



Pilgrim

Annual Report 2023

Trustees' report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

Registered Charity No. 1188594

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Contents

Charity Information	1
Trustees' Annual Report	3 - 19
Independent Examiner's Report	20
Statement of Financial Activities	21
Balance Sheet	22
Statement of Cash Flows	23
Notes to the Financial Statements	27-29

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity number:	1188594
Trustees:	Mohammed Shabbir Hassan (Chair) Khatija Sacranie Omar Salha
Executive Management Team:	Zain Luqman Miah (CEO) Afshanara Khanom (Finance Director)
Registered Office:	83 Hastings Street Luton LU1 5DN
Independent Examiner:	Moore Kingston Smith LLP 9 Appold Street London EC2A 2AP
Bankers:	Metro Bank One Southampton Row London WC1B 5HA



Chair of Trustees Statement

As Chair of Trustees, it is my privilege to reflect on a year of notable progress and transformation at Pilgrim. 2023 has been a year of both consolidation and expansion, as we have strategically aligned our efforts to ensure that we continue to provide invaluable support to pilgrims worldwide. Our commitment to governance, financial oversight, and strategic direction has never been stronger, and this is reflected in the positive outcomes we have achieved.

Our organisation started the year on solid financial ground, and through careful planning and execution, we have doubled our reserves by year-end. This financial stability not only safeguards our future but also empowers us to invest in initiatives that directly impact our beneficiaries. The continued success of our fundraising efforts have not only raised substantial funds but have also increased our visibility and engagement within the community.

Our partnerships, such as the ongoing collaboration with Al Isharah, exemplify our commitment to inclusivity and service. The Umrah for the Deaf project stands as a testament to what can be achieved when organisations work together towards a common goal. It is through such initiatives that we are able to extend our reach and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Looking ahead, we are focused on sustaining this momentum. The upcoming launch of Pilgrim.co V4, with its enhanced user experience and AI integration, represents our forward-thinking approach and commitment to innovation. Furthermore, our plans for long-term investments and expanded marketing efforts, will ensure that we continue to grow and thrive in the years to come.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my fellow trustees, our dedicated team, volunteers, and supporters. Your unwavering commitment has been the cornerstone of our success. Together, we will continue to build on the strong foundation we have laid, ensuring that Pilgrim remains a beacon of hope and guidance for all those embarking on their spiritual journeys.

**Warm regards,
Shabbir Hassan**



Chief executives statement

2023 has been a pivotal year for Pilgrim, marked by significant milestones and a clear focus on our mission to empower and support pilgrims worldwide. As CEO, I am proud to lead an organisation that not only adapts to changing circumstances but also proactively seeks opportunities to expand its impact.

This year, our financial performance has been robust, with a doubling of our reserves by year-end. This achievement is a direct result of strategic financial management and the success of our key fundraising initiatives. These efforts have not only bolstered our financial health but have also strengthened our community ties and enhanced our ability to serve our beneficiaries.

Our partnership with Al Isharah for the Umrah for the Deaf project has been a highlight of the year. By providing substantial financial support and resources, we have enabled members of the Deaf community to experience the transformative journey of Umrah. This project exemplifies our commitment to inclusivity and our dedication to making pilgrimage accessible to all.

I am pleased to say that we have printed our book, “A Pilgrim's Prayer,” we wanted to create a companion that merges the beauty of du‘ā to the transformative journey of Pilgrimage. We hope this book serves as a roadmap of prayers as you journey on in fulfilling one of the greatest obligations to your lord.

Looking forward, we are excited about the future. The upcoming launch of Pilgrim.co V4, with its focus on user experience and AI integration, will revolutionise how we engage with our users and provide them with the resources they need. Our ongoing investments in marketing and property acquisition are strategic moves that will secure our financial future and allow us to continue expanding our services.

I am deeply grateful to our team, whose dedication and hard work have been the driving force behind our success. I also want to thank our trustees for their guidance and support, and our donors and partners for their continued trust and collaboration. Together, we have made great strides, and I am confident that we will continue to achieve even greater things in the years to come.

**Zain Luqman Miah,
Chief Executive Officer**

About Pilgrim

The Trustees of Pilgrim are pleased to present their annual report, accompanied by the independently examined financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2023. This report includes reference and administrative details found on page one, which are integral to this document. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with current statutory requirements, the charity's governing documents, and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Pilgrim is dedicated to advancing the Islamic faith, religious practices, and education for the benefit of the public throughout England and Wales. Our work fosters religious harmony by promoting understanding and respect among different faith communities. Additionally, we are committed to relieving those in need due to factors such as youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship, or other disadvantages by providing support for religious pilgrimages.

