

## President Yvonne's message

### Healthy People, Healthy Planet



MY FIRST MONTH as Regional President has indeed been a busy one. Following the United Nations Association Peace Service on which I reported last month, Canterbury Climate Action Partnership (CCAP) held their first Climate Action Week. As a director of CCAP, I was quite involved with the week which included a range of activities for residents in Canterbury, the surrounding villages and the coastal towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable.

On the Monday evening, I joined other directors at the Canterbury Cathedral Lodge for talks and a questions and answers session on the topic of 'The Global Climate Emergency'.

On Tuesday, Canterbury Soroptimists had a stall at the Community & Civic Action Day, at which we were able to showcase the work of Soroptimists on Climate Action and other areas in which we are actively involved.



President Carol Reed and PAO Jan Tebbett

On Thursday of that week, I attended the Federation Programme Action Committee (FPAC), which I hope some members in our Region also attended. I think the new format with keynote speakers worked well.

Friday saw the beginning of Annual Conference and I was pleased to be able to reconnect with our Programme Speaker, Dr Asha de Vos founder of Oceanswell, who I met back in 2017 whilst on a cruise to the Far East, which included Sri Lanka, Asha's home country. We were able to catch up in the 'Green Room' where speakers and those asking questions raised by delegates wait until they go 'on stage' – all quite surreal when working online (see below)! I believe that her talk on 'Whales as oceans superheroes' was very timely in the lead up to COP26, where life in, and the health of, our oceans was a key theme. I have written a blog on the presentation by Asha which is available on the SIGBI website and there will also be a follow-up article in the December Soroptimist News.



/CONTINUED ON PAGE 05

## Lewes and Eastbourne Soroptimists receive special thanks from East Sussex Foster Carers Association



AT THEIR AGM on November 15, the East Sussex Foster Carers Association gave special thanks to the Lewes and Eastbourne Soroptimists who worked together during the first lockdown to keep in touch with ESFCA and donated 80 Emotion Games for foster families going through a difficult time. These games are designed to be a therapeutic way to support young people's mental health and encourage them to talk about their feelings and were much appreciated by the families.

ESFCA's first in-person AGM since the pandemic hit was well attended, including a guest appearance from Jaqueline Wilson, children's author and local resident.

The lovely paintings below (displayed at the AGM) were produced by foster children at the first monthly painting group supported by Lewes Club. The session was run by art teacher and new Lewes Club member Maureen Wells.

VERA GAJIC, SI LEWES AND DISTRICT



**SILENT MARCH  
AGAINST  
Gender-based  
Violence**

**Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**See page 13 for a report of the event**

# Club retains its sense of purpose 84 years after challenging start

WAR CLOUDS WERE gathering in the winter of 1938 but that did not stop a group of Sevenoaks women getting together to form a club to help improve the conditions of women and girls living in deprived circumstances at home and abroad.

The first meeting of SI Sevenoaks took place “by kind permission of Miss Ethel Breeding” at her home in Dunton Green on January 18, 1938. Mrs Deed was elected president and Mrs Bosenquet secretary, while Miss Beatrice Wilson, who later founded Rockdale, took her place on the executive council.

On this occasion Miss May Field, a director of British Instructional Films, gave “a delightful description of her experiences.” As well as the speaker and the 14 founder members, five guests were present.

Today, some 84 years later, Sevenoaks Soroptimist Club is still very active under recently elected president Mrs Pat Downing MBE, who has taken over from Penny Robbins, and one of their key concerns is the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan.

This is not far removed from the issues which faced the club in the early days when the members, all actively professional women, continued to meet throughout the Second World War.

The minutes, either immaculately handwritten or recorded on a manual typewriter, indicate a group of women serious in their commitment to fundraising in stressful times. However, they still participated in social activities such as dances, tea parties and whist drives.

Each president chooses two charities. Under Pat Downing the club is raising money for a Hospice in the Weald and continuing with CAMFED (Campaign for Female Education), a non-profit making organisation tackling poverty and inequality in African rural communities.



The club also supports local projects, such as Sevenoaks Welcomes Refugees and the council’s participation in South East England in Bloom. The Vine sensory garden, restored and maintained by eight Soroptimists, was this year awarded a gold medal.

Membership is no longer restricted to actively professional women; rather it is open to and welcomes women of all ages willing to dedicate time and effort to supporting those less fortunate than themselves.

A group of SI Sevenoaks club members (seen above) attended a Tree Dedication in The Vine Sensory Garden on October 21, 2021. The photograph accompanied an article by Bob Ogle, which appeared in the Sevenoaks Chronicle on November 04.



## Christmas qui...Z

LAST YEAR’S ABCD Christmas quiz was so successful, raising £1500, that I’ve been asked to prepare another.

Entry costs £10 – the prize of a Zaytoon Hamper has been donated so every penny raised will go to help a disadvantaged family in Bethlehem this Christmas.

Please apply to [info@abcdbethlehem.org](mailto:info@abcdbethlehem.org) for further information and the question sheet.

My thanks in advance for your support.

ALISON DRISCOLL, SI BROMLEY AND ABCD TRUSTEE  
(ACTION AROUND BETHLEHEM CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY)



## Which historic event took place on Saturday November 13, 2021?

HERE ARE A FEW CLUES:

8,000 people took part.

More than 500,000 people turned up to watch.

It attracted a TV audience of between 2-3 million people.

I was very honoured to be part of The Lord Mayor's Show, commemorating the election of the 693rd Lord Mayor of the City of London, Vincent Keaveny, who is a Freeman of both the Worshipful Company of City of London Solicitors and the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers.

