

SI LEIGH & DISTRICT

PUTTING BACK THE PIECES

After a very successful Orange the World campaign, during which we raised awareness of ending violence against women and girls throughout the 16 Days of Activism, we launched our Putting Back the Pieces initiative on 10 December, Human Rights Day. This initiative is a partnership with Wigan Soroptimists, formed during the initial Zoom meeting of clubs interested in the Fresh Thoughts project. As we are both based within Wigan Borough, combining our efforts and resources was a natural step.

Our early conversations with organisations supporting victims and survivors of abuse highlighted a clear need for easily accessible information. However, they stressed that this information did not need to be in printed form; a digital resource would be far more useful. They reviewed the Fresh Thoughts material and advised us on what they felt should be included to make it genuinely effective.

With this guidance in hand, the next challenge became clear: how do we turn this into a practical, accessible digital resource?

We came up with a plan: Using Canva to create a simple FREE website that is accessed with a QR Code. Here you will find basic information on online safety and links to online tools -

- Bright Sky app
- Clare's Law
- Information on local D.V. services
- A link to an online booklet with local and national helplines
- How to access Legal Advice - Financial support - Housing

This came with very little cost, just the printing of the cards with the QR Code. So far 250 cards have been given to DIAS, Well Women, Community IDVA's, Wigan Borough Family Hubs, Wigan & Leigh C.A.B. with more places planned. Having this online means that it can be easily updated, and the cards can be printed when needed.



WOULD YOU LIKE HELP PUTTING BACK THE PIECES? FIND OUT MORE HERE

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

After our Charter lunch on 15th February, we are very much focused on International Women's Day, which we hope will be even bigger and better than last year.

FREE ADMISSION

Well Being

Women's Health

Tombola

Raffle

Fair Trade

Refreshments Available

International Women's Day 8th March 2026, 11.30am - 2.30pm
@ Pennington Wharf Community Hub
Plank Lane, Leigh, WN7 4QA

Drop in throughout the day
Rights, Justice, Action IWD 8th March 2026
For ALL Women and Girls

Let's celebrate!

FREE ADMISSION

Retail Therapy

Sand Art

Tree of Hope

Crafting

Women supporting Women

Strong Women

Sponsored by Big Cotton Events

Soroptimist International Leigh & District

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Leigh Soroptimists, along with other organisations were invited to take part in Holocaust Memorial Day in Leigh Town Hall. Programme Action Officer Dorothy introduced the Mayor of Wigan Borough and invited her to light the candle. The event is organised by a friend of Josie Carter, Jean Hensey-Reynard, it was a very moving event with speakers and singing by children from a local school.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

Christmas cheer for someone less fortunate. Throughout the year Josie has gathered a large collection of Christmas mugs, with the support of members, friends and family she has filled them with Christmas treats. We have donated toys and gifts to Family Welfare for their Christmas appeal to give Santa a helping hand.

SI CROSBY

WOMEN'S WELLNESS DAY

February was mainly taken up with preparation and planning for International Women's Day next month, when we are to hold a Women's Wellness Day in a spectacular setting amongst the dunes in Formby – peaceful and beautiful. All aspects of women's health will be included, so it's a huge undertaking and will be an all-club event. All are welcome!

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL MEETING

This year's December meeting involved a festive meal followed by fun, games, seasonal readings and a Secret Santa (aka Terry in a Mother Christmas outfit). Cards were exchanged between members and our big Club Christmas Card raised £135 for the local Community Pantry. Our newer members are pictured below, together with their sponsors.



CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



Every year except during the Covid pandemic we have participated in the annual Christmas Tree Festival held at St Faiths Church. The decorations used this year were silken red hearts made by our own fair hands during the monthly Gardening Club meetings. These magnificent red hearts coordinated with our theme for the current year: Women's Health. The tree raised another £34 towards our target. Every penny counts!

SANTAS SLEIGH



At Waitrose, Santa's sleigh raised yet more funds towards our HIPEC goal – a whopping £450 for three hours effort. Three teams of Soroptimists greeted children and adults alike. Everyone loved meeting Santa Soroptimister Phil, who once again did us proud.

CHET

Our members helped again at CHET's Christmas fair. Jane dealt with the raffle, whilst others assisted with the catering, or ran the tombola and gift stalls.



HOSTED BY CROSBY SOROPTIMISTS WOMEN'S WELLNESS DAY

Saturday, 7 March 2026 | 10.00am - 4.00pm

In partnership with Liverpool Women's Hospital Charity and supported by Liverpool and Southport Soroptimists

Soroptimist International
SI Crosby

Liverpool Women's
Hospital Charity

- Health talks by expert speakers
- Wellbeing tasters: yoga, relaxation & creative activities

BOOK NOW!

£15 registration fee (includes light lunch)

St Joseph's Prayer Centre, Freshfield, Merseyside



SCAN TO BOOK

www.ticketsource.co.uk/soroptimist-international-crosby/t-jxznrxj

GARDENING CLUB

January was quiet, though we met for Gardening Club and also at Lunt Meadows. Our Plant for Peace, aligned to our Better for Bees project, continued. As well as local parks, some schools in the area have joined the venture and planted wild flower beds to attract pollinators.

