiness	French Language Day
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	
21 March	World Poetry Day (UNESCO)	
21 March	International Day of Nowruz	
21 March	World Down Syndrome Day	
21 March	International Day of Forest	
22 March	World Water Day	
23 March	World Meteorological Day (WMO)	
24 March	World Tuberculosis Day (WHO)	
24 March	International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims	
25 March	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	

25 March	International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members
30 March	International Day of Zero Waste

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

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SI:MK support these local charities:

