

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB



Soroptimist
International
Solihull & District

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

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Acorns Trust

Corinne McDonald (a past member) was a member of the fundraising team for Acorns Trust that finances children's hospices. Some members from Club attended a Ball at the St Johns Hotel Solihull, where £24,000 was raised in one evening.



Age UK - Inspired to knit

After hearing from our November 2020 speaker – Lorraine Hart from Age UK Solihull – one of our members Ann Banks was inspired to join the Age UK national projects “The Big Knit 2020/2021” where they are aiming to have 8000 knitted ‘hats’ supplied to Innocent drinks, in return for which they will receive £2000 (i.e. 25p per item). The first deadline is 8th January 2021. The project will continue in 2021 with two further deadlines for donations of knitted items. The money raised will go some way to help them sustain services to isolated older people in the borough. The hats will be used to top drinks from February 2022.

Amnesty International

In 2021/22 Lobby Group encouraged all members to send greetings cards to three prisoners identified by Amnesty International. These were a Chinese person for reporting on the COVID situation in China, a teenager sentenced to five years in a child facility in Belarus because they took part in a peaceful protest and a woman prisoner in Iran.

ANAWIM

This is a charity who support women coming out of prison and who have been identified as benefitting from help. Members have made tote bags filled with toiletries and organised various fundraising events.

We continue to support ANAWIM most years with various projects which then provide anything from furniture to food-packs.



Aquabox

In March 2005 we were given a talk by Solihull Rotarians on Aquaboxes and the valuable service they provide in disaster areas, such as those affected by Tsunamis, earthquakes. These boxes provide many items, but more importantly provide water filters to provide safe drinking water for a family over a 3 month period. A list of basic survival items was issued with each box. Members generously donated items, and the first box was dispatched in September 2005. Each box has a code number on it so it can be tracked to its destination. Our first box went to Eritrea in Africa. Since that first box, another 3 boxes were filled and dispatched.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Arm Rests for Elizabeth House

Continuing our support with Elizabeth House in Shirley, members of the Crafts and Laughs Group in 2018 made Arm Rests which were very much appreciated by the residents of the Home.

Baby Think It Over

Like many Soroptimists we were concerned about the high number of teenage pregnancies in the UK. Therefore, we held a number of fund-raising events, including a barbecue, to raise funds to buy a "Baby Think It Over" doll for a local school. This was a lifelike baby doll, with realistic computerized responses, that teenagers could take home overnight to help them appreciate the responsibilities involved in being a parent. In fact, sufficient funds were raised to purchase two Cyber Dolls. In 2001 the first "baby" was given to Whitesmore School in Chelmsley Wood, where at the time Jan Hemlin was a teacher and developed the programme within the School. In 2002 another "baby" was presented to Light Hall School.

Bags for Bravery

The first of this project was in November 2016 when we brought along good quality unused handbags and filled them with toiletries, makeup, perfume etc. for the ladies of Solihull Refuge. This project was repeated again a couple of years later. Many of the women arriving at the Refuge arrive with nothing, just the clothes they are wearing. No handbag, no toiletries, no toothbrush.

Beat (Eating Disorders)

In 2022-23 we supported Beat which provides help and support for individuals & families affected by Eating Disorders. We raised funds by a variety of events including a Car Boot Sale, Quiz, Jubilee Garden Party, Crafts & Laughs Coffee Morning and Hanging Baskets Sale.

Bees for Development

As a club we first heard about Bees for Development at the 2010 SIGBI Conference in Manchester when Bill Turnbull, a patron of the charity, was a keynote speaker. Bees for Development assists beekeepers living in poor and remote areas of the world - lifting them out of poverty through beekeeping. They work with community groups and associations, raising the profile of apiculture in developing countries to ensure a sustainable future for bees, people and the environment. Angela Sadler chose this as one of her charities during her Presidential year and thanks to the generosity of members a cheque for £800 was presented to Dr. Nicola Bradbear who established the organisation in 1993.



With Bill Turnbull at Bees for Development HQ

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Boxes of Hope

Saturday of Service March 2005 we launched the Boxes of Hope project. A stand was set up outside Sainsbury's in Solihull to raise awareness, collect Hygiene and Educational items to fill A4 sized boxes. Donations from the public, along with £65 raised from a book stall at Enid Hinton's Open Garden in June 2005 enabled the club to send off 15 boxes.

Bra, Bra Black Sheep

Following a request from SI Cheltenham, we supported their project of collecting bras. As a Club, along with SI Kenilworth, we collected 15 kilos of bras raising £34.56p. This project was reinstated by Jan Hemlin in her time as Regional Programme Action Officer to support the regional project FreshStart, with £30 being raised for this project. All clubs within the region are now supporting this project and monies are being donated to the Soroptimist Diamond Education Grant to support women wishing to go back into education.

Breast Cancer Now

'Paint The Town Pink' was an event where local shops in Knowle dressed their windows pink and the Mayor of Solihull judged the winner. There were tables in the precinct displaying information leaflets and promotional items. Money was raised through bucket collections, tin shakes, and raffles was for Breast Cancer charities. This event was held on two consecutive years.



Buddy Bag Foundation

Many years ago, we supported this project and in 2021/22 we once again donated hand-knitted/crocheted teddies to the Midland Arden Region collection for children in refuges in the region.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Cambodian Child's Dream Organisation

Margaret Jarman was UK Director for CCDO and Chair of the Friends' Organisation. The organisation raises funds for digging wells in Cambodian villages. During Margaret's year as Club President, we raised much needed funds.

At the Belfast SIGBI Conference £378 was raised from the sale of raffle tickets and leather carvings, which was enough for two wells with money to spare, providing clean drinking water for over 100 people. Many other fundraising initiatives were held.



Centenary of some women getting the vote

A lot of focus was on the centenary of some women being given the vote and celebrating the achievements of the women's suffrage movement. The club was awarded a Women's Vote Centenary grant which was used for the following:

- A questionnaire was developed to learn about women's views on voting and to understand reasons why some women may not always use their vote.
- Equaliteas was part of a programme of events from UK Parliament to mark the centenary. We used this event to bring together a group of people to share, debate and celebrate what democratic equality means to them over a cup of tea. It took place in The Core at Solihull Library and was attended by Dame Caroline Spelman MP, Mayor of Solihull Mrs Flo Nash and representatives from many local organisations.
- A conference was run in Autumn 2018 with the theme "Your Community Needs You" exploring the issues around isolation and loneliness in our community.
- March 2018 - International Women's Day - Our speaker was Clare Mullin; Parliament Outreach who spoke on the topic From Suffragettes & Beyond: Vote 100



The Mayor of Solihull 2018, Cllr Flo Nash, with our display



Centre for Orthopaedic Research

A new Centre was being built on the Walsgrave Hospital site in 2002/2003, to provide a "centre of excellence" in orthopaedic research. In the summer of 2002, some members took part in the Wishbone Walk to raise essential funds for this project. In addition, funds raised from our Annual Quiz Night and Charter Dinner were also given to this charity. In total £3,000 was donated to the Centre.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

“Cherished”

An initiative for disaffected girls in school. We helped to fund and support a Girls Conference run by Cherished and were delighted that Hannah Borg the founder of Cherished won the Soroptimist International Midland Arden Regional Inspirational Woman award.



Chernobyl Children's Project

Following a talk about the Chernobyl Children's Charity which supports victims of the Chernobyl disaster, the club decided to support this charity. Each year the Solihull branch host a group of teenagers from Belarus. As well as raising funds for the charity, two members of our club were host families for the visit in July 2000. We made donations to this charity in 2004, namely £1,755, along with unwanted children's clothing, which was given to the children during their stay with their host family. Some members of club still support this charity today.

Christmas Charity Surprise Event

This event, which ran for a number of years, partnered with the Mayor's Office in Solihull, Solihull Rotary Club and House of Fraser Solihull. The event was held in the evening once the House of Fraser store had closed to the public. It was a ticket only event, consisting of a Fashion Show, various instore displays and workshops, as well as the opportunity to Christmas shop. Several hundred people attended the event each year, with monies raised going to various charities such as St. Basils, Women's Refuge, and Solihull Young Carers to name a few.

Christmas Crafts Day – Roll Back Malaria

On December 10th 2005, 10 members from club assembled at Enid Hinton's house to make Christmas Front Door decorations. Monies raised were for the International President's Appeal – Roll back Malaria. £85 was raised.



Christmas Craft Sales

A group was formed for members who had interests in crafting. The group was called "Crafts and Laughs". Over the past few years this group has organised a Christmas sale of their handicrafts and products. This included homemade Christmas Cakes; Mince Pies; Jams and Pickles; Christmas decorations; etc. The sales were held in the Manor House Solihull. Items were also sold at our Club Christmas Party, and at our November/December Regional meeting. Monies raised were donated to the Club's Presidents Charities.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Club Choir

In 2006 the club formed a choir and performed at our annual Christmas meal in 2006 and 2007. Maris Atkins a member of Club is also a Trustee at Elizabeth House in Shirley. In December 2007 our choir were asked to perform for the residents. They thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and the choir were invited to perform a number of times.

Contact the Elderly

A past member in Club made us aware of this project, as she volunteered as a driver. The scheme is a national voluntary organisation, which among other things, organises a regular monthly Sunday Afternoon tea for older people. People are referred to "Contact the Elderly" because they live alone and have little contact with people on a day to day basis. Contact the Elderly arrange relevant insurance and have regular drivers to ferry people to the tea and back to their home. Contact the Elderly recruits hosts for the tea gatherings. We organised an Afternoon Tea in the Village Hall in Meriden. A similar Tea was organised at Elizabeth House.



COVID-19

On 23rd March 2020 the world stopped when a global pandemic was confirmed. Everywhere in the world shops, businesses, everything closed. All residents were asked to stay at home so as to reduce spreading this deadly virus. As a Club we had to look at new ways of working and meeting, and thanks to Zoom (which hardly any members had used or were aware of) we were able to continue to meet and raise much needed funds to support local charities such as the Food Bank and Refuge. In addition to Club meetings every month, various coffee mornings were held via Zoom, as well as quizzes. Contact was constantly made with members to ensure they were ok, and help any that needed support, such as shopping, or collecting prescriptions. One of the lessons from the pandemic was to care, particularly for our members and their families.

In partnership with John Lewis Partnership, we distributed boxes of chocolates to nurses and carers in hospitals and different care settings.

Craft Sales

During the Covid 19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021 the Crafts and Laughs group made face masks for sale to members, family and friends. These included "Christmas" themed masks. All monies raised went to Club President Margaret Lloyd's chosen local charity Solihull Mind.



SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Datalink (Message in a Bottle)

This was a project targeted at vulnerable people and people living alone. Datalink is a free voluntary scheme, originating in Australia, whereby details of medical information (drugs, allergies etc) and next of kin contact details are stored inside an empty film canister (remember those) making the information easily available for any emergency service called to the home. With the support of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Age Concern, the Freemason's and the local emergency services, we launched this scheme across the Solihull Borough in two years. A great deal of hard work went into the presentation of the scheme to the relevant people in Solihull, and in setting up the infrastructure to distribute the containers. Over 22,000 containers were received, with many words of praise and congratulations on a very simple, but worthwhile cause. As a club we decided to end the scheme in December 2004. This project was later introduced at Midland Arden Region (2007/2008), by the Regional President at the time June Muir, who had involved her own club Stourbridge in filling these containers.

Dester Mender Village

In support of the International President's Appeal 2007 and 2008, funds were raised for this project. In 2007 at the Club Christmas meal, a raffle was held and in 2008 a Quiz sheet was organised by Judy Brown for all members, family and friends to complete over Christmas.

Dig for Donuts - Elizabeth House

Maris Atkins a member of Club is also a Trustee at Elizabeth House in Shirley. As a Club we first supported this home for elderly residents by our Club Choir entertaining the residents. Our next project with Elizabeth House was helping to maintain and improve the gardens for the elderly residents. Trees were cleared, beds dug and planted, and shrubs cut back, plenty for the residents to see on a walk around the grounds. These became known as the Dig and Donuts days. Over the years we have continued to support Elizabeth House. The gardens have continued to be maintained via regular "Dig and Donut" days, as well as supporting fundraising events such as Coffee mornings at Elizabeth House.



Dog Bandanas for Fun in the Park

In 2014 the Crafts and Laughs Group made Dog Bandanas for the dogs competing in our Dog Show at Fun in the Park.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Domestic Abuse Victims Projects

Over the years we have supported many different types of projects that support victims of domestic abuse and those organisations who help them. Recent support has included Lobby Group writing to the Secretary of State for Justice and MPs to lobby for amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill to include new statutory defences for survivors who offend due to abuse.

Dorridge Day

This is a community event organised by Dorridge Round Table. For a number of years, we supported this event by taking a stall. The stall was either a tombola, book stall, games for children etc. All monies raised went to local charities including our own Club President's chosen charity.

