**Reports for Council Meeting 30th November 2023**

**Diocesan President’s Report for November Council meeting (29.11.23)**

This Report is different from the most recent Trustee DP report. I thought I would give you a flavour of what October has been like…., and it doesn’t seem to get any less! So, we start on the

1st October – Harvest Festival at the Cathedral. MUe invited to have a stall in the Cathedral Garden.

Wednesday – Start of I-Chameleon. Pray specifically for this endeavour. Need someone to write an Obituary for Lillian Rose (who previously worked for MU in Tower Street). Mary Addington? Val?

Thursday – zoom prayer meeting for the Sunday service, followed by Fellowship Group at Hacheston for coffee and cake. Sharing stories, encourage, supporting. Wonderful to catch up again.

The next Sunday – start of prison week. Need to do a church display, especially as we have Shaun, an ex-prisoner coming to our church and we are making it an evangelistic opportunity. Need to draw people’s attention to our MU responsibilities towards ‘those families who have met with disaster’, raise awareness of the issues involved and how MU is trying to move this forward with a lead for a Prison Community-of-Interest group.

Wednesday – Christians Against Poverty (CAP) training session – no car – so the team need to come to me! Worthwhile session = scams, debt crisis, money management – article for newsletter?

Saturday - Morning at Diocesan Synod zoom. 9.00 am start! Learned that new Archdeacon Rich has been appointed Clergy Well-being lead. The Bishop reminded us of the stress that clergy in multi-parish benefices are under. I spoke in our break-out room to say that MU has pledged to MSH that we will focus our attention on praying for and supporting local clergy in their ministry.

…. Putting this into practice, I delivered a “Bag of love” to the Archdeacon on the Monday prior to his visit to one of our branches which is having a rough time. (Subsequently, he has said how much he appreciated the gesture, and the timing, and shared this with the Deanery Chapter.)

Ring Karen at Diocesan Safeguarding to establish the phone numbers we need to be using on the MSH Rise-Up posters and let members know via the newsletter. Tell Jeanette. Discuss with Safeguarding the issues about the branch having difficulties – this to be taken forward by the Archdeacon, Rural Dean, Safeguarding team and the incumbent. Email to keep trustee board informed and to ask them for their prayers.

Sunday – Will I read in Church? Ask Jeanette to speak in my place about the work of MU on the new Graham Miles radio programme from East Bergholt. Thank Sandra for contact and liaising with GM.

Monday: Zoom Cluster Meeting – 1 ½ hours – with the Diocesan Presidents from Peterborough, Lincoln, Ely, Norwich and us. Hearing reports from other dioceses. Reported that we have the beginnings of our next triennium team: Jeanette will become Diocesan President (subject to Bishop’s approval – and also the Bishop’s nominee for Diocesan Synod - ? will we need someone else to be Bishop’s Nominee?), Amanda, Treasurer; Rev Catherine, Chaplain, and Clare, continuing with the website and database. Need to have these Trustee Minutes checked by Amanda and circulated.

Tuesday am: Trustee zoom to finalise the MU accounts for the Charity Commission, and discuss current issues. This was Extra to the earlier Trustee Meeting on the previous Tuesday because I had had a 3-hour Britain and All Ireland zoom from MSH (passing on the same information as in the MSH newsletter, in Connect, and reported at the Annual Gathering– and it’s also on our website, in our diocesan newsletter, and on the MU website – no excuse for not knowing what’s happening!)

Visit the I-Chameleon shop in Halesworth to encourage them, support them, listen to any issues…

Tuesday: Check everything is OK for the Healing Service in the Cathedral. Beryl’s done an amazing job in organisation, Rev Catherine has everything in hand and prepared a lovely service and Keith did a grand job in playing the organ for us. Clare has all the information on the website.

