

Anne Jones, SI St Helens



Anne has been a member of SI St Helens for 28 years and has been our President twice. She attends the SIGBI safeguarding meetings on behalf of SI South Lancashire.

Her background is in primary education. In the early 1980s Anne was one of the first primary teachers on the government 'computers in schools' project. She became an IT and Technology Advisor in St Helens. At that time, Anne was one of the few women in the country in this position - only three had a background in primary education, and Anne was the only one with early years' experience.

As a member of the first 'Internet in schools' project, she developed training for teachers. She later worked on government-funded projects to enhance the use of IT in schools, and she lectured at Edge Hill University.

Following an approach from the St Helens Adult and Community Learning Service she developed a short IT course for parents in schools, and further successful projects. Anne became a permanent staff member responsible for the borough's IT community courses, plus assessment and quality assurance processes, and bidding for grants.

The needs of vulnerable adults in IT led to work on safeguarding and e-safety training. Anne became an ambassador for CEOP (Child Education and Online Protection) running e-safety courses in the community. She was a member of the council's E-Safety Strategy group.

Anne also spent time with the high-tech crime unit in Liverpool looking at online grooming of children and young people. This experience led her to encourage SI St Helens to link with 'Stop the Traffik'. Hence, we were one of the first Soroptimist clubs to host the UN Gift box; we have since had other projects raising awareness of trafficking and modern-day slavery.

Over the years Anne has been involved in many club initiatives. She visited Belarus to follow up our work with children in Chernobyl. Currently Anne leads on developing 'prosperity through partnerships'. For example, a successful bid to the Arnold Clarke Community Fund enabled the club to buy food and toiletries for women and children in the local Refuge.

The council invited Anne - as a Soroptimist - to join the 'safer communities' team to discuss safety of women at night and assist with a funding bid. This led to sponsorship of a leaflet on spiking, distributed to leisure venues throughout St Helens. Through links with the council Anne secured tables and chairs for the Teardrops charity, saving them around £1,000 in hire costs.

Throughout the pandemic Anne was able to secure furniture, household and white goods for women escaping domestic violence, plus nursery items for the 'baby basic' project at the local foodbank. She volunteered via CVS as a community champion - shopping, delivering food parcels and making befriending phone calls to those who were isolating.

Anne is clear that the 'opportunity of service' is why she became a Soroptimist.