Dorridge Fun Run

Our Club provided Stewards, who aided the safety aspects of the event, and participants to walk or run the course raising money for local charities. The event was organised by Knowle and Dorridge Lions.



eBay Auctions

During November 2004, and early 2005 Sue Knowles organised eBay Auctions to raise money for St Basil's the homeless charity in Birmingham. Members were asked if they had good quality – unusual items – that they would be willing to donate and be sold on eBay. Sue put all the items on the site, and on the agreed closing date, she held a tea to see how much the items had raised. In October 2008 Sue organised another auction to raise funds for the Born Free Appeal which funds medical aid to ensure babies are born free from HIV.

Edwards Trust

Edward's Trust was set up in 1989 by the parents of a little boy called Edward, who spent a lot of time as an inpatient at the Birmingham Children's Hospital before his death. Following Edward's death his parents decided to set up a Trust to open a "home from home" (Edward House) to provide accommodation for 9 families whilst their child was receiving treatment at the (old) Children's Hospital. During 2002 members were invited to visit Edward House to see the facilities on offer to the families of very ill children, and this visit inspired members to raise funds to support this project. A Body and Soul Therapies evening was just one of the many fundraising events helping to raise £1500. Another donation to Edward's Trust was made in December 2007 of £1250 as part of the funds raised by Club from Solihull Festival (later known as Fun in the Park). When the new Children's Hospital was opened in Birmingham, Edward House was closed. The Trust now focus on bereavement counselling for children who have lost parents or siblings.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Empilweni Vegetable Growers Project

As a consequence of regular visits to South Africa and meeting with S.I. Johannesburg, (one of our Friendship Link Clubs), Marjorie Stubbs visited a school project in Diepsloot near Pretoria. During this visit she was impressed by the work of a young man teaching the women of the community how to grow organic vegetables on a half-acre plot adjacent to the school. Classes were being taught in an empty classroom and using borrowed gardening tools. We launched the project (Empilweni means “where you get life”) and decided to provide a building solely for the vegetable growers use. Funds raised were used to purchase building materials and a two roomed building with a concrete floor was erected. Marjorie supervised all purchasing to avoid waste of resources. At a small opening ceremony, we donated packets of seeds and a small plaque stating “donated by SI Solihull and District” was displayed. Further funds were raised and it was planned to provide gardening tools to give the vegetable growers complete independence. After 2004 on a subsequent visit, Marjorie found that the project had been so successful that it had been taken over by a large commercial concern, Pick and Pay, which paid for equipment and seeds so our involvement ceased. At the Gateshead Federation Conference in October 2006, the Empilweni Project was awarded Finalist in the Best Practice Awards in the Environment Category – an International Soroptimist Award along with a Certificate was presented to Marjorie from International President Lyn Dunning. During 2004 we also established a formal Friendship Link with S.I. Johannesburg. Photos and details of this Project were displayed on the Programme Action Board at the SIGBI Conference in Bournemouth and at Gateshead in 2006.

Fairtrade

Back in 2006 Solihull Soroptimists via our Lobbying Group discussed the question of why wasn't Solihull a Fair Trade town. A Fairtrade coffee morning was held on 16th October 2006 – World Food Day at Pauline Mackey's home raising £70 for the Steering Committee. A Fairtrade Steering Committee was formed in 2007 with members from Club, Council and other bodies and organizations in the Borough. Unfortunately, the first application was refused due to insufficient schools taking part. The committee continued with their efforts and Fairtrade status was granted in July 2010. Representatives from Club have continued to work with the Council to maintain a Fairtrade status for the Borough. To maintain our status various criteria have to be met. A joint event organized by our Club and Solihull Council was a Cake Off. This event promoted the use of Fairtrade products in baking. Entries were encouraged from local residents and children, including local schools. Contestants were also encouraged to add any additional information with regard to Fairtrade. The Cakes were judged by professional Chefs and local Business leaders. Prizes were donated from local businesses and organizations. The first Cake Off was organized in 2014 with the last event in 2020.

Felt Needle Cases

SI Masaka – In 2014 our Crafts and Laughs Group made Felt Needle Cases for our Friendship Link SI Masaka for their Ladies Group.

EDUCATE EMPOWER ENABLE

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Even When I Fall

The incredible story of Saraswoti and Sheetal, trafficking survivors who reclaim skills that once came at a high cost: They were slaves in Indian circuses - sold as children. Now freed, together they form Nepal's first circus. An intimate, beautiful film that harnesses the visual power of circus to give a unique perspective into the complex world of human trafficking.



Film Nights organized by the Lobbying Group

Over the years Lobbying Group have organized many film nights, usually with a supper first. The films vary from those with strong messages, to just enjoying friendship. Monies raised from these evenings have gone to various club charities.

Fireside Homeless Centre

The Fireside Day Centre in Central Birmingham is run by the Sisters of St Paul, Selly Park and Birmingham City Centre Council of Churches, and is staffed by volunteers. During 2001 and 2002 club members donated clothing, towels, bedding and toiletries for the Centre to distribute to homeless people dropping in for a hot meal and a shower. In 2005/2006 a rota was set up for about 12 members and some partners, to go to the Fireside Homeless Centre on a Sunday to help serve meals and wash up. Christmas 2005, 135 wrapped presents of toiletries, shirts, jumpers and 100 signed Christmas cards were given. However, in 2008 due to changes in management of the Centre and relocation of meals service, we were unfortunately unable to support the food service rota.

Firewalk and Glasswalk for the Meningitis Trust

This was the most challenging event in Chris Sprigg's year. Along with Chris, two members and some friends took part in this event at the Old Sils in Knowle, with several Soroptimists and supporters gathering to cheer on the participants.

Forgotten Ten



In 2014 a coffee morning was held for the Forgotten Ten. This was to mark the work of Handicap International in assisting mine clearance and supporting victims. Soroptimists were able to peruse shoes and handbags – it seemed appropriate as arms and legs are most likely to be injured or lost for those victims who survive. Over £120 was raised.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Fun in the Park



In 2006 we jointly organised a community event in Brueton Park, called Fun in the Park with Solihull Rotary Club as part of Solihull Festival. This consisted of a joint marquee promoting our

two organisations; a children's land train for them to ride on; and football coaching by an ex player from Aston Villa. In 2007 we worked with Monkspath Rotary to grow this event, and set the template for future Fun in the Park events. In 2007 the event consisted of many stalls from local organisations, and a stage for local acts to perform and entertain. Over the years the event grew to include a Dog Show, along with a display of Classic Cars, as well as entertainment/rides for the children. Many thousands of pounds were raised for local charities. The event moved to Tudor Grange Park after a few years as more space was needed. The event ran from 2006 until 2019.

