



### TREE PLANTING

The tree planting map has been updated to 31 October 2021, and a fantastic 69,331 trees have been planted so far. Record your club's efforts by adding to the map, via the link below or visit the members area of the SIGBI website.

**Complete the Form to submit your Club's Tree Planting Data**  
<https://sigbi.wufoo.com/forms/w1d02o87190yylb/>

### Crafty Members?



SIGBI Trading Ltd is offering Clubs/Regions/NAs/Networks the opportunity to sell their products via the SIGBI Online Shop. Visit the members section of the website for more details.

## Soroptimists Recognised for Covid Services to the Community



It was a proud moment for SI Leigh & District when club members received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services.

The Special Recognition badges were awarded for the work members carried out in partnership with The Bridge during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Hampers for Care Home workers, gift bags for Young Carers and Operation Caring Hands all counted towards the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The club was also presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for their support of The Bridge, which included a contribution to their Christmas appeal, providing meals to struggling families as well as the toy appeal.



## A Message from the Incoming Region President

### ***CELEBRATING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS, VALUING ONE ANOTHER.***

It is a privilege and honour to become your president for the year 2021-2022.

Covid 19 will be remembered worldwide for its impact. It has affected all organisations such as ours, our members, and those we care about 'women and girls'.

Domestic violence increased during the pandemic, therefore we must continue to raise awareness and all forms of gender based violence.

Our Past President Josie's theme really inspired us to face our challenges head on and develop new ways of working, which you all did and are still doing; using Zoom for meetings and developing different initiatives to raise money for your local projects. I will say thanks to President Josie and well done to you all for your hard work and not allowing the pandemic to beat us.

But the time has come to start looking after ourselves, hence my theme for the year. Let's hope it will be a year of celebrations and valuing one another. We can continue to do what we know best for the 5 Ps (People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership) and the SDGs but also create time to care for one another at club and Regional level.



Our Regional Conference titled "WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN-TOGETHER WE STAND" reflects my theme for the year. As we support women and girls locally, nationally and internationally let's continue to support one another as well. The Conference Committee is working hard to ensure you have a very friendly and informative day. It will be a conference with a difference with motivational speakers including our own members from the Region. Hope to see you all there on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 at The Radisson Blu - God willing.

Thanks again for the honour of accepting me as your President, for the trust you are showing in me and also for believing in me that I can do the job. I hope with the support of the Executive officers and all clubs I will not let you down.

The year of 2022 will be a year of blessings for us ALL.

YOUR HUMBLE PRESIDENT

*DORCAS O. AKEJU, OBE*

## A Message from the Outgoing Region President

I can truly say that this Presidential year has been like no other although Past President Yvonne can also lay claim to that description! The lockdown from March to May 2020 cut us all off from “normal” activities and meant that she had really limited and restricted contact with Region and although the pre-cursor to my year saw us developing a wide range of ways to continue to serve our communities and stay true to our mission and vision, it remained a very remote form of working together. Many members felt isolated and unable to become involved although we were beginning to meet virtually and I must thank our then Federation President Elect, Johanna Raffan, for setting an example which Region Presidents Elects and National Association Presidents Elect were able to follow. She encouraged us to embrace the technology that would enable us all to remain in close contact, an example she continued to demonstrate after the Belfast Virtual Conference in October 2020.



Members have asked me if I was disappointed that I was unable to attend Charter and club events because of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 and I can honestly say that I would have loved to have done all that a Region President gets to do during her year of office. However, my overall reaction to the year has been one of great pride and overwhelming thankfulness that clubs were able to find creative and innovative ways of starting and completing Programme Action projects, raising awareness of the many issues affecting women and girl which were negatively impacted by the pandemic and raising funds for some of the most vulnerable people in our local communities. In addition, clubs ensured that all their members were looked after and able to access meetings once they had mastered the technology. Where members could not do this, they had buddies to keep them keep up to date with events and activities.

Many of our housebound members created opportunities for service from within their own homes, clubs held virtual Charter events following the excellent example set by SI Bolton and gradually our legendary determination and perseverance enabled us all to find ways of coming together. Clubs were flexible and adaptable, changing their approach as often as the government changed the lockdown guidelines. Last November I was a little nervous that my theme for the year “Facing Challenges, Making Changes, Moving Forward Together” would not have an impact on clubs; how wrong I was. This is exactly what Region has done and I looked forward every day to see what was posted on social media - from the 16 Days of Activism right at the beginning of my year to the Llandudno Conference which I thoroughly enjoyed.

