



Save our Sanity

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



30 November 2024

MK Soroptimists

Newsletter 64

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Editorial Welcome

Standing up for Women and Girls - 16 Days of Activism #Prevention and #ItStartswithMen

I hope you will find this bumper issue covering the last couple of months enjoyable. The year has flown by and we have all been busy and are going to get even busier with the Festive season fast coming upon us so let me take this opportunity to just say. Don't forget to have some time out for yourselves. This festive season can be stressful with all the preparation, and can also be difficult for some who remember loved ones not here to celebrate it. So be kind to yourselves and each other, pace yourselves and look after yourselves. And as soroptimists it goes without saying do enjoy yourselves.



A quick reminder that from Mid-October to Mid-January MK Act is one of three community groups bidding for a cash boost from the Tesco Stronger Starts scheme. Stronger Starts provides grant awards of up to £1,500 to local community projects, with a particular focus on children and young people.

So don't forget every time you visit Tesco's, or if not, please try to visit a Tesco's to make a purchase. And when you do, pick up a handful of the blue tokens and cast a vote against MK Act. MK Act very much appreciate your support and help with this.



Another request for this time of year, when you receive Xmas cards through the post. Please save the stamps.

In October, we achieved another 90 Challenge, or to be more accurate 4 x 90 challenge. 360 grams of used stamps were collected from members and friends and donated between the "Against Breast Cancer" charity and the "Macmillan Charity". I have another bag of stamps up to 200 grams but if you can all save the stamps you receive and ask your friends then in the new year, we should be able to make another donation to help the vital research and much needed services both these charities carry out to benefit women's health.

Now a little catch up of what we have been up to during October and November to and the run up to Xmas



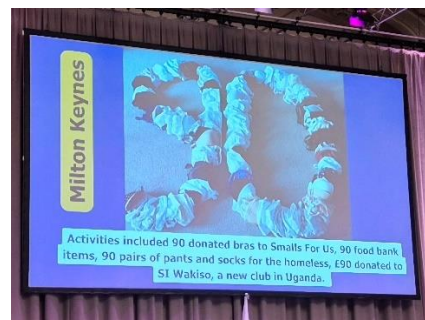
In October we donated to MK Act a sister bear to our Orange Bear, kindly made by Scottie for them to use on their stall when promoting their services. Another black sack of clothes and 50 velvet coat hangers were donated to Works For Us in October to help them better store and display the works clothes they provide to people to help them when they go for job interviews. And here is our Orange Bear who is now appearing at our monthly Orange the World café at Dobbies to help us raise awareness of the issues of violence against women and girls.



It was a delight to sponsor the YMCA Community Lunch this October and we helped serve out the delicious soup. October was the month for YMCA MK to launch their 2nd Soupfest booklet and it's made me realise this could be another challenge. We provided a soup recipe for their first edition and I think it's time to provide another, so thinking hats on girls and who can come up with a tasty soup we can send to YMCA MK in January for their next edition. And it was lovely to be introduced to Anna Chestnut from the Co-op, who very kindly provided some Co-op goodies we were able to make into hampers to use on our raffle tables for both the Ukraine event on 9 Nov and our raffle table at the Music event. Thank you, Anna and the Co-op, your donations helped us, raise much needed funds for our charities.



But it wasn't all work, we did get to enjoy ourselves. It was lovely to have an evening out at the theatre to enjoy the wonderful Chicago musical first performed back in 1975 and based on a 1926 play. Great music and very toe tapping



What a way to kickstart November off, but with a jolly good SIGBI Conference in Edinburgh. As you can see, we always like to let everyone know that the Milton Keynes contingent is in the room. President Ruth Healey set clubs the “90 Challenge” to celebrate our Federations 90th birthday and our projects got mentioned on the big screen and were included in the regional booklet. You can see Lynne and myself standing next to the banner illustrating what the London and Chiltern Region contributed. It was inspiring to see the variety and number of clubs who had found many different ways to celebrate and help others, one club even came up with the idea of trying out 90 different cocktails. Now why didn’t we think of that!!

