**Trustee Reports for St Edmundsbury and Ipswich MU AGM 17th March 2021**

**Diocesan President – Report for the Annual General Meeting, 17th March 2021**

**The past:**

So, looking back over the last year, who would have guessed the impact of the pandemic? In spite of everything thrown at us, the Mothers’ Union is battling through, changing the way we work but still holding to the “old-fashioned” values of prayer, love, service and commitment. Over this past year we have had much for which to give thanks - our ABC strategy has given a sense of structure, something by which we can measure progress. We have been able to play our part in the diocese in deepening our Christian faith and building God’s kingdom in the places where we live. We have embraced Zoom, YouTube, videos, eBooks, Microsoft Teams and regular newsletters, all of which are raising our profile across the diocese. Our memberships remain loyal, albeit growing older. Sadly, over the last year two branches have closed, but members have been able to transfer to other branches or joined the Diocesan membership. More than ever, in a worldwide pandemic, the Mothers’ Union has a unique role to play – through our prayers, giving, actions, and showing kindness to others.

**The present:**

***Members:*** Although unable to visit in person, I have been in touch with all our Branch Leaders during lockdown and they have been maintaining regular contact with their members.

***Changes:*** different ways of “doing” included new formats for the “Wave of Prayer” service for our overseas links of Byumba, Jalingo, Lake Malawi, and Lucknow, the *“Blue Christmas”* service and MSH video services, all of which have unified the membership through shared experience, whilst maintaining social distancing. We have been learning and coping with modern technology, Zoom, webinar programmes, adopting the MSH Microsoft Teams policy, and YouTube and video presentations. Now all Diocesan, Cluster, Provincial and the even the Annual Gathering in the autumn have been recorded and are available to view again. All members, including Life Vice Presidents, received regular diocesan newsletters to keep updated, together with a new format Diocesan Prayer Rota.

***Our Finances*** are in good shape, and all members were thanked for their generosity and support for the MSH

Urgent Appeal, Summer of Hope, Big Gift Day, overseas links/work, Gift Aid, and various other donations.

***The ABC strategy*** has focused on **A**FIA, **B**efriending (through prayer and relationship-building, addressing issues around loneliness, isolation and loss, delivering “Bags of Love”, and many other small acts of kindness) and **C**lewer material (with posters/updates/webinars/YouTube courses and other resources) has been circulated to members, the most recent focussing on County Lines, one of the most prevalent forms affecting the young and vulnerable in our country.

***Spreading the word:*** continues with the Prayer Chain, organising AFIA grants, celebrating anniversaries, and

letter-writing keeping in touch with Indoor and Diocesan members, preparing our worship servicesfor the

*Wave of Prayer* and “*Blue Christmas”,* our *“Discovery Day”* (sadly a Covid-casualty) and the compilation of the

*eBook of Comfort* written to encourage us all during lockdown. Branches too have been creative and imaginative.

***Campaigning*** has continued with *16 Days of Activism* against gender violence, “*No more 1 in 3*” (with a website photographic challenge), and Clewer with new office staff and updated materials/videos raising their profile.

***Spiritual support*** remains invaluable from Ian, our MU Chaplain, and Kathy, my Spiritual Director/Advisor

**The future:**

In this year, the last of this triennium, we still have much work to do guided by our ABC strategy but putting greater emphasis on Befriending and addressing the needs of those less fortunate, developing our work with prisons, the night shelter and women’s refuge, local care homes and hospitals, and disadvantaged groups. We will extend Befriending to include a focus on Bereavement - using our “Book of Comfort”, branch booklets, MU resources and webinars, the prayer-chain, and worship services – the way we do things may have changed, but the message of Christian care for families, remains the same. In spite of everything, our fund-raising efforts (I-Chameleon, and at Area, Deanery and Branch level will continue, alongside using our crafts, skills, gifts and talents, and so much more.

