

Mater Ecclesiae CIO



Annual Report and Accounts

31 March 2024

Charity Registration Number
1171376

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Congregational Leader	Sister Clare Lennon
Correspondence address	Buzzacott LLP 130 Wood Street London EC2V 6DL
Charity registration number	1171376
Auditor	Buzzacott LLP 130 Wood Street London EC2V 6DL
Investment managers	Waverton Investment Management Limited 16 Babmaes Street London SW1Y 6AH
Bankers	Royal Bank of Scotland plc 62-63 Threadneedle Street London EC2R 8LA
Solicitors	Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP 134 Edmund Street Birmingham B3 2ES

The trustees present their report and the accounts of Mater Ecclesiae CIO (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 23 to 28 of the attached accounts and comply with the charity's Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Introduction

The Congregation of Mater Ecclesiae is a diocesan Roman Catholic religious congregation (the Congregation) known formerly as the Congregation of Mary, Mother of the Church, founded in 1982 by Sister Catherine Mulligan SMR with the purpose of enabling mature women to enter religious life. The Congregation is governed by its own Constitutions.

The accounts accompanying this report are the accounts of the Mater Ecclesiae CIO (Charity Registration Number 1171376) ("the charity" or "the CIO"), a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) incorporated on 31 March 2017. The CIO was established to continue the activities of the Mater Ecclesiae Trust Fund, a charitable trust constituted by a trust deed dated 25 July 2007 as amended by a supplemental deed dated 30 January 2016 and registered with the Charity Commission (Charity Registration Number 1120575).

Charism and mission

"Go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news" Mk 16:15

The eloquent title of Mater Ecclesiae is an ancient title deeply engraved in the Scriptures. Modern devotion to Mary under this title begins with the proclamation by Pope Paul VI in November 1964 in his concluding address to the third session of the Second Vatican Council.

"We declare most Holy Mary, Mater Ecclesiae, that is, Mother of the whole Christian People"

Specific objectives, activities and relevant policies

The object of the charity is the advancement of the Roman Catholic Religion through the religious and other charitable work of the Congregation as the trustees shall from time to time think fit provided that if, at any time, the Congregation shall have ceased to exist, the trustees shall advance the Roman Catholic Religion in such exclusively charitable way or ways as the trustees shall from time to time think fit, in sympathy with the Congregation's charism and the philosophy and ideology of the Congregation's foundress Sister Catherine Mulligan SMR.

Specific objectives

The work of the charity is primarily to support and maintain the members of the Congregation of Mater Ecclesiae, a community of religious sisters, who both by intercessory prayer and practical work advance the following charitable purposes:

- ◆ the promotion and maintenance of public worship;
- ◆ the maintenance of the fabric and furnishings of any church or chapel used for worship that is open to the public;
- ◆ taking the sacrament of Holy Communion to nursing homes, and/or to others who cannot attend public worship;

Specific objectives, activities and relevant policies (continued)

Specific objectives (continued)

- ◆ praying with people who are not members of the Congregation of Mater Ecclesiae;
- ◆ allowing visitors to share in the religious life and worship of the community;
- ◆ the production, publication and/or dissemination of religious works by supporting Seminarians and other students;
- ◆ giving money and/or property to other charities carrying out work consistent with the CIO's objects;
- ◆ the relief of poverty, human suffering and/or distress, and the protection and preservation of spiritual, emotional, physical and/or psychological health, including by:
 - ◇ visiting the sick, elderly, housebound, prisoners and/or others in need;
 - ◇ by giving financial assistance, goods, services and/or other support to the poor;
 - ◇ corresponding with the sick, elderly, housebound, prisoners and/or others in need; and
 - ◇ by providing hospitality to visitors.

The principal work with which the sisters are involved concerns the provision of social and pastoral care in the wider community. The sisters aim to help people come to a deeper understanding of God, themselves and others and to provide a witness to others of a radical and counter-cultural way of life which celebrates the unique value of every person and recognises the need we have for one another.

By supporting and caring for the individual members throughout their lives within the Congregation, the charity aims to enable and support the sisters in living out their faith and serving other people, keeping in mind both the most urgent contemporary needs and present capacities of the sisters.

When setting the aims, planning the work of the charity and encouraging the work of individual members of the Congregation, the trustees give careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Activities

The main activities of the charity during the year were to:

- ◆ Care for the members of the Congregation
- ◆ Share the Community's life, hospitality and environment to provide opportunities for others to deepen their spiritual awareness
- ◆ Participate in outreach activities, especially to the lonely, the housebound and those in care homes, and contribute to charities caring for those in need
- ◆ Giving donations to charities and those in need.

Specific objectives, activities and relevant policies (continued)

Activities (continued)

Caring for members of the Congregation

Following the death of Sr Anne Kelly in December 2022, the Congregation had five members throughout the year. Of the remaining Congregation, the majority have given their working lives to the charitable activities of the Congregation, and any earnings are gifted to the charity. In common with many religious congregations in Britain, the age profile of the members of the Congregation is increasing as existing members grow older.

The charity has an obligation, both moral and legal, to provide care for the members of the Congregation, none of whom have resources of their own and all of whom have devoted a significant part of their lives to the work of Congregation. As the age profile of the Congregation increases so too does the need to provide care for the sisters.

Four of the five sisters are in residential care homes in locations that they have chosen in order to be near family or for personal reasons. Sister Clare Lennon supports these sisters with regular visits, calls, emails, texts and parcels. Two of the three care homes used provide daily Mass and other prayer services. The other care home resident can attend Mass locally. Sister Clare attended the Christmas lunch for Sister Mary and residents at the Coleshill care home.

As all the members of the Congregation, except one, are now requiring some form of care, the trustees are giving careful consideration to the impact of this on the work of individual members of the Congregation, the charity's property requirements and the financial implications.

Continue the Charism of the Congregation - Hospitality and sharing the Congregation's Environment

Sister Clare provided accommodation and hospitality for eleven people on a pro-bono basis throughout the year at her bungalow in Walsingham, during the period she was there, was used as a holiday retreat for two people who would not otherwise have afforded a holiday. The bungalow was put up for sale during the year and completion was achieved in April 2024. During the sale process, the CIO purchased a retirement flat in Nuneaton for Sr Clare, which she moved in to in February 2024.

