

## **2024/2025 – A year in the life of SI Barry & District.**

Programme Action is central to the work of the Club and all members engage in a variety of activities aimed at improving the life of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities.

### **Velindre Chicks**

The Easter chick project is one of the longest running projects of the Club. For over 25 years members have knitted chicks to raise funds for Velindre Cancer Care. Since Covid, the Club has, in addition to knitting, sourced Cadbury cream eggs, packaged and sold the chicks.



This year Crafters met regularly at Dinas Powys Library and Activity Centre to knit, sew up and decorate chicks. Eggs have been generously donated by members and friends, Tesco, Asda, Waitrose and Morrisons Store. Our sales outlets have included, Arbuthnots Opticians Barry and Penarth, Barry Railway Station Cafe, Barry and Sully Libraries, Dinas Powys Library and Activity Centre, High

Street Chemist, Sully Primary, Wenvoe Primary, Holton Road and St Helen's Primary schools. A number of supporters have also sold chicks for us locally. All our outlets received a certificate to display, showing how much they had raised and a thank you letter.

The final amount for 2025 was a record breaking £3,800. A cheque was presented at a Club meeting to Cancer Consultant Dr Emma Hudson from Velindre. She gave a brief talk saying how the monies raised would enable women suffering from cancer to have a better patient experience.



### **Barry Hospital and The Sam Davies Ward.**

The Club has provided active support for the frail and elderly patients to enable a more comfortable stay in hospital and aid their recovery. Members have donated nightwear, day clothes and toiletries to the Ward. Washbags made as part of The Health and Wellbeing project have been filled and given as Christmas gifts and chicks donated as Easter presents

Working with the Sister on the Sam Davies Ward, a successful grant application to the Health Charity resulted in funding to convert a disused outside space into an attractive Courtyard with raised planters and two beautiful murals on the walls for patients to enjoy.

As part of the GlastonBarry Fringe Community Arts Festival 2025 the Soroptimists hosted an event "Tea, Tunes and Treats" for patients in the Courtyard. An afternoon of entertainment was held which included entertainment by The Barry Ladies Choir, The Barry Male Voice Choir and Hope 4 Change Music Project. It was a great success with the sun shining, patients, relatives and friends socially interacting and enjoying the music and refreshments. The Club were fortunate to receive sponsorship for the event from Littlechild & Hayley to the tune of £200.



## **Card Project.**

This self funding project has proved to a very useful source of income to support local charities. A grant was originally provided by Barry Town Council to start the project. Most recently a relative of Past President Stephanie, kindly donated a number of photographs to expand our range of cards.. The response from Club members, Wales South Soroptimists and the local public at craft fayres has proved to be very positive.

## **Golau Caredig.**

We have continued to support Golau Caredig Extra Care Facility with monthly visits to chat and enjoy refreshments. The communal spaces has been used for crafting, hosting Carol Services in the past and a Cyber Fraud Prevention talk arranged by the Club and provided by South Wales Police. All functions are open to residents, Club members and friends



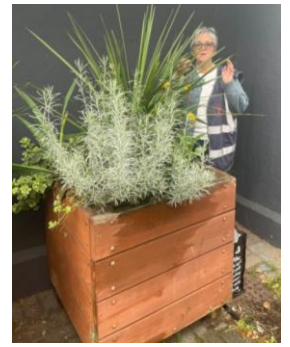




## **Adopt a Station.**

Members and Adopt a Station volunteers have continued to enthusiastically support

Barry and Barry Island Stations with the aim of enhancing travellers' experience and making the stations a more attractive, safe place for women and girls. Planters have been lovingly tended, watered and deadheaded throughout the year and due to this successful addition to the stations, more planters have recently been introduced. Barry Station Foyer is now regularly decorated with bunting, flowers and wreaths at Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and St David's Day and feedback from travellers has been very encouraging.



As a consequence of this project and the relationship established with TFW and the owner of the Barry Station Cafe, the Club has been able to sell our Easter chicks for Velindre, hold Crafternoon sessions and make white ribbons to distribute to travellers. All these activities help promote Soroptimism

A very popular initiative with female travellers has been the introduction of baskets displayed in the Ladies waiting room containing toiletries supplied by members and friends and Period Dignity items supplied by VOGCC. A feedback sheet has enabled Club members to gain a valuable insight into travellers' views on the items provided. The comments have all been constructive and heart-warming. A large mural has been painted on the outside of the building to welcome trains and their occupants as they enter the station and the original idea came from a suggestion from the Soroptimists.



## **Crafternoons.**

A grant in 2024 from Barry Town Council for £200 provided financial support for one of our newer initiatives, the Health and Wellbeing Project. This has resulted in a variety of items being made -adjustable mastectomy drain bags, mastectomy comfort



cushions, syringe driver bags, car seat belt protection cushions, walking frame caddy bags, toiletry washbags and twiddle muffs for dementia patients and calmers for autism. These items have been made during Crafternoon sessions attended by members and friends at free locations within the community. Venues have included, Golau Caredig, The Community room at Victoria Park, Cadoxton, Al's Coaltrain Café at Barry Railway Station and Dinas Powys Library and Activity Centre. The aim of this project has been to provide much needed items for Llandough Hospital (including the Breast clinic), Velindre Hospital, Sam Davies Ward, Community Care Homes and Age Connects. To date over 180 items have been produced with more in the pipeline.

To highlight the Club's Wellbeing project, an exhibition of the items made was displayed at Art Central Gallery, Barry Library on International Women's Day. Soroptimists were invited to the opening ceremony and this gave members the opportunity to discuss Soroptimism and its aims and objectives. The exhibit was highly commended by the Gallery organiser.





In the past year, Crafternooners secured pitches at two Craft Fayres to sell sustainable items which had been made. These included moth proofing bags, reusable make-up removers and other decorative items. The first venue at Highlight Park Community Hall in November 2024 raised £168. The second in December hosted by Age Connects at Golau Caredig raised £113 for the President's charities.

The Crafternoon sessions encourage anyone to attend, whatever level of crafting ability. The group aims to combat social isolation and share skills. In 2024 a crafting session was held at Golau Caredig after securing a Grant of £60 from GlastonBarry Fringe Community Arts Festival. Club members and friends participated, making and displaying Rag Rugs, Floral designs, Chick knitting and many more crafts. The event was a great success.

### **Partners in Fundraising.**

Our annual **Macmillan Coffee Morning** was held at Barry Island Beach Huts in September and donations amounted to £430. Cakes, tea and coffee were provided by members and friends and the event was attended by various local politicians.



Members also volunteered to sell Poppies for **The Royal British Legion** at Penarth and Barry. This was an opportunity to work with another organisation, raise funds for a worthy cause and raise the profile of Soroptimism.



In the lead up to St David's Day, members supported **The Marie Curie Daffodil Appeal** by dressing up and selling daffodils. Sixteen members volunteered at Morrisons Supermarket and £622.07 was raised.



### **Ongoing donations to our partners**

Supporting **the Coastlands Food bank** has been ongoing for a number of years. The Club link person who volunteers there regularly liaises with the staff to identify food shortages.



Items required each month are added to the Agenda being sent out for Club meetings so that these can be brought to the meeting and passed on to the Food bank.

In keeping with the objectives of Soroptimism to help transform the lives the women and children, for SI Barry & District domestic abuse is a very important issue. Hence over the years wherever possible the Club has offered its support to **Atal Y Fro/ VDAS** through gifting household items, toiletries and gifts at Christmas.



## **Vale Baby Basics**

Club members regularly donate items of babies clothes, Moses baskets, toiletries and nappies etc. to provide vital assistance to Mothers who face financial difficulties with a new addition to their family.



## **Reading Buddies.**

Over the years Club members have given of their time to help children with their reading skills. Since Cogan Primary School won the Barry & District prize in the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative, members have regularly attended the school to listen to pupils read. More recently members have also assisted with reading programmes in St Hellen's Primary School, Barry.

## **Christmas Tree Festival.**



Every year a themed tree has been entered by the Club in the annual Christmas tree festival at St Augustine's Church, Penarth. This year's our title was "Sorooptimist Vision for the Future", using donated spectacles to decorate the Christmas tree. It achieved a bronze award and helped the Church raise funds for local charities.

The tree was later displayed at Arbuthnots Opticians, Barry and seventy pairs of glasses were afterwards donated to the Uganda Eye Care Project. A win, win project!



## **Prom Dresses.**

Dresses and suitable items for students have been donated by members and friends to Pencoedtre High School so that no pupil is prevented from attending their Prom due to financial constraints. This project is in the process of being extended to include outfits suitable for interviews, to ensure that no student is disadvantaged because of appropriate dress code when applying for jobs.

Also as a new textile course is about to start in the coming year, materials have also been donated to help build up pupil resources.

## **Annual Beach Survey.**

Another longstanding environmental PA project has been the annual Marine Conservation survey carried out at Jacksons Bay, Barry. Our Club co-ordinator, Linda Jones has overseen this survey and each year has recorded items found on the coastline, written a report and also informed the local Council of the results so that action can be taken if required. By monitoring Jacksons Bay, the Soroptimists have been actively engaged in trying to maintain safe standards so that families can continue to enjoy time at this popular beach.

## **KIVA – The International dimension to Soroptimism**

As an International organisation Club members have attempted to support women across the world through KIVA. In the past year the following women have been loaned money by SI Barry & District:



- 1) Jesca, from Uganda who wanted to expand her business by buying more cows
- 2) Lora from Fiji, who wanted to set up a food canteen
- 3) Marigoret from Uganda, who wanted to buy tools to work on her farm
- 4) Ibodat from Tajikistan who wanted to buy an embroidery machine to improve the quality of her goods
- 5) Vilisi from Fiji, who wanted to develop her business

Once the money has been repaid it can be reinvested in another deserving recipient

**2024/2025 has been another busy and successful year with the continuation of a number of favourite projects of SI Barry & District and the introduction of new ones. With such a range of projects, there is something to interest all members so that every Soroptimist can be engaged in Programme Action and make a valuable contribution to the life of the Club.**