**St Albans Mayor’s Pride Award 2019**

**Voluntary Sector Award**

**In what ways does the nominee contribute to the community? What is their story (300 words)**

The local women’s group Soroptimist International St Albans and District has been serving the community since it was founded in 1957. Soroptimist International (SI) is a Membership Organisation with Clubs like the St Albans and District one at its heart. SI has more than 75000 Members in 122 countries. Everything we do is focused on educating, empowering and enabling women and girls - internationally, nationally and locally. We are a recognised body representing women at the United Nations with consultative status. Our Club currently has 32 volunteer Members and we usually meet twice a month. Our Programme of Action is the work we do to tackling issues including women’s education, the environment, health and violence against women and girls.

We support charitable causes, international, and local financially and in kind – to find out more about the charities we support please see [www.sigbi.org/st-albans/charities-supported-by-st-albans-soroptimists/](http://www.sigbi.org/st-albans/charities-supported-by-st-albans-soroptimists/)

To read more about our Projects see the website: [www.sigbi.org/st-albans/category/projects/](http://www.sigbi.org/st-albans/category/projects/)

Soroptimist Vision: Women and girls will achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

Soroptimist Mission: Soroptimists transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities.

Soroptimist Principles: The principles of Soroptimist International are to strive for:

* The advancement of the status of women;
* High ethical standards;
* Human rights for all;
* Equality, development and peace; and
* The advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace

**Why do you think this nominee deserves to win? What makes them special? (200 words)**

All of the Members of Soroptimist International St Albans and District joined because they share the vision and mission – to make a difference to the lives of women and girls. We often say we must be the world’s best kept secret because so few people have heard of us in spite of the fact that the organisation has been around for almost 100 years and the St Albans Club for 61 years! Our Members have included many unsung heroines over the years.

The local charities that we support (St Albans and Hertsmere and Welwyn Hatfield Women’s Refuges, Home-Start Herts, Rennie Grove House to name a few) are always impressed by our understanding of the issues they face and how we are willing to help, not just financially, but through volunteering our skills and energy too – including assisting with grant applications, lobbying on their behalf for increased funding and manning market stalls….

A wonderful part of this international organisation is that it not only works on internationally recognised projects but also gives back to its roots nationally and locally, with Members keeping the organisation firmly grounded in the local community.

**What is your message for the nominee? (100 words)**

Carry on inspiring action and transforming the lives of women and girls whilst supporting one another. I joined Soroptimist International St Albans and District 20 years ago and am immensely proud of the work that the organisation and our Club has achieved during that time. Sometimes you can feel overwhelmed by the things in the world that need to change and that can lead to inertia. Being a Soroptimist means that your contribution, however small, can collectively make a big difference. I have also made friends with some wonderful women locally and all over the world – what a gift!