



Autumn Council
Reports
2021

13th November 2021

Diocesan President Elect's Report to Autumn Council **November 2021**

In the six months since our last Council meeting, held by Zoom, it is good to see how things have changed, with Covid restrictions eased and life returning to a more normal pattern. The ongoing vaccination programme has given many of us the confidence to get out and about more, although caution is still the watchword. It is appreciated however, that for many it will take some time for them to feel comfortable about meeting up with others and we must consider this when looking ahead to the way Mothers' Union in this diocese works.

Immediately after the Spring Council I 'attended' the Canterbury Provincial Conference, held virtually over two days. The Autumn meeting is scheduled for Monday 8th – Wednesday 10th November, in person, for the first time in two years.

In the summer Katherine organised a festival service for Salop Archdeaconry in Shrewsbury Abbey and Julia liaised with Lichfield Cathedral in planning a midday Eucharist, hopefully the first step in strengthening our links with the Cathedral. Branches started meeting up again, sometimes small groups in gardens or coffee shops but always with great joy after so long without the fellowship which is an important part of our organisation.

Meetings with members of the Mary Sumner House staff have continued by Zoom. There have been a lot of changes in the staffing with numbers reduced and, until recently, working from home. The debate about the future of the building itself continues although planning permission to make alterations has now been granted. The building needs to be modernised but will cost a lot of money. If the decision is made to sell the property it will be more marketable with this planning permission in place. The Midlands cluster of dioceses meets every two months or so, again virtually, to share problems and solutions!

Since the summer I have visited Berkswich and Yoxall branches and celebrated the 90th Birthday of Audley Branch with the members there. Mothers' Union members again helped out with refreshments at the Staffordshire County Show. The Church Tent provides a safe space for people to talk and also enjoy a quiet cuppa! At the 'wash up' meeting (debrief!) the contribution of Mothers' Union members was acknowledged and is much appreciated. I have committed us to 2022! It is a good opportunity to 'fly the flag' not only with the public but with clergy and others who are part of the team. The trustees continued to meet by Zoom until September when our first 'in person' meeting was held. In future it is planned that there will be both versions of meetings – this may be useful if the weather is bad, particularly in the early part of the year.

As a result of my visit to a branch, a response regarding someone to manage our diocesan website was received. The website had been neglected for some time and, as it can be the first contact someone makes with us, it was in great need of TLC – and updating! I am delighted that Mark has done some fantastic work upgrading the site and making it more secure. He will be happy to manage it on an ongoing basis. However, we do need news and items of interest to go on to the website so please send items to the office email. May I remind you that, with a photo, remember to ask for permission for it to be used. With adults, verbal permission is fine, but if children are included written consent is needed.

The second edition of *Connected* magazine has been circulated but there seem to be a few members who have not received copies in spite of being on both our and the central database. The problem may be that, when the first edition came out it included a form on which you could opt out of certain mailings. One of the options was 'Fundraising' which apparently includes not only the appeals such as 'Make a Mothers'

Day' but also *Connected* and the Prayer Diary. I am not sure, but I think this was not explained at the time although the form with the new magazine does make it clear. Please let the office know if this has happened to you.

With *Connected* magazine there is a prayer diary for 16 Days of Activism, the time of prayer and campaigning from Thursday 25th November until Friday 10th December. There is a printing error in the sequence of days of the week which go awry (Wednesday December 1st is followed by Tuesday 2nd!) but the content is all fine. Please try to participate in the Global Day of Action on Saturday 27th November even if it is only by wearing a purple scarf to show support.

The administration of Mothers' Union in the diocese is ticking over and Adie and her family continue to be in our prayers. It is likely that the end of year paperwork, which in the past has been available at the November Council meeting, will not be ready until January but we shall do our best to get everything out to branches and groups as soon as possible. In the meantime, we can announce that the 2022 Subscription for all members will be £27.50. We hope that you will continue to support this worldwide organisation which makes a difference to so many lives.

The elections for the Trustee Board for the next triennium were held in September with all the current trustees re-elected unopposed. It is a privilege to have been elected as Diocesan President and, with God's guidance and your prayers, the Trustees and I shall try our best to take Mothers' Union in Lichfield Diocese through the next three years to become a stronger and more active organisation working for the care of families here and elsewhere.

The information above was prepared before I attended the Provincial Conference at High Leigh, mentioned above. It was the first time the Diocesan Presidents of Canterbury Province had met in person for two years and it was a very busy and informative time. You gain as much from the social interaction during these gatherings as you do in the formal sessions. My head is still buzzing with all the ideas and plans for the next three years! Once I have sorted them out and the trustees have discussed our own diocesan plans we shall let you know! One of the speakers at Conference was our own Debbie Huxton and ,as is her way, she gave a powerful and passionate talk which made a huge impact on the others present. We are blessed to have her in our diocese.

Thank you for everything that you in the name of Mothers' Union.

Helen E Palfrey
Diocesan President Elect

Finance Report - JANUARY 2019 TO DECEMBER 2021

At the beginning of 2019 the value of the reserves held in investments by the office for the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Lichfield equalled £110,898. Adding the branch funds and investments brought that figure up to £234,569. With a total income during 2018 of £86,126 and an expenditure of £80,159 we were holding reserves equal to almost three years of activity.

Ideally a charity should hold reserves that equal six to eighteen months of activity, we needed to spend some money!

£35,467 of the Doxey investments was formed by the John Hayes Trust which was originally for the general purposes of the Lichfield Diocesan Moral Welfare Association and another smaller charity known as the Legge Memorial Trust which originally provided a home for and promoted the welfare of unmarried mothers and their babies in the Wolverhampton area. Another £9,018 was formed by the Diocesan Association of Family Care. These funds were entrusted to the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Lichfield to be used to continue their work of providing Christian care for families almost twenty years ago.

Using the John Hayes/Legge Memorial Trust funds, the Diocesan Association of Family Care funds and our general funds during the past three years we have spent over £16,000 helping families experiencing financial problems and affected by the Covid Pandemic, £6,000 providing a residential activities weekend for forty two Syrian refugee parents and children, £9,000 providing holidays and days out and to date £33,996 has been spent on the MUVsMS project raising the awareness of the problems of modern slavery all across the Diocese of Lichfield and beyond.

Our investments performed well in 2019 and we began 2020 with central investments worth £125,484. Despite selling almost £18,000 worth of the John Hayes investment shares during 2020, we still began January 2021 with £112,611 in our central investments! During 2021, I have sold £8,300 worth of the Diocesan Association of Family Care shares and another £15,500 worth of the John Hayes property shares will be sold on the 28th of December.

The result will be a reduction in the Funds!

Celia Richardson
Treasurer and Financial Trustee
The Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Lichfield

Salop Archdeaconry Leader report to Autumn Council **13 November 2021**

The impact of the covid pandemic remains with us and sadly I think that particular cloud will hover above us for a while to come.

Recently, Trustees resumed our face-to-face meetings at Doxey and that encouraging for us and, I hope, for members also. We are, after all, rebuilding hope and confidence during this year.

Christmas cards 2021

Like last year, Julia Collinson and I have liaised about Christmas cards to be sent to prison chaplains in 9 prisons located in Lichfield Diocese. There are sufficient cards remaining in the diocesan office.

As I write, I am in the process of sorting cards previously written by membership and ascertaining which are still useable. Sadly, a number of boxes of cards have gathered damp and this has made the flaps stick down; they may need to be thrown away.

Local activities

Branches have embarked on their usual Christmas projects – especially those that can be coordinated with social distancing arrangements; St Giles branch, Shrewsbury, for example, is collecting gifts for teenagers leaving Shropshire Council social care and who may otherwise lack any festive presents and treats. The branch, along with many other MU members and church families, collect for Operation Christmas Child.

Members will know the sad news regarding the somewhat sudden death of Rosemary Horton in Ellesmere deanery. I was unable to attend her funeral earlier in November but I know that others were able to represent membership and trustees.

My own parish church is the Holy Cross (Shrewsbury Abbey and St Peter's); the Abbey holds prayers at midday throughout the week and as I fulfil my rota, MU prayers resources are always used. In a small way, I hope to raise awareness of our marvellous movement and the work members (like you) carry out quietly but to such positive effect.

Keeping in touch and joining your meetings

I am only too happy to join members to speak or just to join your usual meeting. Indeed, as we go into next year and your meetings are being arranged, do let me know dates and I will gladly attend where possible.

During the last few months, I have received only one invitation to lead sessions or speak at a branch meeting. That is disappointing and I do encourage branches and groups to contact me to make a date for 2022. I would be delighted to join you at one of your meetings or acts of worship together.

A Salop Archdeaconry Festival service

The Salop Archdeaconry festival service held on Wednesday, 16 June, went very well indeed all considered. Bishop Sarah Bullock, Bishop of Shrewsbury, spoke to us and shared her lengthy involvement with the MU movement. There were quite a number of banners assembled, giving a strong MU backdrop to the service. A small choir of 6 voices sang the hymns and given the limited practice allowable, it was absolutely delightful! Thank you to Sian, Margaret, Debbie, Pam, Jean and Bernice.

Thanks must go to all who helped with the arrangements and the serving of refreshments that followed. Given that we were just emerging from covid-restrictions, the theme of 'rebuilding hope and confident' was all the more apt. Members met for worship and fellowship after a lengthy time apart and departed feeling a renewed hope and confidence in being able to meet as MU again.

Thank you for your continued faithfulness and prayerfulness for Mothers' Union work in this diocese and across the world. We know our prayers are heard and we hear of the life-changing impact of members' activities.

Katherine May
Salop ADL & LDMU Trustee
8 November 2021

GENERAL TRUSTEE REPORT FOR COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 2021

The role of general trustee was roughly planned out for this trimester; however, we knew as a new venture it could develop more. We did not foresee the changes for all of us and so now the role can be seen as ambiguous. You may feel therefore this report follows on.

As all trustees I am always happy to be contacted by phone and help in any way I can, even contacting others if such information is not at my fingertips or of my knowledge. Many branches have been in contact this year and I hope I was of some help and as usual the variety of questions was huge.

I have been able to be a speaker when requested and the branch met by zooms. This year in particular the subject requested the most was how branches could adapt and be of greater relevance to their community. Trustees have continued to meet on zoom and managed to get together at the office in Doxey. When necessary, we pass information or share views via email. There were also meetings set to give the opportunity for members interested in the trustee role to ask questions and hear the practicalities of being a trustee as well expectations of by members.

As trustees we also supported Debbie Huxton's event in the cathedral focusing on sharing information around modern day slavery. A well-planned event that sadly had less uptake than hoped.

Facebook has also allowed us to share our faith and we all like to hear what posts you enjoy, the bible passages we highlight, prayers, positive thoughts etc. You could even send us, or post yourself, ideas for this page.

Plans for next year are always put into place and mapped out during this time of year, services, meetings, new projects and as the new triennial approaches trustee training sessions.

Sharing and deepening faith and fellowship has to be the highlight of my year

Deb Tudor

Report to Diocesan Council 13th November 2021

It feels so good to be able to meet again in person even if we still have restrictions on the number who can meet here at Doxy and thank goodness for the wonders of modern technology that means many more members can join us by Zoom.

On July 20th we were privileged to attend and take part in the mid-day Eucharist Service at Lichfield Cathedral which was well attended. Rev'd Cannon Gregory Platten was the celebrant, and, in his address, he spoke eloquently about the work our organisation does both at home and abroad. He was really pleased with our input into the service and has invited us to take part in an evensong service in the future. I hope that the service was both a celebration of easing of restrictions and one of remembrance of the year we had just lived through. Depending on the situation with covid 19 in 2022 I hope that we can hold another Lichfield Archdeaconry service with people mixing freely together and the joy of singing and worshipping together.

After speaking to branch leaders, I decided not to organise anything specific for Mary Sumner Day as most branches felt they would be safer meeting in much smaller groups. I spent the afternoon with Yoxall Mothers' Union in Liz Brinsley's Garden where we held a short service followed by a good chat, tea and some seriously nice cake.

On 26th August I joined with Helen and others to help with refreshments in the Church tent. It was a glorious day, and we were kept busy with a steady stream of people pleased to have a seat out of the sun and a good cup of tea.

I joined with the other Trustees to attend the "Let's Talk" event held in the Cathedral on 18th September and organised by Debbie Huxton on Modern day Slavery and keeping our young people safe. It was an excellent event, very well organised with speakers from various organisation who like us are very concerned about organised crime, drugs, and the way criminal gangs operate to lure our youngster into a life of crime and into slavery. We should be very concerned about our young people these gangs are here operating in Lichfield Diocese and not just in the big Cities as some might think.

Recently I have been in contact with the Prisons in our area regarding the number of Christmas cards they may require. So far, I have had requests for 1300 hundred cards which is about 300 more than was requested last year. There are a few prisons where I have not been able to find a contact person namely..... If any of you have any information or contacts with this prison, I would be very grateful for your assistance. I feel it amiss that we don't have a point of contact to a women's prison.

I hope that all of you will have had time or are going to set aside time to hold a "Re-imagining Mothers Union Coffee Morning or a meeting to discuss the way forward for our much-loved Mothers Union. It is very important that you send your ideas to the office by at the latest mid-December because I am hoping to attend the Re-imagining MU Conference in early January 2022 and I want to present your ideas at that conference on your behalf

Julia Collinson