The Lord Mayor's Show dates back to the year 1215, when King John granted a charter allowing the citizens of London to elect their own Mayor, on the condition that each year the new Mayor must travel from the City to Westminster to swear loyalty to the Crown. It has taken place every year since then, with the exception of 1852 for national mourning following the death of



the Duke of Wellington, and 2020 when it was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The outgoing Lord Mayor, William Russell has therefore served two years in office.

It is the world's oldest and longest civic procession, and is different every year because it highlights the interests and history of the new Lord Mayor. Vincent Keaveny's theme is "People with Purpose – Investing in a Better Tomorrow".

I was parading with the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers "People of Vision" involving various different sectors of the Optical profession. The sweatshirts we were wearing came in a choice of two sizes, Extra Large, and Even Larger than That! We carried umbrellas with an eyeball design on them, sandwich boards, and a very large pair of spectacles which needed four people to support them.

My husband Bob came with me, but he was not allowed to walk in the parade because he is not a Freeman or Liveryman of the Company. He did manage to pop up in several places along the route, taking photos, and even managed to gain access to our supposedly "secure" lunch area for a chat while we were standing around eating our provided pre-packed sandwich lunch, before heading off for his sit-down gourmet buffet lunch (including wine!) at Apothecaries' Hall.

All along the three mile route there were people waving and cheering, and several cub, scout and brownie groups blowing whistles, so there was a great atmosphere. Many people were videoing the whole thing on phones or iPads, and we got about 15 seconds' coverage on the BBC, but their cameras switched shots just as I came into view...

The return journey in the afternoon was delayed by almost an hour by some protesters who were apparently lying down in the middle of the route. I'm not sure how they were dealt with in the end, but as there were plenty of military and regular police, the Household Cavalry and various other mounted divisions, not to mention a few big guns, tanks and a combine harvester on hand to assist in moving them, I don't think they could have put up much resistance!

After standing and walking for about six hours my feet were beginning to ache, and my arms were also tired from waving and holding an umbrella, but it was great fun.

HEATHER BAILEY, SI CROYDON AND DISTRICT





## Climate Challenges – Act Now!

Programme Action Committee, October 28

THIS WAS ANOTHER excellent session learning about and discussing things that are important to Soroptimists.

The first speaker, Avani Awasthee, at age 18 was the youngest Indian to have visited the Antarctic twice as an environmental ambassador. She has been working for the UN Asia Pacific, UN Women and the UN Humanitarian units to spread awareness about climate change. Her talk was 'Saving the world 1% at a time'. She wanted to impress on everyone that the little things we do, matter. She suggested that the greatest threat to our planet is thinking that someone else will do it. Education is the best way to help save the planet; share information and knowledge to educate others; reduce, reuse and recycle. Consider fitting water reducers/aerators to your taps to reduce the amount of water you use.

The second speaker, Dr Bonnie Waring, is an ecosystem ecologist and biogeochemist studying how land ecosystems respond to climate change. In addition to trees storing carbon, she reminded us that soil stores more carbon from dead plants, than all the trees. One English oak tree 30 years old stores as much carbon as one passenger flying return from London to New York.

We need to look after our forests. Clearing forests to support farming or manufacturing is not the best use of land; cutting the trees reduces carbon storage, fossil fuels are used for machinery to clear the land and when considering grazing animals for human consumption this only contributes 20% to the diet. Eating a more plant-based diet reduces the pressure on the climate.

We need co-ordinated political action; the Government needs to send clearer messages to industrial organisations and companies about reducing carbon emissions. The amount of Sulphur Dioxide in the air has been reduced, so it can be done with carbon emissions. Contact your MP. Look on the parliament website to see how your MP has voted on climate issues.

Mary Muia, our Soroptimist International UN representative in Nairobi, was the final speaker. The UN Office in Nairobi focuses on environmental issues and covers the work of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). We have three crises to deal with; Climate, Biodiversity and Waste. We need to address all aspects. We know that climate issues disproportionately impact women and girls. Mary's role, with others, is to raise the issues faced by women. To have a seat at the table, and to be able to give oral and written statements, is powerful. Mary reminded us all again the importance of educating people about climate change, the more people know and take action the better, use people power. After the presentation there were group workshops discussing what we as Soroptimists and individuals can do. The key points will be posted on the SIGBI website. Look out for new ways to get involved.

CAROL INFANTI, APD, PROSPERITY



IN THE SUMMER, the Lewes Soroptimists kicked-off an appeal for football boots, trainers and books to send to the Mother of Millions Foundation in Zambia, set up in 2012 by Faith Musapa to offer support, lessons and activities for children of people in prison. There is a film about her project on the BBC, and she was shortlisted for an award. [BBC World Service – Outlook, Inspirations: Caring for Kids in Prison.](#)

Faith recently set up youth football teams at a number of her projects near local prisons. Anja St Claire, a Lewes Soroptimist and pharmacist visited Zambia with the Brighton Lusaka Health Link Partnership in 2019 "I was struck by how much they enjoyed playing and how little they had. The children were playing football in bare feet so I thought this was something our club could help with" she said.

On November 01, a large 220 litre barrel packed with 80 boots and trainers, 15 new shorts (donated by Barcombe Zambia project), 20 football shirts (donated by Lewes Football Club) and 25 children's books, set sail on it's long journey to Zambia .

Vera Gajic, Programme Action Officer at the Lewes club said "we had a fantastic response to the call out. I regularly opened my front door to find a bag of boots on the doorstep.

"In particular, we would like to thank Grace Onions who, when Region President, collected five bags of boots and brought them to Lewes on the train in a push chair, a truly sterling effort, and Lewes Football club who donated the football shirts.

"We are looking forward to January, when we hope to hear that the barrel has arrived safely."

VERA GAJIC, SI LEWES



Caroline Harris, Jane Garnons-Williams and Sue Daykin

ON NOVEMBER 16 Christmas came early to Medway as the G4 Christmas 2021 Tour kicked off in the idyllic, festive setting at Rochester Cathedral.

