

Report of Diocesan President to AGM Jan – Dec 2018

2018 has been a momentous year for MU. In February at Swanwick DP's from across our membership gathered to witness the signing of our new Constitution which lays out a prayerfully considered means of representation, policy and governance that encourages MU to be an organisation looking forward to growing in service and membership in today's world. MSH continues as HQ but Communities of Interest have replaced the familiar Units and encourage a more effective development of the work, engaging with grass roots members at every opportunity. In October, we learnt with delight that Mrs Sheran Harper was to be the next WWP, the first to be elected from beyond the UK. A new WWP and a fresh Constitution records a momentous year indeed.

St Eds & Ips had the joy of welcoming our long serving WWP, Mrs Lynne Tembey, on an impromptu visit over 11-13 April. Lynne gave a memorable address at the Lady Day Banner Service at St Andrew, Rushmere and commissioned Catherine Kersey as Trustee and Ipswich Area Representative. During her short visit, many members met Lynne who delighted in hearing stories and seeing all there was time to see of our work. She was like spring sunshine after a gloomy winter and brought encouragement and affirmation to so many. We were truly blessed to experience her warmth and dedication to MU, both worldwide and here in Suffolk.

Worshipping together is central to our MU membership. This year we have enjoyed the Diocesan Lady Day Banner service and the service of Healing and Wholeness on St Luke's Day at Clare. In addition, we have established a Diocesan Celebration of Holy Communion at the Cathedral on 09 August for Mary Sumner Day and a Diocesan Vigil and Service in the Cathedral Lady Chapel to be held within the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Abuse. This year it was on 06 December and included contributions from Lighthouse and many other stories; we are grateful to the Cathedral for their welcome and supplying the vigil candles, to Revd Canon Brian Lillistone for leading the service and to Keith Foulds for playing the organ.

Apart from our new WW constitution, this has been a legislative year. Trustees undertook to update our Diocesan Policies and Procedures and engage with MSH requirements for GDPR and the new Membership Database. Thanks to the diligence and skill of Clare Thomas and our Treasurer's comprehensive records, this is all in hand. To ensure that all branches were aware of current requirements five Essential Information sessions were offered and nearly every branch has sent representatives to this hands-on opportunity. In safeguarding, food hygiene, risk assessment and our duty of care to our members and guests, we are now fit-for-purpose and I am deeply grateful to everyone who has participated in this process giving their time and goodwill.

Another essential part of MU life is the fun we have together. Within the Diocesan Membership and in the Branches we continue together in faith, friendship and fundraising to support the work of MU. As we pray, knit, sew or prepare events, we can be thankful to God for his many blessings and the opportunities he gives to MU to reach out in service. Apart from local Garden Parties, Coffee mornings, Wedding Fayres, this year we have also enjoyed the residential Retreat at Belsey Bridge, Quiet Days, and the Wave of Prayer and Advent services. Sandra organised a party of supporters to present a beautiful garden seat to Lighthouse for the enjoyment of their service users, the welcome we received showed how much your support is valued. This year has seen a Parenting Facilitators Course happen at Sudbury following a

request from the Diocesan Multi Academy Trust who recognised MU expertise. Marian Pope has tutored this group of teaching staff and we have covered all costs. To acquire accreditation the students now collate a portfolio of practical experience. How encouraging to know that through this initiative we are part of outreach to the heart of MU care for families.

A presentation of our true appreciation for her unique contribution to MUE was given to Diana at the AGM as she laid aside this responsibility. If there were a Diamond award, Diana would surely qualify. The memory of Linda Cadman remains in our hearts as another dedicated MU member; before her sudden death, she had gladly accepted my nomination as a Life Vice-President and she richly deserves to be remembered with gratitude and honour. Happily, Val Jeffreys was pleased to be invited to be a L V-P for her services to MU and is returning to be AFIA representative and Trustee in 2019.

Away from the legal necessities, MULOA has been a source of encouragement and inspiration. During the February WWC, there were 4 days of training to rollout this transforming opportunity within Dioceses. In the July conference Viv joined in the Joint analysis of learning from our MULOA sessions to test and revise our Britain and Ireland framework so we have a shared understanding of Mothers' Union's role and how we could work best. We sought a clear plan, guided by God, for how we share and take forward learning from MULOA sessions in our work at Diocesan level and in our personal faith and relationships with each other. The aim being to enable the individual Provinces to work together effectively to apply the learning across Britain & Ireland. I have been invited to continue offering MULOA sessions to branches and other groups (MU members or community based) during 2019. Usually this involves three of us from our 'Family Group' to present a session, which can be tailored to your needs.

It was a pleasure to have Linda with me at the Provincial conference in October and to hear together the practice of working with families of prisoners during visiting and at Christmas. We learned about those affected by Modern Slavery and discovered that many Anglican Dioceses already invite their MU to share in both these areas and we hoped that eventually this might happen here in Suffolk.

In this year of 'Following in Mary Sumner's Footsteps' I can confirm that Trustees, Officers and Members have done just that. My thanks for the prayer and support you have given me this year and throughout the triennium. The welcome Tony and I have received will always remain with us.

On reflection, it seems that there are as many social and family issues today as in 1876 and the need for MU as real as ever. Looking forward to 2019 I'm sure with the skill, enthusiasm and dedication of your new Trustees and especially with Linda's visionary leadership, this year, as you 'Listen, observe, act – in step with God' – *'All will be well and all manner of thing shall be well'*.

May God bless you richly in His service and to Him be the glory.

Christine Ward

ACTION & OUTREACH 2018

We asked the Woman's Refuge in Ipswich if there was anything they were in need of for the ladies. They gave us ideas and one was a garden bench for the garden where the ladies and children go for therapy and coffee mornings also it is a lovely space for children to play. Several of Mothers Union members came with me to see the bench

in the garden we were made very welcome and were told of the work that the Woman

's Refuge does to help the ladies and children.

The amount of Toiletries, Bedding, Towels, Underwear and Toys donated through the year for the Woman's Refuge in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds has been fantastic. Once again, at Christmas members kindly donated Gift Vouchers in £5 denomination's for the Woman's Refuge in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds which were very well received.

The members of the Diocese have been very busy making items for the Special baby unit at Ipswich and West Suffolk hospitals. Also, drain bags for the Oncology department at Ipswich hospital. Hats for the Seaman's Mission.

The Wedding Fayre at Trinity Park in September, which is always an enjoyable event, was another success as the majority of brides that we spoke to were getting married in church rather than a venue, which is very encouraging. A big thank you to Monica & Val for their support at the Wedding Fayre.

This year we were asked if we could help provide new underwear, hats, scarves, gloves and toiletries, for the Ipswich Winter Night Shelter. The amount of items donated by Mothers Union members was fantastic.

I would like to say a very big thank you to all members and friends of Mothers Union for your generosity helping making the lives of the families who are in need of the Woman's Refuge in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds and the dedicated work of the staff at Ipswich and West Suffolk Hospitals.

I could not have done Action and Outreach these last six years without all of your help and prayers.

Sandra Griffiths
Action & Outreach

AFIA Annual Report 2018

I was able to send two families away on a holiday out this year. They both went to caravans on the Norfolk coast. All had a great time and thanked Mothers Union for the opportunity to spend valuable time together. I did not have to raise funds this year due to the generosity of branches and individuals. Social workers have not been recommending as many families as they are very stretched with heavy workloads and not sufficient time to tell families about AFIA. I contacted the Diocesan Education officer to inform her that we could help young people of school age whose parents could not afford to send them on school trips etc. but I have had no response so far. I also contacted Maureen Reynal from Ipswich FIND and she did recommend a family so hopefully she will remember this year and refer someone else.

I would like to thank all branches for their support in donating money to AFIA from their funds.

I have visited several branches to update them on what is happening, thank you for giving me the opportunity for this and to meet branch members.

I am at the end of my second triennial so have passed the AFIA trusteeship over to Val Jeffreys. I know Val will be as enthusiastic as I have been. The AFIA job is very enjoyable and I have enjoyed my last 6 years.

I shall still be involved with the trustee board, as I have taken up the challenge of Diocesan Secretary/Administrator. This post has not had anyone in place for some time. I will do my best to support Linda and the other trustees.