Gilgal

In 2020-21 and again in 2022-23 we supported this women's refuge which is based very nearby in Birmingham. Members have donated diverse goods, e.g., food, children's nightwear, Easter Eggs and toys as well as cash gifts and beautiful fabric folded shopping bags for all the adult residents at the refuge. In 2023 & 2024 we continued supporting the home with cash for the adults and winter coats & pyjamas for all the children.

Hamlin Fistula Hospital

In 2008 clubs in Midland Arden Region were told of the work undertaken by the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Adaba. The Hospital deals with the plight of women and girls giving birth in poverty and without medical attention. To support the work undertaken club members were asked to knit squares or baby jackets. The squares were sewn into blankets which the ladies at the hospital were given, as it gets cold at night. This project is still on going.



Handicap International (now rebranded as Humanity Inclusion)

Tom Shelton of Handicap International came and presented his work on Cluster Bombs to the club. This was no mean achievement as he came straight off a plane from France to address the meeting. Forgotten Ten was sponsored by SI Solihull during 2013-2014. Fundraising projects were organised, but also a shoe mountain to visually raise the work of Handicap International.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Helping Hands Food Bank - Solihull

Following a talk by the manager of Helping Hands Food Bank in Solihull, regular collections of donated food were started at every club meeting. This project continued through COVID-19 pandemic (when there was a huge spike in its use) and is still happening today. We believe our support will continue for many years to come as (unfortunately) there is an ongoing need for this support for some members of our community.

Homelands School, Uganda

As Club President in 2007, Ann Keepax invited her cousin Sally Ann Saunders to talk about her visit to Homelands School in Uganda. Sally Ann was Deputy Head of St. Nicholas Church of England School in Nuneaton, and through the Department of Education's initiative "Global Dimensions", she and couple of members of staff went to Uganda to help teach and support the staff. This was a reciprocal visit with Canon Charles coming to the UK and spending time at Sally Ann's school. Members from Club had provided some items for Sally to take such as crayons, pencils, books, etc. Sally talked about her experience at Homelands which is a school and orphanage located 60 miles west of Kampala. It houses 99 children at the school, of which 43 are AIDS orphans. She also talked about the work Canon Charles's wife did with the women in the local area. To date we are still working and supporting Homelands School. Over the years we have sent educational equipment, laptops, football kits, shoes, and many other items to support the education at Homelands. In 2011/2012 was the first visit of members to Homelands School and Orphanage in Uganda. They saw the impact a relatively small amount of money could make and purchased a sewing machine for the Vvamatulu ladies in the neighbouring village. 2014/15 saw some club members making another trip to Uganda, visiting our friendship link SI Masaka as well as Homelands School and Orphanage.



Homeless Charities

In 2023/24 we supported Crisis Skylight Birmingham with a donation from our annual Quiz. The donation helped provide support for access to psychological support to aid wellbeing.

Honeypot Charity

Honeypot is dedicated to improving the quality of life for severely disadvantaged young children, young carers and teenage mothers living in Britain. During 2003/2004 through fundraising events, we raised £3000 for Honeypot, which enabled us to send 10 children from the Midlands to Honeypot House in the New Forest for a holiday. An open invitation to visit Honeypot was given to members and, en-route to the Federation Conference in Bournemouth in October 2004, eight members stopped off for tea and were given a very warm welcome, plus a tour of the holiday home.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Human Trafficking – Taxi Sticker Campaign



In partnership with Solihull Council, we introduced a scheme whereby all taxis licenced in the Borough were asked to display a sticker which said.... NO EATING; NO DRINKING; NO TRAFFICKING. This was displayed on the passenger side, but on the driver side it highlighted signs to be aware of when Taxi Drivers were taking passengers around the Borough, these included anxiety, acts as if controlled by someone, travelling to or from overcrowded properties, doesn't know the address of where they live or work, etc. The sticker on the driver side also had the telephone number of the Police's Trafficking Helpline. Sometimes it's hard to believe such actions taken place where we live. Trafficking is a terrible crime where vulnerable people are exploited and taken advantage of in the sex

industry, through forced labour, domestic servitude, street crime, cannabis cultivation, benefit fraud and other types of abuse.

Human Trafficking – World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

In 2022/23 we distributed 81 dolls with a blue heart in Shirley, Solihull & Dorridge. The dolls were either handed out or left on park benches. Labels attached to each doll explained their purpose and invited passers-by and children to take the dolls home with them.

International Human Rights Day

Over the years this has been celebrated in many ways. One such event was a Working Breakfast at Helen Clark's house.

John Lewis Fashion Show

Since 2010 we have organised annual Fashion Shows in partnership with John Lewis Solihull. All of these have been well attended with money raised going to local charities nominated by our Club Presidents. A great working partnership with John Lewis.

Joolz Dance Studio

The club were approached for financial help towards funding a group of 50 students from the city area to attend a dance event in Germany in April 2009. £200 was donated to provide t-shirts.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Karma Nirvana

Forced Marriage has been a topic discussed at club for many years. Members signed the petition to make Forced Marriage illegal in the United Kingdom. In February 2018 Sue & Jacky (SI Bilston) visited club to talk to us about Karma Nirvana. Bilston Club had been supporting the charity for a number of years. One of their ongoing campaigns was the “spoon” campaign. Girls are being taken out of the country against their will to marry and they are asked to conceal a spoon about their person, which would activate the metal detectors at Airports. We linked with Solihull Council’s School Support Services & Julie Ann Kelly of Birmingham Airport so that she could go into schools to talk about the different ways they identified young women being forced abroad for marriages. In addition, one of our members Baroness Burt of Solihull (Lorely Burt) took some spoons to sell to members of the House of Lords, and even spoke in the House of Lords about the campaign. Spoons were also sold in Solihull Council Offices.

Knitted Tulips for AYME

To support Club President Jan Tilsley’s campaign to raise awareness of ME, in 2018 the Crafts and Laughs group knitted Tulips for AYME – Association of Young People with ME.

Kori Project “Dress a Girl around the World” project

The dressmakers, and members of the Crafts and Laughs Group in the club made over 70 cotton pinafore dresses for children in less developed areas of the world. Some of these dresses were made out of pillowcases. These were later presented to the Kori project in Sierra Leone.