Participate in outreach activities, especially to the lonely, the housebound and those in care homes, and contribute to charities caring for those in need

The impact of the Congregation's work reaches beyond the convent especially now as the sisters, all bar one, are in residential or nursing care homes.

The Sisters are increasing in age with all bar one now in their 80s and 90s and, as such, their activities each year are lessening due to an increase in their frailty and instances of poor health and a marked decrease in mobility. Sister Clare regularly visits the other sisters who are in residential care homes across the country, in addition to regular visits and support to the wider community in Walsingham.

Specific objectives, activities and relevant policies (continued)

Activities (continued)

Participate in outreach activities, especially to the lonely, the housebound and those in care homes, and contribute to charities caring for those in need (continued)

Frequent prayer requests are received in person from people throughout the world and from all walks of life. All requests are answered promptly and passed to Sister Clare to be included in the sisters' prayers.

Ministry

Sister Clare continued to live independently in a bungalow and then latterly in a retirement flat owned by the charity and continues the charism of the Congregation through her work and prayer life at the Catholic Shrine, and by offering hospitality to pilgrims.

Sister Clare continued as a Eucharist Minister at Walsingham Shrine and as a reader at Mass. She regularly attends the prayer services at the Shrine in her role as a contemplative intercessor.

Sister Clare visits elderly neighbours and invites them to tea and to meals and, in addition, provides transport to Mass and shops and assistance with shopping for those who need it. Sister also offered the same hospitality to other religious and priests who live in and around Walsingham village during her time there. Sister Clare, since moving from Walsingham, continues to visit the area and provide support to her former neighbours.

She continues to visit and support the elderly sisters of the Congregation who are in care homes in different parts of the country. Sister also keeps in touch with the sisters by telephone, letters, sending parcels, video calls and ensures they are provided with everything they require, as well as providing spiritual support and accompanying sisters to hospital appointments.

Sister Clare keeps in regular touch with Mater Ecclesiae Associates, providing spiritual accompaniment and support. She ensures that Masses and prayers are offered for the intentions of everyone connected to the Congregation monthly. Sister Clare also visits Associates who have become unwell.

Sister continues to be a member of the support team for Rachel's Vineyard, Birmingham; an organisation offering help and support to anyone traumatised by abortion or miscarriage and also supports the team for the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat held in Walsingham each year. Sister has attended three of their healing retreats, two in Birmingham and one in Walsingham. In addition, the charity has also given increased financial assistance to both groups. Sister attends the retreats as an Intercessor as and when invited.

Spiritual Life

Sister Clare made a three-day private retreat in Dereham with the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham in April and attended the Walsingham Association retreat in October.

Sister Clare took part in a five-day "Grief to Grace" course at the Schoenstatt Centre, Glasgow.

Specific objectives, activities and relevant policies (continued)

Activities (continued)

Spiritual Life (continued)

In December, Sister Anne Therese and Sr Mary Thomas joined in the Retreat with the Augustinian Sisters at Boarbank, Cumbria.

Sister also took part in two eight-week online Alpha Courses provided by Rachel's Vineyard Birmingham Group.

Sister Clare participated in a four-week advent Zoom course with Father John Deehan.

In addition, Sister takes part in a weekly Zoom Lectio Divina group, hosted by a former Associate of Mater Ecclesiae in the West Midlands and also participates in a bi-weekly Bible Study group organised by the Rachel's Vineyard Birmingham team. Sister also receives Spiritual Direction on a monthly basis.

Donations to charities and those in need

In accordance with the Congregation's Constitutions (item 16 "the relief of material and spiritual needs to those to whom we minister"), and the spirit of our Foundress ("to emulate Mary by our maternal attitude of care and concern for anyone who requires our help") the Congregation makes donations to charities within these criteria and in line with the budgeted allowance.

Throughout the year, payments were made to charities including but not limited to Rachel's Vineyard, St Mary's Educational and Charitable Trust, COLW Sisters, The Common Fund, Sightsavers, WaterAid, St Vincent de Paul foodbank, CAFOD appeals, British Red Cross earthquake appeal, Samaritans, Crisis, Cardinal Hume Centre, Marys Meals, ActionAid, Million Minutes, Trussell Trust, SPUC, Medaille Trust, Alzheimer's Society, Marian Fathers, Jericho Society.

In addition, regular donations have been made to Walsingham Shrine and the Parish Church of St Mary and All Saints for the upkeep of the cemetery where the sisters have been laid to rest and where Sister Anne was buried in February 2023, at her request to be with the other sisters.

Rachel's Vineyard was supported with a donation of £20,000 in the year to March 2024 (further to a commitment made in the year to 31 March 2023) to support the rising meeting costs of both groups. The Trustees committed, at a meeting in March 2024 to provide further financial assistance of £20,000 in the year 24/25.

The trustees also made a commitment in the year to March 2023 to further fund the scholarship at Durham University, set up and funded in July 2021 to specifically support students in a named scholarship for our foundress Sister Catherine Mulligan. Total donations of £15,000 were paid in the financial year to March 2024 in relation to the commitment made in the prior year. The Trustees further committed, at a meeting in March 2024 to a payment of £15,000 in the year 24/25.

Specific objectives, activities and relevant policies (continued)

Activities (continued)

Donations to charities and those in need (continued)

A donation of £50,000 was paid in the year to St Mary's Educational and Charitable Trust (SMECT), in keeping with Pope Francis's admonition that the Catholic Church was to be a missionary church and to continue the vision of the deceased sisters who had wished to make a foundation overseas. The remaining sisters decided to support the work of SMECT which wishes to construct a clinic building on the same site as the pre-existing school/orphanage in India to provide for the health needs of the locals who otherwise would have no access to basic healthcare. The clinic will help to provide medicines and care for approximately 20 villages. A further donation of £40,000 had been committed for the year 24/25 and £40,000 for the year 25/26 at a Trustee meeting in March 2023. Work on the clinic has progressed well and subsequently, following the sale of both the CIO's property in Walsingham and the investment property in Brownhill, at a Trustee meeting in March 2024 to uplift the 24/25 payment to £50,000 and to make an additional payment of £50,000 from the proceeds of the property sales in 24/25.

Ongoing formation and training

The sisters recognise the importance of ongoing formation and training to increase their knowledge, acquire new skills and develop their personal spirituality. Some examples are given below:

- ◆ Sister Clare attended a four week online course on the old testament.
- ◆ Sister Clare also attended online RLSS certificated safeguarding courses throughout the year and renewed her certification.

Grants and donations policy

Whilst the trustees agree to support organisations whose work is within the objects of the charity, the charity does not regard itself as a grant making entity and applications for grants and donations are not invited.

Fundraising policy

The charity aims to achieve best practice in the way in which it communicates with donors and other supporters. It takes care with both the tone of its communications and the accuracy of its data to minimise the pressure on supporters. The charity does not actively fundraise. The charity undertakes to react to and investigate any complaints regarding its fundraising activities and to learn from them and improve its service. During the year, the charity received no complaints about its fundraising activities.

Protection of children and vulnerable adults

The trustees recognise the importance of ensuring the protection and safety of all those whom the charity serves. All the sisters have obtained enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service, and the trustees are committed to implementing all policies and procedures of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS).

Specific objectives, activities and relevant policies (continued)

Protection of children and vulnerable adults

Sister Clare continues to take part in ongoing Zoom safeguarding meetings with Sister Frances Orchard and her team on CSSA and RLSS roles and responsibilities.

Investment policy

The charity's investments are managed by Waverton Investment Management Limited under a discretionary investment management agreement.

The investment strategy takes into account income requirements, the risk profile and the investment managers' view of the market prospects in the medium term.

The policy is to maximise total return through a diversified portfolio whilst providing a level of income advised from time to time. There is also an Ethical Policy precluding investment in any company which, after reasonable enquiry, clearly has significant profits from an activity which is contrary to the objectives of the Roman Catholic Church.

The trustees receive a report and valuation every three months and meet at least once a year with the investment managers. They ensure that the portfolio is managed in accordance with their written guidelines and with the religious and ethical principles of the charity.

The charity had one property which was rented out to tenants and which was regarded, therefore, as an investment property. The rent charged was constrained by the existence of a restrictive covenant and was rented under an Assured Tenancy Agreement. The trustees received regular professional advice in respect to the upkeep of this property, the level of rent and its valuation. During the course of the year, the tenants, in their 80's, became increasingly less mobile and their needs changed. It was agreed mutually that they now needed a single storey building in a more accessible location and the charity worked with them to help them navigate through the council process and secure a suitable and more accessible rental property nearby. Once they had vacated the property, it was put on the open market and achieved over the asking price. The sale was completed in April 2024.

As previously mentioned, Sr Clare was living in a bungalow in Walsingham, but with her own changing needs and to be closer to the other Sisters, whose health was deteriorating, she relocated to Nuneaton in the Midlands. The charity purchased a two bedroomed retirement flat to enable her to continue to offer hospitality when required. The property in Walsingham was put on the market and sold to a local religious charity where it will further meet the needs of local religious and poor. The sale completed in April 2024.

Financial review for the year

Results for the year

A summary of the year's results is set out on page 19 of the attached accounts.

During the year to 31 March 2024, income amounted to £238,310 (2023: £232,159). Of this, £97,760 (2023: £96,879) represented donations, the significant part of which comprised pensions receivable by members of the Congregation and donated to the charity under Gift Aid compliant Deeds of Covenant. Investment income from the charity's listed investments, bank deposits, and investment property totalled £140,550 (2023: £127,560).

Financial review for the year (continued)

Results for the year (continued)

During the year, the charity incurred expenditure of £470,133 (2023: £572,883). Cost of raising funds included investment management fees of £43,689 (2023 - £42,250). Expenditure on maintaining the members of the Congregation and enabling them to carry out their charitable work amounted to £342,638 (2023: £358,289). Donations payable during the year totalled £78,746 (2023: £174,325) - further details are given in note 5 to the attached accounts.

The overall net expenditure for the year before losses and gains on investments amounted to £231,823 (2023: net expenditure of £340,724). Net investment gains totalled £889,180 (2023: net losses of £47,190). After accounting for the net investment gains, the net increase in funds for the year amounted to £667,357 (2023: after accounting for net investment losses, the net decrease in funds amounted to £388,533).

Financial position and reserves policy

The balance sheet shows total funds at 31 March 2024 of £7,674,648 (2023: £7,007,291).

£627,230 (2023: £391,043) represents the net book value of the charity's tangible fixed assets, after deducting the liability under a finance agreement. An equivalent amount has been designated as a tangible fixed assets fund in recognition of the fact that the assets are required for the charity's operations and are not available as a reserve to fund activities or meet future contingencies.

The trustees have set aside £3,300,000 (2023: £3,300,000) to provide for the sisters' care in the future. The value of the fund has been calculated using actuarial principles to provide for the Congregation's sisters but is not meant to guarantee sufficient resources. It is merely an estimate designed to recognise, and make provision for, the financial undertaking implicit in the relationship between a religious congregation and its members.

The trustees have set aside £2,000,000 (2023: £2,000,000) as a financing and congregational fund with the broad intention to use the fund to finance grants and donations. The trustees are yet to formalise their plans for the future and need to do further work on deciding exactly how these funds are to be applied.

Funds which are available, therefore, to support the work of the sisters in the future are those shown on the balance sheet as general funds or "free reserves" and amount to £1,255,064 (2023: £940,123).

The trustees consider that, given the nature of the charity's work, the level of free reserves should be sufficient to cover approximately twenty-four month's on-going expenditure and to provide for contingencies, unevenness in future income and volatility in the value of investments.

At the date of the balance sheet, the trustees consider that the level of free reserves were adequate but not excessive given the inherent volatility in world stock markets at the current time as a result of prevailing macroeconomic and geopolitical climate.

Financial review for the year (continued)

Investment policy and performance – listed investments

The policy of the charity is to achieve a combination of income and capital growth within acceptable levels of risk. The trustees of the charity continue to take a long-term view and believe the investment policy continues to be appropriate.

The charity had a portfolio of listed investments, which at 31 March 2024 had a market value of £6,540,597 (2023: £5,790,949) including cash available for reinvestment of £18,856 (2023: £35,007).

During the year, the charity's investments achieved an income yield of 2.1% (2023: 2.5%) and a capital yield of 13.5% (2023: minus 2.8%). The performance of the portfolio reflected the recovery of markets generally following the decline at the end of the previous year as a result of the macroeconomic and geopolitical climate. The investment managers continued to invest in accordance with the trustees' investment policy set out above.

Further details of the investment portfolio are detailed in note 11 to the attached accounts.

Future Plans

The Congregation comprises, in the main, elderly sisters whose needs have increased such that all but one are living in residential care homes.

The trustees continue to review income and expenditure. Having undertaken a review of Investment Managers and the investments themselves previously, the plan is to have ongoing annual reviews of performance with the Investment Managers and a consultant to monitor the ethics and the performance of the investments.

With the sisters living longer than originally expected and the increase in care costs and investment income decreasing, a review of the long-term forecast, commissioned three years ago, was sought and reviewed. The ongoing needs of the sisters and the associated costs in line with income projections are constantly reviewed and discussed.

The trustees are united in their concern for the overall health and wellbeing of each of the members of the Congregation. They are equally concerned that the members be supported and encouraged to live to the full the Mission of the Congregation to which each one has professed.

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

In terms of Canon law the charity is governed by the Congregation's own constitutions.

In terms of Civil law, the charity was incorporated as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 31 March 2017 and is governed by a constitution, as amended on 25 October 2018.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Trustees

The charity is the responsibility of its trustees which include Sister Clare Lennon who is currently the Congregational Leader (referred to as the Mother General in the charity's Constitution). The Congregational Leader, by virtue of holding that office, is also the sole member of the CIO.

The charity's constitution requires that there must be at least three trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustees request the Congregational Leader to appoint a new trustee. The maximum number of trustees that may be appointed to the CIO is five and for such time as it remains reasonably practical, the majority of those holding office as trustee at any time shall also be members of the Congregation.

The Congregational Leader is a trustee ex-officio for as long as she holds that office.

The trustees appoint further trustees, including people from outside the Congregation, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. In addition to the Congregational Leader, there is one other trustee who is a member of the Congregation and three trustees are members of other religious congregations,.

The trustees are responsible for making all decisions regarding the charity's activities, properties and funds. There is no policy of delegation to other members. For advice concerning financial and legal matters, the charity calls on the expertise of suitably qualified professionals.

Organisational structure

At the beginning of the financial year there were five finally professed sisters with four in residential care. Sister Clare Lennon ensures that she visits all the sisters in residential care on a regular basis and maintains telephone or electronic contact with them in order to ensure that they are supported and their needs are met in every aspect of their lives.

The Congregational Leader liaises with the trustees and with the charity's Business Administrator to ensure that the day-to-day activities of the charity run smoothly.

Key management personnel

The trustees consider that they comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis. The trustees are responsible for making all decision regarding the charity's properties and funds. There is no policy of delegation to other members. For advice concerning financial and legal matters the charity calls on the expertise of professionals.

Two trustees are members of the Congregation and whilst their living and personal expenses are borne by the charity they receive no remuneration or reimbursement of expenses. The trustees who are not members of the Congregation do not receive any remuneration but are reimbursed any expenses that they claim in relation to travel and similar costs associated with their role as trustees.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare accounts for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period. In preparing the accounts the trustees are required to:

- ◆ select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- ◆ observe the methods and principles of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- ◆ make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- ◆ state whether applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts;
- ◆ prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the relevant Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of charity's constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Liability of the member

If the CIO is wound up, the member of the CIO has no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

Risk management

In line with the requirement for trustees to undertake a risk assessment exercise and report on the same in their annual report, the trustees have looked at the risks the Congregation (and hence the CIO) currently faces and have reviewed the measures already in place, or needing to be put in place, to deal with them.

The trustees recognise their responsibility for the management of risks faced by the charity and the sisters.

The trustees have identified the following areas for particular attention within the charity's risk management strategy:

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Risk management (continued)

Governance and management: looks at the risk of the Congregation, and hence the CIO, suffering from a lack of direction, at the skills and training of its members, and the good use of its resources.

An analysis of the age profile of the sisters shows that the average age at 31 March 2024 was 84 years. The trustees are aware that there is both a moral and legal obligation to care for the sisters. None of the sisters have resources of their own as all earnings, pensions and any other income have been donated to the CIO under a Gift Aid compliant Deed of Covenant.

As stated above, the trustees meet regularly to monitor the life, mission and ministry of the sisters. A Business Administrator is employed and meets regularly with the trustees.

The trustees are regularly assessing current social needs and seeking ways of offering assistance.

Operational: looks at the risks inherent in the activities of the charity, particularly care of the sisters and social and pastoral care.

Procedures are in place for staff and health and safety issues. Comprehensive insurance policies cover health and safety, equal opportunities, media safeguarding, dignity at work and termination of employment. There are disciplinary and grievance procedures in place.

Financial: looks at risks including those arising as a result of poor budgetary control, poor accounting and poor management of the investment portfolio.

The charity's principal asset comprises listed investments, the value of which is dependent on movements in UK and world stock markets. The investments are managed by a reputable investment manager who adheres to a policy agreed by the trustees. The investment strategy is assessed regularly to ensure it remains appropriate to the charity's needs – both now and in the future. Given the current macroeconomic and geopolitical environment, the trustees will continue to communicate with their investment managers and, whilst there are concerns over the volatility in world stock markets, they acknowledge also that the charity is a long term investor. As such, the charity will be able to wait for markets to stabilise over time whilst the trustees keep a watching brief.

Reputational: looks at possible damage to the Congregation's and hence the reputation of the charity.

Laws, regulations, external and environment: looks at the effect of government policies and the consequences of non-compliance with laws and regulations insofar as they are applicable to the Congregation's activities. When laws are applicable, care and consideration are given in implementing them. These include: health and safety, equality, data protection, human rights and safeguarding. The trustees attend workshops and conferences to keep up to date with their responsibilities.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Risk management (continued)

Having assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, the trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring controls exist over key financial systems and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

Members and associates of the Congregation

The trustees wish to record their recognition of the professionalism and commitment of the individual members and Associates of the Congregation. Their dedication, enthusiasm and positive approach are very much appreciated.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:

Sister Clare Lennon

Trustee

Date: **18 November 2024**

Independent auditor's report to the trustees of Mater Ecclesiae CIO

Opinion

We have audited the accounts of Mater Ecclesiae CIO (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows, the principal accounting policies and notes to the accounts. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the accounts:

- ◆ give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- ◆ have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- ◆ have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the accounts in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the accounts, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the accounts is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the accounts are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report and Accounts, other than the accounts and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the accounts does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Other information (continued)

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the accounts or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the accounts or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- ◆ the information given in the trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the accounts; or
- ◆ sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- ◆ the accounts are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- ◆ we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities contained within the trustees' report, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the accounts, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these accounts.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts (continued)

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

How the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- ◆ the engagement director ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- ◆ we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the charity through discussions with representatives from the trustees, and from our knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- ◆ we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the accounts or the activities of the charity. These included but were not limited to the Charities Act 2011, Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102); and
- ◆ we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of relevant representatives from within the charity and reviewing the minutes of trustees' meetings.

