



Diocese of Newcastle

OFFICERS 2024

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AN ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR THE HALTWHISTLE HERALD

MOTHERS' UNION – WHO ARE WE?

I have been asked about the Mothers' Union when I have been out and about, so I thought it may be helpful to give you some information!

Mothers' Union was started by a Vicars' wife, Mary Sumner, in the Winchester Diocese in 1886. The first Bishop of Newcastle, Ernest Wilberforce, saw the need for education and support, and suggested the MU became part of the Anglican Community.

Mothers' Union is an inclusive international organisation, part of the Anglican Community worldwide, with 4 million members in 84 countries, with a voice in the United Nations on the UN Commission on the status of women.

Their Aims and Objectives are to support families and individuals whose lives have met with adversity, both locally and globally.

Some Churches, not all, have a MU branch, ours is Henshaw with Beltingham Branch, historically with links to St Cuthbert's in Haydon Bridge. We support NDAS (Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service) where we give Christmas presents and gift vouchers, for the staff to give to users of their service which is based in Hexham. Other MU Branches support "Safe Houses" in other parts of the County.

This year we held a "Make a Mothers' Day" Coffee morning in Bardon Mill Village Hall. All proceeds, totalling £461, have been sent to MU headquarters, in London, to be used to make a difference for mothers and their families through the ground-breaking work Mothers' Union does at home and worldwide.

For more information, see the MU Websites www.mothersunion.org or www.munewcastle.org.uk

Anne Brunton



Do consider writing an article about Mothers' Union, or your local project, for your local 'rag'! Include pictures to make it more appealing! Editor

President's Letter



Dear Friends,

It seems that again our main focus is on Change.

I am pleased to inform you all that our own Mothers' Union Safeguarding will be rolled out to everyone later this year. This is obligatory as we are a charity overseen by The Charity Commission.

After the Election process is complete we may have some

rearranging to do. Streamlining has proved a possible way forward. AFIA can now be administered online but we need someone to lead it. Some Dioceses no longer offer this service due to lack of leadership. Please consider taking on some of our vacant roles. I promise you it has its own rewards.

Wherever I go in our Diocese I meet committed people working for their own community. We will highlight some of our projects in future Newsletters and Journals. We may be diminishing in numbers but our achievements are phenomenal.

Please make use of our website for news. Look out for our Footsteps in Faith culminating in Morpeth in August (see page 8). I look forward to seeing you there.

Mothers' Union celebrates 150 years in 2026 with a service in St Paul's Cathedral. Other things will be happening down in London and I am sure a group of us will be there. We will also plan our own Newcastle celebrations: I wonder what Mary Sumner would make of it all.

We will also have our own Newcastle End of Triennium Service in December: details later.

It has been a wet and chilly Spring, let us all anticipate and pray for a warm and sunny Summer. Thanks to all of you for the hope that you give to

Thanks to all of you for the hope that you give to the many families we help. Hope, as you know, is a marvelous thing!

With love, Margy

The articles on pages 2 and 3 include examples of local projects, and some more are to be found elsewhere in this Journal. Editor

FIVE MINUTE PEACE – OVINGHAM MOTHERS UNION

NE of our members proposed the idea of having 'Five minute peace' aimed at parents/ grandparents/carers on their way back from the school run. Whilst many children are taken to school by car, there is still a sizeable proportion who walk and the lane at the back of the Church is on the main route to school. I hasten to add the lane is rarely used by vehicles.

This is seen more as a community event and ultimately perhaps to encourage new members for both Mothers' Union and St Mary's, Ovingham.

Our first trial run was before the start of the school holidays last summer but unfortunately, we hit a day of teachers' strikes! Undeterred, we recommenced in September on a Wednesday morning between the hours of 8.30 and 9.30 when a hot or cold drink is offered together with a snack and a listening ear. To date, those who have stopped for a drink or a chat have provided

positive feedback and we are also helped by our Parish Priest, Revd Tom Birch who sees this as an opportunity to engage with parents. Ovingham First School is a Church of England school and whilst Revd Tom knows the children, he has not had much contact with their parents/guardians.

We also have a small tent which gives us some shelter during inclement weather.

The title is based on a book called 'Five minute peace' by Jill Murphy and one or two copies are displayed for those who stop by.