Kwabena Poku Appiah St. Benedict School, Ghana

Club heard about this project through a former member, Sue Jerrard, who told of a close Ghanaian family friend who died suddenly in his early 20s of deep vein thrombosis. His Mother decided to do something positive as a memorial and was raising money towards the rebuilding of the school at Jamasi in the Ashanti capital of Ghana. The school St. Benedict RC takes children of all religions. Sue’s son decided to ask for donations to Kwab’s Fund instead of wedding presents and £3000 was raised which would pay a teacher’s salary for one year. We held a Sunday Morning Brunch followed by a walk and raffle, raising £160.

Ladies of Vvamatula in Uganda

Back in 2011/2012 on a visit to Homelands School and Orphanage, a hand sewing machine was purchased for the ladies. On a subsequent visit in 2015/2016 we raised sufficient funds to provide 7 water storage cisterns to collect rainwater from the roofs of their homes. In 2019/2020 we were again able to support the Vvamatulu ladies in Uganda by providing funds to build latrines for the ladies in the village.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Lamps for Malawi

We joined with the Open University, who was running a project with the Saltire Trust (Scottish Government) for Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA). It looked to recruit women to become teachers in their own communities, combining academic study and structured experience of school practice. A key constraint had been a lack of the necessary academic qualifications required for admittance to teacher education programmes, so the Scheme provided pathways for rural women to access relevant training. We supported the scholarships with wind-up lamps to enable the students to continue to work even in the dark. With each lamp went a personal letter to the student, telling them about us, and offering words of encouragement.



Make a Better Life

During the 2002 we became aware of a lack of facilities for domestic violence victims (most of which are women) in the Borough of Solihull. We started to get involved with the Make a Better Life (MABL) Trust, a charity set up to assist the victims of domestic violence in Solihull. We helped them with funding for the production of cards and leaflets containing key information and points of contact for victims, but also to establish a Women's Refuge in Solihull.

We have always kept a watching brief on human trafficking, particularly of women and children in the West Midlands, and the response of the Police and Government organisations. In June 2003 Solihull Council launched a Strategy for Domestic Violence, a multi-Agency group to oversee it, and a White Paper was published which started to raise public awareness. From 2003 a member from Club attended Make a Better Life Trust Board Meetings, and in 2006 Jan Rudge became a Board member, followed a few years later by Grace Hampson. To help fund the Helpline a Promises Auction was organised. A couple of members also trained as volunteers to run the Helpline.

Make a Wish Foundation

The Make a Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children aged 3 to 18 living with life threatening illnesses. Following a very touching presentation from one of the Foundation's Co-ordinators, a Summer Sparkler Ball was held in July 2002 and we were able to donate £350 to the Foundation.

Manga style comic books, Cambodia

During Margaret Cheek's year as Club President, SI Solihull & District and the other Midland Arden clubs supported the Manga style comic books to raise awareness of Anti Human Trafficking. These books are a particularly effective way of addressing the problem of Anti Human Trafficking in Cambodia, a transit point between Vietnam and Thailand. Most of the villagers are still illiterate although this is slowly changing. They have no access to TV or radio to learn about the tricks that the traffickers use when targeting a village. Children and particularly girls are vulnerable to human trafficking and end up in sexual slavery. Thanks to SI support we raised enough to buy and distributed 1,000 of these books to the villagers. Not one single child or young person in our Commune became a victim since we raised awareness. This cause was presented to the Federation Conference in Gateshead.

ME - Raising awareness of M.E.

During 2019-2020 one of Club President Jan Tilsley's objectives was to raise awareness of ME. Jan's daughter suffers with ME so has first-hand knowledge of the debilitating illness. One of the key actions was to make GPs more aware of the symptoms of ME. Booklets were delivered to GP surgeries in Solihull and further afield. "How to support Students with ME" booklets were distributed to local secondary schools.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

National Memorial Arboretum

On 20th October 2007 some of us joined other Soroptimists, along with International President Lynn Dunning and Federation President Hilary Kay-Young for the dedication of the new site/plot at the National Memorial Arboretum.

In this year, as a club we also bought a tree for the Soroptimist plot as a lasting testament to the work of our club. The plot at the Arboretum is the only memorial to the work of Soroptimists in the world, and in 2021 a Sculpture dedicated to the work of Soroptimists around the world will be unveiled.



Operation Christmas Child



For a number of years as a Club we supported this charity by wrapping and packing shoe-boxes for needy children. This project is organised by the charity Samaritan's Purse. Inside the Christmas wrapped shoebox we filled them with toys, pens, hats, toothbrushes, toothpaste. These shoeboxes are distributed to children in over 100 countries. We first began this project in 2002 and concluded in 2007. In that time, we were able to fill and send over 500 shoeboxes, including 23 from our Friendship Link Club SI Kings Lynn. The boxes need to identify on the outside as to whether they are suitable for a boy or

girl, and an age range. Every year we would receive notification of how much these boxes were received. One year we heard the story of the last box on a vehicle was for a girl, but it was a boy waiting to receive the box. He said "never mind, now I have a Christmas present for my sister". Very humbling.

Park View Day Centre

Park View Day Centre in Solihull supports adults with learning disabilities. Some members made costumes for adults with learning disabilities from Park View Day Centre. These costumes were for their summer musical production based on "Grease".

Pens4Life

In 2007/2008 we heard that children in Rwanda cannot go to school unless the family can provide a pen. We started saving ballpoint pens which were taken out to Rwanda, enabling children to go to school.

Plants & Ploughmans – Solihull Young Carers

In May 2008 a plant sale and ploughmans lunch was organised in Enid Hinton's garden. The weather was fabulous and over 70 people attended. £486 was raised for Solihull Young Carers.



SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Poppy Project

The Poppy Project, is a national project by Eaves to support women who have been trafficked into prostitution. Eaves is a London based charity which provided accommodation for the women. This was the early days of trafficking when it was little understood and led to the setting up of the Purple Teardrop campaign which we supported and raised awareness of at a local conference.

Postage Stamps

Over the years we have collected Postage Stamps to raise money for various charities including Marie Curie.

Prince's Trust (now known as The King's Trust)

In October 2023 a breakfast was held to raise funds for The Prince's Trust, whilst at the same time hearing about the work they do here in the West Midlands. The event was attended by Sir Nigel Thrift, one of His Majesty's Deputy Lieutenants that supports Solihull initiatives.