We assessed the susceptibility of the charity's accounts to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- ◆ making enquiries of representatives from the trustees as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- ◆ considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- ◆ performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- ◆ reviewed journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- ◆ assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- ◆ investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts (continued)

How the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud
(continued)

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- ◆ agreeing accounts disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- ◆ reading the minutes of meetings of trustees; and
- ◆ enquiring of relevant representatives from within the charity as to actual and potential litigation and claims.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the accounts is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and with regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Buzzacott LLP

Statutory Auditor
130 Wood Street
London
EC2V 6DL

Date: **21 November 2024**

Buzzacott LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006

Statement of financial activities Year to 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds	
		2024 £	2023 £
Income from:			
Donations	1	97,760	96,879
Investments and interest receivable	2	140,550	127,560
Other income – surplus on disposal of tangible fixed assets		—	7,700
Miscellaneous sources		—	20
Total income		238,310	232,159
Expenditure on:			
Cost of raising funds			
. Listed investments – investment manager's fees		43,689	42,250
. Investment property – legal, professional and miscellaneous costs		5,060	(1,981)
Charitable activities			
. Support of members of the Congregation and their ministry	3	342,638	358,289
. Charitable donations	5	78,746	174,325
Total expenditure		470,133	572,883
Net expenditure for the year before investment gains (losses)	6	(231,823)	(340,724)
Net gains on the revaluation of investment property	11	116,229	93,049
Net gains (losses) on the revaluation and disposal of listed investments	11	782,951	(140,239)
Exchange losses - investment cash		—	(619)
Net income (expenditure) and net movement in funds		667,357	(388,533)
Reconciliation of funds:			
Funds brought forward at 1 April 2023		7,007,291	7,395,824
Funds carried forward at 31 March 2024		7,674,648	7,007,291

The statement of financial activities includes all recognised gains and losses for the above two financial periods.

All activities of the charity derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods.

All income, expenditure and fund balances brought and carried forward were in respect of unrestricted in the above two financial periods.

Balance sheet 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	10		641,632		407,764
Investments	11		7,032,951		6,167,074
			7,674,583		6,574,838
Current assets					
Debtors	12	35,080		49,411	
Short term deposits		4,385		152,757	
Cash at bank and in hand		158,525		447,992	
		197,990		650,160	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(185,880)		(123,343)	
Net current assets			12,110		526,817
Total assets less current liabilities			7,686,693		7,101,655
Creditors: amounts due after more than one year	14		(12,045)		(94,364)
Total net assets			7,674,648		7,007,291
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds					
. General funds			1,255,064		940,123
. Tangible fixed assets fund	15		627,230		391,043
. Designated funds					
.. Investment property fund	16		492,354		376,125
.. Financing and congregational fund	17		2,000,000		2,000,000
.. Sisters' care fund	18		3,300,000		3,300,000
			7,674,648		7,007,291

Approved by and signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees by:

Sister Clare Lennon

Trustee

Date: **18 November 2024**

Statement of cash flows Year to 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash used in operating activities	A	(378,691)	(347,328)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Investment income and interest received		149,523	108,147
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(239,618)	(26,207)
Proceeds from disposal of tangible fixed assets		—	—
Proceeds from the disposal of investments		1,012,841	1,237,546
Purchase of investments		(995,688)	(2,806,567)
Net cash used in investing activities		(72,942)	(1,487,081)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayments on finance lease agreement		(2,357)	(1,012)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the period		(453,990)	(1,835,421)
Exchange losses on investment cash		—	(619)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April 2023	B	635,756	2,471,796
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March 2024	B	181,766	635,756

Notes to the statement of cash flows for the period to 31 March 2024

A Reconciliation of net income (expenditure) to net cash flows from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income (expenditure) (per the statement of financial activities)	667,357	(388,533)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charge (note 10)	5,750	4,300
Gains on disposal of tangible fixed assets	—	(7,700)
Net gains on the revaluation of investment property	(116,229)	(93,049)
Net (gains) losses on the revaluation and disposal of listed investments	(782,951)	140,239
Exchange losses - investment cash	—	619
Investment income and interest receivable	(140,550)	(127,560)
Interest on finance lease	38	—
Decrease in debtors	5,357	207
(Decrease) increase in creditors	(17,463)	124,149
Net cash used in operating activities	(378,691)	(347,328)

Statement of cash flows Year to 31 March 2024

B Analysis of changes in net debt

	As at 1 April 2023 £	Non cash movements £	Cash flows £	Other adjustments £	As at 31 March 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	447,992	—	(289,467)	—	158,525
Short term deposits	152,757	—	(148,372)	—	4,385
Cash held by investment managers	35,007	—	(16,151)	—	18,856
Total cash and cash equivalents	635,756	—	(453,990)	—	181,766
Finance agreement					
. Debt due within one year	(2,357)	(38)	2,357	(2,319)	(2,357)
. Debt due after more than one year	(14,364)	—	—	2,319	(12,045)
	(16,721)	(38)	2,357	—	(14,402)
Net debt movements	619,035	(38)	(451,633)	—	167,364

Principal accounting policies Year to 31 March 2024

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the accounts are laid out below.

Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared for the year ended 31 March 2024 with comparative information provided in respect to the year to 31 March 2023.

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policies below or the notes to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) and the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The accounts are presented in sterling and are rounded to the nearest pound.

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Preparation of the accounts requires the trustees to make significant judgements and estimates.

The items in the accounts where such judgements and estimates have been made include:

- ◆ estimating accrued expenditure;
- ◆ estimating the useful economic life of tangible fixed assets for the purpose of calculating the depreciation charge;
- ◆ assessing the probability of the receipt of legacy income;
- ◆ the assumptions applied in determining the valuation of investment properties; and
- ◆ estimating future income and expenditure flows for the purpose of assessing going concern (see below).

Assessment of going concern

The trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in preparing these accounts. The trustees have made this assessment in respect to a period of one year from the date of approval of these accounts.

Assessment of going concern (continued)

Given the current macroeconomic and geopolitical environment, the trustees continue to communicate with their investment managers and, whilst there are concerns over fluctuations in world stock markets, they acknowledge also that the charity is a long-term investor. As such, the charity will be able to wait for markets to stabilise over time whilst the trustees keep a watching brief.

Undoubtedly there will be challenges ahead but the trustees do not expect material concerns to arise over the charity's financial position or going concern. The trustees have concluded that the charity will have sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

With regard to the next accounting period, the year ending 31 March 2025, the most significant areas that affect the carrying value of the assets held by the charity are the level of investment return and the performance of the investment markets.

Income recognition

Income is recognised in the period in which the charity has entitlement to the income, the amount of income can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Income comprises donations and legacies, investment income and interest receivable surplus on disposal of tangible fixed assets.

Donations, including salaries and pensions of individual religious received under Gift Aid or deed of covenant, are recognised when the charity has confirmation of both the amount and settlement date. In the event of donations pledged but not received, the amount is accrued for where the receipt is considered probable. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

In accordance with the Charities SORP FRS 102 volunteer time is not recognised.

Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the legacy, the executors have established that there are sufficient surplus assets in the estate to pay the legacy, and any conditions attached to the legacy are within the control of the charity.

Entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution.

Income recognition (continued)

Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, but the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material. In the event that the gift is in the form of an asset other than cash or a financial asset traded on a recognised stock exchange, recognition is subject to the value of the gift being reliably measurable with a degree of reasonable accuracy and the title of the asset having being transferred to the charity.

Investment income is recognised once a dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the amount due.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Income from the operation of the charity's retreat centre is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the charity and the revenue can be reliably measured. It is measured as the fair value of the consideration received or receivable excluding any relevant discounts.

A surplus on the disposal of tangible fixed assets is defined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the net book value of the asset at the time of disposal and after deducting any costs associated with the disposal. The surplus is recognised at the time when legal completion of the sale takes place.

Expenditure recognition

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure comprises direct costs and support costs. All expenses, including support costs, are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. The classification between activities is as follows:

- a. Expenditure on raising funds includes expenditure associated with raising funds for the charity. This comprises those investment management fees charged directly to the charity and are in relation to the fees paid to investment managers in connection with the management of the charity's listed investments and professional fees in connection with the management and advice obtained in relation to the charity's investment property.
- b. Expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs associated with furthering the charitable purposes of the charity through the provision of its charitable activities. Such expenditure comprises:
 - i. Expenditure on the support of members of the Congregation. Such costs include direct and indirect expenditure in respect to the support of members of the Congregation and enabling their ministry (including support and governance costs).

Expenditure recognition (continued)

- (i) Charitable grants and donations. Grants and donations relate, in the main, to the support of the support of other Roman Catholic charitable organisations and people who the trustees consider are in need. Charitable donations are made where the trustees consider there is real need following a review of the details of each particular case and comprise single year payments rather than multi-year grants. Donations are included in the statement of financial activities when approved for payment. Provision is made for donations approved but unpaid at the period end.

All expenditure is stated inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs represent indirect charitable expenditure of the charity. In order to carry out the primary purposes of the charity it is necessary to provide support in the form of personnel development, financial procedures, provision of office services and equipment and a suitable working environment.

Governance costs comprise the costs involving the public accountability of the charity (including audit costs) and costs in respect to its compliance with regulation and good practice.

Support costs and governance costs are allocated directly to support of members of the Congregation and their ministry.

Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised.

♦ **Freehold land and buildings**

Non-specialised buildings are those designed as, and used wholly or mainly for, private residential accommodation. They are stated at cost. Their value and condition are reviewed annually by the trustees, who are satisfied that their residual value is not materially less than their book value.

Specialised buildings comprised the Congregation's large residential convent and retreat centre. They were stated at cost net of impairment. An impairment review was carried out if events, or changes in circumstances, indicated that the carrying amount of these properties may not be recoverable. The freehold specialised buildings were sold during the year to 31 March 2023.

♦ **Non-specialised land and buildings**

Non-specialised buildings i.e. those designed as, and used wholly or mainly for, private residential accommodation are not depreciated. Their value and condition are reviewed annually by the trustees, who are satisfied that their residual value is not materially less than their book value.

Tangible fixed assets (continued)

- ◆ Other tangible fixed assets, which include fixtures and fittings and motor vehicles are stated at historical cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write each asset down to its estimated residual value evenly over its expected useful life, as follows:

Fixtures and fittings	25% per annum
Motor vehicles	25% per annum

Investments

Listed investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price. The charity does not acquire put options, derivatives or other complex financial instruments.

As noted above, the main form of financial risk faced by the charity is that of volatility in equity markets and investment markets due to wider economic conditions, the attitude of investors to investment risk, and changes in sentiment concerning equities and within particular sectors or sub sectors.

Properties held for investment purposes are included in these accounts at open market value subject to any restrictions on the rental income receivable and/or the occupation of these properties. The valuation has been determined by the trustees, with professional assistance.

Realised gains (or losses) on investment assets are calculated as the difference between disposal proceeds and their opening carrying value or their purchase value is acquired subsequent to the first day of the financial year. Unrealised gains and losses are calculated as the difference between the fair value at the period end and their carrying value at that date. Realised and unrealised investment gains (or losses) are combined in the statement of financial activities and are credited (or debited) in the period in which they arise.

Debtors

Debtors are recognised at their settlement amount, less any provision for non-recoverability. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid. They have been discounted to the present value of the future cash receipt where such discounting is material. They have been discounted to the present value of the future cash receipt where material.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand represents such accounts and instruments that are available on demand or have a maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition. Deposits for more than three months but less than one year have been disclosed as short term deposits. Cash placed on deposit for more than one year is disclosed as a fixed asset investment.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are recognised at the amount the charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt. They have been discounted to the present value of the future cash payment where such discounting is material.

