



Annual Report

2023

**NI Charity No 102695
RoI Charity No: 20007331**

**MAIN OFFICE BEARERS
(Correspondence)**

Diocesan President Mrs Debbie Davidson

Secretary Mrs Yvonne Woods

Treasurer Mrs Yvonne McFarland

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Bank

Ulster Bank
20 High Street
Portadown
BT62 1HU

Membership **825**

Subscriptions Paid - £29 - £21.00 per member General Fund (MSH)
£6.00 per member All Ireland Fund
£2.00 per member Conference Fund

<i>MSH & All Ireland</i>	<i>£22,275</i>
<i>Diocese</i>	<i><u>£ 1,650</u></i>
Total	<u>£23,925</u>

Armagh Diocesan Mothers' Union is a charity for tax purposes under HM Revenue & Customs,
Ref. NIC 102965 & ROI 20007331.

ARMAGH DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION

Diocesan Trustees 2023

PRESIDENT Mrs Debbie Davidson

Public Relations Rep & Editor of MUST Magazine Mrs Joy Greer

FINANCE AND CENTRAL SERVICES UNIT

Vice-President Mrs Ann Anderson

Unit Co-ordinator Mrs Ann Anderson up until end of May when Jennifer Pillow took on the role.

Secretary Mrs Yvonne Woods

Treasurer Mrs Yvonne McFarland

ACTION AND OUTREACH UNIT

Vice-President Mrs Irene Dawson

Unit Co-ordinator Mrs Irene Hewitt

Young Members' Rep. Mrs Lynda Galway

Overseas/ Links Mrs Teresa Duncan

Links Rep Mrs Myrtle Stevenson

FAITH AND POLICY UNIT

Vice-President Mrs Juliana Wade

Unit Co-ordinator Mrs Claire Smith

Prayer Rep. Mrs Claire Smith

Database Co-Ordinator Mrs Eleanor Orr

I.M.P.C. Mrs Teresa Duncan

Social Policy Rep Mrs Beth Wortley

Chaplain Rev Alan Cross

FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNICATION UNIT

Vice-President	Mrs Gillian Patterson
Unit Co-ordinator	Mrs Linda Douglas
Editor of M.U.S.T.	Mrs Joy Greer
Enterprise Rep.	Mrs Heather Montgomery

TRUSTEES RETIRED/RESIGNED 2023

Mrs Ann Anderson retired as Unit Co-ordinator for Finance & Central Services.

New Appointments 2023

Mrs Eleanor Orr - Database Co-ordinator for Faith & Policy Unit

Mrs Jennifer Pillow - Unit Co-ordinator for Finance & Central Services.

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.

BYE LAWS

These Bye Laws shall come into effect on the First day of January 2016 and on that date the Bye Laws heretofore in operation shall be revoked.

PATRON

The Archbishop of Armagh.

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 Archbishop 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 Archbishop of Armagh. A term of office shall be three years with possible election for a further three years.

DIOCESAN VICE PRESIDENTS

There shall be four Vice-Presidents each one elected to a specific unit.

If still resident in Armagh Diocese the immediate Past Diocesan President shall be invited to attend meetings of the Trustee Body for one year following her completed term of office.

The spouse of the Archbishop of Armagh shall be invited to be an ex-officio Vice President and shall be invited to attend both Trustee meetings and Diocesan Council meetings.

DIOCESAN TRUSTEE BODY

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.

Working Parties

The Trustee Body shall have the power to form working parties which may include persons other than members of the Mothers' Union to be used in an advisory capacity.

Working parties shall have specific aims and completion dates.

DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Membership

The Diocesan Council shall consist of the following: The Diocesan President, the Immediate Past Diocesan President, the spouse of the Archbishop of Armagh, the Trustee Body, Diocesan Members, Branch Leaders, Branch Secretaries and one other representative from each Branch.

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.

Management

The Trustee Body elected by Council shall manage the affairs and finance of the diocese. The Trustee Body shall debate, consider and determine all matters of policy and strategy to be effected on behalf of Armagh Diocese and bring decisions to Council for approval. They will monitor, review and evaluate the work of the Mothers' Union in the diocese.

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.

INCONSISTENCY

In the event of any inconsistency between the provisions of the Constitution of the Mothers' Union in Ireland and the provisions of these Bye-Laws, the provisions of the Constitution shall prevail.

REVIEW OF BYE LAWS

A Sub-Committee appointed by the Trustee Body shall review the Bye-Laws as and when deemed necessary.

REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER, 2023

It is such an honour to be part of this great organization called the Mothers' Union, and to be your leader in this Diocese. I hope and pray that I am fulfilling the role to the best of my ability and that you are finding me helpful and approachable at all times. I am committed to all I do for Mothers' Union and I'm so grateful for all the wonderful Diocesan Trustees without whom I could not carry out my role.

Training

The Trustees and I held Information Evenings in the 5 Rural Deanery's. These offered an opportunity to tell branch members about the role of Trustees, discuss ideas with members about what they would like from Mothers' Union moving forward. Excellent feedback from members and we also secured two new Trustees from these meetings.

Thursday 13th April, 2023 - St Anne's Parish Hall, Dungannon

Wednesday 19th April, 2023 - Mullabrack Parish Hall

Tuesday 16th May, 2023 - St. Saviour's The Dobbin Parish Hall

Tuesday 23rd May, 2023 - Killylea Parish Hall

Tuesday 30th May, 2023 - Tullyhogue Parish Hall

Diocesan President Activities

On Saturday 28th January All Ireland Diocesan Presidents met in **CITI in Dublin** to plan for the year ahead.

Annabelle Hayes Day was celebrated on Tuesday 7th February via an online service with guest speaker Mairead McGuinness, MEP who spoke with great affection about Mothers' Union and the work that they do.

Overseas Meeting held in Church House, Armagh on Thursday 23rd March. The speaker for the evening was Diane from 'Days for Girls' which is a **nonprofit organization** that focuses on improving menstrual health and education for women and girls. prepares and distributes **sustainable menstrual health solutions** to girls who would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods. These solutions include **washable pads** that can be reused, reducing the need for disposable products.

Armagh Diocese raised **£17,722.81**. This amount was sent to Overseas (Worldwide) in 2023.

All Ireland Conference in An Grianan Termonfeckin, Co. Louth on 24th & 25th March. The keynote speaker was Sheran Harper, Worldwide President along with June Butler, All- Ireland President, Stephanie Nunn from Mary Sumner House and talked about 'Reimagining MU' and Dr Maurice Elliot, Director of CITI. It was a great weekend of learning, sharing, fun, fellowship including an early morning prayer walk, friendship and of course lovely food.

Launch night for Armagh Show in Gosford Forest Park on Wednesday 12th April, to make arrangements for MU Baby Changing & Feeding facilities at Armagh County Show in June 2023

Armagh Diocesan Spring Council held in Church House, Armagh on Tuesday 25th April. This was well attended and Trustees presented their reports along with the DP's Remarks.

Diocesan Communion Service for Indoor Members in Killyman Parish Church on Thursday 27th April at 3.30pm. The Archbishop attended this service and everyone enjoyed refreshments in the Parish Hall. The Indoor Members Rep. Mrs. Teresa Duncan sent cards for birthdays, Christmas and Easter. Teresa kept in touch with the members by writing to them on a regular basis. Indoor members receive copies of MUST, Focus and Connected publications. Sympathy cards are sent to the family on the death of a member.

Diocesan Festival Service with Commissioning of New Trustees on Wednesday 10th May. We had a great representation of members from the branches in the Diocese and a beautiful spectacle of the Branch Banners being carried through the Cathedral during the first hymn. The Diocesan Chaplain from Clogher, Rev Charles Eames delivered the sermon. The MUE stall was present and sold lots of cards and gifts and we all enjoyed refreshments afterwards.

Military Wives Choir Concert – Friday 19th May, 2023 in Killyman Parish Hall. This was a fantastic showcase concert for our Diocese and really put MU on the map. We had a packed hall with just over 300 people attending. The Military Wives Choir entertained us with fabulous singing, we were also entertained by local artists including one of our Trustees granddaughter, who sang so beautifully. Our Chaplain was compere for the evening and the Trustees threw themselves into putting on a sketch, which created many laughs. We had a lovely treat of a tub of Betty's Ice Cream in the interval.

All Ireland Trustee Meeting in CITI Dublin – Saturday 20th May, 2023, it was great to be back with all the Trustees in a face to face meeting and to share our thoughts and ideas.

Armagh County Show on Saturday 10th June 10am – 5pm. The MU from Armagh Diocese provide a baby changing and feeding facility which is greatly appreciated by parents, and we receive beautiful comments of thanks.

Commissioning Service for our new All Ireland Chaplain - The Ven Dr Stephen McBride – Sunday 11th June in St. Patrick's Cathedral and refreshments afterwards in Armagh City Hotel. This was a well-attended event with great music and fellowship.

Mary Sumner Day – A lovely Prayer Walk was held in Gosford Forest Park. It was well attended, and our Chaplain Rev Alan Cross led the singing. There were a few different walk routes to suit all abilities. We all shared a time of fellowship and a cup of tea after the walk.