The G4 Christmas Tour is a series of twenty-nine concerts held in idyllic settings across the UK that supports the charity 'Missing People' ([www.missingpeople.org.uk](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk)). This is the only UK charity lifeline for anyone affected by someone going missing. Unfortunately, last year the tour was cancelled due to lockdown. Four Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists, Sue Daykin, Janet Garnons-Williams, Wanda Wright and Jane Barnes, along with a Friend of the Club, Caroline Harris were volunteers at the concert.

One of our main responsibilities is organising the bucket collection at the end of the evening. In 2019 volunteers collected over £18,000 at G4 concerts and that sum could keep the Helpline open for families for 18 days.

Everyone was very generous after enjoying an evening at the Cathedral hearing timeless classics such as When A Child is Born, Silent Night and All I Want For Christmas, as well as delightful medleys to evoke the Christmas spirit. A grand total of £570.14 was raised for this worthwhile charity.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

## President Yvonne's message

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01

As advised in the last newsletter, I was scheduled to travel up to Glasgow on Sunday, October 31 to attend COP26. Unfortunately, due to adverse weather conditions in the Northampton area which brought down trees and power lines onto the rail track, I had to turn back and recommence my journey on the Tuesday. For a full report on my attendance at COP26, go to page 07.

The other noteworthy event which I have attended during the past month is the Remembrance Day Service in Canterbury which included Carol Reed, SI Canterbury President and Region Secretary, laying a wreath at the war memorial in the Buttermarket followed by a service in Canterbury Cathedral.



I am looking forward to my first Region Meeting on December 04, which will be held on Zoom. There will be two speakers – Dr Libby Webb from AGE UK who will be advising us how we and our families can stay fit and healthy during the winter months when the usual coughs, colds and flu are more prevalent and, at the same time, continuing to be aware that the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us.

Dr Carl Wright, Chair of Canterbury Climate Action Partnership, will be talking to us about the outcome of COP26 and how we can all play our part in addressing climate change. Carol Reed, Region Secretary, has already sent out the agenda to all clubs and I hope as many of you as possible will be able to join the meeting.

YVONNE FREEMAN, REGIONAL PRESIDENT, SI SOUTH EAST ENGLAND



ON NOVEMBER 11, the Croydon Soroptimists held a 'hybrid' meeting with guest speaker Brian Reilly from the National Centre of Domestic Violence, who joined via Zoom.

In recognition of the SIGBI 16 days of action against domestic violence against women, everyone attending wore something orange.

HEATHER BAILEY, SI CROYDON AND DISTRICT



Region Meetings in 2021-2022  
are scheduled to take place on:  
December 04 (via ZOOM)  
March 19  
June 25  
September 24

## Remembering Brenda

BRENDA BEETHAM WAS a Maidstone Soroptimist for many years and everyone remarks on how she was always very supportive.

She introduced her neighbour Michelle, who was our treasurer for many years, and also another neighbour – Janet of patchwork fame.

In 2010, Brenda and Janet made a beautiful patchwork quilt that was raffled in aid of Project Sierra. (See photo below.)

Brenda had an interesting life at sea with her Sea Captain husband Eric, and she missed him dreadfully when he died several years ago. They had no children. Brenda had considerable expertise as a Charity Fundraiser, skills which SI Maidstone were able to use to the Club's advantage. One of her favourite Charities was Sea Cadets.

Dr Mary Buchanan said that in addition to our Soroptimist friendship, she and her husband got to know Brenda and her husband as friends, with another Rotary couple – all the men had associations with the local Sea Cadets.

Nellie Adjaye remembers her chats with Brenda about Ghana. This resulted in a large donation of some unwanted (but perfectly viable) eye medicines from Brenda's local pharmacy to a rural eye clinic through one of Nellie's visits to Ghana. The eye Doctors and Nurses in charge were so grateful.

For a long period, Brenda was an active member of Maidstone Club's Social and Fundraising Committee, and one of the many fundraising activities she helped to organise was the Weekender Parties in member's homes that were popular at the time, where it was possible to enjoy some retail therapy as well as to raise monies for club projects.

Brenda was very interested when we had a speaker representing the Salvation Army who talked about the victims of traffickers and their need for somewhere safe to stay away from the SE of England. So much so that Brenda volunteered to be a driver with an escort to take victims to safe houses in other parts of the country. She enjoyed this very much but she kept this activity quiet to avoid contact with traffickers who would want to track their victims.

Brenda left Soroptimists prior to closure of SI Maidstone and did not transfer to SI Medway and Maidstone. She will be missed by the former Maidstone members with whom she

continued to correspond, and as a Friend of SI Medway and Maidstone.

The funeral will be held on Monday, December 13 at 14:00 at Thames View Crematorium and Cemetery, Gravesend, followed by drinks at The Railway Inn in Sole Street.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY  
AND MAIDSTONE



## Safeguarding Adults Week and Predatory Marriage

IT WAS NATIONAL Safeguarding Adults week, November 15-21 and the theme this year was 'Creating Safer Cultures'.

**Everyone deserves to be safe.**

Safeguarding Adults week, is a time for organisations to come together to raise awareness of important safeguarding issues. The aim is to highlight safeguarding key issues, facilitate conversations and to raise awareness of safeguarding best practice.

**So, we can all be better together.**

Soroptimists from across the UK, including seven members from our South East England Region, attended a presentation recently on 'Predatory Marriage' by Daphne Franks organised by the SIGBI Safeguarding Forum.

Daphne spoke eloquently about what happened to her late elderly mother, Joan Blass who suffered with dementia and how she wants the law to be changed to prevent it happening to other vulnerable adults.

Daphne's mother, Joan, was 91 with severe dementia and terminal cancer. She died in March 2016. After this, Daphne found out that a much younger man, age 68, had secretly married her five months previously.

