

President Yvonne's message Healthy People, Healthy Planet



AS MY FIRST President's message of the year, I would just like to wish you all once again a Happy and Healthy 2022. I can hardly believe that we are rapidly approaching the end of January already!

My first visit of the year was on the Saturday morning, January 15, when I joined Medway and Maidstone to plant tree saplings at Tovil in Maidstone as part of the Soroptimists Centennial Campaign 'Planting Trees for a Brilliant Future'. The event was also one of the club's activities to mark SI Medway and Maidstone's 75th Anniversary. It was good to meet the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Fay Gooch, and to hear how the various mayors and the other council officers throughout the county meet up to network and support each other in a similar way in which we do as Soroptimists. Just before I left, Sharon Forghani, Club Secretary, kindly presented me with a lovely Soroptimist brooch, which will be a super memory of the morning. A total of 420 saplings were planted.

In the afternoon, Penny Robbins, Jan Doyle and I attended the first of two webinars organised by Kay Richmond, SIGBI Director of Programme, and her team. The aim of the webinar was to consider whether or not to have a future SIGBI Federation Project. Those who attended included Cathy Cottridge, Federation President, Regional Presidents, Regional Programme Action Officers and Federation Councillors.

Presentations were given by Ruth Healey, SIGBI Director of Finance, Sylvia Watson, SIGBI Director of Governance, and Kay Richmond. We then went into breakout rooms to discuss what we heard, to vote on some specific questions and to report back to the meeting. I will be circulating the presentations and the outcomes of the webinar to club presidents shortly and I would like you to discuss these in your club meetings and feed back your thoughts to me please and copy in Penny and Jan.

The key outcomes of the day were (1) the majority of those present were not in favour of having another federation project at the present time, and (2) the majority were also in favour of supporting the new SI President's Appeal 'Opening Doors' and the Diamond Education Grant, which will provide international and local interest for each country within SIGBI. SI President, Maureen Maguire, has assigned to SIGBI as part of her theme for her two years a project in Pakistan, details of which will be issued in due course.

There will also be a second webinar organised by Kay on February 05, when the topic will be Programme Focus Forms.

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What's in this month's newsletter?



A toilet made from aluminium cans. Page 02.



A Suffragette made from Lego. Page 07.



Tree planting with The Mayor of Maidstone. Page 06.



Ancient tree walk in Sevenoaks. Page 08.

ONE OF SOROPTIMIST Tunbridge Wells current projects is the recycling of aluminium cans into cash, we then use the funds to sponsor toilets in poor countries with the Charity Toilet Twinning <https://www.toilettwinning.org/>

Approximately two billion people worldwide do not have a toilet and, according to Toilet Twinning, women and girls are the most affected in poorer countries with many women and girls not being permitted to go to the toilet in the daytime. Many have to seek relief in the night time, putting them at risk of sexual assault and also snake bites.

So we came up with this scheme to raise funds and to look after our local environment at the same time. We started by collecting the cans from individual households. Then the pandemic happened so we went out walking, either on our own or in small groups, with a purpose and with litter-pickers.

Our streets, hedgerows, parks and the local common sadly seemed inundated with empty cans just thrown away. Not only is this unsightly but also the BPA from these cans (bisphenol A, an industrial chemical) is likely to leach into the environment which will ultimately harm our local eco-system.



We are very delighted that with the help of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Parks Department we have installed two can collection bins in Dunorlan Park and Grosvenor & Hilbert Park. These bins have our posters informing the user of our intentions, and we are emptying them on a regular basis, hoping that the

cans are pre-crushed, but we are happy to take uncrushed ones. Our team of Soroptimists have quite a competition to see who can collect the most cans and it is surprising how therapeutic it is to have a can crushing session.

It takes four car loads of crushed cans to raise enough money (£60) to support one toilet. When we have enough cans, club member Mary Salmon drives them to the recycling unit to be weighed.

So far we have supported a number of toilets in Zambia, Malawi, Nigeria, and a toilet block in Afghanistan.

In November 2021 the local community in Tunbridge Wells arranged a COP26 event in which we took part. We had stall and President Caroline Aukland gave a presentation on being a



Soroptimist and our alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goal's, the impact of poverty on health and well-being and women and girl's safety. The highlight of the stall was the unique toilet created out of cans made by our treasurer Louise Taylor. This was utilised as a fundraiser with the winner of one of the competitions being gifted a Toilet Twinning certificate. We had a number of fundraisers, including a 'guess the number of ring pulls', and the stall was visited throughout the day by curious attendees.

We hope to encourage the local community to recycle aluminium cans and love, not litter, our parks and green spaces. Plus the toilet certificates will be shared amongst the local community who have helped us with can donations.

When we are out with our litter-pickets and hi viz jackets, many people stop and ask us what we are doing. It is a real conversation starter and a good way to talk about the projects that we undertake.

Ultimately we would like to encourage Tunbridge Wells to become a Toilet Twinned Town in much the same way as we are already a Fairtrade Town.

One of our newest members, Jean Meadows, has started fundraising for Toilet Twinning and Jean will be walking 20 miles in January to raise funds for this project. If you would like to sponsor Jean, here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8e82et>

CAROLINE AUKLAND, PRESIDENT SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



PHOTOGRAPH DETAILS: President Caroline with Treasurer Louise christening one of the new bins. PA Officer Angela McPherson, Treasurer Louise Taylor and UN Rep Mary Salmon with the Tunbridge Wells Toilet. Angela McPherson with Jean Meadows.



Programme Action News from Region PA Chair Penelope Robbins

THIS MONTH REGION President Yvonne Freeman, Carol Infanti APD Prosperity, Jan Doyle Federation Consultative Councillor, and I, attended Programme Director Kay Richmonds Programme Action Zoom meeting, the the purpose of which was to help us as an organisation, discuss and decide the way forward for a SIGBI project and projects across the Federation.

Informative presentations were given by Ruth Healey on Finance and Sylvia Watson on Governance in Projects. At the time of writing further information will be sent out to clubs by Region President Yvonne for discussion and feedback. Kay Richmond, Programme Director, advised that the outcomes will be discussed by the Board in March and the final outcome given in April.

SI Presidents Appeal and SIGBI President Blog

For January 2022 I wanted to draw everyone's attention to these weblinks and Blog. Please do share with your club members. SI President Maureen Maguire Appeal "Opening Doors to a Bright Future" <https://tinyurl.com/yckrtutn> with a link to the Cambodia project:

<https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/opening-doors-to-a-bright-future-cambodia/>

SI President Maureen Maguire has given us permission to tell you that in addition to the first project in Cambodia, two others have been selected, one in Pakistan (SIGBI) and one in Uganda (SIAF). Details will be made available on the SI website as soon as feasible

SIGBI President Cathy Cotteridge Blog

<https://sigbi.org/2022/presidents-message-january-2022/>

Programme Focus Report Forms

A big thank you to everyone who submitted reports last year. For the period January 01 to December 31, 2021, 219 reports were accepted reaching 2429 beneficiaries and Total Funds raised £16211.

Please do keep submitting the report forms for all your projects; it's so important to have our work recognised and for us to maintain our consultative status at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the UN, which gives us a voice on important discussion papers, and allows us to attend the Commission on the Status of Women in New York each March, and contribute to the "Agreed Conclusions". This status would not be possible without the fantastic work being done by you all.

Carol and Yvonne will be holding a Webinar in February for Regional Presidents and Regional Programme Action Officers specifically for Programme Focus Report Forms, which I will attend and report back to you all.

Commission for Social Development (CSocD)

In addition to the Convention to End all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), SIGBI has access to the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) through Soroptimist International (SI). SIGBI has co-signed a recent submission to CSocD from the NGO Committee on Social Development, which advocates for a new social contract which values inclusive collaboration and ensures respect and dignity for the most vulnerable people" Please see SIGBI website January 12, 2022 for full published details.

