

Cathy Cottridge

SI Southend - Nominated by Soroptimist East London

Cathy Cottridge became a Soroptimist in 2007. We are nominating her both for her steadfast work as a Soroptimist, and particularly for her work on violence against women.

Cathy has tirelessly championed our cause over many years. Initially stepping into the Southend Club president's role. The outreach work she helped put in place in Southend reaches from local to global. She cemented good relationships with her Local Authority's Safeguarding Board, Essex Police and Essex Border forces. She has helped provide them with resources and education around the issues of trafficked women, FGM and forced marriage, and her work continues in the club today. She has worked tirelessly against violence against women and girls and other national and international work. She organised an International Women's Day event in a Southend shopping centre, when she and members of Southend club, collected 1,500 pre-loved bras. Together with another member, she delivered the bras piled up in the car, to S.I Poole. From there they would be sent abroad to women rescued from being trafficked, to set them up in business selling the bras. Cathy was one of the key people in raising awareness in the wider community about the dangers of trafficking of persons, and how it can easily happen to someone you know. She helped raise awareness of trafficking in persons, arranging for an educational stand to be placed in the Southend's High Street (again involving the Essex Border Agency), talking to the public about how to spot signs of people trafficking. Simultaneously she raised awareness of the work of her club and Soroptimist International.



Cathy has worked extensively with the White Ribbon Campaign to eliminate violence against women. For the last four years she has worked with students at the University of Essex, again raising awareness of all forms of violence against women.

Cathy was reluctant to take on the role of Regional President of London Anglia Region as she is fundamentally quite a shy person. She delivered an amazing year as President, introducing many organisations and speakers to keep members informed and educated. She was direct and honest in her role, while maintaining her approachability. She stepped into her power at that point, taking on the role of Federation Councillor and then Director without Portfolio and now Federation President of SIGBI.

Cathy has always been a supportive member of her member club, Southend, and London Anglia Region. She attends as many events as possible, supporting other clubs where she can. She has always been willing to mentor new members of the exec both locally and regionally and is often called upon for her help, empathy, and practical no-nonsense approach.

Cathy is a straight-talking, savvy businesswoman who has a knack of seeing through the waffle to get to the crux of a matter and get solutions. She is approachable and supportive and is a great mentor and role model for others. She has a drive and energy second to none, even when her own health has been challenging. She is a modern businesswoman who has helped transform the landscape of SIGBI, and has been one of the key women who have been instrumental in the development and management of SIGBI Trading Limited.