

MOTHERS' UNION – NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

Meeting of Council held in St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park, at 1.30 pm on Fri 13 October 2023
Present: Margy Tasker-Brown (President) Anne Blight, Anne Cairns (Vice Presidents); 63 members.
Apologies for absence had been received from a further 8 members.

Margy welcomed everyone, especially three members attending for the first time.
Chaplain Revd Anne Marr assisted by Diana Macnaughton led the meeting in worship, including the hymn "Living Lord"; Anne included prayers for five deceased members and those who had lost loved ones since the last meeting of Council, and gave thanks for all new members.

MINUTES of the Ordinary Meeting held on 31 March were taken as read and confirmed. There were no matters arising.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS Margy complimented the many people who used their talents to support our work in a wide variety of ways, those who sew, knit, embroider, welcome, visit the sick and housebound, help in schools, write for the Journal, bake or cook, secretaries and treasurers, IT folk, the chaplain and trustees. She appealed for people to help with A&O projects and thanked those who had used their initiative successfully to raise funds. Two of three Actions deemed necessary at the last meeting of Council, Improving Links with Clergy and with Communities, had progressed well, but there was still an urgent need for a fund-raiser.

NEWS FROM THE UNITS The reports previously circulated were taken as read and several officers added or highlighted points.

Finance & Central Services Julian Brown would be sending to each branch a current membership list and asked that branch leaders go through these carefully to ensure that all details were correct before Paying-In Day on 1 February 2024. He would also be contacting trustees personally as under a new Law the Charity Commission had to be informed of every charity for which each individual acted as trustee.

Action & Outreach Diana Macnaughton asked branch leaders to take the provided gift bags in accordance with their branch's ability to fill them, and bring them to Church House on 1 December. The People's Kitchen was very grateful to receive them; details of the required items were displayed to the meeting and were available on the website. Diana invited financial donations to be sent to Julian earmarked 'for gift bags' by any branch that didn't feel able to fill a bag. A working party would meet on 10 November, probably at Holy Nativity church, to purchase items and pack any remaining bags. Other initiatives mentioned were hospital bags and items for the neo-natal units; it was important to liaise over these and to keep Diana informed.

Faith & Policy Jackie Moore displayed artwork produced at this year's Retreat; details and a booking form for next year would appear in the Winter Journal. As well as the White Ribbon Service at St Nicholas Gosforth on 25 November a group would be decorating the Altar of Resurrection in the Cathedral with purple hearts and white doves, for which patterns and templates were available. Branches were asked if possible to have a display in their own parish and maintain a two-minute silence, and there would be Midday Prayers before the Eucharist on 7 December in the Cathedral focused on the theme of 16 Days of Activism. Jackie would be sending out Wave of Prayer leaflets. She mentioned the number of Indoor Members known to Mary Sumner House which was

considerably less than the total claimed by branches, and pointed out that unless details were on the central database people would not receive *Connected* or any other direct mailing. The position of those who wished to be Indoor Members but whose branches had closed required clarification.

Marketing & Communications, Safeguarding and Diocesan members nothing to add to written reports.

Deanery Leaders Several dates for Advent Services and other events were reported; Elizabeth Dean asked for full details for inclusion on the website.

SPEAKER

Margy introduced Melanie Hinson, Director of Primary Education at Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust. Melanie had taught in city schools before moving to become Head Teacher of Whalton Village School where for ten years she had worked with Margy. She had then been approached by and moved to the Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust, which oversaw a number of schools throughout the County educating children from two to eighteen. The Trust's Light Values were: **Love, Inclusivity, Goodness, Hope, Truth**. Her priority throughout her teaching career had been to put the child first, and to broaden their experiences. Firmly believing that reading was essential, she aimed to ensure that no child left school illiterate. This was challenging for many rural families where there were low expectations and poor transport links, and many families were in crisis; in many homes there was not a single book so she had been very grateful for our help when we gave Story Sacks to her Early Years Unit to encourage reading and language.

OTHER BUSINESS

For technical reasons it proved impossible to show a video from the Gathering in York but this was available on the MU website.

Margy expressed our gratitude to Jacqueline Rainford, who had given much to the diocese but was about to relocate to Sheffield. The meeting offered its good wishes to the Chaplain's husband Derek Marr who would celebrate his 90th birthday the following day.

A raffle organised and drawn at the meeting raised £51.50

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 2.45 pm with prayers and The Grace led by the Chaplain.

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(Diocesan President)

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(date)