



Save our Sanity

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



30 Nov 2023

MK Soroptimists

Newsletter 55

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Editorial Welcome

Soroptimists – Standing up for Women and Girls



On the last day of October we were back at MK Snap sorting out toiletries, and what a collection this quarter.

YMCA were so very grateful when we turned up with a supply for them,

they told us these essential items are always needed. Well done everyone for your contributions and well done to our collection points at MK Snap, The Mead Centre, Red House Surgery, Great Linford Parish Offices.

Xmas time is nearly upon us and we know times are very hard for everyone. Can I ask that you put a call out to all your families and friends to ask if they get any toiletries for Xmas they don't want, to consider donating them to us so that we can pass on to our charities. Our charities are always telling us how grateful their clients are for these items and how essential they are for their wellbeing.



November started with the SIGBI London Conference and here we are on the steps of Friendship house and being welcomed on the first day.

There were great inspirational speakers, we learnt about lots of interesting club projects going on around the Federation and welcomed our new SIGBI President Ruth Healey into office. [Click here](#) to learn more about Ruth Healey, and you should also have seen her monthly video on your latest Hub update.

You can find out about the conference by clicking on the following:

Friday 3 November [Saturday 4 November](#)

The next Annual SIGBI Conference is taking place in Edinburgh 1- 3 November. Highly recommend you put this in your diary and come along. It was my first time at conference and I came away very inspired.



Thank you, Angel and Bethan, for representing Soroptimists at this year's Remembrance Ceremony at The Rose MK.

This is the second year we have taken part, and it is a privilege to lay a wreath to remember those women who served and died in the forces and the factories, those nursing our fallen and those women and girls who have lost their lives in conflicts all around the world. May they never be forgotten.

Thank you, MK Snap learners for our beautiful wreath, which was again biodegradable and received many compliments. I hope you can join us next year as this is now a permanent part of our annual calendar of events.



May I take this opportunity to give a big well done to Angie. This month Angie, along with 50 other CEO's from various businesses across MK took part in the CEO's Big sleepout to help homeless charities working in Milton Keynes. It took place at MK College with temperatures down to 4 degrees. So far they raised more than £50,000 for YMCA MK, Milton Keynes Food Bank, St Mark's Meals MK and The Bus Shelter MK.

And I know Angie wants to thank everyone who sponsored her.



Our November meeting was a celebration. We are now officially Guinness World Record Participants and have the certificate to prove it.

Just another example that Soroptimists can turn their hand to anything, are always up for a challenge and always up for helping their community.

And please see below a lovely thank you note from MK Foodbank:

"Thank you so much for being part of such a brilliant event last Monday. Everyone we spoke to commented on the incredible atmosphere, the feeling of community and the sense of achievement that we all felt communally. We have spent all morning so far reminiscing on everything that happened this time last week... and then the official email came through! All our evidence has now been uploaded and accepted and we are now OFFICIALLY the Guinness World Records Title Holder! [Longest line of food cans | Guinness World Records](#)"

However, we have recently heard, that originally MK Foodbank thought the event would create 6 months worth of tinned food goods. Demand has increased so much that it now looks like the tins will only last for around 77 days. If you and your friends are able to help with food donations over this festive period, I know MK Foodbank will be most grateful. Please share this message with your friends. Thank you.



A big thank you to our crafters, who have been busy and stocked us up for our two Xmas craft stalls this month.

Our first xmas stall took place in The Mead Centre, Newport Pagnell on 25 November, the day the lights on Newport Pagnell were switched on. This is the second year we have taken part and again we had a great time and took over £156.50 for our charities.

And on Wednesday 29 November we were at MK Snap, and their lovely Xmas Fayre. Again, our second year, and there was a lovely atmosphere. Here you can see us with our neighbouring stall, Thames Valley Police, who we had a great laugh with. Barbara got talking to a friend who helps in social services and was telling us they were desperate for blankets. We were happy to donate a blanket from our stall to help out.



The day before the MK Snap Xmas Fayre we held our second Orange Café at Dobbies.

It was lovely to have so many volunteers come along and we are now hoping we have a new member as a result.

Our next Orange Café will be on 23 January at Dobbies and then we are will be holding our February session on 27 February at MK College Bletchley. Volunteers are needed for both.

We are hoping our café in February will be the start of joint working with the college to raise awareness amongst the students.