FRESH THOUGHTS

Programme Action Sue and Jan continued work on promotion of our Fresh Thoughts booklet (which is linked to our partnership with SWACA).

CROSBY READING

Our Reading Project in Great Crosby Primary and St Benets schools has continued to flourish with members giving many service hours to assist children learning to read.

RE-ENGAGE

Re-engage/Age Concern Crosby has stopped its lunch sessions, but we have continued to support this charity by service at our local community cinema, The Plaza. Flicks and Friends, screens popular films there for the over-sixties, free of charge. "White Christmas" was screened in December, evoking the nostalgia of a bygone era. The first film of 2026 was "Fackham Hall" a hilarious skit to brighten the dark January days. As a huge contrast the February film was "The Housemaid", a psychological thriller. All were well attended. In February members also attended SWACA's Fundraising Quiz – always great fun.

UNWANTED TECH

Also thanks to Vesna's efforts in collecting and selling used, out-of-date, unwanted tech items, we contributed another £57 to SIGBI's Diamond Education Grant.

SI MANCHESTER

SPONSORING "THE TIGERS"



Following the successes of the England Women's football team, the Lionesses, SI Manchester explored the possibility of sponsoring a local girls' football team. The club eventually formed a partnership with Ashton on Mersey's under-12 team, The Tigers, agreeing to sponsor both their home and away kits. Their shirts now proudly display Soroptimist International Manchester and the dynamic "S" on the front and one sleeve.

Now in our second season of sponsorship, we're building a strong and positive relationship with the parents, coaches, and of course the girls. Congratulations to our girls' football team – a brilliant start to 2026!

The Tigers have enjoyed a run of good results, including a 3-2 win on 24 January against the Snow Leopards. Inspired by their form, I went along again on 31 January, a bright but cold morning, to watch them play Urmston Meadowside. It was a thoroughly enjoyable match, made even better by a 3-0 victory. The girls created most of the chances, even hitting the post, and although the third goal was disputed as offside, without VAR it stood, and was well deserved.

I asked one parent what she thought was behind this positive run, and she immediately pointed to coach Ian, who happened to be standing beside me. Ian was quick to deflect the praise, highlighting the commitment of all the coaches, parents, and especially the girls, who are working hard as a team while having fun. I also spoke to three mums who asked me to pass on their thanks to club members for our sponsorship. They are genuinely appreciative of our support and spoke passionately about the physical and social benefits their daughters gain from playing football.

Girls' football is one of the fastest-growing sports globally, making our partnership with Ashton on Mersey especially meaningful. Together, we aim to empower the girls to develop confidence, leadership, and teamwork, while also helping to raise the profile of Soroptimist International Manchester

SI RAMSBOTTOM

TREATS FOR GOOD



Time flies, especially when you are a member SI Ramsbottom. We ended 2025 on high. Our famous Christmas treats raised over £700 for good causes. We were delighted that our collaboration with Tesco Haslingden and Tesco Accrington continued. Not only did they donate to the treats they also helped us prepare them and did all this embracing the full spirit of Christmas.

January is our time to reflect as a group by having a few weeks off. In light of such we started 2026 with a post-Christmas social, remembering that friendship is what keeps us going as group. We have so many plans for 2026 and beyond we cant wait to keep you updated



SI WIGAN

PINK CAFE

Recently we 'held a Pink Cafe' to help promote our local hospital's 'Three Wishes - In Pink campaign' and to raise awareness of breast cancer.



ORANGE CAFE

On the 25th of each month we meet and enjoy refreshments at our 'Orange Cafe' held locally, which promotes the awareness of domestic violence against women and our drive to end this cycle.



DIAS GIFTS

Members and their families and friends make up gift bags containing toiletries and small gifts for DIAS staff to distribute to clients over the festive period.



ECO TOILET ROLLS

SI WIGAN SMALL PROJECT

Some of our members are unable to join in our large projects so have looked at other ways help us to achieve our aims.



For example, a member has raised our awareness of products that are ecologically friendly. She gifted each of us a toilet roll from 'Who Gives a Crap' - a company that donates 50% of their profits to clean water and toilet projects. 'Small steps help' especially if enough of us work together to make a difference in the world.

Alongside our whole club projects our members sometimes set up small projects to help us achieve our aims. These have included the gift of an ecologically friendly toilet roll for each of us from a member, raising awareness of how working together in small projects can make a difference.

KNITTED POPPIES

A group of members was the knitting of poppies for the Royal British Legion. These were sold in local supermarket to support those in need within the Armed Forces community.



Poppies made by our members for The Royal British Legion Appeal.

