

Mothers' Union

Movement

Members

Membership - The issues

Falling membership in many dioceses



Decreasing finances and capacity for work



Fewer people = less done



Poor self image



Poor external image



Dissatisfaction, despair, disintegration

Members

- How can we get new members?
- How do we encourage those members we have to engage fully and be active volunteers?
- How do we keep our members?

- 2010- 39,971 members in Canterbury
- 2011- 38,382 members in Canterbury
- In this period, 2,206 joined and 2,564 resigned
- 940 died

Objectives

- Produce a strategic plan for growing the membership
- Develop our understanding of the different needs and interests of potential new members so that we understand what will attract them

How do we get new members?

Who are we trying to attract?

- What is their age?
- What do we know about their interests?
- What kind of activities are they involved in?
- Where/how do they meet?
- What contact do we already have with them?
- What gender?
- **Where are we looking?**

How do we get new members?

2 possible avenues

- Non – MU parishes
- Men

How do we get new members?

Where are we looking?

Non – MU parishes

- How many are there?
- Where are they – is there a pattern?
- Which ones might we target?
- How could we do it?
- What would we offer?

Non-MU parishes

- How would we decide
 - which offer the best chance of starting a new branch?
 - what type of branch would best suit them?
- How would we help them to establish a branch?

Could depend on

- size of the congregation
- current organisations in the parish
- age profile of the congregation
- views of the incumbent
- needs of the parish
- 'twinning' strategies with existing branches
- enlargement of successful branches to cover neighbouring parishes
- joint events to market MU
- Parishes choose from a menu of structures for MU branches
- greater central membership?

How do we get new members?

Where are we looking?

Men

- A ready-made source of new members
- What could we offer them?
- How should we approach them?

How do we get new members?

Are there any other potential sources of new members?

- Cathedral personnel
- Civic personalities
- Significant Clergy
- Significant members of Diocesan Synod

How do we get new members?

Take a look at the communication methods branches/diocese currently uses.

- Can you think of some methods that might appeal to them more?
- Are they relevant to the audience you are trying to attract?

How do we get new members?

- Establish a “Team” to help you
- Choose team members carefully
- Target certain groups of people
- Use your Newsletter to put out your message

Small Change.....
Big Difference

How do we get new members?

Take a look at the projects your diocese currently does.

- Are they relevant to the audience you are trying to attract?
- Can you think of some project ideas that might appeal to them more?

Why do people become members?

Parenting Courses

Facilitators training funded by MU.

Diocesan Project.

Ann and Liz:

joined because they wanted to do the course free.

Run Parenting courses in their own parish; have continued their MU membership.



Why do people become members?

Marriage Course

Diocesan project in conjunction with the Department for Social Responsibility

Dallas:

Joined because she found that the organisation echoed her own beliefs



Why do people become members?

Antonia:

Joined after visit to Malawi showed her MU in action. Her local branch met in the evening.

Took over as branch leader when vicar decided to change the face of MU in his parish.



Why do people become members?

Sian:

Volunteered to host an Overseas MU member and discovered more about Worldwide work of MU.

Started a branch in her parish - MU4All.



Why do people become members?

Jane and Sarah:
Joined after coming to
“Bumps and Babies”
group organised by
branch leader for
local Mums



Potential members?



