



Trustees' Report and Charity Commission return for 2025

This Trustees' Report represents the activities and results from the year January to December 2025. The document also includes plans for 2026/27 and a statement of ongoing viability. All parts of this Annual Return have been seen by the CPR Board of Trustees who have approved its content.

Aims

The Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome (CPR or Pilgrims to Rome) was founded in 2006, and in 2019 was granted charitable status as a CIO (registered charity number 1182135, company number CE016586). It is a non-denominational association whose objectives are:

- To encourage, inform, and assist those making a journey to Rome along historical pilgrimage routes on foot, bicycle or horseback.
- To promote the health and cultural benefits of journeying along ancient pilgrimage routes, learning about them and engaging with those who live along them.
- To collaborate with other organisations to support the maintenance and accessibility of pilgrimage routes to and from Rome.

In practice our focus is on the Via Francigena route from Canterbury to Rome and its recent northern and southern extensions, the Francigena Britannica from London to Canterbury and the Sud from Rome to Santa Maria di Leuca.

Membership

The CPR is a volunteer run membership charity that is funded from donations, membership fees and sales from our on-line shop. Our active membership at December 2025 was 298 (328 at December 2024), most of whom were from English-speaking countries: 53% of our members are UK based, 25% from the USA and Canada, 15% from Australia and New Zealand and 7% from other countries.

Activities in 2025

In February 2025 we held an on-line briefing on the VF for interested people in Australia and New Zealand attended by 59 people. Our annual conference in March 2025 was attended by 88 people and the on-line version a week later by 24 people. The in-person conference began with a guided walk of London's pilgrim sites between St Paul's and St George's Cathedral. Another on-line session for newly returned pilgrims was held in November 2025 and attended by over 30 people from UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Following formal approval at the European Association of the Via Francigena (EAVF) Conference in October 2024 of the Francigena Britannica as the official northern extension of the Via Francigena our focus has been on developing guides and signage to promote the route. We have produced waymark stickers and started placing them at locations where we have permission from site owners and authorities. We revised the guidebook to the route and published it in March 2026 as an e-book and paperback available through our on-line shop and we have revised the downloadable route maps available for free from our website. We were delighted to be awarded the EAVF Best Practice prize in 2025, given to us for the effectiveness of how we achieved the formal recognition of the Francigena Britannica.

CPR Members benefitted from four e-newsletters and one printed magazine in 2025 and CPR paid for the translation into English of the annual update of the French accommodation guide sold through the CPR shop. The booklet credential was revised and reprinted to include up to date information on pilgrim facilities in Rome. The CPR volunteer team handled an estimated 500 plus email enquiries during the year.

The volunteer team continued to build strong relationships with European partners (EAVF, FFVF) and UK partners (Canterbury and Dover Councils, British Pilgrimage Trust, Pilgrim Ways, Canterbury Cathedral, Southwark Cathedral and many local churches and groups on the Via Francigena). The CPR President attended the EAVF Conferences in Troyes, France and Rome. The President also attended several EAVF on-line meetings.

A major focus of 2025 has been maintaining our day to day arrangements for running the charity's key services. Three people are now trained to run Membership services but the company to whom we had outsourced fulfilment of our shop's orders went into administration in August so we have taken this in-house. There are now two volunteers able to carry out this task but as they are also trained in running the Membership services this does not represent an increase in our capacity.

Southwark Cathedral in London and Canterbury Cathedral now stock CPR Pilgrim Passports and badges. We have an arrangement with a CPR Member in the Irish Republic to despatch some shop merchandise to EU customers and a similar arrangement with a Member in South Africa to help pilgrims coming from that country.

Personnel and Governance

The CPR is a volunteer run charity but, with increasing world-wide interest in the Via Francigena (VF), the work load has continued to grow. The decision in 2022 to routinely engage a part-time, self-employed book-keeper has been highly successful and ensures the smooth running of the charity's finances. We have also engaged self-employed personnel and companies for specific pieces of work (eg website design, translation work, printing and design). In early 2024 we out-sourced the routine fulfilment of orders from our on-line shop to improve our capacity and reliability. This was successful until the company went into administration in August 2025. We have not found an affordable substitute and so the shop is currently being managed in-house by volunteer team members.

