



*Autumn Gathering
Reports 2025*

Diocesan Presidents Report for Autumn Gathering

Cathedral

We have had two events at the cathedral this year both of which went well and on both occasions we thanked Cannon Andrew for his guidance. The commissioning was a lovely family event for myself, and I hope our members also enjoyed it with the enrolment of Bishop Michael.

Then in the Summer we were again able to be part of the lunchtime eucharist celebrating Mary Sumner day. I hope we can also have a service next year in the cathedral and pray for Cannon Andrew who moves on to a new role and the new incoming Precentor.

Branch visits

As usual I have been lucky enough to be invited to many branch events; ranging from services, being a speaker, attending a meet and greet and enjoying afternoon tea. Thank you all for your invites (cake) and please continue to pass on and invite trustees to join in your future plans. All trustees are happy to be able to visit members or help with ideas for meetings.

PCC/Synod

Diocesan presidents are invited by the bishop to attend Synod, and this also includes being a member of a PCC. I have attended two synods this year and several PCC meetings. I must give my apologies to the next meeting of synod as it clashes with our Autumn Gathering. We would try to avoid clashes but sometimes we have to set dates before others are released.

Prison Visits

Members will no doubt remember donating children's books for the refurbishment of the library at one of the prisons in the diocese. In fact, you were incredibly generous and there were so many we were able to donate the remaining 200 books to Werrington YOI. Reverend Vander and her team were surprised by the generosity and so encouraged by this further contact has been on going. I wrote on behalf of Lichfield Mothers' Union a congratulatory/best wishes card marking the institutes anniversary. Also joining the team in prayers, they invited myself and some of my own branches' members to afternoon tea. Boys who have no relatives or visitors take part in food courses and they prepared and joined us for a great afternoon of fellowship and refreshments.

Conference

Previously this year I have taken part in a conference via zoom but in June I travelled to the leadership conference in Liverpool. The venue, Hope University was beautiful. The conference gave us all a chance to mix and swap news among dioceses and sessions included project updates, finance, future panning, 150th events; being 9am – 9pm the days were very full. The team from Mary Sumner house led many of these and Katherine Snow (worldwide president) and Bev Jullien (CEO) both addressed the assembly.

Safeguarding

As everyone will be aware safeguarding is the hot topic and rightly so. Trustees have been training with both the diocese and Mothers' Union central and most of us hold one, two or even three certificates, Megan took on the role of safeguarding officer, and we will continue to be vigilant.

Communities of interest (COI)

Communities of interest are groups around areas of common work the MU takes on, for example faith, prison work, domestic violence etc. I sit on many and have via zoom attended all that have sent invites. Each community shares their focus on the subject; trouble shoot and plan for the future. The celebratory community has been kept up to date on next years central events while encouraging all dioceses to plan their own. The faith COI has been part of a service and prayers for 2026, and the prison COI has asked me to meet a smaller steering group. Unfortunately, the leader of many of the COI's has left their post and we await to see replacements.

Cluster meetings

Cluster meetings have this year been a monthly occurrence and have been online and in person. August saw the majority of us meeting for the day in Matlock. We discuss how each of the dioceses can plan for the future and problem solving as many struggle with finding leadership and the difficulties of falling membership. There are occasions we meet as a wider group and have later in the year plans for an online event around helping women in the sex industry.

Quiet day

Our quiet day in September was graciously hosted by St. Chads, Lichfield and led by Val Hicks. The theme of the day was Wells and Water giving all who attended much to think upon. Though it was dry the previous day's torrential rain and wind didn't allow us to pray by the well together, but some of us did manage a visit to reflect. Bringing our own lunches, we enjoyed the fellowship time, before visiting stations around the church that Val had set up. Our day concluded as Val blessed us with water around the font. A very big THANK YOU goes to Val for all the work she put in. Next year we hope to arrange two or three around the diocese.

Trustees

We are as you realise a very small board and sometimes, we have to prioritise work, not overloading ourselves. Next year we hope some of you would consider joining us or just take part in finding out a little more of the responsibilities of the board. One initiative being introduced is that of interest groups set around project work. Please talk to any of us if you would like to know more or be part of a group. This way members can lead the way we wish to move forward with projects we continue to support or initiate. All trustees have areas of responsibilities but giving others a chance to be a little more involved will also reduce the stress and pressure on the Trustees.