For all of this to have happened it took a great deal of team work on the part of Region Executive Officers, Club Officers and Club members and I thank you all for the tremendous efforts and hard work everyone has put into achieving so much, in spite of all the barriers and limitations this pandemic has thrown up since January 2020. We are a skill-based organisation with the highest standards to maintain and we have shown that if those skills were lacking, we were more than able to develop them, retain our membership and attract new members with the same goals. We have much to celebrate after 100 years of service and a great deal to look forward to as President Dorcas begins her year. I wish her all the best for her year ahead and I am looking forward to her Region Conference in Liverpool in May 2022.

*IPP Josie Carter*



## Club News from around the Region

### SI STOCKPORT – Promoting 'Me Time'

Friday Coffee Morning for the Mums at Independent Options.



President Sue took tea, coffee, fruit teas and biscuits donated by the club. It was emotional as some of the mums hadn't seen each other for 18 months due to isolation of vulnerable people. They very much enjoyed their "Me Time" as the photos show and much appreciated our support.

*Contributed by Joyce Garside*

### SI ST HELENS – It's a family affair

In a bid to grow membership and raise awareness of SI St Helens, President Sheila Fowler enlisted the support of her two daughters, Nicola Parkinson (left) and Helen Cunliffe (right).

On joining the club, Nicola said "We have been supporting mum and SI St Helens in the background for a while now by attending various action events and functions. As Soroptimist International strives for the advancement and status of women, this fully aligns to my core values and purpose so it made complete sense to join a group of fabulous women doing great things for other women".

On Helen's membership she said "As the mother of two daughters (and a son), I want the world to be a better place for them. I want to be a role model who takes action to show how actions create change in the world."



*Contributed by Sheila Fowler*

## SI ST HELENS – 78 Years Young

After nearly 18 months we finally met together in August to celebrate our club 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Soroptimism with a picnic in member Edwina's Garden.

President Sheila was able to carry out her first official duties in presenting three new members, recruited during lockdown, with badges and membership certificates, two of them being her daughters (Photo) She also presented members Alison and June with their long service awards for 45 and 40 years. Sadly, member Barbara was in hospital and unable to join us to receive her certificate for 50 years membership. We celebrated the event with cake and bubbles and after their picnic lunch, members and guests took a walk through the beautiful wildflower meadows on Edwina's farm.



Since the start of the pandemic, the club has worked with Pause, a project managed by St Helens Council, which works with women who are at risk of, or have had children taken into care. 97% of these women

have experienced domestic violence or other forms of abuse, and enrolling on this 18-month programme enables them to make significant changes in their lives. The club initially got involved following a plea for furniture and household items - it was difficult to source items during lockdown and this delayed these women moving into permanent accommodation.



Meeting with the project leaders established a need for a welcome pack containing toiletries and essential wellbeing items, as many of these women had nothing. Through the generosity of members, family and friends, our Pause fresh start bags keep going. Last year, as part of our 16 days of action, we gave each woman on the

programme a cheer up bag which was greatly appreciated. This year we are doing a hug in a mug gift for each of them at the start of the 16 days of action on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

We held our first face to face meeting in September with one housebound member joining us on Zoom due to a broken ankle. We normally start our meetings with a meal but due to uncertainty over restrictions, we decided to only have coffee and biscuits and bring a

donation to the foodbank. This was very successful and we continued with this at our October meeting, resulting in two sizable donations of much needed supplies to the local foodbank.



Our October meeting started with a candle lighting ceremony to mark the 100 years of Soroptimist International. This gave us a chance to reflect on our club's past achievements and explain to our newer members the structure of the organisation. As each candle was lit, a member explained their place in the organisation; a new member, a regional officer and a former SIGBI officer. The final candle was lit by president Sheila to congratulate Soroptimist International on their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



*Contributed by Anne Jones*

## SI ST HELENS



Members have been collecting medicine blister packs for recycling via Superdrug Chemists. As well as the environmental advantages, any money raised goes to Marie Curie Nurses. The latest collection in October completely filled member Linda's car boot!