**Thank you:**

As I write, there is “light at the end of the tunnel” re the pandemic… All of us are feeling the strain in one way or another, in our decision-making, the way we work, our relationships, and it seems that Zoom, replacing face-to face encounters, only compounds the problem. Lockdown has given us time to reflect on and value what has been lost, challenge us as to what is important to retain, and nudging us to learn and adapt to a new kind of “normal”. Thank you everyone for your love and support, especially during these last eight months. I see a bright future ahead in the MU, in spite of everything that coronavirus will throw at us. The harder the task, the greater will we see the power of God moving and working through us to build his kingdom right here in Suffolk. We can rejoice and celebrate all that has been achieved in this last year, and together re-build hope and confidence serving God as this triennium draws to a close. (LG 28/2/21)

**Vice President’s REPORT for Zoom AGM March 2021**

The Branch Reports for the year ending December 2019 were collated and the required information relating to the diocese as a whole, were sent to MSH.

The information gathered is very useful in keeping our contact details up to date and drawing together an overview of MU in St Edmundsbury & Ipswich and gives a ‘picture’ of the effects of the COVID-19 year. (Reports for 2020 are currently being submitted and collated)

From the reports for 2020 so far received, it is clear that members adapted their ways of working and kept in contact by telephone, ZOOM and in the summer months when lockdown was relaxed having garden meetings. Fund raising was badly affected and outreach became more difficult. Members involved in OTB and Messy Church were unable to continue this except at a distance.

The ‘Modern Day Slavery’ network did not meet but received emails from Carol Mansell, the Clewer Initiative, and members of the group exchanged information. The pandemic has not helped the ongoing work as the population has spent much of the year in lockdown with the inevitable result that MDS is more deeply hidden.

The 6 year Constitution review has taken considerable time as MSH has changed to the ‘Communities of Interest’ way of working. The current MSH boilerplate has been customised to St Edmundsbury & Ipswich diocese and the appendices updated.

Cathie McGregor. March 2021

**INDOOR MEMBERS**

Indoor members currently number 39. Through the year some have gone and a few new ones have joined our list.

During the past year I have sent all the members copies of the letters received from Linda. It is important to keep these members feeling loved and wanted and in touch.

I have also been able to send Christmas cards and Easter cards.

It is a privilege to keep in touch with these members, but I feel the time has come to step down and let a younger person take on this very important job. I am happy to remain until someone comes forward.

MONICA TWAITS

**A.F.I.A. Report Trustees**

Nothing to report.

Thank you to members to have been using easyfundraising, this is the link to the home page

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

There are over 3,500 online stores to choose from here are just a few. 

I have entered the free draws, but sadly have not won yet !!!

Val Jeffreys AFIA Rep.

**Over 90’s report**

My numbers of members 90 + is 68.

**Margaret Rollins**

**Secretary’s Report for AGM 2021**

Throughout 2020 I have kept in touch with branches, more so when the country was in lockdown, as I was aware that some members were on their own and would maybe be grateful for a friendly contact occasionally.

There were 714 members at the end of 2020. We held one face to face Trustee meeting and 5 via Zoom.

There was one face to face Council meeting AGM last March and we held 2 further meetings during the year via Zoom.

I have sent out the monthly Peculiar Times newsletter to Branch Leader, Deanery Leaders, Trustees and Life Vice Presidents (posting 4 that are not on email.)

Recently Linda asked me to survey branches to see how they had been coping throughout the pandemic and not meeting face to face. Most branch leaders have contacted most of their members, either by email, phone calls or post.

The Diocesan Diary has not been added to as we are still uncertain when we will be able to meet face to face (depends on the Roadmap!) We hope that by the Autumn it will be possible to hold the Council meeting in November in person, but this has to wait until we are certain it is possible.

I recently asked Branch Leaders if there were any members willing to be nominated as Trustees in the next triennium. To date I have received no names. The post of trustee is changing over the next 3 years as we develop the Communities of Interest. This means that Trustees will not have titles or be fully responsible for sections eg. Faith & Policy, AFIA etc. These jobs can be done by any member with an interest in the subject. They will then report back to the Trustees regularly. There may be one trustee that is willing to be the contact for that section, therefore that will be the person to report back to!

Please ask around your members to see if there is anyone willing to be nominated to be a trustee. Nomination forms can be found on the Suffolk MU website with instructions how to nominate someone.

Beryl Mee Diocesan Secretary

**Annual Faith and Policy report. Council AGM March 2021**

Lockdown changed many aspects of our lives, but not the amount we prayed. Following the announcement that churches were closed, and we were all to stay home members put pen to paper and by July we had a new edition of the Book of Comfort.

