



Registered Charity No. 251394

ELY DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

INTRODUCTION

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union is a registered charity (Charity Registration No. 251394) and is an affiliated diocesan organisation of The Mothers' Union (Charity Registration No. 240531). The constitution of Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union is in accordance with the Constitution of The Mothers' Union dated 2018.

PURPOSE, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The Purpose and Aim of the Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union is that of the Mothers' Union:

The Purpose of the Mothers' Union is to be especially concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life.

The Aim of the charity is the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life. In order to carry out this Aim, its Objectives are:

- to uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and to promote its wider understanding
- to encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church
- to maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service
- to promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children
- to help those whose family life has met with adversity.

ORGANISATION

Ely Diocesan Mothers' Union is managed by the Board of Trustees headed by the Diocesan President and Diocesan Vice-Presidents. The Board of Trustees is serviced by a voluntary non-voting Minutes Secretary. There is a maximum of 17 voting Trustees, 11 of whom are elected by the Council of the Society; one (the Treasurer) is nominated by the Board of Trustees and a Life Vice-President can be nominated and appointed by the trustees and ratified by Council. There are up to 3 co-opted trustees. Nominations for Diocesan President by the trustees must be approved by the Bishop of Ely before election by all members. Elections are held every 3 years.

The work of the Charity is organised into Task Groups each headed by a Leader who is a Trustee. The task groups are: Praying our Faith; Faith in Action; Finance & Administration; and Fundraising & Communication.

As an affiliated diocesan organisation of The Mothers' Union, the work of the Charity follows the policies of the central organisation. There is close liaison between the central and diocesan units. The Central Mothers' Union organises a training day for trustees at the start of each triennial and the diocese provides new trustees with a welcome pack detailing their responsibilities. In the diocese the work of the Charity is carried out by volunteers in parish and deanery based branches and by diocesan members.

The Charity no longer has the use of a central office and since the beginning of the Covid Pandemic in March 2020 all officers have been working from home. There is a voluntary Diocesan Secretary. Branches work closely with the local parish or deanery of the Church of England.

Hazel Williams MBE, Diocesan President 2022-2024



Della Fletcher receiving her 50 year membership certificate from Bishop Dagmar.

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During the year the Diocesan Trustees met on four occasions to plan for and review the work of the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Ely in meeting our stated objectives.

The Annual General Meeting was held at St Peter's Church, March in April and the Annual Report and accounts were circulated to members and accepted. The Autumn Diocesan Day was held at St John's Church Hall, Waterbeach in October, at which Canon Matthew Bradbury spoke about Modern Day Slavery.



The General Meeting (Annual Gathering) of the Worldwide Mothers' Union was held in York in September.

The on-going support of our bishop, the Chapter of Ely Cathedral and other senior clergy has enabled us to maintain a high profile for the Mothers' Union in the Diocese and our President is an ex officio member of the Diocesan Synod. We continue to enjoy good working relationships with Diocesan staff. However, the Diocesan Office closed due to the pandemic in March 2020 and everyone is working from home. A new Diocesan office is being built on the outskirts of Ely.

Members have continued to support Mothers' Union initiatives in the diocese and worldwide.



The work of our society is detailed in the four Task Groups:

PRAYING OUR FAITH

Thursday Prayers

Thursday Prayers have continued to be held each month, throughout the year in Ely Cathedral Presbytery and also on Zoom. They are also read at St Ives, where the Branch Leader invites MU members from surrounding branches to join in as well as her own.

Quiet Day

We held a Quiet Day at St Peter's Church in Yaxley, Peterborough at the end of March which was led by our MU Diocesan Chaplain, Rev Paula Spalding, with the theme 'Walking with God'. This was well supported with 19 attendees being able to worship in the peaceful surroundings of this beautiful church.

16 Days of Activism: 25th November - 10th December

As part of the Global Day of Action against Gender-Based Violence and abuse, Over 20 MU members stood outside the West door of the Cathedral at 1.03pm on Saturday 25th November, for 1 minute's silence, to raise awareness of the fact that 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience gender-based violence in their life time. As well as holding placards to advertise our vigil, members wore purple scarves; knitted purple rosettes, and badges that highlighted the #nomore1in3 (no more one in three), as they stood together, to show solidarity with victims. Prior to this, the same MU members took part in a silent prayer vigil inside the cathedral for 30 minutes. Also inside the cathedral, in the South Transept, opposite St Dunstan's Chapel, a display was on view for the duration of the campaign which was organised by the Cathedral MU Branch.

Clergy Liaison

Della Fletcher continues to keep contact with the Ely Diocese Clergy, familiarising them with Mothers' Union activities throughout the year. She has circulated information on MU resources for Mothering Sunday to all clergy; sent MU cards to all ordination candidates (14 priests and 7 deacons) for the Petertide ordinations, informing training incumbents and relevant MU branches that she has done this. She has also circulated information on the UN's 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence and our involvement with this in Ely Diocese.