Wednesday – 8.30 am leave for Healing Service in Cathedral – 30 members attended. Lovely occasion. Caught up in A14 traffic, rush-hour, sugar beet harvest, and roadworks. Diverted around Gt Barton

arriving home at 6.15 pm! Remember to take photo to send to Sue for next Diocesan *Transformation-Now!* newsletter.

Thursday -- Branch Meeting – prepare Bible verses for the display in church. Sue will be collecting subs. (Need to “play” too – follow-up coaching session from Amanda making crochet hearts for the Rise-Up campaign on domestic violence to be hung on a branch on the church’s window sill.)

Monday – Retired Clergy Conference, again in the Cathedral at Bury – another 100 mile round trip …. Networking with cathedral staff and others. Excellent speaker. Tried to connect with Cedric Caton, a previous MU Diocesan Chaplain, to give our condolences for his wife Margaret. Will send a card instead.

Tuesday – no car. Catch up with emails, DP WhatsApp group, Katheryn (Provincial President), and MSH

Wednesday – Baby-sit for Sarah so she and Tim can go out for a meal to celebrate Tim’s 50th….

Saturday – help Isaac and Ini at their Scout Fair in Southwold – doing the book stall and taking items that didn’t make it to I-Chameleon!

And that’s another month gone!

Outstanding – still “To-Do”: Minutes of Trustees meeting, DP Zoom to summarise for Trustees, Prepare for Council meeting – think clergy wellbeing and arrange time to see the new Archdeacon. Type up the four Synod questions for discussion (speak to Jeanette). Think around Domestic Violence - 16 days, Restored, Red Chair Project, No more 1:3, check Blue Service is happening, and discuss Global Day on 26th November. (Brilliant piece for website from Cathie.) Write something on Healing Service for Sue for next diocesan newsletter. Check with Clare about Safeguarding training. Christine and Tony have covid – send an MU card. Think flowers and card for Freda celebrating 105 years! Design MU card and think displays for next year’s Marriage Week? Think “Bag of Love” for all clergy where there are MU branches. Must catch up with all those emails too, and answerphone messages – sometime...

I wrote this account of “What I do as MU DP” for our October branch meeting, and here I now include the following week too – at the end of the month I represented MU at the Rev Emma Haggard’s service of Celebration and Licensing at All Hallows, Ipswich. Three more Licensing services in the pipeline for November. And then there have been issues around members not receiving their magazines (but Clare has done a wonderful job in keeping our MU database up to date, so it would appear we haven’t had any issues). And there’s the Metamorphosis survey to undertake, the condolence card for Cedric Caton, the resignation of a branch leader under difficult circumstances, and keeping in touch with branches who are sadly deciding to close due to dropping numbers, age and infirmity, health and transport issues – namely Martlesham, St Margaret’s Ipswich and Halesworth. Members are now becoming the church’s responsibility to be cared for and nurtured in their Christian faith. Things are changing/transforming. In Cardinal Newman’s words, we can be sure “God knows what He’s about.”

Our thanks to our wonderful Trustees, Officers and Community of Interest Leads who all pull together to help us meet the numerous challenges, and to our membership (in whatever form) for all that they contribute. We have so much for which to be thankful: our calling and purpose; the variety of opportunities we have for service for God; putting our love in action; and a sense of belonging to a grass-roots organisation with a global vision. Our thanks too to those not specifically mentioned above – Monica, Margaret, Janice, Christine and Sue (my Rugby Team of 15!) for all their help and support.

 But I must finish this Report with extracts from today’s Our Daily Bread Bible reading: *“Faith is having confidence in what is hoped for – things not seen”. My hope in Christ is firm and secure. Not because my faith is strong but because God is faithful and true and will do what He has promised. Therefore I can expect things to work out, I can expect good things to happen – because of my faith, I have peace; salvation from sin; and for all the wrong things I do I have forgiveness; help in times of need and stress; encouragement…”* I do indeed, ‘have an anchor that keeps my soul, steadfast and sure while the billows role, fastened to the Rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour’s love….’

