

REPORTS FOR MEMBERS' EVENING MAY 2022

Diocesan President's Report

A huge thank you to you all for coming to this meeting this evening and thank you to Rev Claire, Janet and Stoke St Michael's Branch members for hosting us and for providing the refreshments.

So what has happened in our diocese since we last met in October?

We bid farewell to Jane Hill, Rev Pam Gould and the retiring Trustee Board and thanked them for steering us through the long periods of lockdown isolation, disappointment, cancelled meetings and more. The strength of unity in prayer, outreach and sharing of information provided all us with a sense of God's hope in the darkness and this kept us connected. On behalf of the Trustee Board and wider membership, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jane, Rev Pam and the retiring Trustee Board for their commitment and dedication to all things MU.

The Advent Service at St Andrew's Church, Rugby was a joyous occasion with over 100 MU members in attendance and seeing Jane enrol so many new members was just wonderful.

The Christmas campaign 2021 and tackling Gender Based Violence raised £96,000. Thank you - to all those who supported this project. Your support will go towards works spanning Kenya, Uganda and South Africa to support survivors of Gender Based Violence and tackle root causes of this type of abuse.

Turning now to 2022: I have met with Branch Leaders/Deanery Chairs/Treasurers/ Office Holders and the Diocesan Members' Correspondent and their support has been amazing. I am also pleased to confirm that the Trustee Board has met on three occasions now and we have been busy familiarising ourselves with the start of the triennium checklist which covers various aspects of good governance such as safeguarding, conflicts of interest etc.

I have also had the opportunity of meeting many members and have been welcomed warmly to branch meetings. I am thrilled that two Lady Day services plus a Deanery service have taken place this year. All the little things that we may have taken for granted before lockdown, we now cherish and for me - it is being able to worship together in person within the prayer soaked walls of our beautiful churches. Alcester branch has already planned a Mary Sumner Day service in celebration of Mary Sumner's birthday at St Andrew's Church, Wilmcote on 9th of August at 2.30pm – do come and join us, if you can.

I was delighted that over 100 gathered for the Commissioning Service at St John Baptist Church, Berkswell and many of us were uplifted by Bishop John's address. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the service and those that came.

Mothering and Easter Sunday initiatives saw us provide 175 small 'gifts of love' throughout the Diocese and all were greatly received.

The MU Re-imagining Conference will take place at Liverpool Hope University from 8-10th July. This conference is viewed as a very important step towards making sure MU continues to remain

relevant to 21st Century life, throughout the triennium and beyond. Please uphold Catherine Bartlem and Rosie Lee and all those involved, in your prayers and the conference will be a resounding success.

We have much to look forward to this summer with the Queen (our Patron) celebrating her Platinum Jubilee - strawberry teas, church festivals etc. and some of you, might have plans in place, to use the President's Challenge to share God's love in new and creative ways. Please remember to capture all these precious moments to forward to Felicity Hawke (Link Up) and Sue Foster (Facebook & MU website). The photo consent form can be downloaded via our website mothersunioncoventry.com under publications.

The Speakers List has now been updated and some new speakers have been added for branches and diocesan members' fellowship groups to consider for either this or next year's programmes. Please note that the Trustee Board has recently agreed both Mothers' Union commissioned speakers and external speakers can claim reasonable expenses via the MU Diocese, using the MU expense form which can be downloaded via our website. This will be reviewed annually.

Members should have received details about the Summer of Hope campaign, celebrating female leaders who have had an impact on our lives to coincide with the Jubilee celebrations, which is packed with fundraising ideas and fun things to do. Just a suggestion - do try to involve all members - it doesn't have to always fall to the committee. I am also aware that the majority of branches have been excellent at raising money for our various projects and overseas work in the past but many have understandably been involved in raising money for Ukraine so please just do what you can.

Opportunities to get involved in:

One of the projects that members and friends faithfully donate generously to each year is our MU AFIA project and as you know Lynda Howells has coordinated the AFIA project for nine years now. Lynda has kindly agreed to continue leading this but she would like to step down, at some point.

A craft Community of Interest has been established and will be reporting back to Britain and Ireland Group to recommend a practical way of ensuring that all craft created, in the name of MU, meets necessary quality standards. I am conscious that we don't currently have a Mothers' Union craft Community of Interest champion within our Diocese.

If you feel God is calling you to be more involved in MU and in particular with AFIA or craft, please get in touch, alternatively, if you know of a member, well suited to either role, please do give them a gentle nudge.

Midday prayers continue to be run very effectively by a rota of members and mostly pre-recorded from around the world for the big festivals. New volunteers to join the rota would be welcome.

Prayers for the 2023 prayer diary are currently being gathered – there are some slots still available, so please let me know if you would like to get involved.

The annual gathering is going ahead in Belfast and members have been advised to book tickets ASAP.

Transformation – now! Will continue to be MU's theme for this triennium and Domestic Abuse will be the focus for advocacy for the next three years also.

Jane Hill, our overseas representative, will continue to be our lead for the Diocesan trip to Kapsabet, Kenya in 2023 and Bishop Christopher is keen for two MU members to be involved in the trip.

Can I just finally add - you are all greatly valued whether an office holder or grassroots member and all of you continue to inspire me so thank you!!

Karen Morris
Diocesan President
07952542776 or Karen.morris@coventry.anglican.org

Vice President and Prayer & Spirituality Report

Please see Link Up.

Ann Gibbons

Report for the Finances for the Diocese at Members Evening

Even though much of 2021 was in lockdown or everyone was being cautious about mixing in large groups / crowds when we were able to get out more because of the pandemic. We nevertheless were able to send £1800 to MSH from the Diocese at the end of last year to support their appeals. We had also received £1900 for AFIA from you, the members to use for people in this area. For those of you who may want to see a few more figures, during 2021 £962 was sent to MSH for their seasonal appeals, and just under £900 for Overseas work.

Also the President's Challenge has required an outlay of between £300 and £400. As you will know the aim of the President's Challenge is for MU members to make the work of the MU more widely known by promoting our activities nationally and internationally. You are at liberty to spend the £25 as a branch in order to do this. Should you be able to raise extra money to put towards one of the MU projects that will be a bonus!

Many of you, including myself, are now aware that many banks are charging for holding an account with them and charging extra for paying cheques and cash in and out of the account. The way to transfer money, account to account, is to do it online if you can. This method of transaction does not incur a charge!

Margaret Siggers
Diocesan Treasurer

AFIA & Onley Prison Report - Lynda Howells

Onley Prison

There was some money left after buying the vouchers at Christmas, so we bought Easter eggs for the children visiting their dads over the Easter weekend. The dads were able to give the eggs to their children which made it very special for them. Needless to say the children were very happy. If all goes to plan we will be having a family day in May which will be very special.

Thank you. Godbless Lynda x

AFIA

I have not received any requests for holidays yet, which is probably a good job as we are very low on funds, so if you are planning any fundraising I would be grateful if you could consider including AFIA in your plans.

Thank you Lynda x

DATABASE REPORT from Alison Wiggins.

The database is going very slowly, and it is a case of checking and rechecking that MSH has done what has been submitted. We are still having problems with MSH, things not getting done when they have gone in. If you ring MSH it seems to be an answer phone and one doesn't know if your message gets through. Patience is a virtue, so one keeps trying.

On the whole the database seems to be up and running well for Coventry Diocese, as I have not received any queries regarding people not receiving things.

I am hoping that the deceased people are not still receiving post. If I am not told then I take it that all is ok.

I do amendments and get an electronic reply to say the item will be altered but I tend to not trust this anymore and go back a few weeks later to check, and I am still checking on this.

We have come through a number of teething problems but things are definitely improving.

All I can add is please let Nicola and myself know of any changes in your branches A.S.A.P. and I will do my best to get MSH up to date. Also please let us know if you are not receiving "Connect" from MSH and I will try and put this right for you. Once again if I am not told I do not know.

Diocesan Members' Report for Member's Evening May 2022

Karen's letters and any other information are sent on by e-mail to those with e-addresses. This month, I've also written a letter to accompany Link Up for members without e-mail, even suggesting use of the free WhatsApp, as I'm sure many use smart phones.

The latest list of Diocesan members has been received, and Karen and I are endeavouring to contact or find out about those who have not renewed, for whatever reason.

Sadly, we have lost long-standing member Ellen Watkins recently. Of the 107 Diocesan members, 33 appear to have not renewed for 2022. We appreciate that the pandemic has left members feeling cut off from the normal personal contact, and I have not been able to step up efforts to maintain contact; however, we are hugely grateful to those who see their subscription as a contribution to the wider MU work, which has continued throughout the past two years.

As more of my time has been devoted to Make Lunch, which supports families whose life has met with adversity, I am enormously grateful to members for their support again for Mothering Sunday, with Hug-in-a-Mug, a pot plant, a card and some toiletries, not to mention hosting the tea and cake. The lavender bags will be used to promote relaxation and the fragrance of Jesus at Pentecost aka the Platinum Jubilee weekend.

It is hoped to arrange a lunch for Diocesan members and friends later in the year, looking at a central venue to enable as many as possible to meet.

Val Brant
Diocesan Members' correspondent
6th May 2022
valbrant@sky.com
07804 863836

Social Media Report, May 2022

Websites

Coventry Diocese Mothers' Union still have a presence on 2 websites. The first is on the central MU website at

<https://www.mothersunion.org/diocese/coventry>

I have not updated this in a couple of years and it would benefit from some newer photos and so please send me any that you think would be representative of our work.

We also have our Diocesan website at

<https://www.mothersunioncoventry.com/>

Thank you to those of you who send information for me to add to the website. I always try to update it in a timely fashion. In addition, I add the monthly communications from Karen and the monthly prayer diary.

I haven't received programmes for 2022 from many of the deaneries and branches, just eight so far. If you haven't sent yours yet, I would much appreciate it. Our website is incomplete without them.

The "action and outreach" pages could also benefit from more up to date information.

Facebook

Our facebook group currently has 140 members. If you have not already done so, I would strongly recommend joining Facebook and joining our Facebook Group. The group is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mucov/>. There is also a link via the facebook logo in the footer of each webpage.

If I add anything significant to the website, I always add a post to Facebook. For example, I always post when I have added the prayer diary for the month. There are also other members who regularly post to the group. Our posts are often shared by other MU Diocese to their pages and we share posts from other Diocese.

If you or your branch or deanery are doing anything that you would like to share with others, please add a post to our facebook page. We would love to hear about it!

Zoom

Zoom proved to be an invaluable communication resource to Coventry Diocese MU whilst there were restrictions on meeting in person. I think that we have also learnt that it is a useful resource in 'normal times', simply to enable us to communicate without travelling.

Central Mothers' Union

The following central Mothers' Union resources are also invaluable:

<https://www.mothersunion.org/>

Mothers' Union YouTube channel,

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz4qiyQqyw3u9DnGTpkryzQ>

Sue Foster

Mothers' Union Overseas Links: Report May 2022

Links between Coventry Diocese and.....Akot, South Sudan; South West Tanganyika, Tanzania; Aba and Irele-Ese Odo, Nigeria; Cuttack, India; Kapsabet, Kenya. Wave of Prayer: Dec 3rd – 5th

In the past it has been difficult to contact MU members in some of these dioceses, but I have recently received updated contact details from Mary Sumner House, so I hope that we can make contact again soon.

Links between Kapsabet Diocese and Coventry Diocese

Background:

- There has been a Companionship Link between Kapsabet Diocese and Coventry Diocese since 2017, its vision being: *“particularly prayerful, seeking Kingdom relationship and opportunities to learn from and be enriched by each other primarily.”*

For Mothers' Union, we want to promote:

- Mutual learning about MU in a different, global context
- Links through email and social media
- Focussed prayer

Visiting Kapsabet:

- It was proposed that there would be a diocesan team visit, including 2 or 3 MU members from Coventry Diocese to Kapsabet in May 2022. However, for various reasons, this team visit has not taken place, although Rev Richard Suffern and his wife Jacqui (both MU members) will be visiting Kenya.

Possibility:

- It is hoped that a visit to Kapsabet will be planned for 2023, with a wider team from the Diocese, including 2-4 MU members.

What would be the purpose of a visit to Kapsabet?

- To build stronger relationships between MU members in both dioceses
- To learn and understand more about the lives of MU members, family and community life in Kapsabet and share this learning with MU members and others in Coventry Diocese
- To encourage MU in Kapsabet, by our visit – worshipping, praying, friendships
- For MU in Coventry diocese to pray in a more focussed, meaningful way
- For MU to be part of a wider Diocesan Team, thereby being part of the “Companion Links” group and raising the profile of MU in our diocese
- To encourage individual MU groups across our diocese to forge additional links, where appropriate

- Suggestion in preparation for this:
 - Members' event later this year – day/half day to celebrate and learn more about MU in an international context, and specifically our overseas links.

Please contact Jane for more information or if you would like to be more involved with our overseas links. janehillcovmu@gmail.com

Jane Hill

Report from Paul Morris re. MUE

In this next Triennium we are looking to drive forward MUE sales, especially after Covid curtailed our meetings and subsequently the ability to sell our MUE stock.

We undertook a stock take on the 28th April and we have some £866.00 of stock in the Diocesan Office.

We are looking to have stock available for sale at all branch meetings, going forward, with a big push on the members day on May 23rd. All stock will be on display for sale.

Remember we receive 10% cash commission from MSH of all MUE sales, by way of a cash credit paid annually to the Diocese Bank Account.

This is a good income generator to fund our projects and AFIA.

Our target for 2022 is to get £3,000 commission for our MU projects, that will mean some £30,000 MUE sales for 2022, ambitious yes, but let's try and achieve it, with every branch pushing MUE sales to members, friends and family.

MUE also provides a great service to our members at our various events, as the pricing on the various cards available from MUE are very competitive, so much cheaper than the high street card retailers, and we have an excellent variety of choice.

Please make sure if anybody does order stock directly from MSH on line through MUE website, you quote 'Coventry Diocese' in the drop down box, otherwise we will not get the 10% cash commission awarded to Coventry Diocese.

Jackie Swain is the MU lead on MUE matters and I am delighted as a new Trustee to support her in this important MU project.

Paul Morris
May 2022

Parenting Report May 2022

The Parenting work is slowly picking up again after the pandemic as schools are more open to allowing people in, and the impact of lockdowns and disruption on the children and families is becoming more apparent.

Felicity has run an in person WSWTTC group at Brooke School again, with 3 parents attending. It was well received but not much feedback. Copies of the materials are starting to run out, so a decision may need to be made this year about the course's future. It has not been taken up as was hoped by other Dioceses, but a new promotion may help, subject to MSH agreement. With the new PHSE curriculum, it is more needed than ever!

Felicity and Barbara ran an online Time Out course at Rokeby School Rugby which had mixed success. There were challenges with the technology and with attendance, but all the parents said they enjoyed it and found it helpful. At least it kept our registration current

Karen delivered 3x10 weekly virtual parenting groups last year via Barnardo's and Solihull Local Authority with an average of seven parents attending. Karen was due to lead a new group in January but the group folded after the second session due to only two parents logging on and a decision was made to signpost the parents, to another group. Karen also helped deliver two standalone virtual parenting workshops in the summer.

The PAP Review

Karen continues to be involved in the Passionate About Parenting (PAP) evaluation by Mary Sumner House and is a member of the steering group, which was specifically set up to lead on the review process.

The next steps that were agreed upon were:

- 1) To design a simple Facilitator Training Manual to help equip all facilitators in the three areas of listening, programme design/content and problem solving.
- 2) To design a basic system for screening facilitators and for supporting them.
- 3) Work on the safeguarding policy specifically with the parenting project in mind.
- 4) Look at the possibility of rebranding the PAP project with a new name
- 5) Dropping the requirement for Mothers' Union facilitators to be trained to Open College Network (OCN) accreditation, level three. Overseas facilitators do not require an OCN accreditation and feedback has shown that within the UK there is not a need for the OCN accreditation.

Possible Parenting Group Leads

In the autumn, Felicity's son Steve, who was then acting Head of a primary school in Solihull, asked about running a group at his school. The Birmingham DP, who is a facilitator herself, gave us clearance to go ahead, and Karen and Jackie would be willing to do a group. Karen has also suggested parents join the online Parenting Programme that she runs for Solihull, which Steve was not aware of. So far there has been no further progress.

Care for the Family have just launched a single session on parenting in a digital age, based on the book Left to Their Own Devices by Katherine Hill. Felicity and Karen hope to run an evening after half term in Kenilworth

Please pray that the parenting programme continues to touch as many lives as possible. Thank you!

Felicity Hawke and Karen Morris
May 2022

Report from Chris Cooke re. Ryehill Prison

Visiting at Ryehill has resumed, there are very few of us now and the chaplaincy would be pleased to talk to anyone interested.

Chris
May 2022

Indoor Members' Report

It was a great sadness to us all to learn of Pauline's tragic death. As I had known Pauline for many years I was moved to offer to take on her role with the indoor members.

There are currently 25 members on my list.

I wrote to everyone to introduce myself at Christmas time.

I copied Sherman Harper's Easter message and enclosed it with an Easter card at Easter time.

I hope that the members know that they are remembered.

I am happy to receive any suggestions as to what else I can do.

Elizabeth Smitham

Anne Short - Introduction for The Community of The Cross of Nails report

It was an honour to be asked to become the Mother's Union contact for the Community of the Cross of Nails so soon after joining. My links to Coventry Cathedral go back to one of my first memories, in 1972, as a seven-year-old proudly carrying my Sunday School banner up the aisle in the cathedral at a service to mark the 10-year anniversary of the consecration of the new cathedral.

A few years ago, my parish church of Saint John Baptist Berkswell, held a Festival of Crosses event and I was involved in the display for The Cross of Nails. For part of my research, I read the very inspiring book The Cross of Nails by Oliver Schuegraf. This showed how wonderfully global the community has become and how its work is so relevant today. This led my interest to also read the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2019 Lent book, Reconciliation by Muthuraj Swamy and to appreciate the different stages involved in the process of reconciliation.

My background is in education having been a Physics teacher, but I was also Head of Key Stage 3 for many years particularly involved in the hopefully smooth transition of pupils from Junior to Senior school. I was involved in writing schemes of work for Personal, Social, Health, Economic and Environmental education, as well as Ethics. So, I am particularly interested in spreading the Coventry message to upper junior pupils with a view to enabling them to appreciate the history and work of the Community and to learn some skills for dealing with possible conflict as they move to Senior schools.

I look forward to carrying on and prayerfully strengthening the bond between Mother's Union and the CCN.

Anne Short