The UN 16 Days of Activism has been taking place from 25 November till 10 December. We have been busy on our social media platforms promoting this year's theme, #WiredForChange, agreed by Soroptimist International, raising awareness about the impact technology has had on gender-based violence and abuse. How it can be a negative force but also how it has a positive impact on the world. The message is we need to make technology safe for everyone, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity online and offline.

Locally we have circulated our posters to Parish Councils and a number of organisations. These posters have also started appearing in Newport Pagnell High street and members will be asked to help with getting them into shops, churches etc near you.

Milton Keynes City Council has sponsored our "Helps at Hand" Bookmarks and we are now in discussions with the Youth Council on how we can get these bookmarks into schools.

In addition, we met with MK College who are keen to work with us on raising awareness amongst all students and they have agreed for us to hold an Orange Café in February and September and a member of staff is looking at ways of engaging all students on this issue. So, watch this space.

And now looking forward, please put the following dates in your diary. Please note the International Women's Day Afternoon Tea and Cake event date is now confirmed at Wednesday 6 March. Please ensure it is in your diary and if you can come along and help on the day that would be great. Many thanks

Dear Diary Dates	
Tues 12 Dec	7.00pm Xmas Meal, Xmas Meal, The Swan, Newport Pagnell Time to be confirmed
Wed 27 Dec	Friendship Lunch 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Tue 16 January	Branch meeting. 5.30pm, Acorn Training Centre, Westcroft
Tues 23 Jan	Orange Café 10 till 2.00pm Dobbies, Bletchley
Wed 31 January	Friendship Lunch 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
Tue 20 Feb	Branch meeting. 5.30pm, Acorn Training Centre, Westcroft
Tues 27 Feb	Orange Café 10 till 2.00pm MK College, Bletchley
Wed 28 Feb	Friendship Lunch 12.30pm at the Inn on the Lake, Mount Farm, Bletchley, MK1 1PA
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 Womens Day celebration London Details TBC
Tue 19 March	Branch meeting. 5.30pm, Acorn Training Centre, Westcroft
Wed 27 March	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 10-4pm in London
June	SILC Region Conference TBC
12 Oct	SILC Region Conference AGM/Conference,. Details to be confirmed
1-3 Nov	SIGBI Conference Edinburgh Details to be confirmed

November was busy and so is December. Our Xmas buffet for the homeless at UnityMK, previously the Winter Night Shelter was on 5 December. Then there is the Ukraine party on Sat 9 December where we have sponsored over 120 presents for the children. On Monday 11 December we are cooking the Xmas meal for the supported

living people at the YMCA. And we busy purchasing Tesco Food vouchers for the families at MK Act to give to them before Xmas. A big thank you everyone, for contributing food, donations and your time to make these events happen. We know they are important to the clients of these charities and even more so now as we continue to hear how the cost-of-living crisis is still hitting people very hard. Thank you everyone.

As I sign off for this editorial, I just want to say how it is a privilege being a Soroptimist and being apart of this group. We have achieved so much this year and helped our charities. It's true that volunteering is not only good for your own wellbeing but for all those you help in the process. I had a lady come up to me at the UnityMK to thank us for a clothes donation we made, she was so grateful. That's what giving is all about.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all, your families and all our friends a big thank you for all your help this year and wishing you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and all the very best for 2024.



Happy reading everyone.

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

Carol Concert with the Salvation Army Band - Simpson Church

Carol Concert with the Salvation Army Band

Friday 15th December 2023
7:00pm in St Thomas's Church
Simpson, MK6 3AD



Bring & Share Buffet

Collection taken and shared between the Church and the Salvation Army

Teas served

Please park along Simpson Road if possible.

Friday 15 December 2023
7.00pm in St Thomas's Church
Simpson, MK6 3 AD

You can bring your own buffet

A collection will be taken and shared between the Church and the Salvation Army

Teas will be served

Please park along Simpson Road if possible.

Stalking victims face “postcode lottery” says coroner



Stalking victims face a “postcode lottery” of support due to a lack of advocates in police forces across the UK, a coroner has said following the death of Gracie Spinks.

To read the full Guardian article [click here](#). (picture Gracie Spinks/Facebook)

Obama, Clooney and Gates: “We can end child marriage in a generation”

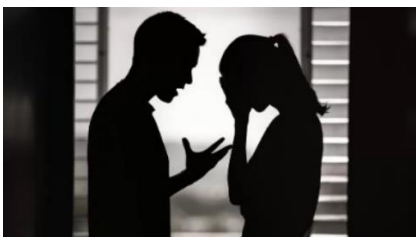


Three of the world's most influential women have told BBC News they want to end child marriage within a generation.