For more information on how the packaging is recycled visit:

<https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades/medicine-packet-uk>

To celebrate 100 years of Soroptimism and to mark National Tree Planting Week, Club members planted 100 trees and 100 blue and yellow bulbs in Sherdley Park alongside St Helens Ranger Service. We have also funded fruit trees in Africa and donated to the tree planting fund for the late President Johanna Raffan.

Members are purchasing toys and gifts for women and children staying at the Refuge at Christmas.

In partnership with St Helens Council Community Safety Team, we have produced a 'Spiking Awareness' leaflet as part of our 16 Days of Activism. The leaflet was designed by the talented daughter of one of our members and is being distributed throughout the town including pubs, clubs, gyms, colleges and school Sixth forms.

We arranged for the Steve Prescott Bridge in St Helens to turn orange to mark the 16 days and signage on the roads leading to town display our stand on gender-based violence. Our spiking awareness leaflet is on display on the electronic screens in all libraries.

*Contributed by Anne Jones*



## SI BOLTON

Backup Bolton provides an opportunity for young people who are homeless to be safe, stable and develop skills for independence.

Soroptimists collected essential items, but some chocolate treats too, for Goodbye and Good Luck boxes.

A young person will be presented with a box when they leave Backup for their own accommodation.

*Contributed by Carole Swarbrick*





## SI RAMSBOTTOM – Open Evening

In October we held an Open Evening and buffet dinner at the Red Hall Hotel in Bury. Slides showcasing some of our work over the past few years were shown to members and guests to give everyone a flavour of the diverse range of activities Soroptimists undertake.

We also made a delayed presentation to our Young



*Contributed by Ann Bennett*

Achiever of 2020; Ella Thompstone,

for her outstanding achievements in Muay Thai boxing. Ella gained both the European and British titles in her sport.

A fun quiz ended the evening with questions on “local landmarks”, “true or false” and even a round of “Dead or Alive”!

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening and several ladies expressed an interest in joining our club in the future.



## Seniors' Afternoon Tea

Afternoon Tea and entertainment was laid on for 40 Seniors at Ramsbottom Cricket Club. As well as a delicious range of sandwiches and cakes, our guests were entertained by the band singing old time songs and everyone joined in with gusto!

This is an annual event which had to be cancelled last year and it was so wonderful to see our regular guests again, as well as some new faces.



*Contributed by Ann Bennett*

## SI LIVERPOOL – A21 Walk for Freedom

On 16th October we walked with the world again on an A21 walk for freedom. Walking for those who do not have a voice but also to raise awareness of human trafficking. Hundreds of cities in countries all over the world joined in on the same day as it was anti-trafficking day on 18th.



This year was our fourth walk for freedom. Again, we partnered with the International Slavery Museum. We walked through the shopping area and then along the famous Liverpool Waterfront. Over 50 people joined us for the walk, and we were spared the rain. Our marshals got us safely across the roads and through the streets.

We had fabulous boards from A21 with facts about human trafficking and the reasons why we were walking. Some of our fantastic Liverpool SI members joined in, along with amazing women from SI Warrington and they had even made their own brilliant boards to hold as they walked.

I was so happy with the walk; I think it was the best one yet! We started and finished at the International Slavery Museum but stopped along the route for photo opportunities.



Contributed by Annette Maudsley

*the link to the global walk page is [www.a21.org/walk](http://www.a21.org/walk)*



## SI LEIGH & DISTRICT – Flapper Girls on Parade!



A fun event was held on Sunday 17th October at the Plaza in Atherton, a newly opened 1920's themed cocktail bar, which provided the perfect backdrop to celebrate 100 years of Soroptimist International.

Canapes and sweet treats were served and we were entertained by singer, Michelle Lee, with songs from the era and more recent times concluding with a rendition of 'Simply the Best'.

We took the opportunity to raise some funds for services supporting victims of violence and abuse with a three-hamper raffle, a drinks hamper, pamper hamper and food-based hamper and raised £364.00.

## Three of a Kind!

SI Leigh & District members were keen to commemorate Region President Josie Carter's Year of Office as she passes the Chain of Office to incoming President Dorcas Akeju. Club President Lynda Lilley spoke of Josie's commitment and diligence throughout this Pandemic year. Former Region Presidents' and club members, Pat Woodward and Margaret Molyneux presented flowers and a congratulations card on behalf of the club.



