

**The Congregation of the
Sisters of St Mary of Namur
CIO**



Annual Report and Accounts

30 September 2023

Charity Registration Number
1178092

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Reference and administrative information

Trustees	Sister Moira Meeghan Sister Louise Swanston Sister Susan Mary McLean (resigned 1 October 2023) Sister Doreen Bradley (appointed 1 October 2023) Sister Bridget Folkard (appointed 1 October 2023)
Regional Leader	Sister Moira Meeghan
Regional Bursar	Sister Susan Mary McLean (resigned 1 October 2023) Sister Doreen Bradley (appointed 1 October 2023)
Regional Secretary	Sister Louise Swanston
Accountant	Mrs Teresa Lloyd
Principal and administrative address	25 Huyton Church Road Liverpool L36 5SH
Telephone number	0151 489 9188
Charity registration number	1178092
Auditor	Buzzacott LLP 130 Wood Street London EC2V 6DL
Investment managers	Rathbone Investment Management Limited Port of Liverpool Building Liverpool L3 1NW
Bankers	Royal Bank of Scotland plc 6 th Floor 1 Princes Street London EC2R 8BP
Solicitors	Stone King LLP Boundary House 91 Charterhouse Street London EC1M 6HR

The trustees present the report and accounts of The Congregation of the Sisters of St Mary of Namur CIO (the charity) for the year to 30 September 2023.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 30 to 34 of the attached accounts and comply with the charity's constitution, applicable laws 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 Sisters of St Mary of Namur (SSMN) (the Congregation) is an international Roman Catholic Apostolic Religious Congregation currently comprising 332 sisters worldwide, including 13 novices. Previously the sisters in Britain were referred to as the British Province. However, due to the falling number of sisters, the former Province changed its status and became known within the Congregation as the British Region.

The Congregation was founded in 1819 in Namur, Belgium, where the motherhouse is still located. For administrative reasons the Congregation is now divided into 3 Provinces and 5 Regions, across 9 countries.



The accounts accompanying this report are those of the charity which administers the assets of the Congregation in England.

MISSION

The objectives of The Congregation of the Sisters of St Mary of Namur CIO during the period, as set out in its governing document, were education, pastoral care (including working with asylum seekers and trafficked people), faith development and spiritual accompaniment.

MISSION (continued)

By 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 objectives, 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.

The ministries of the sisters of the British Region during the period fell into the following categories:

♦ ***Worship and prayer***

The sisters of the Congregation are given the opportunity for private and communal prayer and worship. They are encouraged to continue their own faith and human development with appropriate updating sessions. The sisters pray and reflect with the wider community, including people of all faiths and none. This is realised through the ministries of welcome, hospitality, chaplaincy, spiritual accompaniment and retreat-giving, parish liturgies and home visits. Groups meet regularly in different communities, for prayer, scripture study, faith formation, spirituality and discernment.

At a time when other retreat houses are closing or are financially/logistically inaccessible to many, this offering of space, kindness and learning has become more urgent and something we are still able to provide. Interfaith and ecumenical dialogue and cooperation are encouraged, as reflected in the composition of the different groups. Our less mobile sisters have an invaluable ministry of prayer, listening and presence in a world where loneliness is one of the greatest problems.

♦ ***Education***

Education is intrinsic to our various ministries. One of the sisters continues as Director of EducareM, an organisation for ongoing educational training of teachers and governors. Another works with the Irenaeus project, a spirituality focus for the Archdiocese of Liverpool, delivering programmes of lay initiation into new pastoral responsibilities. Much of the group work mentioned above also contains a strong teaching element, as several of the sisters have a background in education.

♦ ***Social and pastoral work***

The sisters have the privilege of being involved in different branches of pastoral ministry. This includes proclaiming the Word of God, Eucharistic ministry and leading liturgies; also working in the field of catechesis and adult faith formation, giving retreat days, visiting the lonely and the dying, and being engaged in advocacy and work with refugees and trafficked people. One sister provides singing opportunities with people living with dementia and their families as part of our involvement with the Irenaeus project and another sister is chaplain to the police. The sisters' priority is to reach poor, neglected or marginalised people in society whatever their personal background, faith, gender or individual circumstances. Where visiting is not possible, emails or phone calls are a means of communication. From time to time, letters are sent to Members of Parliament to encourage just law-making on behalf of the poor and marginalised.

MISSION (continued)

♦ *Overseas missionary work*

The three Provinces of our Congregation in the southern hemisphere have been established since 2000. Since then, they have been administratively independent and thriving in terms of membership, while relying to a large extent on the financial support of the Northern Regions and other charitable organisations to help them with school maintenance, building projects, colleges, clinics and orphanages. Progress is being maintained in teaching and facilitating finance management and auto-financing projects. The British Region has continued each year to fund university studies for sisters who are preparing either to teach or to manage self-supporting initiatives, particularly in agriculture, small farming, and handicrafts. The return of some British sisters from our missions has enabled us to make even stronger links with the communities in our missionary provinces of Brazil, Rwanda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon. Since the pandemic, there has been a strong emphasis on developing communications between countries, and the sisters are supporting each other in learning the language of other regions and provinces. A group of our older sisters has made strong links with the younger sisters of Cameroon. They share their life experiences and how Religious life was lived in the past.

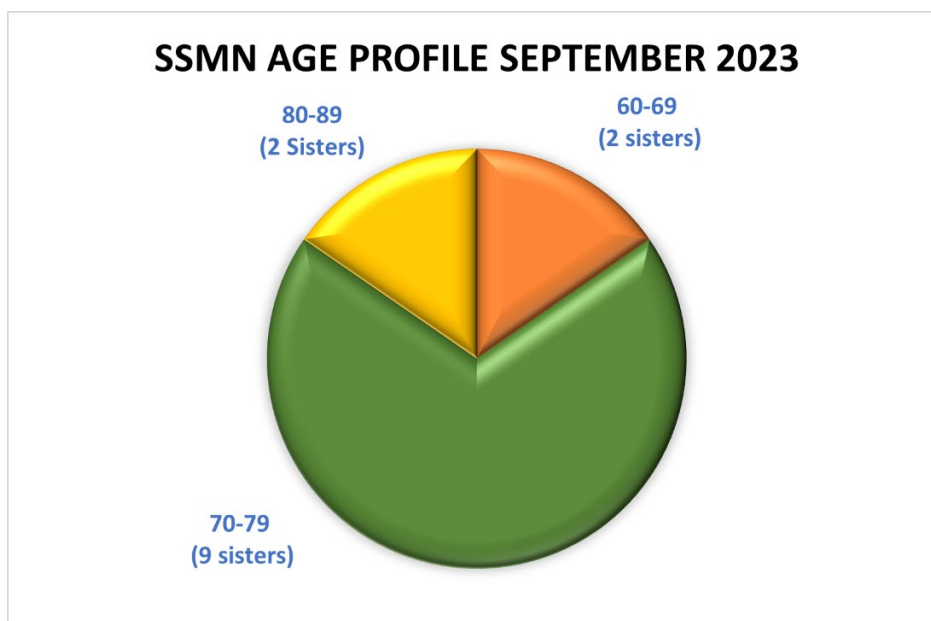
ACTIVITIES, SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANT POLICIES

