

What are our current activities including outreach?

- Midday Prayers in Cathedral once a month
- Retreats and Quiet Days
- Prayer for our diocesan links
- Branch meetings – social aspect especially for older members

- Crisis Intervention Fund & Store
- Washbags for hospitals
- Knitted teddies for West Mercia Police
- Marriage candles
- Activity Quilts / Twiddle Muffs
- AFIA
- Support for Women's Refuge and Food Banks, involvement with Homeless Forum, possible future support for refugees
- Fundraising for MU funds – overseas, relief etc as well as our diocesan projects

- Many members are also involved in their local churches and communities supporting projects that accord with our aim and objects with people power – with increased partnership working due to cuts in public funding, this is likely to be an area of growth for us.

Particular concerns of family life in our diocese

- Older / ageing people (social demography)
- Loneliness / social isolation – rural area, sparsely populated, lack of transport
- Babies / parenting issues
- Low wage economy – poverty, homelessness, housing affordability, food banks etc
- Small business economy – especially agricultural / rural
- Economic migrants / refugees - (CIF are working to support 26 applications from refugees to come to Herefordshire, by providing bedding and kitchen equipment; other local groups are sending items to Calais)
- Further cuts to public services / austerity

Plans for our diocese during this triennial (up to five priorities):

Identified area of concern social isolation / parenting / poverty / local community needs

What do we intend to do? Encourage branches / members to work in partnership with other local groups to support their own local community needs eg Pub is the Hub, Meals on Wheels distribution, parent and toddler groups who need volunteers, maybe helping with readers in schools, community transport schemes / transport sharing. Many branches

/ members are already making the connections with younger children and families through initiatives like Messy Church and Open the Book too.

What do we feel MU can offer in this area? People power / volunteers, and resources (not least willingness). We can also offer additional support in some cases with CIF and AFIA.

Who might we work with? Other local community groups, local parish and county councils, schools, churches.

What other support / information / resources might we need? Clear information about what links well with our own aim and objects, guidance on DBS etc and Charity Commission guidance on partnership working. Other support / information / resources would need to be identified for each individual situation. Being able to link in with local signposting would also be useful – such as helping identify local contact numbers and sources of advice and support.

What are our identified goals / outcomes? Difficult to identify, as they would vary from group to group / community to community – but being able to share ideas at (eg) Diocesan Council, and via our media presence would be good.

How will we assess impact? Again, difficult to identify – but each partnership would have some idea of what it was achieving and who it was helping – making the links will be the most important thing, along with sharing ideas and good practice.

Identified area of concern social isolation / loneliness in older people

What do we intend to do? Encourage branches to keep in touch with their own members (especially Indoor Members), and others locally – perhaps ringing round to each other. Many branches circulate members' phone numbers on their programmes, so we could encourage branch committee members to organise a chain. We should remember that social isolation does not only affect older people, but potentially anyone, including families, and is not only in rural areas, but also in towns and cities. (When we say what is MU doing, ask instead what are we / you doing!)

What do we feel MU can offer in this area? – See above.

Who might we work with? Probably our own parishes to begin with.

What other support / information / resources might we need? We will need to collect IMs telephone numbers – and check that they are happy to be contacted in this way.

What are our identified goals / outcomes? Our IM Co-ordinator will be able to report to Trustees and Councils on conversations she has had, and issues that have been raised. (We are already aware of levels of dementia locally – and support this with activity quilts and twiddle muffs).

How will we assess impact? We expect to hear stories from both our IMC and branches at Councils to share ideas of what they are offering in their locality.

Identified area of concern support for refugees (especially those fleeing war in Syria)

What do we intend to do? Our CIF co-ordinator is already collecting items believed to be required, and we await news of further items we may be able to help with. We also support our local food banks.

What do we feel MU can offer in this area? We hope to be able to help with items from our Crisis Intervention Fund and Store, and possibly with special appeals for further items that are required.

Who might we work with? We are already liaising with the local Council, and various other local groups. Churches have already been working with migrant workers and Traveller / Gypsy families.

What other support / information / resources might we need? We need to hear from the Co-ordinators what more is required, then make the requests of our branches.

What are our identified goals / outcomes? We will know that we have supplied items to help people settle into their new homes.

How will we assess impact? We will know what we have supplied, and how many families we have helped.

Identified area of concern increasing awareness of Mothers' Union as a charity, and what we can do to help

What do we intend to do? We intend to create a Facebook presence and to better use communications channels (we await news of a revamp of the diocesan website, which hosts a few pages for us). We will try to promote our work through local media when it is appropriate to do so. We are also encouraging members to engage with the diocesan Follow! initiative (diocesan mission action plan) – which may lead to further MU engagement with marriage and baptism preparation, Messy Church, Open the Book etc. (Some of this depends on local clergy!)

What do we feel MU can offer in this area? We can offer information about our existing projects, and raise awareness of ourselves as an organization and charity alongside. We also have access to resources and volunteers for (eg) marriage preparation, baptism preparation etc.

Who might we work with? Local clergy, churchwardens, Local Ministry Teams etc and local media, Diocesan Communication Officer etc

What other support / information / resources might we need? A "go to" person at Mary Sumner House for queries about websites, social media, and working with the media advice would be useful.

What are our identified goals / outcomes? It would be good if raising awareness and interest meant more people joined as members.....which in turn would mean more people available to help, and more resources (not least financial) to support projects.....

How will we assess impact? Press cuttings, anecdotal evidence from branches on involvement, membership numbers.