Worldwide Links

Irene Porter has kept in contact with our worldwide links throughout the year, sending copies of our MU Newsletters; Easter and Christmas cards. She also sends invitations to them to join us on Zoom for Thursday Prayers. She has received replies from Claudine in Shyogwe who included some photos in March and also Ellen in Lusaka. Ellen says that she tried to join us for Thursday Prayers in February.



MU in Lusaka, Zambia celebrating Independence Day in October.

In May, Irene received several communications from our links which she has shared with the Ely Diocese via our MU Newsletters. Kigali joined us at one of the Thursday prayers, others have indicated they would like to join, but so far have not succeeded. Priscilla in Karimnagar asked if Irene could contact sometimes via WhatsApp. Ellen in Lusaka shares our Ely newsletter with the members there and joined us for Thursday Prayer in November. She is very active on Facebook and responds to messages. Irene has still not yet been able to contact Nigeria, but did find some news from the Anglican Mothers' Union Executive, which she shared in the June newsletter regarding voting and elections to be held in 2023. MU were concerned about voter's apathy, non-collection of voting

cards, voter's education and other points that could lead to non-credible and fair elections.

In December, Irene informed us that Priscilla in Karimnagar, who usually replies to any email sent, has



not done so recently. Irene has sent a 'Hope all is well' email but has had no reply. Irene provides the link between Ely Diocesan MU and our link dioceses for our prayers during our 'Wave of Prayer'.

Irene Porter and the Worldwide display.

Indoor Members (IMPC)

Joanna Sanders continues to keep contact between indoor members (now 14) and the Ely Diocese MU throughout the year. She sends Christmas cards, Easter cards and birthday cards, informing Mary Sumner House of those reaching 90 years old so that MSH can also send a birthday card. IMPC members also receive a large print prayer diary based upon the current Thursday Prayers booklet to use throughout the year. Joanna sends three letters a year to IMPC

members (some in care homes), one from herself, one from the Worldwide President and one from Ely Diocese MU President.

FAITH IN ACTION



In 2023 we continued to put our Faith into Action through our various projects to support those “whose lives have met with adversity” (Mothers’ Union 4th objective).

12 families, who needed a break and would not otherwise have been able to afford one, enjoyed an AFIA “Away From It All” holiday in a mobile home at a Leisure Resort in Hunstanton. 3 other families booked to go, but pulled out because of health conditions/ hospital appointments. This project is very popular with members, and most branches fund-raise for it. We were fortunate, once again, in securing some funding from a Diocesan Welfare Fund. We received these comments:

“The holiday from AFIA was a fantastic break in 2023; my daughter absolutely loved every minute of it and didn't want to come home. There was so much to do, which she needed as she has ADHD. It made a



huge difference to us. Holidays are very expensive for a single parent to afford so it was amazing to be able to be away for a week and enjoy ourselves, so thank you”.

“We really appreciate and grateful for letting us have that holiday experience at the resort. Our family loved it. And we are double happy because the children are happy. All the best and may you give many more families like us this kind of holiday”.

All 3 Women's Refuges in the Diocese of Ely, and 2 young people's hostels, have been well provided with personal and domestic items throughout the year, and supermarket vouchers at Christmas time, that enable the recipients to choose something they particularly want. The following thank you is from one of the Refuges-

It means so much to these families to have the opportunity to use the vouchers to choose the things that they like or need rather than being given a food parcel, which they are also grateful for, but often say how lovely it is to actually have the freedom of choice. This can also be particularly useful if there are any specific dietary requirements that have to be adhered to or simply a child's favourite cereal, that mum is able to purchase.

We continued to support an evolving charity in the 3 parishes of Farcet, Stanground and Fletton bordering Peterborough diocese. Throughout the year we provided Mary's Child with food, toiletries and domestic goods. We have worked in partnership to support a Mary's Child Families Support Worker. We were so pleased to learn that the worker appointed, Esther, was already a Mothers' Union member, having been one for five years in her native Zimbabwe. Esther reported: *Thank you and Mothers' Union for having the generosity of supporting my role all year which has really made an incredible impact on the way we support those in crisis, and developing the role within Mary's Child. My work involves working with families dealing with mental health problems, difficulties with parenting, domestic abuse, welfare issues, and supporting older family members through financial and material hardship.*

Prison work resumed in the summer with a team of MU members delivering a Relationships Course to inmates at Littlehey Prison. Unfortunately due to lack of space in the prison it was not possible to deliver the course in the Autumn term but it will be resumed in 2024.

Our knitters have been busy, with making baby items for the Ely Baby Bank and Fenland Family Bank, Hinchingsbrooke Maternity Unit and Mary's Child. Lap blankets, Twiddle Muffs and Dementia Cannula sleeves have been gratefully received by the Dementia Specialist Nurse at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Warm hats, mitts and scarves have been given to a charity working with the homeless and 2 schools were pleased to receive hats for the children in the cold weather. Larger blankets and woollens have been sent to Christian Hope International.

On behalf of all of the staff at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Maternity Unit, I would like to pass on our heartfelt thanks for your kind donation of knitted baby hats that were delivered earlier today. The families we care for really appreciate their babies' being given a handmade hat at birth, and always comment on the beautiful colours and designs. As midwives, we also take great enjoyment from choosing a hat to suit each baby and family.



We have supported other charities whose aims are similar to ours. Collections of postcards have been sent to Mission Aviation Fellowship, and postage stamps to Marie Curie Cancer Care, and St. Johns Hospice, Moggerhanger (which caters for the South West of Ely Diocese).

With members around the diocese, we participated in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (from November 25th) with a display in Ely Cathedral, of ways the Mothers' Union supports those who have suffered Abuse, and about the Refuges, and available support.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

This Group continues to ensure that the Charity complies with the requirements of the Charity Commission and associated legislation through providing administrative services and observing correct accounting procedures.



The Group prepared the Annual Review and Accounts. Derek Tye was appointed as treasurer in 2021 and has taken on the administrator's role too.

A fund, named the "Susan Baker Family Fund" was set up in memory of our immediate past president,

Susan Baker who died in 2020. It was agreed by trustees that this should support family work in the diocese. It was decided, during the year, that two existing funds, the Parenting Project and the Diocesan Development Fund should be merged into the Susan Baker Fund with the terms widened to include the objectives of all the funds.

Kristy Leach, Safeguarding Officer, has kept trustees informed of safeguarding issues and requirements. Some training has taken place and she has offered to visit branches to talk about Safeguarding and offer training. There is new training online on the Diocesan Website specifically in regard to Domestic Violence Awareness.

Notice was also taken and implemented of the Charity Commissioners' Guidance for Charity Trustees to show public benefit in the advancement of the Society's Charitable Purposes, namely:

the advancement of religion, the prevention or relief of poverty, the relief of those in need by reason of financial hardship and the advancement of community development. In 2023, the trustees took the decision to support a Families Worker, Esther, working in the northern part of the diocese with the charity Mary's Child. The task group continues to underpin the charitable purposes of the Society through offering guidance and support in finance, training and general administration to Trustees, Deanery and Branch officers.



FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNICATION

There are several ways in which our Group communicates, supports, and engages with members, as well as by promotion and through informing others on a local, national and worldwide level. Our monthly Diocesan Newsletter is produced by Hazel Williams which contains lots of interesting news and articles about MU Projects and Events. The monthly Family: Faith: Fun Activity Sheets (produced by Ros Wright) have been a great resource for members, and available to be shared with families and parishes. Our MU page on the Ely Diocesan website is regularly updated with the Newsletters, Family: Faith: Fun Activity Sheets, Prayer Resources, and events, and relevant items are posted on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MUElyDiocese/>).

Our contact details on the National MU website have now been updated and our Diocesan page has new photos and latest project information added. The MU Noticeboard in the Cathedral is located in the south-west transept near St Catherine's Chapel, with displays being looked after by Penny Hall, covering various seasonal and thematic topics and MU events and information.



For the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, there was a Silent Vigil and Banner Witness at Ely Cathedral in November, and a photo and newspaper article appeared in the Ely Standard.

Monthly Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral meets in the Presbytery, and continues to be streamed live via Zoom as well. Recordings are posted on our YouTube Channel, to enable those

members who could not come along or join in at a set time to be able see the videos. We are able join in with the Live Recordings of Mothers' Union Midday Prayers held daily on Facebook, thoughtfully led by staff from Mary Sumner House, and other MU members from around the country and worldwide.

Regular Zoom Meetings for the Communities of Interest Groups have been held during the year by Mary Sumner House staff which included Communications, Membership and Database Support. We held our Garden Party in the Bishop of Ely's Garden on Friday 14th July which was very enjoyable despite the rain. We were joined by the Bishop of Huntingdon. There was an MU Stall selling cards, a Worldwide Display, and Raffle. Della Fletcher our Clergy Liaison Officer, and a past President, was presented with her certificate marking 50 years of membership by Bishop Dagmar. £186 was raised for MU Projects (which included the raffle takings of £166).

DIOCESAN MEMBERS

Diocesan Members were written to or emailed each month with the Newsletter, Family: Faith: Fun Activity Sheets, Prayer Resources, and other relevant documents and leaflets, with membership totalling 54 at the end of the year. Somersham Branch closed and several of the members joined as Diocesan Members. The Diocesan Members' Lunch took place on Tuesday 7th November at Ely City Golf Club, attended by 21 Members and Trustees. We were pleased to welcome Sue Claydon from March who spoke about "A view of women's lives in Africa today", together with a slide presentation. She also brought some craft items from her visits to Africa. Afterwards there was a talk from Beth Georgiou about her work with the Anna Chaplaincy, which offers spiritual care to people in later life. Hazel Williams gave an update about latest MU News. The raffle raised £52 which will go towards AFIA ("Away From It All" Holidays).

