

Spring 2024

Mothers' UNION   
Christian care for families

Diocese of Oxford

# Focus on...

## *Membership*



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THE CLEWER  
INITIATIVE

**BabyBasics**  
Milton Keynes

away from it all



**Children**  
Heard and Seen



Ronald  
McDonald  
House  
Oxford

**Mothers' Union** works through **4 million members** in **84 countries**, fighting poverty, injustice and tackling family issues.

## From our Trustees



### *Dear Friends,*

Best wishes to you for a healthy and happy year ahead. 2024 is the third year of the triennial and is a time of reflection and planning for the future for your trustees. Mothers' Union is a wonderful charity and the value we can deliver to local communities relies on each and every one of you to contribute in prayer and in the skills and time that you bring to our projects.

In the 2022 Spring edition of Focus I began the *Dear Friends* letter with a quote from Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury: 'Mothers' Union are the heart and love of the church'.

However, we are sometimes known as the church's greatest secret too. To improve the awareness of Mothers' Union, all members are encouraged to speak out about Mothers' Union and we would like to encourage you to consider giving the MU Oxford Gift of Association to a friend or relative. For one year the recipient will find out about Mothers' Union and may decide to take up membership themselves.

And to raise awareness in the wider church, three trustees will be attending the Oxford diocesan synod at the beginning of March to give a short presentation to delegates about the work of the Mothers' Union in Oxford diocese.

Also, in 2022, trustee Jenny Searle wrote that the trustee board would focus on three things:

- to simplify aspects of our organisation;
- to raise the profile of Mothers' Union within the church and local communities where we live;
- to increase fundraising from outside our membership.

eNews, read by over half of our members monthly, is providing news and keeping members who have access to the internet up to date. Eve, MU membership secretary, has also been working on a new website which will be easier to navigate and will grab the attention of our members and the wider community.

I would like to thank Rachel Buckley who for a long time has done a wonderful job keeping on top of the more cumbersome current website.

Mothers' Union Oxford magazine Focus will be issued twice in 2024 and a copy will be posted to all members in spring and autumn.

Please continue to send in your contributions and pictures, and make sure your branch enters the noticeboard challenge (see page 10) - an eye-catching way to highlight Mothers' Union projects and inform members of the public of the contribution we make and how we do touch lives. Trustees would also like to encourage more applications for AFIA holidays. Please advertise what we offer; details are on the website.

Fundraising from outside our membership may be seen as more of a challenge. Branch correspondents and diocesan members will have received a poster produced by Rev. Lady Denise Brown. Please pin it up

to show the wider community what we do. Perhaps you could:

- organise a special service in church using MU resources with a collection for Mothers' Union;
- provide a cream tea or similar for members of the congregation to raise funds for AFIA;
- invite the wider church community to buy MUE cards;
- contribute coffee for Ronald McDonald House,
- knit goods for Baby Basics and Children Heard and Seen.

Resources and ideas are on the Oxford MU website. Together we can make Mothers' Union relevant and visible in today's world in 2024.

Thank you for your support and prayers.

*Val Bolan*



## From our Diocesan Chaplain



*Dear Friends,*

Recently we had Snowdrops Saturday in our church, a joint venture with the WI to invite people to view the host of snowdrops in the churchyard and in our village. It was the first decent weather for some time and we were overwhelmed by the number of people who came to join us, to have a cup of tea and a piece of cake and to buy plants and preserves, as well as enjoying the snowdrops.

It caused me to reflect on the snowdrop. A small white flower that looks very vulnerable, and yet grows at a time of the year when there are storms, high winds, snow and rain. Despite all that, it continues to grow and to provide delight and joy to all who see it. Multiply that by the number we have in the churchyard

and the village and you have numerous examples of how to withstand anything, and to continue to thrive and to be enjoyed by those who pass by.

There is an example here for us. Wherever we are and whatever we do with the help of God, we can withstand all that is going on around us and be examples of delight and joy to all with whom we come into contact. Life for many of us is hard at the moment, and there is so much going on in this country and the world that is worrying. Let us all remember the snowdrop and its ability to look fragile and yet to be strong, and follow its example.

*Mary Harwood*



## Just a thought....

It is said that there is a book inside every one of us and so there is – the story of your life. Unique. Special to you. Have you ever wanted to write it down, or at least part of it? I hope to encourage some of you to do just that.

Why do we want to tell others about the life we have lived? Part of the reason may be, as the advert tells us “because you’re worth it”. We are all worth it, certainly in God’s eyes if not in our own. Your story is a one-off. You may not think it very interesting but others may not agree. Your story is a social history. For instance, you may have memories of the war.

You may have grandchildren who wonder about your life when you were young. I wonder about my grandparents. My Dad was one of fourteen. The weekly grind began with the washing (in the ‘copper’) on Mondays and Grandma said she was lucky if it took only one day. Grandad was disabled and had to retire early. She lived to be 91. They were tough in those days!

My mother was the eldest of ten. Her father was never out of work and his children always had shoes, so they were able to attend school. I can remember him sitting at the kitchen table, repairing shoes on a last. When he brought home his wages on a Friday evening, Grandma set aside

the rent and the insurance before allocating money for food and heating. The bills were always paid.

That is another reason to write your story: to honour those who have gone before us, whose DNA we share. You may like to write your story for sheer enjoyment of your memories. Or maybe you wish to exorcise some of your ghosts or share insights with readers. Another reason will be to give thanks to our father God for taking us along the way we have walked, for being with us, for the happy memories and experiences, perhaps seeing other parts of the world.

If you are moved to take up pen and paper or to sit at your computer or laptop, then go for it! You can start at any time in your life, following a timeline or moving backwards and forwards. Write as memories come to you – you can always tidy up the order later on. You may want to start with a prologue, something that interests your readers and makes them want to read on. Above all, be frank and honest.

So, have a go! There is no need to be anxious about editing and publishing until you have something to edit and publish! I shall be glad to help if you have any fears or questions.

*Iris Lloyd*  
[iris@irislloyd.co.uk](mailto:iris@irislloyd.co.uk)

# Barbara Teague

When Barbara and her family moved to Arborfield in 1962, one of her first concerns was to find a church. Arborfield parish church had a small gathering of 'mums' and other younger ladies which flourished as the Young Wives Group. Barbara joined and found that the group was loosely affiliated to the Mothers' Union. Before long Barbara was attending MU meetings in Oxford as representative of Arborfield. As the young wives matured the group became a Mothers' Union branch. Barbara's love and enthusiasm for the work of Mothers' Union was second to none.

In 1983 Barbara was asked if she would take on the post of Diocesan Treasurer, a post she held until 1993. In 1994 she was elected Diocesan President, and she held that position until 1999.

The post of Diocesan President is a demanding one as each of the local branches (about 200 over three counties) has a right to ask the DP to listen to and solve their problems.

She never counted how many branches she visited but there were very few times when she had to say "sorry, I can't make that date". There were also demands made by Mary Sumner House to attend central meetings, take up central roles and to be 'available' to other organisations for MU co-operation.

After she ceased to be Diocesan President Barbara still attended local branch meetings, central AGMs, Lady Day services and some speaking engagements. Her local branch closed, and she joined Wokingham All Saints' branch, but found regular attendance almost impossible. She had a minor seizure in 2018 and a recurrence in late 2022 which developed into the illness which took her to be with her God on 4 August 2023.

The full church in Arborfield for her funeral was a testimony to

the many people and organisations she had touched with love, with skill and with joy at being able to make a difference, all in the name of our Lord.





# Gift of Association

## Give the Gift of Mothers' Union to Family and Friends

We are delighted to be able to offer members the opportunity to give a friend or family member a Gift of Association with Mothers' Union in the Oxford diocese.

It is hoped that this will encourage more people to join as members in Britain and Ireland; those receiving a Gift of Association with Mothers' Union in the Oxford diocese will share in the wonderful work of our movement.

The more other people get involved and understand what we do, the better known and more effective we will become.

Mothers' Union in the Oxford diocese will use the money you spend on this gift to fund the provision of the benefits and to contribute to our work more widely.

To purchase your gift, please complete the application form, which may be found on our website, and send it to: Membership Secretary, Mothers' Union, CMS House, Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6BZ together with your payment.

## Gift of Association – One Year - £25:

A Welcome Pack containing card, prayer card, holding cross and introductory information will be sent.

### Benefits: -

1. All issues of *Connected* magazine for 12 months.
2. The annual prayer diary.
3. A subscription to our national monthly e-newsletter.
4. All issues of *Focus* (the Mothers' Union Oxford diocese magazine)
5. A subscription to Mothers' Union Oxford diocese eNews

During the year the recipient of your gift will have opportunities to support specific projects which take their interest or to support our work more generally both here in the UK and across the world.