Michelle Obama, Amal Clooney and Melinda French Gates announced last year a collaboration between their foundations to combat the problem.

To read the full BBC article [click here](#). (picture The Obama Foundation)

Domestic abuse prevention schemes face dangerous cuts - charities



Charities working to change the violent behaviour of domestic abusers have told the BBC that survivors lives are being put at risk because of funding shortages. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner has said cuts have hit an already limited provision and has called for more funding for perpetrator programmes to help stop the cycle of abuse and improve the lives of families. To read the full BBC article [click here](#). (picture Getty image)

I paid £30k to protect my child from her paedophile dad



When her daughter's father was sent to prison for child sexual abuse, Bethan was horrified to discover he could still be allowed access to their child after he was released. It was a risk she wasn't willing to take.

To read the full BBC article [click here](#). (picture BBC)

Therapy could be offered to women suffering menopause symptoms



Women experiencing hot flushes, night sweats, depression and sleep problems could be offered therapy to help reduce their menopause symptoms, under new guidelines.

Evidence reviews by Nice found that cognitive behavioural therapy should be considered alongside or as an alternative to HRT.

To read the full Guardian article [click here](#). (picture Phanie/Alamy)

More women to get the contraceptive pill from chemists in England



Almost half a million women will be able to get the contraceptive pill from pharmacies in England, from Dec 2023, without the need for a GP appointment.

Treatment for urinary infections and other common conditions will also be on offer under the Pharmacy First Scheme. [Click here](#) to read the full BBC article. (Getty Images)

Milton Keynes to be a super hub in King Charles new scheme to tackle food poverty



King Charles is setting up a huge new scheme called the Coronation Food Project, with the aim of rescuing surplus food from growers, manufacturers and retailers then redirecting it to the people who need it most.

A handful of super hubs will be set up across the country to collect the food, starting with Northern Ireland, Glasgow, Merseyside and London and later joined by Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds and Milton Keynes. [Click here](#) to read the full MK Citizen article. (MK Citizen image)

How area once dubbed "tent city" cut rough sleeping



Milton Keynes was created in 1960s as a way of easing housing shortages in London. But five decades later it was facing a housing crisis of its own, dubbed "tent city" in the media because of the encampments of rough sleepers dotted around the centre.

In autumn 2017, there were estimated to be 48 people sleeping rough on a single night in Milton Keynes. That number has fallen to just 16, according to the local city council. [Click here](#) to read the BBC article. (picture Alamy Images).

Cardiff University student says she was hassled for fees after rape



A student has said she received no support from her university after she was raped, and was instead hassled to pay tuition fees after taking time out. She said she was in her final year at Cardiff university when she was raped in 2021. And subsequently more students have raised concern over the lack of information on support. [Click here](#) to read the BBC article. (picture Getty image).

Domestic-abuse victims fear of deportation if they go to police



Every police force in England and Wales has reported migrants who are domestic-abuse victims to Immigration Enforcement, new data suggests.

Fear of deportation can stop victims coming forward and empower abusers, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, Nicole Jacobs says. She has written to the Home Secretary, urging the practice to end. [Click here](#) to read the BBC article (picture BBC).

Girl Pack UK - supporting everyone's Period



Girl Pack is a UK registered volunteer led charity working primarily in Milton Keynes

It supports everyone's period providing emergency period packs and period products to schools and communities across MK and beyond.

Girl Pack was started by Megan and Paige, two teenagers who noticed that their friends were not able to access period products. They were asked for pads on numerous occasions by friends and decided to do something about it.

To read more about this local charity [click here](#).

Wiltshire Police to review thousands of checks on suspected violent partners



Fears force failed to protect people at risk after Clare's Law applicants given wrong information.

Wiltshire Police Force is reviewing thousands of applications made under the Clare's Law, which gives people the right to ask whether a partner has a violent past, after it came to light that wrong or incomplete information has been given.

Wiltshire Police is to review more than 3,500 Clare's Law applications made between April 2015 and 2023. [Click here](#) to read the full Guardian article.

Soroptimist Global Voice Newsletter - November



The latest issue of Global Voice Newsletter is now available.