We met the guest speaker Baroness Benjamin, who got a Welsh hug from Lynne. She was very inspirational, talking about catching our children early and giving them confidence, love and support. Her 4 C’s for us were:

Consideration – empathy and understanding of others

Contentment – have a happy heart, don’t be jealous, don’t be tempted, don’t be greedy

Confidence – like yourself, believe in yourself, be mindful of others and give love unconditional

Courage – stand up for truth, for justice, act with integrity, morality, be strong

It was a very interesting conference, with input from European clubs and the mentoring they carry out and we learned about the Steve Sinnott Foundation and the educational work they carry out to deliver projects that progress the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 - ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. There was a section where we heard about what projects/works other clubs undertake, which was really inspiring. As a result of hearing about the work of one club with its local refuge and the wonderful informative booklet they put together to help victims, we have now shared this with MK Act. To read more about the Conference [click here](#) to visit our London and Chiltern regional pages.

And a couple of us did sneak off to go and say hello to the new Paddington Statue in Edinburgh. Everyone was queuing up and we were all taking photos for each other. Paddington helps you create friends and brings a smile to everyone.



When we got back from Edinburgh one of the first projects, we completed was the delivery of 50 bags of toiletries to Bridge Academy. They contacted us because they had heard about our sanitary and toiletries

donations to our charities and asked if we could help them. They work with many young people who don't have access to basic hygiene supplies and whilst the academy has access to sanitary packs, they often need more basic items like toothbrushes, deodorant, shower gel etc to help those children taken into care or when a family is being moved. Members made donations and we were able to drop these bags off to the academy in the first week of November.



MK Act, YMCA and Unity MK each received a box of toiletries this month.

Can I ask if you do receive any toiletries over the Christmas period that you don't need, please donate them to us for our charities or to be raffled, the donations will get to our charities. in one format or other. And ask your friends if they have any unused toiletries they don't want and are happy to donate.

While we were dropping off the toiletries to Unity MK we got to meet Yvonne the new Welfare Manager and tell her all about ourselves and we look forward to working with her to help in whatever capacity we can.



On the 9 November the Ukraine Appeal held a Fundraising Concert with Musica Charity Choir to support the work of its Sunshine school providign additional educational support to the Ukrainian children and we agreed to run the raffle table and provide the raffle prizes. It was an amazing evening and thank you to the Co-op fo their raffle donations and to Jutta Evans for her painting donaton. We raised over £268 on the night for the Ukraine Charity. One of our best ever raffle contributions. And it was lovely to chat to both the Kurshida Mirza, High Sheriff and our Mayor, Cllr Marie Bradburn at the event. We were also treated to some beautiful food made by one of the Ukraininan women, the food was out of this world.



Soroptimists Milton Keynes attended the 11 November Remembrance wreath laying ceremony at Milton Keynes Rose and we feel this is an important annual event for us..

This Remembrance day, and every day for those women who served and died in war and those women killed in conflicts we shall not forget you, we will always remember.

Thank you to the learners at MK SNAP (Special Needs

Advancement Project) for the beautiful biodegradable wreath they made for us again. They have set a trend. This year the High Sheriff had a biodegradable wreath too.



November is the month for Xmas Fayres, with our first one taking place on 23 November at MK Snap and our second at the Mead Centre on 30 November in Newport Pagnell for the light switch on.

Thank you everyone who helped out and all our crafters for making the

beautiful items for sale. We raised £200 over the 2 events.



UNITE!

Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls! #No Excuse

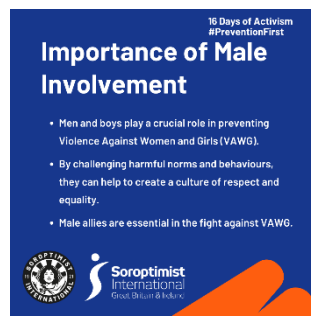
Violence against women and girls remains one of the most prevalent and pervasive human rights violations in the world. Globally, an estimated 736 million women — almost one in three — have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both, at least once in their life. This scourge has intensified in different settings, including the workplace and online spaces, and has been exacerbated by post-pandemic effects, conflicts, and climate change.

