

ANTIGONISH DIOCESAN COUNCIL SERVICE CHAIR

Annual Report: 2024

of councils reporting: 17/27

Is the council satisfied with the communication from the standing committee of service?

Yes, 100% of reporting councils stated they were satisfied with communication received from the service standing committee.

Have there been positive changes in the council due to the new structure of the standing committee of service?

13/17 councils (76%) reported positive changes due to the new structure.

Is the chairperson of service familiar with the material provided on cwl.ca concerning the standing committee? Is it adequate?

Not all reporting councils have a service chairperson. Nearly all councils with a service chairperson reported being familiar with the service-related material on the national website and stated it was adequate. Only one council chairperson felt the material was not adequate. In most councils without a chairperson of service, the material is brought to the meetings by members, shared and discussed as a group. One council reported having no access to a computer.

What strategies does the chairperson of service use to raise awareness about bullying, racism, human trafficking, homelessness?

Chairpersons of service obtained information about these issues from researching on the internet, from the media, from memos and communiques shared from other levels of the League and one chairperson shared information from a conference she attended. Strategies used to raise awareness about these issues with members included actions such as: discussions and reports at meetings; collection of personal items for a local Transition House and homeless shelters; food drives; donations for One Plane Away and hospital maternity departments; and advocacy through the use of postcards, letter writing or petitions.

What challenges does the chairperson of service face in her efforts to relate to the members? Or to encourage women to join?

It was noted in two comments that the chairperson does not face challenges relating to the members.

The challenges facing chairpersons of service were identified as:

- Low attendance at meetings: everyone is busy, many do not want to attend meetings, young women are busy with family and work
- Declining membership: older age of members and demographic to draw new members from, difficulty attracting new members in a rural area, young people do not attend church
- Lack of computer skills and gaps in internet service especially in rural areas
- Lack of new ideas
- Confusion with overlapping roles and responsibilities of service and social justice

To help members engage, it was reported that in some cases the three pillars work together; they identify priorities for the year and work collaboratively to coordinate activities and topics of interest to members.

To encourage membership, it was reported that councils hold a CWL Mass, speak on membership and pass out information on CWL.

What is the chairperson of service's overall thoughts on the effectiveness of the standing committee?

Overall responses were very positive. It was noted that service covers a lot of issues and councils do what they can. It was reported that the service chair was very effective overall and described as a great pillar to begin conversation and to get members involved. There is an option to focus on topics of interest personally and locally. Overlapping between service and social justice was noted. The membership is very active at the local level with the following projects: church ministry; visiting/provision of activities at nursing homes; provision of gifts at Christmas for needy families; volunteering at food banks; with the help of a grant, preparation and delivery of treat boxes for sick and shut-ins of a community; financial assistance to local social justice committee to help with home heating costs; help with church heating and maintenance of parish hall. Another example given was advocating for the Catholic Campaign for Conscience Nova Scotia.

Appreciation was expressed for the development of various resources including handbooks, training reference guides and various toolkits.

Service Chair's Activities: (September – December 2024)

- Attended an orientation training program for incoming diocesan officers
- Attended diocesan officers' meetings in Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec 2024 and diocesan executive meeting in October 2024
- With the faith and social justice chairs, presented a workshop on The Three Pillars at Fall Conference 2024
- Prepared memos for councils and a newsletter article for the 2024 fall newsletter
- Participated in Mass for Shut-ins with diocesan council members

Thank you to all those councils who submitted annual reports.

Rita Wojtyniak

Antigonish Diocesan Council Service Chair