This issue includes articles on the end of the Opening Bright Futures campaign and the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

[Click here](#) to read the Global Voices newsletter in full

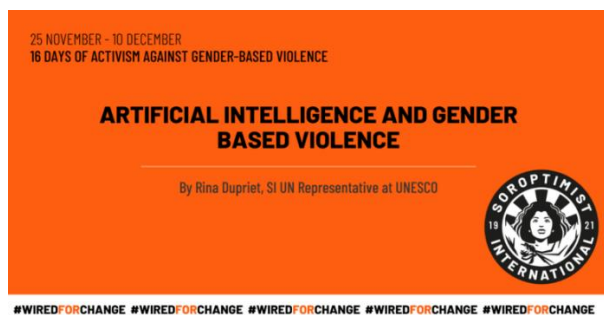
SIGBI latest News/blogs



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

- International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development – 5 Dec
- Global Voice Newsletter
- Introducing our new President Ruth Healey
- UN International Day for Prevention the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict – 6 Nov

Soroptimist International Blogs - read the latest



Read the latest Soroptimist International Blogs including:

- Artificial Intelligence and Gender Based Violence
- AI as a tool for Mental Health Care
- Introduction to 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence
- The Ethic of Neurotechnologies
- UNESCO General Conference: Young People's Voices and Demands

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

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](#).

SIGBI London Conference 2023 - Monty John and the poem just for women and girls

At the SIGBI Conference, held this year on 3-4 November in London, we had some inspirational speakers. And to start us off was Monty Halls, TV Broadcaster and Marine Biologist. He only had 24 hours' notice to stand in but I think by the end of his session we were all impressed by just how much he knew about Soroptimists and I think it is reflected in a poem he read to us. He had slightly adapted for his daughters but below is the original, quite motivational. To read more from the London Conference click on the following, where you can find a menu at the top going to blogs and then scroll down to view the pictures. Happy reading:

Friday 3 November **Saturday 4 November**

For My Daughter By Sarah McMane

"Never grow a wishbone, daughter, where your backbone ought to be." – Clementine Paddleford

Never play the princess when you can
be the queen:
rule the kingdom, swing a scepter,
wear a crown of gold.
Don't dance in glass slippers,
crystal carving up your toes --

be a barefoot Amazon instead,
for those shoes will surely shatter on your feet.

Never wear only pink
when you can strut in crimson red,
sweat in heather grey, and
shimmer in sky blue,
claim the golden sun upon your hair.

Colours are for everyone,
boys and girls, men and women --
be a verdant garden, the landscape of Versailles,
not a pale primrose blindly pushed aside.

Chase green dragons and one-eyed zombies,
fierce and fiery toothy monsters,
not merely lazy butterflies,
sweet and slow on summer days.

For you can tame the most brutish beasts
with your wily wits and charm,
and lizard scales feel just as smooth
as gossamer insect wings.

Tramp muddy through the house in
a purple tutu and cowboy boots.
Have a tea party in your overalls.
Build a fort of birch branches,
a zoo of Legos, a rocketship of
Queen Anne chairs and coverlets,
first stop on the moon.

Dream of dinosaurs and baby dolls,
bold brontosaurus and bookish Belle,
not Barbie on the runway or
Disney damsels in distress --
you are much too strong to play
the simpering waif.

Don a baseball cap, dance with Daddy,
paint your toenails, climb a cottonwood.
Learn to speak with both your mind and heart.
For the ground beneath will hold you, dear --
know that you are free.

And never grow a wishbone, daughter,
where your backbone ought to be.

Inspiring Women - Be Inspired



Jane Austen

“There is a stubbornness about me that can never bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises at every attempt to intimidate me.”



Gaucin, Andalusia, Spain. Crocheted umbrella street decorations which also create shade made by local women's groups

UN International days and Awareness days - December 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 Dec	World Aids Day	
2 Dec	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	
3 Dec	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	
4 Dec	International Day of Banks	
5 Dec	International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development	
5 Dec	World Soil Day	
7 Dec	International Civil Aviation Day	
9 Dec	International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime	
9 Dec	International Anti-Corruption Day	
10 Dec	Human Rights Day	
11 Dec	International Mountain Day	
12 Dec	International Day of Neutrality	
12 Dec	International Universal Health Coverage Day	
18 Dec	International Migrants Day	Arabic Language Day
20 Dec	International Human Solidarity Day	
21 Dec	World Basketball Day	
27 Dec	International Day of Epidemic Preparedness	

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](#)

Sl:MK support these local charities:

