

# Diocese of Southwark Mothers' Union

## Annual Report and Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended 31 December 2023

### Vision

Our vision is of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships. This is not a vague hope, but a goal we actively pursue by praying, campaigning and enabling.

### Mission

We aim to show our Christian faith by the transformation of communities worldwide. We can do this through supporting strong relationships within the family and promoting reconciliation at all levels.

### Values

We are firmly rooted in voluntary ethos centred on mutual respect and collaboration. Our governance, leadership and programmes are driven by and undertaken through members within their own communities worldwide. We are inclusive and work with people of all faiths and none.

### Aim

The Aim of the Mothers' Union is the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life. In particular we aim to:

- uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and to promote its wider understanding;
- encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church;
- 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.

## Objectives and Activities

Together with members across the world, our objectives are:

- **Strengthen** communities all over the world
- **Help** the most disadvantaged at home
- **Shape** how we advocate for the rights of families
- **Build** supportive, loving relationships
- **Develop** our own relationship with God.

## Achievements & Challenges

The MU theme in 2023 ***Transformation in Action!*** has been fundamental to how we have continued to develop actions associated with our Strategy ***Flourishing together.***

### Growing the MU Community:

*Inspiring others and showing the relevance of the MU*

The main challenge we have been facing over the last year is about how we can flourish as an organisation. We have been working on ways we can be more creative and imaginative in promoting our mission and increasing member engagement. At the General meeting in York in 2023 there was a significant discussion about how we as MU members are to be bridge builders linking all sorts of people groups, bodies, ideas and communities. It is with this in mind that we reflect on the actions we have taken over the last year to support our strategy.



### *Being a bridge between clergy and MU members*

Over 2023, branches have closed due to an increasing ageing and frailty of its leaders and with no expectation of securing new members. In some cases, these branches are in a church which itself is finding it difficult to grow its congregation or where the members do not have the energy to reach out and connect with new people. Sometime the closure has been due to a break down in relationships either between members or with the Church. We have been thinking about how we can respond to this.

It is helpful to look at those branches that continue to grow and learn how this is being achieved. These appear to be branches that are actively engaging with their local congregations, reaching out to potential members from other churches who perhaps stopped because their branch closed and those who have a strong relationship with their incumbent.

To help the MU grow at branch level we have been looking at ways in which we can develop strong relationships with our clergy. We have developed clergy packs and distributed to local churches, with and without branches. When we have shared this information with trainees and established clergy, we have opened a dialogue about how the MU can support them in practical ways. There has been some positive feedback but more needs to be done to follow up those who are showing an interest.

More still needs to be done to help MU members and leaders to connect with our clergy, understand the pressures they face and find ways to work together. The actions we have taken appear to have the greatest impact where we can share the benefits of the MU in a parish underpinned by prayer and action. Many of the achievements we can see in the rest of the report show how the MU can shine out in the ministry of the Church as a whole.

## **Connecting with the Church Mission:**

### ***Strengthening our role within the wider church community***

Where MU branches have a strong membership, we can see that they also play a big part in the mission of their local church whilst promoting the MU. This includes as worship leaders, choir members, servers, toddler group assistants, eucharistic ministers, intercessors, coffee makers, service steward, youth leaders and many more active roles in worship as well as outreach. Over the last year we have seen a number of examples of engagement:

- Supporting community projects: including Community cafés in North Mitcham at St Barnabas and at St Luke's, Camberwell; pastoral lunches in St Mary Magdalene and St Martin's in Addiscombe; links with local foodbanks in New Malden, Caterham and South Norwood; Mums and Toddlers and Nurseries attached to the Church at St Matthews, Redhill and St Barnabas, Sutton.
- Taking part in services: Most branches regularly participate and contribute to Mothering Sunday with prayers, talks, gifts and flowers, leading services for Mary Sumner Day as well as helping create Christingles at Christmas.