UKPAC Chair Liz Dominey

I received an update from UKPAC Chair Liz Dominey on the Safe Homes for Women Leaving Prison initiative, and circulated to Programme Action Officers the details of the virtual 'drop-in' event to be held on Monday January 24. Isobel Groves PAO SI Sevenoaks is kindly attending on my behalf. We will give a further update in February.

Tree Planting

Did you read in SIGBI News Briefing that to end December 2021 75,475 trees have been planted by SIGBI. Amazing achievement and fantastic that our Region has been a part of this. I have calculated that we as a Region have planted at home and abroad 1701 trees. Thank you Jane Barnes for letting me know that SI Medway and Maidstone recently planted 420 trees which are yet to show on the map at the time of writing, making the total for the Region 2121! We can continue to record tree plantings on the map until the end of March 2022. Link to Form <https://sigbi.wufoo.com/forms/w1d02o87190yylb/>

Rotary "Empowering Girls" Seminar is to be held on Saturday February 05, 2022 at 10am free to attend.

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/yzmapnux>

UN Days/Regional Meetings

Our Regional Website has now been populated with UN Days. Acknowledgement Days, Region Meetings and Social Events, a useful aide when planning club programmes. Link: <https://sigbi.org/south-east-england/sisee-region-calendar/> Thank you to Jacalyn Wood and Jane Barnes for all their hard work on this.



International Womens Day is fast approaching. This year's theme is #BreakTheBias.

"Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. A world that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality. Collectively we can all #BreakTheBias. Celebrate women's achievement. Raise awareness against bias. Take action for equality".

I have emailed to clubs Kathy Warrick, UKPAC Communications Officer's materials to be used at club meetings, on your Websites and Social media. Further resource SIGBI website Link <https://sigbi.org/members/wp-admin/my-sites.php>

UKPAC recently Tweeted The Independent Article "Women have fewer than a third of top UK jobs", report finds "It's bad for us all, as we miss out on women's talent, skills and perspective." Fawcett Society Chief Executive adds "Please raise awareness of this important day at your March club meetings and look forward to seeing many photos of club members with crossed arms/hands!"

Learning how to be a racial equality ally

Another in the occasional series of articles by Tessa Woodward, SI Canterbury

A new concept, 'Micro-intervention'

IN MY ARTICLE published in the August 2021 issue of this newsletter, I looked at the concept of micro-aggression. Just as a reminder, this is a brief, commonplace, verbal, behavioural or mental event that may, intentionally or unintentionally, communicate derogatory racial messages to the receiver. Here's an example. After hearing a person of colour speak at a meeting, someone might perhaps say, 'Well done! You were so articulate!'

Last time I discussed the fact that, although some of the example remarks I offered are, on the surface, well-meaning and intended as compliments, it is not the intention that is important. It is the unconscious meta-message, the fact that they communicate derogatory or hostile racial messages to the receiver that is important. It is not the intention but the effect that is important.

A person of colour out and about in the UK on public transport, at work and in their free time, may encounter many micro-aggressions in a day. They may be completely sick of them, tired of wondering where the next one is coming from. And if a person in this situation murmurs in dissent, they may well be accused of being touchy or having no sense of humour. If the person has the energy, they may try to explain why the unconscious message is hurtful. But they may have tried to explain in the past and got nowhere. They may be too exhausted that day to try to educate white people or those from a different heritage from themselves.

This is where an anti-racist ally can come in. When I am in the company of friends, family, colleagues or others, I may realise that someone has said or done something which is racially problematic. If I do and say nothing, I am in effect condoning the aggression. I am complicit. So, what can I do, as an anti-racist ally to interrupt the bias?

If I call a person out abruptly as a racist and take the high moral ground, I am likely to encounter defensiveness, upset

and anger. Instead, I need to encourage the person to reflect, to learn, to empathise, with the person attacked. I need to educate the person rather than lose them. This is where 'micro-interventions' come in.

I need to address the unconscious message in the micro-aggression, to make the invisible visible. This is because the perpetrator may be quite unaware that they have been offensive. I need to shift the focus from the intention of the remark or action to its effect.

Let's look at some problematic remarks. I need to think about them carefully, to understand the bias they contain and then to figure out how to interrupt it. It is sensitive work!

'Wow! She's so eloquent, so articulate!' 'Oh, what makes you say that? Are you surprised? What were you expecting?'

'Her hair is great! Is it real? Can I touch it?' 'I don't think trespassing in someone's personal space is a good idea.'

'White privilege doesn't exist. We all have problems in life.' 'That's true. But how often are you and I stopped by police when we are driving? Do store detectives follow us around when we go shopping? How often do people try to touch our hair? Do people clutch their handbags in fear when we pass them in the street?'

'What do they mean, Black Lives Matter? All lives matter!' 'Absolutely! And all houses need to be protected. But if one house is on fire, don't we rush to protect that one first?'

'I'm colour blind! I don't see race!' 'I guess you and I don't have to see it! Everything is arranged for our benefit!'

'I'm not racist. I have a black friend, partner, neighbour, colleague...' 'That's funny! The other day, I heard a man say that he couldn't be sexist because he is a husband and a father of two girls.'

I need to practice this special kind of thinking, so I try to take it with me when I watch TV and films and listen to the radio too.

Eastbourne Club Writers Group



A GROUP OF our members enjoy a monthly meeting on Zoom to develop their writing skills. We have used a variety of writing exercises including sensory description, character development, location, opening and closing lines, dialogue and observation.

We also now produce a short story at each meeting on a given theme. Recent topics have included: Spirit; Revenge; The Day that went Wrong; A Twist in the Tale; People Watching; Fear and Opposites Attract.

As a group we aim to provide supportive, positive criticism to develop our writing and provide motivation. Meetings are very enjoyable too.

If you are thinking of setting up a similar group for your club and would like more information please contact Lynne Chiswick (lynne.chiswick@sky.com).

Our Writers Group is one of several activities for members, and other groups include a Book Club, an Art Group, a Craft Group and a Photographic Challenge.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SI EASTBOURNE

New Year – New Regional Website



A SMALL WEBSITE working group was set up, led by Jacalyn Wood, Regional Communication Officer, to develop our Regional website. The group consisted of President Yvonne Freeman, President Elect Lynne Chiswick, Jacalyn and Jane Barnes.

They had their first virtual meeting in December to discuss what should be included on the website, thinking of the target audience and to promote the Region.

Acknowledging there was a considerable amount of work involved, it was agreed to contact SIGBI office to request that Jane Barnes also be registered to enable the administrative duties to be shared between Jane and Jacalyn.

Over recent weeks, work on populating the website has progressed and it now consists of the following pages:

- Home page
- Region News
- Regional Officers
- Our Clubs
- What we do
- Membership
- Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility
- Where it all began
- SISEE Region Calendar
- SISEE Newsletters
- Contact us

It is hoped you will have a look at the Region website <https://sigbi.org/south-east-england/> and use it as a resource to share with existing and new members.

Should you wish to have anything of interest published on the website, especially involving President Yvonne at your meetings or events, please send details and photographs to Jacalyn and/or Jane (email addresses below) so they can keep the website updated with what is happening.

REGION WEBSITE WORKING GROUP

jacalynwood@ntlworld.com and barnes786@btinternet.com

**Region Meetings in 2022
are scheduled to take place on:**
March 19
June 25
September 24

President Yvonne's message

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01

...We will be discussing what constitutes a good project and how to complete a good form with sufficient details and information, which can be passed onto the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) division of the United Nations. The information we supply about our project work helps to maintain our special consultative status with ECOSOC. Carol Infanti, APD Prosperity, and Yvonne Gibbon, APD People, will be supporting Kay on this webinar and Penny Robbins, Jan Doyle and I will be attending.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jacalyn Wood and Jane Barnes for all their hard work on our regional website, which is now looking really good. Shortly before Christmas, we took the decision to form a small communications team, which also includes Lynne Chiswick and myself. We started by sharing ideas of what we really want from our website, and it has now gone from strength-to-strength.

