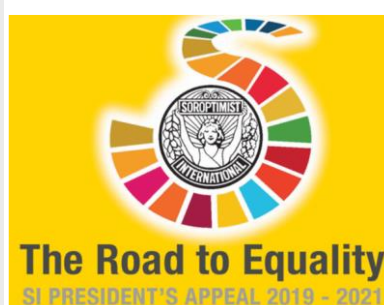




SI VOICES



Visit the SIGBI website to listen to the video recording of the recent 'Exploring the Road to Equality' Webinar, which took place on 20 August 2020.

With more than 200 attendees, the webinar is the first in a forthcoming series of informative and exciting webinars, under the banner of 'SI Voices' which from October 2020, will also include Podcasts.

Exploring the Road to Equality was a one-hour webinar hosted by SI President Sharon Fisher, featuring presentations from Ayushi Kundu & Olga Sidenko (SI Road to Equality Co-ordinators), and Khayanga Wasike CEO/President at Willing Hearts international.

SI MANCHESTER ZOOM AHEAD WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

Since the beginning of lockdown in March, we have held all of our club and executive meetings using the video conferencing application, Zoom. To most of us (including myself) this was a completely new social media experience. However, with the help of Sue Underwood, our club communications lead who hosted all meetings, we soon adjusted to today's world.



We decided to trial social Zooming sessions to ensure informal communication and inclusivity for all members, initially three times a week. We now have regular coffee mornings every Tuesday and afternoon tea sessions every Thursday.

The sessions have been successful and popular with significant benefits, enabling many of our new members to get to know each other better in a friendly, informal and entertaining way.

Members who have difficulty attending meetings on a regular basis can now join in our lively sessions. One of our members in her nineties, a long-term Soroptimist and club President, has been able, with the help of her resident carer, to enjoy meeting up with us all on a regular basis. Former member Val Moss (now a member of SI Lancaster) has also participated along with Honorary Member Kathleen Beavis, now living in Anglesey and a member of SI Bangor, has also joined in.

Conquering Zoom has even enabled four prospective new members to meet us and gain an understanding in an informal manner of the culture of our club. Two ladies actually joined during lockdown and we are optimistic regarding the others.

Zoom meetings have been invaluable at this difficult time and we will continue our Executive Meetings by Zoom in view of the considerable geographical spread of our membership. It has proved to be an essential channel of communication at this time, and a new invaluable tool in our club portfolio.

Rosemary Steven, President SI Manchester

Club News from around the Region

SI WARRINGTON – Lockdown no Obstacle to Activity

Members of SI Warrington have continued to be busy during lockdown with a variety of activities.

We launched a request to members in early July, asking for additional support to the independent charity Warrington Women's Aid. We managed to raise £250 in donations plus a supply of food and hygiene items.

Photo courtesy of Jackie Alexander



One member acted as Transport Coordinator for the Mid-Cheshire Leighton "For the Love of Scrubs" appeal, collecting and distributing materials to a group of volunteers who produced around 2000 pairs of scrubs, 500 mask extenders/head bands, 500 laundry bags and 200 knitted hearts. Other members have been knitting continuously; over 250 mask extenders were donated to Warrington Hospital, for which we received a handwritten Thank You card from the hospital's Chief Executive.

Photo courtesy of Rhona Kettle

Pictured right are sets of two knitted hearts, donated to Alder Hey hospital. A young patient keeps one, and the parents take home the other, thereby providing a link between them.

Photo courtesy of Liz Smith



Club member Julia has been a one-woman production line!

- providing ongoing support to Care UK, a charity providing goods for Syrian refugees, including cot blankets, baby hats, dresses and shorts and teddy bears;
- producing scrubs for Warrington hospital and local care homes - she sourced the materials, made the patterns and sewed 16 tops and 12 pairs of trousers, together with 45 laundry wash bags.
- she has also sewn over 500 masks for the charity Masks for Refugees and is still sewing!

It just goes to show how much can be achieved even in such challenging circumstances!



Photos courtesy of Julia Blair

SI WIDNES – Keeping Fun & Friendship Alive

On the evening of 16th July, ladies of SI Widnes and friends donned their walking boots for a walk around Pex Hill in Cronton. It was the first time that most of the group had seen one another 'in person' for nearly five months and the weather was lovely.

Eleven members (and two pooches) took part in the walk which took them through the cobbled yard of Cronton Hall, following the path up past woodland, and then along the side of the M62. Eventually the ladies came to the old derelict waterworks, reclaimed by nature, passing beautiful farmland on route to Pex Hill itself - socially distanced of course.



Pex Hill, as ever, was awe inspiring with a panoramic view across to Liverpool and the Welsh mountains. Not everyone had completed this walk before but it was enjoyed by all. Afterwards, we enjoyed tea, coffee and cake in Denise's garden (Patricia had made some delicious cup-cakes) and all agreed that it was a lovely way to spend a summer's evening. We hope to do it again, weather permitting.

Contributed by: Denise Parker

ZOOMED Fun Bingo & Quiz Nights.....



Multi-talented Club member Patricia made full use of Zoom technology to bring members together for fun Bingo and Quizzes. As well as hosting the get-togethers, Patricia also devised the quiz questions.

President Linda keeps a record of the winners in order to award the prizes at some point in the future when it becomes possible to do so.

.....and A Socially Distanced Tea Party

We had afternoon tea at Patricia's home in the garden. Present were Madam President Linda, Eleanor, Denise and Julie. We enjoyed scones cream and strawberries, walnut cake, a glass of Prosecco followed by tea/coffee. The weather was good and the conversation enjoyable.

