



A Message from our Regional President



Hello Ladies, well what a year it's been so far! It's not quite turned out as I expected and I am so disappointed that all our events and lunches/dinners have had to be cancelled, including the Region Conference.

I do hope that you and your families are all managing to stay sane as well as safe. I am fine, as is my family but we are missing our Friday dates with our granddaughter Amelia, as I am sure you are all missing your family and friends.

I took part in an online meeting, yesterday, with Federation President Isobel and 16 other Presidents from Regions, National Associations and Countries throughout SIGBI. It was quite emotional when we said 'goodbye' to Lisette from South Africa as the African countries leave SIGBI to form their own Federation. It was also interesting hearing what other Regions/Clubs are doing in this new, virtual world, while we are in lockdown. We are planning to have these meetings monthly for the duration of the lockdown.

President Isobel updated us on the Belfast Conference and advised us that she is continuing to plan for it taking place as planned. The Conference centre and Conference hotel have said they will extend the cancellation period up to the end of June, after which time cancellation charges will be levied. Consequently, the decision whether to proceed or not will be taken by the end of June unless the situation changes with regard to COVID 19.

In these difficult times of social distancing and self-isolation, many of us are using social media and online platforms for virtual meetings etc. However, we must remember those members who do not use IT and it is important to pick up the phone and check in with our most vulnerable members. Maintaining contact with friendship links will be a useful way of keeping up with how others are coping and what else is going on in the world around us.

Not only must we keep in contact with and support one another but we need to find different ways of continuing to support our charities and projects, particularly those who support victims of domestic violence, which will continue to increase as the lockdown progresses. I was reminded recently about the way to make a silent call to the police if someone is being abused and is unable to speak. 'Dial 999 then 55 once the call has been picked up'. This will alert the police that help is required. If you have the opportunity to share this information, where it may be seen by victims, please do.

I know many of you will have already started to think 'outside the box' and have come up with innovative ideas for carrying on with project work or raising money. Please do share them with me and I will share them with the Region's Clubs and at my next virtual meeting with President Isobel.

I wish you all the best and look forward to meeting up with you when we have come through this ordeal, which we will do hopefully sooner rather than later.

In friendship

South Lancashire Regional President Yvonne

Club News from around the Region

SI Southport –Nepalese Curry Evening for ChoraChori

At the November 2019 SIGBI Conference in Bournemouth, we were introduced to the Federation project for 2019-2022, 'Empowering Girls in Nepal', specifically the charity ChoraChori and its co-founder and Chief Executive, Philip Holmes. The charity provides protection, support, education and training to trafficked and displaced Nepalese children rescued from India, child rape survivors from Nepal and vulnerable girls from deprived rural communities.

Southport member Heather Shulver was so inspired she decided to raise funds for ChoraChori by holding a Nepalese Curry Evening. With husband Ian and a team of talented and creative chefs, she prepared a delicious chicken curry and mouth-watering desserts.

We were fortunate that Margaret Baker, SIGBI Federation Councillor and SI South Lancashire Ambassador for the ChoraChori project, joined us for the evening and gave an update on the project. This was a brilliant evening and raised almost £400



Contributed by Ghislaine Fletcher SI Southport

SI Ashton-under-Lyne Make good use of other people's Rubbish



Jill Dewsnap has been keeping busy during the current lock down continuing a very enterprising Club project.

Members collect ring pulls from used drink cans for the Purple Community Fund which helps women start small businesses, both in this country and abroad.

The ring pulls are then cleverly transformed into jewellery, purses and handbags.



With time on her hands, Jill continues the work and took the opportunity to count up all of the ring pulls. Says Jill "This is what I have been doing whilst on lock down and I am just short of a quarter of a million".

That's a load of rubbish Jill !

Contributed by Jill Deswnap SI Ashton under Lyne

SI LEIGH & DISTRICT - Kindness is Free to Give but Priceless to Receive

SI Leigh and District have been actively involved in the “Be Kind Movement” a rallying cry from Wigan Council to look after yourself, look after others and volunteer to help the vulnerable during the COVID19 Pandemic. Members were invited to the launch at Wigan Town Hall led by the Chief Executive, Alison McKensie-Folan.

National appeals for volunteers to sew scrubs, hats and masks led member Emma Barker, in true Soroptimist fashion, to sew numerous masks for local health workers.



