Susan Biggs
SI Pendleside NW England and IOM

Susan (Sue) was born in Blackburn in 1955 and has spent all her life in Lancashire, making her a true Northerner her whole life.

Sue worked in Secondary Education for 37 years, firstly at Baines School in Poulton le Fylde and then in Burnley where she ended her career as Head of English and Modern Foreign Languages at Thomas Whitham Sixth Form.

Her Soroptimist career began in 2000 when she joined SI Colne and Nelson. She had only been a member for a few weeks when it was suggested that she become the Club Programme Action Officer. Sue describes her initiation into Programme Action as a light bulb moment. She could see a way to make a difference to those less fortunate than herself. Her first project with the Club was a “Nappy Project” as the issue had been grabbing the headlines locally.

After having served as Club President and Regional President Sue became Regional Programme Action Officer. Her enthusiasm for PA work encompassed everything she did and Sue often told members that all the students in her school were Soroptimists as they worked on furthering Soroptimist project work around the globe including helping Flood Relief charities in Bangladesh, celebrating International Women’s Day, signing petitions and lobbying local government to name but a few.

As Federation Programme Director Sue attended Commission of the Status of Women at the United nations in New York on 4 separate occasions and spoke at side events there. Her role as Federation Programme Director meant she attended Soroptimist International Board meetings where she was instrumental in changing the focus of Soroptimist International away from Programme work to international advocacy.

Whilst Federation President Sue served on the Board of Soroptimist International when it went through its transition to a smaller and more dynamic board structure.

Sue was Federation President in 2017-18 and the Conference was held in Liverpool. The theme of the Conference was “Empower today- Enable tomorrow” concentrating on making a difference to women and girls by showing them what is possible. She remains actively involved as the Regional Trustee for the SIGBI Benevolent Fund and Club Membership Officer.

Away from the Soroptimist world Sue is Chairman of Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Council for Voluntary Service and Chairman of PAC- Positive Action in the Community. PAC runs the supported
housing accommodation for young people in Pendle and Rossendale and the Outreach Domestic Abuse Services across East Lancashire. She counts herself very lucky to have been given these opportunities but says that being a Soroptimist gave her the self confidence to apply for the positions.

For the past 6 years Sue has served as a member of the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service Panel in Lancashire, assessing local groups nominated for this prestigious award.

Walking, reading, theatre visits and gardening are amongst her favourite hobbies.