Margaret Davenport, Branch Leader



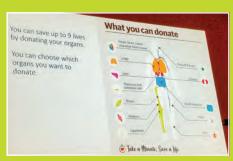
The Gift of Life

Mothers' Union welcomes local experts to Diocesan Council

Many members have personal stories about organ donation, and the difference it can make. Our MU Secretary's son, Andrew, had lived with kidney dialysis for many years, until, recently, he was able to receive a new kidney, which is transforming his life. So we invited Dr Frankie Dowen, renal consultant at the Freeman Hospital, to come to speak to Diocesan Council about this 'Gift of Life'. Her aim was to spread awareness in the local area, and she hopes Mothers' Union members can help. Her presentation was fully supported by statistics and showed the sensitivity and care which the team bring to their work.

Over 60 000 people are currently living with a transplant, but 7000 others are waiting, and 4 500 have died while waiting. In 2020 'Max and Keira's Law' came into effect, meaning that we are all potential donors unless we opt out. Keira was a local 9-year-old girl who died in a tragic accident: her organs saved four lives, including that of Max, then aged 10. Her parents take comfort in knowing that their daughter's heart is still alive in Max.

Dr Dowen pointed out that many parts of our bodies can be donated (see picture), and up to nine lives saved. However, every effort is made to accept the wishes of bereaved families, and there are many difficult



conversations. There is still a shortage of appropriate kidneys, as not all are eligible (dependent on health, rather than age). This is particularly true for those of minority ethnic origins, and where faith and other requirements need to be respected by the team. Prior awareness of transplantation is helpful, and the team would like to go into schools.

About 40% of donors are live. These include **Ross Hutchinson**, Tyne Tees weather man, who also came to speak to us. Recently his Dad was 'under the weather', and was found to have only 3% kidney function. Ross was immediately convinced that he should offer a kidney, and, after all the appropriate tests, this took place just a few weeks ago. Ross told us about the process, in his usual humorous and engaging style, and about his delight at seeing his father in full health and riding his bike. Ross was initially shy about telling people what he had done, but soon realised that people were very interested,



and so he is now an ambassador. He also became aware of the anxiety suffered by his own family and wishes he had talked them through it more beforehand.



The message to MU is one of hope, and Dr Dowen and Ross encouraged everyone to have family conversations about organ donation: it is important that those who are willing to make this gift of life should make this clear to our families. For more information or to register your wishes, go to www.organdonation. nhs.uk

After the talks, several members shared their own experiences. Andrew himself was unable to be there, but he wanted to thank members for their prayers and good wishes, and his mother Sandra was there to share his delight with us.

Barbara Packer

Photographs by Linda Benneworth and Anne Marr



RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse

On Saturday, 25th November some members of St Bart's Mothers' Union, along with family, friends and local dignitaries, took a walk of witness from St Bart's Church to Forest Hall Shopping Centre. We congregated outside Greggs, where a three-minute silence was held. This encouraged curious passers-by to chat with us and helped us to spread the word.



St Cuthbert's, Blyth give Christmas and Easter gifts for the Northumberland Refuge



At Christmas toys were given from the Toy Service, with special gifts bought by MU members for the older teenagers. Each household received a bag full of special Christmas food and gifts. At Easter, each family received Easter eggs. All this makes the families at the Refuge feel cared-for.

Jennifer Snowdon

2nd January 2024 Dear All

I would like to personally thank you for the continued support and the food you provided for Christmas day, for our Ladies & children in Refuge and Outreach. Your generous support allows us to be able to help individuals and families through a very difficult time in their lives.

For over 40 years Harbour has worked to achieve positive outcomes for all those affected by domestic abuse. We work across Tees Valley, County Durham, Darlington and North Tyneside, supporting around 4000 individuals a year.

Domestic abuse recognises no boundaries and people can be affected regardless of their age, income, ethnic origin, gender and sexual orientation. We believe that everyone has the right to live free from abuse and violence and will continue to support individuals and their families to recover from these experiences.

Lesley Gibson, CEO, Harbour Refuge

"Rise Up" Domestic Abuse Campaign

MU has launched this across Britain and Ireland (see pages 18&19 in your Autumn Connected magazine).



In November 2023 I sent this new campaign poster (with local helpline included) to every branch leader. I do hope everyone has put the poster on Church/Church Hall noticeboards, the backs of toilet doors (including the male) etc. This will increase awareness and also provide contact details for anyone seeking help and support, including those who use Church premises but are not members of the church community.

I welcome branches inviting me to talk about Domestic Abuse. Some have already done so but many have not taken up the opportunity. Please do consider hearing my talk on the subject – it all adds weight to this important national campaign.

Sylvia Hickey



Christmas Day support for families at the Harbour Refuge

For the third year running, the First internet Branch, with financial support from Ponteland and St Columba's MU delivered 16 large gift bags, each one containing a full Christmas Day menu of fresh food for the families in the Harbour Refuge. The response is shown above. *Sylvia Hickey*

Action & Outreach

□ IRST I would like to pay tribute to Margaret Crawforth, who served as Away From It All rep for nine years.

She worked hard to keep in touch by email with agencies and individuals authorised to refer families who needed a holiday and could not afford to go away. She also organised Awayday outings for parents or carers and children in refuges or hostels, or those living with disability or mental health issues. She worked with agencies such as the Cedarwood Trust on the Meadowell Estate in North Tyneside, the Pendower Community Hub in the West end of Newcastle. as well as Barnados and NDAS (Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service). Margaret made bookings and liaised with our Treasurer over payments to the caravan sites in our area. She booked coaches and entrance tickets, and made sure safeguarding was in place.

These families long for a restorative break away from their daily difficulties, to reset their often stretched relationships. Over the years there have been trips to a wide variety of attractions. Thank you, Margaret! The reason I have outlined the AFIA job is because we need to find somebody with a warm heart and administrative skills to fill this vital post. It is at the centre of what we as Mothers' Union are about, helping families in distress.

Last year A&O co-ordinated the collection of 160 gift bags for the People's Kitchen. Thanks to all who helped in this, and who attended 'Gift Bag Day'. Can we beat this total



in 2024? People's Kitchen had 250 rain-drenched people attend their Christmas party. Thanks to Anne Blight for attending, equally soaked through, on behalf of Mothers' Union. Please see our website website@munewcastle.org.uk for the current list of contents and come along to Gift Bag Day on 29th November.

We were able to deliver seven filled rucksacks for prisoners on the day of their release who had no family to go to; we have also supported asylum seekers by providing clothes. I hope to increase the numbers this year.

Many of our other projects and gifts are pictured on these pages. Several are organised by individual branches for their local hospital, hostel or refuge.

Do invite me to talk to your Branch about Action and Outreach!

Diana Macnaughton, Action & Outreach Co-ordinator

Friday December 1st Christmas Gift Bag Coffee Morning

E woke to snow and ice but the brave ladies of our MU arrived from further North, Berwick, Hepple and Amble – I'm so proud of you. Others living a little closer still had to face the conditions and the traffic congestion which ensued.

The Trustees kindly provided the goodies to have with our coffee. Our Secretary Sandra welcomed all as they came in the door with her "sign in book".

About 160 Gift Bags were blessed by our Chaplain and then put into the van from People's Kitchen ready to be taken there for one of their Christmas Parties on Monday night. We were helped by Andy the caretaker from Church House and Karen the receptionist.

Because of the weather conditions some didn't stay as long as other years but it was a lovely social morning which it was a pleasure to be at.

A big thank you to all members for your contribution in helping to make this Christmas a little special for some homeless person.



Anne Blight, VP
Northumberland Archdeaconry





21 attractive cloth bags sewn by Lillian Broatch and filled with gifts from MU members for women supported by Girls Are Proud/ Changing Lives.

ACTION AND OUTREACH · ACTION AND OUTREACH · ACTION AND OUTREACH

Concert and afternoon tea





£691 was raised (before expenses)
– a huge 'Thank you to everyone!

HE First Internet Branch and St Francis' Heaton
Mothers' Union led a concert and afternoon
tea on Saturday 24th February at St Nicholas'
Church in South Gosforth. The Eclectic - Lite
Trio, with singer Jonathan Worthy, entertained us with light classical music and songs from the musicals.

