**Mothers’ Union Worldwide Board Meeting, November 23-27th 2020, by ZOOM**

**Key Messages for sharing**

The Board Week opened in worship led by Central Chaplain, Bishop Emma Ineson and then Trustees reviewed progress through 2020, and set the priorities and budget for 2021.Trustees give thanks:

* To each and every member, everywhere, for the amazing way in which they have ‘stepped up” during the pandemic supporting one another through prayer, visits, calls, whatsapps, zooms – and even when isolating themselves, finding ways to support local communities. The range of ways in which members have helped the vulnerable, through education and practical support, as well as key workers, through making much needed items such as scrubs, scrub bags, masks, soap, has been truly remarkable
* To all who have been able to contribute, in prayer or through financial contributions, to the Emergency Appeal for the Central charity, to enable it to continue to provide support for the movement and member activities. Over GBP870,000 was raised, which is stunning
* For the way in which so many have had the courage to embrace new technology – with meetings now happening all around the world at Branch, Diocesan, Provincial and cross-province levels on Zoom, Teams or whatsapp….enabling members to support one another and to share, becoming closer as a Mothers’ Union family than ever before
* For the staff team, who despite extended periods of furlough (government funded time not working) and a major restructure through which a third of colleagues are departing, have continued to focus on supporting the work of members
* For the new approaches, particularly to worship, which are now reaching out more widely than ever before – especially Facebook Live Midday Prayers (also available in the UK through the Daily Prayer Phone line) and services such as Thy Kingdom Come – and the increased sharing of member stories on the website and social media (for example, during 16 Days of activism against Gender Based Violence)
* For building skills further, through on-line sessions together – both practical skills building (for instance in social media) and sharing (eg how to map community needs and identify solutions)
* For the programme work relating to COVID-19, for which external funding was identified and work completed in 2020 (in Tanzania, Myanmar, Uganda, DRC, Burundi, Madagascar) and for other programme work, for example in England, Tanzania and Sudan, which has continued despite the pandemic ( in England, the Metamorphosis programme being redesigned and delivered virtually)
* For progress made in uplifting voices against domestic abuse, in consultations with the UN, in partnership with others including Side by Side and Thursdays in Black and nationally, for example in Britain and Ireland lobbying for the Domestic Abuse bill, alongside others, including the Church
* For provinces outside Britain and Ireland having discussions about, and moving to sign, affiliation agreements with associated contributions, as agreed in Kigali in 2019
* For the rigorous cost management, which means that over GBP1m costs were taken out of operations in 2020, enabling overall a surplus to be made after restructuring

Looking to 2021, the aim is to ensure that MU can continue to SURVIVE, whilst sowing the seeds to THRIVE beyond the crisis

The plans, which were reviewed, continue to fit within the Strategic Plan approved last year:

* A :Transforming Lives - creating the 3 key outcomes agreed by Worldwide Council in Kigali:
  + A peaceful and safe environment for all
  + Gender justice (everyone can thrive)
  + Self-reliance ( no one goes hungry)
* B: Nurturing membership
* C: Building firm foundations
* D: Accessing necessary resources

With a particular focus on what is required to help recover from the pandemic

**Priorities**

* To generate revenue of at least GBP3.1m whilst managing costs tightly, to enable core activities to be delivered and reserves built up (D)
* To nurture the membership, especially in Britain and Ireland, including launching the new publication, Connected, and ongoing skills development, sharing and worship online (B)
* To ensure that all programme work is focused and funded - within the 3 core areas, but with a clear focus on how they will help survival through and rebuilding beyond the pandemic (A)
* To move campaigning against domestic abuse from 16 to 365 days (A)
* To ensure compliance – particularly in safeguarding, both with the legislation of each country and requirements of the Anglican Church
* To run the Triennial Elections (C)
* To ensure that the most essential foundations are in place – specifically the database (verified, with systems and processes in place for this to be sustained) and a new finance package operational (to save resources and enhance efficiency and effectiveness) (C)
* To continue to build the profile of MU (ultimately, to access more resource, whether financial or through partnering, and support sustaining and growing the membership) (D)
* To nurture and develop an adaptable staff team (C)

The Board recognizes that 2021 will be an uncertain and challenging year, and will be reviewing plans throughout the year, to adapt quickly when needed. It is taking the lead in working differently, continuing to meet virtually, with just one in-person meeting in November, at the end of the Triennial

**For reference, “virtual” Mary Sumner House will be closed to give a much-needed break to all staff, 18th December, 2020 to 4th January, 2021**

The Board sends blessings for a peaceful and joyful Christmas, and looks forward with hope and confidence to renewal in the New Year