

Soroptimist International Wales South Annual Officer Reports AGM 2016

Regional Secretary – Lesley Morgan

During the SIGBI 2015/2016 year we held four Regional Officer meetings, three Regional meetings, one at Natgaredig and two at Aberavon plus the Annual General meeting at Aberavon. Club Presidents and Presidents Elect met at Machynys Golf Club Llanelli to start discussions on the way forward for Wales South. This was followed by an afternoon fun event which was open to all members. Usually 70-80 members attend the meetings representing the majority of clubs in our region.

The format of meetings continues to be reviewed and amended. Members are now asked to sign in prior to the start of the meeting with apologies only being recorded for Regional Officers and Club Regional representatives. These people constitute the Regional Council.

The amount of email traffic seems to grow year on year, but it does allow us to pass on information quickly and respond promptly, when necessary. However this does **rely on us all** forwarding and circulating information promptly. Clubs can really help by making sure that I receive any change of officer's details as soon as possible thus ensuring the information reaches the relevant club officer. This is particularly important at the start of the new club year. As you send your annual returns to SIGBI please send a copy to me as well.

Invites from clubs across the region have been circulated within two days of receipt but sadly some have had to be recirculated as clubs have not responded appropriately. I ask that all clubs reply to the invite, directly to the club issuing the invite, even if it is to say 'sorry we are unable to attend'. That way I will not need to recirculate invites and reduce the number of emails you receive.

Communicating with each other, sharing ideas and supporting other clubs is important but please, please, please when you send things for circulation or for putting on the regional website, keep it to a plain text word document. Space on the website is very limited and for ease of reading by the majority of members items without pictures or graphics really help. If you wish to put hard copy flyers in the regional post box at meetings they can look however you would like them to. Your help with this would be very much appreciated.

I have enjoyed several events/meetings with my buddy clubs SI Abergavenny and SI Cwmbran. All produced food for thought, from the 'Women in World War 1' to the taxing discussions of a club development session. In between there was a membership month open evening which resulted in some new members and a relaxing garden party in the summer sun that raised funds to support PA projects. Thank you to members of both clubs for their warm welcome.

As Regional Secretary I have responded to queries from several different clubs and I hope they have found my replies a help. I do not always have the answer myself but I always know 'a woman who has'! Living in the far east of the region it is always good to hear what is going on in parts that I do not always reach in person.

This is my third year as Regional Secretary and I had thought it would be my last. Sadly no one has come forward to take on the job as Regional Secretary. SIWS is run by a team of officers and as a Region we achieve a lot but if we do not have officers region will not function. Please, I ask everyone to consider taking office, if we all do a little we can achieve a lot and there is plenty of support from fellow officers. The rewards of being a regional officer are great, new friendships made, links to a wider variety of PA projects that all inspire plus an insight into the Federation and International perspective of being a Soroptimist.

Lesley Morgan, August 2016

Programme Action Officer- Ruth Mckie

As this is the PA report for the AGM, I will try not to repeat information previously provided. However, our Toilet Twinning and AHT projects will be continuing for the next year also.

We were lucky enough to be invited by Toilet Twinning to help man their stall at the Eisteddford held in Abergavenny in early August which was a great opportunity given the expense of having a stall for ourselves.

Unfortunately we have not yet been able to hold an AHT sub group meeting yet this calendar year, but hope to do so prior to the actual AGM. Peoples' priorities have been taken up with family and other activities during the summer months and it has been difficult to manage a quorum.

The new SI Database system has been in place for several months now, and I hope you are finding it easier and more meaningful to help with the submission of PRFs. There have been one or two comments, and I hope to go through the process at the Regional December Meeting for clarification. We have been a little slow in submitting PRFs as a region, which is a pity as some great project work has been carried out which will not be included in the data used for SI input to the UN.

Our Regional PA competition has resulted in winners in each of the 3E categories – Education, Empower and Enable – and the clubs have been notified. The winning clubs have been notified and will be giving short presentations at the AGM. There has been quite a lot of difficulty in categorising the submissions under these Es, and it may be that we need to look at the criteria for this regional competition.