Project Sierra – Quadrennial project

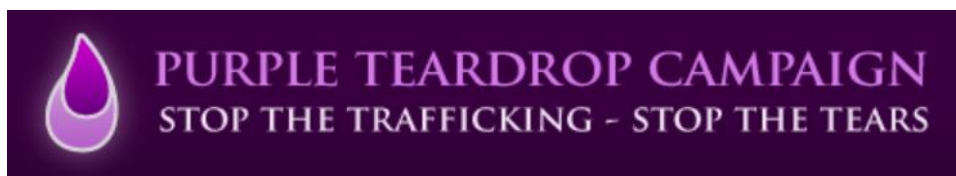
The club supported the Regional project of a concert in Coleshill Church to perform Faure's Requiem. Several members of the club choir joined other Soroptimists and the Julian Singers to create a magnificent choir. £727 was raised.

Project Sierra – Friendship Link project

Another fundraising project was the £1 challenge. This was a project in conjunction with our Friendship Link Club SI Kings Lynn, and their Friendship Link Club SI Amber Valley. Each member was given £1 and asked to turn it into £10. It resulted in some very innovative and fun ideas. We raised £750 to support the SIGBI Quadrennial Project – Project Sierra – working with Hope and Homes for Children, to support homeless children and disadvantaged families in Sierra Leone.

Purple Teardrop Campaign

Solihull Council held a conference on Domestic Violence and we had a stall promoting Purple Teardrop Campaign which is led by SI Poole- this followed a Club talk by Poppy Project on housing and accommodation nationally for women victims of trafficking (only scheme at that time). The club have gone on to support the Purple Tear Drop Campaign over many years.



Quiz Nights

These have become an annual fixture in our calendar of events. A quiz with a fish and chip supper is normally the format, which raises usually between £500-£900 per event for various charities. We always find this is a hugely popular event for members, family and friends.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Race for Life – Coombe Abbey

On 9th July 2007 Club President Ann Keepax, past member Sue Collins, Jan Hemlin, Grace Hampson, past member Corinne McDonald, plus two of Ann's friends joined her at Coombe Abbey Park for a Race for Life event. Sadly, the day dawned grey and overcast, with torrential rain later in the day, not what she had envisaged when she invited Club members and friends to join her on the run/walk for life supporting Cancer Research. Her words were something like.... "come and enjoy a lovely walk through beautiful grounds of Coombe Abbey, it should be a warm and sunny evening with luck". Reality it was more like a monsoon. There were 2,000 participants, divided into 3 sections – Runners, Joggers and Walkers. Everyone was very excited for the start which was delayed because of the rain delaying some competitors' arrival. We were in the walkers group. With rain pouring; muddy underfoot the group soldiered on enjoying excellent company and lovely scenery. The run/walk was 5km (3 miles). After completing the course, everyone changed into dry clothes and headed back to Solihull collecting a fish and chip supper to enjoy at Jan Hemlin's house.

Race for Life – Solihull

Undeterred by the Coombe Abbey experience when Race for Life organised annual events in Brueton Park Solihull, club members once again rose to the challenge. This time there were some runners from club, with the rest of the group being walkers. Again, funds were being raised for Cancer Research. After finishing the 5km course, most headed to House of Fraser for a much earned coffee. The difference on these occasions was that the weather was lovely.



Recycling/Environmental project

In 2003 some of our members were extremely concerned about the lack of recycling facilities in the Borough, compared to other parts of the country. Solihull at that time only recycled 6% of its refuse. We had been working with Solihull Council on producing an A-Z of recycling opportunities leaflet which it was planned to distribute to all households in the Borough. After 18 months this project stopped as we were unable to secure funding for 3 reasons – Government changed the rules on Land Fill Tax; Awards for All refused funding as Soroptimist International wasn't a registered charity; and our organisation was not open to anyone. However, the Council did produce a leaflet which was distributed in Summer 2006 based on the research carried out by the Club.



Remembrance Sunday

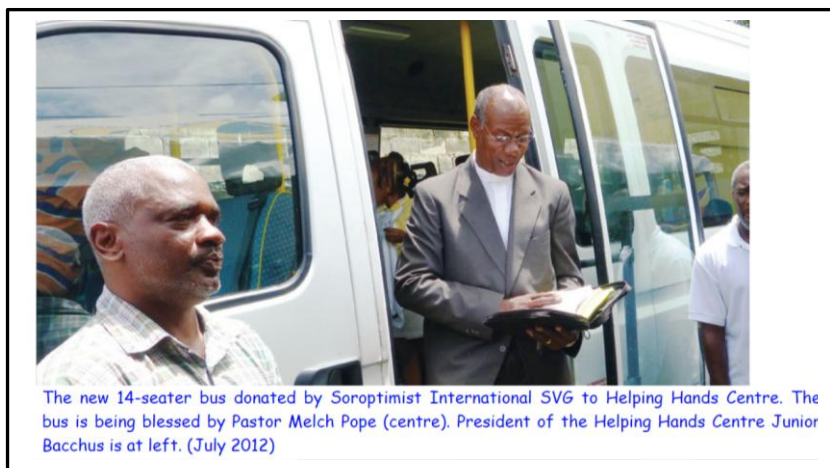
A few years ago, we commenced being invited as an organisation in Solihull to have representation at the Annual Service of Remembrance in central Solihull. Sue Knowles said in 2015 "I had the privilege of representing the Club today to lay the wreath at the War Memorial in Solihull. There was a great turnout, with wreaths laid by many organisations in the Borough. As you'd expect it was a very moving service." Members from club have also assisted in marshalling for this event.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

We worked closely with one of our friendship links, SI St Vincent & the Grenadines, supporting their Helping Hands Centre for treating children and young people with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy. Past club President Jannette Lambert grew up on St. Vincent, and so began SI Solihull's Friendship Link. During Jannette's presidential year, SI Solihull raised \$4,400 (£2,700) which was used by SI St Vincent and the Grenadines as a contribution to their fund raising to purchase a wheelchair-accessible minibus which can be used to transport the children to and from school.

Following the devastation Hurricane Beryl caused in 2024, a donation was made to our Soroptimist Sisters in St Vincent to support a shelter to enable children to continue their education.



Safari Supper

More than 20 club members took part in a Safari Supper around Solihull. Several members hosted and the group moved around various homes enjoying starters, next house main course, and finally desert. £103 was raised to help funding for the Make a Better Life/Women's Refuge helpline.

Shirley Donkey Derby

In 2007 we took a stall at Shirley Donkey Derby. A community event that had been organised by Shirley Rotary for many years. The stall consisted of a tombola, along with a couple of games for the children such as "hook a duck". We supported this event until 2013, once again raising money for local charities.