## A Tree-mendous Effort



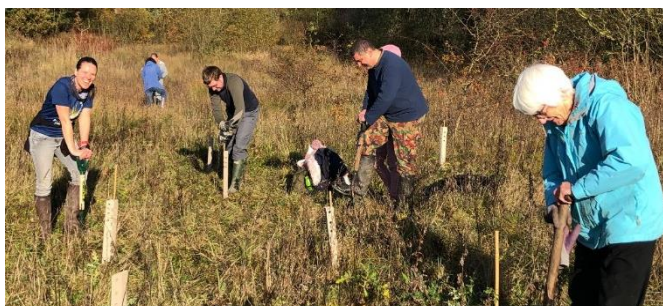
Continuing the Centenary Tree Planting Project, SI Leigh & District and SI Wigan club members, together with keen supporters, recently planted 100 tree saplings in a designated area of Bickershaw Country Park. Working on a beautiful sunny Autumnal morning, led by Lancashire Wildlife Trust personnel, the task was completed in an atmosphere of camaraderie and commitment.

*Pictured: SI Wigan President Angela Holmes (L), SI Leigh & District club President Lynda Lilley (R)*



Coincidentally, but timely, the Glasgow UN COP 26 Conference was reaching its climax and recognised the value of trees in improving air quality by photosynthesis. The project is ongoing, involving eight partnership organisations, with the next stage being the Soroptimist signage at the site. Local school children, who assisted in the sign's design, will plant further saplings and officially open the fledgling woodland area.

*Contributed by  
Margaret Molyneux*



## SI SOUTHPORT – Harness the Power of International Communication

Since the last Lancashire Leader, SI Southport have resumed face-to-face speaker and club meetings in our club-room in Baverstock House. We were delighted to welcome two new members to the club, Susan Fryer and Bernie Reynolds, who have already engaged in club activities and will be wonderful Soroptimists.

Some members are still reluctant to attend meetings in person so, we are continuing with 'hybrid' meetings to give our members most flexibility and freedom of choice.



One such meeting was our Friendship Night in October. When lockdown precluded any gatherings, we had a wonderful Zoom meeting with all our friendship links present. This year, with more relaxed Covid security rules, Heather Shulver and her International Committee decide to revert back to the more traditional format, with a meal and a candle-lighting ceremony – but with a difference.

We started the meeting with candle-lighting with our friendship links on Zoom, as we did in 2020. Our friendship links were in full support – when else would there be an opportunity to celebrate together? We were joined by our friends from SI Caserta (Italy), SI Windemere (UK), SI Gdansk (Poland), SI Dhanmondi (Bangladesh) and SI Lisburn (Northern Ireland) – with a message from SI Horsens (Denmark), who were not able to join us as they were holding a big lecture night to raise money for 'Moving the World to End Hunger', a United Nations project providing food for schools.



Our friends told us about some of their projects, which included providing thermo-scanners, eco-friendly bottles and interactive toys for the kindergarten of the University, raising funds for the sponsorship of a girl in Swaziland, knitting blankets over the lockdown, recycling blister packs with a local pharmacy, financing a cookery course and internship for victims of trafficking and many more!

The candle-lighting was followed by an amazing array of delicacies from the countries represented by our friendship links, prepared by Heather and the International Committee.



It was a very special evening for SI Lisburn – our friends in Northern Ireland were hosting their own Friendship Night with their links, SI Peterborough (Canada) and SI Drogheda (Ireland) and they also welcomed Soroptimist International President-Elect Maureen Maguire to address the meeting on her SI Appeal 2021-2023, 'Opening Doors to a Bright Future'. With the aid of technology, we in Southport, together with our friendship links, were able to listen to the plans for the International Appeal, for which projects will be established in all five Soroptimist Federations. It was a truly inspirational evening, and demonstrated the power of international co-operation and communication.

*Contributed by Ghislaine Fletcher*



## SI CROSBY

SI Crosby members nurtured native wildflower seeds including ox-eye daisy, field scabious and ragged robin at their homes for several months before planting out at Lunt Meadows. Over two hundred native wildflowers were strong enough to have a good chance of surviving in the wild at Lunt Meadows, which is part of the Wildlife Trust (Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside). SI Crosby has an ongoing partnership with the Wildlife Trust and the aim of the wildflower meadows at Lunt, near Crosby, is to increase biodiversity and enhance the visitor experience.