Daphne had lived within 30 yards of Joan, and they saw each other every day. Daphne never knew that her mother had married this man. And in UK law, marriage annuls wills. So, Daphne's mother had effectively died without a will, leaving the man to inherit her entire estate.

Predatory marriage is a term that many of us will not have heard of before. It is defined as the practice of marrying an elderly person exclusively for the purpose of gaining access to their estate upon their death. While the requirements for mental capacity to make a valid will are high, in most jurisdictions the requirements for entering into a valid marriage are much lower; even a person suffering dementia may enter into marriage. In many jurisdictions, a marriage arrangement will invalidate any previous will left by the person, resulting in the spouse inheriting the estate.

In the UK, a campaign, Predatory Marriage UK (originally known as Justice for Joan) was started, working to change laws and procedures around marriage to reduce this practice, supported by lawyer Sarah Young of Ridley and Hall. The local MP, Fabian Hamilton, introduced a bill in Parliament during 2018 entitled the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Consent) Bill, to establish that marriage should no longer always revoke a previous will and have introduced other protections against predatory marriage. The bill was passed but ran out of parliamentary time, but work is continuing.

To find out more about Justice for Joan and what action you can take to support them, use this link

<https://www.predatorymarriage.uk/>

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



# Region President Yvonne reports on COP 26



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**

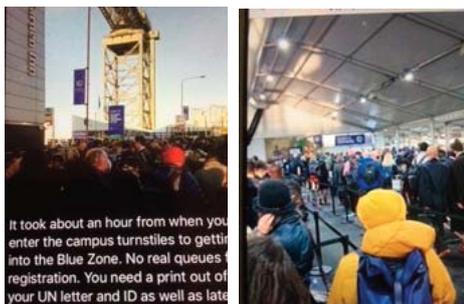
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

AS EXPLAINED EARLIER, my first attempt to travel to Glasgow for COP26 was thwarted by bad weather. My delay in travelling did, however, mean that I was able to watch the Opening Ceremony for COP26 online in the comfort of my own home and it was much easier to take notes and enjoy the event. I also managed to listen to part of the World Leaders' Summit on the Monday afternoon and hear some of the achievements and visions for the future presented by the Heads of State and Government.

When I finally set off again on the Tuesday morning, the other director representing CCAP for the first week, Freddie McCormack, a recently retired police officer, was also travelling on the same day. This meant that we could plan how best to spend the four days we were going to be at the Conference, which proved to be very helpful.

Registering at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) to gain access to the Conference the next morning certainly took quite a while before we reached the airport-style security check as shown in the following photos.

Despite the long wait to get into the SEC each morning, we felt reassured that all necessary safety measures were in place, including checking your daily lateral flow test.



During my week at COP26, I managed to attend a total of 14 sessions and events, visit a large number of exhibition stands in the pavilion, almost enrol two ladies from Niger in SI Africa (I am following up on this one) and drink numerous cups of coffee! What were the highlights? The events which will always stand out in my mind were the following:

**Finance Day** – Enhancing Support for Developing Countries and realising the \$100 Bn Goal, which involved three panel discussions by Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary, Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Germany, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, and The Lord Stern of Brentford, IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government and Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics (LSE).

**Energy Day** – Retail – Race to Zero. This session included representatives from H&M, Kingfisher, Walmart, IKEA, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and EDRA/GHIN the Global Home Improvement Association. It was noted that there are vast amounts of travel and carbon emissions involved in retail, which covers all areas – food, technology, clothing and homeware. Trade Associations have stepped up to support this initiative and help to accelerate the Race to Zero.

During energy day, hydrogen was highlighted as the way forward for vehicles as demonstrated in this hydrogen fuel cell electric ambulance pictured above.

**Youth and Public Empowerment Day** – Al Gore, Former Vice President of the United States spoke about the many disasters the world is now facing as a result of climate change using a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate these. He referred to



Climate TRACE which is an independent group harnessing satellites and artificial intelligence to advance emissions monitoring through direct observations and open data. It monitors and publishes greenhouse gas emissions within weeks. It was launched in 2021 before COP26 and improves monitoring, reporting and verification of both carbon dioxide and methane. This was indeed a most impressive and inspiring presentation. Al Gore is well known for his passion for climate action and he shared that passion with us, leaving us all keen to do more. He concluded with a quotation from Nelson Mandela "It always seems impossible until it's done".

Later that day, we heard from the young people present at the Conference:

**Youth** – Education and the Environment – Together for Tomorrow – Education and Climate Action The session started with a video of young speakers from around the world who had attended a mock COP. One speaker referred to the importance of helping indigenous people rather than displacing them as a result of climate change.

The first speaker was the Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP, Secretary of State for Education who quoted Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying "It's one minute to midnight on that doomsday clock. The people who will judge us are children not yet born. If we fail, they will not forgive us". Referring to the Paris Agreement, Mr Zahawi went on to stress the goal of keeping 1.5 degrees alive and that dealing with this was the challenge of our generation. We need to invest in education for our young people because we need more wind turbine technicians, solar engineers, nuclear scientists, etc.

**Nature Day** – The Ocean Ecosystem – From Green to Blue Andrea Vera, Senior Manager Natural Carbon Solutions, and Julian Ekelhof, Senior Director Climate Solutions from Forliance GmbH focussed on the importance of saving our ocean's ecosystem. They highlighted how mangroves are helping to restore and save our coastlines, particularly in the southern hemisphere, whilst at the same time creating opportunities for local people to earn an income by developing fish farms within the areas protected by the mangroves.

My time spent attending COP26 was indeed both informative and inspirational. I must admit to being quite sad at leaving Glasgow half-way through COP26, as I knew there was so much more ground that I could have covered during the second week. However, three other members of CCAP went up the second week and attended the relevant sessions for us. Now the challenge is to try and put into practice everything we learnt during the conference, and for me the key word is 'education'.