In planning our activities, the Trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, ensuring that all our initiatives contribute meaningfully to our stated objectives. The Trustees are confident that Pilgrim efforts continue to serve the public good, in line with our mission.

As we review the year 2023, we are pleased to present this comprehensive report detailing the activities, achievements, and financial performance of Pilgrim. This year has been one of considerable progress and strategic development, allowing us to expand our impact and continue fulfilling our mission to support pilgrims worldwide. Our work this year has been underpinned by careful financial management, innovative projects, and a commitment to operational excellence.

The core objectives of Pilgrim remain focused on providing essential services and educational resources to pilgrims. In 2023, we continued to build on our past successes with several key initiatives, which includes our;

- Digital Strategy
- Rebuild of Pilgrim.co
- Umrah Fund- Umrah for the Deaf
- Pilgrim Knowledge
 - *Dua Books*
 - *Ziyarah Guides*

Digital Strategy

The year 2023 was pivotal for Pilgrim as we continued to refine our digital strategy, focusing on enhancing our organic search performance and expanding our online presence. Our aim is to ensure that Pilgrim remains competitive in the digital space while continuing to effectively serve our community.

In 2023, Pilgrim's website experienced significant growth in organic traffic. The number of keywords ranked in search engine results increased from 13,199 in 2022 to 25,145 in 2023, marking a 90% growth. This surge in visibility is a direct reflection of our successful SEO efforts. Specifically, keywords ranked in positions 1 to 3 saw a 137% increase, growing from 458 to 1,088, while those in positions 4 to 10 improved by 119%, and keywords ranked 11 to 20 increased by 63%. These improvements in keyword rankings have significantly boosted our organic traffic, as higher rankings typically result in more clicks and visits.

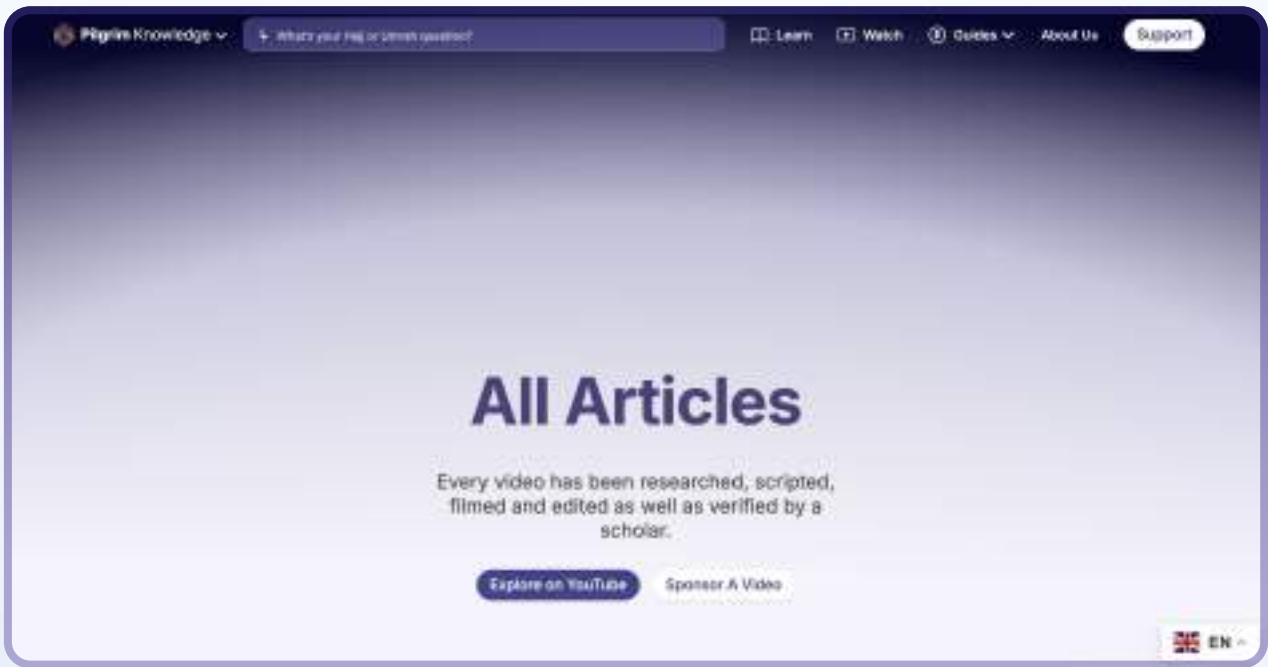
The financial impact of this growth is also noteworthy. The monthly value of our organic traffic in 2023 ranged from £4,835 to £10,431, reflecting the influence of seasonal trends, content updates, and targeted marketing campaigns. Over the year, the estimated value of our organic traffic totalled between £58,031 and £125,152, demonstrating the substantial return on investment from our SEO activities.

