

THE MOTHERS' UNION LEICESTER DIOCESE

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 250038

PATRON: THE BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE

CONSTITUTION

1. GENERAL

1.1 The Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Leicester shall be affiliated to the Central Organisation of the Mothers' Union (incorporated by Royal Charter 5 September 1974) and shall have the same Aim, Objects and Organisation as are defined in the Constitution of the Mothers' Union and are appropriate to a Diocesan Organisation. This Diocesan Constitution is therefore to be read in conjunction with the Constitution of the Mothers' Union, available at the Diocesan Office.

2. DIOCESAN COUNCIL

2.1 Diocesan Council acts as a forum and shall consist of:

- a) Diocesan President, elected as in section 11
- b) All past Diocesan Presidents resident in the Diocese, hereafter called Life Vice-Presidents
- c) Diocesan Mothers' Union Chaplain
- d) Unit Co-ordinators for Action & Outreach, Faith & Policy, Finance & Administration, and Marketing Units, all elected as in section 11, and also serving as Vice-Presidents
- e) The Diocesan Administrator, appointed as described in section 11, shall service the Diocesan Council and, if serving in an honorary capacity, shall have voting rights
- f) Diocesan Treasurer, appointed as described in section 11, and, if serving in an honorary capacity, shall have voting rights
- g) Training Officer, appointed as in described in section 11
- h) All members of the Action & Outreach, Faith & Policy, Finance & Administration, and Marketing Units, established as in sections 5, 6 and 7
- i) All official Speakers who are Mothers' Union members
- j) All Deanery Leaders (or their representatives with power to vote – with the President's prior approval)
- k) All Deanery Secretaries
- l) All Branch Leaders and Contact Persons (see section 11d) (or their deputy with power to vote - with the President's prior approval)
- m) Any leader whose group is affiliated to the Mothers' Union
- n) Mothers' Union members who are representatives on other committees, as approved by the Trustees, including holders of office in Central Units, Boards and Committees of the Mothers' Union
- o) Not more than 6 members co-opted by vote of Council, and with the approval of the Trustees, for the life of that Council

2.2 The Diocesan Council shall meet at least twice a year and shall:

- (i) consider any business from Worldwide Council
- (ii) consider any resolutions from the Diocese with a view to forwarding them to Worldwide Council
- (iii) receive the Financial Report
- (v) receive the reports of its officers and bring matters to their attention
- (vi) consider any resolutions with a view to forwarding them to the Trustees

Resolutions for discussion at Diocesan Council may be submitted via the Diocesan Administrator.

2.3 Voting at Diocesan Council shall normally be by show of hands of those present and entitled to vote. If two or more members shall request a ballot then the President shall immediately organise this, voting slips shall be issued, and those participating shall be required to prove their right to vote, by a voting card issued at the meeting. A matter shall be carried by a simple majority.

2.4 The detailed work of the Mothers' Union shall be directed by (a) The Trustees, (b) The General Purposes Unit, (c) The Action & Outreach Unit, (d) The Faith & Policy Unit, (e) The Finance & Administration Unit, (f) The Marketing Unit. The composition and purpose of these Units follow.

2.5 The Diocesan President shall have power to appoint sub-committees for particular purposes.

2.6 Any member of Mothers' Union, or representatives of other organisations, may attend Diocesan Council meetings, with no voting rights.

3. TRUSTEES

3.1 The Trustees shall consist of:

- a) Diocesan President
- b) Diocesan Administrator (non-voting if not serving in an honorary capacity)
- c) Unit Co-ordinator for Finance & Administration OR Diocesan Treasurer (non-voting if not serving in an honorary capacity)
- d) Up to 2 Life Vice-Presidents, chosen by fellow Life Vice-Presidents
- e) Unit Co-ordinators for Action & Outreach, Faith & Policy, and Marketing Units, or representatives if no serving Co-ordinator
- f) Training Officer
- g) Diocesan Member Co-ordinator
- h) Individual Member Co-ordinator
- i) Diocesan Chaplain
- j) One Deanery Leader, elected by fellow Deanery Leaders
- k) One representative from the General Purposes Unit, elected by members of that Unit at its first meeting of the triennial period
- l) The Trustees may co-opt one person for the duration of that triennial period.

Members of the Trustees may attend meetings of ANY Unit as observers.

3.2 The Trustees shall meet at least 4 times a year and shall:

- 1) transact business referred to it by the Diocesan Council and the General Purposes Unit
- 2) transact business as referred to it by Mary Sumner House
- 3) arrange and carry out all necessary business, including financial, and present a report of its work to Diocesan Council
- 4) receive reports from and ratify the decisions of each Unit, and allocate resources of personnel and finance
- 5) appoint an external auditor
- 6) The Trustees shall have power to appoint sub-committees for particular purposes.