## Soroptimists Pledge 75 Hours Volunteering at Blythwood Sorting Centre



Jill Squires and Janet Garnons-Williams

AN URGENT CALL went out for volunteers to assist with checking the filled shoeboxes for the Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Nine Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists, including some of our new members, responded offering to volunteer working shifts totalling 75 hours.

The Sorting Centre for London and the South-East is operating between October 25 and December 10 and is being held this year in a different location, at St Barnabas Church in Gillingham.

It is a busy time for the volunteers checking shoeboxes that are to be dispatched to Serbia and Romania. The latest update is that over the next three weeks there are still 7000 shoeboxes waiting to be checked, so still more volunteers are needed.

The Leicester area does not have a Sorting Centre and so their 2800 filled shoeboxes were put on a lorry and delivered to Lok'n'Store at Gillingham on November 13. A small group of seven volunteers, which included Janet Garnons-Williams, Jill Squires and Jane Barnes, had to work to a tight deadline of just two hours. The lorry had been held up on the M11, but the group worked hard and successfully unloaded all the shoeboxes into cages and put them in storage until they could be checked. The photo shows Jill Squires and Janet Garnons-Williams in one of the storerooms surrounded by all the shoeboxes.

In 2020, 75,218 shoeboxes and bags were donated from across the UK and sent off to Eastern Europe. This year the Blythwood plan is to deliver shoeboxes and bags to Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine. Receiving a shoebox brings so much joy and happiness to the vulnerable communities across Eastern Europe when they find things they need such as hat, scarf, gloves, soap, shampoo, toy, and sweets.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

### Closing Date for the December issue of SEE News is Tuesday, December 28, 2021

Email your text and photographs to Patricia at  
pat.painting@btinternet.com 020 8668 2681

## SI Medway & Maidstone



Latest delivery  
this week of  
30 trauma teddies  
to Child Protection  
Team (Maidstone  
Police Station) for  
vulnerable children  
affected by  
domestic violence



THE LATEST DELIVERY of 30 Trauma Teddies to Maidstone Police took place on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This was followed by the 16 Days of Activism to promote a campaign to end gender-based violence.

As part of our commitment to raise awareness, Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists had a talk at our November club meeting by Kent Police on Operation Madrid in Medway. This work focuses on women and their safety at night and has been well received. The good news is that the initiative will be rolled out in other areas.

Carol McKeough followed up after the meeting by getting a Police contact dealing with domestic abuse in the Maidstone area. She was advised that the West Kent vulnerability team that Isobel Groves had been in contact with previously, covers both Tonbridge and the Maidstone area.

After the sterling work done by Isobel, they were fully aware of the trauma teddies being provided by Soroptimists to support children who maybe victims or witnesses to traumatic incidents. Having seen the teddies provided by Isobel, the Police think they are fabulous!

On hearing from Carol that Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists had further supplies of trauma teddies available, DI Richard Pringle requested 30 bears, which Jane Barnes delivered to Maidstone Police Station for his attention.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

## More Trauma Teddies from Tunbridge Wells Club



TUNBRIDGE WELLS CLUB'S knitted trauma teddies were packed up in their Covid-secure bags and delivered to Tunbridge Wells Police Station by Club Secretary Ann Greenfield and Programme Action Officer Angela McPherson. These teddies are used for victims of trauma and traffic accidents and join all the knitted bears submitted across the region.

CAROLINE AUCLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



# Federation Consultative Council Report from FCC Jan Doyle

I ATTENDED THE remote meeting of the Federation Board on October 27. Among the items discussed were:

## Conferences

- The SIGBI Conference for 2021-2022 is planned for Belfast and it is hoped that this will not have to be a virtual conference again!
- President Cathy reported that locations for future conferences were under review, taking into account several considerations, including our falling membership and the size of venues. The venue for the next SIGBI overseas conference is also under consideration.
- A further report on this will be brought to the Board Meeting in January 2022.

## Patron

- President Cathy updated the Board on the recommendation from the Patron's Working Party that a patron is probably outdated and that we should consider appointing Ambassadors. The working party have submitted a shortlist of four names but after a general chat several other names were mentioned. There was considerable discussion about managing an ambassador, (who they would report to, and how long they would serve).
- It was suggested that initially there should be just one ambassador and the Board have been asked to carry out some research and report to a future Board Meeting.

## Membership

- Membership Director Chevonne updated the Board on her work including further meetings with Associate members. Typically, about 25% of associates attend these meetings and a What'sApp group has been set up to support them.
- Concern was expressed as to how the Federation can make the Associate members feel more included and the FCC was asked to ensure that any Associate member within their region is made aware of region events. So far as our Region is concerned, Associate members are invited to all our region events and indeed, the Editor of our Region Newsletter is an Associate member.
- Director Chevonne went on to report on new clubs formed in Asia and the Caribbean, but little has happened in the UK although a potential club looks very promising.
- It was reported that the fee structure for e-Clubs will be the same as any normal club. So, in the UK, for example, the member will pay their club fee, regional levy, SIGBI fee, the three small charity contributions and UKPAC levy. This is to ensure that e-club members have representation at every level and can take office at those levels if they wish.
- It was clarified that members can only be a member of one club (although any member may attend a meeting of any club – including e-clubs, but they are only a member of one club) and that e-club members must come from the country within which they are situated. The question of location was discussed, and this was agreed to be the location of the founder Secretary. Additionally, it was agreed that an e-club should have a maximum of 30 members to avoid an enormous, online, unwieldy clubs.

