

Reports for Council Meeting 28th October 2017

Diocesan President

Suffolk Show 31 May – 01 June 2017

Thanks to the Rural Coffee Caravan and Rev Canon Sally Fogden whose kind invitation meant we were there and I'm grateful to Cathie, Clare, Linda, Sandra, Monica and Margaret Llewelyn for volunteering. Our work was on display but space was limited and there was no opportunity to be interactive in a way that would draw visitors to the stand or excite the interest of enquirers about MU in Suffolk. Diana selected leaflets to give away and Val printed information sheets. Clare was brilliant in getting MU onto the Diocesan Events webpage launched at the Show – that was a plus. We're invited to add events on via Clare or direct to this link: <http://www.cofesuffolk.org/event-submission>. At Council I can report on Trustees' forthcoming discussion for a MU presence at Suffolk Show 2018.

Provincial Conference 05-07 June High Leighs.

CEO Bev writes 'The Britain and Ireland (B&I) Group of the Board, which includes the 5 Provincial Presidents, has approved the theme of "In Mary Sumner's Footsteps" for 2018. Resources will reach you by the end of August, and it will be formally announced at the General Meeting in Edinburgh. The thinking is to follow on from WWC in March, and to use Mary Sumner, the individual, as an inspiration for both our outward facing work and internal reflections on co-creating the future of Mothers' Union.' MSH, as we refer to our esteemed and harassed leaders, are working with our new Constitution and formulating it's rules and regulations; they plan to achieve an accurate Membership list to enable clear lines of communication for the future. It is essential to maintain and increase our fundraising, and improve the consultation with Dioceses on many issues including elections and MULOA, so our response can input the decision making. To this end there are constant emails and I intend to forward more communications to Branch Leaders where relevant, so you can grasp the complexities and purpose of future plans.

Meeting members.

I was at the show from 30 May – 01 Jun; although few members found us there was opportunity for networking and conversations. I was invited to many Wave of Prayer services and was able to attend Hoxne, Marlesford, Melton and Shotley Peninsular; Janice creates this beautiful service and it amazes me that branches interpret and present it so many innovative ways. I enjoyed an interesting and well attended NSA day at Westleton and branch meetings at Claydon & Barham, St Andrews Melton, Sudbury, Walton and Stowmarket. In September many of us gathered to support Margaret and Brenda at their husbands' funeral. It is hoped that in their bereavement they both feel comforted by their MU friends of so many years.

The Garden Party on 30 June at Bishop Martin's house was enjoyed by all who attended; everything was provided for our comfort and the buffet and fruit cup were plentiful. Those who came in hats and fascinators added atmosphere as we clapped and congratulated Freda Smith on being 99 years young that week and on her recent honour. She thanked us for the beautiful hydrangea presented by Cathie and invited us to her 100th birthday next year! Bishop Martin said Grace and took time to chat to many people and examine the MU information on display. As raindrops appeared we were pleased to shelter in the marquee and listen to the Rushmere Voices who had prepared an entertaining programme, including audience participation, a perfect ending! Thanks to Cathie for dealing with tickets and Freda's gift; to Beryl for the buffet table flowers and to Beryl, Sandra and Tony for setting up.

Diocesan Synod on 10 June was interesting and included parish presentations within Growing in God which seemed pertinent to our aims and objects too. Key messages emerging from all four projects were - 'Be bold. Take time to develop relationships and build trust. Have confidence in the message'.

Finance was also discussed and the declared aim was to work towards a budget deficit of less than £200,000 and towards break even in 2018. From the minutes - *Archdeacon Ian, Chair of Project Board, introduced the highlights of the Church Stand at the Suffolk Show, including an example of the vox-pops. He thanked all who had taken part, and especially Mr Eric Falla. It was essential that the Church of England was present at the county show. As in previous years, significant conversations had taken place. Sadly MU was not mentioned. I have asked for the opportunity to speak to Synod about MU in Suffolk, being at Diocesan or Deanery Synod is an important opportunity to raise our profile.*

General Meeting at Edinburgh 30 September 2017. Thanks to the creative energy of Beryl and Monica 25 members set out for another enjoyable holiday planned around the Cathedral Service on Friday afternoon and the General Meeting on Saturday. Our Keynote Speaker was Canon Sarah Snyder whose current responsibility for 'Peace and Reconciliation is to Archbishop Justin Welby. It was an inspiring delivery and the theme resonated through all the addresses we heard. MU is recognised world-wide as engaging with peace and reconciliation in all we do in God's name and the service of others. In the Community Hub there was an 'Exhibition of Shoes', this display was created by the Scottish Interfaith Group and used in prisons to show offenders the effect of domestic abuse on victims e.g. a pair of child-size winter boots bearing the caption 'I hate it when my mum and dad argue'. Later at the hotel, we talked about using shoes in a similar way to have impact in 16 Days of Activism events this year to reflect not only abuse but the reality of family life today. Our holiday is a unique opportunity where friendship and MU information come as a package – why not come to Swansea next year?

I'm sure the many contributions to the Summer of Hope Appeal will reflect all the fun we've had this summer as we work for the continuing outreach of MU. At Edinburgh, our Central Chaplain, Bishop Andrew Proud, asked God's blessing on MU members to go out as Ambassadors for Christ, wherever we are.

My thanks to our Trustees, Officers, Branch Leaders for your continued support for MU in St Edmundsbury & Ipswich and thank each one of you for the blessing you have been to many lives this summer.

Christine Ward

Diocesan Vice President

Earlier this year I completed the Annual Returns for Mary Sumner House showing total membership numbers, with details of numbers of new enrolments, those with children under 16, male MU members and much more. These are collated from Branch and Deanery Returns and submitted in order that they know the overall picture of Membership in our Diocese. This together with information gathered from around the country enables plans to be made for the future direction of the MU. At the October Council these forms are sent out to all branches as hard copy and need to be returned by 28th February 2018. The completed forms can be sent back by post or submitted electronically. (All branches will receive an electronic copy in January) Alas this year it was necessary to 'chase up' many returns and there were a few never submitted! It is so easy to complete this form when Annual Subscriptions are collected in November/December and you know your number of members. Then you can forget this task for the next twelve months. I am sending you a big thank you in advance as I know that each branch will have submitted their annual return to me by the end of February.

Love and blessings from **Cathie McGregor**

IMPC

There are approximately 40 IMPC members. Each one received a letter and a copy of Pathways in the summer of 2017. I feel it is a privilege to write to these members, many of whom have shared a long membership and no doubt prayed for Mothers Union and its projects over time. It would be very good if these members could receive visits from other members and I am aware that many do get visitors. I am

still working on an idea to create little teams. Unfortunately these things take time. However I am getting help from Linda Ginn, which is very helpful, for which I am very thankful.

PATHWAYS REPORT.

I took over the job of PATHWAYS editor in 2010 I changed the format from a single sheet of paper to what we have today. I must admit my son helped me with the first layout as my computer skills were very limited then (they are not much better now!) He found help on the MSH website and took it from there. I now feel it is time to hand over this job to someone younger and wiser! I am happy to stay in situ until another editor is found. I have enjoyed this job immensely and I will miss the contact with members and the printer, but I just feel the time is right. Please give some thought to this opportunity and pray about it. It is very rewarding!

Monica Twaits

A.F.I.A

We have paid for 5 holidays for 2017. Unfortunately, one had to cancel at the last moment due to his mother going into hospital seriously ill. Haven Holidays were very good and gave us half the cost back (something not usually done) and we are claiming the balance from our insurance co. Needless to say, the family were very disappointed. There have been a mixture of referrers this year some Social workers and some clergy, it is nice to think we are getting the word around that we will support parishioners.

Nothing has come from the article I wrote in the bi-monthly newsletter for school heads, chair of governors and foundation governors. However, it was worth a try. The shopping online via easyfundraising is now picking up and I receive a report regularly. We have 12 people registered but this is increasing each month so far we have raised £79.00. I think this way of raising money will not be an immediate way but will slowly take off.

Beryl Mee

Worldwide Representative

I have been pleased to have been contacted with favourable responses re the Wave of Prayer order of service. Clare has taken a photo of me with her on her trip to Rwanda !

Janice Brett

Faith & Policy

Since the last Report, life has been hectic over the summer months which began with the Suffolk Show involvement and followed on with such activities like garden parties, garden meetings, garden teas, speaking at branches and working on various Committees. Bigger events have included attending the North Suffolk Area, celebrating Mary Sumner Day, spending money at the Bring and Buy and MUe stalls, fund-raising opportunities, and generally having a great, but incredibly busy, time as the rest of life has to fit around all these activities. But there has also been the more serious side - reflecting on the Quiet Day at Wenhaston, representing MU at Thy Kingdom Come in Melton, attending several Wave of Prayer meetings and exploring the role that MU could play in the Diocesan Who Cares? project.

Our F&P work is becoming increasingly more difficult as people become even busier with just living: health and family issues are often unpredictable, circumstances and priorities change and expectations come to nothing. The booking of speakers who are prepared to make a commitment well in advance can sometimes become just another hurdle. As MU volunteers, we have a terrific opportunity to promote Christian care for families in our local community, whether it be through our prayers or active participation. It is obviously not without its problems, but much work goes on behind the scenes, and we are very grateful to all those who make things happen. Thank you to everyone for your support and encouragement.

Linda Ginn

Diocesan Members Representative

We have around 40 members and I am still collecting subscriptions. The Christmas cards were collected and are now at the prison. I have 1800 cards ready cut to stick next year and so next year I will not require any Christmas card fronts from anybody. If you wish to save them for the following year that would be okay or you could find another use for them. The hats and cardigans for premature babies are still an on-going commitment and they are always needed. Do not forget that if you cannot knit you can buy new-born socks as the ones at the hospital do not survive in the washing machines.

Christine Mitchell

Social Policy & Website

Rose Wright remains the only person at Mary Sumner House on Social Policy, and is now part of a new team called 'Development and Policy' along with the Action and Outreach staff. MSH are prioritising policy work in three areas – Gender Based Violence, Gender Equality and Peace & Reconciliation.

I responded to a survey from MSH asking about Faith and Policy Watch, but the results of the survey have not been published.

Website Report

Thank you to everyone who has sent me material to publish on the website, and I am very sorry that I haven't always published it quickly. Monica has very kindly offered to help me, but I haven't had time to show her how to edit the website pages. Hopefully things will be quieter during the autumn and winter and we'll be able to get together.

Clare Thomas

90th Birthday's Contact

The list for the 90th birthdays remains the same at 79. Sadly one member has died but one new lady.

Margaret Rollins

North Suffolk Area Representative

Twenty five members from across the North Suffolk Area attended a Quiet Day in Wenhaston on 29th June. The day, led by Revd Jane Hall, focused on three Celtic saints - St Martin, St Ninian and St Patrick and what their spirituality offers to us in today's world. Between each session there was time to sit or walk and ponder on what we had heard and the day ended with Celtic worship.

The North Suffolk Area Morning was held at Westleton on 8th September. We began the day with a Eucharist in church and then moved to the village hall for coffee and to browse the Bring and Buy, Produce & MUE stalls. The morning was attended by a total of 33 members from our area and we were very pleased to be joined by some from elsewhere in the Diocese. Our speaker was Debbie Johnson from the Lighthouse Women's Refuge in Ipswich. Her talk was a real 'eye opener' for us all. The need for support for women in a great variety of abusive situations is acute. Sue Norrington was able to present Debbie with a box full of bags containing basic toiletries for women coming to the refuge. These had been made by members of the Yoxmere branch and were very gratefully received. The centre would still like MU members to continue to collect underwear and toiletries as well as tinned and packeted food. Following Debbie's talk Christine Ward spoke to us about the changes we must face and embrace in MU. Linda Ginn led us in Midday Prayers and we then enjoyed a shared lunch. After gift aid, the collection raised £161 for the Summer of Hope appeal. Money raised on the stalls and raffle has been used to offset the morning's expenses and the remainder will be used to pay for our next venture.

This is the pop up shop, I-Chameleon in Halesworth, which we are running from 10am to 4pm on 17th - 22nd November. As the cost of the hire of the shop has now been covered all monies raised will be able to be given to the work of MU in supporting and empowering families in the UK and overseas. We will

be grateful for contributions of good quality bric-a-brac, books, Cds, DVDs, unwanted gifts, plants, preserves etc.

Anna Vessey

Action & Outreach

The Special Baby Unit at Ipswich Hospital would still like Quilts and Memory Bags which hang on the end of the cot. The measurements for these are on our Webb site.

I have been in touch with the Woman's Refuge at Ipswich regarding Christmas to see how we can help and they would like gift vouchers like we gave last year and also gifts for the ladies and younger children. The gift vouchers can be purchased from Primark, Boots, The Works, Body Shop, WH Smiths but not food shops in £5 amounts. We will divide the Vouchers and gifts between Ipswich Woman's Refuge and Bury St Edmunds Woman's Refuge like we did last year. It would be a help if these items for the Woman's Refuge could be bought to the next Council meeting which is in November.

It was noted that the hearts that were taken down after the Wedding Fayre in September that about 90% of the couples were getting married in church.

Last academic year, I ran two courses at Eyke Primary School. The first had three attendees (of which one was Nicola!) and the second three. I based the six-week sessions on the book, "How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk". Those who attended were grateful for the input and new ideas which they were able to try out.

Nicola and I are booked onto the one-day training on 14 September to be able to deliver a course by Coventry Diocese entitled, "What shall we tell the children about relationships and sex?"

Eyke School has a new Acting Head beginning in September, so Nicola and I will endeavour to meet with her after a couple of weeks, and discuss the possibility of running courses there again. Alternatively we could use St Felix' Church as the base, inviting parents from Rendlesham and Eyke Schools. We have both found that personal contact with parents is best way to encourage them to attend courses, on the whole. **Rachel Parsons**

I ran an 8 week group for pre school children. It had 9 subscribe and on average 6 attending. I have course evaluation sheets from 5 parents if that helps?

I enjoyed learning with pre school parents and planned lots of different activities which on the whole went as planned and parents engaged with.

The local contact centre is interested in me running a dads one. **Nicola Griffiths**

Sandra Griffiths