A small subset of pages accounted for a significant portion of our organic traffic. Notably, the "List of 10 Imams of Masjid Al Haram" page was the top performer, contributing 3.16% of total sessions. Other key pages focusing on various religious topics each contributed between 1.69% and 2.72% of sessions. While the strong performance of these pages underscores the high level of user interest in specific content areas, it also highlights the need for a broader content strategy to ensure a more diversified traffic source, reducing reliance on a limited number of pages.



In 2023, we implemented several key initiatives to enhance our digital presence. Our SEO optimisation efforts included improving on-page SEO by refining meta titles, descriptions, header tags, and internal linking structures. These efforts were directly correlated with the improvements in our keyword rankings. Additionally, we conducted comprehensive technical SEO audits to address issues such as site speed, mobile responsiveness, and crawl errors. These improvements not only boosted our search engine rankings but also enhanced the overall user experience, leading to longer session durations and lower bounce rates.

Our content strategy in 2023 prioritised the creation of high-quality, well-researched articles that provide genuine value to our readers. This focus on quality over quantity has been particularly effective in driving user engagement and establishing Pilgrim as a trusted source of information. Regular updates to existing content were crucial in maintaining and improving our search rankings, ensuring that these pages continued to attract significant traffic.

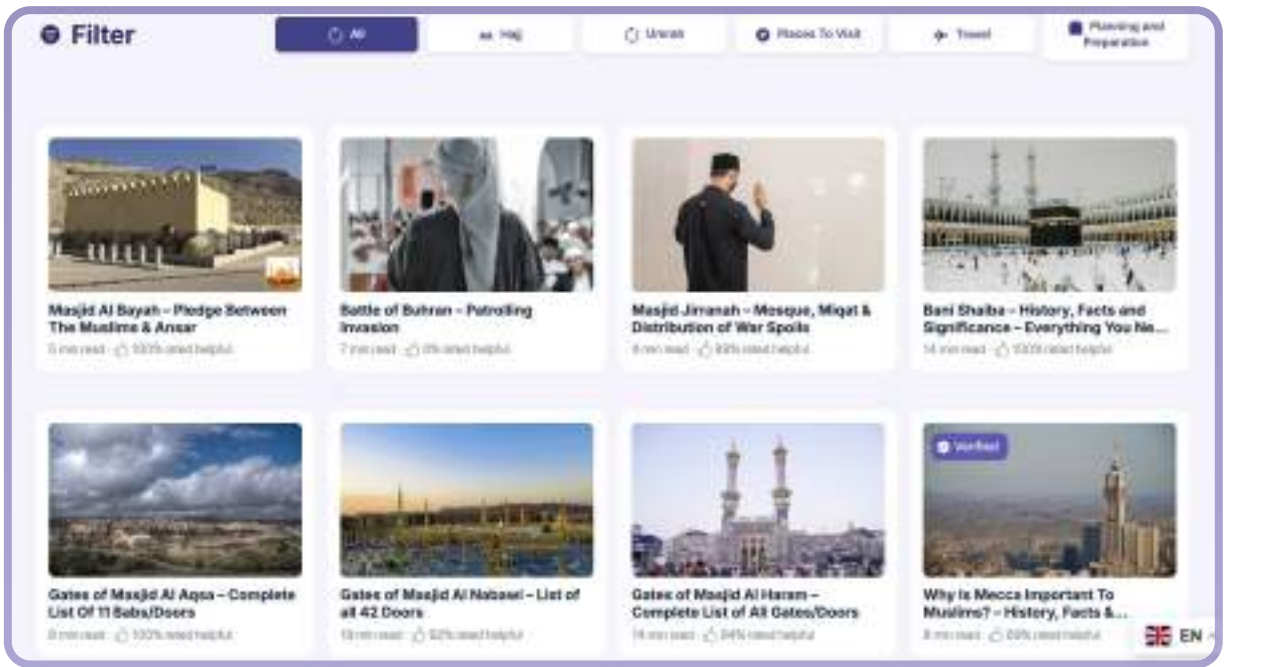


Furthermore, our backlink strategy played a vital role in enhancing our domain authority and search engine rankings. We focused on acquiring high-quality backlinks from reputable, high-authority domains and established strategic partnerships with industry influencers and thought leaders. These collaborations expanded our reach and introduced Pilgrim to new audiences, further solidifying our online presence.