## Programme

- Director of Programme, Kay Richmond confirmed that clusters were now in place representing all parts of the Federation, which is pleasing, and she looks forward to greater input moving forward.
- She went on to report that it appeared some clubs were better than others at completing Programme Report Forms and to help improve this, a webinar is planned for February which it is hoped will help members complete programme focus report forms that reflect a club's work in the best possible light.
- SIGBI were present at COP26 and I know that President Yvonne will update us on this.
- We were reminded about a webinar in January on future SIGBI projects whether or not we should have one! Two areas of sensitivity here are governance and finance of a project and there will be presentations along those lines on the day.
- A second webinar is to be held on completing Programme Focus Report Forms.
- I do hope that each club is able to send at least one member to the webinars.

## PR, Marketing & Communications

- PR, Marketing & Comms Director Nisha Ghosh, reported on work done over the last three months including small podcasts and/or Facebook live streaming pieces which will enable members to dip into information whenever they want.
- She reported that more people were using the app to access the Newsletter, and this is to be encouraged.
- Noted that the PR Committee are currently working on further toolkits for the coming year which it was suggested should be made available earlier to ensure clubs have time to make good use of them.
- Nisha stressed that members should be encouraged to be aware of the SIGBI branding and to consistently use the correct font, colours and layouts as set out in the brand guidelines handbook.

## Finance and Systems

- In presenting her report, Finance Director Ruth Healey, mentioned:
  - An increase in membership fees by 3.1% with effect from April 01, 2022 (in line with policy that increases are linked to the CPI rate in September).
  - The 2022/23 budget will shortly be drafted, and presented to the January 2022 Board meeting. Ruth indicated that in line with Charity Commission requirements a Reserves Policy was under consideration.
  - The FCC was asked to encourage any of their clubs who have microfinancing projects to consider joining the SIGBI teams on the Lendwithcare and Kiva websites so that we can publicise the total that SIGBI is doing. Joanne Voller in the office can help if clubs need information.
  - A 'picture of the future' is being developed and will be brought back to the January 2022 meeting. This will incorporate a 5-year financial forecast and potential changes to structure and operation that might be required given our reducing membership.

/Continued on page 12



## A campaigner on the outside at COP26

THE 26TH CONFERENCE of the Parties has ended and while many people and organisations are 'hopeful' of positive outcomes, many more have been paying attention to what the scientists have been advising for decades and evaluating government promises against the data and what that will mean for future years on this planet, both sooner and later.

Representatives from around the world attended both inside the conference buildings and outside on the streets of Glasgow. I was fortunate to join with representatives who were campaigning outside. The information about environmental destruction and the devastating effects of climate change brought to the conference by people from nations already badly affected is sobering at the very least, terrifying if extrapolated to future scientific scenarios and utterly incomprehensible when it is shown that many of these impacts could have been reduced or avoided if our planet and people were revered more than profit.

The peaceful protest of over 100,000 citizens from all over the world on a wet and windy November day in Glasgow clearly showed the strength of feeling of desperation at the inaction of so many governments. How many more would have been there if accommodation was available/affordable (thank goodness for a friendly and welcoming Edinburgh Soroptimist – thank you Anna). A bit less of the fresh Scottish weather and more would have joined in or stayed longer. As it was, they say the head of the march reached the finish point before the tail had left the start! Lots of creative and symbolic events took place on the streets, many showing how our consumerist lifestyles are driving the destruction. Our Region speaker from September (Robin from Population Matters) was there to show the link with the exponential rise and rise of the human population and many groups highlighted how women's rights were literally falling off a cliff edge, just as progress was increasing. Save the trees, the elephants, the oceans, the birds, the bees, the NHS – too many to list.

Was COP26 a success? Of course not – not for our planet anyway. Lots more political double-speak and targets that sound great but for which no-one is accountable – classic 'greenwash'. No legislation on anything that is known to be destroying ecosystems or adding to carbon emissions. More broken promises to help struggling countries where market-driven forces in 'developed' countries have destroyed lives and livelihoods. More representatives of fossil fuel industries present than the number of countries sending delegates – what message does that send? But let's come back next year and do it all again...

If you're not a fan of civil disobedience, what would you do that hasn't been tried over the last 30-40 years to bring about the drastic changes needed by governments and big corporations to act appropriately in the face of the Climate and

Ecological Emergency? Consider when women in this country might have got the vote if not for the Suffragettes. This is a much bigger scale. So I challenge you – who is it that you think is coming to protect or save your family and friends?



GRACE ONIONS,  
SI CROYDON AND DISTRICT

## Sevenoaks Club Orange the World



President Pat with Jennifer

AT THEIR NOVEMBER meeting, Sevenoaks members acknowledged International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women by inviting guest speaker Jennifer Proctor to talk about her book *Suffragettes of Kent*. Club President Pat welcomed Tunbridge Wells President Caroline, accompanied by two of her members, and three prospective Sevenoaks members

A candle was lit by Jennifer in memory of Suffragettes who suffered horrific violence and death to give women a voice in the highest places. All women who have met their deaths from violence throughout the world were also remembered.

To start the 16 Days of Activism everyone was given an orange to use as a reminder of this most important UN day, together with a copy of 'Eight Ways to Recycle Orange Peel' to add to their list of recycling objects and saving waste.



'Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread persistent and devastating human rights violation in the world' UNESCO

ISOBEL GROVES, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SI SEVENOAKS

### 2022 Diary Dates

- UKPAC Meeting January 29
- SISEE Region Meeting March 19
- UKPAC Meeting March 26
- SISEE Region Meeting June 25
- SI AGM July 11
- UKPAC Meeting September 03
- SISEE Region Meeting September 24
- CSW66 (2022) Commission on the Status of Women  
March 14 to 25 (Representatives of Member States,  
UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental  
organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world  
are invited to attend the session.)
- Belfast Conference October 27-29  
which it is hoped will be in person at the Belfast Waterfront.