3.3 The quorum for all meetings of the Trustees shall be two-thirds of their total voting membership.

4. GENERAL PURPOSES UNIT

4.1 The General Purposes Unit shall consist of:

- a) Diocesan President
- b) Diocesan Administrator (non-voting if not serving in an honorary capacity)
- c) Unit Co-ordinators for Action & Outreach, Faith & Policy, Finance & Administration, and Marketing Units
- d) 3 members of the Action & Outreach Unit, appointed as in section 11
- e) 3 members of the Faith & Policy Unit, appointed as in section 11
- f) Worldwide Links Secretary
- g) Enterprises Representative
- h) Diocesan Newsletter Editor
- i) Press & Publicity Officer
- j) Diocesan Member Co-ordinator
- k) Individual Member Co-ordinator
- l) Training Officer
- l) Leaders of major Diocesan Projects
- m) Elected members of any Unit deemed necessary by Trustees
- n) Any representative to Unit Committees at Mary Sumner House
- o) 2 Deanery leaders and 2 Branch leaders, one from each Archdeaconry, to serve for one meeting of the General Purposes Unit, by invitation of the Diocesan President, in rotation, to observe
- p) Not more than 2 members co-opted by vote of the General Purposes Unit for the duration of the Triennial and subject to the approval of the Trustees

4.2 The General Purposes Unit shall meet at least twice a year and shall:

- 1) transact business referred to it by Diocesan Council and the Trustees
- 2) arrange and carry out all necessary business, including financial, and present a report of its work to Diocesan Council if necessary

4.3 The quorum for all meetings of the General Purposes Unit shall be half of the total voting membership of the Unit.

5. ACTION & OUTREACH AND FAITH & POLICY UNITS

5.1 The Action & Outreach and Faith & Policy Units shall each consist of:

- a) A Unit Co-ordinator as Chair
- b) A Secretary may be appointed by the Chair
- c) 3 members appointed by the Trustees to assist the Unit Co-ordinator
- d) The Action & Outreach Unit shall also include the Worldwide Links Secretary and leaders of any major Diocesan projects.
- e) Each Unit may co-opt one person, if appropriate, for a maximum of one triennial period, and subject to the approval of the Trustees.

5.2 Each of these Units shall have a Committee of members, one elected from each Deanery, who consider business from Central Units and that brought forward by Deaneries and make recommendations to Trustees, who then bring it to other Units and Diocesan Council as appropriate.

5.3 The Action & Outreach Unit shall discuss, consider and develop the work of the Mothers' Union, including UK and worldwide projects, and relevant training.

5.4 The Faith & Policy Unit shall discuss, consider and develop the work of the Mothers' Union in faith education, social policy, the Indoor Members Prayer Circle, and relevant training.

6. FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION UNIT

6.1 The Finance & Administration Unit shall consist of the Unit Co-ordinator for Finance & Administration, the Diocesan President, the Diocesan Treasurer and assistants, the Enterprises Representative, the Diocesan Member Co-ordinator, the Training Officer, and the Diocesan Administrator to take Minutes.

6.2 The Finance & Administration Unit shall monitor and evaluate all financial, administrative, membership and training aspects of the work of the Mothers' Union.

7. MARKETING UNIT

7.1 The Marketing Unit shall consist of the Unit Co-ordinator for Marketing, Diocesan Newsletter Editor, Press & Publicity Officer, and may appoint a Minutes Secretary. The Unit may co-opt up to two people, if appropriate, for a maximum of one triennial period, and subject to the approval of the Trustees.

7.2 The Marketing Unit shall discuss, consider and develop the work of the Mothers' Union including publications, the Diocesan Newsletter, press and publicity, and relevant training.

8. DEANERY COMMITTEES

8.1 Deanery Committees shall consist of the Deanery Leader as Chair, a Secretary appointed by the Chair, the Branch Leaders of the Deanery, the Deanery Representatives to Unit Committees, a Treasurer elected by the Committee from its own membership, or co-opted.

8.2 The Deanery Committee shall meet after each Diocesan Council meeting, ideally within two weeks after a meeting of the Diocesan Council, and shall:

- 1) receive reports from Diocesan Council and Unit Committees
- 2) discuss, consider and develop the work of the Mothers' Union in the Deanery
- 3) elect officers and representatives as laid down in section 11

9. **BRANCHES**

9.1 Parochial Branches may only be formed with the consent of the Incumbent of the parish, and must be carried on in accordance with his/her wishes and in accordance with the Diocesan Constitution. The Diocesan President and Diocesan Administrator should be notified before a branch is started. They can be asked to speak at its first meeting.