Thank you to all the Mothers’ Union members who sent in the prayers, poems and reflections as well as for the many photographs and artwork. Thanks also to those trustees who have helped in the process of proof reading. We pray that our Book of Comfort will be a true blessing to all those who receive it and we have had many letters of appreciation from people who have bought or downloaded the Book of Comfort. The next stage is to record this book as a Talking book for the RNIB.

**Wave of Prayer:** The 2020 Wave of Prayer service was sent to all branches and diocesan members and was also available on our website [www.musufflok.org.uk](http://www.musufflok.org.uk). The three days July 16th – 18th are when we are asked to pray for the work of Mothers’ Union worldwide. This is when our link diocese will be praying too. Lake Malaw in Malawi, Byumba in Rwanda and Jalingo in Burundi are in Central Africa time zone which is one hour ahead of our diocese. Lucknow in India is in Standard India Time zone which is 4hrs 30 minutes ahead of our diocese. With this in mind our joint wave of prayer could extend as long as 15 hours each day. We are a praying diocese, and our prayers are heard by God, our heavenly Father.

**Blue Christmas service:**. Rev’d Tim Rogers from the Yoxmere benefice opened the doors of St Peter’s church Westeton for the recording of the Mothers’ Union Blue Christmas service. Thank you to everyone who came and read the lessons and prayers. The final prayer was recorded at Bures St Mary a few days later. Carols were recorded at St Andrews’ Rushmere and our musical Mothers’ Union members did us proud. The service had 189 views via Facebook and YouTube.

**Art and Scripture reflections:** I was aware that branches may want more faith resources during these months of lockdown when we could not have our usual meetings. To meet this need in addition to the monthly prayers, Art and Scripture reflections were added to the musuffolk.org website.

Our latest outreach is a book supporting and promoting marriage, namely **For Better, for Worse**. This has just been circulated to the branches and already your memoires of married life as lived out in the five-wedding vows have started to arrive. So whether it is for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish, or till death us do part. Please send in your memories to email: [jeanetteappleton@hotmail.com](mailto:jeanetteappleton@hotmail.com) or post to Jeanette Appleton, ‘Field View’, Hadleigh Rd, Holton St Mary, Suffolk CO7 6NP

Jeanette Appleton

Faith & Policy Trustee

**Ipswich Area AGM Report March 2021**

We had to cancel Ipswich Area coffee Morning at St Michael’s Martlesham in November 2020 because we were in Lockdown due to Corona Virus. So we have booked the Ipswich Area Coffee Morning for November 20th 2021 all being well At St Michael’s Martlesham.

Christmas Gift Cards were bought for the Woman’s Refuge in Ipswich & Bury St Edmunds.

Pyjamas and Underwear were bought for the ladies and men in the Ipswich Winter Night Shelter.

Christmas Gifts were bought for the children and Mum’s in Peppercorn Lodge.

I have received letters of thanks from the Woman’s Refuge in Ipswich for their Christmas Gift Cards and the Ipswich Winter Night Shelter for the Pyjamas and Underwear.

Beryl kindly passed the letters on to all Branch Members and Trustees via email.

Thank you all for your continued support in supporting these worthy causes through a difficulty year we all have experienced.

Sandra Griffiths, Ipswich Area Rep

**Diocesan Members Rep - Report for AGM March 2021**

Early on in the pandemic it was decided that we needed to communicate with our members much more regularly to reduce feelings of isolation as lockdown continued. Diocesan members received newsletters every two weeks initially and this changed to monthly after the first period of lockdown. The newsletters were sent out with a letter from me, by Email or post and aimed to keep members up to date with MU initiatives and to provide a positive message at a difficult time. I have been sending MUe catalogues out to Diocesan Members and several orders have been made via Clare. Members also received material about the Wave of Prayer and 16 Days of Activism.

The cards for prisoners could not be made when meeting face to face so Di Barker made kits which went out to some Diocesan Members. The cards were made at home and returned to Di who made sure that they reached Highpoint Prison. A letter of thanks was received from the Chaplain.

When renewing membership for 2021, two members decided to join branches, one member died, two decided not to renew and one moved to a new diocese. However, we gathered several new members from branches that recently closed so the number of Diocesan Members currently stands at 45. These 45 members have all paid their subscriptions for 2021.

Sue Norrington

**North Suffolk Area Report for AGM 2021**

Area Morning in 2020. However, we were delighted to be able to run the I-Chameleon pop-up shop in October.

