MOTHERS’ UNION – NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

Meeting of Council held in St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park, on Friday 11 October 2024 at 1.30

Present: Margy Tasker-Brown (President) Anne Blight, Anne Cairns (Vice Presidents); 44 members.

Apologies for absence had been received from a further 23 members. Dr Deb Lee, Zonal Trustee Elect to the World Wide Board, and Andrew Davison attended by invitation.

Margy welcomed everyone and invited the Chaplain Revd Anne Marr and Jacky Moore, Faith & Policy Co-ordinator, to lead the meeting in worship; this included prayers for the sick, and for deceased members and those who had lost loved ones since the last meeting of Council.

**MINUTES** of the Meeting held on 22 March 2024 were taken as read and confirmed.

**Matter Arising** Andrew Davison, son of the secretary Sandra Davison, having been prevented by an unrelated indisposition from attending the Spring meeting of Council when Dr Frankie Dowen had spoken about organ donation, thanked everyone for their prayers and good wishes, and support to his mother, while he had undergone kidney transplant surgery. The meeting was very glad to hear that he was now in good health, the donated kidney working well.

**PRESIDENT’S REMARKS** Margy mentioned that volunteers were needed to fill important posts, Vice President of Northumberland Archdeaconry, A&O and F&P unit leaders, AFIA co-ordinator, Treasurer, Gift Aid recorder, Deanery Leaders for Bedlington, Morpeth and Tynemouth Deaneries. Anne Blight, retiring VP Northumberland had agreed to accept nomination as Deanery Leader for Newcastle West and Margy suggested that unless volunteers came forward she would propose amalgamating Morpeth into a Northern Area with the deaneries of Alnwick, Bamburgh and Glendale.

Mary Sumner House had begun planning for the 150th anniversary celebrations in 2025; there would be an evening service in St Paul’s Cathedral, a special prayer book and other commemorative merchandise was being prepared. Margy invited anyone interested in preparing diocesan celebrations to contact her so that a committee could be formed to take this forward.

**NEWS FROM THE UNITS** The reports were taken as read and several officers added or highlighted points:

Action & Outreach Diana Macnaughton said that since the production of her report more caravan holidays had been arranged and she had been asked to deliver more talks. Those at the meeting were asked to take drawstring bags for branches to fill with gifts in the hope that there would be enough for the People’s Kitchen to give to their homeless clients who would number up to 180 men and 80 women. The bags would be collected from Church House between 9.30 and noon on 29th November. Branches or individuals unable to fill bags were invited to donate money to fill extra bags, and Diana invited anyone interested to help with packing these at Holy Nativity, Chapel House, on 9th November from 10.30.

Faith & Policy Jackie Moore paid tribute to Lorna Beadle who was now retiring from the prayer chain which she had co-ordinated for many years; someone was considering volunteering to take this over.

Safeguarding Sheila Walker stressed that while safeguarding was everyone’s responsibility each branch should have at least one trained member, and said that training sessions were being organised.

Marketing & Communications, Finance & Central Services and Diocesan members nothing to add to written reports.

Deanery Leaders Margy reminded the meeting that reports of the regular activities of branches were not the business of this meeting, and that Deanery reports should be limited to accounts of what had gone well, what was planned and where any help might be required.

There was no further business and Margy invited Dr Deb Lee to address the meeting.

Dr Lee said she was no stranger to the North East, having lived with her husband in Leam Lane, Gateshead, for five years following his ordination in Durham Cathedral. She now lived in St Bee’s and was Diocesan President of Carlisle. She invited the meeting to consider in small groups what recent achievement in their branches people were most proud of; this generated lively discussion. Deb then asked how many people had been informed of these achievements, stressing that it was important to raise the profile of Mothers’ Union in every way possible; outlining some of the successes in Carlisle Diocese, she said that what everyone was proudest of was the commitment of MU members, and commended the opinion of Kate Snow, World Wide President Elect, that we were STRONGER TOGETHER.

After an explanation from Karoline Wellborne about the *Rise Up* campaign Deb presented Bronze Award Certificates to representatives from 1st Internet, Holy Nativity Chapel House, and St Bartholomew Benton branches, and Margy hoped that next year some branches would be receiving Silver Awards.

Refreshments, raffle arranged by Anne Blight, and the sale of cards by Anne Marr at the venue raised £24.05, £55 and £50 for funds.

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(Diocesan President) (date)