A special quilt featuring the 'Friendship Star' and traditional blue and yellow Soroptimist colours was made by Crosby's Soroptimists to commemorate the centenary of Soroptimist International. The quilt will be raffled at the May conference in Liverpool with proceeds going to the Diamond Education Grant. Crosby member Sandy Taylor came up with the original idea and suggested this to fellow members who were then led by experienced crafter Laurel Byrne of Treasure Quilt, with many members being new to quilting.

Lunt Meadows Nature Reserve, part of the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside, are planning education workshops as part of a project on Mesolithic and Modern Life.

Crosby Soroptimists joined other volunteers in developing sessions including prehistoric crafts and archaeology techniques. Senior Lecturers in Archaeology at the University of Chester, Barry Taylor and Amy Gray Jones, led the initial workshops in prehistoric crafts, providing an insight into life in Mesolithic times.

Members started with cording using nettle and other tree bark and also tried 'wet sieving', revealing tiny fragments of flint, chert and hazelnut shells. The items recovered hadn't been seen for around 9,000 years.



Back-packs with books, crayons, clothes, sandals and other items were filled by Crosby Soroptimists for Mary's Meals, a charity that helps children across the world who have suffered famine, war and poverty. Crosby Soroptimists have supported the charity for many years, filling more than 500 bags and donations in excess of £5,000

*Contributed by Jill Boggan*



## SI MANCHESTER - EMMELINE'S PANTRY VISIT

Recently President Rose and club members Susan, Barbara & Val, went to visit Emmeline's Pantry, an organisation we have been supporting for several years. Emmeline's Pantry started life as a foodbank in the basement of the Pankhurst Centre but now has its own premises in the outskirts of the city. This has given them the opportunity to expand their services and develop new ones.



With the help of Manchester Urban Diggers (MUD), the land around the new centre has been developed into a community garden, aptly called the Pankhurst Plot. The garden has areas for growing flowers and vegetables, as well as a children's activity area, a sensory garden and an outdoor seating area where staff and volunteers can relax.

The foodbank goes from strength to strength, with regular donations from Foodshare and a number of other charitable and corporate organisations in the area. The centre has had to amend its practices to cope with COVID regulations but its clients continue to receive an excellent service.

Our visit concluded with the handover of our annual donation of pyjamas which will be given as Christmas gifts to service users.

We are proud to support this wonderful organisation.

*Contributed by Sue Underwood*



## SI WIDNES

In July, members brought along the mugs given out at the June meeting to be filled with goodies. The gifts were for people supported by Reverend Linda Riley via St Michael's Church.



## Meal in a box



Working with Reverend Linda, members provided the ingredients for meals for 18 local families in need.

We had help from Tesco Widnes, Shaw's Butchers in Runcorn and the Farm Shop on Mill Lane, Widnes.

One recipient sent in a photo, along with her message of thanks.



## New members and Awards Lunch



Our newest member, Steph Gibbon writes....

It was a pleasure to attend the New Members Lunch, being surrounded by such inspirational women. We enjoyed a lovely meal and it was insightful listening to the speaker's story and seeing the work that other groups have been up to throughout the past two years.

## Celebration tea for Yvonne Gibbon

Due to the pandemic, Widnes members did not have an opportunity to celebrate Yvonne's year as Regional President. So, we decided to hold an afternoon tea in October. It was a happy occasion and it was good to welcome guests from a number of clubs around the region. Yvonne's little granddaughter, Amelia, presented flowers and Yvonne gave Amelia a little soroptimist badge. Amelia enjoys helping with our projects and is now our 'Soroptimiss'.

As Yvonne is fond of alpacas, we all enjoyed cake with an alpaca decoration!



*Contributed by Wendy Ross-Barker*



## SI STOCKPORT & DISTRICT – Hats off to Pamela



Recycling is not a new concept to SI Stockport. Our first project in 2001 involving recycled plastic bags, from which Pamela knitted stylish hats, brought the club accolades from across the country. The hats were displayed at several venues and finally at the Hat Museum in Stockport for two years. The final accolade was winning the Programme Action award, presented at the SIGBI conference. Pamela is also a contributor to our blister pack recycling project.

Recently 30 Syringe driver bags were donated to the Gynie Oncology ward at St Mary's hospital where they have 28 beds. They are thrilled and emailed their thanks.