## Programme Action News from Region PA Chair Penelope Robbins

WHAT A BUSY FEW months in the Soroptimist calendar: SI 100 Celebration, UKPAC, FPAC, the Llandudno October Conference, which I hope you all enjoyed and were inspired by the speakers, and of course now we are in the middle of the Unite Campaign: **Orange the World 16 Days of Activism: END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NOW!** – International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25, concluding with International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2021.

In early November I decided rather than send lots of separate emails I would write an Updates Report and Reference document which I circulated to all Programme Action Officers. I hope you found it helpful or if you have any other ideas re best method of communication please do let me know.

### COP 26 Challenges of Climate Change

Programme Director Kay Richmond advises that they have just published the COP26 [Outcomes Document](#) which details the progress made on the four goals – mitigation, adaptation, finance and collaboration.

There are three short videos on voices from the green zone which include important messages from [Indigenous people](#), [Youth](#), and [Faith Leaders](#).

Kay Richmond says “These reflect the hard work, achievements and activity from yourselves and wider civil society”.

### United Nations Days November 2021

This month saw three important UN Days: International Day of Tolerance and World Toilet Day tackling the global sanitation crisis and aim to achieve SDG6: water/sanitation for all by 2030.

For our Region the most important of all the UNiTE campaigns is **Orange the World 16 Days of Activism**. It has been good to see many clubs using the SIGBI PR & Marketing Toolkit & Poster on their Social Media pages to raise awareness. I have never seen Instagram so flooded with information and orange items. The toolkit, available in the Membership area of the SIGBI website, highlights the key issues.

I attended the Zoom UN Official Event led by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and other speakers. Six languages one voice. Good to hear that the Global Agenda for Action Coalition now has a 5-year plan: “Ground-breaking commitments to end gender-based violence, drive equality in technology and innovation, and to ensure economic justice and rights for women and girls everywhere”.

Thank you to all club members who held events, acknowledged the day at club meetings and raised awareness of this most important of UN Days.

### 100 years later ‘Planting Trees for a Brilliant Future’

The SI Centenary tree planting map was updated as at October 31 and 69,331 trees have been planted, of which our Region planted 655, an amazing achievement. Trees are the lungs of our society. Please do take time to look and see where they have been planted across the world and read the descriptions on the map. [Tree Planting Map](#).

### Recycling and Sanitary Poverty

I understand that it is the intention of SIGBI to set up a recycling database, so we as a Region should be able to feed information into that. So please let me know what your club is currently recycling.

The list I have for Region is:

**Plastic milk bottle tops:** SI Eastbourne for the Friends of Eastbourne hospital.

**Blister packs:** SI Croydon (partnership with Croydon Rotary club) and SI Medway and Maidstone, via Superdrug for TerraCycle.

**Tin cans:** SI Tunbridge Wells for cash.

**Tights:** SI East Grinstead.

**Corks:** SI Croydon.

**Stamps:** SI Sevenoaks for RNIB.

**Tinfoil:** SI Sevenoaks via local vets for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

**Spectacles:** SI Sevenoaks via local opticians for Rotary Vision Aid.

**Clothes for Male Gatwick Detainees:** SI Sevenoaks.

Thank you to those clubs who continue to donate to Food-banks and for Sanitary Poverty. UKPAC Chair Liz Dominey has directed us towards [HEY GIRLS](#) a community interest company aiming to eradicate period poverty in the UK. For every product you buy, they give a product to someone in need.

### Programme Focus Report Forms (PFRF)

Carol and Yvonne will be holding a Webinar in February 2022 for Region Presidents and Programme Action Officers specifically for Programme Focus Report Forms which I will attend and report back to you all. In the interim here is a link to [Programme Action Database](#) page with links to the PFRF webinar in April 2021 and the template form together with sample forms produced by each of the five APDs.

### UKPAC Modern Day Slavery Group

Janice Wilson of SI Scotland North has been working hard throughout the year to “pull” everything together and create an Action Plan. Please see my previous report giving details of The [Brave Bear Trust](#) work and Petition to sign – Revoke Leicester University student sex work toolkit. Currently 11,654 signatures aiming to get to 15,000 signatures.

Reaching out to club Programme Action officers please let me know if you are currently undertaking any project work with Modern Day Slavery/Human Trafficking. Would you like to progress further? Be on a sub-committee? Please contact me as Janice Wilson would like to connect to those who are interested.

Federation Programme Action Committee (FPAC) October 2021. The [minutes of the October 28 meeting](#) are now available.

### Llandudno Conference 2021

You can view the full presentations from the three excellent speakers, Avani Ashwani, Dr Bonnie Waring and Mary Muia, on the [Llandudno Conference Website](#).

### Soroptimist International 2021-2023

Every two years, on Human Rights Day, December 10, the incoming SI President selects a project that provides direct assistance to women in extreme need; “Opening Doors to a Bright Future” was officially launched on October 01. Headed by SI President-Elect Maureen Maguire, who takes up her role as President in January 2022, the Appeal is now part of the broader recently established [Soroptimist International Foundation](#).

I look forward to seeing you at Region Meeting in December and take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

SEE PAGE 10 FOR 2022 MEETING DATES



## Candlelit Vigil in Tunbridge Wells

TUNBRIDGE WELLS CLUB, in conjunction with local Councillor Justine Rutland, organised a peaceful Candlelit Vigil, on November 25 outside Tunbridge Wells Town Hall. The Town Hall was lit in orange to reflect the colour of the United Nation's Campaign #OrangeTheWorld 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

Approximately one hundred people attended the event, many holding candles along with personalised placards made using the SIGBI graphics, to hear invited speakers.

President Caroline described how around the UK and across Europe councils, towns and organisations will be lighting up their buildings and bridges in orange in unified support during the 16 day period and she thanked Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for its support.