As a follow-on to the period poverty Red Box project, club members, under the leadership of Programme Action Officer Lynda Lilley have been collecting items with the help of The Bridge Community Café personnel, to distribute Kindness Boxes to Community hubs.

Demand has been high during the Pandemic and fortunately just before the “Lockdown” toiletries and period products were delivered to the local Startwell Centre allowing families in urgent need to access essential items.

Fundraising for Marie Curie at the local Morrisons store, in early March, led to much hilarity wearing the traditional costume and elaborate headwear. This also gave the opportunity to raise the profile of Soroptimism. A total of £1057.10 was collected to support terminally ill patients to be cared for in their homes.

A disappointment for club members was the cancellation of the “Brew with the Crew” event aiming to support the Northwest Air Ambulance. Not to be outdone, funds are still being collected online and Leigh members shared a brew video as a thank you to the organisation which was forwarded to staff via Social Networking to patients and supporters. If you would like to see the Club’s video contact Margaret Molyneux.



During the Corona Virus Pandemic Leigh Soroptimist Club joined forces with The Bridge Community Café to fund Food Hampers for local people in social isolation with around 1,000 distributed by Easter.



Another initiative in collaboration with “The Bridge” was a gift of 32 Easter Eggs to two local refuges. Domestic Violence incidents in Wigan are currently four times the national average per head of population and these alarming figures provide the impetus for the Club to continue ongoing support for local Domestic Violence agencies and a forward focus for Programme Action work.



Contributed by Margaret Molyneux SI Leigh & District

SI WIDNES – 75 years and Bucket Loads of Support



Just before the lock down, SI Widnes donated 75 buckets filled with cleaning products to local agencies who support vulnerable adults and families. The project was related to celebrations to mark 75 years of action in Widnes. Members had support from local businesses and other South Lancashire clubs.

Currently, one member volunteers at the Foodbank to help with increased demand. Members help Night Stop (Women’s Refuge), a charity that supports the homeless and two houses by donating bedding, towels, kitchen utensils, toilet rolls and toiletries. Donations of nappies, wipes and toys for the children have also been co-ordinated.



Some members make cash donations of money they would have spent on Business Meeting meals for March, April and May to help Night Stop and donate to Empowering Girls in Nepal. In addition, club are supporting one another by shopping and collecting prescriptions for members who are self-isolating, whilst others telephone all members to check that everyone is ok.

Contributed by Wendy Ross-Barker SI Widnes

SI CROSBY – Stay Calm and Carry on

Members of SI Crosby have been putting their talents to good use. Former Regional President Sandy Taylor and President Elect Chris Chua Short have been making face masks. Following an appeal to members for materials, keen marathon walker Charan Singh offered all her souvenir T-shirts for the cause. The masks are donated to local hospitals, Food Bank friends and family – including those in Australia.



Chris also volunteers for Scrub hub Liverpool, part of a national effort to supply hospitals, care homes, GP surgeries, NW ambulance and many more with scrub wear, scrub caps, washing bags and buttoned headbands for use with face masks to ease the pressure on the ears through prolonged use.

Isolating Club members are helped with shopping, others get regular calls to touch base and a dedicated WhatsApp group coordinates requests for help. One member said: “It is tempting to ignore advice but my doctor warned, ‘It only takes one sneeze or cough.’” So, I am extremely grateful for the help I receive from fellow members who not only get the essentials but the treats which are badly needed at this time.”



SI Crosby makes full use of information technology; Executive Committee meetings continue using Zoom video conferencing, Facebook and Twitter keep us connected and a general group WhatsApp provides much needed light relief as members share their news, information and some hilarious videos. Members who are not on line receive printed information.

Secretary Pat Williams produces regular newsletters with menu ideas, puzzles and quizzes to help pass the time. Five Club members are trustees with Age Concern Crosby. Sadly, lunch clubs and outings are on hold but calls are being made to keep in touch. Trustee Jill Boggan compiled a list of local shops and businesses that were supplying and delivering groceries which has proved invaluable.

There have been many reasons to celebrate during lockdown. Former Regional President Jenny Stanistreet and husband Tony celebrated their golden wedding, minuting secretary Sharon Ryan was awarded a distinction for MA in History and member Pat Mahoney completed a 10k cycle challenge for charity.

Contributed by Ann McCracken SI Crosby