Finance arrangements

Assets held under finance arrangements are capitalised and depreciated over their useful lives. The corresponding finance obligation is treated in the balance sheet as a liability. The interest element of the rental obligations is charged to the statement of financial activities over the period of the arrangement in proportion of the outstanding balance of capital repayments.

Fund structure

Restricted funds are monies raised for, and their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or donations subject to donor imposed conditions.

The tangible fixed assets fund comprises the net book value of charity's tangible fixed assets, the existence of which is fundamental to the charity being able to perform its charitable work and thereby achieve its charitable objectives. The value represented by such assets should not be regarded, therefore, as realisable.

The investment property fund comprises the net book value of charity's investment property. As the property is occupied by a tenant with a life tenancy interest paying a controlled rent, the charity would have difficulty disposing of this property and the value represented by this asset should not be regarded as realisable with ease.

Other designated funds are monies set aside of unrestricted general funds and designated for specific purposes by the trustees.

General funds represent those monies that are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that fall within the charity's charitable objects.

Pensions

The charity offers its employees membership of a defined contribution pension scheme administered by the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST). Contributions to the scheme are debited to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are payable to the scheme. The assets of the scheme are held by an independent corporate trustee, whose activities are governed by the National Employment Savings Trust Order 2010, made by the Secretary of State in exercise of powers confirmed under the Pensions Act 2008.

1 Income from: Donations

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries and pensions of individual religious received under deed of covenant and gift aid	96,650	96,879
General donations	1,110	—
	97,760	96,879

2 Income from: Investments and interest receivable

	2024 £	2023 £
Investment Income		
<i>UK listed investments</i>		
Equities	9,277	15,334
Bonds	7,070	12,073
Alternatives	32,972	23,791
<i>Overseas listed investments</i>		
Equities	55,840	44,188
Bonds	19,979	12,442
Alternatives	2,217	9,418
	127,355	117,246
Interest receivable		
Cash held by investment managers	5,363	4,456
Bank interest	6,082	3,548
	11,445	8,004
Income from investment property	1,750	2,310
	140,550	127,560

3 Expenditure on: Support of the members of the Congregation and their ministry

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	28,356	25,901
Premises costs	23,367	15,705
Sisters' living and personal expenses	21,351	21,872
Nursing care and medical costs	222,032	227,702
Education, training and spiritual renewal	3,640	3,736
Motor and travel	18,397	11,813
Exhumation, funeral and memorial stone costs	—	22,119
Support costs (note 4)	25,495	29,441
	342,638	358,289

4 Support costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Accountancy and bookkeeping fees	1,560	2,000
Governance costs:		
. Audit fee	16,110	11,100
. Legal and professional	—	9,442
Communication and IT	1,545	1,546
Office and miscellaneous costs	6,280	5,353
	25,495	29,441

5 Expenditure on: Charitable donations

	2024 £	2023 £
Donations to institutions:		
. Rachel's Vineyard	20,000	20,000
. Durham University	—	15,000
. St Marys Education	20,000	130,000
. Gaza - Daughters of Charity	30,000	—
. CAFOD	500	1,000
. RLSF	1,000	—
. Just Giving	—	110
. COLW	1,000	—
. Little Walsingham Maintenance	1,000	1,000
. Trussel Trust	250	1,000
. Youth Charity Donation	—	1,000
. Father Hudson's Donation Sr Anne	—	1,000
. Other donations	4,996	4,215
	78,746	174,325

6 Net expenditure for the year before investment gains (losses)

This is stated after charging:

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs (note 7)	28,356	25,901
Auditor's remuneration		
. Statutory audit services		
.. Current year	9,720	8,100
.. Previous year	2,940	—
. Accountancy services		
.. Current year	3,450	3,000
. Taxation	—	2,160
Depreciation	5,750	4,300

7 Staff costs and remuneration of key management personnel

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	27,267	25,153
Employer contributions to pension plans	1,089	748
	28,356	25,901

The average number of part-time employees during the period was 1 (2023: 1).

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the period (2023: none)

All staff are employed to support members of the Congregation and their ministry.

The trustees consider that they alone comprise the key management of the charity in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis. Trustees are not remunerated for their services to the charity (2023: no remuneration). See also note 8 below.

8 Trustees' remuneration and expenses and related party transactions

Two trustees are members of the Congregation. As members of the Congregation, their living expenses during the period were borne by the charity but they received no remuneration or reimbursement of expenses in connection with their duties as trustees or key management during the period.

In addition, as members of the Congregation, these trustees do not have resources of their own as all earnings, pensions and other income have been donated to the charity under a Gift Aid compliant Deed of Covenant. During the period, the total amount donated by the trustees to the charity was £17,838 (2023: £18,439).

One trustee received reimbursement of expenses in connection with their duties as trustees in the year to 31 March 2024 of £nil (2023: One trustee received reimbursement of expenses in connection with their duties as trustees £115).

There were no other related party transactions (2023: no other related party transactions).

9 Taxation

Mater Ecclesiae CIO is a registered charity and, therefore, is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities.

10 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings £	Furniture and equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2023	358,773	31,053	25,433	415,259
Additions	232,907	6,711	—	239,618
At 31 March 2024	<u>591,680</u>	<u>37,764</u>	<u>25,433</u>	654,877
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2023	—	6,965	530	7,495
Charge for the year	—	5,220	530	5,750
At 31 March 2024	<u>—</u>	<u>12,185</u>	<u>1,060</u>	13,245
Net book values				
At 31 March 2024	<u>591,680</u>	<u>25,579</u>	<u>24,373</u>	641,632
At 31 March 2023	<u>358,773</u>	<u>24,088</u>	<u>24,903</u>	407,764

See also post balance sheet events disclosure at note 20 pertaining to the sale of freehold land and buildings post-year end.