Activities and specific objectives

As stated above under "Mission", by caring for individual members throughout their lives within the Congregation, the charity endeavours to support the sisters in the living out of their faith through a variety of religious and other charitable works: worship and prayer, education, chaplaincy, social and pastoral ministry and overseas missionary work.

Caring for members of the Congregation

In common with many religious congregations in Great Britain, the age profile of members is increasing as existing members grow older and at present there are no new vocations in Great Britain and our age profile is shown below:



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANT POLICIES (continued)

Activities and specific objectives (continued)

Caring for members of the Congregation (continued)

The Congregation has an obligation, both moral and legal, to provide care for its members, none of whom have resources of their own and all of whom have devoted a significant part of their lives to teaching and caring ministries. As the average age of the sisters increases, so too does the need to provide specialised and increasingly expensive care for them.

At present, one sister is living in a residential care home, and we expect this number to increase over the coming years. As a consequence, the trustees are giving careful consideration to the impact of this on the lives of the sisters, property requirements and financial implications. In this regard, the objectives of the trustees of the charity over the current period are summarised below. All these objectives will continue to be applicable for the foreseeable future.

It is important to ensure that all members of the region receive respectful comprehensive care. Our new premises built 2018–2020 known locally as the 'Swanside House' are already enabling sisters with mobility issues to remain at home and this helps them to keep their independence. The house has the capacity to house nine sisters (at the time covered by this report six sisters belong to this community). It has a lift and two rooms with capacity to accommodate sisters with more physical needs. The house is large enough to accommodate larger groups of people, so enabling the older sisters to be involved in the ministry of all the sisters.



There is another house in the Liverpool area, in Huyton. This house is known as the 'Gatehouse'. The house holds the Charity's main office and is the hub for the management of the Charity as well as providing a base for the ministry of the sisters living in it (at the time covered by this report 4 sisters belong to this community).

Two sisters live in Harrow at the time of this report and continue their work in education, Parish work and catechesis. They also work with women in need, refugees and those seeking a welcome in their loneliness.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANT POLICIES (continued)

Activities and specific objectives (continued)

Enabling and supporting members in a variety of religious and charitable works at home and abroad

The religious and charitable works of individual members of the Congregation can be divided into four principal areas: worship and prayer; education; social and pastoral work; support of overseas missionary work

♦ ***Worship and prayer***

During the period 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023, the sisters were involved in a number of activities which included:

- ♦ Promoting Gospel values of human dignity, respect for diverse cultures and faiths, justice and peace, care and respect for creation.
- ♦ Offering prayer and retreat days, hospitality and calm for short times of prayer, Gospel reflection and study.
- ♦ Outreach and engagement with parishes, schools, groups and Diocesan initiatives.
- ♦ Praying with the housebound, sick and dying.

The objectives of the trustees in this area are to:

- ♦ Support and enable people to develop their relationship with God and other aspects of community life.
- ♦ To support the various people that we work with in keeping God at the centre of all that they do.

♦ ***Education***

During the period, the sisters were involved in a number of activities, which included:

- ♦ Retreats and in-service training for Catholic School Heads and Governors.
- ♦ Working in schools with children, supporting their Catholic education.
- ♦ Providing Inservice days of reflection with the teachers and staff of schools.
- ♦ Sharing in Archdiocesan programmes of adult faith formation, catechetics and Dementia and Mental Health Awareness projects - online and face to face.

The objectives of the Trustees in this are to:

- ♦ Support all those working in schools enabling them to recognise their calling and the importance of their ministry.
- ♦ To support and nurture the faith of the youngest members of our communities in schools.
- ♦ To provide ongoing adult formation for those working with others in the parish.
- ♦ To support the most vulnerable by teaching them the skills that they need in life.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANT POLICIES (continued)

Activities and specific objectives (continued)

Enabling and supporting members in a variety of religious and charitable works at home and abroad (continued)

♦ **Social and pastoral work**

The charity enables and supports individual members of the Region in ministry and outreach – all this in the spirit of Article 18 of the Congregation's Constitutions:

"Reaching out in love and sharing, [the sisters] become one with the people to whom they are sent".

At our international gathering at the most recent General Chapter, during the summer of 2019, we expressed that:

'It is together that we walk with the Risen One,

Listening to one another,

Enriched by the strength of our interculturality,

United by the Gospel-inspired insights of our founders,

Longing to open up new paths of collaboration, sharing and participation.'

The following are examples of the social and pastoral work undertaken by individual sisters:

- ♦ Working in parishes, visiting - especially the sick and housebound - helping in catechetical programmes, encouraging parishioners to develop their spiritual lives.
- ♦ Supporting people living with dementia and their families by providing training in dementia awareness and singing activities.
- ♦ Adult faith formation and the training of catechists.
- ♦ Training of Eucharistic ministers.
- ♦ Creative work with trafficked women and refugees.
- ♦ Accompanying trafficked women and refugees when they move to asylum seekers' housing and continuing this support when the women receive a five-year licence to stay in the UK.
- ♦ Accompanying families and individuals in joyful experiences of Christian baptism, marriage and other sacraments, and through difficult times of illness, loss and grief.
- ♦ Spiritual accompaniment and individually-guided retreats.
- ♦ Animation of music and/or liturgies in parishes.
- ♦ Chaplaincy, supporting those working in the police force both emotionally and spiritually.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANT POLICIES (continued)

Activities and specific objectives (continued)

Enabling and supporting members in a variety of religious and charitable works at home and abroad (continued)

♦ ***Social and pastoral work*** (continued)

- ◇ Multi-media presentations for education, prayer and spirituality.
- ◇ Encouragement of young adults' faith groups.
- ◇ Visiting the local prisoners and sharing in prayer times and the Celebration of the Eucharist.

The objectives of the trustees in this area are:

- ◇ To enable members of the Region to carry out meaningful social and pastoral ministries as needs emerge, and according to the personal skills, gifts and training of the sisters.
- ◇ To respond as sisters to the specific human and spiritual needs around us of those neglected, lonely and forgotten, including widows, trafficked women, asylum seekers, people living alone and those who have no sense of 'belonging' in society.

Any financial gain (salary, stipend or offering) is donated to the charity and thereby ensures that the work of the sisters and the charity may continue into the future and develop. However, owing to the advancing age profile, this income is diminishing annually.

♦ ***Overseas missionary work***

Traditionally, the Congregation's overseas missionary work has had two aspects to it:

Firstly, the provision of sisters to work in the missions and, secondly, the provision of donations and grants. The British Region for many years provided missionaries, but with the increasing average age and declining health of the sisters, the focus is now on the financial aspect and supporting the sisters from our home countries. Grants, donations and other payments in support of missionary work and ministry are decided on by the trustees after consultation with other members of the Congregation. In the main, the charity supports the work of the Congregation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Rwanda, Tanzania and Brazil. The individuals who benefit include those of all faiths and none, and the help they receive is crucial.

Investment policy

During the period, the charity's investments were managed by Rathbone Investment Management Limited, Liverpool, and are held in a diversified portfolio subject to ethical constraints. Further details are given in note 11 to the accounts.

The investment strategy is set by the trustees for the charity, and takes into account income requirements, the risk profile and the investment managers' views of the market prospects in the medium term.

ACTIVITIES, SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANT POLICIES (continued)

Activities and specific objectives (continued)

Investment policy (continued)

The policy is to achieve a combination of income and capital growth within acceptable levels of risk. There are no restrictions on the charity's powers to invest.

The performance of the investments, as well as the charity's investment strategy, are reviewed by the trustees who meet with the investment managers at least once a year and with whom the trustees are in regular contact and receive quarterly investment reports.

Voluntary hours

Throughout the year, 13 members of the Region gave their time to assist the poor, the marginalised and those in need. The majority of members receive no financial reward for this work which contributes to the overall achievement of the charity's objectives. In addition, members were involved in administering the work of the Congregation and charity - without their contribution the charity would be unable to function effectively or fully.

Area	No. of volunteers	Hours volunteered
Care home visiting, Liverpool, and care home gardening	4	785
Hospital and special NHS Units – pastoral care, hospital chaplaincy and police chaplaincy	5	570
Prayer ministry, faith groups, prayer groups, rosary group, life choices, scripture groups, spiritual accompaniment, retreats and retreat days.	8	3,163
Music ministry for parishes and prayer groups.	1	120
Pastoral help for schools	3	80
Collaborative ministry with other charities with the same aims and objectives and offering similar services: a sharing of gifts, training and resources	6	2,560
Diocesan work, parish visiting and pastoral ministry - Harrow: National level adult education and formation and adult faith formation and the Welcome Centre in Harrow. Liverpool: Irenaeus Centre conference work and training for Eucharistic ministry and a variety of spiritual events.	7	1,596
Promotion of Justice and Peace, letters and emails. Ministry to trafficked women and refugees, ecology and climate	8	1,050
Support and on-going formation of associates and companions in Faith and Mission - Liverpool and Harrow	12	250
Digital Art Project - making DVDs for liturgies, parishes, the Region and the Congregation and designing and updating the website.	1	365
Personal prayer and community prayer of the sisters, associates and companions for the world	13	8,792
Pastoral and financial administration of the Region	3	820
International communication and support for mission around the world	5	420

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Review of activities

Care of members of the Congregation

Throughout the year, the charity continued to assist members of the Region in their charitable and religious work.

Worship and prayer

The work of the sisters continues to expand, more and more people seek one-to-one support in order to make sense of their lives and the place of their religion and God within it all. Our spiritual accompaniment of people is carried out in different ways:

- ♦ Spiritual accompaniment for some is on a face-to-face basis but we also use Zoom, Skype and telephone, depending on the needs of each person. This means that those who live further away have found this a better way, enabling them to speak more often.
- ♦ Scripture mornings that we support at the Irenaeus Centre are being run. For these we use a hybrid format, some attending face to face, with other people joining us on Zoom. This has enabled people to join us from all over the country and internationally, as distance imposes no limits. Our work is expanding in many different ways.
- ♦ Retreat ministry is provided in face-to-face situations and some people are able to spend time in retreat in the comfort of their own home through the use of the internet.

Supporting those struggling to survive the financial crisis that has hit the country

In order to support those struggling financially many of us work alongside and contribute to other charities working in our local areas. We support people with contributions of food and by volunteering in various ways.

For example, the community in Harrow supports the welcome centre which is in the middle of the town centre. This is a 'drop in' centre where people are able to get a cup of tea, chat with people, and improve their English.



The Irenaeus Centre in Liverpool runs in a similar way. The sisters help in both these centres in different ways. One of the sisters is a volunteer and helps with English as a second language at the Harrow welcome centre.



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

Review of activities (continued)

Supporting those struggling to survive the financial crises that has hit the country

The Irenaeus Centre has a 'food cupboard' to which the sisters contribute food regularly, one sister is employed by the project.



The work that volunteers do in these centres enables people to have a warm, welcoming place to go and to feel secure. One person at the Irenaeus Centre said,

"I love to come in here because nobody judges you, you are always welcome even if you are having a bad day and there is always something to eat and a nice cup of tea".

The Gatehouse community has made a commitment to donate goods to a local charity four times a year. Over the past year they have given food to the Irenaeus project, Share Knowsley, and another food bank that operates near the Swanside house. They have also bought sleeping bags for people sleeping rough on the streets.

Times of retreat and reflection

The sisters provide various opportunities for quiet and reflection. Enabling those who attend to reflect and take time out in their daily lives.

On 11 -12 August 2023 Sisters Louise, Doreen and Bridget and 19 people from our various prayer and meeting groups, spent 2 days praying, sharing and learning together through personal and community discerning. On the first day Sister Louise gave two talks, and we had long moments of prayer and sharing. Ten who stayed the night had examen and evening prayer together.