The solution lies in robust responses, including investment in prevention. However, alarmingly, data on how much nations are committing to counteract violence against women and girls remains glaringly sparse.

For instance, just 5% of government aid is focused on tackling violence against women and girls, and less than 0.2% is directed to its prevention.

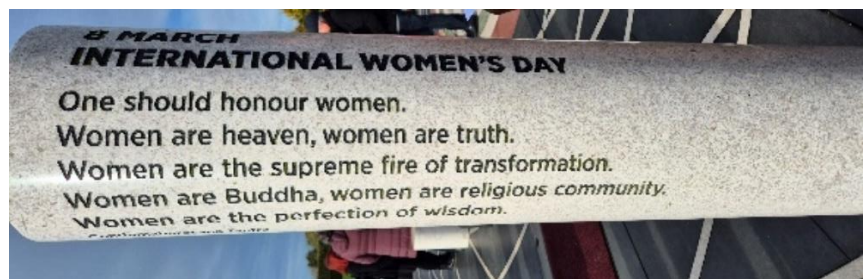
We need more investment in women's organizations, better legislation, prosecution of perpetrators, more services for survivors, and training for law enforcement officials.

November is important to Soroptimists because 16 Days of Activism, also known as the UN's Orange the World Campaign starts on 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls and concludes on 10 December, Human Rights Day. Soroptimists have a voice on the UN and work to support, raise awareness and take action around this issue - empowering communities with the knowledge needed to help prevent violence before it starts. SIGIB's social media theme this year was #PreventionFirst highlighting strategies and key messages to work towards prevention. As in previous year's we have used our social media platforms to raise awareness through promoting the SIGIB #PreventionFirst social media campaign and "Voices for Women", MK Act and the MK Fawcett society shared our social media posts to widen the audience here in Milton Keynes.



This year, again, we supported two important events. On Monday 25 November, during the day we set up our Orange the World stall at Milton Keynes City Council offices at an event to raise awareness with staff about the campaign, the issue of violence against women and to highlight the services that are available here. We were there alongside other agencies including Thames Valley Police, MK Act and SASSMK and we even got the Mayor to give our Orange Ber a hug and wear orange show laces or the rest of the day. We then took part in the Annual Vigil, we helped to organise. The event started at MK Gallery and this year's speakers were Men, encouraging

them to recognise the issues and help to change attitudes and it included one speaker giving a personal account of knowing someone in an abusive relationship and the difficulties of how to help. It was great to see the sky room full, there were over 100 people there wanting to know more and they walked down to MK Rose and the International Women's Day Column for a moments contemplation and to make a pledge to do what we can. The 90 Orange hearts we made were handed out to people as they came into the gallery and again, we set up our stall to highlight the issues and were able to raise £35 in donations for MK Act. And we must thank Hotel LaTour, who were lit up in Orange. The colour orange is used to symbolise a brighter future, free from violence against women and girls. Soroptimists around the world want to get more buildings lit up Orange to raise awareness so thank you Hotel LaTour and we hope you will light up again in orange next year.



And the next day we set up as usual our Orange Café stall at Dobbies, with a few changes. Lynne has rescued 3 beautifully handmade orange the world wreaths, made by SI Glamorgan and made of orange rosettes with 2 purple rosettes on each. The purple rosettes signify the number of women killed per week. We hope to use them in future to help get our message across. We were also able to hand over a £45 donation to MK Act, this is money people have donated at the stall since we have started our Orange Café at Dobbies.

SPOT THE SIGNS of MODERN SLAVERY

Are you aware of someone who is a victim of Modern Slavery?