At the end of the 12 months we will contact them and ask if they wish to join MU as a full member or a supporter. If they live in another diocese, with their permission, we can put them in contact with that diocese.

## Raising the Profile of MU (Part 5)

We were all so impressed by the entries to last year's Noticeboard Challenge that we have decided to run the competition again this year.

So, I am delighted to announce:

### The MU Noticeboard Challenge 2024

In making their judgement, the judges will take into account:

- **Content:** does the noticeboard inform the reader about MU in the church, in the diocese and across the world and can people find out where to go or who to speak to, to get further information?
- **Overall look and feel:** is the noticeboard enticing to look at; does it draw people in to take a closer look?

Once you have updated your noticeboard, take a photograph and send it into the Focus Editorial Team by **20 September 2024**. Please note: this is two weeks before the copy deadline for Focus so that we have time to organise the judging.

The winner will be announced at the AGM in Benson on 15 October 2024 and published in the Autumn 2024 edition of the magazine.

*Jenny Searle*

Fundraising & Communications Coordinator

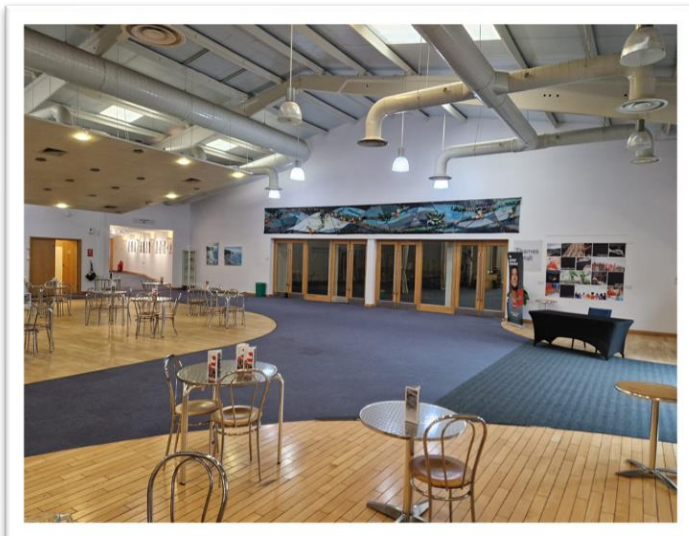
## MU Gathering

**Oxford, Saturday, 22 June 2024**

Canterbury Province is planning to hold a gathering for all MU members on Saturday, 22 June 2024 at The King's Centre in Oxford. The King's Centre is on Osney Mead in Oxford, reached from the Botley Road. This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet members from across the province; to share information about what we are doing in our local dioceses; to enjoy fellowship; and to worship together. There will be plenty of time during the day for socialising and to have some fun too. The event is open to all members and you are welcome to bring friends with you; a great way to learn about Mothers' Union.

Tickets cost £20 per person and will be available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) from mid-March. You can register your interest now by emailing: [mugathering2024@muoxford.org.uk](mailto:mugathering2024@muoxford.org.uk) and receive a full information pack.

It is not often that these opportunities occur right on our doorstep, so please put the date in your diary now and we look forward to seeing you in Oxford on the day.





Imagine travelling three or four days to get to a Mothers' Union meeting. That's what Rev. Gertrude, the president of the Kinshasa Union des Meres (MU), often has to do.

The diocese of Kinshasa is vast. On the Western end, Boma is on the Atlantic Ocean, two hundred miles from Kinshasa. Bandundu, another town in the diocese, is the same distance away in the opposite direction.

Under any circumstances, it would be a challenge to care for groups in such distant settings. What makes it even more challenging is that the transport infrastructure in the Democratic Republic of Congo is not good – and the diocese of Kinshasa doesn't have a vehicle able to negotiate the often dangerous roads. But Bishop Achille and Rev. Gertrude are not deterred: they will

travel by bus and by boat for days to be with their congregations.

The Mothers' Union in the DRC is growing. It has a rigorous training programme for new members in all its branches and undertakes many

different activities. In Kinshasa itself, the members meet regularly for prayer each Wednesday. They also, when they have the means, undertake projects such as distributing clothing to widows. In Bandundu, the churches have been active in helping to look after people who have been displaced by conflict.

On one of his pastoral visits Bishop Achille said that it was moving to think that despite the vast distances within the diocese, we are connected by a single body of water. And we are always connected in prayer and affection. As Bishop Achille has said to us - "We are with you in our hearts".