As in previous years we received a wonderful array of goods to sell, and we also displayed MUe cards. The number of people running the shop each day was Sadly, we were unable to proceed with either the Quiet Day or North Suffolk limited to two so that we could allow more customers into the space and maintain social distancing. All relevant safety measures were put in place and the whole week went smoothly. So much so that we made over £1200 from direct sales together with donations from goods sold privately, plus £238 on MUe cards. Since then, another £87 has been made from sales, giving us a total of just over £1300. This, in spite of Covid-19, is very compatible with previous years.

£300 has been sent to both the Overseas fund and the Britain & Ireland fund. £100 was used to buy gift tokens for the Lighthouse and Christmas stockings were bought and filled for both guests at the Ipswich Night shelter and tenants in Hope for Action housing. These were all very well received.

The deposit has been paid for rental of the shop for the week of 21st - 27th October 2021 and we have held back money to pay the balance and also to support ‘Open the Book’ teams in our area, with additional books, when they are once again able to visit schools.

If the ease up of Lockdown restrictions follows the pattern recently laid out, we may be able to hold some sort of NSA gathering in September but it is too soon to make any definite plans. Meanwhile, please begin to gather goods for the shop!!

Anna Vessey

North Suffolk Area Representative

**Social Policy**

During 2020 Mary Sumner House set up a Community of Interest for Policy, led by Bev Jullien. There were two Zoom meetings with members from across Britain & Ireland. The group focussed on two things – raising publicity and lobbying for changes to the revised domestic abuse bill, and the 16 Days of Activism which was strengthened this year by the No More 1 in 3 campaign on Global Day. Many members used the 16 Days prayer diary, and some joined in the No More 1 in 3 photos on Facebook.

Christine Ward represented us at Clewer meetings during the year. We continued to publicise the Clewer initiative, sharing updates and the new Farm Work Welfare app.

**MUe**

Although we only managed face to face sales at the start of the year, many members sent in orders by post and by the end of the year sales were almost as good as 2019. Sales of handmade face masks added to our revenue, and printed copies of the Book of Comfort sold well.

The value of stock at 31st December 2020 was £2938.57 and the balance to carry forward was £3509.32, which was an increase of £495 from 2019.

**Membership database**

All members in our Diocese are included in the Mary Sumner House membership database and this was used to post out the 2021 prayer diary to all members. The new Connected magazine will also be posted out to all members from Mary Sumner House, so it is essential that we keep the information as up to date as possible. Please can all branch leaders continue to let Beryl Mee know promptly of any address changes, new members and resigned / deceased members as soon as possible. It is only by doing this that we can ensure any future mailings from MSH reach all our members, and unnecessary distress is not caused to bereaved families.

**Website & Facebook**

Our website [www.musuffolk.org.uk](http://www.musuffolk.org.uk) continues to generate a lot of interest, from our members and also from people outside Suffolk and even abroad. New pages on newsletters, reflections and webinars were added to the website during the year.

Our Facebook page has attracted more followers, many of whom are not MU members, so it is a good way to publicise what we do. One post reached over 800 people!

Thank you to everyone who has sent in news, photos or information for the website and Facebook.

**Safeguarding**

All our Trustees are up to date with safeguarding training.

Clare Thomas

Social Policy/MUe Rep

**Financial Reports**

**To be read in conjunction with Keith’s Financial reports**

**Notes on Financial Statement dated 31st December 2020**

In the column headed Diocesan Funds

***Income***

Subscriptions are those collected for 2020 this year and last autumn. It does not include subs collected for 2021.

MUe dividend is now complete and is more than last year (thank you Clare)

Insurance premium for 2020 was paid eventually and that for 2021 a few weeks later

Sundries include repayment of 3 months Zoom licence.

***Expenditure***

Sundries include the Zoom licence

***Restricted and Unrestricted Funds***

The total in restricted funds and Diocesan Fund is £10,113.80 and we hold £10,234.88 in the current and Gold accounts supporting the ‘cash flow’. All other bank accounts are investments but I can raid the deposit account if necessary…….

Otherwise, the table of restricted and unrestricted funds is self-explanatory, unless you think otherwise.

Bank reconciliation shows what we had at the start of the year and what we have now. Everything balances.