Do they appear to:

- Working against their will or being controlled?
- Subject to violence or threats?
- Distrustful of authorities?
- Unable to communicate freely with others?
- Unsure of where they are?

Do they appear to:

- Have little or no time off?
- Live in overcrowded accommodation?
- Have bruises or unexplained injuries?
- Be under control at work and home?
- Have no access to their earnings?

In emergency, call 999
Modern Slavery Helpline: 0800 0121 700
(operated by UNICEF UK's confidential)

SPOT THE SIGNS of exploitation by COUNTY LINES

County Lines gangs are using violence and intimidation to recruit drug networks.

County Lines refers to the use of a single telephone number to order illegal drugs.

SIGNS

- Increase in visitors to premises
- Regularly changing residents or residents missing for long periods
- Unexplained new possessions
- Young people seen with unknown adults
- Increase in anti-social behaviour and unexplained injuries

SPEAK UP NOW!
Call Crimestoppers 0800 555111

Be SMART STAY SAFE ONLINE

Stay safe online – don't share personal details or any images

Meet up only with people you know in real life

Accept friend requests only if you know the person in real life

Report anything that makes you feel uncomfortable

Trust only people you know in real life

DON'T SAY OR DO ANYTHING THAT YOU WOULDN'T DO IN REAL LIFE.

TRAVEL SAFELY on PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts

On a bus, sit near the driver; on a train, sit in view of CCTV camera

Tell someone where/how you're going, and when you expect to arrive

Arrive in good time to avoid missing bus/train

Keep personal belongings close to you, with bank card separate from your phone

Wear your bag over your shoulder, under your coat if possible

Text British Transport Police on 61016. See it. Say it. Sorted.





TFDA - using technology to control another person through coercion, stalking or harassment.

Stay safe from TFDA by following these Top Tips:

- Know how to turn off your location settings on your mobile phone
- Change your passwords on emails and apps regularly
- Know how to change passwords on your home devices
- Keep your trusted people's numbers in a safe space



Prevent

What 3 Words - what3words.com/ways-to-say - how to communicate location to emergency services

WalloSafe - wallosafe.co.uk - Safe multi-platform based on previous incidents

StreetSafe - police.uk/police/streetSafe - Anonymous report places that don't feel safe to the police

National Stalking Helpline - suxymh.org/Help/Category/national-stalking-helpline-0800-555-0300 - Information on what to do if you think you are being stalked

Stomp Out Spiking - youtube/ A10a2z9pW

Act

The Survivors Trust - the-survivors-trust.org.uk - National support groups for survivors of rape and sexual abuse

Refuge - refuge.org.uk - need help now - Supporting those who have experienced abuse

Hub of Hope - hubofhope.co.uk - Mental health local support database

Mind - mind.org.uk - Nationwide support for mental health

Victim Support - victimsupport.org.uk - Online chat and 24/7 Support line 08 00 55 56 55

Police - police.uk/contact-us



We now have these wonderful smart cards produced by SIGBI to display and hand out at our monthly Orange Café.

SIGBI have produced these graphics in A4, A5 poster size as well as credit card size.

If you know of anywhere that would display these as posters please let me know and we can get some to you.

And don't forget our Help at Hand poster is still available to be displayed in shop, community, pub and other facilities.



November finished with Scottie and I appearing on Stony Radio on Thia's Friday Community Show at lunch time. Thank you, Thia, for inviting us. We had a great time, a few giggles and were able to let people know what our club had been up to this year in supporting our community. Thia also gave us the opportunity to promote our December concert.

And the following week, with the help of Viktoryia I was interviewed over the phone on the Caz Tricks morning show, and you never know we may hear from someone who is interested in what we do as a result of that.



December was kickstarted with a donation of 90 more velvet hangers to Works for Us. Another 90-challenge completed.

And courtesy of a friend more bras were sent off to the Small for Us charity helping people here and in Africa.



