

## President Yvonne's message

### Healthy People, Healthy Planet



I HOPE THAT members did not suffer any damage or disruption during the awful weather we have experienced recently. It was indeed quite frightening to see the damage caused by storms Dudley and Eunice.

I can hardly believe that I am already one-third of the way through my year as your Regional President. However, I am pleased to be able to report that my diary is filling up with visits to clubs, either for a special event or to attend a club meeting. There are a couple of clubs for which dates are still to be arranged, but I am hoping I can join them soon.

On February 05, Penny Robbins, Jan Doyle and I took part in the second of two Programme Action webinars. Carol Infanti, APD Prosperity, and Yvonne Gibbon, APD People, led the webinar with the theme of how to complete a good Programme Focus Form. Nisha Ghosh, SIGBI Director for PR, Marketing & Communication, opened the meeting with an inspiring PowerPoint presentation entitled 'Are you telling the story', which led nicely into the review of three completed sample forms which we had to judge as 'good, better, best'. We then considered the 17 SDGs and how we need to include these in our reports, along with the 5Ps People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnerships, and how to judge which one is the most relevant for a particular project. We plan to present the key elements of the webinar at the March Regional Meeting to help members with completion of these forms.

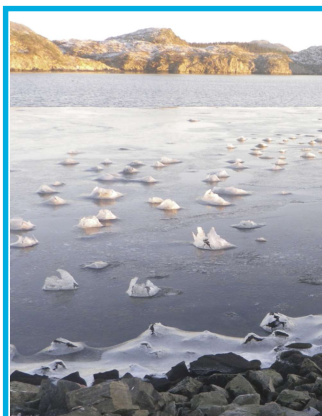
I visited Folkestone Club on February 09, at Waitrose in Hythe, which kindly allows the club to use the café and provides tea, coffee and cakes as well! Folkestone has carried out excellent Programme Action work over the years, including regularly supporting the women in the local Refuge and volunteering at the COVID-19 vaccination centre in the town.

Whilst at the meeting, I had the great pleasure to present Pat Wood with her long service certificate. A Soroptimist for over 25 years, Pat originally joined Ashford Club, then moved to SI Canterbury when that club needed support to keep going, and she is now a member of SI Folkestone. Many congratulations to Pat and thank you for all your hard work and support for Soroptimism. [See photo bottom right.]

During March I will be attending SI Croydon's Loud and Proud Competition; SI Sevenoak's President's Lunch; and these will be followed by our Regional Meeting. March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and our guest speaker will be Susan Booth, Executive Director, Development with Target Ovarian Cancer. I hope that clubs will be doing some fundraising and projects to support and raise awareness.

I also hope this will be our last Zoom meeting and that we will be able to meet again in person for our June and September meetings.

## What's in this month's newsletter?



A Tale of Two Beach Cleans. See page 02



Art Classes for Foster Children. See page 04



A 99th Birthday Celebration. See page 04



Pat Wood, receiving her long service certificate from President Yvonne

# A TALE OF TWO BEACH CLEANS

## High Summer and Freezing Winter

### June 2021 Ramsgate Western Undercliff, Thanet

THE GOOD WEATHER in the early summer of last year, combined with the relaxation of many of the Covid restrictions, meant that the number of visitors, especially day-trippers, to the sandy beaches of Thanet greatly increased. Unfortunately, many visitors ignored the litterbins provided and left their waste behind.

As our SI Thanet Club members had discussed beach cleaning for our programme action (we like the kind of projects where we can get stuck into activities), I offered to co-ordinate one at the Undercliff Beach near me in Ramsgate.

A small group of us met as planned, each contributing some aspect as well as their time, such as waste sacks, gloves, litter-pick sticks, and even tweezers. It was also the first opportunity we had to wear our new SI Thanet fluorescent tabards to help raise our profile.

I ended up focusing on the obscure rather than the obvious as this beach has many tiny nurdles, polystyrene balls and cigarette butts that do not biodegrade and cause harm to sealife. Unless one is sitting down it is hard to see these items, let alone pick them up, so that is why I am pictured sitting on the beach with tweezers at the ready. It became a rather Zen like activity. We were able to have discussions with other beachgoers, who were appreciative of what we were doing and wanted to hear more about Soroptimism.



### November 2021 Herdla near Bergen, Norway

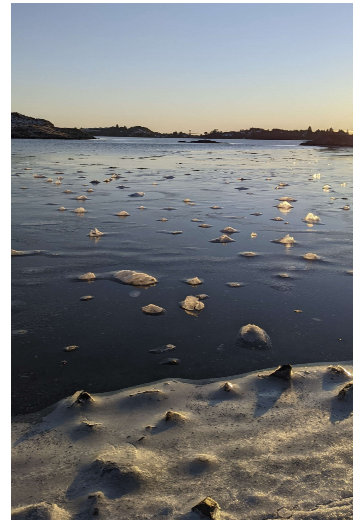
I was fortunate enough to be on a Hurtigruten Expedition cruise in November. Part of the ethos behind such cruises is for the scientists and experts on board to contribute to projects that mirror or link to the UN SDGs. There are many opportunities for the guests to participate in that work. As soon as I saw that a beach clean was one of the activities on offer, I signed up.

We were on our way back from the Arctic Circle when we docked in Bergen and luckily the snow had been left behind, but not the cold, it was just above freezing. About 20 guests were bussed to the fjordland beach on Herdla where, after about a 20 minute walk, a suitable area of stony beach was identified. It was difficult not to be distracted by the fabulous scenery and strange ice effects.

We were provided with equipment and also a detailed log sheet to record the different types of waste. These sheets follow the NOAA Marine Debris Shoreline Survey guide.

I was struck by how much plastic there was in this remote area, it looked almost pristine until one looked closer, then there was lots to find. I was not about to sit down though as it was too cold not to keep moving. As expected, I found mostly fishing-related pieces but also many cotton bud sticks, bottle tops and even syringes.

After an hour we headed back as the sun was beginning to set. We were told by the experts with us that they had been to the same area two weeks previously, so much of what we found was new. All the waste we collected was then combined and weighed 30kgs.



PHILIPPA DIXON, SI THANET

## Bromley's book club-cum-walking group



DURING THE PANDEMIC friendship and mutual support have been important to members of SI Bromley.

Two years ago our Book Group decided to add walking to its activities, meeting first in pairs then in a group of six once that was permitted under lockdown rules.

As readers we have read almost 150 books over the years and yes, we often discuss the books on our walks. We are amblers rather than ramblers, but as you can see from the photo taken on one of our winter outings, we are well-equipped for the weather.

CHRISTINE THOMAS, SI BROMLEY



# Federation Consultative Council Report from FCC Jan Doyle

THE LAST BOARD meeting was held on January 08, but unfortunately I was unable to attend. The report for that meeting has highlighted the following points.

## Patron/Ambassador

- The board are still considering the merits of an Ambassador for the Federation and the Board will meet with the working party, discuss this further and come to a conclusion – so watch this space on this one!

## Llandudno Conference Reports

- Following the last SIGBI conference, the conference committee have submitted their reports with recommendations, and conference guidelines will be reviewed shortly.

## Strategic Plan

- The new Strategic Plan for 2021-25 has now been completed with the workplans finalised, and will be distributed shortly.

## Membership

- Membership Director Chevonne clarified details relating to the formation of E-Clubs – one of which is shortly to be chartered. Basically E-Clubs will have the same structure and fee as any usual club and will be part of a single region, although the members of that club might not live in that region. E-Clubs will have a maximum of 30 members. Members can only be a member of one club, and this applies to E-Clubs as well.
- Falling UK membership is an issue of concern and our own region has recently lost clubs so it will be interesting to get the feedback on the membership webinar from both Jane and Lorna. The FCC will invite Chevonne to its next meeting and I will let you know how this goes.

## Programme

- Kay Richmond reported that CSW for this year will be virtual, or possibly hybrid, but there was still some uncertainty at the moment with the possibility that only three delegates from each ECOSOC accredited organisation will be allocated passes for UN HQ in New York.

- Two webinars had been arranged for Programme, the first around the subject of a Federation Project. Region President Yvonne, Region PA Chair Penny Robbins, APD Carol Infanti, and I, all attended the first webinar in January on the future of SIGBI Projects and both Penny and Yvonne have contacted all clubs about this. Please ensure that your club replies to President Yvonne so that your views are heard.

- The second webinar (also attended by Yvonne, Penny, Carol and me) on improving Programme Focus Form reporting has also now taken place; Carol Infanti is to be congratulated on the work she has done in putting together this webinar. A lot came out of it, but the main message is that as a region we should ensure that all clubs are given full feedback so that we are all encouraged and enthused to ensure that we report all our club activities on the PFRFs and I know Yvonne and Carol have this firmly in mind. So again watch this space for more information from President Yvonne

## Governance

- Governance Director Sylvia reported that she and her committee have been reviewing all the constitutional documents, particularly focussing on the club constitution, which needs to be updated to specifically allow for virtual meetings and AGMs. Some updates were presented but these may not be the final ones that will need to be presented to Belfast conference.
- Sylvia mentioned that the call for resolutions has gone out to clubs; this letter has been amended slightly this year to make the process clearer.

## PR, Marketing & Communications

PR, Marketing & Comms Director Nisha reported on work done over the last three months and the following points were noted:

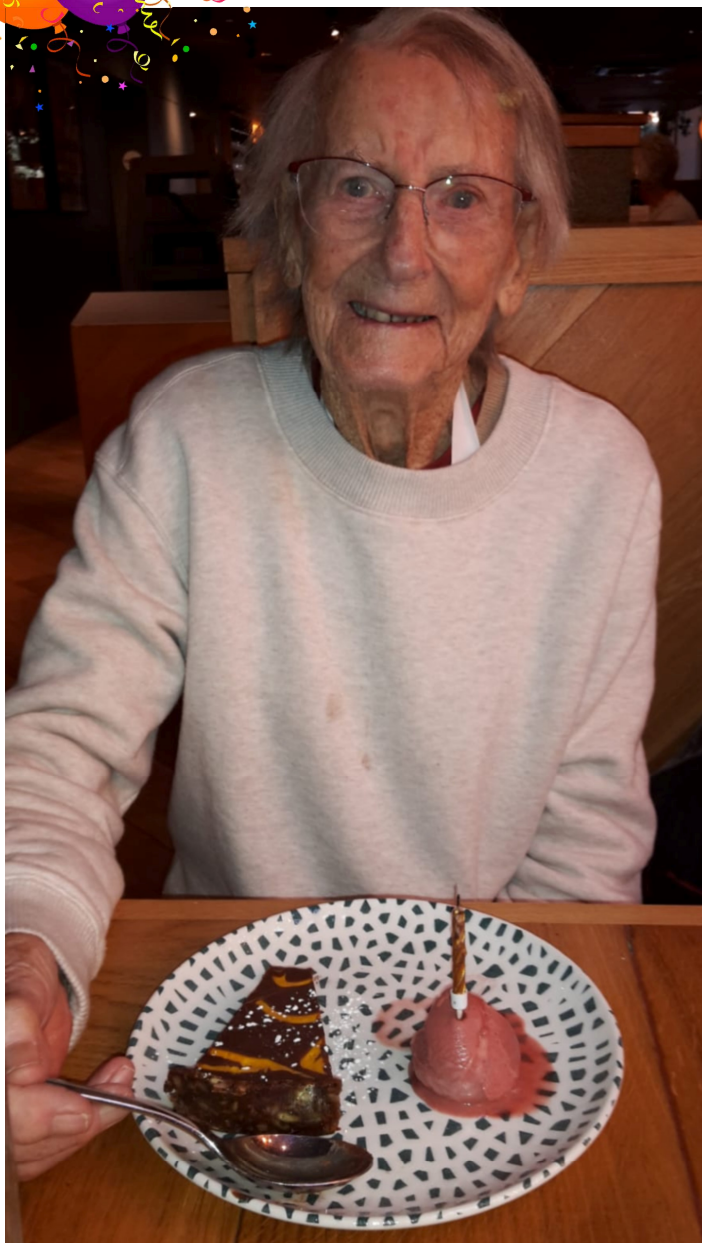
- Clubs have mentioned that toolkits come out too late but unfortunately that's frequently because the team have to wait for the UN to announce themes; often that is late too; nevertheless clubs have been making good use of toolkits.
- Posters are to be produced in addition to the toolkits and this will develop using projects as examples.
- Nisha is trying to make the issues of Soroptimist News livelier and member friendly.
- A team of bloggers for 2022 is being put together – 12 from PR and 12 from Programme.
- Facebook Live streaming (designed by Rachel Weinhold) is to start in January on the third Saturday of each month. Initially as a six-month trial and it will be possible to download recordings afterwards. The first episode is on hybrid meetings, tips and best practices. The second stream will be on correct branding and marketing.
- A suggestion has been made that a calendar be put on the website and on the Facebook communications page so that members know the times and programmes for the streamed events.

## Finance and Systems

- In presenting her report, Finance Director Ruth highlighted that the budget for 2022/23 is to be a deficit budget. She mentioned that this is the first time that a deficit has arisen out of membership fees not covering ordinary expenses. This is a huge issue, and the Board are going to be discussing a way forward over the next few months and she suggested this might require radical thinking as doing what we have always done clearly doesn't work.
- Ruth went on to report that progress is being made on a system upgrade which will give SIGBI a new database/CRM system, integrated accounts system and reliable network which allows for direct storage alongside office filing systems. This should alleviate duplication of work in the office and enable us to do more in terms of campaigns/liasing with members

[SEE PAGE 08 FOR JAN'S REPORT ON SIGBI'S MICROFINANCE GROUP]

# 99 years young!



SI BROMLEY'S MOST senior member, Winn Mitchell, recently celebrated her 99th Birthday.

The Social Group took her out for an Italian lunch at a local restaurant, where they spent a convivial afternoon.

Winn was a schools meals organiser and was originally a member of Bexley Soroptimist Club and when that club closed, she transferred to SI Bromley (then known as SI Beckenham).

She served as Treasurer for several years and is very active in the club, making jams and marmalades to sell for our funds.

Winn plays Mahjong in one of our groups and she wins a game quite frequently. She also has knitted some trauma bears.

CHRISTINE THOMAS, SI BROMLEY

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



THE LEWES CLUB have continued their partnership with the East Sussex Foster Carers Association, helping to support the foster parents and children with learning activities and therapies.

Since the autumn, a new member of our club, Maureen Wells, who is an art teacher, has been running monthly Saturday morning art classes for foster children.

The classes give the parents a few hours off and the children a chance to explore their creative talents, some of whom have proved to be especially gifted and keen. Each class has a theme, the February class was Dragons.

Maureen donates her time and the Lewes Club helps with the materials.

VERA GAJIC, SI LEWES





# What's in a P?

by APD Carol Infanti

YOU MAY WELL ask. This was the title and theme of the Federation Programme Action Webinar held at the beginning of February. This was about understanding what is meant by the United Nations 5Ps (People, Prosperity, Plant, Peace and Partnership). I was pleased to be able to co-host and co-design this event which was intended for Programme Action Officers, Federation Councillors and others.

During the afternoon we had an excellent presentation from Nisha (Director of PR and Marketing) about ways in which we can raise our profile, using our programme work. We want the public to know what Soroptimists stand for in the same way that we all know who is 007! We've got some work ahead of us.

We had three really good, interactive workshops covering:

- How to improve programme focus reporting.
- The importance of our programme focus forms in this regard and how they are used across SIGBI, SI and the United Nations.
- Improving your club's chance of being selected for the Best Practice Award.
- Using PA to better promote your club to a wider audience.
- Understanding the 5 Ps and SDGs better.

The webinar was very well received, and found to be extremely useful, as was the presentation from Nisha, the interactive workshop sessions and the table of Ps which was developed to help members choose the best P for their project.

There appears to be a need for more training on the importance of completing the programme focus report forms, using and searching the database. Members don't see the synergies between the database, the programme focus forms, Best Practice Awards, and articles/clubs featured in the magazine.

Members also asked for information about what is involved for SIGBI/SI to be awarded its UN status and how the projects are used/reported to the UN. FPAT will be discussing these and other points.

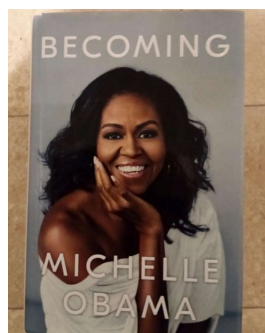
A report will be going to the Board with the outcomes from the webinar. I will feedback to you on the next steps in due course.

A great learning experience. Thanks to all concerned.

I will be covering some of this at our next regional meeting – I look forward to seeing you then and hearing your thoughts.

## Eastbourne's Book Club

THE EASTBOURNE SOROPTIMIST club have been running a book club for 10 years. The group usually has about 10 members and when we started we chose books from the library, reading them over a month or two, and meeting at members' houses to discuss. Each



member of the group took it in turns to host the meeting and ask questions about the book. But now, with buying books online and audio books, we get our own copies.

During Covid we have been able to continue the book club using Zoom and it was great to read books and meet up to discuss and have a social time together. Recently we have read the following:

MAY: J M Maloney 'The Sisters of Battle Road' – a local story of a family who, during the war, were billeted to Hailsham, a place only 10 miles from Eastbourne. The house is still in the road and we knew the streets and places they visited.

JULY: Elif Shafak 'Three Daughters of Eve'.

SEPTEMBER: Raynor Winn 'The Salt Path'.

NOVEMBER: Maggie O'Farrell 'Hamnet'.

JANUARY: Michelle Obama 'Becoming'. This was a very interesting read and one we would recommend to other clubs.

Our next book for March will be Matt Haig's 'The Midnight Library'.

The group decide on books often having read them before or by finding them as a suggestion in magazines or from other book clubs and friends.

We know the group will continue into the future as it is enjoyed by everyone.

DENISE STAPLEHURST, SI EASTBOURNE

## New Memorial Bench for the Children's Garden



SI FOLKESTONE PRESENTED a new memorial bench to the Children's Garden in Hawkinge. This replaced an earlier bench that the club had funded in 2000, showing our commitment to our local community.



**TARGET OVARIAN CANCER**

**MARCH IS OVARIAN Cancer Awareness Month**

A recent report featured in The Guardian, states that GPs and women are still ignoring key symptoms of ovarian cancer. The charity, Target Ovarian Cancer, are concerned that despite campaigns to boost awareness, many are still ignoring the vital signs.

To learn more, come to the March 19 Region Meeting, to hear guest speaker Susan Booth, Executive Director, Development with Target Ovarian Cancer.

# East Grinstead Club Projects Update

## Extra-curricular STEM Clubs

FOLLOWING ON FROM our very successful Rocket Girls project which brought STEM ambassadors into schools and community groups, members of East Grinstead Club have been working with local schools, Brownies and Cubs in STEM clubs during lunch breaks and in the evenings. The programme is run in partnership with school staff and community leaders and aims to inspire the young people to consider following careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. The less formal settings in which the programme is delivered and imaginative, inventive and fun teaching methods encourage the young children to continue studying STEM subjects throughout their education.

In the sessions they are involved in problem-solving, research and using evidence, and thinking critically.



One activity, making lavender bags, involves the children in planting and harvesting the lavender and measuring the fabric required.

Feedback from the participants proves that the programme is very popular with girls and boys alike, and that all are looking forward to further STEM learning.

ROSEMARY STONE

## 2022 Garden Bird Watch

MEMBERS OF EAST Grinstead Club, a local school and Briars Lodge Field Centre, took part in this year's RSPB Garden Bird Watch, the aim of which is to monitor how garden birds are faring.

The shocking facts are that over the last 50 years an incredible 38 million birds have been lost from the UK skies.

The RSPB depends upon public support to save nature and to look after places where wildlife can thrive.

Participants in the Bird Watch report on the birds seen in their gardens during a period of one hour on a designated weekend.

This initiative is in its 43rd year and in 2021 over a million people took part. January's survey has highlighted the importance of gardens to the future survival of house sparrows, starlings and blue tits.

Fortunately in East Sussex numbers of house sparrows and starlings are gradually increasing which is encouraging news.

ROSEMARY STONE



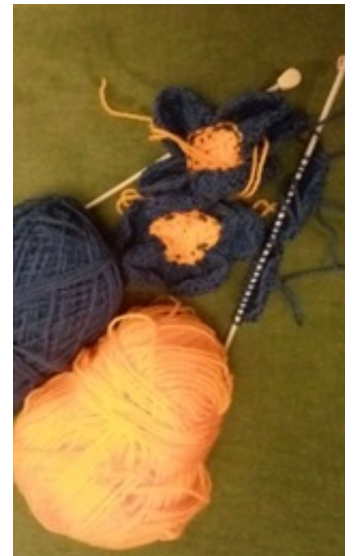
## Dementia Action Alliance Forget-me-nots

KNITTERS ARE ONCE again clicking those knitting needles to produce Forget-me-nots to be displayed around East Grinstead town.

Working with other organisations in the East Grinstead Dementia Action Alliance, the Club will help the town turn into a sea of blue and yellow. This year a grant was awarded for this event and wool has been distributed within the Club.

This activity is aimed at raising awareness of Dementia which touches many families in our town, region and throughout the UK.

SUE EDGAR



## A reminder from President Yvonne

If you haven't already done so, please ensure you enter your tree planting on the SIGBI map as soon as possible.

We are trying to reach our target of 100,000 trees and we still have 12,000 to go."

## The important role of Trauma Bears



SI SEVENOAKS MEMBERS welcomed invited guests, including Jane Barnes of SI Medway and Maidstone, to their February club meeting to hear DI Richard Pringle speak about his work in child abuse and child protection. He told how trauma bears play an important role in helping to relax children who have to be interviewed in distressing circumstances following abuse.

His talk was very well received and was followed by a lively, informative discussion. Richard was presented with more bears and his own monogrammed de-stressor muff, knitted in police colours for his desk.

Jane Barnes brought bears to the meeting, some knitted in police colours. She informed us that her club was responsible for the knitting of 130 bears. Jane had knitted 90 bears including one in purple for IWD! U3A members had knitted 34. The bears will find homes at two women's refuges and a primary school.

Sevenoaks club members have knitted over 300 bears, so together with SI Medway and Maidstone club, a total of 430 bears have been knitted so far in the region, and still counting.

It would be so good to have a regional score and to know from other clubs how many bears are out there and not included in this total. A wonderful achievement by all our knitters!

ISOBEL GROVES, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SI SEVENOAKS

## Those teddies get around



FOLLOWING SI SEVENOAKS February club meeting, DI Richard Pringle sent this delightful photograph of Kent Police Child Protection Teams holding the trauma bears outside police headquarters, as a thank you to Soroptimists.

Detective Chief Inspector Steve Mclean, Officer for Vulnerability throughout Kent writes: "I would like to thank the Soroptimists for the trauma bears you have made which support the work we do with vulnerable children. This really does make a difference and I cannot underestimate the positive impact this has when we are dealing with some very distressing matters."

ISOBEL GROVES, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SI SEVENOAKS

## Brave Bear Books Donated to Byron Primary



FOLLOWING THE REPORT on Brave Bear Books in the January 2022 edition of SEE News, on February 22, Lillian Gould and Jane Barnes of SI Medway and Maidstone were able to finally present copies of the Books to Jon Carthy, Headteacher at Byron Primary School in Gillingham.

The presentation was delayed due to incidents of Covid in the school leading to staff shortages as a result.

Jon Carthy was pleased to receive the Brave Bear books which are about freedom and friendship, and raising awareness to keep children safe from exploitation.

Jon said, "We will be looking to use them as a resource for 8-10 year-olds as part of their 'Life Learning' curriculum".

The photo shows Lillian presenting the Brave books to Jon Carthy, Headteacher.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



# International Women's Day

FREE

Tuesday, 8 March  
12.30-7pm  
Medway Park

FOR ALL AGES

Join us to #BreakTheBias and:

- try new physical activities and sports
- hear guest speakers
- visit information stands on women's well-being
- chat to local supporters
- enjoy refreshments



**Keeping Medway Safe**  
Working together as part of the Safer Streets initiative



## Club Subscriptions

SOME CLUBS HAVE been collecting members subscriptions by monthly standing order for some years. However, I am aware that some clubs have not, and continue to get members to pay in one go or over a couple of payments.

Taking my club as an example (SI Medway and Maidstone) members pay £10 per month, which members find more affordable than £120 in one go; 75% of the club pay by standing order.

When a new member joins my policy is to ask them to make an initial payment to cover their SIGBI subscription. Then start their monthly payment a few months later to arrive at the correct yearly total. The main issue is if someone leaves before the end of the accounting year; to date we have asked them to complete their monthly payments which so far, they have always done so. As this is a standing order the member has to set this up with their bank, which means they have total control of the payments.

The main issue is to cover the Capitation and Regional Fee, neither of which qualify for a rebate should a member leave before the end of the financial year, which applies whether paying by standing order or by an initial full payment.

It is true that you could lose out from the standing order member if they leave before the end of the year and cancel their standing order. However, on the plus side, paying by monthly instalments could be very attractive to potential new members.

Treasurers can also elect to pay their subscriptions to SIGBI by an initial payment and then 10 more monthly payments by standing order.

BARBARA FISHER, TREASURER, SISEE

## Microfinancing

THE MICROFINANCE GROUP was formed in April 2021 and has four members, two drawn from the SIGBI Director of Finance Committee and two from SIGBI's Programme areas.

Our Region has two representatives on this committee, Carol Infanti representing the programme side and my brief is the Finance side. The other two members are currently Maureen Collison (Finance) and Mary Courtney who is the Past National Programme Action Co-ordinator for the Republic of Ireland.

We meet virtually every month, and we are supported by Joanne Voller from SIGBI HQ staff. We report to the Director of Finance following each of our monthly virtual meetings.

We use the microloan platforms LendwithCare and KIVA. Initially the team considered giving preference to women from countries in the SIGBI Federation, however this is currently too restrictive as only one country, Pakistan, is on the lending platforms.

We observe parameters when making our loans – no investment to be more than 25% of the total loan amount required and no investment to be more than £400 to any one recipient and that the repayment term should not exceed 24 months.

We have loaned to women living in a number of countries, including Madagascar, Senegal, Pakistan, Indonesia, Guatemala, Ghana, Nicaragua, Democratic Republic of Congo, Samoa, Rwanda, Philippines, Liberia, Cambodia, Malawi and Ecuador. The loans have been given to help the women run businesses in areas such as farming, fish farming, embroidery, retail.

One woman has used her loan to buy a phone which will enable her children to take part in online learning during COVID restrictions, and another woman, who had lost her husband to COVID, is using her loan to improve her house so that she can take in lodgers.

Many of the women from Africa work as a group, with the loan being made to the group, with a particular woman being highlighted in the application. Every woman who applies for a loan, whether through Lendwithcare or KIVA, works with a local partner who checks the application both in terms of the content and business viability. They also provide advice and support.

On average we make loans totalling £400 per month to our lady entrepreneurs and we regularly receive repayments, with at least four loans being completely repaid. You can see all the people we support at the links below:

<https://lendwithcare.org/teams/soroptimist-gbi>

[https://www.kiva.org/team/soroptimist\\_gbi](https://www.kiva.org/team/soroptimist_gbi)

These two links will also allow for other donors to join the SIGBI team. This doesn't mean that SIGBI takes over your account but rather that all activity on the two platforms is amalgamated so we can see what the entire Federation is doing. If you do have an account, please think about clicking on the links to join the team.

Microfinancing can start with as little as £15 so if you are not microfinancing already, please think about it as a way of extending your club's programme work in supporting women to make improvements in their lives and in the lives of their families.

If you have any questions about microfinancing, please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Carol or me and Joanne will also give you advice about setting up an account on either platform ([joanne@sigbi.org](mailto:joanne@sigbi.org))

JAN DOYLE, FEDERATION CONSULTATIVE COUSSELLOR

## Region Communications Update a reminder regarding the regional calendar

YOU CAN VIEW the calendar on the regional website [SISEE Region Calendar - SI South East England \(sigbi.org\)](https://sigbi.org), and using the blue arrows can change the month you are viewing to assist with forward planning events without clashing.

To add entries to the calendar you can either send a calendar invite via your email provider or email the details to [siseecomunications@gmail.com](mailto:siseecomunications@gmail.com) where they will be added.

JACALYN WOOD, REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Soroptimist International South East England

Today) February 2022

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31	1 Feb	2 20:00 East Grinstea	3	4	5	6
7	8 19:30 Sevenoaks C 19:30 Thanet Club	9 19:00 Folkestone C	10 19:30 Croydon Club	11	12	13
14 International Epi 19:45 Eastbourne C	15 19:30 Medway & M 20:00 Regional Men	16 20:00 East Grinstea	17	18	19	20
21 Fairtrade fortnight 19:00 Lewes Club 19:30 Tunbridge W 19:45 Bromley Club	22 SISEE News Desk	23	24 19:00 Canterbury C 19:30 Croydon Club	25	26	27
28 Fairtrade fortnight	1 Mar	2 Ovarian Cancer M 20:00 East Grinstea	3 World Book Day	4	5	6



## More news from East Grinstead Club



SACKVILLE COLLEGE IS a Jacobean almshouse in East Grinstead, West Sussex, England. It was founded in 1609 with money left by Robert Sackville, 2nd Earl of Dorset. Throughout its history it has provided sheltered accommodation for the elderly.

Recently their first female warden, Rosalind Crowther, came to the Club to talk about how they have kept their residents safe during the pandemic. Usual college life was suspended as innovative ideas came into play with a goal of no Covid 19 cases. From buying chest freezers, setting them up in the refectory to offer frozen foods for the residents, to re-organising the refuse bins so that residents could not congregate around the bin store, their goal of no cases was achieved.

Funds for the college are from donations and fundraising activities contributed to by visitors and local organisations.

The pandemic has obviously had a negative effect on the college's finances so SI East Grinstead were pleased to be able to present Rosalind with a cheque.

SUE EDGAR



**RBWA**  
FREEDOM FROM ABUSE

FOR OUR FEBRUARY speaker meeting we welcomed a member of staff from Reigate & Banstead Women's Aid, a small independent charity with three refuges across Surrey.

For the first time at Christmas 2021 the Club supported our nearest refuge based in Reigate. Guided by a wish list provided by the refuge, members collected gifts for the women and children living there at that time. Christmas gift bags were provided so that appropriate presents could be selected to suit each individual resident's needs.

Our speaker told us about the many services offered to the women and their families, some of which came as a surprise. For some of us the assumption was that the families accommodated were catered for on a bed and board basis. It became apparent however that they are being prepared to return to independent living at some stage in the future. The women shop for their own food – accompanied at first to regain their confidence – cook for themselves or each other in communal kitchens and are provided with whatever training and/or therapy they need before leaving the refuge and reintegrating into everyday life.

Our speaker stressed the value of gifts for the families, not only at Christmas but for Mothering Sunday, Easter and other special occasions. There is also an ongoing need for toiletries and treats.

We are delighted to have adopted this project and to provide some pleasure to people recovering from very distressing circumstances.

ROSEMARY STONE

### A DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES

In September SI East Grinstead will be celebrating its **60th Anniversary**. Our celebratory dinner will be held at Sweetwoods Golf Club, Colestock Road, Cowden, Edenbridge, on the evening of Saturday September 24. Please reserve the date, details nearer the time.

### 2022 Diary Dates

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.

### Closing Date for the February issue of SEE News is Friday, March 25, 2021

Email your text and photographs to Patricia at [pat.painting@btinternet.com](mailto:pat.painting@btinternet.com) 020 8668 2681

### PLEASE NOTE

If you have events coming up after the monthly closing date, which you would like to appear in SEE News, please advise the Editor who is happy to accept late articles with prior notice.



## #BreakTheBias

MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE CLUB held their Day of Reflection on February 26 at the Millennium Centre in Rainham. Seventeen members attended the Day including three of our newer members, for whom it was their first-time taking part.

Liz Duckworth facilitated the session where we reviewed our Growth Plan 3-Year Strategy and Action Plan.

Originally SIGBI had recommended the vital few elements to focus on, which were: -

- Membership.
- Marketing and communications.
- Partnerships and awards.

However, as this work has evolved Medway and Maidstone have also included: -

- Programme action.
- Social and fundraising.
- Running the club.

The day progressed generating lots of discussion. We looked at the way we do things and what had been achieved. Covid had impacted and we acknowledged we had to do things differently. However, overall the outcome indicated we had either met our targets or exceeded them. We identified words [below] that each of us felt best described Soroptimists.



As with any typical Soroptimist get together, food and drink plays a key role in the proceedings and it was no different on this occasion. At lunchtime we eagerly tucked in, choosing from a selection of homemade soups, freshly made bread, cheese, fruit and cakes made by members.

Before getting down to the afternoon session, we gathered for a group photo with everyone proudly wearing our Kente sashes and striking the #BreakTheBias pose. The theme of International Women's Day 2022, 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow', recognises the contribution of women and girls around the world to the fight against climate change and towards building a more sustainable future for all.

The conversations continued with everyone contributing and was captured to update our Growth Plan 3-year Strategy and Action Plan to take us forward to March 2023.

A big thank you to Liz for planning the Day of Reflection that plays such a key role in our Club calendar.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE





**Medway & Maidstone Soroptimists  
 are hosting a  
 Charity Fashion Show by Travelling Trends  
 on  
 Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
 7 for 7.30 pm at  
 The Franklin Rooms,  
 65 Franklin Road,  
 Gillingham, ME7 4DG**

**Price £8.00 which includes a welcome drink**

**To book or for further  
 information please contact  
 Angela Howe on 01634 724365  
[howeangela@btinternet.com](mailto:howeangela@btinternet.com)**

**Raffle Prizes gratefully received  
 All proceeds towards Soroptimist International charities**

# Membership Officers Forum



## South East England Region

### STARTING THE CONVERSATION WITH MEMBERSHIP OFFICERS

LORNA BLACKMORE AND Jane Barnes, Joint Regional Membership Officers, held their first Membership Officer Forum in February via Zoom. They were pleased to welcome membership officers from six out of our 11 Regopm clubs. It was an ideal opportunity for us all to get to know one another and discuss membership issues.

We shared what has been happening with membership across the Region, focusing on what has gone well and what has proved to be a challenge, particularly with lockdown restrictions.

We highlighted use of introductory meetings with potential new members. Some preferred to do this via Zoom, whilst other MOs preferred face-to-face gatherings, often over a coffee to chat about what Soroptimist means and becoming a member.

We discussed and shared some useful recruitment tools such as use of induction slides focusing on Club, Region and Federation level. The benefits of identifying a buddy/mentor for each new member to facilitate their introduction to the club/organisation, and support to settle in during the early months after joining.

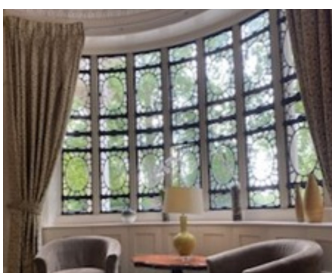
Social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Websites can be useful if kept updated, to promote what Soroptimists do to make a difference, particularly for women and girls. Also reflected on the cost of being a member being the same as the cost of a cup of coffee/£10 a month subscription that can be paid on a monthly basis.

Feedback following the meeting was positive and the conversation at the meeting was both interesting and informative.

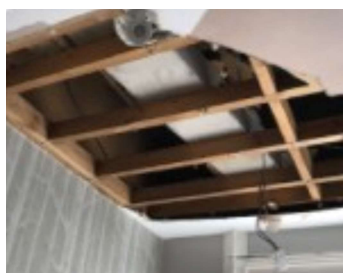
The next Membership Forum will be held via Zoom on: -  
Saturday 7 May from 2 - 3pm

All existing MOs and any new ones appointed at the club AGMs are invited to join us. The theme will be 'May as Membership month' and will explore Soroptimist School Clubs. Do contact either Lorna Blackmore [lorna.blackmore@icloud.com](mailto:lorna.blackmore@icloud.com) or Jane Barnes [barnes786@btinternet.com](mailto:barnes786@btinternet.com) if you want to know more.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



The Italianate Window



Ceiling Damage Room 101



## Number "63" 500 Club



### Your help needed

Article written by the Number 63 Representative on the Board of Directors for the London Chilterns area, Barbara Diamant, with the assistance of fellow Directors, photographs courtesy of Director Barbara Jeremiah and details of the 500 club from Director Pat Dale.

OUR HOTEL NUMBER 63 is a Grade 2 Victorian building boasting many beautiful and valuable architectural features, the most significant being the Italianate window designed by William Arthur Benson (1854-1924),

The hotel is regularly used for meetings by two of our London Clubs and the Executive. It is also visited by many Soroptimists who regard it as their London "Home from Home." The meeting rooms are much used by various institutions and there is a steady stream of visitors from home and abroad who love the atmosphere of the building, the staff and the fabulous location.

During the last two years due to the pandemic, numbers of visitors have decreased and in common with all Hotels the premises have been closed for lengthy periods. The Directors have striven to maintain the building but the elements and the age of the building have caused much damage which needs to be addressed and obviously requires us to raise finances.

Some of the damage caused by the flash floods of July 2021 affected the kitchen area which suffered significantly, as did the dining area. Also bedrooms sustained damage, with the ceiling collapsing in Room 101 (see photo below left).

The roof requires substantial repairs; the common parts need redecorating and several rooms show signs of damage through recent leaks. The exterior is also in need of repainting. The estimated cost will be in the region of £150,000.

We would like to invite you to help us in our attempts to raise this sum so that we can maintain our beautiful asset in central London to the standard it deserves. There are various ways in which you could help and I would refer you to the website which has further current information, [www.number63.co.uk](http://www.number63.co.uk)

As a Soroptimist you can:

- Buy shares.
- Donate to the Platinum Appeal started in 2018.
- Leave a legacy.
- Book a stay at the hotel or indeed hold a meeting.
- Join the 500 club.

Through buying numbers from the 500 club you can win money for an annual stake of £12, this puts your number in a monthly draw, the more numbers you buy the higher the chances of your winning. Each month two numbers get £50 each. Clubs can buy tickets, as can individuals. In the past the 500 club has been in a position to donate up to £3000 a year to the Hotel. Also you can give these tickets to friends as a token of thanks, which I am sure would be much appreciated. It is easier to set up a standing order to be renewed annually. Forms are on the website <https://number63.co.uk/500-club/>

You can also buy Number 63 gin available directly from the hotel, also a book, "History of Number 63" produced by former Director Liz Batten at the cost of £5 plus postage.

A short video is also being made and will be available on the website and to your clubs. An earlier version was shown at the AGM.

Please do support us, your ideas are welcomed.

Contact with Number 63 is advised via [info@number63.co.uk](mailto:info@number63.co.uk)