On the second day Sister Bridget spoke on 'welcoming the new and unexpected'. Two ladies shared personal life experiences and a third spoke of how the face of 'Christ' emerges as one writes icons, a wonderful gift she discovered when her husband died. Sister Doreen introduced sessions with quiet prayer, managed all the catering and clearing up behind the scenes and had all the tables ready. Her hospitality touched everyone and made the mealtimes often the most important moments of sharing.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

Review of activities (continued)

Times of retreat and reflection (continued)

Here are some of the spontaneous messages we received following the weekend.

'I had been to so many Ignatian retreats, but I had never heard the Exercises and discerning explained in the way Sister Louise explained. I enjoyed the talks and the Retreat Centre as a peaceful and prayerful space. I feel very blessed to know the Sisters of St Mary.' (Karen)

'I was delighted to be a part of this, my first 'retreat.' I learned so much about the holy Spirit and how to have faith in darkness and light. The bond we created in our group touched my heart.'



All the sisters gave me so much over the two days. I cherished the prayer time, and learning about St Ignatius. I learned how to open my heart and be ready to amazed by the God I trust. I understand better the prayer of 'examen' at the end of the day.' You all made me feel so welcome, and I can't wait to be a part of 'something new, always new.' (Jodie).



'I loved Sister Doreen's quiet introductions to sessions and the mantra music to call the Holy Spirit.' (Veronica)

'This was truthfully the best retreat I have ever been on. Everyone was so truthful and inspiring and sharing: it touched me on so many levels. Spiritually, it opened up so many areas of communicating with God. It created wonderful community links with the other people.' (Pat)

'It was so life-giving for me and seemed to be so for everyone. The love and trust in the group is the welcome we have found in the communities, not only with Sisters Doreen, Louise and Bridget, but with all the other sisters in the community. Listening to Pat speaking of her life should be mandatory for all seminary training.' (Bernadette)



'I found peace and tranquillity in this beautiful place. I was so happy to share the thoughts and prayer of others, and to share what I have learned about to writing icons.' (Kath)

(The photos show you our times of listening to Sister Louise, praying and sharing food and life.)

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

Review of activities (continued)

Sisters working in education

Sister Judith Russi works in the field of education and formation as the director of the educational charity EducareM. She leads a team of six who deliver formation programmes for leaders as well as creating several new initiatives which respond to the present social justice issues today.

One such example is the Oracy for Advocacy programme which seeks to enable young people to discover that they can bring about change through direct advocacy work.



Pupils across the Westminster Diocese arranged a series of seminars on Catholic Social Teaching and presented their findings to clergy, MPs and local councillors.



Pupils from 6 schools with an age span from year 5 – to year 10 in Westminster Diocese addressed the leader of the Council on issues of Social Justice and the Common Good.

Formation for leadership in education

Formation for leadership continues to be Sister Judith's central work through the National School of Formation for educational leaders at all levels. This work was recently acknowledged in the Catholic Herald magazine naming Sister Judith as a national leader and person of influence today.

As well as working to form leaders for these challenging times both nationally and internationally, Sister Judith and her team have introduced a programme of exchange between the young people and the Catholic Union and Clergy.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

Review of activities (continued)

The Sisters continue with their ministries despite living with illness.

Sister Margaret Young has Parkinsons and now lives in Christopher Grange Care Home but continues her ministry. Sister. Margaret has always enjoyed gardening and does all that she can to create areas of beauty and quiet within the care home. This is much appreciated by both the staff and residents.



Work overseas

The sisters in the region of Great Britain support the sisters working in our missionary areas.

One of the areas where we have supported our sisters is the Democratic Republic of Congo. The money that we have sent has helped to train our sisters to be doctors, nurses and teachers.

We can see the sisters here in their work, giving valuable support to their local communities.



Two sisters working in an operating theatre.



Sister Marie Katona and Sister Claudine with primary school students in Mpasa.



Sister Huguette Elolo in Secondary 1

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Results for the period

A summary of the year's results is set out on page 27 of the attached accounts.

During the year to 30 September 2023, income amounted to £422,284 (2022: £414,787). Income comprised donations (including pensions receivable from members of the Congregation under Gift Aid or Deed of Covenant) and investment income and interest receivable.

During the year the charity incurred expenditure of £399,865 (2022: £361,784). Expenditure on maintaining the members of the Congregation and enabling them to carry out their charitable work was £330,151 (2022: £289,689) including governance costs of £14,304 (2022: £14,320).

Donations paid during the year were £32,761 (2022: £31,334). Further details of donations are given in note 3 to the attached accounts. Investment management fees for the year were £36,953 (2022: £40,761).

Net income before investment gains and losses was £22,419 (2022: £53,003). After net investment gains for the year totalling £102,209 (2022: net losses of £911,738), the net income/net movement in funds was £124,638 (2022: net expenditure/net movement in funds was £858,735).

Investment performance

The charity's investments are managed by Rathbone Investment Management Limited. At 30 September 2023, the investments had a total market value of £6,111,199 (2022: £6,136,598) including cash awaiting investment of £43,780 (2022: £173,252).

The investment managers continued to invest in accordance with the trustees' investment policy set out earlier in this report. During the year, the charity's listed investments achieved an income yield of 2.6% and a capital yield of 1.7%. Further details of the investment portfolio are included in note 11 to the attached accounts. The trustees believe their investment policy continues to be appropriate.

Financial position and reserves policy

The balance sheet shows total reserves of £8,384,093 (2022: £8,259,455). Of this £1,873,910 (2022: £1,890,174) is represented by tangible fixed assets used to support the work of the sisters and, therefore, cannot be easily realised if needed to meet future contingencies.

A further £4,830,000 (2022: £4,750,000) represents a retirement reserve designated to provide an income to maintain the sisters as they grow older. A further £1,081,000 (2022: £1,091,000) has been designated as a Financing and Congregational fund.

The balance on the restricted funds was £155. Therefore, reserves which are available to support the sisters and their work in the future are shown on the balance sheet as general funds and amount to £599,028 (2022: £528,031).

FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

Reserves policy

The trustees consider that, given the nature of the charity's work, the level of free reserves should be up to twenty-four months' unrestricted funds expenditure to ensure sufficient investment income is generated and also to provide for contingencies and unevenness in future income. The sisters are also aware of the importance to the charity of the investment assets and the income generated therefrom. At the date of the balance sheet, the trustees consider that the level of free reserves were adequate.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

As we move into the future it is important that we use our resources as best we can and that we make the most of each sister's resources to live out her life in ministry at whatever level is possible.

