**Reports for AGM 2022**

**Diocesan President Annual Report for 2022**

Mothers’ Union in St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is alive and well, energetic and vibrant! 2022 was a year of almost unprecedented challenges as we began the process of adapting and changing Mothers’ Union to be fit for the 21st century, whilst at the same time remaining true to our faith, core values and identity.

Last year saw many funerals, but with these also came thanksgiving to God for lives well-lived and much loved: friends and family members will be sorely missed, and for some there was the opportunity to share memories through our Inspiring Members webpage. After the joy of celebrating our Patron Queen Elizabeth’s Platinum Jubilee in the summer, it was again with sadness that, on behalf of our members, we acknowledged her passing through our prayers, the press and social media.

2022 saw the start of the second term of office, the theme for this triennium being “Transformation – Now!”. Covid has not gone away. Here, in our diocese, we slowly began the process of transformation and with renewed enthusiasm and impetus started introducing new ways of doing/being Mothers’ Union. Significant changes are happening:

* We adapted and changed the way we used **technology** which enabled us to continue meeting together. Using Zoom, YouTube services, online streaming of services from MSH, Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media groups the membership started to gain confidence. The Anglia Cluster group and residential Provincial Conferences became “hybrid” some sessions being face-to-face and others online.
* **Communication** between Mary Sumner House and the membership also changed with the introduction of a restructuring programme, updating technology, reorganising the administration and employing new staff. We too reviewed, updated and extended our database and contacts in order to reach more people and forge closer links with the diocese. We engaged with more diocesan events, attended Cathedral worship, were invited to be a presence at the Vocations Fair, continued to serve on the Diocesan Mission and Ministry team and as the Bishop’s representative attended Diocesan Synod meetings. Another eBook was published. Hearing and listening to members views through our summer workshops enabled us to respond and pledge our commitment to three specific areas in the Reimagining conversation (see VP report). At diocesan level, we changed the name of our monthly newsletters *“Peculiar Times”* to *“Transformation – Now!”* to reflect a post-covid turning point.
* **Money** – Banking arrangements were updated, revamped and streamlined, with the introduction of direct debit payments (as well as cheques) for annual subscriptions, thus reducing the workload of branch treasurers. Our accounts were in good order. Prior to her resignation, thanks were extended to the Diocesan Treasurer for all that she had done.
* **Church worship** - including the Lady Day service, Mary Sumner Day and the Healing Service - also reflected the post-covid era. TheEmergency Prayer Chainwas revamped and new members recruited. Although our overseas links in Byumba, Jalingo, Lake Malawi and Lucknow remained unchanged, the format of the Wave of Prayer service shifted from meeting together in one venue, to local branches taking responsibility using pre-prepared material.
* Some smaller branches who might otherwise have closed switched to become **Fellowship Groups** under the umbrella of Diocesan Membership, thus removing the need for branch treasurers and admin tasks.
* A new concept of **Community of Interest Leads** was introduced to work alongside Trustees and Officers, with particular attention being focused on finding someone to help us with Publicity and Communication and Prison work. Vacancies for a new Diocesan Treasurer and an Emergency Prayer Chain co-ordinator were announced, and these posts are still waiting to be filled.

We continued with our ABC strategy (AFIA, Befriending and the Clewer [and modern day slavery] Initiative) broadening our scope with AFIA, increasing Diocesan membership, and extending our work in outreach with the Women’s Refuge. Crafts, fund-raising activities, Make a Mothers Day, Summer of Hope, the Harvest Appeal and the Big Give at Christmastime were well supported, as were our campaigns around domestic violence, 16 days and Nomore1in3 initiatives.

With the lifting of covid restrictions, I had the opportunity to attend many happy and social events like a Fellowship Group Pancake Party, a Strawberry Tea and a Garden Party, along with several other occasions speaking at branch meetings, being interviewed on Mothering Sunday by Radio Suffolk, and twice being invited to talk about the work of Mothers’ Union within the context of church services. On two occasions I was delighted to support new young clergy at their licencing services. It was also a joy to be able to attend Area events like the North Suffolk Quiet Day, the I-Chameleon fund-raising shop in Halesworth, and Ipswich Area Coffee Mornings. I attended and very much enjoyed the County Harvest Festival at the Suffolk Showground which provided further opportunities for networking and raising our MU profile in the diocese. Further afield, there have been residential and zoom MU Conferences, a six-week Safeguarding Training programme, and I have valued the support from Kathy my Spiritual Supervisor.