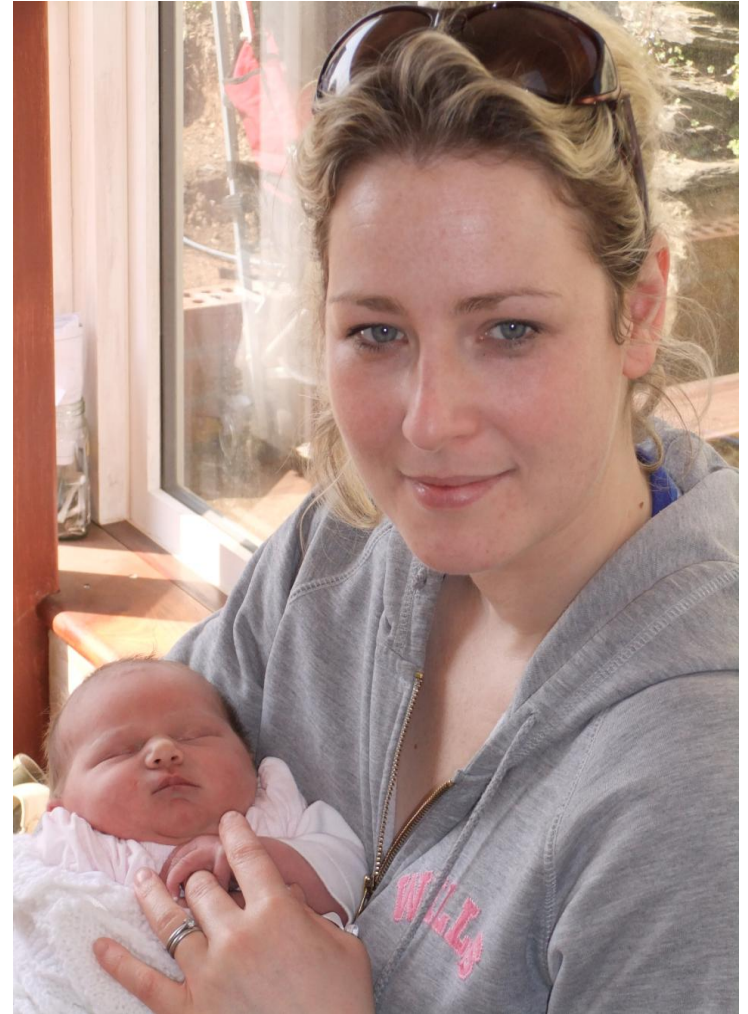
Catherine – aged 30

- Family is a top priority
- Law graduate
- Passionate about social justice issues
- Committed Christian
- Member of church choir
- Writes well
- Very articulate
- Good at technology – uses Facebook, email and text for most communication
- Uses the internet for learning and research
- Has just given up job to concentrate more on family life



Barriers to becoming a Mothers' Union member

- There's no one else my age in the organisation... 'It's full of old ladies!'
- Exceptionally busy life
- 'They can't be that good because the web sites are out of date.'
- 'I don't DO letters'
- 'Where am I going to get £18 from?'
- 'You have to have been in it for about 50 years before they listen to you or let you run anything.'
- I have a toddler who won't sit still so I couldn't come to meetings
- Can't always get a babysitter



Bridges to becoming a Mothers' Union member

- The issues that concern Mothers' Union especially on a global scale are the things that matter to Catherine
- Her friend suffered from domestic violence....MU supports Women's Refuges
- The MSH and some regional staff are a lot like her
- Family is a top priority in Catherine's life which is in tune with Mothers' Union
- If Catherine writes well.... Could we use her?
- Well known in her church
- Local Mothers' Union were kind to her when she had post natal difficulties
- 'Ripe' for captivity – has just given up her job and will need something other than 'house and home'.



Methods of communication with Catherine

- Email
- Facebook
- Web pages
- RSS feeds e.g. Bloggs
- Magazines
- Text
- Letters (don't expect a reply!)



Suggested route into Mothers' Union and appropriate activities

- Through central or diocesan membership
- Via the website
- Email updates
- Request her to speak or advise in a project
- Ask her to do an article for Diocesan newsletter
- Could be involved in a virtual baby project with young people
- Invite her to a talk about Diocesan work with Women's Refuges
- Through social concern/justice forums
- Set up new events.....



Time for Group work

Consider the four pen portraits:

- Discuss the barriers that keep people from becoming MU members.
- Look at the opportunities that individuals bring:
 - What can they offer MU?
 - What MU can offer them in their circumstances?
- What are the best ways to communicate with different people?
- Explore the different pathways into becoming member of MU.
- Bear in mind that 'one size does not fit all'.
- Share what is already going on in different places that might suit different people.
- Can you think of new ideas?

Target: Non MU parishes

- Which parishes should we aim at?
- How would we research their needs?
- What menu of branch types should we offer them? (e.g. meeting based, virtual, evening based etc)
- How should we approach people?
- Should we try to twin with strong existing branches or expand existing branches to cover new parishes?
- Should we suggest membership other than branch?
- What resources/publicity material should MU offer?
- Should there be different types of material for existing members and attracting potential members?
- Any other suggestions?

Membership Growth - Strategic Plan

What are the main elements MU should adopt?

- Should we concentrate on new branches in parishes which have no MU?
- Should we concentrate on growing numbers in existing branches?
- Should we look at new categories of membership e.g. Men, Joint, wider Central Membership etc?
- All the above?
- What else?
- What resources/publicity material should MU offer?
- Should there be different types of material for existing members and to attract potential members?

How do we encourage and retain those members we already have?

- Tell them they are valued
- Ask them what they want
- Allow people to belong - share your plans with them even if they will not be involved
- Tired/ bored MU members - get them more involved/offer training/explore their gifts
- Choose a team to chase up lapsed members
- **Keep them informed/resourced e.g. FW, Newsletter, E News, F&P Watch**

How do we encourage more active involvement?

- Engaging members in the planning of events
- Find a 'job' for them
- Think in small steps
- Looking at the obstacles e.g. Time, transport and hopelessness (no one wants us, what's the point, there aren't enough of us)
- Value prayer as an action and make it strategic
- Mentor them, ask them personally, do it with them
- Work with others inside and outside the branches

Nurturing members

Lesley

- Used to belong to Young Wives
- Wouldn't join MU – too old
- Joined new group MU@8
- Gave her a job – organise Christmas meal for members
- Now trying to persuade younger women to form their own MU group



Antonia

- Interested in Overseas issues
- Joined because meetings were during evening
- Keen on theatre/ entertainment
- Gave her a job – arrange a production open to all
- Now a branch leader and diocesan speaker



How do we encourage more active involvement?

‘Committed volunteers have the ability to get others to participate’

Carol Dunitz

But above all.....

- Remain relevant... People change...times change
- Stay in touch