

# A Year of Soroptimism at SI Haverfordwest and District

## April 2024-2025 with President Susie



### INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

What a lovely day we had, celebrating women! Handing out bunches of daffodils, spreading the word about Soroptimists and bring a smile to everyone's faces. All of the bunches had our contact details attached. A truly 'feel good' day we will repeat, and a fantastic opportunity to talk about our club.



## PROM DRESS PROJECT

As we started the year in April 2024, thoughts of prom were taking a second place to revision and exams. But we want every girl to be able to 'go to the ball' regardless of financial situations, and we were aware of 'recycle, repurpose and reuse'. For the third year in a row, we arranged pop up shops in four local schools and Pembrokeshire College. We offered a free loan of one of our 250 dresses. As well as being able to borrow a dress, the students found the trying on sessions fun, empowering and confidence boosting.



"Thank you so very much for your kind donation of the prom dresses to Portfield School for their leavers prom. Introducing Lotte, she loved her dress. She loves her clothes and felt very proud"



Poster at Convention in 2023

## BRA PROJECT

We have been collecting bras since 2021 – from members of the public and via our links with local charity shops. Since then, a staggering 16,800 bras have been sent to Bravissimo for reuse or recycling. That's an amazing 1.7 tonnes. Donating a bra to a woman in developing countries can confer status, give confidence and deter sexual violence. 300 donated bras were brand new with tags. These were taken to The Garth Project, as having been shown around the venue at a club meeting we identified the women there would appreciate them.



## EASYFUNDING

Did you know you can get money for club funds when you buy things online you were going to purchase anyway? And at no extra cost? It takes a few minutes to sign up and many online companies are part of the scheme. Haverfordwest have received £111 in the last 12 months.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sorophaver>



## HANDBAG DRAW



Members are always so generous when asked to provide raffle prizes, but a brand new Radley handbag was a little bit special. By selling tickets and doing a live Facebook draw, we raised £260 and made an associate member in Yorkshire very happy.



## BOOK VENDING MACHINE

We were asked by a local school to help fill a book vending machine. Tokens are given out for good work and behaviour, and then the students can choose a book from the vending machine. The idea is that a reward or prize is seen as more valuable and the books are more likely to be read and cherished. Members were happy to collect and deliver an ongoing donation to the school.

## LITTER PICK



To coincide with the 16 Days of Activism, we planned a litter pick on Market Day. At one of our Orange Coffee Mornings, we created bows with QR codes linking to help for those experiencing gender-based abuse. While picking litter, we placed posters and the bows around the town.

## CHRISTMAS DONATIONS



For our wonderful Christmas Party, we bought gifts that were donated to Patch, a local charity that passed these on to families in need.

## LEND WITH CARE

Making small loans to women via Lend With Care is an ongoing club project, and during President Susie's year we made two loans, each of £45. The money repaid is lent out again.

Lien, in the Philippines, farms, and wants to purchase more fertiliser and pay more labourers.

Mawupenoussin Womens Empowerment Collective, near Lome. Women are dressmakers, hairdressers and sell clothes and shoes. Elena, one of the group, is using her share of the loan to buy an industrial sewing machine. This will save her time and money and enable her to buy more in bulk. Her vision is to set up a sewing school for young girls.

## FUN AND FIZZ

This was our big fundraiser of the year, and what a success! 150 guests enjoyed sunshine, dancing, great company, eating and drinking, raising £4160. The new venue for us, Haverfordwest High School had inside and outside spaces, and perfect facilities for catering. A happy coincidence – we had previously given financial support to the caretaker's daughter, so he was extra obliging.





## TRAIN TRIP

We have strong links with St Marks School, and were delighted our current regional President Helen could accompany the children via train to Plantasia in Swansea. We're not sure who enjoyed the creepy crawlies the most, but we think it was Helen. At Christmas, our club gives a cash donation for the headmistress of St Marks to pass, at her discretion, to a family she considers in need of a little help. We are also aware that donations of children's clothing are appreciated at the school.



## BINGO

Such a fun evening! Bingo, a bar, and fish and chips, all with a Valentine twist. The evening drew plenty of support from the charities involved and raised £600.



# QUIZ NIGHT

Squeezed in just before the end of President Susie's year, this ended up attracting twice the number of quiz fans we anticipated, and raised more than £600. A fun evening with great catering (rose to the challenge of extra qizzers admirably) and good company.



# SPEAKERS AND MORE...

Anji Tinley came and told us about The Hive project. She is a powerhouse, with a fantastic understanding of young people and their needs. We visited the The Hive, too, and saw where they provide computers, cook meals, the football court and skateboard park. A truly welcoming facility and a credit to her drive and passion.

Cruising Free were the first all women team to complete the Atlantic Dash, rowing 2800 nautical miles across the Atlantic, and setting two world records (oldest woman and first with Cystic Fibrosis). They came to speak to us before the challenge, and we were incredibly proud to have Haverfordwest Soroptimists on their sponsorship teeshirts. Watching their arrival into Antigua was emotional!

As well as arranging speakers for our meetings, President Susie gave talks too, promoting our club. She was interviewed by local radio for Pembrokeshire Island Discs, and was invited by Pembrokeshire County Council to speak at a 'Women in Leadership' conference.

We had regular dinner and business meetings, Orange Coffee Mornings, communications with our Friendship Links Leigh, Dunfirmline and Bielska Biala. We've met in person, used Zoom, email and Whatsapp. We've enjoyed each other company, appreciated the skills that each of us brings to the club, and made a difference.