There are ongoing projects supported by Wales South, such as Fish and Chip Babies, BRAs, Life for African Mothers, jewellery collection, and other recycling. This ongoing work is led by one club within Wales South Region, and these clubs will be providing feedback to Regional Meetings.

There are also updates on the recent SI Global news on the Meru Garden project (with many delicious afternoon teas, etc. given by clubs!) and the work being done by and in support of, SI Katmandhu. There are some lovely flower badges/brooches for sale.

Thank you for all your hard work at the local, regional, national and international level during this past year, and also for the responses put in to the discussion paper on FPAC. Apparently there were 161 responses and it will be interesting to hear the outcome!

Additional information on the AS (Anti Slavery) sub group:

A meeting was held on 7th September, with a general catch up on the various groups' activities. For clarity it may be useful to lay out the structure within Wales addressing the AS issues:

Reporting directly into WAG – Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group. This is chaired by Stephen Chapman, who many of you will know. Within this group are two sub groups – training and joint intelligence. This group lays out policies, builds an evidence base assessing the scale of slavery in Wales, scopes training needs, develops intelligence/information sharing protocols and establishes a communications engagement plan encouraging good practice in victim care.

Responsible for actual delivery of the above outcomes is the Operational Delivery Group. Chairs of the 5 regional groups (Gwent, Cardiff and the Vale, Dyfed Powys, North Wales and Western Bay) are invited to sit on this group. These are the groups Soroptimists are represented on.

WAG commissioned a report from Cordis Bright, evaluating the current training within Wales and its initial report is quite positive on the training programmes. However, each of the 5 groups are responsible for the training within their area and there is a shortage of available trained trainers. This needs to be addressed of course. If anyone would like to undergo this training as a trainer – for the non specialist awareness courses – please let the sub group know.

The other point of interest for us is probably the effectiveness of child advocates. A report following a pilot scheme in England has suggested that they have not added to the number of victims coming forward, or prosecutions of perpetrators. Why would they? However, WAG is seeking fund to hold a pilot scheme within Wales so it is a case of watch this space.

Ruth McKie, August 2016

Development Officer – Carole Evans

1. Since taking over the role of Development Officer last year, I have simplified, revised and up-dated the Wales South Region Development Plan. This was circulated to all clubs following the last AGM with a reminder that every club should:
 - Ensure there is a Club Development Plan in place;
 - Make sure this reflects the aims and objectives of the club and incorporates and supports the Regional Plan;

- Revisit this annually to evaluate outcomes, and revise the plan in the light of current achievement and future goals.
- Re-draft the Development Plan to support the club's development, aims, and aspirations over the coming year.

Some clubs have taken the opportunity to discuss their development planning with Club Buddies and/or Regional Officers. A Development Plan is a "Working Document" and sharing, revisiting and amending in the light of experience, and at any time during the year, is good practice.

2. Following some club closures, appointment of new Regional Officers and other changes, the Buddy and Cluster Groups were revised and new lists distributed to all clubs. A few Buddies have reported enjoyable and successful visits and exchanges of ideas with clubs, but it would be good to see more interaction between clubs and their Buddy.
3. Working in collaboration with our Membership Officer, and other Regional Officers, I have contributed to initiatives designed to promote our region and raise our profile. In particular, we now have a Wales South Region four fold 'handbag leaflet' which was recently distributed at the Eisteddfod. This is similar to the fourfold club leaflet which some clubs have now developed for themselves.

I would be very happy to help and support any clubs who would still like to develop something along these lines for themselves. So far only a couple of clubs have asked for help with this. It would be excellent to discover you have all been getting on and doing it yourself – please let me know! And a sincere thank you to the clubs who included me in their work on this, and sent me examples of some excellent outcomes.

Carole Evans, August 2016

Federation Consultative Councillor - Erene Greive

My apologies that I can't be present at the AGM in person to present this report.

During the year there have been 4 FMB meetings. I have attended 3 of them – one in Glasgow and two in London and have stayed for the two days that the meetings have taken place. The meetings are a fascinating insight into the workings, the successes and the difficulties experienced by our Federation. There is a terrific amount of work being done with many new initiatives this year to heighten the profile of the organisation and increase its membership – Associate Membership now has 34 members; plans for Youth Membership have been drawn up; Membership Month has been a success though final figures haven't all been received yet; the Leadership and Development Days have been well attended and well-received; the Growth Plan cluster group meetings have all taken place and have been very productive.