- Helping with church fundraising: This includes supporting Church Summer and Autumn / Christmas Fairs, coffee mornings as well as church Lent lunches and Firework displays.
- Welcoming people into the Church family: MU branches across the Diocese have strong roles in their churches supporting baptism families, distributing cards, gifts and arranging events. At Christ Church, Purley they supported a Good Friday outreach event; Christ Church, Gipsy Hill lead prayers by candlelight at the beginning of the school year; St Luke's, Camberwell and members in Caterham are active in Junior church and Horley branch have established a new service 'Tea and Chat' all of which reach out to the wider congregation and community. Some members are also engaged as pastoral visitors and others as Street Pastors.
- Supporting church events related to Eco Church and sustainability. With an increasing emphasis on Eco Church activities, it would be good to see how MU could connect around this issue of social injustice. St Andrew's Coulsdon have been involved in a Noah's Ark Festival learning how to use our voice and live more sustainably.
- Engaging with Diocesan links with Zimbabwe: The Croydon area have a strong link with Central Zimbabwe Diocese and for many years been supported by the MU through Rosemary Kempell. Rosemary has now stood down and Susan Gibbin has picked up the mantle. Many thanks to Rosemary for so many years of service.

## **Having an impact:**

### ***Meeting the needs of families facing injustice and adversity***

Members across the Diocese are also active in wider community outreach projects. Although coordinated at a Diocesan level, it provides a real opportunity for members to connect with the wider mission of Southwark MU.

**Tea @ 2:** Thanks go to Hilary Richardson for coordinating Tea at 2 at the Evelina Children's Hospital. This initiative has now firmly established itself again after COVID with a small but dedicated team of 11 volunteers. During the year Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Trust held an afternoon reception where awards were handed to volunteers for their years of service. Several MU members received awards including Hilary Richardson and Liz Pullen.

**Craft work:** The MU continue to support the Neo Natal Intensive care and other Hospital units by knitting, crocheting and stitching. In Kingston Area members have completed 5 pairs of hats and cardies, 27 octopuses, 15 teddies for tragedies and 4 angel pockets. Also 14 cross' in pockets for adult patients and 3 sets of paired hearts for end-of-life care.

**Prison Links:** Links between Prisons and Southwark MU are also now expanding. The links with Belmarsh continue to be strong, facilitated by Jan Gosling. This includes supporting a family day once a month where feedback from the male prisoners showed they enjoy doing all the craft activities with their children and a new initiative at Belmarsh, called “Father Bonding”, still in its early stages. Links with Wandsworth prison have also developed with MU contributing to the call for woollen hats and socks as well as local initiatives where branches have sent Christmas tags and cards.

**Tea and Talk:** This initiative was set up by Cynthia Smith and continues in South Croydon. The purpose is to support refugee families in the local community. Strong connections have been built and strengthened with examples of generosity. On Mothering Sunday, each mother was given a wrapped rose which they loved. Before Easter, hot cross buns, small chocolate eggs and Easter blessings cards were given. The male leaders also took the men on a walk and some guests attend church.

The active engagement of MU volunteers also provides the opportunity to hear about the realities of living with refugee status. The children are at the local schools with some families making connections with local churches and a toddler group however MU members are well aware of the many problems families face. These have been brought to the attention of Bishop Rosemarie and Bishop Christopher and others in Trinity House who are then able to take action. Cynthia and the other helpers also keep in touch with many families who have moved on.

### **AFIA (Away from it All) Holidays:**

2023 was extremely busy with 23 families given breaks, twice as many as 2022. Holidays are arranged in a way that meet the needs of the individuals. One family went to a Sykes cottage for a week and other families had 4 nights/ 5 days away near Pagham, West Sussex in a Haven Park. Organisations such as these provide a small amount of charity discount. The average cost of these holidays was just over £600.00.



There was one other family of a very sick little boy who had their holiday held over from last year who did manage to go away this summer, even though the little boy had so sadly died. The family

were really appreciative and all benefited from the break at Butlins.

In total the number of people who have benefited from a holiday this year is 118; 63 adults and 55 children. This is an amazing total and we are grateful to all branches for their continuing fantastic efforts at fundraising for AFIA. Thank you to Sally Steel for organising and managing these holidays.