After seeing our post on Facebook, an appeal by a District Nurse in Whitefield was received and we sent out a further 20 bags.



SI Stockport and District donated two Apple trees to Independent Options, who work alongside children and families with disabilities. With the help of a Sorooptimister, Joyce planted them in their large garden for their children and families to enjoy.

Thinking about the impact of climate change through waste recycling, Pamela Brown (our oldest member) whose latest project is reusable gift bags which she has donated to sell at St Ann's Hospice shop.

*Contributed by Joyce Garside*





## SI WARRINGTON



A **GARDEN PARTY** on 8<sup>th</sup> September to raise £240 for the charities we support. Alongside the delicious sweet and savoury afternoon tea we sold chutneys and lavender and herb sachets, all homemade by our members. A Raffle and a couple of quizzes added to the fun. Friends and two prospective members also enjoyed the social gathering.

In October, President Rhona, Helen and Renuka were joined by Dr Margaret Emsley for the first in the Club's **LITTER PICKING** activities in the Warrington area. Helen Crombie, our Recycling and Environmental Expert, sourced Hi-Vis jackets and litter-picking equipment. Despite the damp weather, the ladies collected three sacks of rubbish during their 3-hour walk around the Stockton Heath area. Another outing is planned for November.



2021 saw the anniversary of one of our longest-serving members, **Margaret Tye**, who celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> year as a Soroptimist.

Margaret is pictured here receiving her certificate from President Rhona.

Many congratulations Margaret!

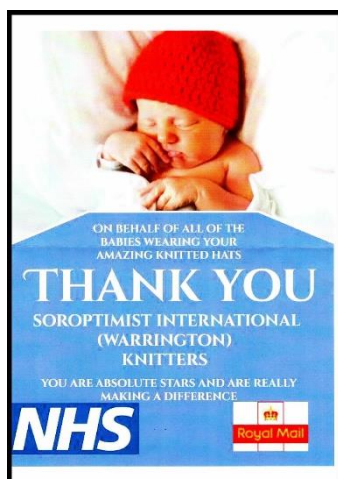
## Soroptimists March Together



President Rhona, June, Jackie and Jackie's sister Anna joined members of SI Liverpool on the **STOP THE TRAFFIK March on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October** to raise awareness of Modern-Day Slavery.

Annette Maudsley of SI Liverpool is the local coordinator of **StopTheTraffik.org**: this annual march was held in 500 cities around the world on the same day. Around 50 walkers marched in single file/in silence through the busy city centre and along the waterfront.

During the week, the LUSH store supported the event by selling hand & body cream in aid of STT activities. Jackie also volunteered a few hours on the product stand – a great spot to get into discussions about MDS with teenagers wandering through the store. A total of £650 was raised during the week leading up to the march.



Our ongoing support to different charities has not slowed down. We continue to support the Royal Mail initiative to collect and supply the NHS with knitted **TRAFFIC LIGHT HATS** for premature babies and sent off 147 in September and more are wanted!

Keep knitting ladies!

*Contributed by Jackie Alexander*





## SI WIGAN – Down on the Farm

After a long year of lockdown, zoom meetings and cries of 'you're on mute', the time had come for us to re-join the real world, and the Wigan Ladies sprang into action.

'Tea at The Farm' was to be our main fundraiser for Wigan Hospice, and so the planning began with an outside meeting at the Farm where the event was to be held. It was a glorious warm evening and I cannot tell you the excitement the meeting generated; getting together after such a long time and discussing ideas. Wonderful!



The working party put their plans into place, Elvis arrived and was greeted by our hardworking President, Angela Holmes, intent on making sure that everything went to plan – even the weather.

An evening was spent labelling Tombola prizes and another decorating the barn and washing what felt like a million chairs.

Bunting was even strung along the lane to greet visitors.



The day itself could not have been better and the sun shone. Some people couldn't make it due to Covid but we had a mountain of cake so there was no question we would go ahead.

Slowly people started to arrive, tea and coffee was made, the cream was shared out and the party began! Comments from guests included 'It's just like normal' and 'I feel like I am on my holidays'.

So, all in all a good day and we raised a grand total of **£2,400.00** which was donated to Wigan Hospice.

Thanks must go to all the people involved, volunteers who gave their time and cakes and to Kathleen for letting us use her farm. A good day was had by all.

*Contributed by Anne Clarke*