Thank you to all for your support.

Beryl Mee

IPSWICH AREA ANNUAL REPORT – 2018

Our Suffolk Mothers' Union as a whole has had a very busy 2018 and this made it a challenge to plan the diary for the Ipswich Area, which has the most number of branches in the diocese. I am very conscious of the time pressure put on our volunteers and what can realistically be expected of them with all the branch events as well as the events at Diocesan level.

I started with a list of what I thought are new and lovely branch ideas from Mothers' Union, Australia but this turned out to be unhelpful – word I had back from the deanery leaders was that the branch leaders have their own ideas. In April, we had our Lady Day service at St Andrew, Rushmere, and at this I had the honour of being commissioned by the world-wide President. My heartfelt thanks to Lynne Tembey for her kind words and being the VIP who started me on this journey as Ipswich Area Representative.

Sponsored Walk 2018.

At our AGM we learned that a new 'Passionate about Parenting,' course was about to begin in Sudbury and would need about £500. It was agreed, due to previous disappointments with people signing on for the training and dropping out half way, that this money would be restricted to training for MU members only.

I arranged a sponsored walk at the beginning of October 2018 around Christchurch Park. With gift aid, we managed to reach our £500 target, but the walk was poorly supported.

Coffee Morning 2018.

This was held on 27 October 2018 at Martlesham. We heard the opinions of some of our members who felt there were too many tables with lottery type items in 2017 and wanted more goods of a bathroom and kitchen nature to buy. We had these on a kitchen and supermarket table, tombola, our usual cakes, raffle prizes as usual, and MUe for those who love our Mothers' Union cards. Our thanks as always to Martlesham for hosting us. We raised £640.

Day of Reflection 2018

After such a busy year with several quiet days, I thought our members may not want another day of reflection, but our deanery leaders felt it was important to do this for our area. So, after discussing several venues, I visited and chose St Marys, Witesham. Not only does it have a lovely church for this type of event, but it also has a small hall next door useful for lunch time break.

We used the theme of 'love' in particular the new commandment as Jesus gave it in

John 13:34-35. Unfortunately, this day was poorly supported with just 22 people attending. My thanks to Reader Paul Laughlin and Rev Catherine Forsdike for leading this day. I also thank the St Mary, Winesham branch for hosting us and giving those of us who did attend a lovely day.

Looking to 2019

We are getting a new DP in 2019 and this will inevitably mean changes because we all do things our own way. I am still concerned about the potential burden we as an Area are placing on our members to attend our Area events as well as those of their branch and the Diocese. There are even some deanery events which adds to the diary. I will discuss with the deanery leaders what to do about this.

We are still in need of a deanery leader for Woodbridge because their branches sometimes are left out of the news and information after our leaders' meetings. My thanks to Margaret Lowe for sometimes helping with this. My thanks also for Sandra Griffiths for continuing as the leader of the Ipswich Deanery.

Thank you finally to all our branch and deanery leaders for all they have done to support and continue the work of our Ipswich Area and the MU in Suffolk.

Catherine Kersey
Ipswich Area Representative

Diocesan Members annual report for 2018

This was a relatively quiet year as I tried to organise a couple of things but there were only few takers so I had to cancel them. The number of members was static and we did not lose any through death so that was a good year.

The card making at Di Barker's house was as enjoyable as ever and we needed no further cards from members during the year; we will need them for 2019 though. Di also agreed to take on the card making organisation and delivery, which has been achieved; we have said goodbye to Tony Fowler (our contact at the prison) as he and his wife are now in the Channel Islands. The new contact at HMP Stradishall is FR. Ian. He is also new to the job.

This will be my last annual report and I am very pleased to have served you all in this trusteeship for the last six years and wish you all God's blessing in your future endeavours and hope that Sue Norrington, your new co-ordinator, enjoys it as much as I have.

Chris Mitchell

Indoor members AGM report 2018

The number of Indoor Members is changing all the time. However, I have had an average of 42 members during 2018.

I have been able to write 3 times to each member and send him or her all Pathways and the prayer diaries, Easter cards and Christmas cards.

I have received nice letters from some members, which I really appreciate.