*Maranda St. John  
Nicolle*

## Wave of Prayer 2024

Linking our dioceses of:  
OXFORD and SOUTHWARK (England);  
VICTORIA NYANZA (Tanzania);  
KINSHASA (Democratic Republic of Congo);  
AHOADA and WARRI (Nigeria);  
PORT MORESBY (Papua New Guinea)



*This material for the Wave of Prayer could be used by an individual at home, or by a small group, or the central prayer intentions could be used in Sunday worship. MU members may wish to add a branch prayer or other material as seems appropriate.*

Welcome

### **Psalm 23**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside still waters,  
He restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil, for you are with me;  
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.



Today almost one hundred and fifty years after its founding, we give thanks for Mothers' Union members in eighty-four countries across the world; living in a wide variety of cultural, political, and economic situations. We remember our diocesan, national and worldwide trustee boards as they work for the welfare of women, men and children and we pray for family life, for stability, equality and an end to violence and discrimination.

The diocese of Oxford is linked in the Wave of Prayer with dioceses in Africa and New Guinea and we name them now:

**Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo** - giving thanks for Bishop Achille and for Rosalie Etsa the first woman ordained in the diocese and praying for "Awaken" which uses Bible study to improve literacy among women. We pray for those affected by the floods in Kinshasa, and for areas suffering insecurity and displacement of people.

**Ahoda and Warri in Nigeria** – providing educational opportunities for children and programmes for visiting sick or elderly members of their communities.

**Victoria Nyanza in Tanzania** – involved in running kindergartens and nursery schools, in various agricultural and craft projects and offering pastoral support to prisoners.

**Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea** – training offered by the Mothers' Union in adult literacy, life skills and homeworking.

**Oxford** – supporting Ronald McDonald House at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Baby Basics in Milton Keynes, Children Heard and Seen, Away from it All providing holidays for families, and other local projects. All MU branches, their officers and leaders, for diocesan members, and those who continue faithful in prayer at home.

United in one faith in God our creator, redeemer and sustainer, we pray that Mothers' Union members everywhere may spread the knowledge of the love of God through their witness and service within their communities.

We reflect on some words of Jesus:

***John 10. 14-16***

I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

We pray:

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:

teach us to hear your voice

and to follow your command,

that all your people may be gathered into one flock,

to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with us all evermore. Amen.



Mothers' Union Diocese of Oxford  
CMS House, Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6BZ  
Charity No: 249723



# Branch updates

## Tilehurst St Michael

We held our AGM on Saturday 17 February. There was a good turnout of members. After not having a branch leader for a while we were delighted that Liz Curling stepped forward for this role. She was duly elected. Thanks were expressed to the various committee members who have shared the responsibilities whilst we were without a branch leader. Many of them are continuing in their roles.

The annual report showed that we had welcomed four new members to the branch which is a great joy. We have continued with afternoon and evening meetings though attendance had not always been high especially at the afternoon meetings. The programmes have been varied and interesting.



*Glenis Kerr Elliot and Rev. Amy Sykes (our new curate)*

*Debbie and Matt Firth and Rev. Amy Sykes*



Social events have tended to be joint affairs. These have worked well.

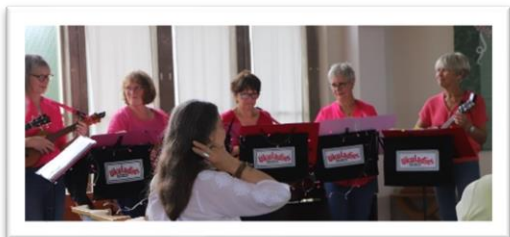
We have continued with outreach activities: including the donation of 187 emergency toiletry bags for our local hospital and 30 Christmas cards for prisoners. We are working with Berkshire Women's Aid. A speaker from the organisation came to one of our meetings and we have met with them subsequently to discuss how we might support them further.

Another highlight of the year was coming second in the diocesan Noticeboard challenge.

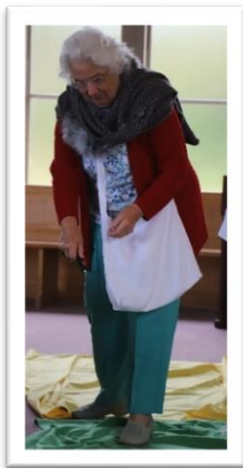
After the business part of the meeting was concluded we enjoyed a delicious bring and share lunch together which gave plenty of opportunity for good food and conversation.