Afternoon tea was delicious and shared by all with much chatter and time to catch up for many friends. It was a delightful afternoon with good music, food and friendship. The money raised was shared between the sensory room at a local refuge, and Mothers' Union projects.

Jackie Moore



Emergency Hospital Bags

EMBERS from All Saints' Branch, Gosforth, got together on Monday 22nd April and produced 40 hospital bags in 40 minutes!

St Nicholas' Hospital informed us that they desperately needed more bags. The Chaplain's secretary was surprised and delighted when they were delivered speedily. Well done ladies!

Pam Taylor, Branch Leader







T Aidan and St Francis had a few things in common. They both walked everywhere, and they both told stories of faith. Aidan would recommend walking as the best way to get around, to meet others and to share stories along the way.

Mothers' Union is all about Footsteps in Faith

We make them. We look ahead to judge the terrain. We look back to see where we've come from.

We journey together, though sometimes we feel alone. Sometimes our path is well lit, sometimes we stumble in the darkness; but always, like the saints of old, we mark the landscape with our footsteps in faith.

When we look back, we may wonder how we managed to keep going at times. We may also wonder at the journeys we have made, the heights we have reached and the wonders we have seen. We all have stories to tell one another, and our grandchildren – just as the saints of old told their stories of faith.

Walking itself is a faith activity – we step out in the faith that we won't fall over – that we will get to where we wish to be, be it upstairs or up Mt Everest; be it across the street or across the country, or even with a mobility aid.

In order to walk we need two feet: one to hold fast and one to let go! Our feet are reminders of the two essential disciplines which support any journey in faith. 'Holding fast' to what is true and right and eternal, and 'letting go' of what holds us back in regret or fearfulness of loss. Somewhere between the two we need to find our 'balance' – so much easier to do when we keep walking rather than standing on one leg! The hardest part of climbing a mountain is the first step out of the car park – the intention to 'let go' of the known and step into the unknown!

As we journey through the summer months, we are invited to notice where we walk, what we see, who we meet, what we discover; to wonder at the miracle of walking and the privilege of having 'our being' balanced in the love of Christ.



In Him we live and move and have our being.

Acts 17:28

MU Newcastle makes FOOTSTEPS in FAITH

June-August 2024 – including a Morpeth Meet

Mothers' Union is all about Footsteps in Faith.

We journey together, though sometimes we feel alone but always, like the saints of old, we mark the landscape with our footsteps in faith.

We are invited to make 'Footsteps in Faith' together this summer: to encourage one another in our journey, share our stories and finally to

Meet in Morpeth in St George's URC Church Friday 30th August 2024, 10.30-2.30. PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

The venue is on the ground floor.

Free parking in Morpeth for three hours or all day – a disc is needed.

Tea/coffee available / Bring picnic lunch or eat out.

Suggested walks in Morpeth and places to visit will be posted on the website. Activities for all ages will be available in the church.

Creative all-age Midday Prayer in St Georges at 12:00. You are invited to 'Bring a Shoe' that has a personal story to share informally.

More detailed information about car parks, Morpeth town and St Georges Church will be posted on the website.

Ideas for 'making footsteps' see: www.munewcastle.org.uk



WANTED

Good Photographs of MU Banners across the Diocese

OR the next Commissioning
Service in the Cathedral we
wish to have photographs
shown on screen of the
banners from every MU branch (in
memory of the days when we all
processed in with them!)

Please e-mail them (full size, not reduced) to Anne Marr at chaplain@munewcastle.org.uk

Welcome to our QR code quiz

QR stands for:

- 1. Quaint Rubric?
- 2. Quite Reasonable?
- 3. Quick Response?
- 4. Quietly Reflective?
- 5. Quite Relevant?
- 6. Quite Right?

Full marks for getting the right answer, which is **3** – Quick Response.

This nifty square gets you immediately into the MU Newcastle

website and all the information you may wish to find about Mothers' Union. No need for costly leaflets which go out of date. It acts like a bar code, but as it is in in two dimensions there are an almost infinite number of possible codes.

I guess 'Quick Response' is 'Quite Relevant' to an organisation which deals with Prayer and Action. In fact, any of the six options may match MU. If you don't already know how it works – ask a young person to show you. All you need is a smart phone camera which recognises QR codes. If you don't have a smart phone, you can access the website the traditional way on a computer www.munewcastleorg.uk If you don't have a computer, you're truly blessed!