The highlight for me was when our World President met an indoor member in Felixstowe, chatted with her and we were able to publish a photograph in the Pathways.

I am very happy to look after the indoor members for 2019.

Monica Twaits.

North Suffolk Area Report

At the end of June 2018 a Quiet Day was held in Debenham. It was led by Rev'd Susan Bates, vicar of Debenham, on the theme, 'In the Image of God'. 23 members attended from across the area, representing all our branches. The three short talks were each followed by time for quiet reflection and the day ended with a Eucharist. Those attending appreciated having a day in which to relax, listen, think and pray without the usual daily distractions.

We ran our second I-Chameleon pop-up shop in Halesworth in July. Once again, this proved very worthwhile and enjoyable. Not only did it require us to work together as an area with six branches each taking responsibility for a day, but also raised the profile of MU in the locality. Thanks to the generosity of members from across the Diocese, in giving us good quality items to sell, we made a profit of £1229.85. We also sold MUe good to the value of £114.95. Donations totalling £900 have been made to the MU Emergency fund, Overseas fund and Britain & Ireland fund. In addition, we spent £75 buying clothing items and toiletries to fill several washbags left over from the shop. These were given to the Ipswich Night Shelter. Finally, we spent £100 buying Christmas gifts for 11 young mothers and their babies or toddlers who are living in Peppercorn Lodge, Ipswich.

Our third event of the year was the North Suffolk Area Morning held at St Michael's Church, Framlingham in September. It was attended by 33 members from our area and further afield. We started the morning with a Eucharist at which Bishop Mike was the celebrant. This was followed by a time of fellowship over coffee etc. and the opportunity to buy goods at several stalls. Bishop Mike was also our main speaker; he talked about his 'Journey of Faith' with humour, honesty and spiritual insight. Following Midday prayers Christine gave us a summary of the main points from the General Meeting in Swansea and the morning ended with a shared lunch and more valuable time for fellowship.

We are preparing to run the same three events in 2019 with the Quiet Day in June, the NSA Morning in September and I-Chameleon at the end October. Details of all these events will be on the website.

Anna Vessey
North Suffolk Area Rep.

Over 90's report

My numbers for who are over 90 is 82 at present.

Of those 7 are 100 plus. Amazing.

I would like to remind contacts to please let me know if members die or have change of address. Also any members as they reach their 90th birthdays. Thanks.

Blessings.

Margaret.

Vice President's REPORT for 2018 for Annual Meeting

The branch end of year returns continue to provide very useful information about the 'hidden' work of the MU in St Eds & Ipswich. The totals will be available when all the information has been collated.

The other information on membership has also been vital in compiling the Annual Return required by Mary Sumner House. This enables the MU to make strategic decisions on the way forward.

During the year, I have attended Trustee and Council meetings and worked with our Diocesan President, Christine Ward and fellow Trustees to further the aims of the MU.

Cathie McGregor.

Social Policy Report

The re-organisation at Mary Sumner House during 2018 had a big impact on the information flow on Social Policy to our Diocese. The monthly Policy Watch newsletter ceased and I have not had any contact from the new Policy Advisor Mary Santo. However, MU has continued to attend the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW). And is actively involved with the government with its work on Relationships and Sex Education. MU also published a wide range of new resources to support the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign.

In St Edmundsbury and Ipswich we held our first Diocesan Vigil for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in the Cathedral. Beautiful poems written by women at the Ipswich Lighthouse Refuge were read out and brought real meaning to the service.

Clare Thomas (social policy rep)

Website Report

The website is getting used regularly by around 25 users each week. Most of these are based in Suffolk, but it has also been looked at by users in London, Cambridge, Norwich, elsewhere in the UK and also Amsterdam, Nigeria, China and South Africa. The webpages on our branches, and the knitting and sewing patterns are the most popular pages.

The Contact Us page has also been invaluable in enabling a wide range of people to make contact with us – including an EADT reporter, a funeral director, families of MU members and staff from agencies like the Ipswich Winter Night Shelter.

Diocesan policies and guidance for branches on planning events etc are now included on the website.

Thank you to everyone who has sent in photos and material for the website.

Clare Thomas (webmaster)

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