Sight Savers International

This project was started in 2001 when Caz Preston was asked by Solihull Rotary to save coins for the Charity. During a talk given by a speaker from Sight Savers International we heard that 125 million people were at risk of blindness caused by termites found in water which causes River Blindness. We discovered that a small sum of money can often save the sight of people in some of the world's poorest countries. £240 could save the sight of an entire village. Therefore, we saved our pennies and two pence's which were collected at each meeting. By the end of 2006 nearly £600 was raised.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Sithabele Project

On a visit to South Africa in 2008, Marjorie Stubbs saw painted (used) tea bags and thought what an excellent idea. Various coloured hessian & webbing was bought for straps in order to make bags. In 2009/2010 our major project was the bag project in conjunction with SI Johannesburg to raise funds for Sithabele, a children's orphanage and support service for homeless children and young people, outside Johannesburg. Initially it was hoped to make 500 bags for sale at the 2009 Cardiff Conference and elsewhere to raise funds. With the £5000 raised we purchased a water tank and security fencing for the orphanage at Sithabele. As part of this project, we involved our friendship link clubs who also sold bags on our behalf. We were asked to present about the project to SIGBI conference.



Skirting Science

Our first Skirting Science event was held in March 2012 with the aim of encouraging girls at Secondary Schools in Solihull to take up science subjects. The event was developed in conjunction with the local council and schools, and enabled a total of 155 girls from 10 schools to attend a number of science workshops throughout the day. This project ran for a number of years.



SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Solihull Business Woman of the Year

In 2005 the club launched and successfully ran the Solihull Business Woman of the Year Award. This project was aimed at businesswomen living or working in the Borough. The award was to recognise the achievements of women who have started their own business and are contributing to the local economy. Local MP Caroline Spelman (now Dame Caroline) and Kathryn Kerswell who was Chief Executive of Solihull Council at the time, gave their endorsement to this award Scheme. In addition to Solihull Council, Solihull Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Advantage West Midlands and the Solihull News also supported the Award. Eight local companies also provided funding for the scheme. On 16th September 2005 an Awards Dinner was held at the Moat House Hotel (now the Crowne Plaza) where Dame Caroline Spelman presented the winner Karen Tirebuck of Tirebuck Careers Solutions with a cheque for £1500, plus a year's free membership of SI Solihull and District Club, along with a bouquet of flowers. A very successful event which also raised awareness of Soroptimism in the local Business World.

Solihull Environment Champions

April 2008 saw a group of Solihull Soroptimists join the Solihull Environment Champions in clearing up the cinder path running alongside the Land Rovers Works between Lode Lane and Tanhouse Farm Road. Although few in numbers, there was much enthusiasm. The group filled nine black bags with rubbish, and one bag of bottles and cans for recycling. Several other such initiatives have been organised over the years to keep the environment and local area clean and tidy.

Solihull Festival

For the first time in 2001/2002 we were involved in helping organise Solihull Festival with the Solihull Rotary and Inner Wheel clubs. We had representatives on this Committee for a number of years until Solihull Festival ceased. The Club hosted an event, and help with the Charity Tin Shake, supporting the "fun run" which was in aid of Breast Friends, as well as supporting the various other events planned for the week. Our events have been John Lewis Choir at Solihull School Chapel in 2002; Musical evenings at the Dovehouse Theatre in 2003/2004; Organ Recitals at Fentham Hall, Hampton in Arden in 2005 and 2006. Alison Tully and Enid Hinton produced the Festival Editorial in 2003 and 2005, which helped raise our profile in the Borough. 2007 saw the first Fun in the Park event.



Solihull MIND

In 2006 we were made aware of the work by Solihull Mind, in particular the garden in Knowle to help residents with mental health issues. Our involvement continues to this day with supplying various items including a garden heater, lawnmower blades, irrigation system, tea urn, microwave oven, mugs, plates and cutlery.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Solihull Secondary Schools' Public Speaking Competition

2016 was the first time we organised Solihull Schools Public Speaking Competition with the winner going through to the Regional Competition. This competition is open to children 11-13 years and 14-18 years. The idea of the competition is to encourage children to speak publicly; to gain confidence; to source and structure their topic; whilst at the same time not using a microphone, visual graphics, or read from a script. This is an ongoing project.



Solihull Women's Business Networking Events

This is a partnership between Solihull Council and Solihull & District's Soroptimists. Its aim is to bring together public, private and voluntary sectors within the borough of Solihull. In October the first meeting was held with 60 attendees focussing on domestic violence in the Borough.

Solihull Young Carers

In 2008 following a presentation at Club re Solihull Young Carers, we were informed that funding was due to run out in September. A lobbying campaign was organised, and extra funding was granted. This is a vital programme for so many young people in the Borough who are caring for parents or siblings in the Borough. The opportunity to meet with other young people in the same situation; to have fun; to learn skills; to get support. The Young Carers are still active today, and over the years we have supported this organisation.



Soroptimist International Centenary Wood

At part of our organisation's centenary year clubs all over the world were urged to plant trees as it was saving Giant Redwood Trees in California that was our first ever Programme Action Project.

100 trees were planted in partnership with Solihull Council in a new wood within Dorridge Park and the little wood was officially named as the Soroptimist International Centenary Wood. This will be a huge legacy for us as the wood matures and becomes a place of tranquillity and peace for the local community. In 2025 daffodils were planted to mark those women who committed suicide 6 months after being hospitalised due to the domestic abuse they had suffered.



SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Sri Lanka – The Ceylon Schools for the Deaf and Blind

In December 2005 the Deaf and Blind School in Colombo was the recipient of £500 for a project at the school. The money was used to refurbish the very basic, dilapidated toilets and wash rooms. All the money given was spent on materials as the YMCA men did the work.

Summer Jazz Evening – St Basil's

A key Club project for 2005-6 was raising funds for St. Basils, the Birmingham based charity which provides support and accommodation for homeless young people. During the year, their fundraising officer Blair Kessler addressed the Club on a number of occasions to describe the work of the charity. The club held a number of fundraising events during the year, the most memorable being a 'Summer Jazz Evening' in July at the Old Sils club.

Sup with Soroptimists

These were evenings to promote our organisation at our Supper Meetings. Friends, family, supporters and potential new members were invited to hear about the various projects we are, and have worked on, whilst enjoying a meal and friendship.

Sustainable Fishing

Through the Lobbying Group members were made aware of the thousands of tonnes of fish thrown overboard and wasted. As a Club we lobbied to support to change the fishing regulations. The Group also produced a Recipe Book and Advice Leaflet re which are sustainable fish to buy, along with a series of recipes, to encourage a movement to purchase these fish.