Jacalyn, Regional Communications Officer, has really brought us up to date using all the latest media options to get our message out there. The website is possibly the most useful tool to showcase what we do to the wider world and potential new members.

Regional Project. I am still liaising with Margaret Ikiara in Meru to see how we can best support our members there with their proposed project to address unwanted teenage pregnancies, many due to the fact that girls in the region frequently have to purchase their sanitary provision from the elders in the community at a ridiculous cost and for 'favours'. The costings for the project are quite high and it was felt that as a region, we would not be able to fund it in its entirety. I am now looking at some possible options including funding part of the project and/or working with another organisation such as Action Aid, who do work in Kenya, which might enable us to fund the whole project. I will be reporting back on this at our next regional meeting.

Finally, a reminder about the next regional meeting which will be on Saturday, March 19, and on Zoom again, as I do not yet feel confident enough to take our members into a hotel environment when COVID restrictions have only recently been lifted. I have also been in contact with the Holiday Inn at Wrotham, which I know was the preferred option for many of our members, and they have advised me that they will not be reopening for meetings until April. Our speakers for March will be Susan Booth, Executive Director, Development with Target Ovarian Cancer, who has over 20 years' experience leading fundraising in a range of well-known national charities, and a representative from the World Wildlife Foundation, who will talk to us about the work they are doing to protect endangered species.

I look forward to continuing to visit clubs during the coming months and to 'seeing' you at the Regional Meeting.

YVONNE FREEMAN, REGIONAL PRESIDENT,
SI SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

Right Trees in the Right Place in Maidstone for Soroptimist Centenary



SHARON FORGHANI WAS our project lead on SI Medway and Maidstone's Soroptimist Centenary Tree Planting campaign as part of our commitment to climate change. The UK needs millions more trees to reach its 2050 carbon net-zero target. To be effective in tackling climate change it is important the right trees are planted in the right place.

The Woodland Trust were offering free trees to schools and community groups funded by Sainsburys, Lloyds Bank, Ovo Energy, DFS, Players of Peoples Postcode Lottery, Joules, Bank of Scotland and Sofology.

Prior to applying to the Woodland Trust, Sharon contacted Andy Jesson, Parks Officer, Maidstone Borough Council enquiring about any suitable sites for the tree planting. He identified two potential sites and the one chosen was Bridge Mill Way Recreation Ground in Tovil. This is a former landfill site Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) wanted to beautify and re-wild in line with their Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.

In June, Sharon successfully applied to the Woodland Trust for the large Wildlife pack that consisted of 420 tree saplings. The pack was made up of six varieties that included hawthorn, rowan, blackthorn, silver birch, hazel, and common oak. In addition, sufficient canes, and spiral protectors with clear instructions on how to plant. We were satisfied these would be the right trees for the site to provide food and shelter for wildlife.

The tree saplings were due for delivery in early November, so plans were put in place for the Mayor of Maidstone and Regional President Yvonne to join us and break the ground to start the tree planting on November 27. However, these plans were put on hold due to national transport shortages and the Woodland Trust notifying us they could not give a confirmed delivery date for the tree saplings. These eventually arrived on November 29 and were delivered to Nellie Adjaye's house into the nursing care of Nellie and her neighbour Jackie, (who looked after the saplings when Nellie was away), covering them with a fleece each night it was frosty. Thanks to Nellie and Jackie we had healthy tree saplings to plant, some beginning to form buds.

A new planting date in January was arranged which turned out to be a very foggy morning. Carol Infanti and Sharon collected the tree saplings and took them to the site where they were joined by eight other club members, two 'Soroptimisters' and Andy the Parks Officer.

The Mayor of Maidstone Councillor Fay Gooch broke the ground to start the planting of the 420 tree saplings. Regional President Yvonne Freeman presented the Mayor with a small gift in appreciation of her support for the event. Having come well prepared, Yvonne got down to tree planting after receiving instructions from the Parks Officer.

Derek Mortimer, Deputy Mayor who is the local councillor for Tovil came along to offer his support. He was delighted with the support Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists were giving for the local community and he also got dug in.

It was a busy morning but with all the hard work and efforts of everyone, by lunchtime we successfully planted all 420 of the tree saplings in an area equivalent to the size of a football pitch.

A big thank you to Sharon, volunteers and our partners for a job well done and hopefully a lasting legacy for the future.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



A job well done!

SI Sevenoaks visiting Hope The Lego Suffragette

FOLLOWING OUR NOVEMBER club meeting where the focus was on The Suffragettes and acknowledging the UN Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women, Jenny Godfrey had given the club members an excellent talk on her book *Suffragettes in Kent* sharing their stories.

SI Sevenoaks were then invited by club member Linda Larter, Chief Executive, Sevenoaks District Council, to visit The Stag in Sevenoaks where Hope The Lego Suffragette was being displayed. We all took 'selfies' as you can see in the montage. North Kent College Design student Amy Allison very kindly designed the ribbon border in Suffragette colours with rosettes.

We have been in partnership with our local college for five years now and the Design Volunteer Project gives degree students the opportunity to work with non-profit organisations, such as ourselves and local charities.

Linda advised – "In 2018 Sevenoaks Town Council placed a request with the House of Commons for Hope, the Suffragette, made from Lego, to visit Sevenoaks to commemorate the centenary of women receiving the vote. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, this was delayed.

Standing at 170cm tall and consisting of over 30,000 bricks, Hope was built in 2018 to help tell the story of woman's



suffrage. Celebrating the success in getting the vote for women, the impressive Lego statue will be travelling to every region and nation in the UK by 2028"



FOLLOWING MEDWAY AND Maidstone club publicising on social media about our tree planting efforts, we received a message on Facebook from Andy Garland from BBC Radio Kent asking us to contact him with a view to getting someone to talk about our work, 75th anniversary and recent tree planting in Tovil.

Carol Infanti kindly agreed to be interviewed live on January 25 at 09:40 on the 'Make a Difference' slot on The Wake Up Call programme. The presenter, Anna Cookson wanted to know about what Soroptimist meant, and Carol defined it as meaning 'best for women.'

Carol talked about our recent tree planting work on a cold, wet, foggy morning. She explained how the 3Es, Educate, Enable and Empower, best describe our work as Soroptimists with women and girls, locally, nationally and internationally.

The interviewer mentioned the need for members to do all this work and Carol agreed and signposted any potential new members to the SIGBI website Contact Us page.

Well done Carol on talking so eloquently and representing us and the Soroptimist organisation so brilliantly.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

**Closing Date for the
February issue of SEE News
is Tuesday, February 22, 2021**

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



**Number "63"
500 Club**



Why not join the the 500 club, to support our Soroptimist hotel No. 63, in Bayswater Road, London

To find out more, contact Pat Dale at SI Croydon to get your tickets now – a bargain at just £12 each and there's no limit on how many you can have.

Random Acts of Kindness in Eastbourne

ONCE AGAIN, OVER Christmas and new year, Eastbourne Club members carried out random acts of kindness for family, friends and neighbours in need. These activities included:

- providing 24 wrapped gifts as an advent calendar for staff, blankets and muffs for patients in the Frailty Ward at our local District General Hospital;
- contacting and sending gifts to people who were ill, isolating or alone;
- taking elderly friends with mobility problems shopping;
- helping someone to hospital and collecting after surgery;
- visiting people living on their own;
- inviting in neighbours who were on their own over the holiday period, or delivering meals to them;
- giving gifts to doctors, dentists, podiatry clinics and delivery people;
- helping elderly with new technology, placing orders online and tax return;
- helping visitors to Eastbourne with communication problems with directions and general conversation;
- helping with household chores and gardening, including decorating, laundry, dressmaking, houseplants, weeding and putting up a Christmas tree;

- donating furniture, crockery, cutlery, towels and bedding to newly arrived nurses in unfurnished flats;
- donating household items to the Foodbank and other local charities;
- making a donation to local community centre.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SI EASTBOURNE



Ancient Tree Walk at Knole Park, Sevenoaks

United Nations – Climate Change and Partner Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 17

"If we wait for governments, it'll be too late; if we act as individuals, it'll be too little. But, if we act as communities, it might be just enough, just in time." Rob Hopkins, activist.

FOLLOWING ON FROM the inaugural meeting of Sevenoaks Climate Action network [CAN] attended by SI Sevenoaks' PAO, Isobel Groves, who registered Soroptimist interest, four members and a friend [hopefully a potential member] joined a guided ancient tree walk in Knole Park in January, organised by Sevenoaks CAN. The walk aimed to give people an insight into the importance of trees for the planet.

Together with Sevenoaks District and Town Councils, the Climate Change Network is committed to net zero carbon

emissions by 2030. The network programme aims to bring all sections of the community together to share knowledge, skills and ideas around low energy, low carbon, active travel, renewables and re usables.

Penny Robbins writes "it was a most enjoyable, informative walk at NT Knole Park guided by Richard Arnold, Director of Treecraft Ltd, together with a member from the Ancient Tree Forum. It was an opportunity for us all to chat informally as a group to develop ideas in achieving a common goal for the protection of these ancient trees, adding solidarity to the need for Climate Change (UN SDG 13), better understanding of Life on Land (UN SDG 15), and our dependence and existence with the natural world.'

ISOBEL GROVES, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SI SEVENOAKS,
PENNY ROBBINS, REGIONAL PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER



Sevenoaks Club
Members



Past President Penny

How Medway Food Partnership ensures no-one in Medway goes without food

MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE Soroptimists held our first club meeting for 2022 via Zoom. For many years, as so many Soroptimist clubs are doing, we have supported the local foodbanks. However, we wanted to learn more about the Medway Food Partnership that was launched in July 2020 and funded by Medway Council.

Oluseyi Obadare, Medway Public Health Project Manager and Lena Bhohi, Health Improvement Coordinator (Engagement) joined us to tell us more about the Medway Food Partnership, which was created to:

- make sure everyone has access to sustainable and healthy food,
- build the public's education and skills around healthy food,
- create healthier communities and better futures for our residents.

They are working with a number of local businesses, charitable organisations, and public sector partners to help residents across Medway access healthy food and to provide skills and education to help them live healthier lives, to promote healthier eating, and to reduce food poverty.

Over the summer the organisations in the partnership, including the Medway Foodbank, Gillingham Street Angels, the Nigerian Community Association Kent, and Medway and FareShare Kent, provided more than 20,000 food parcels to residents across Medway.

They host regular meetings for all members and smaller sub-group meetings that focus on topics, such as poverty, food security, emergency food support, healthy food for all, education and skills, climate change and the environment, business and procurement and oral health.

Medway Food Partnership also offer a range of sessions for residents of all ages from as young as 2-year-olds. This is to find out more about healthy eating and to try their hand at creating healthier meals. This includes working with nurseries and schools, with the Little Chefs, Tri cookery, Food adventures, adult cookery and MedwayGo, the school holiday activities and food programme.

Members expressed an interest in getting involved and Lena said they would be welcome to join any of the sub-groups. They also produce a Newsletter and members can sign up to receive a copy by contacting foodpartnership@medway.gov.uk

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

A Food Strategy and what it can do for the Partnerships



1. Good diets mean people are healthy.



2. Producing, processing and selling food can provide people with economic opportunities and assets.



3. From production to consumption, food can nurture community and social stability reduce isolation.



4. The 'what and how' of food production can help protect the planet.



Medway Food Partnerships



International Women's Day photo request

THINKING FORWARD TO International Women's Day on March 08, it would be great to get some photos from our region of SISEE members

striking the IWD 2022 pose and to raise awareness and #BreakTheBias that we can share on the regional social media. You can also collate the poses for your clubs own social media posts so we can all show we support #BreakTheBias.

More details of the pose and ideas for IWD can be found here: <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

The photos can be either individual or club photos (may be at your February meeting?), please email them through to siseecomunications@gmail.com or WhatsApp them to 07882729696 by March 04.

IWD 2022 campaign

theme: #BreakTheBias

Imagine a gender equal world.

A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.

A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

A world where difference is valued and celebrated.

Together we can forge women's equality.

Collectively we can all #BreakTheBias.

JACALYN WOOD, REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



Brave Bear Books Donated to Byron Primary



IN DECEMBER 2021, Penny Robbins sent out her Region PA Update from UKPAC, which we circulated to Medway and Maidstone members. It mentioned the Modern Day Slavery Group and specifically about *Brave*, a children's book telling a story of Friendship and Freedom that endeavours to keep children everywhere safe from exploitation. It asked us to spread the word.

A member suggested we approach Byron Primary School in Gillingham, with which we work in partnership, to see if they would like copies of the book. There was strong support from the membership to pursue this proposal.

At the end of term, Lillian Gould approached the Headteacher, Jon Carthy, and he said it would be a great book for them to have and he would like three copies. Byron have recently had their library refurbished and are focusing on becoming a reading school.

An order was placed by the club with the Brave Bear Trust and the books arrived within four days.

Brave is easy to read and full of the most attractive illustrations that immediately captures the reader's imagination and attention. *Brave* is very sensitively written, includes worksheets and will prove an invaluable resource for parents, carers, education staff and community leaders wanting to help children explore this pressing issue in an enlightening and extremely enjoyable way.

The *Brave* storyline, although fictional, reflects some of the realities of those who are currently suffering as victims of exploitation. The story is inspired by the true story of a little girl who was rescued from exploitation with her teddy bear, and a coffee roasting business that exists to empower survivors of exploitation.

By purchasing *Brave* for Byron School staff to read with children aged 8-10 years, we are enabling teachers to equip these children to know how to keep themselves and others safe from exploitation. <https://www.jointhebravebear.org/>

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

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.

Five Top Tips for Running Hybrid Meetings

A MARKETING AND PR Live webinar session was held on Facebook in January. This was organised by Rachel Weinhold and Val Hills in response to many queries raised by members on the SIGBI Communication and Membership page about how to ensure effective combined Zoom and Face-to-Face meetings are held. These are the 5 Top Tips:

Tip 1: Provide the right information to people attending beforehand.

Explain what is going to happen via Zoom and Face-to-Face
Provide training to those who are not familiar with Zoom, including how to mute/unmute.

When inviting a speaker to the meeting explain how the meeting is to be run and offer a trial run.

Tip 2: Choose an appropriate venue.

Consider seating arrangements and whether to move forward to be nearer speaker/screen/audio-visual equipment.
Does venue have Wifi?

Tip 3: Use the right equipment.

Use of external microphone and speaker with USB port.
Can be purchased easily at reasonable cost (under £20 from suppliers such as Amazon).

There is lots of learning through trial and error with the equipment.

Must let Zoom know what equipment is being used by selecting microphone options and ensure click and select right one.

If using two computers/iPads during the meeting then the second one becomes the dummy, and you must switch off the audio when signing into Zoom to prevent feedback loop.

Ensure all the equipment being used is fully charged.

Have a grab and go club bag that keeps all the equipment needed together.

Tip 4: Lead on Zoom

Identify a nominated person to take lead/responsibility for Zoom.

Agree the etiquette for the meeting.

Remind everyone to have mute on except when speaking during the meeting.

Remember for those on screen that you can be seen by participants at all times so turn off camera if necessary.

If taking a break then the host in the meeting room can mute their system so Zoom users can have a chat if necessary.

For those who wish to ask a question during the meeting – ask them to come to the front so all attendees can see and hear them.

Tip 5: Making sure everyone is involved.

Use the chat box function on Zoom. The Zoom lead needs to check it throughout the meeting.

Ensure that any questions from those on both Zoom and Face-to-Face are dealt with at the meeting.

Have a checklist as an aide memoir.

Breakout rooms are a useful function on Zoom. Can be easily set up if host specifies how many groups and how many people in each and it will allocate people to each group.

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