Contributed by: Wendy Ross-Barker



SI BOLTON – Happy Birthday Evelyn

On July 31st three Soroptimists from SI Bolton; Margaret Wardle; Jennifer Hindshaw and Carole Swarbrick, gathered to celebrate the 90th birthday of long-standing member Evelyn Vigeon.



It was a beautiful, sunny afternoon and we were able to enjoy a socially distanced afternoon tea provided by a neighbour of Evelyn's, complete with birthday cake.

How lovely to do something joyful and almost normal in these strange times.



Life Saving Craft Boxes

This photo shows a selection of craft items collected by SI Bolton for the local charity Create Bolton; an arts based Christian charity making a difference and improving people's lives through creativity.

After making a donation the group decided to further support the charity throughout lockdown. People of all ages with a range of learning difficulties, physical disabilities or mental health issues have been able to continue their creative journey through craft boxes delivered with the addition of little treats. One recipient, shielding at home, called them 'a life saver'.



Contributed by: Carole Swarbrick SI Bolton

SI ST HELENS – Celebrate their 77th Anniversary with a 'Covid Cake'

When the club's planned celebrations had to be cancelled, club member Anne was determined to mark the occasion and collected photos from members in lockdown raising a toast to Soroptimist International which were added to a cake.

No celebration is complete without a cake and, as the need for handwashing is one of the key health factors in controlling the pandemic, the ladies devised one containing 77 cakes of soap!

This was then donated, along with a large box of food, to Teardrops a local charity working with the homeless and families in need.



The Club followed up with a further donation of toiletries, towels and supplies to the local Women's Refuge. This was the fourth donation during the Covid19 pandemic.

Contributed by: Anne Jones SI St Helens



SI LEIGH & DISTRICT – Cheese, Cheers & Potty Fund Raisers



The Club found an innovative approach to fundraising with the Social committee organising a virtual Cheese & Wine Party. Members & supporters enjoyed a home delivered basket of Godiva chocolates, wines, nibbles, grapes, bread sticks & not forgetting the cheese board!

Also included was a Cheese & Wine Quiz, complete with answers in a sealed envelope!

Test questions: How many grapes does it take to make a standard bottle of wine? Cheddar is Britain's top selling cheese. What is in second place?

Virtual online host Dorothy Bowker, led participants through the wine selections, with the knowledgeable repartee of a professional! A very enjoyable evening raised over £200 for Soroptimist charities.



Hats off at the Races!

As a complete contrast to the flurry of recent Programme Action work SI Leigh & District held a Zoom Royal Ascot evening. Many of the members wore elegant hats, but as complete surprise 4 members had surreptitiously organized a Horse-racing event.

Starting with the arrival of 'The Queen', complete with crown and National Anthem fanfare, two members were dressed in racing silks and rode inflatable horses! Another member was TV commentator/starter with an 'interesting' commentary on the runners and riders with betting odds! A very special fun & friendship evening.



Contributed by: Margaret Molyneux

SI Crosby – Say Thank You to Covid Heroes



Over 65 colourful handmade goody bags filled with a variety of treats were presented to the staff at St. Joseph's Hospice in Thornton, Liverpool - to show appreciation for their hard work and dedication during the current crisis.

President Chris Chua-Short, Programme Action Officer, Terry Francis were accompanied by club member Charan Singh, when they recently visited the Hospice to hand over the bags.

Even simple projects like this one take on a different dimension during these strange and difficult times, when face to face meetings are impossible. Where to get the bags from, what to put in them, what to buy for the male staff, where to shop, could we buy in bulk?

Club member Yvonne Atkinson liaised with St Joseph's and another member, Jenny Stanistreet made all the bags and printed a thank-you note for each member of staff. Crosby Club members supplied donations of hand cream etc. and cash.

President Chris and PAC Officer Terry did the shopping, which was initially quite daunting as they didn't know how things stood with regard to buying in bulk. But things worked out well.

It was understood that a member of the hospice staff had contracted Covid19 during lockdown and, naturally, that would have impacted on the remaining staff. The message being sent from SI Crosby to the staff reads as follows:

THANK YOU "In appreciation of all your hard work and dedication in very difficult circumstances over the past few months".

Contributed by Terry Francis SI Crosby



Summer Social Event



SI Crosby Social Chair, Margaret, was determined that Covid-19 wouldn't spoil the club's annual Summer Social event. Margaret organised and co-ordinated several socially distanced garden parties, hosted in member's own gardens.

Members arrived with their own individual picnic baskets and were treated to quizzes and games such as Family Fortunes. President Chris visited all of the gardens either in person or virtually using Whatsapp video calls.

This was a first outing for some members and provided a much-needed opportunity for fun and friendship in a safe and relaxing environment.

An Ode to Zoom by Penny Cook (SI Wigan)

I sit in my room and click onto ZOOM,
for the regional meeting this afternoon.
I'm really pathetic I'm not a high-technic
but the meeting is due to start soon.



Oh! here they come, appear one by one
President & members of council
They all look so calm and smile with great charm
as we all settle down to the ritual.

The officers lead and the meeting proceeds
as we work our way through the agenda.
We discuss the five Ps, seventeen SDGs
plus finance, Federation ex-cetera.



To learn how to ZOOM has been such a boon
to contact family, club members and friends.
So, thanks be to region for giving me reason
to learn----for who knows when this crisis will end?