- ◆ As a result of the recent pandemic, it became apparent that the sisters could use technology in a variety of ways to support and communicate, both locally and internationally. We are aware how important it is for our sisters in the Democratic Republic of Congo who struggle to sustain electricity and forms of communication, to be able to develop their independence in creating their own energy sources. One of our aims as we move into the future is to support them in the installation of solar energy, which will help them in the education of those attending their schools and enable them to stay connected with the other sisters throughout the world.
- ◆ To re-consider and develop our links with the people around us, through those who have been recognised in the past as Associates and Companions, to expand this work to include all the friends of the sisters and those who support us in many different ways.
- ◆ To continue to use our new building as a place of hospitality, enabling the sisters to carry out their various ministries at home, especially the more elderly sisters, and to enable others to meet in a secure, warm, welcoming place.
- ◆ The re-organisation of our Congregation enables us to explore new ways of working, particularly with our communities in other countries. As we grow older and our numbers dwindle in the northern hemisphere, how can we find ways of communicating and sharing resources and working with sisters from the southern hemisphere?

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by a Constitution agreed by the trustees on 25 April 2018 and registered with the Charity Commission on 25 April 2018.

Governance

In terms of Canon Law, the Congregation is governed at an international level by the Superior General and her Council in Namur, Belgium. They are elected every six years at a General Chapter. The British Region is governed by the Regional Leader and two Regional Councillors. Names are suggested by the sisters of the Region and nominations made by the General Council for a three year mandate. The Regional Leader and her Council are chosen for their personal qualities and their understanding of the life and work of the sisters.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

Governance (continued)

After a Region-wide consultation under the previous leadership team, it was agreed that, owing to the very small numbers in community, each community would function without a local coordinator. The Regional Leader visits each community regularly, and officially once a year. Throughout the year there is a system of accountability within the Region, so that the Regional Leader and her Councillors remain abreast of developments in the ministries carried out in the Region. A visit by the Superior General must be made to the British Region once every three years. She is readily available for consultation and advice.

In terms of Civil law, the charity is governed by a constitution registered with the Charity Commission on 25 April 2018 and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Charity Registration Number 1178092. The trustees of the charity are the three members of the Regional Council and the Regional Bursar if she is not a member of the Council. As all trustees are members of the Congregation, they have a detailed knowledge of the work of the charity and of its structures. On being appointed, new trustees are required to spend some time with those leaving office, to receive a briefing on their responsibilities and the current position of the charity. Three new trustees were elected in August 2023, and appointed on 1 October 2023. To ensure a smooth handover both sets of trustees worked together throughout August and September. On-going in-service training takes place during the mandate.

Trustees

The names of the trustees who served during the financial year ended 30 September 2023, and those who were appointed on 1 October 2023 are set out as part of the reference and administrative details on page 1 of this annual report and accounts.

Brief biographical details on each of the trustees who served during the year to 30 September 2023 are given below:

Sister Moira Meeghan (Regional Superior)

Sister Moira has been a member of the Congregation for 38 years. Her ministry has mainly been in education, teaching in the challenging areas of Notting Hill, Watford and Liverpool. The final years of her teaching career were 10 years as Headteacher of a joint Catholic/Church of England Primary school, in one of the poorest areas of the city of Liverpool. Her other ministries have involved music ministry in parishes, catechetics and youth work. Sister Moira is now employed on a part time basis by the Archdiocese of Liverpool to create opportunities for spiritual development and outreach, as part of the Irenaeus Project. She has previously been a member of the Provincial Council.



Sister Susan Mary McLean (Trustee and Regional Bursar)

Sister Susan Mary has been a sister of St Mary of Namur for 52 years of which 38 were spent in Rwanda. Her ministry within the Congregation has involved serving as a teacher and faith formation in the UK and on the missions. Her leadership responsibilities have included Provincial Councillor and Bursar and Regional Superior. Throughout her religious life her service has been amongst those in the greatest need.



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

Trustees

Sister Louise Swanston (Trustee Regional Secretary)

Sister Louise has been a member of the Congregation for 37 years.

She is trained in teaching and spiritual direction. Her ministries have included teaching, school chaplaincy, faith formation/catechesis, spiritual accompaniment, and retreat work in its many forms. She has spent 17 years in leadership roles within the Congregation, six as Provincial Superior, six as General Councillor/General Secretary and five as Provincial Councillor.



Key management personnel

The trustees consider that they comprise the key management of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis.

All the 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 in connection with their duties as trustees or key management personnel.

Liability of the member

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

Fundraising policy

The charity aims to achieve best practice in the way in which it communicates with donors and other supporters. The charity takes care with both the tone of its communications and the accuracy of its data to minimise the pressures on supporters. It applies best practice to protect supporters' data and never sells data, it never swaps data and ensures that communication preferences can be changed at any time. The charity manages its own fundraising activities and does not employ the services of professional fundraisers. 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 period, the charity received no complaints about its fundraising activities.

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;

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

Statement of trustees' responsibilities (continued)

- ♦ 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 assume 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.

Structure and management reporting

The Regional Leader and her Council hold their team meetings on average every two months. Trustees' meetings occur approximately every three months, unless a pressing concern requires immediate attention and thus an extraordinary meeting. The trustees' responsibility is to review developments with regard to the charity and its activities and to make important decisions. These are times of assessment and forward planning. When necessary, the trustees seek advice and support from the charity's professional advisers including property consultants, investments managers, solicitors, accountants and insurance companies. The day-to-day management of the charity's activities, and the implementation of policies, is delegated to the appropriate members of the Congregation and senior staff.

The British Region currently comprises thirteen sisters, twelve of whom live as part of three communities. One Sister is currently residing in a care home. Two of the community houses are situated in Liverpool and one is in Harrow, Middlesex.

The community houses are located in those areas where it is believed that the sisters can serve the poor and marginalised. All the houses are close to areas of social and spiritual deprivation where pastoral and spiritual needs are evident.

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 charity) currently faces in Britain and have reviewed the measures already in place, or needing to be put in place, to deal with them.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

Risk management (continued)

Each community reviews regularly its risk assessment chart, increasing safety measures and adapting house facilities as needs evolve. This enables the trustees to have an overall view of possible risks and their management across the whole Region, as well as in each individual community, facilitating policy making and prevention of accidents.

