**What about our first meeting?**

**Encouraging members to come**

The most important thing to do about a first meeting is to make sure everyone knows about it! If you have been keeping in touch though emails and social media, don’t forget to contact those who don’t use technology.

It may be a little daunting for some people to come to a meeting involving everyone (and initially that may not be possible anyway, depending on national restrictions) so you may want to start with smaller groups, merging together as Government guidance allows.

Meeting outside may be preferable as a first step for some. As the weather starts to improve, meetings could take place outside in church grounds, a local park or someone’s garden.

**What could we do?**

In the ‘Preparing for Future Meetings’ Zoom sessions held earlier in the year, there was a wide range of ideas for the first few meetings – with an emphasis on catching up on all that has happened over the past year and having plenty of opportunity to chat and share fellowship. These are some of the more popular ideas:

**Acts of Thanksgiving and Reflection**

A service in church may be a good starting point as many church buildings have re-opened for worship and have protocols in place.

An Act of Reflection and Remembrance is available on the Mothers' Union website: <https://www.mothersunion.org/system/resources/8652>

There are also some ideas for celebration and thanksgiving:

<https://www.mothersunion.org/system/resources/8657>

including suggestions for members to share what they have been thankful for during the past year as well as prayers and Bible verses which have been meaningful. You could also ask members to bring an item which has gained significance for them.

**Getting to know each other again**

Holding a social event involving food, such as a Strawberry Tea or a Fish & Chip Supper is a relaxed way of getting people back together again, especially if these can be held outdoors. There’s a Summer Quiz which you could use as a light-hearted activity <https://www.mothersunion.org/sites/default/files/resources/public/A%20Summer%20Quiz.docx>

Learning from Lockdown (<https://www.mothersunion.org/system/resources/8651>) is another theme resource for 2021 where members can share what they did (or didn’t) miss during lockdown and the new things they have discovered, learned or come to appreciate.

Finding that they have time on their hands, a number of people have taken up new activities over the past year. Why not have a time when people can share their new skills – and perhaps teach them to others?

**Getting out and about**

Many people have discovered the joys of a walk or stroll in the fresh air. Why not plan a prayer walk around your local area?

You could turn a contact/prayer circle into a real event, going to see the person you have been contacting by telephone or email, sharing a few moments of prayer and fellowship together. Perhaps you could plan a route so that a prayer could be passed from one member to another.

**Moving forward**

At the start of 2020, no one could have imagined the changes that were in store for everyone – or the different ways in which Mothers' Union groups across Britain & Ireland have supported each other and their local communities – not to mention becoming proficient in using new technology such as Zoom, WhatsApp and Facetime!

So once the catching up has been done, there is an ideal opportunity to talk as a Mothers' Union group about what you would like to achieve and how you might do that, as we look forward to a post pandemic future with hope and confidence.