It is recommended that new members should not be admitted at their first meeting. Each new member should be made aware of the Purpose, Aim and Objects of the Mothers' Union before being admitted. The Incumbent should be asked to admit members at a service in church.

The Diocesan President, Diocesan Administrator and Deanery Leader should be invited to the first enrolment service. A new branch is entitled to a grant from Diocesan Funds, the amount to be decided by the Trustees upon a recommendation from the Diocesan Treasurer.

When a branch has lapsed and wishes to be re-opened, there should be a fresh election of all officials.

9.2 Each branch shall have a Branch Committee normally presided over by the Branch Leader, assisted by a Branch Secretary and Treasurer, and as many members as are necessary to ensure the smooth running of the branch. See also Section 11d. The Branch Committee shall discuss, consider and develop the work of the Mothers' Union in the parish in close co-operation with the Incumbent. Tasks and business may be delegated to other Branch members.

9.3 All meetings must include a time of prayer, and can include prayers or services from Mothers' Union publications or other appropriate resources.

9.4 When a branch wishes to close, it is requested that the Deanery Leader and the Diocesan Administrator be told in sufficient time for help and advice to be offered. When a branch is closed the case shall be reported to the Diocesan President.

Upon closure of a branch, any monies should be sent to the Diocesan Treasurer to be applied to Mothers' Union work in the Diocese. Branch records should be preserved through the relevant church or deposited with Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office by prior arrangement.

9.5 BRANCH ACTIVITIES

a) The Feast of the Annunciation (Lady Day: 25 March, or such other date as may be appointed by the Church for the keeping of that Festival) is observed annually as a special day of prayer and thanksgiving for the Mothers' Union.

- b) Founder's Day (9 August) is observed annually as a special day of prayer and thanksgiving for the vision and work of Mary Sumner.
- c) Members are invited to observe the hours designated for the Wave of Prayer in their Deanery or Branch, and to pray for the Diocesan Linked Dioceses, for members overseas and for our own Diocese.
- d) Branch programmes should be arranged so as to further the Purpose, Aim and Objects of the Mothers' Union, which includes service to the community while maintaining the spiritual character of the Society.

10. AFFILIATED GROUPS

All affiliated groups shall adhere to the Purpose, Aim and Objects of the Mothers' Union and be approved by and accountable to the Trustees. An annual report and accounts shall be submitted to the Diocesan Administrator.

11. ELECTIONS

All members of the Trustees, General Purposes Unit, all Deanery Leaders, Secretaries and Treasurers and all Official Speakers shall be communicant members of the Church of England or of a church in communion therewith.

- a) The following are elected by the Diocesan Council, by postal vote where there is more than one candidate:

Diocesan President

Unit Co-ordinators for Action & Outreach, Faith & Policy, Finance & Administration, and Marketing.

The Diocesan Administrator shall invite nominations for the above offices. Members who are willing and eligible to stand will have their names placed on a nomination form. Elections may need to be held if more than one nomination is received for any elected post.

If an election is required, anyone receiving two or more nominations shall have their name placed on a voting paper which shall be sent to each member of Council, with the request that it be returned by a stated date. The candidate receiving most votes shall be deemed elected. In the case of the Diocesan President, the name(s) of the candidate(s) shall be approved by the Bishop before election takes place.

- b) The Deanery Leader is elected by the Deanery Branch Leaders. The Deanery Secretary shall invite nominations, submitting to the Area Dean for approval the names of any candidates who receive two or more nominations. Election shall be by postal vote where there is more than one candidate.
- c) The Deanery Representatives to the Action & Outreach and Faith & Policy Unit Committees shall be elected by the Deanery Leader and Branch Leaders of the Deanery at one of their meetings.
- d) A Branch Leader shall be elected by the Branch with approval of the Incumbent. In cases where a branch is unable to find a Branch Leader, it is permissible for a "Contact Person" to be appointed, with the agreement of the Incumbent and Diocesan President, and for the branch to be run by committee for up to two years, when the situation should be reviewed by the Incumbent and the Diocesan President. In this instance, preparation for membership should be undertaken by the Incumbent and/or Deanery Leader, or may be delegated to some suitable person.

- e) The Branch Committee shall be elected by the Branch.
- f) No member may hold more than one office in the list (i) below, nor more than one office in the list (ii) below, nor more than one office in the list (iii) below, without the approval of the Incumbent of the member's parish and the Diocesan President.