WIGAN AND LEIGH HOSPICE



Each Christmas we support Wigan and Leigh Hospice by funding and decorating a tree for their Light for a Life campaign. This allows the community to celebrate cherished memories of loved ones who are no longer with us. This year we made orange decorations at our club meeting. On each was a word connected to SIGBI's sustainable goals - Educate; Empower, Enable Women and Girls along with Action, Advocacy and Awareness. Members braved the winter weather to place them on the tree.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



We had a wonderful Christmas Party evening with a delicious meal at Ashfield House Standish, with musical entertainment from Liz Hendry, pianist and an enjoyable musical quiz set by our president.

SI SWALLOWS 1st ANNIVERSARY

SWALLOWS SOAR AT ONE: A YEAR OF PURPOSE, POWER AND PARTNERSHIP



As Winter draws to a close and Spring is on its way, we have been looking back over our first year, celebrating our successes and looking forward to our 2nd year. On 18th April 2026 we will mark our first birthday joining with The Lewy Body Society (marking their 20th anniversary here in Wigan).

Join our joint celebration at the glittering, ...

Lewy Body Celebration Dinner
Saturday 18th April, 2025

Leigh Sports Village (07768 290 553 for tickets or from Try Booking)

This is not a fundraiser but a celebration dinner with dancing, great food and friendship. You're all invited to the party!

From a bold beginning of 10 founder members, the club has flourished to 14 dedicated members plus one honorary member—proof that when women unite with purpose, momentum follows and impact abounds.

Powered by Purpose, with clear priorities on Women's Health, Women's Safety and Equality, the Swallows have packed their first year with meaningful action, laughter, learning and community impact.

A LOOK BACK OVER THE YEAR..

There has been so much over the last year, our much-loved Race Night thundered ahead, raising over £2,000 to support vital causes. Creative energy flowed through seasonal wreath-making workshops at Easter and Christmas, while a festive collaboration with ReDoo with U saw members painting their own T-shirts. We hadn't completed our t-shirts when we had our amazing fashion show at Wigan RUFC - but maybe this year at our 2nd fashion show you may see us on the catwalk. 1st October 2026, Standish Club Strut your stuff with Swallows and grab yourself a bargain. High street clothes but not High Street prices.



STRENGTH, SOLIDARITY AND SELF-DEFENCE

A lively self-defence introduction brought "good laughs" alongside practical skills, tackling an important issue of women's safety in a supportive setting. With many friends in attendance, the session was a reminder that women's safety can be addressed with both seriousness and sisterhood. Some of us looked on from the wings but others gave the instructor a run for his money!



A TASTE OF SUCCESS



At the unforgettable Buena Comida Spanish Night at Wigan College, members asked: "Where else can you find better quality food and be part of the students' learning journey?" The answer, of course, was right there—supporting students while savouring authentic Spanish flavours in a vibrant learning environment. We are looking forward to celebrating the year of the horse at our Chinese Meal at Wigan and Leigh College – February 2026.



SI SWALLOWS 1st ANNIVERSARY

RAISING VOICES ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

The Swallows' impact reached far beyond the local community. Members and local business network (FubHub) attended a special event at Parliament demonstrating their commitment to advocacy at the highest level.

Together with decision makers, politicians, clinicians, researchers and people with lived experience, we highlighted the urgent need for better recognition, diagnosis and care for people affected by Lewy body dementia.

Here's Jacqui looking perfectly at home on the green bench – perhaps we'll see her on the front bench one day. Watch this space!

Swallows founder member, Jacqui, and CEO of the charity said: 'Reaching our 20th anniversary is a moment to reflect, but it is also a moment to act. Raising awareness is one of the most powerful ways to improve outcomes. ...earlier and accurate diagnosis can change lives, and awareness is the first step to making that happen.'

Rob Rinder, the charity's new patron, spoke about his lived experience. The powerful choice of language and insight that he showed, left us all in no doubt that we must continue to advocate, raise awareness and take action for carers and families too in this complex landscape. His phrase 'Walking through the fog' is something we won't forget.

In an iconic London landmark, members also witnessed the premiere of a powerful new film, shining a spotlight on a condition that affects thousands of families. Supporting World Lewy Body Day became a key moment in our 1st year calendar—combining compassion with action to amplify understanding of Lewy body dementia. Unfortunately, none of our members could play on one of the Steinway pianos – perhaps as well!

On a lighter note, Angela and Jayne would like to thank the two strangers who stood up for them on the Tube!

HORSES AND HOTPOT ROUND 2



Getting ready for our 1st birthday party, the celebrations start with **Horses and Hotpots** event on **Friday 17th April 2026**.

A fantastic night of fundraising, fun and food! Come and hear about our project supporting the breast cancer journey in Wigan. Soak up a brilliant community atmosphere and maybe you'll find yourself in the winners' enclosure. Horse ownership only £10.

Neigh, we hear you call - that's cheap!



SORING INTO YEAR 2

In just twelve months, we have shown that a small group of determined women can create meaningful change—locally and nationally. As we gather for their Charter celebration this April, one thing is clear: **The Swallows are not just marking a milestone, they're building a movement.**

Here's to strong voices, shared purpose and even greater impact in the years ahead.