



Annual Report
Mothers' Union
Diocese of Clogher
2023

NI Charity NO 100592
RoI Charity No 20007331

Main Office Bearers

Diocesan President	Mrs Heather Ellis
Secretary	Mrs Liane Armstrong
Treasurer	Mrs Diane Donaldson

Financial Details

Annual Accounts 1 January 2023 - 31 December 2023

Closing Balance £2348.49

Branch Subscriptions for 2023 were £16098.

£ 600 for Clogher Diocesan Funds

£15498 sent to MUAI (£27 per member)

Branch Subscriptions for 2023 were € 1890 which was sent to MUAI

(€ 30 per member)

Bank

Ulster Bank
16 Darling street
Enniskillen
BT74 7ER

Membership

Clogher Diocese Members - 650

The number of branches in Ireland at 31 December 2023 was 264
(31 December 2022: 280)

The number of members in Ireland at 31 December 2023 was 4,940 (31 December
2022: 5,016). (1930- 10,000 members)

CLOGHER DIOCESAN MOTHERS 'UNION

DIOCESAN TRUSTEES 2023

PRESIDENT Mrs Heather Ellis

FINANCE AND CENTRAL SERVICES UNIT

VICE-PRESIDENT Mrs Geraldine Beattie

UNIT CO-ORDINATOR Vacant

SECRETARY Mrs Liane Armstrong

TREASURER Mrs Diane Donaldson

FAITH AND POLICY UNIT

VICE-PRESIDENT Vacant

UNIT CO-ORDINATOR Mrs Valerie McMorris

INDOOR MEMBERS Mrs Irene Boyd

SOCIAL POLICY (N) Mrs Joy Graham

SOCIAL POLICY (S) Mrs Linda Keating

ACTION AND OUTREACH UNIT

VICE-PRESIDENT Mrs Lettie Coulter

UNIT CO-ORDINATOR Mrs Noreen Little

WORLDWIDE Mrs Doreen Earls

YOUNG MEMBERS Mrs Caroline Watterson

FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNICATION UNIT

VICE-PRESIDENT Mrs Myrtle Allen

UNIT CO-ORDINATOR Mrs Ivy Edwards

MU ENTERPRISE Mrs Vivien Clarke

PRO Vacant

OTHER MEMBERS

CHAPLAIN Rev Charles Eames

HOSPITAL VISITOR (N) Mrs Geraldine Beattie

HOSPITAL VISITOR (S) Mrs Myrtle Allen

ELECTED REP TO COUNCIL Mrs Beulah Whittendale

GFS REPRESENTATIVE Mrs Eileen Cutler

Mothers' Union is an international Christian membership charity that aims to demonstrate the Christian faith in action through the transformation of communities worldwide.

Our aims and objects are:

- To promote and support married life.
- To encourage parents in their role to develop the faith of their children.
- To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service.
- To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children.
- To help those whose family life has met with adversity.

Our 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.

Our values

Mothers' Union is a Christian mission organisation working with people of all faiths and none. Mothers' Union is firmly rooted in a voluntary ethos centered on mutual respect and collaboration. Our governance, leadership and programmes are undertaken and driven by members within their own communities worldwide.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself.” Luke 10:27

Our membership

Our members are not all mothers, or even all women. They are single, married, parents, grandparents, or young adults just beginning to express their social conscience. Mothers' Union provides, for all four million members, a network through which they can serve Christ in their own community - through prayer, financial support and actively working at the grassroots level in programmes that meet local needs.

PATRON The Bishop of Clogher.

DIOCESAN CHAPLAIN

The Diocesan Chaplain shall be appointed for a term of three years and may serve a further three years even if retired, but still living with the Diocese. The appointment shall be made by the Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan President. The Chaplain shall be entitled to participate in meetings of the Trustee Body and Diocesan Council. The Chaplain shall be invited to formally open Diocesan Council with prayers and/or a time of worship.

DIOCESAN PRESIDENT

The Diocesan President, in accordance with the direction of All Ireland Council, shall be elected to commence the term of office on the first day of January in the year preceding the triennial elections. This appointment shall be agreed by the Bishop of Clogher. A term of office shall be three years with possible election for a further three years.