One trustee, Vince Rollason, resigned during the year due to changes in his personal circumstances. With no physical office base, the trustees and volunteers (Canterbury Rep, Membership Secretary, Assistant Membership Secretary and President) share all the day to day operational and governance responsibilities by working from homes across the UK and meeting at least twice a year in person and at least twice by Zoom. Sub-groups meet by telephone, Zoom or in-person to progress specific areas of work, including finance and on-going projects like the Francigena Britannica.

At December 2025, the trustees were: Nick Dunne (Chair), Brian Mooney (Vice Chair), Robert White (Treasurer), Alex Knox, David Matthews, Eamonn Mullally. Our volunteers were Carlo Laurenzi (President), Ciaran Prendergast (Membership Secretary), Tim Greig (Assistant Membership Secretary) and Julia Lewis (Canterbury Rep and Shop Manager). All four trustee meetings have been quorate.

Plans for 2026/27 and early achievements

A one-day pilgrimage along the Via Francigena in Kent in January attracted 28 members and newcomers and another is planned for May which will follow part of the Francigena Britannica. A two-day cycle ride along the full length of the Francigena Britannica is also planned for July.

The new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Sarah Mullally made a six-day walking pilgrimage from St Paul's in London to Canterbury in preparation for her installation as Archbishop on March 25. CPR Trustee Eamonn Mullally accompanied Dame Sarah on the pilgrimage and CPR President Carlo Laurenzi assisted the Archbishop's team in planning the route and joined her for the stages that followed the Francigena Britannica.

The 2026 Pilgrims to Rome Annual Conference on March 14 was once again held at St George's Cathedral in south London. A total of 53 people attended, many of whom also took part in a guided walk "The Southwark Pilgrim Adventure" exploring London's pilgrim connections between Southwark Cathedral at London Bridge and St George's Cathedral near Waterloo station. The walk was led by Pilgrims to Rome trustee Eamonn Mullally, an official City of London tour guide whose knowledge gave fresh insights into the pilgrim history of these busy city streets. The theme of the Conference itself was "The Transformative Experience of Pilgrimage" and our two keynote speakers, Rev'd Dr Robert Wainwright, chaplain and Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, and Dr Victoria Field, a poet living in Canterbury, explored how silence, simplicity and effort on the Via Francigena deepened the spirituality of their journeys.

Our new guide to the Francigena Britannica was launched at the conference and we are recruiting volunteers to take responsibility for specific sections of the route to waymark it and develop local contacts to engage with pilgrims along the way.

The EAVF will hold a conference in Canterbury in 2027 and we will be playing an active role in its planning and delivery.

We will continue to update information on the website and we will be prudent with our finances and manage all our activities within the funds that we have.

Management of Risks

Although pilgrim numbers on the VF are rising and our shop sales are steady, our membership has declined from 328 in December 2024 to 298 in December 2025. By March 31, 2026 it was 269. Conference attendance has also declined (103 in 2024, 88 in 2025, 53 in 2026) so, while numbers are still sufficiently strong to make the Confraternity a viable community of interest these downward trends are of concern and being monitored closely.

The risk of our volunteer capacity being unable to cope with routine work-loads and therefore being unable to sustain our core services and income through shop sales and membership is being managed by greater use of outsourcing to paid agents on affordable terms and scrutiny of project proposals for costs and affordability. We also continue to seek to strengthen arrangements to cover key tasks should individual volunteers/trustees become unavailable. Two potential new trustees

with excellent networks of contacts and a deep commitment to pilgrimage have been approached to join the Board at the April 2026 AGM