Adapting to change is never easy. Looking forward, the future continues to remain uncertain… but change is the evidence of life, and it has ever been thus! How wonderful that we have a God “who is the same yesterday, today and forever”. Exciting projects are in store – a potential book on Baptism, more engagement with Prison work in our county, clarifying the shape of Mothers’ Union in the future (“Transformation/transitioning/changing/reimagining….”), and with the beginnings of succession planning in mind, prayer as we seek those whom God is calling to serve – whether it be in joining the Trustee board, becoming an Officer or a Community of Interest lead, Diocesan Treasurer, or EMPC, running a Metamorphosis group, using practical skills, sewing and knitting hats for seafarers, or praying for the work of Mothers’ Union in all its different and varied forms. Nomination forms will be available shortly.

We thank God for all those who have contributed much to Mothers’ Union in our diocese during 2022, and in particular are grateful to the members of our Trustee Board – for Jeanette, Sandra, Sue and Val who have continued into a second term of office; for our Officers looking after Indoor Members, sending out newsletters and anniversary cards keeping members informed and reminding them that they are not forgotten. Catherine’s spiritual input in her first year as our Chaplain along with the work of our Community of Interest leads, managing the website, IT and database, promoting MUe sales and merchandise, representation on the diocesan worldwide committee, and regular updates on the Clewer Initiative including and modern-day slavery have all been so much appreciated. We are grateful to our Diocesan Treasurer Amanda for all that she was able to do for us. And we thank God for the prayerful support of our Life Vice Presidents, our Bishops, senior staff in the diocese, clergy (local and otherwise), readers and lay elders, and for the many MU friends we have at the Cathedral. We also thank those who are “unseen” – Alan Forsdike in supporting Catherine, and Keith Foulds who so often plays the cathedral organ for us at our special services, the staff at the Salvation Army HQ and our printers. But special thanks as always must go to Beryl for everything she does on our behalf in her admin role, and for all those who work with her behind-the-scenes. We praise God, rejoice and give thanks for the wonderful team we have serving Mothers’ Union in our diocese, and have confidence in God that he will be working out His purposes as we continue to engage in the process of “Transformation – Now!”

LG/16.3.23

**Vice President’s report: Annual General Meeting April 2023**

Mothers’ Union members in our diocese, despite a decrease in the membership in 2022

surpassed themselves, as our Branch Activity and Goods form revealed that 8,772 lives were touched by Mothers’ Union members, compared to 5,245 lives touched in 2021. One of the areas where this increasing in giving was noted, was the donations to foodbanks by MU members and also the increase in craft items made by our members. This may in part be due to the response by MU members to the cost of living crisis.

Campaigns: Make a Mothers’ Day- supported by 7 branches

Summer of Hope- supported by 9 branches

16 days of Activism- supported by 12 branches

Members reached a total of at least 8,772 people, whether it was:

* Service (e.g. foodbank) 2,706 lives touched by MU members + 2,231 from 2021
* Craft items 2,572 lives touched by MU members + 1,057 from 2021
* Nurturing faith activities 2,307 lives touched by MU members + 147 from 2021
* Gifts of love 647 lives touched by MU members - 868 from 2021
* Skills (e.g. parenting) 540 lives touched by MU members + 529 from 2021

**Areas and Deaneries**

Discussions have taken place throughout 2022 regarding the structure of Areas and Deaneries, given that the membership has fallen from 938 members in 2019 to 578 members at the end of 2022. There are currently two vacant roles of Area rep for Sudbury and North Suffolk areas and 12 of our 31 branches are currently without a deanery leader.

This has now become a priority for re-imaging and creating a new way of being for the Trustee board and deaneries.

**Re-Imagining Mothes Union**

During September there were a number of face-to-face events across the diocese and on zoom, where members contributed their thoughts and ideas for Re-Imagining Mothers’ Union, whether in the diocese or in their branches.

Following the Re-Imagining conference in July, when Catherine Forsdike and Christine Ward attended, as representatives of our diocese, Mary Sumner House asked every diocese to send in three priorities for re-imagining Mothers’ Union in their diocese and an action plan of how these would be achieved.

Trustees reviewed all the feedback from the Mothers’ Union members who attended these meetings and the following priorities and action plans were identified and adopted.