MEMBERSHIP

The Diocesan Trustee Body shall take office triennially on the 1st January and consist of the following: The Diocesan President, Diocesan Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Unit Co-ordinators and Representatives. The Trustee Body shall have power to invite members to attend for a specific purpose and for a specific period, in order to report, advise or represent Mothers' Union policy. Representation on other organisations shall be determined by the Trustee Body.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO TRUSTEE BODY

All Diocesan Officials, excluding the Treasurer, shall serve for a term of three years and shall be eligible to serve for a further term. They shall be ineligible for re-election to the same office if they have already served in it six years either consecutively or at intervals. All voting must be completed by 31st July and subsequently at three-year intervals. Each name included in the voting paper must have received a minimum of three nominations. Only votes received by post will be accepted. The Diocesan Officials with the exception of the President shall commence their term of office on the first day of January in the year following their elections. Trustee Meetings The Trustee Body shall meet as required but not less than twice per year. Any additional meetings of the Trustee Body may be called at the discretion of the Diocesan President. Most of the meetings are on Zoom which leaves it convenient for most Trustees. Agenda for Trustee meetings If a member wishes a specific item to be discussed at a Trustee meeting, notice must be given to the Diocesan Secretary at least three weeks in advance of the meeting.

Diocesan Members Diocesan members are those who wish to remain in touch with the Mothers' Union in the Diocese and would like to become involved in Mothers' Union work in the local area without having to commit to regular meetings. Diocesan members pay a subscription each year which entitles them to attend Council meetings, receive invitations to all special services and events, and receive Diocesan and All Ireland magazines.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Not less than fourteen days' notice shall be given of a meeting of the Diocesan Council.

BRANCH ELECTIONS

The Branch Leader may be appointed by the Incumbent of the Parish or elected by the members of the Branch, with the appointment approved by the Incumbent. The Branch Secretaries, Treasurers, and Branch Unit Representatives shall be elected triennially by the Branch members and shall commence their term of office on the First day of January. Their term of office should be three years and they will be eligible to continue for a further three years.

WORSHIP

All Mothers' Union meetings and events shall include a time of worship. The Mothers' Union Prayer and the Wave of Prayer should be included regularly. Branches are encouraged to have a service of corporate communion when appropriate during the year.

INVITATIONS TO THE WORLD-WIDE PRESIDENT

Before any invitation is extended to the World-Wide President, the Chief Executive or any member of staff of Mary Sumner House, the advice and guidance of the Diocesan President should always be sought. The All Ireland President should then be informed before any invitation is sent out. This is not only courtesy but also good practice. According to guidelines issued by Mary Sumner House invitations should only be issued for a diocesan event.

INVITATIONS TO ALL IRELAND AND OTHER DIOCESAN PRESIDENTS

The Diocesan President should always be informed before any invitation is issued to the All- Ireland President. Similarly, she should be informed of invitations to any other Diocesan President.

FINANCE

It is in keeping with our ethos, and in line with Charity Commission legislation, that best practice shall be maintained in all areas. Any two of three signatories are required on all cheques and where possible one should be the Diocesan President. At Branch level, the annual accounts shall be audited by an independent person, presented annually at a Branch meeting and forwarded to the Diocesan Treasurer. At Diocesan level, all accounts shall be audited by a person approved by the Trustee Body and presented annually to the Trustees. Once in each triennial period, the expenses of the members of the Trustee Body shall be reviewed to make sure all expenses are covered.

CHARITABLE APPEALS

The Mothers' Union is a charity and is not in a position to be used as a channel for appeals by other Charitable Organisations unless sanctioned by the Diocesan President (Reg. 12 MU Constitution 2002). A Branch may support the needs of its own parish but subject to the Aims, Purpose and Objects of the Society.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

A Health and Safety policy including child protection shall be in place and reviewed annually. All activities and initiatives shall be in accordance with the guidelines as specified in the Church of Ireland's Safeguarding Trust.

Mothers' Union Trustee Unit Reports

Action and Outreach

Many of our members knit, crochet, sew and contribute to the many items that are donated throughout the Diocese.

Teddies have gone to Fields of Life in Uganda via June Butler and Romania via Geraldine Beattie. It is sad to see as the hospital valued them and would still appreciate them. This does not affect any other items and many were busy knitting baby blankets, cardigans, hats, angel gowns etc. These are always welcome and are now handed over by a Volunteer Co-Ordinator Stacey Clarke who has assured me of the value to the hospital. Blankets and Fiddle-muffs have also gone this year to the hospital following a direct request for Fiddle-muffs etc from the Elderly Care wards.

Vouchers were handed over to Women's Aid and Tearmann following the successful breakfast in Maguiresbridge. Again, these charities are very grateful for Vouchers and toiletries given. We have come a long way in raising awareness of Gender-Based Violence in our communities and can now consider going further with the Rise-Up campaign coming to our Diocese.

A Worldwide sub-group was established in All Ireland last November to develop up to date resources ie PowerPoint for Diocesan Representatives to use when they speak at meetings. Your worldwide funds really make a difference and we all value hearing what it does. Articles in your Connected Magazine also have information on this.

Ireland contributed £50,000 plus €15,000 in the year ended 31 December 2023 to Worldwide charities in Mothers' Union.

Clogher Diocesan Mothers' Union Worldwide Account 2023

The Overseas Department of Mothers' Union Ireland Worldwide Fund benefitted from members contributions of £12,361.89.

Our branches continued their generosity this year by novel fundraising and members donations.

Fundraising and Communication

WEBSITE: www.mothersunion.ie

The website is updated regularly. No personal information should be put on the website ie personal email addresses, home addresses or personal phone numbers (house or mobile). Putting personal details on a website can leave a person very vulnerable to scam artists. Permission must be received for the uploading of photographs and written permission in the case of minors, a copy of which must be sent to Margaret.

FACEBOOK: The Facebook pages are updated regularly. Only posts pertinent to Mothers 'Union are posted on the Facebook page. Any other posts will be taken down.

An Instagram Account for MU has now also been set up. As Instagram is now more popular with the younger generation it is hoped this will increase our following.

TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE: The Conference was held at An Grianan Termonfeckin, Co Louth from Friday 24 to Sunday 26 March 2023. This took the form of an All-Ireland Triennial Training Weekend along with other members from Clogher Diocese. The theme for the Conference was 'Reimagining MU 'and included many and varied speakers and a number of workshops which were led by Stephanie Nunn from MSH. Also included were periods of worship and prayer. The Conference also gave the opportunity to meet with friends and colleagues from other Dioceses and to learn from their knowledge and experience. On the Sunday morning Unit Meetings were held.

MUMS IN MAY 2023: Fundraising plans included a Puzzle Book to be sold to members for £3/ €3. The A5 booklet would include different types of puzzles with an armchair quiz in the centre-fold.

PUBLICATIONS

FOCUS: Focus is an All-Ireland publication

The magazine is now only produced once a year because of cost and the difficulty with distribution. The Spring 2023 edition featured reports and photographs.

CONNECTED: The Spring and Autumn 2023 editions of Connected were mailed directly to members from MSH. The Spring edition included stories demonstrating the spirit of giving within Mothers 'Union around the world, together with useful resources and reflections. In the Autumn edition it was discussed how love and faith drive us to help our communities, our families and our Mothers 'Union sisters and brothers around the world. This edition also shared details of the new domestic abuse campaign, RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse and celebrated the Literacy and Financial Education programme in Burundi as well as useful resources and reflections.

PRAYER DIARY: Members received the 2024 Prayer Diary in December 2023. Mothers 'Union members around the world join together and pray the same prayers using the Diary. It contains daily prayers, monthly reflections and creative prayer ideas.

PRAYER CHAIN: The prayer chain continues to be a great comfort to those who have need of prayer

CHARITABLE APPEALS: The Mothers Union is a charity and is not in a position to be used as a channel for appeals by other charitable organisations unless sanctioned by the Diocesan President (regulation, 12, MU Constitution, 2002). A branch may support the needs of its own parish, but subject to the aims, purpose, and objects of the Society.