Statement of Viability

The charity's income was steady at £20,051 in 2025 (compared to £20,719 in 2024) despite a drop in membership subs and shop sales which was offset by two unexpected significant donations (£1,000 and £439) and a third of £3,000 restricted for use in future years. Expenditure dropped to £16,191 (£21,266 in 2024). This resulted in an end of year surplus of £3,860 (deficit in 2024 of £507; 2023 of £4,109). Charity funds in reserve therefore rose to £14,194 at December 31, 2025 (£7,279 at December 31, 2024). Trustees have set a reserves policy of having between 6 and 12 months of essential core operating costs in reserve to protect against sudden significant income loss and ensure that the charity's basic infrastructure commitments can be fulfilled. Current reserves are the equivalent of 14 months of these essential operating costs and trustees expect that planned expenditure for 2026 will reduce these through the year to remain within our reserves policy.

The trustees are confident of the charity's future viability.

Nick Dunne

Chair of Trustees

Approved by Trustees at the AGM on 18 April 2026

Balance Sheet

Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome As at 31 December 2025

31 DEC 2025

Current Assets

Cash at bank and in hand

Metro bank	13,091.86
Total Cash at bank and in hand	13,091.86

Debtors	350.00
Total Current Assets	13,441.86

Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

Accrued income	1,642.11
Creditors	555.72
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2,197.83

Net Current Assets (Liabilities)	11,244.03
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Total Assets less Current Liabilities	11,244.03
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Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

Prepayments	(200.00)
Total Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(200.00)

Net Assets	11,444.03
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Capital and Reserves

Current Year Earnings	3,860.71
Retained Income	7,583.32
Total Capital and Reserves	11,444.03

Income Statement

Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome
For the year ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2025 CPR BUDGET 2025
INCOME		
INCOME: Donations	1,859.84	-
INCOME: Conference & Events Income	807.86	500.00
INCOME: Gift Aid	719.20	500.00
INCOME: Postage refund on sales	2,913.28	5,000.00
INCOME: Shop sales:	6,832.65	9,000.00
INCOME: Wholesale Shop sales - Canterbury Cathedral	1,361.00	830.00
INCOME: Subscriptions	5,558.00	5,500.00
Total INCOME	20,051.83	21,330.00
Total Income	20,051.83	21,330.00
CORE FIXED EXPENSES		
CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES GROUP A		
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES: Accounting software	588.75	547.00
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES: Bookkeeping & accounting	1,590.14	2,000.00
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES: Insurances	422.36	400.00
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES: Mail Chimp, Zoom, Ordinance Survey fees	313.03	400.00
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES: Paypal, stripe, conditional logic payment system fees	577.83	1,000.00
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES: Web Suport, Hosting & Maint By BD	468.00	468.00
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES: Paid Plug ins - WooCommerce, Ninja Forms	245.71	300.00
1A. CORE FIXED EXPENSES (A): Contingency for Inflation at 3%	-	200.00
Total CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES GROUP A	4,205.82	5,315.00
CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES GROUP B		
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Annual conference exps	764.23	1,000.00
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: FFVF booklet and translation	1,473.97	1,470.00
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Incidental exps	-	150.00
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Postage (New memberships and incidental postage)	661.29	800.00
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Postage sales	2,890.52	5,000.00
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Shop stock	1,962.34	1,500.00
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Travel and Accommodation	147.99	250.00
2B.CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Contingency for Inflation 3%	-	465.00
Total CORE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES GROUP B	7,900.34	10,635.00
CREATIVE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES		
3. CREATIVE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: AEVF Liason	-	100.00
3. CREATIVE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Magazine	1,992.00	2,500.00
3. CREATIVE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Francigena Britannica	1,363.21	1,800.00
3. CREATIVE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: Development Consultancy	729.75	2,000.00
Total CREATIVE OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	4,084.96	6,400.00
Total Expenditure	16,191.12	22,350.00

Income Statement

P&L CPR TEMPLATE BUDGET

	2025	2025 CPR BUDGET 2025
*	3,860.71	(1,020.00)
*	3,860.71	(1,020.00)
Surplus Deficit	3,860.71	(1,020.00)