What a great time we had on Saturday 14 December at the Mead Center and our Charity Concert with the wonderful Musica Charity Choir MK performing a beautiful selection of festive songs. Musica was formed in 2018 and sings in many different styles and genres. This year one of their highlights was to sing at Stowe Gardens in support of the D Day memorial installation "Standing with Giants". And I have to say, my personal favorite of the evening was the singing of silent night in German and English.

This was our fourth music event. The first was in 2021, when one of our members with her string quartet performed and they raised £450 which we donated to the Welfare Team at Unity MK for their homeless residents. In 2022, the quartet performed for us again and this time raised over £600 which we split between the Ukraine Appeal charity helping Ukrainian refugees just arriving in MK and to our sister club in Krakow who were helping Ukraine refugees arriving there. Last year Hearts and Music singers performed and raised £700 which was split between the five charities we support. And what did we raise this year, I have to say I was nervous. This was the first time we have held one on December and there was another concert on in Newport, but we needn't have worried. A big thank you to everyone who came, thank you Musica Charity Choir you made the evening a wonderful festive evening and the total raised on the night was £996.50. Our best effort yet. I can't say enough thank you on behalf of our charities, I know this will be of help to them.

And we finish this year with our Xmas projects. Firstly, a big than you to our business friend, who wants to remain anonymous but has again donated sweets which we have given out to the charities as part of our Xmas projects.



8 tubs of sweet shop sweets have made there way to MK Act. And again, this year we have supplied Food vouchers to each of the families.

A massive thank you goes to Sally and her team who organized a Breakfast club and raised £700 which has paid for the Food vouchers and extra towards MK Acts summer projects. Thank you, Sally and your great team. Wishing you a Merry Xmas.



On top of the money we raised at the 9 Nov concert, sweets have been delivered Ukraine Appeal and will be used for the children's educational camp planned for next year.



For the YMCA supported living residents we made up 30 bags of goodies including food, toiletries, cleaning items and a pack each of the Quality street pouches. And we have received a nice thank you from Head of Fundraising.



On 17 December, our Xmas present to Unity MK was to provide a buffet for their Xmas disco. Members provided food donations and we also took along 200 bars of chocolate and another 5 boxes of the sweet boxes and Haribo sweets. It was a lovely day, although I realise I am getting old when I did not know half of the songs in the disco binggo, Hey Ho.

And last but not least, we are purchasing 3 clothes rails for Works For Us in order that they can display all the works cloths they have donated to help people applying for jobs.

I don't know the final tally for our Xmas projects but we couldn't have achieved all that we have done not only at Xmas time but through out the year with out the dedication of all our members, their families, friends and all our supporters. I want to say a big thank you to our members and to all our supporters and hope you will continue to help us in 2025. Which will be our 10th birthday. What will we get up to then.

And for your diary here are some dates of our branch meetings, friendship lunches and events we already have planned. Please update your 2025 diary.

Branch meetings – Tuesday - 5.30pm Community Room (back of café), Morrisons, Westcroft	Friendship Lunch Wednesday, 12.30pm The Inn in the Lake, Mount Farm Bletchley	Orange Café – Dobbies 10am to 1pm
21 January 18 February 18 March 15 April 20 May – AGM 17 June	29 January 26 February 26 March 30 April 28 May 25 June	28 January 25 February 25 March 22 April 27 May 24 June

15 July 19 August – Summer Party 16 September 21 October 18 November	30 July 27 August 24 September 29 October 26 November	22 July 26 August 23 September 28 October 25 November
Events		
5 March 2025 - International Women's Day Afternoon Tea event 3pm till 5pm Venue TBC Sat 15 March – SILC Women's Day Event 10am to 4pm Venue TBC June – SILC Regional Conference TBC Sat 12 July – SIGBI – Day of Action Aug – Fish and Chip Quiz evening at Simpson Date TBC 11 October – SILC Regional Conference TBC Fri 31 Oct – Sund 2 Nov SIGBI Annual Conference Birmingham 11 Nov Remembrance Day MK Rose MK Snap Xmas Craft Stall – Date TBC 25 Nov – 10 Dec 16 Days of Activism Tuesday 25 Nov Annual Vigil MK Rose and MK Gallery Sat 29 Nov Newport Pagnell Lights Switch on and Xmas Fayre, Mead Center Sat 6 Dec Hearts and Music Concert Venue TBC		

Further dates will be added during the year so please keep an eye on our diary.