Being present at the board meetings provides an opportunity to contribute as well as observe – Federation Councillors are by no means silent observers and their ground roots comments are noted and greatly appreciated. One thing that has become clear to me is the desperate need for us to recruit new members and retain existing ones.

In my role I have phoned all new members in the region and mentored one of the Memorial Fund recipients for the Glasgow Conference. I have also contributed to the Easy Guides for Link Membership, and Values and Behaviours in Clubs. I think that Link Membership is something that more members could consider before resigning as it is a way of keeping in touch with the club without having the time commitment or taking office. Now the FMB is considering Charitable Status and a vision for the centenary of the organisation in a few years time – "Vision 20/21".

This will be my last year as FCC. It's an interesting role and an important one, and I hope that people will consider applying for the post when it comes up next year. I would be happy to answer any queries about the role.

The most recent Federation Management Board meeting was held on 16th-17th July 2016 and I have been asked to draw clubs' attention to the following items.

1. GIFT AID

There has been a recent mailing about completing Gift Aid forms for the SIGBI Charities. Members who pay basic rate tax are encouraged to complete them to increase the finding. Forms are on the website.

2. CHARITABLE STATUS FAQ's

These are available on the SIGBI website and will help members in discussion about the Resolutions 1 and 2 at the GM.

3. SIGBI EVENTS

The FMB would like to thank clubs and regions who responded to the request for information about events.

4. NEW MEMBERS

SIGBI currently has 7708 Members and 34 Associate Members. The number of members is declining year on year and this is not sustainable. There have been 229 new members since April, though there could be more as clubs may not have notified HQ. The recruitment of new members is vital and clubs need to keep on recruiting. Clubs also need to let HQ know promptly about any new members they have. Please make sure that the forms are sent straight away.

5. SIGBI GROWTH PLAN UPDATE

All the cluster group meetings have now taken place. Some clubs have exceeded expectations in both quality and speed of delivery of the information. Net membership is the real issue and pilot clubs have worked out that a net membership increase of 7 members over 3 years is an achievable target. With 355 clubs this could mean a possible 2483 new members;

6. SIGBI MALTA CONFERENCE

There are still some places left. Details are on the website. Early registration is advised.

Erene Grieve, August 2016

Report of WEN Wales Representative – Carwen Wynne Howells

I continue to serve as a Trustee of WEN Wales and as a member of its Management Committee (MC)

During the past twelve months I have attended five out of seven meetings of the MC, one in person at the offices at Anchor Court in Cardiff and four from home in Pembrokeshire via skype.

In addition I have met with staff members, outside of the MC meetings, to discuss particular aspects of WENs international work.

Together with three members of SI Haverfordwest, I attended the International Women's Day event organised by WEN at the University in Aberystwyth on 5 March 2016. It proved a very interesting and stimulating event.

I continue to represent WEN Wales on the United Kingdom Joint Committee for Women (UKJCW). Fortunately most of the meetings of this Committee are held electronically which enables me to participate without having to travel far.

I represented UKJCW on the Board of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) until June 2016 and attended Board Meetings and the General Assembly in Brussels in June 2016.

UKJCW worked with EWL ahead of the recent Referendum on the UKs membership of the European Union (EU) to raise awareness of the need to protect women's equality rights. Since the decision to leave the EU WEN Wales has issued a statement on the need to ensure these rights are protected.

I continue to attend meetings of the NAWO CSW Alliance and attended CSW 60 in New York in March 2016. A report of my attendance at CSW 60 has been circulated.

WEN Wales continues to evolve. It is sometimes easy to forget that it is still a relatively new construct. The MC has worked well together and has successfully delivered the elements of the work it was commissioned to do by the Welsh Government. There have been a number of personnel changes during the year but hopefully there is now a team of staff in place that will enable WEN Wales to move forward.