Rural Deanery Services

Our DP, Debbie attended, along with members of Trustees, all five Rural Deanery services in September 2023.

The usual collection at each Service for the local Women's Aid Branches.

RURAL DEANARY	DATE	VENUE
Mullabrack	Thursday 7 th September	Ballymore Parish Church
Kilmore	Wednesday 13 th September	Dobbin Parish Church
Dungannon	Tuesday 19 th September	Clonfeacle Parish Church

Tynan	Thursday 21 st September	Kildarton Parish Church
Tullyhogue	Wednesday 20 th September	Lissan Parish Church

Young Members – Kildare Village Shopping Trip – Saturday 16th September – a very successful trip was organised by Lynda, our Young Members Rep. We had a great day out in a lovely coach, driven by Shelley. She attended to our every need and we all had a great days shopping and a delicious meal on our way home in Monasterboice Inn. We look forward to many more events planned by our Young Members Rep.

Annual Gathering – Friday 22nd September, which was held in York, a few members from the Diocese attended but sadly I was unable to attend.

Indoor Members Tea Party – held in Brantry Parish Hall - Thursday 28th September - this was a very well attended event and the ladies were treated to a beautiful Afternoon Tea. An impromptu sing-a-long which the ladies really did enjoy. The attention to detail by the ladies of Brantry MU was outstanding.

Women’s Getaway Weekend - in Kilmore Hotel, Cavan Friday 6th & Saturday 7th October – the keynote speaker was Melanie Douglas who spoke about ‘Living the Abundant Life’. Our All Ireland Chaplain and his wife joined us for the evening meal and a little bit of line dancing. We ended the evening with some Praise Singing. On Saturday we heard from Melaine who was such a wonderfully inspirational. After lunch we ended on a high with fun and chair aerobics from one of Cavan member, Leila. Once again we enjoyed a great Getaway and look forward to more of these.

Armagh Diocesan Autumn Council held in Church House, Armagh on Tuesday 24th October. This was well attended and Trustees presented their reports along with the DP’s Remarks.

Eliminate the Violence for a New Beginning and was held in Civic Centre, Craigavon - on Thursday 2nd November – I attended a conference related to Domestic Abuse, it was entitled,– the speakers were Detectives from Public Protection Branch, Local policing team, PSNI Online Prevention Officers and White Ribbon NI Charity which (seeks to end violence against women and girls in all its forms – they work with businesses, employers, workforces, community organisations, schools and churches to take a stand and empower women. This was a very interesting conference, and the speakers were excellent and happy to answer questions from anyone who needed clarification.

Prayer Breakfast and Gender Based Violence Prayer Vigil.

A very successful Prayer breakfast was held in Armagh City Hotel on Saturday 25th November, when 110 members and friends attended. Claire our Prayer Rep and Unit Co-ordinator for Faith and Policy welcomed everyone, introduced the speakers who were The Archbishop, our Diocesan Chaplain and myself, Debbie. I told my own story of childhood abuse which surprised a lot of people. It was difficult to do but the response and number of people who came forward since with their own accounts of abuse has been humbling.

Debbie thanked everyone from the unit, Claire, Juliana and Beth for organizing the breakfast and especially members of the faith and policy team for taking part. The prayer breakfast was sponsored by Mums in May grant.

Gift bags from Armagh Diocese MU for Craigavon Area Hospital and Southern Area Hospice – Trustees met at Yvonne’s to pack the bags for people in hospital or hospice during Christmas. Irene delivered bags to the hospital and Rev Hagan delivered bags to the hospice. All were greatly received and we received lovely letters of thanks and appreciation.

All bags had toiletries, sweet treats, inspirational verses and Bible texts, little note books and pens.

AFIA – AWAY FROM IT ALL - In 2023 - families received funding for a variety of needs. **(Need details of this!!!)**

Invitations for DP to attend Branch Meetings.

Debbie, DP attended many local branches in the Diocese where she was asked to speak about her new role in MU.

I also attended celebrations in Branches where 75years and 100years service in MU.

Practical Projects

Various branches have been doing individual projects within their own parishes such as:

- Knitting baby clothes for the neo natal unit and trauma teddies for the Children's Ward.
- Provide baby essentials for the 'Baby Basics' project.
- Providing essential items for the Woman's Aid Centres, and responded to an urgent call for food for the womens' refuge centre in Portadown
- Organising supplies to Food Banks.
- Our 'Prayer Circle' is co-ordinated by Claire Smith and is working well with many people requesting prayer.
- Supply gifts to patients in hospital and hospice who wouldn't see any visitors over the Christmas period.