MEETINGS: Meetings in person mostly returned (some were held by zoom) for fellowship, training and business became the norm members continued to use the new technology when necessary to suit their members needs and availed of the opportunity to communicate with others throughout the Diocese and All Ireland for Branch and Trustee meetings.

However, for some members, technology continues to not be available or manageable. The leadership in branches and on the Trustee Board, kept in touch using the telephone, newsletters and face to face meetings generally.

BRANCH ACTIVITIES: This year again some members saw restrictions on branch meetings while some others who had lost confidence last year are still fearful of meeting together.

Branches held meetings in their church buildings and their parish halls, where the attendance is growing.

MOTHERS' UNION DIOCESAN EVENTS DURING 2023

Diary details

Saturday 11 March 2023 – Training for Branch Leaders, Branch Secretaries and Branch Treasurers.

'Spring into New Life'

The keynote speaker was Mrs Sonya Johnston, Deputy Director Fermanagh Trust. Sonya has 30 years of experience working and leading in community/family/voluntary sectors in England and Northern Ireland in a wide range of settings. She told those present of her experiences in establishing services and working across boundaries in challenging areas with the homeless, youth care leavers, women's groups and education projects for children and young people. She also advised us of how Fermanagh Trust could be a resource for Mothers' Union branches and of the training they offer for community groups. She added that there are many opportunities for volunteering in the community and she encouraged Mothers' Union members to sign up for the Trusts telephone helpline.

The Diocesan President reminded those present that this was International Womens' week and we then gave thanks for the inspiring women who work with us in Mothers' Union.

Branch Committee member role outlines were shared by Trustees and those present asked questions about their new roles and learnt more of where they could get help and advice.

Wednesday 29 March 2023 – Domestic Violence Awareness Training

This training was greatly valued by all.

Friday 19 May 2023 – Festival Service – St Patrick's Cathedral, Monaghan

Approximately 182 members from 28 branches in the Clogher Diocese attended the Festival Service in Monaghan. There were 27 banners.

Thursday 25 May 2023 – Spring Council Meeting – Lisbellaw Parish Church Hall

There were 66 in attendance and 27 apologies.

The President read from Matthew 14:22-33 and then discussed the Reimagining MU – Moving forward. Mothers' Union has a declining and aging membership. We were reminded that we need to act now to GROW and SUSTAIN Mothers' Union as a vibrant and relevant organisation.

Wednesday 7 June 2023 - Indoor Members 'Tea Party – Donacavey Parish Hall

This Indoor Members' Event on Wednesday 7 June brought together over 60 members which included a good representation of Indoor members. It began with a Holy Communion service where Bishop Ian Ellis brought an encouraging message, Revd Charles Eames and Canon John Woods assisted the Bishop to distribute the Holy Communion.

Friday 22 September 2023 – Annual Gathering in York Mothers' Union Annual Gathering 2023 at York Barbican and York Minster. The 13 strong contingent from Mothers' Union Ireland benefitted from the Conference greatly.

Sheran Harper Worldwide President spoke from the heart as she encouraged us to trust in God for our Transformation, 'a transformation that will take root and bear good for all seasons'.

Friday 6 – Saturday 7 October 2023 – Women's Weekend – Kilmore Hotel, Cavan

The guest speaker was Melanie Douglas who gave an introductory talk about her life, which encouraged members to think what 'Living an Abundant Life' would mean.

Thursday 26 October 2023 – Autumn Council Meeting - Sallaghy Parish

The theme for 2022 - 2024 remains 'Transformation – Now'

The prayer of the Trustee Board is that the year ahead, 2024 will see improvement in the freedom to meet and the building of confidence in the membership.

This theme has guided Mothers' Union in its work to transform the churches and communities in which we live, reflecting Christ's kingdom and transforming Mothers' Union's relevance for 21st Century life.

It is hoped that many stages of transformation will occur in the lives of the membership and within the charity as a whole, as we move beyond the pandemic and continue to address the many issues resulting from its legacy.