LG/9.11.23

**Diocesan Members – November 2023**

I continue to collect 2024 subscriptions. Although some subscriptions arrive promptly, others need reminders and are slow to reach me. It is helpful that 21 Diocesan Members pay by Direct Debit.

A few branches are becoming Fellowship Groups or considering this option. Several members from Martlesham and Halesworth have indicated that they will continue as Diocesan members.

The cards for Prisoners at Highpoint Prison have now been completed in the 4 workshops held this year at East Bergholt, Fressingfield, Ipswich St Margaret and Newmarket. Di Barker and I enjoyed working with members in these branches to complete 1,500 cards.

Sue Norrington – Diocesan Members Rep

**90 + Report**

I have 39 members who are 90 + on my records.

Margaret Rollins

**MUe**

The Autumn & Winter catalogues had a much better range of religious themed Christmas cards and advent calendars this year, which have proved very popular at the meetings and events which Penny and I have attended. Thank you to all members who have ordered from the catalogue or bought from our stall.

**Membership**

Some dioceses had problems this autumn with members not receiving Connected, but I haven’t received many reports of this happening in Suffolk. The Prayer Diary will be posted out before Christmas, so do please also check that your members receive that, unless they have opted out of postal communications from Mary Sumner House.

Thank you so much to the branch leaders and treasurers who let me know as soon as new members are enrolled, and of any address changes / deaths.

**Direct Debits**

This autumn twenty four members have signed up to pay their subs by direct debit, which takes us up to 24% of our membership paying this way. However we are very happy for members to continue to pay by cash or cheque if they prefer.

**Website / Social Media**

Thank you to everyone who has sent me news for the website and Facebook. Please remember that any photos with people in do need to be accompanied with a signed permission form otherwise we can’t publish them.

Clare Thomas 17/11/2023

**Policy COI Report for November 2023 .**

Information and guidance for the 16 Days of Activism has been put on the Suffolk MU website.

This year we are in partnership with Women’s Aid and have a shared flyer which will add to our displays.

There has been no further contact by ZOOM meetings with MSH.

Cathie McGregor November 2023.

**CRAFT COI REPORT FOR TRUSTEES NOVEMBER 2023.**

We continue to support Health Visitor Teams and Midwives within the NHS by knitting practical teaching aids for them to use in their daily work to promote breast feeding.

To date 96 have been logged as having been dispatched to Lisa Locke who is really pleased with them. Our target number was 120- so we need to keep on knitting. If anyone knows of any sent directly to the ‘Breast Feeding Co-Ordinator’, please let me know how many, and I will add them to the total.

We are very near our target and a little spurt should see it being achieved. However, I suspect a small supply will remain needed for new staff.

Seafarers hats, drain bags and other items continue to be made and distributed.

There have been no further updates from MSH.

Cathie McGregor November 2023.

**Secretaries Report**

I have kept branches up to date over the summer months. There always seems to be items of news even in the summer when most branches may have a break or members are on holiday. It is good to be able to share with other branches news of what others are doing and perhaps give them some ideas for what they can do.

The trustees have met several times either in person or via Zoom to make certain decisions that have time constraints, ie approval of accounts ready to go to the Charities Commission.

I have also been sorting out dates for 2024. Some events are confirmed but others are still waiting confirmation. I will send the 2024 Diocesan Diary out with the minutes from this meeting in the next few weeks. This will hopefully help branches to plan and complete their calendars.

The trustees are looking to fill the vacancies after next year when the next triennium commences on 1st January 2025. There will be a vacancy for the post of Secretary as I will be stepping down after 6 years of being the MU Diocesan Secretary. If you or someone you know would be interested in taking over this role (they do not have to be an MU member) I will be happy to have them shadow me over the next year, so they are not thrown in at the deep end. Please contact me either by email secretarysuffokmu56@gmail.com or my phone no is 07948 356555. It can be an interesting and rewarding role.

Beryl Mee

MU Secretary.