We now have small MU name cards with our QR code on them. Easy to give to anyone – or have in church for people to pick up.



Scan to check our website...

...to find out about out Local Branches, Projects, Resources and more





Find us on Facebook, or on www.munewcastle.org.uk

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Tynemouth Deanery Quiet
Afternoon was held at St Mary's,
Monkseaton on St Joseph's Day,
19th March. The Vicar, Nigel Taylor,
reflected with us on the place of St
Joseph, whom we hardly encounter
except at the Nativity, when he
responds to the message of his
dream – 'Do not be afraid, the child
is of the Holy Spirit': it gave him the
courage to accept the pregnant Mary
as his wife. We see an honourable,
faithful man, who must have been
very important to Jesus. Having
looked at the place of Joseph, we
were encouraged to look at our own
place, and that of Mothers' Union –
and at our need to be faithful.



The group of members from all over the Deanery finished by singing the lovely chant 'In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice'. We enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with other Branches over tea afterwards, and were delighted to hear that Nigel is to be our new Area Dean. He is shortly to be admitted as a Mothers' Union member.

Barbara Packer

Benwell Branch members running and supporting the Craft and Coffee group they started in January last year.



A visit to Stannington Branch

I was privileged to attend Stannington Branch meeting last Thursday for their 'Spring in a teacup' flower arranging demonstration. I was also glad to present three members with long service certificates, Liz Ferguson, 51 years, Ann Wilson, 46 years and Margaret Coulter, 40 years.



The Teacup arrangements were delightful and it was commented that as they were all concentrating so much on what Sandra Dickenson had shown them to do, the group had never been so quiet!

The meeting was also Liz Ferguson's last meeting as Branch Leader, as she is moving nearer her daughter in the Whitley Bay area. She was presented



with a card and a gift of a Mothers' Union scarf from the members. The branch has decided now that it will close at the end of this year.

Joan Howard, MU Deanery Leader, Morpeth



Diocesan Members' Day

Saturday April 20th dawned bright and sunny, perfect weather for our spring meeting. For once, my dream that diocesan members attending would outnumber Trustees attending was realised! We were also joined by one or two valued visitors.

Opening prayers were led by Revd Ruth Stradling our new curate at St Nicholas South Gosforth, our venue, herself a new MU member.

Our speaker was Canon Barbara Packer with her presentation on our MU links Overseas. This gave us an international perspective – we often forget that we are a worldwide organisation.

Revd Diana Macnaughton, herself a Diocesan Member, led Midday Prayers, followed by our light lunch which seemed to be enjoyed by all.

Sylvia Hickey, Diocesan Members' Co-Ordinator





President Margy presents Long Service Awards at Morpeth Lady Day service, including one for 60 years to Dorothy McLean.





St George, Cullercoats Long Service awards.



June Olliver, Obituary

We were greatly saddened to hear that June Olliver had died in November.



June had served Mothers' Union for many years, and during that time she had been Hexham Deanery leader, a member of Worldwide Council, and Lindisfarne Archdeaconry Vice President. With her lovely singing voice, she sang in the Mothers' Union Choir.

She was a member of Hexham Abbey Mothers' Union. In recent times, when the branch was struggling and threatened with closure, June, although unwell herself, fought valiantly to keep the branch open, she recruited new members and the branch is now doing well with members determined to keep it going as June would have wished.

Who could forget June's wonderful cross stitch pictures and many craft items which she made for sale for Mothers' Union or as special gifts.

June loved her family, especially her grandchildren, Hexham Abbey and Mothers' Union and they all loved her in return.

She will be greatly missed. Sheila Walker

St Bart's Long Benton Branch

We were delighted to welcome three new members, Pat, Frances and Joan at their induction on Sunday, 11th February. Here they are, pictured with Father Ben Jarvis, our Vicar.



On Sunday, 25th February we held our annual Soup and Sandwich lunch. Sally and Anna-Lisa dished out the soup. We had seven flavours of homemade soup on the menu, and as many varieties of sandwiches too. Lovely food and a great atmosphere – a successful fundraising event.





Four new members

In March, Haydon Bridge with Henshaw and Beltingham branch welcomed four new members at their branch meeting in Henshaw.