*Jenny Searle*

## Earley St Nicolas



We held a Summer of Hope tea party and were entertained by the Ukuladies, a band who play the ukulele. They are dressed in pink as a symbol of the breast cancer charity they support.



The drama group were back in action acting out the "Parable of the Four Soils". We decided to act out this parable as it was mentioned by Sheran Harper (our President) in her Mothering Sunday pamphlet from earlier in the year. It was a splendid afternoon.

*Ingrid Pooler*

## Crowthorne

Crowthorne Mothers' Union has had a busy few months, hosting an ecumenical meeting for the local World Day of Prayer committee in October and a children's choir from the C of E school in December. Gwen made a wonderful Christmas cake that we raffled and made £142 for AFIA to which we added another £60 from a Bring and Buy sale and cards made by Jasmin and her team.

We were delighted to ask our vicar, Laura, to enrol four new members. Joan, Beryl, Sue and Jo received a warm welcome.

We have a Lent eucharist and a talk on Rwanda to look forward to and a visit from Jean Vaughan as well as an outing to St James Finchampstead.

*Penny Rickards*



## Action & Outreach

### Vacuum Cleaners for Refugees



Abingdon branch has put us in touch with a lady who is working with refugees who are settling in this country and who need a little help. As you will know, nobody gets rid of a working vacuum cleaner though other furniture and equipment might be donated!

So, we have used some of our Action and Outreach money to buy four vacuum cleaners from Argos which have been delivered to single mums and they've been so pleased to receive them. To be given a new product, still boxed, has been great for them.

One has been given to *"grateful Olena who is Ukrainian and has a son with special needs. Her city was bombed and her parents live in Russian-occupied Ukraine. She has had two generous hosts but happily has now been given social housing on a new estate in Abingdon.*

*She passes on her thanks to the Mothers' Union for the gift of a Hoover."*

Thank you so much for your help which enables us to buy items for some needy individuals.

*Jean Vaughan*

[action.outreach@muoxford.org.uk](mailto:action.outreach@muoxford.org.uk)



You were wonderful at knitting stockings for Christmas so I was able to take 160 stockings, filled with chocolate snowmen, to Children Heard and Seen to be given out at their party. Building for the Future also had some Christmas parties so I was able to join them and take 70 filled stockings too. It was interesting to talk to the parents and fun to play with some of the children! A great start to Christmas. A new charity in Wokingham, Kinship Carers, took six filled stockings for children they are working with. It may be that other Kinship Carers groups meet in your area and if we have contact details we may be able to help them as well.

There was a last-minute request for party food for Children Heard and Seen in December. Abingdon branch were able to help with some items and I bought various goodies for the party and breakfast for those families staying overnight. A great use for some of your Project Fund donations.

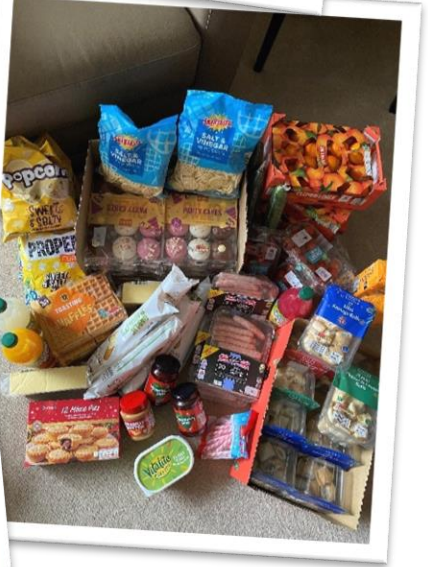
The pattern for the chick you can make for Easter is on our website and the party at Children Heard and Seen will be held on 4 April. I'll be buying food for them again and staying to help at the party too. Another fun afternoon!

There's a group of Young Carers in Buckinghamshire who we are helping with an afternoon out in the Easter holidays, using AFIA funds. They would like to go to an Escape Room together. (The aim of an escape room is to race against the clock and decipher clues to find their way out!) They'll need the hot dogs and drinks we're also buying to refresh themselves after that, I should think. So about 17 youngsters will have a great time together and build some fun memories.

Thank you all for your help and prayers for the work we're doing.