The leadership team are responsible for overseeing the risk assessment each year, focusing on internal and external risk factors. Each community is updated on the ongoing requirements of health and safety and the importance of a safe, healthy living environment.

Sisters have maintained collaborative ministry with lay people in diverse apostolic fields, sharing with them the charism and mission of the Congregation.

The areas identified for particular attention within our risk management strategy are: governance and management; operational; financial; laws, regulations, external and environment.

Governance and management: looks at the risk of the Congregation, and hence the charity, 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 30 September 2023 was 74 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 charity 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 lay accountant is employed and meets regularly with the trustees. A lay Community Support Worker is also employed to support the less mobile and elderly sisters. Both lay workers attend in-service training. Age UK cleaners are employed for the Liverpool communities and a cook is employed through an agency for one of the Liverpool houses. One cleaner is employed through an agency for the Harrow community.

The sisters are encouraged to attend appropriate training workshops and in-service to support their ministries. 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 pastoral care. The house in Swanside Road, Liverpool was built to cater for the needs of the older sisters as we move into the future. It was designed to enable the sisters to invite people in for courses and activities which in turn enables them to continue their ministries.

Maintenance and safety of other Regional properties consistently remain a priority. 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.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (continued)

Risk management (continued)

There is a budget system in place for each sister and each community, agreed by the trustees. Monthly accounts are sent to the accountant from each community. Cheque books and bank cards are kept in safe places but not together. For cheques, there is a ceiling on the amount for one signatory.

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 reputable investment managers who adhere to a policy agreed by the trustees. The trustees meet with the investment managers regularly and the manager's performance and that of the portfolio are monitored. The investment strategy is assessed regularly to ensure it remains appropriate to the charity's needs both now and in the future.

During the current global economic uncertainty, the trustees continue to communicate with the charity's investment managers and, whilst there are concerns over the volatility in world stock markets, it is acknowledged 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.

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.

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.

Protection of children and vulnerable adults: Along with all other organisations who serve in the community, the trustees recognise the absolute necessity of ensuring the protection and safety of all those the sisters serve. This means that all sisters who are in any kind of ministry in Great Britain must obtain clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service. The trustees are committed to implementing all policies and procedures of The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA): a professional standards body with regulatory powers. The region is aligned to the dedicated entity regarding safeguarding for Religious Life Groups, the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) covering religious orders and congregations for all safeguarding issues and the region has a named Safeguarding Officer.

MEMBERS, ASSOCIATES AND COMPANIONS IN THE CONGREGATION

The trustees wish to record their recognition of the professionalism and commitment of those previously recognised as Associate Members or Companions. These, and other friends of St Mary, have supported us in many different ways, and continue to do so. As we develop our ways of working, we recognise the importance of the ever-growing number of individuals and groups that work and pray alongside us. We continue to reflect on how best to collaborate with others to carry out our mission. The dedication, enthusiasm, and positive approach of all those supporting us are very much appreciated.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

D.M.Bradley

Trustee

Approved on: 14 March 2024

Independent auditor's report to the trustees of The Congregation of the Sisters of St Mary of Namur CIO

Opinion

We have audited the accounts of The Congregation of the Sisters of St Mary Namur CIO (the charity) for the year to 30 September 2023, which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows, the principal accounting policies and the related 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 30 September 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the period 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)

In connection with our audit of the accounts, 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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities Act 2011 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 trustees' responsibilities statement, 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.

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.

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

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 partner 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 management and 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) (effective 1 January 2019); and
- ◆ We assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of the trustees and the review of minutes of meetings of the trustees.

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

- ◆ Making enquiries of the trustees as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud and 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;
- ◆ Tested and reviewed journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- ◆ Carried out substantive testing of expenditure including the authorisation thereof;
- ◆ Gained an understanding of the processes in place for the management of the charity's investments and confirmed the validity of investment movements; 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:

- ◆ Reviewing the minutes of meetings of trustees;
- ◆ Enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- ◆ Agreeing accounts disclosures to underlying supporting documentation.

As a result of our procedures we did not identify any key audit matters relating to irregularities.

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 other management 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 144 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

19 March 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 30 September 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	1	256,264	1,500	257,764	260,501	2,250	262,751
Investments and interest receivable	2	164,520	—	164,520	146,166	—	146,166
Other sources							
. Surplus on disposal of tangible fixed assets		—	—	—	5,250	—	5,250
. Miscellaneous income		—	—	—	620	—	620
Total income		420,784	1,500	422,284	412,537	2,250	414,787
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds							
. Investment management fees		36,953	—	36,953	40,761	—	40,761
Charitable activities							
. Donations	3	31,166	1,595	32,761	29,334	2,000	31,334
. Support of the members of the Congregation and their ministry	4	330,151	—	330,151	289,689	—	289,689
Total expenditure		398,270	1,595	399,865	359,784	2,000	361,784
Net income (expenditure) for the year before investment gains (losses)							
	6	22,514	(95)	22,419	52,753	250	53,003
Net investment gains (losses)		102,219	—	102,219	(911,738)	—	(911,738)
Net income (expenditure) and net movement in funds		124,733	(95)	124,638	(858,985)	250	(858,735)
Balances brought forward at 1 October 2022		8,259,205	250	8,259,455	9,118,190	—	9,118,190
Balances carried forward at 30 September 2023		8,383,938	155	8,384,093	8,259,205	250	8,259,455

All of the charity's activities derived from continuing operations during the above periods.

All recognised gains and losses are included in the statement of financial activities.

Balance sheet 30 September 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	10		1,873,910		1,890,174
Investments	11		6,111,199		6,136,598
			7,985,109		8,026,772
Current assets					
Debtors	12	18,728		36,026	
Cash at bank and in hand		655,679		602,685	
		726,814		638,711	
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(275,423)		(406,028)	
Net current assets			398,984		232,683
Total net assets			8,384,093		8,259,455
The funds of the charity:					
Funds and reserves					
<i>Income funds</i>					
Restricted funds	14		155		250
Unrestricted funds					
. General fund			599,028		528,031
. Tangible fixed assets fund	15		1,873,910		1,890,174
. Designated funds	16		5,911,000		5,841,000
			8,384,093		8,259,455

Approved by the trustees and signed
on their behalf by:

D. M. Bradley

Trustee

Date: 14 March 2024

Statement of cash flows Year to 30 September 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash used in operating activities	A	(89,362)	(64,604)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Investment income and interest received		171,164	141,850
Proceeds from the disposal of tangible fixed assets		—	5,250
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(64,426)	(70,236)
Proceeds from the disposal of investments		869,293	1,024,271
Purchase of investments		(959,547)	(1,152,707)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		16,484	(51,572)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the period		(72,878)	(116,176)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 October 2022	B	775,937	892,113
Cash and cash equivalents at 30 September 2023	B	703,059	775,937

Notes to the statement of cash flows for the year to 30 September 2023

A Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash used in operating activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Net movement in funds (as per the statement of financial activities)	124,638	(858,735)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charge (note 10)	30,617	27,214
(Gains) losses on investments	(102,219)	911,738
Investment income and interest receivable	(164,520)	(146,166)
Surplus on disposal of tangible fixed assets	—	(5,250)
Decrease in debtors	10,654	11,140
increase (decrease) in creditors	11,468	(4,545)
Net cash used in operating activities	(89,362)	(64,604)

B Analysis of changes in cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 October 2022 £	Cash flows £	At 30 September 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	602,685	52,994	655,679
Cash held by investment managers	173,252	(125,872)	47,380
Total cash and cash equivalents	775,937	(72,878)	703,059

No separate statement of changes in net debt has been prepared as there is no difference between the movements in cash and cash equivalents and movement in net cash (debt).

Principal accounting policies Year to 30 September 2023

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 to 30 September 2023 with comparative information given in respect for the year to September 2022.

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) 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;
- ◆ determining the value of designated funds including the determination of the assumptions made in determining the value of the retirement fund; 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 at least one year from the date of approval of these accounts.

With regard to the next accounting period, the year ending 30 September 2024, 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 market. This is particularly relevant at the current time given the potential for volatility in world stock markets.

The trustees consider that the charity will be able to meet its liabilities as they fall due and that it is a going concern.

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 and other income including the surplus on the 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.

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.

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.

Miscellaneous income is measured at fair value and accounted for on an accruals basis.

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:

- ◆ Expenditure on raising funds includes expenditure associated with raising funds for the charity. This comprises those investment management fees charged directly to the charity. Fees in respect to those investments which comprise pooled investment vehicles, including common investment funds, are inherent within the relevant investment holding.
- ◆ Expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs associated with furthering the charitable purposes of the charity through the provision of its charitable activities. Such costs include direct and indirect expenditure in respect to the support of members of the Congregation and enabling their ministry (including governance costs) and the provision of charitable grants and donations.
- ◆ The provision for any impairment in respect to the charity's tangible fixed assets.

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. 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. All assets are stated at cost.

1. Freehold land and buildings

Non-specialised land and buildings comprise buildings designed as, and used for, private residential accommodation. They are stated at cost. Such buildings are not depreciated. An impairment review in respect to property assets is carried out if events, or changes in circumstances, indicate that the carrying value may not be recoverable. Otherwise, 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 comprise large residential convents. They are stated at cost net of depreciation. Depreciation is provided at 2% per annum on a straight-line basis in order to write off the buildings over their estimated useful economic life to the charity. Items of plants that are integral to the building are depreciated over their useful economic life of 15 years.

2. Furniture, fittings, equipment and motor vehicles

Expenditure on the purchase and replacement of furniture, fittings, equipment and motor vehicles is capitalised and depreciated over a five or ten year period on a straight line basis.

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.

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.

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.

Fund structure

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

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

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.

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

Services provided by members of the Congregation

For the purposes of these accounts, no monetary value has been placed on administrative and other services provided by the members of the Congregation.

1 Income from: Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £
Salaries and pensions of individual religious received under Gift Aid or Deed of Covenant	254,014	—	254,014	245,775	—	245,775
General donation	2,250	1,500	3,750	14,726	2,250	16,976
	256,264	1,500	257,764	260,501	2,250	262,751

2 Income from: Investments and interest receivable

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £
Investment Income						
<i>UK listed investments</i>						
. Equities	61,146	—	61,146	60,924	—	60,924
. Fixed interest	21,443	—	21,443	19,145	—	19,145
<i>Overseas listed investments</i>						
. Equities	36,370	—	36,370	36,979	—	36,979
. Fixed interest	6,805	—	6,805	2,707	—	2,707
<i>Alternative investments</i>	27,607	—	27,607	23,869	—	23,869
<i>Infrastructure funds</i>	2,800	—	2,800	1,050	—	1,050
	156,171	—	156,171	144,674	—	144,674
Interest receivable						
Cash held by investment manager	3,197	—	3,197	—	—	—
Bank interest	5,152	—	5,152	1,492	—	1,492
	164,520	—	164,520	146,166	—	146,166

3 Expenditure on: Donations

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £
Congregation's Generalate						
. Annual contribution	18,015	—	18,015	18,015	—	18,015
Congregation's overseas mission in:						
. Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil and Rwanda	10,015	1,595	11,610	9,631	2,000	11,631
Other donations under £1,000 each to organisations with objects that are consistent with those of the charity	3,136	—	3,136	1,688	—	1,688
	31,166	1,595	32,761	29,334	2,000	31,334

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

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £
Staff costs (note 7)	36,861	—	36,861	34,589	—	34,589
Property	83,042	—	83,042	61,691	—	61,691
Depreciation	30,617	—	30,617	27,214	—	27,214
Sisters' living and personal expenses	90,171	—	90,171	86,410	—	86,410
Provisions and household	46,959	—	46,959	47,564	—	47,564
Spiritual formations, retreats etc	1,308	—	1,308	1,846	—	1,846
Support costs						
. Other expenses	15,737	—	15,737	11,721	—	11,721
. Other professional fees	11,152	—	11,152	4,334	—	4,334
. Governance costs (note 5)	14,304	—	14,304	14,320	—	14,320
	330,151	—	330,151	289,689	—	289,689

5 Governance costs

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total £
Legal and professional fees	14,304	—	14,304	14,320	—	14,320

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

This is stated after charging:

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs (note 7)	36,861	27,214
Auditor's remuneration (including VAT)		
. Audit services – current year	14,304	13,600
. Audit services – prior period	—	720
Depreciation	30,617	27,214

7 Staff costs and remuneration of key management personnel

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	36,511	34,032
Pension costs	350	557
	36,861	34,589

The average number of employees during the period was 2 (2022: 2).

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the period (2022: none).

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

The trustees consider that they comprise the key management of the charity in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis.

8 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

As members of the Congregation, the trustees' 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.

As members of the Congregation, none of the trustees 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 £ £53,175 (2022: £48,169).