Valerie Gibson, Heidi Hebrank, Lynn McAleese and Terry Hebden were enrolled by our Branch Chaplain, Revd Dr John Harrison. Terry is our second male member and he joins Nigel who was enrolled last year.

We are delighted to have four new members in our branch and we all give them a very warm welcome and wish them God's richest blessings for their future in Mothers' Union.

Sheila Walker



Josephine Kulke RIP

Many Mothers' Union members were among those who attended Josephine's funeral in April.

Josepine had served in a number of MU roles in this Diocese, from Branch Leader of St Cuthbert, Blyth MU., to Bedlington Deanery Leader, Diocesan Trustee, and, earlier, Faith

and Policy Unit Coordinator.



1.

Retreat at Shepherds Dene. See page 2 of Winter Journal for details and booking form. Only day tickets now available.

28th June

Trustee meeting at 10am via Zoom

9th August

Mary Sumner Day - local events

30th August - 10.30am-2.30pm.

Footsteps in Faith event in Morpeth (see page 6)

8th September

Deadline for the Autumn Newsletter. Items to Barbara Packer, please.

12th September - 10.30am

Units meeting at the Cathedral

27th September

Trustee meeting at 10am via Zoom

11th October

Diocesan Council at 1.30pm at St John, Kingston Park

2nd November - 2pm

Provincial End of Triennium Service at Blackburn Cathedral

29th November

Gift Bag Day and collection of Winter Journals at Church House

Every 1st Thursday:

MU lead Midday Prayers at the Cathedral

90th Lil Newby

St Gabriel, Heaton

80th Kate Chilton

Holy Saviour, Tynemouth

80th Judith Clark

Holy Saviour, Tynemouth

80th Joan Kean

Holy Saviour, Tynemouth

80th Margo Haldane Delaval

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

GOLDEN WEDDING

Jennifer & Revd Andrew Beeston St George, Cullercoats

DIAMOND WEDDINGS

Brenda & Don Ross

Earsdon & Backworth

Margaret and Ken Armstrong

Long Benton

Valerie & Revd Clive Harper

Holy Saviour, Tynemouth **Liesbeth & Roger Langford**

Diocesan Member

DEATHS

Odette Walker

St Peter's, Monkseaton

Hexham Abbey Branch Leader, Hexham Deanery Leader

Una Peal

Newsham, St Bede

Jane Weedy

Newsham, St Bede

Joan Waddle

Newsham, St Bede

Elaine Cordingley

St Cuthbert's, Amble

Molly Frost

St John, Killingworth, aged 103

Jean Johnson

St Gabriel, Heaton

Mary Cummings

St Andrew, Cambois

Audrey Henderson

Holy Saviour, Tynemouth

Helen Eadington

Holy Saviour, Tynemouth

Josephine Kulke

St Cuthbert Blyth, Trustee

Linda Boynton

Seaton Hirst

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members, including:

Thomas Rippon Alnmouth & Lesbury **Hilary Harrison** First Internet Branch

Jean Comb Wylam

Jean Annetts Hexham Abbey Hexham Abbey Julie Barham **Daisy Robbins** Diocesan Member

Kathleen Burn St Francis, Heaton

Doris Clavering St Francis, Heaton

Janet Chapman St Peter,

Monkseaton

St Peter, **Helen Lewis**

Monkseaton Sue Ward Benwell

Liz Patterson Benwell Olwynn Reid Benwell

Valerie Gibson Haydon Bridge

w Beltingham & Henshaw

Heidi Hebrank Haydon Bridge

w Beltingham & Henshaw

Lynn McAleese Haydon Bridge

w Beltingham &

Henshaw

Terry Hebden Haydon Bridge

w Beltingham &

Henshaw

Linda Finch Holy Nativity.

Chapel House

Do visit our growing website at www.munewcastle.org.uk



Mothers' Union in Newcastle Diocese is a charity formed to serve families either in a family group or as individuals and walk with them by support through challenging times in their lives. The charity is 100% volunteer led. All monies raised go into the many projects Mothers' Union develops and delivers.

If you would like to contribute to the work that Mothers' Union does both in Newcastle Diocese and Worldwide you can contribute to our Virgin Giving site:



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www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1008779



