MOTHERS’ UNION – NEWCASTLE DIOCESE

Annual Meeting of Council held in St John the Evangelist, Kingston Park, on Friday 22 March 2024

Present: Margy Tasker-Brown (President) Anne Blight, Anne Cairns (Vice Presidents); 61 members.

Apologies for absence had been received from a further ten members.

Margy welcomed everyone and invited the Chaplain Revd Anne Marr to lead the meeting in worship; Anne included prayers for the sick, 21 deceased members (including Josephine Kulke, Deanery Leader for Bedlington) and those who had lost loved ones since the last meeting of Council, and gave thanks for 11 new members. Four members attending Council for the first time introduced themselves.

**MINUTES** of the Annual Meeting held on 31 March 2023 were taken as read and confirmed. There were no matters arising.

**ANNUAL REPORT** Previously circulated

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Julian Brown, Acting Treasurer, had sent his apologies as he had unfortunately sustained an accident the previous day; his report had been previously circulated.

Both reports were accepted and there was no further business.

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(Diocesan President) (date)

An Ordinary meeting of Diocesan Council followed immediately.

**MINUTES** of the Ordinary Meeting held on 13 October 2023 were taken as read and confirmed. There were no matters arising.

**PRESIDENT’S REMARKS** Margy encouraged everyone to pray for people to offer to fill posts which would become vacant at the end of the current triennium; she suggested speaking to the current post-holder for information.

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

Action & Outreach Diana Macnaughton amended her report in respect of support for the Northumberland Refuge, which was supported by the whole of Bedlington Deanery. She thanked Margaret Crawforth for many years of service to AFIA and encouraged everyone to think of a replacement. She also suggested that branches start collecting items for gift bags, as Gift Bag Day would be 27 November, and encouraged everyone to talk to Norma Wilmott about rucksacks for discharged prisoners after the meeting.

Marketing & Communications Linda Benneworth thanked everyone who had provided copy for the website; Elizabeth Dean would welcome more stories and pictures. Barbara Packer gave the date for submission of copy for the Summer Journal as 26 April. Anne Blight mentioned that last year the MU Newcastle facebook page had attracted 800 hits. All were encouraged to take and distribute as widely as possible information cards with a QR code that led straight to the MU Newcastle website.

Faith and Policy Safeguarding and Diocesan members nothing to add to written reports.

Deanery Leaders Karoline Wellbourne said 1st Internet Branch would be holding a quiz in the summer; details would be on the website in due course.

**FUNDRAISING**

There had been no progress.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Leahan Garratt spoke briefly to promote the Diocesan Festival to be held in St James Benwell on Saturday 8 June.

Margy appealed for anyone who liked singing to contact Lesley Wright as the choir needed recruits.

Following His Majesty The King’s cancer diagnosis Sandra Davison had sent him a “Thinking of you” card on behalf of MU Newcastle and she displayed his gracious reply.

There was no further business; the meeting ended at 6.55 pm and was followed immediately by a presentation by Dr Frankie Dowen, consultant nephrologist at the Freeman Hospital entitled “The Gift of Life”. This moving presentation on the subject of organ donation was supported by Ross Hutchinson, Tyne Tees TV weather presenter, who had donated a kidney to his father, and several members from the floor spoke of their own experiences. Sadly Andrew Davison, son of the Secretary Sandra, was unable to attend the meeting as he was currently isolating due to an infection unrelated to his successful recent kidney transplant, but wanted to thank members for their prayers and good wishes. The talk was very warmly received by all.

A raffle arranged by Anne Blight at the venue raised £81.50 for funds.

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(Diocesan President) (date)