## **Developing members:**

*In faith, confidence and understanding through*

### ***Faith and Prayer***

Prayer is the bedrock of the Mothers' Union and this is evident in the various events that have taken place at both branch and diocesan level as well as in our participation in national events and programmes.

At branch level members are involved in leading and supporting:

- Mid-day prayers in the Harvard Chapel each month
- Lady Day services: including services held at St Barnabas, Sutton; Addiscombe St Mildred; and St Peter's Norbiton
- Carol services : including one at Holy Trinity, Redhill
- World Day of Prayer with members in Addiscombe joining with other churches in the local community
- Lent and Advent meditations arranged by St Mildreds Addiscombe; Holy Cross, Motspur Park; Tadworth, and Horley
- Talks linking Art and spirituality - Painting God (St Mildreds, Addiscombe); John the Baptist in Art (St Peter's, Norbiton); Spirituality and Christian support (Sanderstead) Icons and reflections on Art, Where Art meets the Sacred, Praying the Labrinth (St Andrew's, Ham).
- Community outreach: Leading services in Care Homes and providing bibles to schools

At a Diocesan and National level, events include:

- Festival service at Southwark Cathedral held on the 15<sup>th</sup> July with Bishop Karowei, Bishop of Woolwich preaching. We also welcomed provincial and diocesan presidents from around the SE, The MU festival choir sang and refreshments were





enjoyed by all after the service. We remember Bishop Karowei who died on the 8<sup>th</sup> September.

- Wave of Prayer which took place at the beginning of September with many Branches participating.
- The retreat at Wychroft in October which was well attended and ably led by Mother Sandra
- The Diocesan Advent service held at St Stephens Vauxhall, led by Canon Stephen Coulson and Bishop Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston
- Prayer network has been led by Olu Akitoye
- General Meeting: Attendance at the service in York Minster.

Grateful thanks are also given to Rev Esther Foss who stood down as Chaplain to Southwark MU in early summer as she had been made Dean of Women's Ministry on the 12<sup>th</sup> July.

### ***Learning and Growing***

It is important that members continue to have the opportunity to learn and grow in understanding about important issues facing us all today. As well as events within local areas and branches a couple of learning events have taken place at a diocesan meeting.

***Peace Circles:*** On Mary Sumner Day, Amina Dikedi and Jane Namurye assisted by Comfort led around 40 members in two introductory sessions of the Peace Circle material developed by Creators of Peace International (CoP). <https://www.creatorsofpeace.org/> .



This is an initiative open to women from all backgrounds, ages and cultures who want to become more empowered, inspired, hopeful and effective in the current global climate. They organise Peace Circles throughout the year across the country and also run regular social events and talks in more than 55 countries including the UK, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Australia, Kenya, Burundi, Sudan, Cameroon, New Zealand and the Solomon Islands. They firmly believe that women can be catalysts for peace in their homes, workplace and community.

***Dementia Health and Wellbeing:*** At the October Diocesan Council Meeting Dr Pallavi Nair, Research associate at Imperial College, gave MU members a presentation aimed at

raising awareness and promoting dialogue about our cognitive health. As society ages, it is clear that dementia becomes an increasingly relevant topic. Dr Nair addressed the risks associated with dementia, early signs, strategies for risk reduction, and paramount importance was given on early detection and prevention. The aim of events such as these are to create a more informed, compassionate, dementia-aware community who practice mindful ageing. This presentation is now being seen in a number of branches and local church communities across the Diocese.

### ***Responding to Gender Based Violence***

**16 days of activism:** Although Gender based violence is a ‘365 days a year’ programme many MU branches in Southwark took the opportunity to promote this more actively during the 16 days of activism at the end of November.

