



# REPORT TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

## ANNUAL REVIEW 2024



**Banner & Memorabilia Exhibition in Ely Cathedral in August**

## **REPORT TO THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS**

### **ANNUAL REVIEW AND ACCOUNTS 2024**

#### **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.

#### **Vision**

Our vision is a world where everyone prospers. We actively pursue this vision through prayer and action, helping to build confident people and resilient communities. Our movement seeks to bring about justice, challenge prejudice and advocate change.

#### **Mission**

We aim to show our Christian faith by helping the sustainable transformation of communities worldwide. We do this by helping to nurture strong relationships at all levels, promoting peace and reconciliation locally, nationally and globally.

#### **We aim to:**

- Encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children.
- Maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.
- Promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.
- Help those whose family life has met with adversity.
- Promote and support married life.

#### **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 the 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 in 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. All trustees work from home, we have the use of the Diocesan Office for meetings. There is a voluntary Diocesan Secretary. Branches work closely with the local parish or deanery of the Church of England.

## TRUSTEES

## 2024

Diocesan President	Hazel Williams, MBE	(4)
Cambridge Archdeaconry Vice-President	Gill Uttin	(0)
Cambridge Archdeaconry Vice-President	Jo Wibberley	(2)
Huntingdon & Wisbech Archdeaconry Vice-President	Helen Banyard	(4)
Huntingdon & Wisbech Archdeaconry Vice-President	Maureen Haigh	(4)
Praying Our Faith Task Group Leader	Christine Holt	(4)
Faith in Action Task Group Leader	Jean Webb	(3)
Finance & Administration Task Group Leader	Catherina Griffiths	(3)
Fundraising & Communications Task Group Leader	Debbie Tye	(4)
Co-opted Trustee and Safeguarding Officer (resigned in March 2024)	Kristy Leach	(1)

The number of meetings attended in 2024 is shown in brackets after each name.

All trustees listed under 2024 above except Gill Uttin, Jo Wibberley, Catherina Griffiths and Kristy Leach were serving as trustees on 3rd March 2025.

The Revd. Paula Spalding, Honorary Chaplain, attended 2 meetings at which she led the prayers.

Derek Tye was elected Honorary Treasurer in March 2021 and attended meetings to report on the financial affairs.

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 aims.

The Annual General Meeting was held at St Peter's Church Hall, March in April and the Annual Report and accounts were circulated to members and accepted. The Autumn Diocesan Day was held at Waterbeach Church Hall in October.



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 and have been holding our meetings in the new Diocesan Offices at Etheldreda House, Lancaster Way, Ely.

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

The Trustees confirm that there were no serious incidents, or any other matter, which should have been brought to the attention of the Charity Commissioners. The Trustees have had regard to public benefit, as stated in the Charity Commissioners' guidance.

This Report, Review and Account were approved by the Trustees on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 and will be presented to the society's AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

**Signed: Hazel Williams, MBE**  
**Diocesan President 2022-2024**

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

## PRAYING OUR FAITH

*This year has been an interesting one: In August, Mothers' Union held a Banner Exhibition in the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral. Many ladies who came to view told us of the banners that they had helped to sew in previous years. In July, we held our Garden Party in the Bishop's garden and were treated to some amazing cello music by the King's School Cello Ensemble. MU Worldwide Links were on display at both these events-*

### WORLDWIDE LINKS

Communications have been made, by Irene, to our Worldwide links in Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Ikka & Sokoto in Nigeria and Karimnagar in India by forwarding our monthly Ely Mothers' Union newsletter, via email. Easter and Christmas cards were also posted to our links. News and photos from our links are included in our newsletters.

We have prayed for our worldwide links throughout the year, at meetings; during our Thursday prayers and especially during our Wave of Prayer in December.



### CLERGY LIAISON

Della 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, via the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Team's weekly newsletter and sent MU ordination cards, together with the central MU "Who we are" leaflets to 11 priests and 12 deacons ordained at Petertide, these were given out at their pre-ordination retreat.

Della has also sent information on the M U "Rise Up Against Domestic Violence" Campaign, together with the United Nations' Campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" to all clergy, including MU involvement i.e the MU vigil held on 30<sup>th</sup> November. Della informs MU branches that she has done this and encourages them to ask their clergy to incorporate this into their Sunday services. She also suggests that they might like to have a Prayer tree in church during the period of the campaign.

### INDOOR MEMBERS (IMPC)

Joanna remains the contact between our Indoor Members and the Ely Diocese Mothers' Union throughout the year. She has sent birthday cards (ensuring Mary Sumner House is aware of those reaching the age of 90 yrs in order that they can highlight this with birthday card of their own), Easter cards, Christmas cards and three letters during the year (one from herself in the Summer, one from the Worldwide President at Christmas and one from the Ely Diocesan President at Easter).

Early in the year, she conducted a survey of members and provided a list with some information about each member. At the time there were 12 members. Unfortunately, since our last Trustees Meeting in December, the number has now dropped to 10. This Christmas, Joanna sent each member a Christmas present of an Olive Wood Holding Cross that she had seen in the MU Catalogue. Joanna received two Christmas cards especially thanking for the olive wood crosses - they were very appreciative of them.

### ELY DIOCESAN PRAYER DIARY

Members are offered daily prayers which centre on our membership of Mothers' Union. These are updated twice yearly, keeping them relevant with MU activities.



## PRAYING OUR FAITH cont'd.

### THURSDAY PRAYERS

MU members, family and friends are invited to pray together within the Ely Diocese, every third Thursday morning, of each month. The service is held at 10.30-11.00am in the Presbytery of the cathedral and also on Zoom. Each month we use a common theme and pray for a special concern. We also reflect upon our own membership of the Mothers' Union. The prayers are also held at All Saints Church St Ives on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2.30pm.

### QUIET DAYS

Mothers' Union Quiet Days of prayer and meditation are usually held twice a year in varied locations, throughout the Ely Diocese. These provide members and friends with a quiet place to pray where they can be spiritually nourished. The Quiet Day in May, in St Peter's Church, Yaxley, was on the theme "I beg of you bear with one another in love" from Ephesians 4:1-7 and was led by our MU Chaplain, Revd. Paula Spalding.

One of our branch leaders and our MU chaplain led a Weekend Retreat, at a Retreat House, in Northamptonshire, which was attended by 20 members.

All enjoyed the fellowship together, and the opportunity to think and discuss more deeply, parts of the Gospel message.



### CAMPAIGNS

We have publicized, and taken part in the UN 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the MU Rise up Campaign against Domestic Abuse.

On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November, in support of the UN Global Day and MU Rise up Campaign, around 20 Mothers' Union members stood together outside the West door of Ely Cathedral, in a 1-minute silence with placards and banners, to raise awareness of the fact that 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience gender-based violence or abuse in their life time. Some wore purple scarves in support of victims or knitted purple rosettes. Badges highlighting #nomore1in3 (no more one in three) were also on show. Shortly before this members took part in a 30 minute silent prayer vigil inside the cathedral.



A display on the 16 Days of Activism and Rise Up Campaign was held in the South Transept of the cathedral, for the duration of the Campaign. This annual UN international campaign starts on 25<sup>th</sup> November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and runs until Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December (International Day of Human Rights).

## FAITH IN ACTION

***During the year 2024 Members have continued to work towards supporting “those whose lives have met with Adversity” (our 4<sup>th</sup> MU objective), through our various projects.***



### PRISON COURSES

A team of 4 Mothers' Union members ran 3 successful Relationships Courses in Littlehey Prison during the year for a total of 35 men. (One inmate was released after 2 sessions so did not complete the course.)

The course covers personal relationships as well as relating to the wider community; there is a session on listening skills and another on negotiation. The course has been valued by staff and students. Each student receives a portfolio of their work and a certificate at the end of the 5 sessions.

### AFIA (Away From It All Holidays)

Eleven families, (20 adults and 24 children) benefitted from a break at Hunstanton. Mothers' Union hire suitable mobile homes at a well-established, family focused holiday park, and provide pocket money for the children and a contribution towards travel costs/expenses. The families are most appreciative of this when these are delivered to them a few days before they go away.

Our members have been very generous with their fundraising for this so worthwhile project.



*“I would just like to send so much thanks to the Mothers' Union for the trip away that you provided for the children and myself this summer. We had the most amazing time in Hunstanton. We have never stayed anywhere like that before and the children absolutely loved it. We were so lucky with the weather and we were able to use the outdoor pool every day. The whole experience was perfect and a memory to treasure. Thank you so much again”.*

### LOCAL PROJECTS

A new project this year has been supporting The Haven, a new night shelter for street sleeper women in Cambridge. We have given toiletries, warm hats, mitts and scarves.

The 3 Women's Refuges, 2 hostels for young people, and the Mary's Child charity (working in the parishes of Farcet, Fletton and Stanground), have been regularly supplied with domestic goods, toiletries and cleaning materials, and gifts and store vouchers at Christmas.

Members collect items from their communities to pass on, ensuring that all items are in good condition and suitable for the potential recipients.

*“A lot of the items we all take for granted; but for families who arrive at the refuge with nothing, these resources can make a huge difference, and women for the first time feel valued”*  
**Refuge Manager, Cambridgeshire**

## FAITH IN ACTION cont'd

Many members enjoy knitting or crocheting, and we make regular deliveries to Hinchbrook Hospital at Huntingdon, with lap blankets, twiddle muffs and cannula sleeves for the Dementia and Frailty Unit, and baby hats and blankets to the Maternity Unit.

Ely Baby Bank and Fenland Family Bank have received many knitted items, (we also provide baby equipment – high chairs, cots etc.).

Warm hats have been given to several schools for nursery/stage 1 children, in need when the weather is cold.



The Sick Children's Trust, at the Rosie Maternity Hospital, in Cambridge have been kept supplied with emergency toiletry packs for mothers who arrive from around the region without their belongings because of a very ill newborn baby. One MU branch provided Christmas goodie bags for families staying over Christmas.

We have continued to support Mission Aviation Fellowship with postcards, and Marie Curie Cancer Care, and St John's Hospice with used postage stamps, to help their fundraising.

## 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 continued to do the administration for finances.

A fund, named the "Susan Baker Memorial Fund" was set up in memory of our immediate past president, Susan Baker who died in 2020. It was agreed by the Trustees that the Development Fund and Parenting Fund should be amalgamated into the Susan Baker Fund to offer grants for work with children and families.

Kristy Leach, Safeguarding Officer, has kept trustees informed of safeguarding issues and requirements, but unfortunately had to resign in March due to personal circumstances.

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.

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 Mothers' Union group communicates, supports, and engages with members, as well as through promotion and by 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, while events and relevant items are posted on our Facebook page.

The MU Noticeboard in Ely Cathedral is located in the SW transept, with displays being looked after by Penny Hall, covering various seasonal and thematic topics and MU events and information.

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.



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

A new roller banner was purchased for the display in the south transept.

Monthly Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral meets in the Presbytery, which continues to be streamed live via Zoom as well, and a new camera was purchased which gives better video recordings. These videos 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.



The Garden Party took place on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June in the Bishop of Ely's Garden. The afternoon was blessed with lovely sunny weather.

There was an MU Stall selling cards, a Worldwide Display, and Raffle, and a wordsearch for members to test their Olympics knowledge.

Entertainment was provided by Spikes Cello Ensemble from the King's School Ely which was most enjoyable.

Funds raised from the raffle and donations realised £200.



## FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNICATION cont'd



A Banner Exhibition was held in the Cathedral Lady Chapel from 1<sup>st</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> August, with around 40 banners and other memorabilia on display. This was a hugely successful event promoting MU, and was enjoyed by the many visitors to the Cathedral as well as our members.

The Mary Sumner Day Service on 9<sup>th</sup> August was an enjoyable occasion attended by around 100 people, which exceeded expectations.



### 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 totaling 55 at the end of the year. Milton Branch closed and several of the members joined as Diocesan Members.

The Diocesan Members' Lunch took place on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November at Ely City Golf Club, attended by 23 Members and Trustees. We were pleased to welcome The Venerable Hugh McCurdy (Bourn Rural Dean) as our speaker, who gave a very interesting talk about his visit to Rwanda, accompanied by a slide presentation. Hazel Williams gave an update about latest MU News.

The raffle raised £63 which went towards AFIA ("Away From It All" Holidays).



**Signed: Hazel Williams MBE  
Diocesan President 2022-2024**