*Jean Vaughan*

[childrenheardandseen.co.uk](http://childrenheardandseen.co.uk)



# BabyBasics

Milton Keynes

Thank you to everyone who has supported Baby Basics MK over the past year, whether practically or prayerfully. We supported 3711 children during 2023, including 212 Christmas "Santa Sacks" and 183 newborn kits, which is where your knitted cardigans are allocated. This is a considerable increase from the 2022 figures of 2957 children supported and 198 "Santa Sacks", and I expect the need for our services will increase once again during 2024. You contributed an amazing 368 knits, 135 toiletries and 101 Christmas gifts!

The Action and Outreach Unit approved spending on changing mats



and Christmas duvet covers which are used to create bags for the Christmas gifts. Both donations were very gratefully received at our warehouse and a number of the mats have already been sent out.

If you would like me to come and give a talk about the work of Baby Basics MK to your group please get in touch via email or contact Eve who will forward your message.



If you are a knitter, please concentrate your endeavours on cardigans for newborns, chest size 16 inch. We have enough hats now and are unable to take handknitted jumpers or cardigans larger than this.

Thank you once again for everything you do for Baby Basics MK.

*Rachel Buckley*  
[babybasicsmk.org.uk](http://babybasicsmk.org.uk)



## Ronald McDonald House Oxford

As you know I am in New Zealand until the end of May but with your generous donations I was able to supply the regular 25 toiletry bags for women and 25 toiletry bags for men every month, in the form of a bumper delivery to keep them well supplied until my return. They have had the equivalent of 25 toiletry bags for both men and women for each month up to and including May this year.

However, my supplies are now getting low and as always, I need small shaving foam or gel for men, ladies' deodorant and small soaps and small tubes of toothpaste. I have found nowhere to purchase shaving foam in bulk, nor ladies' deodorant but small bars of soap can be purchased cheaply from Out of Eden. Small tubes of toothpaste can usually be supplied by local dentists so if anyone has a friendly dentist please request small tubes and either deliver to CMS House or take to the Spring Meetings in May and June. Should you require more information please feel free to email me.

Branches from South Buckinghamshire are on the list to supply items in March and April but of course I am very happy to take donations from anyone at any time.

Kelly Gillett who runs Ronald McDonald House is grateful for everything she receives from us. However, they are still pleading for packets of sanitary pads and if any branches or individual members feel they can support this request then it might be a good idea to order the products and have them delivered straight to Ronald McDonald House, Woodlands Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 7RU.

Please remember I can only take new toiletry items; please do not send in any items that have already been opened as these cannot be used. Thank you, as ever, for your kind generosity.

With my love, thanks and prayers

*Tricia Campbell*

[avp.northoxon@muoxford.org.uk](mailto:avp.northoxon@muoxford.org.uk)

# Safeguarding Policy

The MU Oxford board of trustees has adopted a new safeguarding policy. This is based on the national safeguarding policy produced by the MU board for Britain and Ireland.

The national policy includes the main policy and a number of more detailed appendices. Both can be accessed via this link:

[www.mothersunion.org/news/mothers-union-britain-safeguarding-policy-and-procedure](http://www.mothersunion.org/news/mothers-union-britain-safeguarding-policy-and-procedure)

Further information can be found on the MU Oxford website under safeguarding.

The general approach to safeguarding issues is unchanged but there are important differences in some of the details, which are set out here.

1. **Every MU activity or programme must have a designated safeguarding lead.** A role description is included in the document. Initially this role may be undertaken by the branch leader. It is expected that Mary Sumner House will provide some training for this role.

2. When starting a new activity, **a risk assessment needs to be completed.** A form for this is in the appendices.

3. **If a safeguarding issue arises,** a response must be made within 24 hours, or immediately if someone is in danger. The policy describes what to do and who to contact.

4. Trustees and other leaders will be offered **saferguarding awareness training** through the central Mothers' Union. More information will be available soon.

*Rev. Lady Denise Brown*  
[safeguarding@muoxford.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@muoxford.org.uk)

07884 493923



## Quiz

1. Who wrote the book Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang: The Magical Car?
2. In which part of your body would you find the cruciate ligament?
3. What is the name of the main antagonist in the Shakespeare play Othello?
4. When was the movie *The Titanic* released?
5. What element is denoted by the chemical symbol Sn in the periodic table?
6. How many of Henry VIII's wives were called Catherine?
7. What was the most popular girls name in the UK in 2021?
8. What is the name of the 1976 film about the Watergate scandal, starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman?
9. What was the Turkish city of Istanbul called before 1930?
10. What is the capital of Finland?