9 Taxation

The Congregation of the Sisters of St Mary of Namur 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, fittings and equipment	Total
	Non-specialised £	Specialised £	Motor vehicles £	£	£
Cost					
At 1 October 2022	1,062,099	1,100,138	67,427	53,384	2,283,048
Additions	—	—	—	14,353	14,353
Disposals	—	—	—	(9,243)	(9,243)
At 30 September 2023	<u>1,062,099</u>	<u>1,100,138</u>	<u>67,427</u>	<u>58,494</u>	<u>2,288,158</u>
Depreciation and impairment					
At 1 October 2022	—	304,638	52,193	36,043	392,874
Charge for year	—	18,167	3,808	8,642	30,617
Disposals	—	—	—	(9,243)	(9,243)
At 30 September 2023	<u>—</u>	<u>322,805</u>	<u>56,001</u>	<u>35,442</u>	<u>414,248</u>
Net book values					
At 30 September 2023	<u>1,062,099</u>	<u>777,333</u>	<u>11,426</u>	<u>23,052</u>	<u>1,873,910</u>
At 30 September 2022	<u>1,062,099</u>	<u>795,500</u>	<u>15,234</u>	<u>17,341</u>	<u>1,890,174</u>

11 Investments

	2023 £	2022 £
Listed investments		
Fair (market) value at 1 October 2022	5,963,346	6,694,606
Additions at cost	867,547	1,204,749
Disposals at book value:		
. Proceeds	(869,293)	(1,024,271)
. Realised losses	(25,382)	(108,198)
	(894,675)	(1,132,469)
Net unrealised gains (losses)	127,601	(803,540)
Fair (market) value at 30 September 2023	6,063,819	5,963,346
Cash held for investment	47,380	173,252
	6,111,199	6,136,598
 Cost of listed investments at 30 September 2023	 5,542,287	 5,589,365

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

At 30 September 2023 no individual holdings were deemed material in the context of the entire portfolio.

Listed investments held at 30 September 2023 comprised the following:

	2023 £	2022 £
UK listed investments		
. Equities	1,545,946	1,655,294
. Fixed interest	931,144	608,470
Overseas listed investments		
. Equities	2,347,029	2,337,957
. Fixed interest	160,398	124,181
Alternative investments	966,625	1,066,992
Infrastructure funds	49,840	62,300
Actively managed strategies	62,837	108,152
	6,063,819	5,963,346

12 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Investment income receivable	4,705	11,349
Sundry debtors	—	15,072
Prepayments	14,023	9,605
	18,728	36,026

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Money held on behalf of individual members of the Congregation	242,089	242,089
Other taxes and social security costs	837	474
Accruals	32,497	21,392
Amounts payable in respect to tangible fixed asset additions	—	50,073
Additions to listed investments	—	92,000
	275,423	406,028

14 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances held on trust to be applied for specific purposes:

	At 1 October 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2023 £
Mission fund	—	1,180	(1,180)	—
Other funds	250	320	(415)	155
	250	1,500	(1,595)	155

	At 1 October 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2022 £
Mission fund	—	2,000	(2,000)	—
Other funds	—	250	—	250
	—	2,250	(2,000)	250

Mission fund

This fund existed to provide support to the Congregation's missions in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil and the Dominican Republic.

Other funds

These funds represent other amounts given that are subject to donor imposed conditions.

15 Tangible fixed assets fund

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 October 2022	1,890,174	1,897,224
Net movements in the year	(16,264)	(7,050)
At 30 September 2023	1,873,910	1,890,174

The tangible fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the charity's freehold properties and other tangible assets. A decision was made to separate this fund from the general funds of the charity in recognition of the fact that the tangible fixed assets were 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, in order to meet future contingencies.

16 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	At 1 October 2022 £	New designations £	Utilised/ released £	At 30 September 2023 £
Retirement reserve	4,750,000	80,000	—	4,830,000
Financing and Congregational fund	1,091,000	—	(10,000)	1,081,000
	5,841,000	80,000	(10,000)	5,911,000

	At 1 October 2021 £	New designations £	Utilised £	At 30 September 2022 £
Retirement reserve	5,100,000	—	(350,000)	4,750,000
Financing and Congregational fund	1,100,000	—	(9,000)	1,091,000
	6,200,000	—	(359,000)	5,841,000

The **retirement reserve** consists of monies which the trustees have set aside in order to provide for the sisters as they grow older. The calculations are based on actuarial methods in order to provide £23,100 per annum for sisters over 65 years of age and £75,000 per annum for sisters over 80 years of age in order to provide for the increasing costs of specialised care. £4.83 million has been set aside for this purpose, whilst having regard to the resources actually available.

The **Financing and Congregational fund** has been established by the sisters to finance grants and donations including contributions to the Congregation's work overseas.

17 Connected charity and related party transactions

Transactions with the trustees are disclosed in note 8.

There are no other related party transactions requiring disclosure in the year to 30 September 2023 (2022: none).

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

The fund balances were represented by the following assets and liabilities:

	General fund £	Tangible fixed assets fund £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Fund balances at 30 September 2023:					
Tangible fixed assets	—	1,873,910	—		1,873,910
Investments	200,199	—	5,911,000		6,111,199
Net current assets	398,829	—	—	155	398,984
Total net assets	599,028	1,873,910	5,911,000	155	8,384,093

18 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

	General fund £	Tangible fixed assets fund £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Fund balances at 30 September 2022:					
Tangible fixed assets	—	1,890,174	—	—	1,890,174
Investments	295,598	—	5,841,000	—	6,136,598
Net current assets	232,433	—	—	250	232,683
Total net assets	528,031	1,890,174	5,841,000	250	8,259,455

The total unrealised gains at 30 September 2023 constitute revaluation of listed investments. The movements on the unrealised gains during the period were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Unrealised gains included above on investments		
Total unrealised gains at 30 September 2023	521,532	373,981
Reconciliation of movements in unrealised gains		
Unrealised gains at 1 October 2022	373,981	1,448,316
Less: in respect to disposals in the period	19,950	(270,795)
Add: net gains (losses) arising on revaluation in the period	127,601	(803,540)
Total unrealised gains at 30 September 2023	521,532	373,981

19 Ultimate control

The Provincial Superior of the Congregation by virtue of holding that office, is ex officio the sole member of the charity. The sole member is responsible for the appointment of the trustees.

20 Liability of the member

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