**St Eds and Ips Re Imagining Mothers’ Union Priorities and Action Plans**

1. **Across the diocese there was a desire to introduce new ways of being Mothers’ Union.**

Trustees will be organizing events for all branches in the diocese, which will include a time of prayer and reflection for Re-Imagining Mothers’ Union. Also included will be discussion groups and a sharing of ideas to enable each branch to decide the way forward for re-Imagining Mothers’ Union in their branch and community.

1. **To raise the profile of Mothers’ Union within the church as well as the community.**

A series of regular Mothers’ Union themed parish magazine articles will be sent to all branches and also to parishes without a branch beginning in January 2023. Highlighting the work of Mothers’ Union and promoting membership of Mothers’ Union.

These articles will be written in a format so that branches can add local news as well.

1. **To work more visibly with the parish ministry team.**

Mothers’ Union is first and foremost a Christian organisation rooted in prayer. We have in the past worked invisibly within the church. The need now is to first build relationships with the Clergy Readers and Elders, so that they can discover our gifts, apart from making the tea.

In order to achieve this, as a first step, branches are asked to promote the Mothers’ Union Mothering Sunday service and Mary Sumner House has been asked to provide a Father’s Day service in June.

J Appleton 14 03 23

**Over 90’s report**

I have 39 members who are over 90 years and older.

Margaret Rollins

**Ipswich Area AGM Report March 2022**

Ipswich Area purchased Savoury Snacks, Biscuits, individually wrapped Chocolate, Sweets and Squash for the Woman’s Refuge in Ipswich for the house where the ladies and children live.

Ipswich Area purchased Single Duvet Sets, Double Sheets and Pillowcases for Families in Need in Ipswich.

During the year I know that branches have been busy knitting Seaman’s Hats, making Drain Bags, making up Emergency Toilet Bags and collecting Food for Families In Need.

Ipswich Area Coffee Morning on November 19th 2022 At St Michael’s Martlesham.

It was once again a great success it was lovely to see members and friends a lot of fun and fellowship which was had by all.

We raised a great amount of £590.25.

Christmas Gift Cards were purchased out of Ipswich Area Funds for the Refuge in Ipswich and the Woman’s Refuge Bury St Edmunds.

Letters of thanks that are sent to me Beryl very kindly scans them and sends them out to all branches.

Thank you all for your continued support in supporting these worthy causes.

Sandra Griffiths

Ipswich Area Rep

**Secretaries Report for 2022**

Throughout 2022 I supported Linda and the trustees by attending all the meetings and taking minutes for our records. I have arranged venues for meetings and services ensuring risk assessments were done for venues we hadn’t used before. I have set up Zoom meetings if we have required them, this enables members that are unable to travel to meetings to join us online.

In 2022 we held 3 Council meetings these were all hybrid (Zoom and In person). The council meetings were attended in total by 86 member in person and 18 via Zoom There were 4 trustee meetings one of these was via Zoom the other 3 were hybrid meetings.

I have contacted branches regularly sending out information from Mary Sumner House and our DP and trustees.

When I am contacted by branches with different enquiries, I answer them if I do not know the answer, I find out and get back to them as soon as possible.

It has been good to be able to meet face to face again this year.

Beryl Mee

Diocesan MU Secretary

**COI Report for Policy Y/E Dec 2022.**

The ‘Make a Mothers Day’ Appeal information was delivered centrally to members by mail.

Also delivered centrally was the ‘Sixteen days of Activism’ prayer diary which was very well received and user friendly for members.

The Britain & Ireland policy COI Zoom meetings were held in April and September to discuss Domestic abuse. COI reps shared local initiatives and strategy used in their own dioceses.

Cathie McGregor. COI Lead for Policy**.**

**COI Craft Year Ending December 2022**

Across the diocese members continue to make a range of items.

The knitted hats have extended from seafarers to include prisoners in our local HMP’s. The hats for the prisons should be labelled but not those for seafarers.

Embroidered labels were purchased stating ‘Made with love by Mothers Union’ and I have a supply available.

Last summer Marion Pope retired from MSH after many years of faithful service to the MU. After a gap the new lead is now Deborah Munday who coordinated a Zoom meeting in November to review guidance notes for toy making and to take into consideration feedback from members. The safety testing and labelling should continue for all toys which we make.

A new initiative was started last autumn – knitted breasts for the Community Nursing Service. The aim is to provide each midwife, HV and support worker with a knitted breast to use as a visual aid when working with new mothers. These have been very well received and are knitted in bright colours. About 120 will be needed in total.

Sue Norrington has organized the recycling of Christmas cards into new cards for prisoners at Christmas.

The support given by members in the ‘craft’ area of giving is very strong in our diocese and a big thanks goes out to you all.

Cathie McGregor COI Craft March 2023.

**Diocesan Members – Report for AGM on 17th April 2023**

All subscriptions have now been collected for 2023. Twenty Diocesan Members pay by Direct Debit. Five members have recently moved out of the Diocese to be nearer their children or for retirement. I have moved one lady over to Indoor Membership. The number of Diocesan Members currently stands at 54.

During 2022 we gained more Diocesan members when Hoxne Branch became a Fellowship group and the Branch in Clare closed. The Very Revd. Joe Hawes joined us as a Diocesan Member.

I continue to send out monthly mailings. These contain the Trustees newsletter and a letter from me. I also send MUe catalogues as they become available.

The making of Christmas Cards for the prisoners at Highpoint was, in the past, undertaken by Diocesan Members but more recently it has been done by branches. Three workshops took place in 2022 to complete the 1,500 cards that were needed. I would like to thank Di Barker who checks all the cards and delivers them to Highpoint. Diocesan Members continue to support this project with their prayers, with donations of old Christmas Cards and with money to purchase the Pritt Sticks and stationery that are needed.

Sue Norrington - March 2023

**A.F.I.A. 2022**

Sadly, it was not a busy year in 2022, this could be the increase of cost of living and families just not wanting to commit to a holiday. With cost of food, household bill and petrol/diesel increasing so much.

AFIA were able to help an Air Training Cadet to attend the annual camp. I received a lovely report of her activities, climbing, learning to ride a mountain bike, exploring local mines, and just learning to trust members of other squadrons. The only downside was the food.

A ‘bag of love’ was delivered to a family of a dad and 4 four children. I was hoping to send them on a much needed holiday but sadly the rise in the cost of living and lack of transport, the holiday was not possible. The bag of love contained toys, games, colouring books and pencil some sweets for the children. An amazon voucher for dad and a Tesco voucher to spent as they pleased.

A very big thank you to all who support the easyfundraising shopping online scheme, a total of £140.07 was raised in 2022 for AFIA. In total £676.42 has been raised for AFIA since Beryl set this up in 2017. If you not signed up to easyfundraising, the details are.

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stedsipswichmu/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stedsipswichmu/)

Val Jeffreys

AFIA Trustee.



**Mothers Union Indoor Members Report for 2022**

I cannot believe another year has passed already!

Indoor members does not change much from year to year, but it is important we keep in touch with these dear souls who were the workers from previous times.

At present I have 47 names on my books. It does fluctuate through the year.

Each person gets a by-monthly letter, a letter from our President and a copy of Connect. As well as this, each person gets an Easter card and a Christmas card.

I find this a very rewarding little job.

Monica Twaits

**MUe**

Thank you to all members who buy MUe cards and gifts, whether from the MUe stall or direct from Mothers’ Union. Our Diocese receives 10% of all sales back as a grant, and we were delighted to be told that we earnt the sixth highest grant in 2022. This money will go into our Indoor Members fund – which pays for Easter and Christmas cards and copies of Connected for our Indoor Members as well as Monica’s regular letters.

**Membership**

Thank you to all branch leaders and members who let Beryl or me know about address changes and new members. As we have to pay for additional copies of Connected it is really helpful to know of any changes at the earliest opportunity so that all our members receive Connected and the Prayer Diary direct from MSH.

2022 was the first year where members could opt to pay their subs by Direct Debit, and almost 18% of our members chose to join the scheme. Another 33 members signed up in the autumn to pay their 2023 subs by DD.

**Safeguarding**

Just a reminder to all branches and groups to seek advice about safeguarding from me or from your Parish Safeguarding Officer if you plan any activities involving children or vulnerable adults. Safeguarding training or DBS checks may be required. And remember safeguarding applies to vulnerable adults such as those with dementia as well as children. We all need to take care of vulnerable people in our communities, and be alert to any signs that they could be suffering abuse in any form.

All trustees have completed their required training and have current DBS checks in place.

**Website / Social Media**

Thank you to everyone who sends me news and photos to publish on the website and Facebook. Our Facebook posts are regularly shared by other MU dioceses, churches and individuals which is excellent, and is a great way to publicise MU – recently several posts have been ‘liked’ by Sheran Harper.

If there is any other information that you would like to see on the website do let me know.

Clare Thomas March 2023