Quiz Answers  
Ian Fleming  
Knee  
Iago  
1997  
Tin  
Three  
Olivia  
All the President's Men  
Constantinople  
Helsinki



## Pray with Us

*We pray for the work of the Mothers' Union in our diocese and throughout the world:*

- That we open our eyes, ears and hearts to new possibilities within ourselves and our work for the Mothers' Union.
- We pray for our trustees, who are working diligently, despite vacancies. Let each and every one of us look inside ourselves and consider whether we could do this work.
- We pray for the Holy Land, for those people who are displaced, homeless, injured, hungry and tired of war. Bless them, Lord, and help us to help them through practical gestures and prayer.
- This Lent, may we share your transforming and generous love with others. Help us to reach out with your hands and speak with your words to encourage new members to join our wonderful organisation.

This Lent, we may think about giving something up. Chocolate, alcohol, biscuits, in fact anything that we like to eat or drink. This Lent why not think about doing something different? Do you think you could volunteer for something that you do not already do? Do you have a food bank locally that needs help; or start collecting things for our hospital projects at Ronald McDonald House. If you are not able to get up and about, you could phone a friend. Think about those friends that you might have lost touch with or have not seen for a while. Give them a ring.

I am brushing up on my Makaton, which is a sign language that people with special needs use. When I am out and about, if I see someone shopping with their carer, I make a point of saying hello. You do this by simply raising your hand and waving it whilst saying Hello. Smile as you speak and make eye contact if you can. If the person you are talking to does not respond, it does not matter. You made the effort to say hello, whereas many people avoid contact.

God is in the face of everyone that we meet and the fragile souls of our special needs brothers and sisters are no less part of God.

Happy Lent as we follow the footsteps of our Lord, until we praise him when Easter arrives bringing the pain and the glory of our risen Lord.

*Rosie Jackson-Kilham*



## MU Enterprises

Even though I am now in New Zealand until the end of May I continue to place orders for MU members and branches who are enthusiastically buying and selling cards, as well as badges and membership cards for enrolling new members.

Placing the orders is exactly the same as when I am in the UK. However, it does mean that any orders under £60 incur £3.95 postage. All orders placed through me are then delivered direct to the mailing address of your choice.

I encourage as many members as possible to pay for the goods online; it saves writing and posting cheques and then paying them in which is getting harder and harder as bank branches close.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our Spring Meetings. I will definitely be there for the one on 28 May at St Nicholas Earley (although I might be suffering with jet-lag) and also for the one in my own area of Deddington, Oxfordshire on 13 June. With love, thanks and prayers

*Tricia Campbell*

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# CELEBRATIONS

In the Celebrations section of Focus we will publish the following:

- 90, 95, 100 and 100+ birthdays;
- 50 and 60 wedding anniversaries;
- MU long service awards.

Please include photos if possible & remember to get the permission of the individual concerned.

## **Rosemary Atmore (diocesan member)**

### *Celebrated her 100th birthday*

Diocesan Members Coordinator Rev. Lady Denise Brown presenting Mrs Rosemary Atmore, a Diocesan Member from Marcham, with a bouquet from Mothers' Union on her 100th birthday on 9 February 2024.



## Dates for your diary

**Tuesday 19 March**

MU Quiet Day

**Sunday 31 March**

Easter Day

**Monday 8 April**

Lady Day

**Saturday 20 – Monday 22 April**

Wave of Prayer

**Spring Meetings**

**Monday 29th April** - Hughenden Church Hall

**Tuesday 28th May** - St Nicolas Church Earley

**Thursday 13th June** - Deddington Windmill Centre

Further details, time of event and postcode to be confirmed

**Saturday 22 June**

MU Gathering at The King's Centre, Oxford

**Friday 9 August**

Mary Sumner Day

**Tuesday 15 October**

Autumn Meeting and AGM at Benson Parish Hall

**Monday 25 Nov - Tuesday 10 Dec**

16 days of activism against gender violence

## News from the Focus Team

**Copy deadline for Autumn: 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Letters to the Editor - please write to us about things happening in Mothers' Union across the diocese and tell us what you think of *Focus* and the events you have attended. We'd love to have your feedback and any suggestions for further improvements. Please send all your contributions to [focus.editor@muoxford.org.uk](mailto:focus.editor@muoxford.org.uk)