During this period a number of members engaged with the Red Chair project promoted by Restored <https://www.restored-uk.org/partner/cneda/red-chair/>. It involved reserving an empty chair in a public place, alongside information about domestic abuse and violence against women. The empty chair acted as a powerful symbol of the many women who have been killed through gender-based violence - women who should still

#### **Southwark Mothers' Union**



#### **The Red Chair**

Good Shepherd Tadworth, Southwark Cathedral, St John's Caterham Valley, Churchwalk Caterham, Tadworth bench, St Barnabas Sutton, St Mildreds Addiscombe



be with us today. Thanks to those branches who sent in images of their symbols displayed in their churches, church halls, community and at the Cathedral.

Actions during this period also included static displays, prayers and services as well as the distribution of information leaflets. There has been significant impact from this initiative with many more people now aware of the incidence of domestic abuse across our local communities.



At St Barnabas Mitcham they also honoured the lives lost to men's violence with the mark of a white ribbon on the first Sunday following the 25<sup>th</sup> November. This was supported by a floral display, leaflets and a three-minute silence.

**Responding to those in women's Refuges:** There continued to be active engagement by branches, working in their parishes, in providing gifts and equipment to local refuges in Croydon, Sutton and Redhill. Hundreds of items and gifts have been supplied to these vulnerable women and their children.

**RiseUp Campaign:** Mothers' Union nationally launched its campaign against Domestic abuse. Known as RiseUp it stands for Respond, Inform, Support, Empower, Unite and Pray. Materials were circulated to Branches to engage with the programme and work with their churches to take action and apply for the different awards (Bronze, silver and gold).



A number of branches launched their engagement during the 16 days of activism. Branches also used the materials supplied by the MU programme Rise Up against Domestic abuse to provide contact details for those who may be in need. At St Mildreds Addiscombe they also adapted the literature for men.

**Modern Day Slavery:** Training and action related to raising awareness of modern-day slavery continues. A number of MU members have been partnering in Surrey with the Reigate Archdeaconry Social Justice Forum who are striving to find ways of identifying and stopping modern day slavery in the community. This has built stronger connection to be made with other Churches in the local community.

### **Fellowship & Fun**

The Mothers' Union members in Southwark continue to show enormous energy and enthusiasm for arranging events that bring joy and interest to members lives. Examples of this include:

- Keeping connected: It is great to see how branches are keeping in touch with housebound members or in nursing homes by phone and in person.
- Talks for members and the wider church community: Examples include learning about individuals' experiences, their faith and their work as well as from those working in organisations that are reaching out the most vulnerable in our community e.g. AFIA, Action and Outreach, Samaritans, Chaplaincy, Foodbanks. Thanks are sent to all who contributed.
- Community events: Including Coronation parties and supporting 'The Big Help Out'; Quizzes and Anniversary celebrations at St Barnabas, Sutton and Coulsdon, St John's. Where these engage with the wider church community it also offers a great opportunity to promote the work of the MU.
- Being active and creative: By bringing members and others in the local community to participate in events which connect us to the arts brings significant joy and wellbeing. Examples of activities that have taken place includes Upcycling Workshops, Wreath making, Craft afternoons, cardmaking and handicrafts and bags of love, all of which also offer opportunities for fundraising or providing gifts to our more vulnerable members in our community. A new project has been set up by the members in Kingston Area, knitting and crochet blankets for the local Star and Garter Home.
- Outings: MU members have been active in getting out to connect with other members and centres of worship. This includes South Norwood's visit to Rochester Cathedral and the 'Threads through creation' display, a trip to Old Alresford home of Mary Sumner, by St Barnabas, Mitcham and Mortlake and East Sheen's visit to St Bart's Church, Otford. Connecting with other MU members and enjoying the outdoors has also enhanced members wellbeing.
- Celebrating: It has been great to see branches celebrating the legacy of members with long service as well as branch anniversaries. We celebrate in particular the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the branch at St Barnabas Sutton and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at St John's Coulsdon.



## ***Fundraising***

Thanks are given to all branches who continue to be active in fundraising for AFIA, Summer of Hope and the Mothers' Union worldwide. Activities have taken place across the diocese including:

- Sales and stalls: Bring and buy sales; Cake and Mothering Sunday sales; Church event; Bible Object Auction and Craft and artwork sales.
- Entertainment & Refreshment: Quiz nights; Post Christmas festive lunch; Garden parties Afternoon and



Strawberry teas; Coffee mornings; Cheese and wine events.

The impact of this has allowed us to maintain our outreach through AFIA, provide grants to branches that are trying new initiatives and support the wider work of the MU.

## Moving forward in 2024

The 2023 theme of *Transformation- in Action!* continues in 2024 as an impetus for us to revisit our Diocesan strategy **Flourishing Together**. In this all our members are called to transform the MU in Southwark so it is recognised as an integral, relevant and visible part of the Church of England's Mission for Prayer, Action and Outreach.

In doing so we will continue to:

- Strengthen our links with Diocesan colleagues – links particularly to the teams focused on tackling social injustice as well as those who lead on communications
- Connect with parishes across the diocese through presentations and attendance at Deanery and Diocesan synods. Using opportunities to connect and promote the work of the organisation as partners in local ministry and mission.
- Continue to promote the work of the MU through fundraising activities and by being present and working with those families who face challenging times here in England e.g., refugees, prisoners, those facing poverty and significant life stresses as well as those overseas.

## Safeguarding

As an organisation concerned with Christian principles and ministry in family life, the nurture and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is at the heart of Mothers' Union. Both individually as members and collectively as an organisation, Mothers' Union fulfils its duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults,

doing everything possible to ensure that they are safe when involved in Mothers' Union activities.

Safeguarding policies and practices issued by the Anglican Church, and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) charter for the safety of people within the churches of the Anglican Communion are used as the basis for the MU in Southwark. In line with the duties of the Board the trustees have

- reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures at the first meeting of the year.
- completed DBS checks on new Trustees using a DBS service from Thirtyone:eight.
- nominated a member to have an overview of the safeguarding aspects of the Mothers' Union activities across the diocese (Susan Gibbin)
- reviewed the roles in Mothers' Union and ensure that recruitment is in line with good safeguarding practice.

As well as ensuring Trustees are aware of policy and practice, guidance continues to be shared with all members to help establish strong practice at a local level. Strong links are encouraged with local Parish Safeguarding officers and training is made available through the Church of England and Southwark Diocesan Safeguarding teams:

- <http://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training-events/>
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding/training>

## Data Protection

As an organisation the Diocese of Southwark Mothers' Union takes its duties under the relevant Data protection legislation seriously. Its actions are guided by Diocesan policy and advice from Mary Sumner House. Work is underway to ensure access to privacy notices are available through the website and in hardcopy. Guidance to role holders has been circulated along with consent forms to be used in line with Diocesan and Central MU advice. The Trustees have made it a priority to maintain good Information Governance practice and provide support to all those responsible for holding personal data.

## Financial Review 2023

Under the Charities Act 2011, the Trustees have prepared a statement of accounts for 2023 which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Mothers' Union Southwark Diocese. Full details can be found in the Annual Accounts.

**Accounting Policies:** The accounts have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP.

The accounts include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the Trustees are responsible in law.

**Financial performance – General and unrestricted funds:** General Funds represent the funds of the Trustees that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application on the general purposes of the Trustees. Funds designated for a particular purpose by the Trustees are also unrestricted. In 2023, £15,000 within the General Funds was held in the designated contingency fund.

In 2023 total income into unrestricted funds was £27,230. Of this income £25,072 was spent from unrestricted funds to support the administration and mission of the Southwark Diocesan Mothers' Union. The net result for the year was an excess of income over expenditure of £2,158 on unrestricted funds. Unrestricted funds totalling £52,030 were carried forward at 31st December 2023.

### **Financial performance - Restricted Funds**

Restricted funds are to be used for specified purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

There were restricted donations totalling £43,536 in the year (this includes money sent to MSH which contributes to the leadership, administration and mission of MU worldwide). These are given to support all the various Diocesan and Mothers' Union Central funds (these are set out in the accounts). The total balance of restricted funds at 31st December was £22,167.

**Receipts:** Collections, subscriptions, donations and interest are recognised when received. Income tax recoverable on Gift Aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised.

Funds raised through any other sources, including through sales of literature purchased from Mothers' Union Enterprises (MUe) are accounted for gross.

**Payments:** Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over.

**Reserves Policy:** Reserves are defined as income that becomes available and which is to be expended at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their objects, but which has not yet been spent, committed or designated. The Trustees recognise the need to hold reserves to allow protection of the core activities in the event of income shortfalls and to promote balanced strategic planning. Through prudent housekeeping over a number of years, the reserves have been built up to the current level of £36,997 and include a legacy of £26,989 received in 2016.



The Trustee Board budgets and plans its expenditure and intends to maintain reserves that will protect the Charity against income shortfalls. A sum of £15,000 has also been set aside in a designated fund to rent and equip a Diocesan Mothers' Union Office should the present premises become unavailable, and to cover the secretary's salary for 6 months in an emergency.

**Investment Policy:** The Trustees continue to invest in the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England.

## Communication

The Southwark Mothers' Union continues to use a range of tools for communicating with its members and the wider community.

### Digital tools

This includes our allocated space on the Southwark Diocesan website where information about the organisation, services, the wave of prayer and projects and publications are posted <https://southwark.anglican.org/mission-ministry/faith-in-action/mothers-union/>.

There has been a steady flow of visitors, however we are unable to offer a facility for people to ask questions (other than by 'contact us) or add comments.

During the year we had 250 views of our pages, split as follows:

- mothers-union: 95 views
- about-the-mu: 85 views
- mu-prayer: 58 views
- mu-projects: 12 views

There has also been an active use of X (Twitter):

[https://twitter.com/MU\\_Southwark](https://twitter.com/MU_Southwark)

with 292 tweets and 117 followers. There were 797 impressions (where people viewed/took action). These figures have been rising steadily.

The Facebook page continues to be a success - sharing information from the wider MU community - nationally and internationally - as well as events and activities within branches and the Diocese <https://www.facebook.com/MothersUnionSouthwarkDiocese>.

During the year, there has been a steady flow of readers with a good proportion using the information in some way – liking, commenting or sharing - Project news is particularly popular as well as 'issues'. We had 521 likes and 560 followers and a vast reach of many thousands.



We also have a You Tube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@southwarkmu> which although still early in its development has had 538 views.

Thanks to Margaret Simmons for all she does to keep us connected and online.

## ***Publications***

In addition to our Southwark News (three times a year) which we thank Val Green for editing, we have had a number of articles published in The Bridge. This included articles on the work of the MU in supporting families and our campaigns around Domestic Abuse. The Diocesan team are now also linked into our programme of events.

## **Leadership and Governance**

### ***Leadership in Southwark***

The affairs of the Mothers' Union in the diocese are managed by the Board of Trustees. Under the Diocesan Constitution and Handbook, revised 2005 and regularly reviewed, the Trustees are elected on a triennial basis. The new Trustee Board was appointed for three years from January 2022 and commissioned at the festival service in May. All are thanked for their commitment to the role.

All subscribing members of the MU in the diocese are entitled to vote for the Diocesan President and Unit Co-ordinators. Members from each geographical Area also vote for their own Vice President and two area representatives on the Trustee Board. To date no election has been held due to a lack of candidates and a number of vacancies were held open last year.

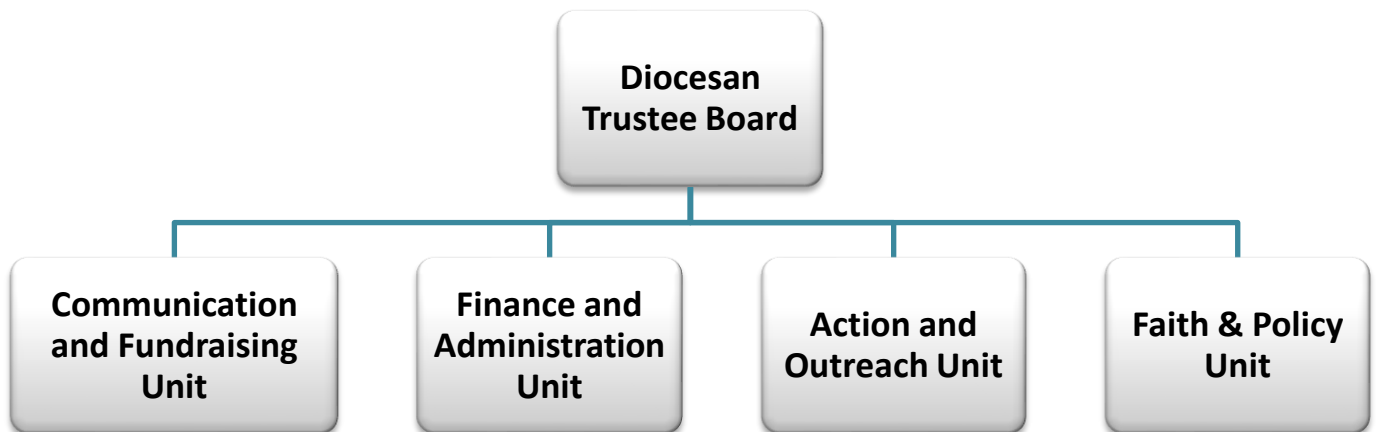
The Honorary Treasurer, appointed by the Trustees continues to keep a close eye on the MU's financial governance. Jean Cartwright is thanked for her continued service. In addition to those trustees that represent the branches within the diocese and those that hold unit lead roles there is an opportunity to appoint three additional members on the Board. These individuals are co-opted onto the Trustee Board for the triennial because of their specific skills. In 2023 there were no additional co-opted members on the Board.

The Diocesan Chaplain is appointed after consultation between the Diocesan Bishop and the Southwark MU President. Also appointed by the Trustee Board are a number of officers listed in Annex 1. The Trustees also employ a part-time secretary, who manages the office and provides administrative support for the Trustee Board.

### ***Governance***

The Trustee Board met five times in 2023 and the Council twice (in addition to the AGM for 2022). During these times meetings were held in person with the opportunity for some members to join over zoom. Thanks to all those who helped manage the technology.

Within the Southwark Diocesan Mothers' Union, the work of the four units continue to report to the Trustee Board and to Diocesan Council, coordinating diocesan activity and advising on policy and performance.



In order that Southwark MU is able to connect with and benefit from other members of MU across England as well as worldwide, members of the Board as well as those directly connected to the four units also participate in meetings facilitated by Mary Sumner House. These include, provincial conferences (we are within the Canterbury Province) and Community of Interest Groups. The areas we are engaged with include:

- Finance / Treasurers
- Governance
- Member Directory and Database
- Safeguarding
- AFIA
- Communications
- Prisons
- Craft
- Faith
- Diocesan Chaplains
- Membership
- Metamorphosis
- Policy

In addition, The Mothers' Union (Southwark Diocese) Vice presidents and area representatives of the four geographical areas (Croydon, Kingston, Reigate and Woolwich) continued to link with their deaneries and branches (in line with the Church of England parish and synod structures). The challenges of maintaining branches continues to be difficult. Many members are happy to keep the connection with the MU but unwilling or unable to continue to take on leadership roles locally. Trustees continue to try and support their branch and diocesan members and try to help find new ways to work.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is arranged for July at which meeting the Annual Report and Accounts will be presented to the membership. The AGM is open to all members although voting rights at Diocesan Council are restricted.

### ***Membership / Volunteers***

In 2023, there were 48 branches in the Diocese to which 788 branch members belong, in addition to 44 diocesan members, a total of 822. Although some branches continue to grow, total numbers of members and branches are not yet seeing significant growth.

Enrolments include: Addington, St Mary's (2); South Norwood (3); St Andrew's Ham (2); St Alban South Norwood (5); St James New Malden (3); St Barnabas Sutton (5); Horley (2)

There have also been a number of people who have and continue to give of their time and talents to the MU. We celebrate these individuals and thank them for the service they have given.

We also thank God for the wonderful lives and service to the MU given by our members who have passed away this year.

***Indoor Members*** are also well supported by local Branches as well as the additional support of the Diocesan Indoor member correspondent, Jane Namurye. In 2023, we had 2 new members however, 2 members sadly passed away, 2 moved out of the diocese and 4 were not able to renew their membership.

### ***Member training and development***

During 2023 branches continued to be supported with information, policies and presentations at Council meetings. In March we received a talk on Women's ministry in Southwark by the Revd Canon Anna Eltringham, the then Dean of Women's Ministry who later became the Bishop of Ripon, and in October on Dementia and wellbeing. At the Mary Sumner day event members also experienced a presentation on Peace Circles.

Branch leader meetings with the Diocesan President have continued and have been well represented. In some areas of the Diocese, branches highlighted significant difficulties in securing leadership capacity to develop and grow their membership. As a result of this the branch guide was redesigned. Trustees do their best to keep members updated and informed of MU initiatives, local activities and good practice. This continues to be cascaded down through the work of the communications lead, VPs and area representatives.

### ***Feedback from local Branches***

The engagement of members at branch, deanery and area level is seen through regular reports to trustees as well as in the celebrating the years successes in the Annual Report. Each provides evidence of the hard work members have continued to do to find new ways of engaging with their local Church and its mission; in promoting the wider role of the MU in supporting families and in offering fellowship and prayer for those in need.

There is much we can be proud of as we all seek to meet the aims, purpose and mission of the MU. It has been wonderful to see the lasting legacy members work has had on families here in the Diocese and worldwide.

## **Administrative Information**

The Mothers' Union Southwark Diocese is under the patronage and sanction of the Bishop of the Diocese. It is affiliated to its parent charity, The Mothers' Union (Reg. Charity No. 240531, headquarters at Mary Sumner House, Westminster), but is an autonomous organisation.

### ***Registered office:***

Mothers' Union Office,  
Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court,  
Borough High Street,  
London SE1 1HW.  
Tel: 020 7939 9459  
Email: [mu@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:mu@southwark.anglican.org)

### ***Bank:***

HSBC, 66 High Street, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4HD

### ***Independent Examiner:***

Mr A J Kett FCA, Little Dolby, Ifield Road, Charlwood, Surrey, RH6 0DR

Trustee Board members are appointed for three years from 1 January 2022. A list of Trustees and other officers can be found in Annex 1.

## **Report Approval**

This report was approved by the Trustees on 1<sup>st</sup> May and signed on their behalf by:



Comfort Idowu-Fearon Diocesan President (Southwark MU)



## **Annex 1**

### **List of Trustees and officers**

#### **Trustees (in post from 1 January 2022)**

Diocesan President	Comfort Idowu-Fearon
Vice President for Croydon	Sally Steele
Vice Presidents for Woolwich	Yemi Ojumu (From April 2023)
Vice President for Reigate	Susan Gibbin
Vice President for Kingston	Wendy Moss
Action and Outreach Unit Coordinator	Sally Steele
Fundraising and Communications Unit Coordinator	Susan Gibbin
Finance and Administration Unit Coordinator	Joy Morrall
Faith and Policy Unit Coordinator	Penny Lohead
Croydon Area Representative	Cathy Brown
Woolwich Area Representative	Roseline Okiti
Reigate Area Representative	Margaret Fitch
Kingston Area Representatives	Ursula Hodges
	Alistair Wharton (from mid-2022)

#### **Attendees (non-voting)**

Hon Treasurer	Jean Cartwright
Diocesan Secretary	Anne Love
Chaplain	Revd Esther Foss
Diocesan Safeguarding lead (co-opted)	Susan Gibbin

#### **Other Officers**

Away From It All (AFIA) Coordinator	Sally Steele
Newsletter Editor	Val Green
Training Officer	Vacancy
Indoor Member Coordinator	Jane Namurye
Social Media lead	Margaret Simmons
Gift Aid coordinator	Ann Squirrell