As I sign off for this editorial, I just want to say how it is a privilege being a Soroptimist and being a part of this group. We have achieved so much this year and helped our charities and I for one have loved every moment.

May I take this opportunity to again say thank you every one of you for all your time and efforts in what we have achieved in 2024. Happy New Year and all the very best for 2025.

Happy Reading everyone.



Soroptimists standing up for Women and Girls
Sue Key, Chair

Future Miss Quiz Dates

Future Miss Quiz Events:	
Sun 15 th Dec:	Carols Singalong – 4.00p.m. in the Church – All welcome
Fri 20 th Dec:	Salvation Army Carols, Simpson Church – 7.00p.m – Bring & Share Supper
Sat 28 th Dec –	Quiz & Lasagne Supper – Camphill Communities – 7.00pm – £15.00 p.p. £7.50 p.p. without the food In SIMPSON VILLAGE HALL MK6 3AD - need to book
	N.A.W.T. (HULA) – Food to be decided
Sat 12 th Jan –	Community Voices Water Eaton – Food to be decided
Sat 25 th Jan –	St Thomas's Church Funds – in the Church
Sat 8 th Feb –	

TGI Choir with the Ukraine Singers – 21 Dec



Director Craig McLeish
Richard Dunster-Sigtermans - Organ



WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
MAUKA
December 21st 2024
4.00pm
ST PETER & ST PAUL
NEWPORT PAGNELL



In aid of Ukraine Appeal MK and the Chernobyl Relief Foundation

Tickets to include mulled wine and other refreshments Adults £10
5 to 16 £5 - under 5 free
Go to eventbrite.co.uk
Search "TGI at Christmas 2024"



If you still need to get some good Christmas cheer, the TGI Choir will be singing at St Peter and St Paul Church this

Saturday 21 December 4pm
And the Ukraine singers will be singing too.

Look forward to seeing you there.

MK Fawcett – Latest Blog



Read MK Fawcett's latest Blog which is appropriate for 16 Days of Activism and called "The seeping stench of Violence" – [Click here](#)

SIGBI latest News/blogs



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

- Human Rights Day 10 Dec 2024
- Soroptimists take action to Prevent Domestic Abuse with Orange the World Campaign
- SIGBI withdraw from X (formerly Twitter)
- New Domestic Violence Resource celebrated by Soroptimists during 2024 Best Practice Awards



The November Global Voice is out and includes articles on the following:

- 16 Days of Activism
- Soroptimist International Foundation Day
- Latest SI Written statements and podcasts
- Our Voice at the UN Geneva

Soroptimist International News and Blogs - read the latest



Read the latest Soroptimist International News articles including, [click here](#):

- New Soroptimist International Foundation Projects announced
- Paraguay, Fundacion Moises Bertoni Project Update: Dec 2024
- Cambodia Community Dream Organisation 2024 Quarter 3 update
- Soroptimists from SI Denmark and SI Tororo visit Rose Academies, Uganda

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

- Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing +30 Review
- The Global Coalition for Social Justice
- The Opening Session of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development
- Bridging the Gaps: Inclusive Digital Health
- Widows Seminar: Challenges, Gaps and Best Practices
- Equal and Inclusive representation of Women in Decision-making Systems
- Beijing +30 Review Forum: Workshop on Education and Training of Women

UN International days and Awareness days - Jan 2025

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.**

4 Jan	World Braille Day
24 Jan	International Day of Education
26 Jan	International Day of Clean Energy
27 Jan	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust

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:

