**THE MOTHERS’ UNION – NEWCASTLE DIOCESE**

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council held in the church of St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park, on Friday 6 October 2017 at 7.00 pm. There were 76members present and apologies had been received from a further 17

Diocesan President Barbara Packer read out the names of twenty four members who had died since the last meeting, and a minute’s silence was held. Barbara Bailes then led a short act of worship on the theme of “Blessings” which concluded with the recently reformed Mothers’ Union Choir singing the anthem “A Gaelic Blessing” by John Rutter.

The President thanked Barbara B and the choir directed by Sarah Scott, then welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially those attending for the first time..

**Minutes of the** Meeting held on 31 March having been previously circulated were taken as read, adopted on the proposal of Sheila Walker seconded byLami Nnamonu, and signed by the President. There were no matters arising.

**President’s remarks**Barbara reported that the Lindisfarne Archdeaconry Festival had been much enjoyed; there had been positive responses from a number of parish clergy in connection with the baptism programme. Centrally Mothers’ Union was looking forward, Barbara particularly mentioning the membership questionnaire and MULOA (Mothers’ Union Listening, Observing and Acting), a ‘worldwide toolkit to put our faith into action’ which had started in the West Indies and would come to Britain and Ireland in 2018. This diocese had been chosen to represent the Province in a pilot scheme for which Barbara and her Vice Presidents would shortly receive some training; three branches would then be selected to carry the process through by January.
Barbara asked Branch Leaders to take particular note of the dates previously circulated for 2018; dates for the remainder of this year would be appended to the minutes.

**Presentation of draft new Constitution** Barbara pointed out that most of the proposed changes related to items being moved from the obligatory Constitution into optional Guidelines. The changes having been circulated prior to the meeting, Barbara invited all those attending and eligible to vote (Trustees, Deanery officers and Branch Leaders) to consider the motion

THAT The Diocesan Council of Newcastle Mothers’ Union accept the changes to the 2012 Constitution now put forward and this was carried unanimously.

**Report on the AGM and Service in Edinburgh** Reports from the Vice Presidents had been circulated; some 40 from this diocese had attended and enjoyed the meeting. A condensed report would be included in the next Journal.

**Unit Reports** had been previously circulated and Barbara thanked everyone who had compiled these. Some of the co-ordinators highlighted particular aspects of their report:

Anne Lloyd had envelopes to circulate to Deanery leaders with all necessary papers to complete with the Tribute which for 2018 would be £20; she reminded everyone that the old £1 coin would shortly go out of circulation.

Dorothy Henderson mentioned that £5,000 was being sent to Mary Sumner House for Relief and £500 was being used to purchase joggers, boxer shorts and sleeping bags for The People’s Kitchen in memory of Gladys McCoulough. Additionally £1,000 had been put aside as a contribution to a holiday fund for the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster.

Jennie Jones highlighted the need to think creatively, vary programmes and be flexible. This Diocese had been chosen to pilot a new scheme so she needed five branches to do this and report back early in December. She invited everyone to a meeting on 17th November to share programme ideas.

Lynne Craggs displayed a new publicity leaflet to be put in churches without a Branch, or in libraries or places where people met. As part of a growth campaign she also asked branches to arrange a sharing-event at which she or other officers would be very happy to speak about the work of Mothers’ Union, and for each member to use this leaflet to offer to a non-member a personal invitation to the event.

Linda Benneworth asked everyone to take labels for the shoeboxes to be brought to Church House on 1 December. The staff of the People’s Kitchen had particularly valued the work of Gladys McCoulough and Linda hoped that they would display a photograph of Gladys dancing with a PK client. Joan Howard had knitted sets of “Women in the Bible” for this Diocese and for Durham, for use in primary schools. The backpacks that had been taken to Acklington Prison were being very much appreciated, and the MU team there would welcome further assistance; petrol costs would be refunded up to a distance of 25 miles.

Josephine Kulke reported that the next Faith and Policy meeting would be on 12 October and open to anyone. She thanked Barbara B who had made arrangements for the Shepherd’s Dene retreat in June 2018. Christmas cards were sent to Indoor Members and Branch Leaders were asked to submit additional names to Brenda Mennear. Similarly anyone wishing to add to the Prayer Chain was asked to contact Lorna Beadle.Information about the 16 Days of Activism at the end of November was available on the website. Mothers’ Union having consultative status on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, representatives were required to attend a gathering in New York in 2018 and information could be found on the central MU website.

Ann Mitchell said that there were now 56 Diocesan members; they had enjoyed the talk from Margaret Weaver at their meeting in September.

The President stressed that any member would be welcome at any Unit Meeting.

**Deanery reports** had been previously circulated. The President thanked all Deanery Leaders and Unit Co-ordinators.

**Other Business**The President introduced Daniel Doran from St Peter Monkseaton, who was now editing the newsletter.

There was a small supply of sweets available for anyone to take for use in ‘messy church’ groups.

**Membership Questionnaire**:The President invited everyone to look at the membership questionnaire; it was a statutory requirement of any charity that it knew who its members were and she hoped people would understand the need for the forms to be completed. She suggested this need take no more than five or ten minutes during a meeting but since the information needed to be gathered by 1 February anyone missing from that meeting should be sent a copy by post, with a stamped addressed envelope for its return to the Branch Leader or named contact. All completed forms would be entered into a diocesan database by a number of volunteers and the information would then be passed on to Mary Sumner House where it would be held securely. Anyone joining a Branch after 1 February would have to be asked to complete a form, and any changes of surname, address or telephone number should be notified so that the data was kept up to date.

There was no further business and the meeting ended with The Grace at 8.35 pm.

Signed: ………………………………………………………….. date ………………………………………..

 (Diocesan President)

ADDITIONAL DATES 2017

12October Faith & Policy meeting at Cathedral 10.30 a.m.

18 October 120th Anniversary Service St John’s Whorlton 2.00 pm

21 October Hexham/ Bellingham Deanery Coffee Morning Bardon Mill Village Hall 9.30-11.30

2 November Service Day and Midday Prayers Cathedral from 10.30 (Trustees)

17November Branching Out programme ideas day at Church House 10.30 – 12.30 (contact Jennie Jones)

28 November Central Deanery Advent Carol Service St Columba’s ,North Gosforth 2.00 pm

1 December Coffee Morning to receive shoeboxes and distribute Journals Church House from 10.00

4 December West Deanery Advent Praise Holy Cross Fenham 11.00 am

4 December Hexham/Bellingham Deanery Advent Carols Hexham Abbey 2.00 pm

7 December Service Day and Midday Prayers Cathedral from 10.30 (Faith and Policy)

11 December Tynemouth Deanery Advent Carol Service St Peter’s Monkseaton 2.00 pm

 Morpeth Deanery Advent Carols St James’ Morpeth 7.00 pm

12 December Corbridge Deanery Advent Carol Service St Mary’s Ovingham 7.15 pm