List (i)

Diocesan President
Diocesan Administrator
Diocesan Treasurer
Unit Co-ordinator
Appointed member of Action & Outreach, Faith & Policy, Finance & Administration or Marketing Units
World-wide Links Secretary
Enterprises Representative
Diocesan Newsletter Editor
Press & Publicity Officer
Diocesan Member Coordinator
Individual Member Coordinator
Training Officer
Leader of major Diocesan Project

List (ii)

Deanery Leader
Deanery Secretary
Deanery Treasurer

List (iii)

Branch Leader
Branch Secretary
Branch Treasurer

- g) With the exception of the Diocesan Administrator, Diocesan Treasurer and assistants, and Life Vice-Presidents, all officials of the Mothers' Union in the Diocese, in the Deanery and in the Branch shall serve for a term of three years and shall be eligible for re-election, or re-appointment, for a second term of three years. They shall be ineligible for re-election or re-appointment to the same office during the next triennial period if they have served for two consecutive triennial periods, unless by approval of the Diocesan President and, in the case of Branch Leaders, the Incumbent of the member's parish.

The Diocesan Administrator and Diocesan Treasurer and assistants, if serving in an honorary capacity, shall be appointed initially for 3 years, and thereafter the appointment to be reviewed annually by the Trustees.

- h) Casual vacancies occurring in offices which are normally filled by an election, shall be filled by the person who obtained the next highest number of votes in the original election - if available and willing. If not, then a fresh election shall be held. A person filling a casual vacancy in the first year of the triennial period shall be deemed to have served for the whole of the triennial period; but the service of a person filling a casual

vacancy in the second or third year of the triennial period shall be disregarded, enabling that person to serve for two subsequent triennial periods, if elected.

12. APPOINTED OFFICIALS

12.1 The following are appointed by the Trustees:

Diocesan Administrator
Diocesan Treasurer
Treasurer's Assistants
Training Officer
Worldwide Links Secretary
Enterprises Representative
Diocesan Newsletter Editor
Press & Publicity Officer
Diocesan Member Coordinator
Individual Member Coordinator
Major Diocesan Project Leaders
3 members for the Action & Outreach Unit
3 members for the Faith & Policy Unit

It will be normal for the Diocesan President, acting alone or with a sub-committee, to find suitable persons and submit their names to the Trustees for approval, or election if there is more than one suitable candidate for a post.

12.2 The appointment of the Diocesan Chaplain is by choice of the Diocesan President with the approval of the Bishop. The Diocesan Chaplain shall serve for a period of three years, being the Triennial of the Diocesan Presidency. The Diocesan Chaplain may serve for more than one Triennial, regardless of previous service.

13. FINANCE

a) An annual subscription shall be paid by each member to their branch, the amount of which shall be calculated as follows:

- i. the annual subscription payable to Central Funds, shall be added to
- ii. the annual subscription set by the Trustees, and payable to Diocesan Funds, shall be added to
- iii. the annual subscription set by the Deanery Committee, and payable to Deanery Funds, shall be added to
- iv. the annual subscription set by the branch, and payable to branch funds.

(In the case of iii. and iv. the amount may be NIL and money may be raised for these funds in alternative ways.)

b) Money may be raised by means of appeals etc. for particular items, projects and causes of the Mothers' Union.

- c) A Mothers' Union branch may not be used as a channel for charitable appeals on behalf of other organisations, nor shall money be allocated to them from any Mothers' Union branch or deanery fund. A branch may support the needs of its own parish but subject to the Aim, Purpose and Objects of the Society.
 - d) Every Branch, Deanery, Unit, Committee and the Diocese itself, shall maintain proper accounts which shall be subject to annual review.
 - e) Where a bank account is held, it is recommended that two out of a possible four signatures shall be required on all cheques.
 - f) Collections taken at a Mothers' Union service in church are at the disposal of the Incumbent. It is the usual custom for the Incumbent to grant the collection to the Mothers' Union, to be allocated to one of its special funds at home or overseas, after the expenses of the church have been met.
 - g) Members should be encouraged to give to the Mothers' Union via Gift Aid declarations. The Finance & Administration Unit will keep the required records.
14. No circular or official letter shall be sent out in the name of the Diocese, nor an official statement of policy handed to the media, unless first approved by the Diocesan President. Any official correspondence should include the registered charity number.

15. **ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION**

The Trustees shall have power to revoke, alter, amend or add to the Diocesan Constitution, subject to any such alteration being in harmony with the Constitution of the Mothers' Union, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1974. Notice of any proposed revocation, alteration or amendment shall be given in writing to all members of the Diocesan Council, at least 21 days before the meeting at which the matter is to be discussed. Any matters arising out of the discussion shall be referred back to the Trustees before a final decision is made.