The first speaker was Jane Beeley, Secretary, UNA LASER (London and South East Region) and Chair, United Nations Association Tunbridge Wells & Wealden. Jane talked about the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the development of the UN, and also the issue around human trafficking. She also invited people to attend an online zoom about Afghanistan scheduled for December 9 at 19:00-20:30, during which women's issues, including education, are expected to be referenced. [Tunbridge Wells & Wealden UNA: Afghanistan – the way forward.](#)

We were then joined by Zoe from DAVSS (Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services) an organisation which supports victims who are living in West Kent. Zoe talked about the shadow pandemic which is domestic abuse and how Covid has increased the demand on local services. She also outlined types of abuse which include, physical violence, coercive control, sexual abuse/control, emotional/psychological/mental abuse, stalking, digital abuse, economic abuse, honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, (FGM).

After sharing information about the Soroptimist Vision and Mission and the extent of Soroptimist reach throughout the world, Caroline highlighted a few other organisations who are also campaigning with relation to violence against women including 'Million Women Rise' and 'Counting Dead Women'. She called for men to support women and girls as well and cited the Bishop of Tonbridge the Rt Reverend Simon Burton-Jones who recently said 'Violence against women has shamefully been treated as a woman's issue'.

There followed a statement about women as victims and male perpetrators, with very positive news that Tunbridge Wells Town Council are considering White Ribbon Accreditation.

William Benson, Chief Executive of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, talked to the audience about the White Ribbon campaign and all of the work being undertaken to demonstrate how committed the council and other local agencies are to supporting women and girls within the borough.

Caroline emphasized strongly how Tunbridge Wells Soroptimists wish to continue the conversation about the safety of women and girls both at home and abroad. She stated: 'This is not political; this is a social issue and community issue. Women are being socially excluded from our town, especially at night due to fear. Recent events in Tunbridge Wells have illustrated that sadly we are not safe even after we are dead.'

She then invited the gathering to take one of the newly printed Tunbridge Wells postcards which include Tunbridge Wells Club contact details.

President Elect Claire Archbold gave a reading 'Sleeping Beauty' from Nikita Gill's book *Wild Embers: Poems of rebellion*,

*fire and beauty*. Poet and author Sarah Salway read the poem 'Conjuring' from the same edition.

We then had a minute's silence to remember the victims of gender-based violence.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND PRESIDENT SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS & DISTRICT



## FCC Report

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 09

### Governance

- Governance Director Sylvia Watson reported that her committee is looking at all the governing documents and a process for undertaking consultation with members/FCC would shortly be outlined.
- Governance Director Sylvia also commented that the streamlining of the website is ongoing, and each director will review their area in an effort to streamline the number of documents.

### President Elect Ruth Healey

- Councillors had submitted their 6-monthly reports, and although the summary has still to be finalised, the common theme appeared to be reducing membership, despite many clubs successfully recruiting new members within the last year. She indicated that good use of Zoom had been made during the pandemic, but some clubs had failed to meet at all during this time.
- She went on to report that she, and the office staff, were about to embark on a full review of office systems, commenting that the accounts system currently being used is out of date and that the membership database is now 10 years old and that these two systems can't "talk" to one another.
- She reported she has made a claim to the IT company for the downtime suffered during 2021, particularly, the nine days in September when, it is believed, significant conference registrations were lost.

President Cathy closed the meeting expressing the Board's thanks to all those FCC members who had come to the end of their term and she also extended thanks to Procedural Consultant Maureen Maguire who steps down from this office before taking up her role in January as President of Soroptimist International.

JAN DOYLE, FCC SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

# Canterbury's Silent March against gender-based violence



CANTERBURY SOROPTIMISTS MARCHED in wintry weather on Saturday, November 27, 2021 to raise awareness of the United Nations 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls.

The latest UN figures show that 137 women across the world are killed every day by a male partner or male member of their own family – a total of 50,000 women a year murdered by men they know and should be able to trust. In the UK, a report from the Femicide Census, a unique source of comprehensive information about women who have been killed in the UK and the men who have killed them, tells us that a man kills a woman every three days – a statistic unchanged across the 10 years studied.

This year there was media coverage of the frenzied attack by a man that led to the deaths in a London park of two sisters, Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry. There was greater publicity given to the gruesome killing of Sarah Everard by a male police officer. Then in May of this year, the Kent news was full of the blunt-force trauma killing of Julia James, a police community support officer, by a man in woods not far from Aylesham. The news coverage and widespread public shock and condemnation from these events may have led some to feel that things would change, must change. But a further 81 women were killed by men in the 28 weeks following Ms Everard's murder.

When a woman is killed by a man, whether by a stranger or more often by someone known to her, we are often told that it is a 'rare occurrence,' 'an isolated attack', or 'an incredibly rare incident'. Thanks to the [Femicide Census](#) we know the truth is otherwise. Violence by men against women and girls is not rare. That is why we Soroptimists walked in silence through the central streets of Canterbury.

Fran Ellis Director, Chief Executive of The Rising Sun, a Domestic Violence and Abuse Charity, addressed the group before we set off. We were also joined by: Soroptimists from Thanet, Sari Sirkia-Weaver chair of the Canterbury Domestic Abuse Forum, representatives of the Women's Equality Party East Kent branch, Oasis Domestic Abuse Services in Margate and Rochester, a White Ribbon Champion, representatives of the Canterbury Sustainable Development Forum, and family members and friends.

Those who marched wore or carried something orange. As a bright and optimistic colour, orange has been chosen to represent a future free from male violence against women and girls.

Walking in solidarity and silence through the ancient streets of Canterbury, to raise awareness about male violence against women and girls, was a moving and powerful experience.

For more information, please go to:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/unite>

TESSA WOODWARD, SI CANTERBURY