Deb Tudor

General Trustee Reports

Since my last report I have attended the Mary Sumner service at Lichfield Cathedral, which was a beautiful experience.

I have also attended the Provincial MU gathering in Oxford on the 27th September. It was wonderful to see so many MU members in one place! It was attended by staff from Mary Sumner House and we had Kathleen Snow (worldwide president) on Zoom! There will not be a gathering next year, as we are pausing to allow space and energy for the 150 years celebration. However, in 2027, I heartily encourage as many of you to attend as you can.

I continue to lead the MU Group at One Parish, Telford. Anyone who would like to visit would be very welcome.

As I have mentioned before, I would like to visit other branches, especially in Shropshire. My first such visit was on the 20th of May at Welsh Frankton where I was made very welcome and had a great opportunity to hear about all the amazing activities they get up to. When asked about what their needs are there was a strong feeling of wanting to link with other branches in Shropshire. I would be interested to find out if other Shropshire branches feel the same? Please do let me know.

Kate Austin

Having spoken to Deb, I have been trying to contact Featherstone & Oakwood Prisons, along with Brinsford YOI. Will keep trying, having received further advice and information from Deb at Trustees Meeting on 20th October. This will be to ask about Christmas Cards and to establish a link with MU. I have support I can access from PCC members who are Prison Visitors. All 3 institutions are within a short distance from home. I will hopefully have an update at the Gathering.

I emailed Helen Palphrey on 09-10-25 to discuss Staffordshire Women's Aid, alongside emailing their Chief Executive. Having spoken to both Brewood and Bishops Wood about the "Rise-Up" campaign, I would like to establish a link, particularly since Bishops Wood PCC may have some financial support to offer. I attended Penkridge MU on 15th October, to meet the Members I don't already know and spoke about "Rise-Up", before being involved with members in a talk by Katherine May. Katherine's interactive talk was looking at quotes from the Bible.

I have now completed a DBS check for Brewood PCC - so have 2!, as I also have an MU one. I am now recognised by thirty-one-eight as a DBS verifier and a senior recruiter. June and July saw me complete the Basic and Foundation Safeguarding Courses, and in July I completed the Leadership Course with Lichfield. Having checked with Deena at MSH, I will be completing the MU course, via zoom, on October 23rd. Will update at the Gathering.

With Deb & Adie, I attended Afternoon Tea at Tettenhall MU, we were made very welcome and met the members. It was good to attend the Mary Sumner day Eucharist at Lichfield Cathedral and to see it well supported. Deb & I also attended Penkridge Deanery Service - which was hosted by Coven Branch.

Along with Deb and several other members, I attended a COI webinar on Domestic Abuse, hosted by Emily Brailsford. It was informative and supportive and it is good to have access to the resources we need. Have emailed Charlotte, the CEO of Staffordshire Women's Aid, she replied and asked for dates when we can meet, I await her reply, in the meantime Helen & I will be attending the Candlelit Vigil (for the 16 days of Activism) in Stafford and Charlotte has asked Helen/myself to do closing Prayers on behalf of MU. Looking forward to the AGM and meeting up with everybody.

Megan Pittwood

FINANCE REPORT

This is the first year of actively working towards maintaining our charity assets. This does not mean that the charity is not stable, it is stable, the level of our charity reserves are good. But it is now time for me to advise trustees and members that at the same time as continuing our vital work offering Emergency Financial Relief grants and AFIA Holidays, it is also necessary to carefully monitor our level of Assets.

The Doxey office bank accounts for 2025 contain no unpleasant surprises, there is a small increase in the amount we received in Diocesan Subscriptions, the amount of income tax reclaimed has also increased and the office fund raising from recycling has increased.

The amount that you have sent into the office for the Diocesan General Fund and AFIA has increased, sadly the amount sent in for the Emergency Relief Fund which is an important part in our care of families in the diocese has markedly reduced. The amount for the MSH funds has also decreased. Please remember until I do the consolidation, I will not know whether the funds you have sent to the office are a transfer of existing branch funds or 'new funds' that is, from fund raising that has happened during this year. Expenditure is in line with the figures for last year, administration, office rent and accountancy figures are all very similar, the main change is a marked reduction in trustees' expenses.

Emergency Relief Fund Grants. (Value of grants given £1,600 Budget £3,000)

Five grants have been given this year to people in Telford, Rugeley, Wednesfield, Burntwood and Lichfield. Two referrals have come from clergy and three referrals from Citizens Advice Case workers. A £350.00 grant was given to lady who was unable to work due to illness and a serious car accident, a family with long term health and financial problems were given an initial grant of £150 follow by a further two monthly grants of £100.00 to help their cash flow and the purchase of school uniforms. A grant of £350.00 was given to a family in Rugeley to replace a faulty old cooker, £250.00 was given to a lady to buy some rugs to make her home warmer and £300.00 to a lady to replace an old, damaged fridge freezer.

AFIA (Total Spent £2,850 Budget £3,000)

Working with the County Council Family Advocate we have funded 3 Caravan Holidays in Hastings for families with very difficult circumstances. A grant has also been given towards the cost of a holiday for the family of a child with complex and expensive daily medical needs in an apartment at the Thurnham Hall Resort, Cockerham. The family were referred by the Community Development Manager for Wednesbury Cultural Hub.

2026 Subscriptions

Coping with the increasing costs that affect all charities and setting the coming years subscription figure at a figure that acknowledges that members also have increasing costs is always a challenge. However, I believe that the figure of £41.00 the Trustees have chosen is reasonable and represents £25.00 for Mary Sumner House and £16.00 for the Diocese.

Please do not hesitate to contact me either by email, or telephone if you have any queries regarding the finance.

With love and prayers,



Celia Richardson – Treasurer/ Financial Advisor

LICHFIELD DIOCESE MOTHERS' UNION
Charity Registration Number 249942
CENTRAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE @ 30/9/25

	year end			year end	
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Subscriptions - MSH	16,390.50	16,882.00	Subscriptions - MSH	16,390.50	16,882.00
			Subscriptions - Diocese	10,079.50	9,537.00
<u>OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION</u>					
Stationery	-	74.77	MUE Turnover Grant	-	795.10
Equipment	411.92	680.37	Income Tax Recovered	2,916.78	2,576.46
Telephone & broadband	707.39	906.36			
Office Rent/Hire of Premises	2,400.00	3,200.00	Interest and Dividends	2,127.49	3,037.77
Insurance	480.21	449.50	NatWest Business ACC		
Accountants Fees	475.00	475.00	LDMU CBF Deposit Account		
			AFIA		
Wages/Expenses	11,528.11	14,648.00	LDMU CBF Investment Fund		
Postage	58.99				
Diocesan Newsletter					
			<u>Fund Raising</u>	590.27	125.52
Administration	1,860.62	3,224.79	Administration	914.70	1,330.27
<u>MUE - Sales</u>	1,393.65	3,672.31	<u>MUE - Sales</u>	1,463.77	3,650.44
Board of Trustees	543.00	3,011.90			
			<u>DONATIONS</u>		
			<u>Diocesan Funds</u>		
<u>Diocesan Funds</u>			General Fund	2,142.00	1,992.48
Relief Fund	1,200.00	2,400.00	Relief Fund	582.70	1,600.00
AFIA	2,850.00	3,047.00	AFIA	3,955.23	4,672.25
Discretionary Payment	-	500.00	Discretionary Fund	150.00	390.00
<u>MSH FUNDS</u>	-	3,607.35	<u>MSH FUNDS</u>	1,818.58	3,607.35
OPERATING EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	2,832.13		OPERATING EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME		6,582.71
	43,131.52	56,779.35		43,131.52	56,779.35
DECREASE IN VALUE OF INVESTMENTS			INCREASE IN VALUE OF INVESTMENTS		
LDMU CBF Investment Fund					
EXCESS OF INCREASE OVER DECREASE			EXCESS OF DECREASE OVER INCREASE		
	43,131.52	56,779.35		43,131.52	56,779.35