WEN Wales' AGM is scheduled to take place on 27 September 2016. At time of writing the venue has yet to be confirmed.

I would urge members to read the WEN Wales Newsletters and to go onto its website regularly.

May I thank you for the opportunity to represent the Region at WEN Wales and my sincere thanks to Dr Kay Richmond for stepping in for me on occasions when I have not been able to attend meetings /events, particularly those organised by the Gender Equalities Office (GEO).

Carwen Wynne Howells, August 2016

Benevolent Fund Report – Lynne Plenderleith

Thank you for the honour of representing you in the role of Benevolent Fund Representative. I attended my first meeting at 63 Bayswater Road on Saturday, 28th November 2015. It was the AGM and it included a Finance meeting for Trustees and a review of the role of Chair. The current Chair was Pam Dowell and the SIGBI Secretary for the B. Fund, Jan Doyle. It was lovely meeting them and all the representatives from the other regions in the Federation. I was made most welcome.

My role over the past ten months has been very low key and I have not received any applications from our Region. I have participated in email voting with regards to supporting ongoing beneficiaries from other Regions and also a few new applications from other Regions. All applications/referrals are means tested and reviewed annually. The service is confidential and only the Trustees and B. Fund Reps need to be aware of the reason for seeking financial support.

I believe that a vote will take place at the Federation Conference in Malta in relation to the Charitable Status of the Benevolent Fund. I am sure that Judith Lewis, Treasurer of the B. Fund will be better informed on this matter than myself.

Please encourage/inform any potential beneficiaries in our Region if you consider they may benefit from financial support. It can be in the form of a one off payment to purchase/repair an item or regular payments for ongoing support until the persons circumstances improve/change.

It will be my pleasure to continue in this role unless someone else is interested in taking it forward. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Lynne Plenderleith, August 2016

SI Wales South Health Education and Hygiene Trust - Carys Brown (Chair)

There have been a few changes to the Trust committee this year with Anne Williams (SI GGM) taking over the role of Treasurer from Judith Lewis and Margaret Kelson (SI Bridgend) being elected as Secretary.

At the last meeting of the Trust held at the end of April it was decided that the Trust should continue but time was taken to revisit the original deed document. A succession plan was drawn up and the following points clarified:-

1. The trustees from December 2016 will be the Regional President, the Immediate Past President, President Elect and 2 other members from the Regional membership together with the Treasurer and Secretary.
2. Maximum total term of office for Trustees is 6 years.
3. In future the IPP Trustee will be chair of the Trustees.
4. The Trustees must sign a declaration of willingness to act as a Trustee of the Trust.
5. In future the Trust can pay for any operating expenses e.g. meeting room hire costs.

At present Bobbie Sheldrake and Carys Brown are the club member Trustees. As Bobbie is moving to the Regional Presidents role and Carys has served at least 6 years, the Trust will be seeking 2 new members from clubs. Anyone interested should send their name, club and details to the secretary Margaret Kelson

(mikkelson1@outlook.com) by Wednesday **November 16th**.

The updated Trustee list will be confirmed at the December Regional meeting.

I am copying the Treasurer Anne's latest report to me as of 4/9/2016

There is £1,270.13 in the bank at the moment but I have a few cheques to send off which I will get signed at the AGM.

£20.00 was paid for room hire for the meeting at Porthcawl golf club.

£121.23 received from Erene from jewellery recycling and paid out to DEG

£600 received from Llanelli club closure which will go to Toilet twinning.

£366.45 profit from Regional Fun Day in June to be split between Toilet twinning and New Pathways probably.

£6 from regional meeting in Feb. to go to Toilet twinning.

£18.73 received from RECYCLE4CHARITY

My thanks to Anne for this and thanks to all the Trustees for their support. Particular thanks to past Treasurer Judith Lewis for all her work, support and guidance over the past few years.

Thanks too to Lesley for 'stepping in' as secretary at our last important meeting.

Finally - please keep collecting items (ink cartridges, mobile phones, and CDs) for recycling and bring them to Regional meetings that we can build up a small fund to be used by Region for any future events. The Trust can be used in a number of ways that adhere to the objects as agreed with the Charity Commission.

Carys Brown, August 2016