11 Investments

	Investment properties £	Listed investments £	2023 £	Investment properties £	Listed investments £	2023 £
Fair (market) value at 1 April 2023	376,125	5,755,942	6,132,067	251,625	4,358,611	4,610,236
Additions at cost	—	995,688	995,688	31,451	2,775,116	2,806,567
Disposals at book value (see below)	—	(1,036,815)	(1,036,815)	—	(1,316,093)	(1,316,093)
Net unrealised gains (losses)	116,229	806,926	923,155	93,049	(61,692)	31,357
Fair (market) value at 31 March 2024	<u>492,354</u>	<u>6,521,741</u>	<u>7,014,095</u>	<u>376,125</u>	<u>5,755,942</u>	<u>6,132,067</u>
Cash held by investment managers for re-investment	—	18,856	18,856	—	35,007	35,007
	<u>492,354</u>	<u>6,540,597</u>	<u>7,032,951</u>	<u>376,125</u>	<u>5,790,949</u>	<u>6,167,074</u>
Cost of investments* at 31 March 2024	<u>91,974</u>	<u>5,605,128</u>	<u>5,555,479</u>	<u>91,974</u>	<u>5,524,028</u>	<u>5,616,002</u>

*The original cost of the investment property is not readily available. The cost at 31 March 2024 represents the cost of additions since 1 April 2021. See also post balance sheet events disclosure at note 20 pertaining to the sale of the investment property post-year end.

Disposals at book value included above comprise the following:

	Investment properties £	Listed investments £	2024 £	Investment properties £	Listed investments £	2023 £
Disposal proceeds	—	1,012,841	1,012,841	—	1,237,546	1,237,546
Realised losses	—	23,974	23,974	—	78,547	78,547
Disposals at book value	—	<u>1,036,815</u>	<u>1,036,815</u>	—	<u>1,316,093</u>	<u>1,316,093</u>

11 Investments (continued)

Total realised and unrealised gains in the year were as follows:

	Investment properties £	Listed investments £	2024 £	Investment properties £	Listed investments £	2023 £
Net unrealised gains	116,229	806,926	923,155	93,049	(61,692)	31,357
Net realised losses	—	(23,974)	(23,974)	—	(78,547)	(78,547)
Total	116,229	782,952	899,181	93,049	(140,239)	(47,190)

Listed investments held at 31 March 2024 comprised the following:

	2024 £	2023 £
UK listed investments		
. Equities	220,323	448,065
. Bonds	1,088,897	716,470
. Alternatives	485,779	496,807
Overseas listed investments		
. Equities	4,409,062	3,535,234
. Bonds	182,036	303,244
. Alternatives	135,644	256,122
	6,521,741	5,755,942

All listed investments were dealt in on a recognised stock exchange.

The investment property was sold shortly after the balance sheet date. The property has been revalued based on the amount realised from the sale of the property post-year end - see post balance sheet events note 20.

12 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Accrued investment income	23,422	32,396
Prepayments	11,658	17,015
	35,080	49,411

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Expense creditors	5,160	1,334
Accruals and deferred income	26,944	33,340
Donation payable	150,000	85,000
Social security and other taxes	1,419	1,312
Amounts due under a finance agreement for purchase of a motor vehicle	2,357	2,357
	185,880	123,343

14 Creditors: amounts falling due after one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Donation payable (note 5)	—	80,000
Amounts due under a finance agreement for purchase of a motor vehicle	12,045	14,364
	12,045	94,364

All of the above are payable within two to five years.

The amounts due under the finance agreement are payable in monthly instalments of £196 with a final instalment of £8,865 payable in September 2026.

15 Tangible fixed assets fund

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 April 2023	407,764	360,424
Net movement in year	219,466	30,619
At 31 March 2024	627,230	391,043

The tangible fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the charity's tangible fixed assets less creditors in relation to relevant finance arrangements. A decision was made to separate this fund from the general fund and other designated funds of the charity in recognition of the fact that the tangible fixed assets are essential to the day-to-day work of the charity and as such their value should not be regarded as funds that would be realisable with ease, by the charity to meet future contingencies.

16 Investment property fund

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 April 2023	251,625	251,625
Designated during the year	240,729	124,500
At 31 March 2024	492,354	376,125

The investment property fund represents the carrying value of the charity's investment property. At the balance sheet date, the carrying value was not available to the charity to meet future contingencies and therefore was kept separate from the charity's general unrestricted fund.

17 Financing and Congregational fund

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 April 2023	2,000,000	2,000,000
Designated during the year	—	165,000
Utilised during the year	—	(165,000)
At 31 March 2024	2,000,000	2,000,000

The Financing and Congregational fund has been established to finance future grants and donations. The trustees are yet to formalise their plans for the future and need to carry out further work on deciding how these funds are to be applied.

18 Sisters' care fund

The income funds of the charity include the following designated fund which has been set aside out of unrestricted funds for a specific purpose.

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 April 2023	3,300,000	3,850,000
(Released) designated during the year	—	(550,000)
At 31 March 2024	3,300,000	3,300,000

The sisters' care fund has been established by the charity's trustees to provide for the future costs of providing care for elderly sisters who have dedicated their working lives to the charity. The additional designation during the year is a result of increasing residential and nursing home fees,

19 Analysis of net assets between funds

	General fund £	Tangible fixed assets fund £	Designated funds £	Total 2024 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	—	641,632	—	641,632
Investments	1,240,597	—	5,792,354	7,032,951
Net current assets (liabilities)	14,467	(2,357)	—	12,110
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	—	(12,045)	—	(12,045)
	1,255,064	627,230	5,792,354	7,674,648
	General fund £	Tangible fixed assets fund £	Designated funds £	Total 2023 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	—	407,764	—	407,764
Investments	490,949	—	5,676,125	6,167,074
Net current assets (liabilities)	529,174	(2,357)	—	526,817
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(80,000)	(14,364)	—	(94,364)
	940,123	391,043	5,676,125	7,007,291

20 Post balance sheet events

Tangible fixed assets (note 10)

Since the end of the financial year, the charity has sold its freehold property situated in Walsingham. The property was sold for consideration of £407,500 before costs related to the sale. The property is included within tangible fixed assets in these accounts at a net book value of £358,773.

Investment properties (note 11)

Since the end of the financial year, the charity has sold its freehold property situated in Stroud. The charity's investment property is included in these accounts at a fair value of £492,354 reflecting the net consideration earned upon its disposal post-year end on 4 April 2024.

21 Ultimate control and liability of the member

The charity is controlled by the Congregational Leader (referred to as the Mother General in the charity's Constitution) who is the sole member of the CIO.

If the CIO is wound up, the member of the CIO has no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.