Ipswich Area

The Coffee Morning which was held on Saturday 18th November at St Michaels Church Martlesham raised £519 – 42p

Once again thank you all for coming and supporting Ipswich Area Coffee Morning as it was a pretty wet morning but there was still plenty of chatter and laughter.

Ipswich Area will be buying Gift Vouchers for the Woman’s Refuge in Ipswich and Bury st Edmunds in time for Christmas.

Hope you all have a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New

Sandra Griffiths

Ipswich Area Rep.

 **A.F.I.A.**

I was able to attend the AFIA Community of Interest Zoom meeting on Wednesday 6th September, sadly the Safeguarding Guidance cannot be finished due to some problems with title.

 Some AFIA reps were a bit upset with knowing that some of the money from Summer of Hope will be used for safeguarding training.

A family referred by Rev Mary Sokanovic enjoyed a break at a Parkdean Holiday Park near Great Yarmouth. They could believe what a lovely caravan they were staying in. Mary says I will be getting some photos from the family.

I have had a requested from a MU branch leader to send one of her members away on holiday to North Norfolk. I’m just waiting for confirmation of dates then I will sort out a holiday or BB. The MU member has some disabilities, so she is taking a good friend with her.

I saw Mary Sokanovic in Needham Market and she has another cadet that AFIA could help with.

Val Jeffreys AFIA Trustee.



 C**ommunity of Interest** **against Modern Slavery & Trafficking**

The focus of ’16 Days Activism against Gender Violence’ shares focus with Modern Day Slavery, so please include those being Trafficked into Slavery in your prayer during those days and people working in Suffolk with victims and survivors of Modern Slavery. Covid prevented me joining the Network outreach on 18 October to raise awareness of MS &T in the wider community. In the morning the group was invited to the pop-up shop and Food Bank at the Triangle Church Ipswich and then moved on to engage with Students in the University forum on the Waterfront. Sadly, no MU banner this time but Revd Richard Stainer approached the Cathedral and I believe the tower was glowing red that evening. It’s understandable that not everyone shares this experience but if you can respond to Clewer’s recent request to assess local nail bars - please do. We are the eyes Clewer needs and Suffolk Police depend on us to be aware of pointers to MS&T ‘right where we are’.

This link reaches resources to raise awareness in our church life and worship <https://thirtyoneeight.org/downloads> . The Clewer Initiative also has a wide range of videos and materials for use in church and branch [https://theclewerinitiative.org/training-and-events](https://churchofengland.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=76911b2c79d088dfb39003a3f&id=ce288fe850&e=18bef4d234" \t "_blank) and for downloadable posters, Let’s Talk and ‘True Freedom the 2024 Lent Course prepared with the World Council of Churches visit <https://theclewerinitiative.org/resources>

If your Branch or Fellowship would like to receive an interactive session for a meeting then I would love to visit you. Please contact me on cmward1@btinternet.com or phone 01473 327697. We’re in Holbrook now but I’m happy to drive and don’t worry if your group is small.

I can post you a card with helpline numbers to display in your Church/community.

MU has a special partnership with The Clewer Initiative through the Anglican Church but there are many other charities working in this field. Modern Slavery and Safeguarding are closely involved and each of our parishes has its own Safeguarding Officer, may I ask for your prayers for Clare Thomas who cares for us in MU Suffolk, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Karen Galloway, and her team and the Parish Safeguarding Officer in every parish across our Diocese. The videos and the information that those training and working in these areas must experience, can be harrowing, we could support them in prayer as all work to make Suffolk a safer place for everyone to live life in freedom.

**Christine Ward**

Loving God

We call to you with hearts in pain for all in our world
who suffer the horrors of modern slavery.
Your Son came to bring good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed –
may we too be voices against oppression, channels of good news;
may our eyes be opened wide to all who suffer in our midst but out of sight.
All this we pray to you, loving God, for whom no one is invisible. Amen.