Swishing

Swishing is taking quality, pre-loved clothes and accessories, and selling them in a member's home to raise money for charity. This is a very low cost, extremely pleasant way to raise funds, but definitely puts the fun in service! These have now become almost an annual event.



Turners Syndrome

Turners Syndrome is a chromosome abnormality affecting only females, caused by the complete or partial deletion of the X chromosome. Unfortunately, the granddaughter of one of our members – Maris Atkins – is a sufferer. We supported Turners Syndrome through awareness and fundraising events, including an Ascot Race Night in July 2003.

Twiddle Muffs for dementia patients

In 2016 the Crafts and Laughs Group made Twiddle Muffs for dementia patients at the Solihull Royal Star and Garter Care Home.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

Twiddle Muffs for Solihull Hospital

Following the success of the Twiddle Muffs for the Royal Star and Garter Care Home, in 2019 the Crafts and Laughs Group made some for the Dementia Ward at Solihull Hospital.

Ukraine

At the commencement of the international support for the war in Ukraine, Solihull & District Club quickly organised new items including baby formula/food, medical supplies, warm hats for children. These were sent via a third party in Poland for distribution. Secondly, we provided donations via our SI Kraków Club to provide food packs for women and children at Kraków Station. Further fund raising helped secure further essential clothing and house items during 2022-23. During 2023-2024 we developed a partnership with the charity Brama; this involved setting up an Art Therapy Group led by a Ukrainian Therapist with monthly classes for Ukrainian ladies held in Solihull. Classes are designed to help with learning & improving their English, making new friends and dealing with the aftermath of the war and being re-settled (however temporarily) in a new country. We continued the above work & support during 2024-2025.

WaterAid

Over the years various events have been held to support this worthwhile charity. Events such as Wine Tasting evenings, Curry evenings and a Buffet evening watching the film Calendar Girls are some of the events organised. Another project was to fill mini egg tubes with 20p pieces – the reward was that the tubes were full of eggs at the beginning.



Water for Life – Severn Trent

The Club, in partnership with Severn Trent Water ran a photography competition entitled Water for Life. Judges selected 12 photographs from entries to form a calendar which was sold in aid of Water Aid, which both organisations have supported for many years.

Widney Manor Station – Adopt A Station



This gardening project was launched on our Saturday of Service in March 2006. Members led by Jenny George, cleared and started the planting of flower beds at Widney Manor Station. On 21st March 2006 Central Trains (as it was then called) took photos and interviewed Jenny for a TV news programme showing the launch of “Adopt a Station” project. Teams of volunteers worked tirelessly through the summer to maintain the gardens. On 21st July 2006 Heart of England Judges for Britain in Bloom visited the station and commended the club for their work in the community. On 10th October 2006 the club was awarded a Central Trains Superstaff Certificate – Highly Commended in the Superpartner Category. Jenny, Maris and Enid attended the

Awards Ceremony at the Motor Cycle Museum. July 2017 we were given a plaque by London Midland Railways "Working with Communities". This project is still continuing today with a small team of members

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

who look after the plants and talk to train travellers about our organisation. In 2019 Widney Manor Station was transported back in time with a Suffragette theme, receiving much press and TV coverage. In our Soroptimist Centenary Year, we grew and planted purple and gold plants (the colours of the Centenary).

In October 2024 we were awarded two awards; the first from Heart of England Community Rail Partnership for our Community work at the Station. The second, from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, was their Civic Honour Award in the Group Community Involvement Category.



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Women's Networking in Solihull

In October 2023, the first Women's Networking Event was held in the Council Chamber. This brought together women in business in the Borough, charity organisations and local, female councillors. This group has helped over the years to raise the profile of gender based violence and young people leaving the corporate care of the Local Authority ("Care Experienced Young People").

Women's Refuge



Over the years the Club has supported Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid who run the Refuge in Solihull. Back in 2007 the Refuge was opened after considerable backing by Dame Caroline Spelman who at the time was a newly elected MP for the Borough. On a visit to Solihull Police Station, the Police asked if she could organize a Refuge as they had nowhere to send women who arrived at the Station after escaping an abusive relationship. So, in 2007 the Refuge opened. As a club we have supported financially via Fun in the Park, and many other fundraising events. We have also provided items for the women and children. Regularly, and still ongoing, is the provision of toiletries for the women, who arrive in some cases with nothing, toys for the children (particularly at Christmas time) school clothing and shoes.

During the

autumn of 2023 Crowne Plaza Hotel in Solihull organized a style event with Solihull & District Soroptimists being the beneficiaries. The funds donated we used to buy irons, ironing boards and vacuum cleaners for the ladies when they are re-housed. In 2025 half the proceeds from the Annual Quiz were used to buy Tesco vouchers and pyjamas for the women & children.



SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

World Literacy Day – Books for the Refuge

On World Literacy Day in 2016 members were asked to bring and/or talk about their favourite book – maybe a childhood favourite or something more recent. These books were then donated to the Refuge for the Mothers and Children. In August 2017 we donated more books (both children and adult) for the Refuge along with knitted teddies for the children.

Your Green Future

This was a project with Solihull Council, Solihull Rotary Club and ourselves. The aim was to encourage Secondary School pupils in the Borough to consider working with “green” companies. The event was over 2 days with between 150 and 200 children attending. There was a welcome address, and keynote speaker. The students were then split into groups to attend various workshops and an exhibition where they could talk to companies about the products they were, or had developed. This ran for a number of years.



16 Day of Action to Eliminate Gender Based Violence



In November 2023, for the first time, Club a display highlighting the United Nations’ 16 Days of Action – known as the Orange Campaign – was

installed in the reception area of Solihull’s Central Library & Core Theatre. This took many months of preparation by members and also many voluntary groups within the borough, who helped to make 2495 orange flowers.



This number represents the number of reported domestic violence incidents to the Police in England and Wales during 2022. The display was highly talked about and became the focus for the 16 Days of Action. In 2024 the Mayor of Solihull hosted the

launch of this annual, international United Nations’ initiative. This was attended by senior Council leaders and figures in the Borough. The displays saw orange flowers & red hearts and were located around the Borough.

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT CLUB - PROGRAMME ACTION PROJECTS

1940s Afternoon Tea to mark 75th Anniversary of D-Day

In 2019 a 1940s themed Afternoon Tea was held to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of D-Day. Music and songs from that time were enjoyed by everyone, including dancing. Monies raised from the Tea went to Action for ME.

Programme Action Projects v4 250805

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