Despite our successes, we faced a number of challenges in 2023. Our organic traffic exhibited some volatility, particularly during off-peak seasons. While seasonal fluctuations are expected, this variability underscores the need for a more robust strategy to maintain steady traffic throughout the year. In addition, despite the increase in organic traffic, our conversion rates did not meet expectations. This shortfall may be due to several factors, including the effectiveness of our call-to-action (CTA) strategies and the alignment of landing page content with user intent. Addressing these issues will require a more granular approach to conversion rate optimisation (CRO), involving A/B testing, improved CTA design, and more personalised user experiences.

Another challenge was our over-reliance on top-performing pages, which, while driving significant traffic, created a vulnerability should these pages experience a drop in rankings or engagement. Expanding our content strategy to diversify traffic sources is critical for long-term stability.

Pilgrim has made substantial progress in enhancing its organic traffic performance in 2023, driven by targeted SEO practices, strategic content initiatives, and robust backlink strategies. Addressing challenges such as traffic volatility, conversion optimization, and content dependency will be essential for ensuring sustained growth. This comprehensive overview is designed to keep trustees informed of the key developments and strategic directions of our digital initiatives, with further details and in-depth data available upon request.



In 2023, Pilgrim focused on enriching the content available on our platforms by embedding additional information tags within our articles and expanding our guides for Hajj and Umrah. The integration of these features was driven by our commitment to providing our users with a more interactive and informative experience, ensuring that they have access to relevant, concise, and useful information as they engage with our content.

The additional information tags are strategically placed within articles to enhance the reader's understanding by providing contextually relevant facts, comments, tips, and warnings. These tags have been meticulously categorised into various types, each serving a specific purpose. For instance, comment tags offer reflective insights on the topics discussed, such as the symbolic significance of Sa'ee, while information tags deliver factual details that enrich the reader's knowledge, like the historical construction timeline of Masjid al Nabawi. Success tags highlight positive anecdotes or religious teachings, as seen in the references to the charitable acts of Abu Talha (RA), while tips provide practical advice, and warnings alert readers to potential pitfalls, such as the consequences of violating the rules of Ihram during Hajj.

★ "The viewing holes in the Rawdah chamber are aligned to the faces of the inhabitants of the graves with the largest hole on the left directly faces the noble face of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)"

Rawdah Mubarak is also known as Riyad Al-Jannah (Garden of Paradise). Rawdah Mubarak holds great significance in Islam. The Messenger (PBUH) of Allah SWT said, "The area between my house and my pulpit is one of the gardens of Paradise." [Sahih Bukhari]

Footwear

Pilgrims are required to remove regular shoes or socks during Ihram. Instead, they typically wear simple sandals or go barefoot as a symbol of humility and equality.



As well as avoiding shoes, male Pilgrims should not cover their ankles by wearing socks or having an unnecessarily long Ihram garment.

The integration of these additional information tags across 196 articles has not only made the content more engaging and easier to digest but has also catered to the diverse informational needs of our audience. This development reflects our broader strategy of enhancing content accessibility and relevance, which is central to our mission of supporting pilgrims in their spiritual journey.

In parallel, Pilgrim also launched new Hajj and Umrah guides designed to provide comprehensive and user-friendly resources for pilgrims. These guides, which include detailed sections on preparation, travel, and a step-by-step breakdown of the pilgrimage rituals, are structured to serve both as overviews and as detailed instructional manuals. The dual-format approach allows users to either quickly grasp the overall process or dive deep into specific aspects of the pilgrimage, depending on their needs.

This flexibility is particularly important given the diverse backgrounds and varying levels of experience among our users. The guides have been well-received, with the Hajj and Umrah versions currently live, and additional guides for Makkah, Madinah, and women-specific pilgrimage needs planned for release.

Overview ☒ step-by-step guide

Umrah Guide

Take the first step of the holiest journey

Share   



Overview ☐ step-by-step guide

Hajj Guide

The greatest journey on Earth

Share   

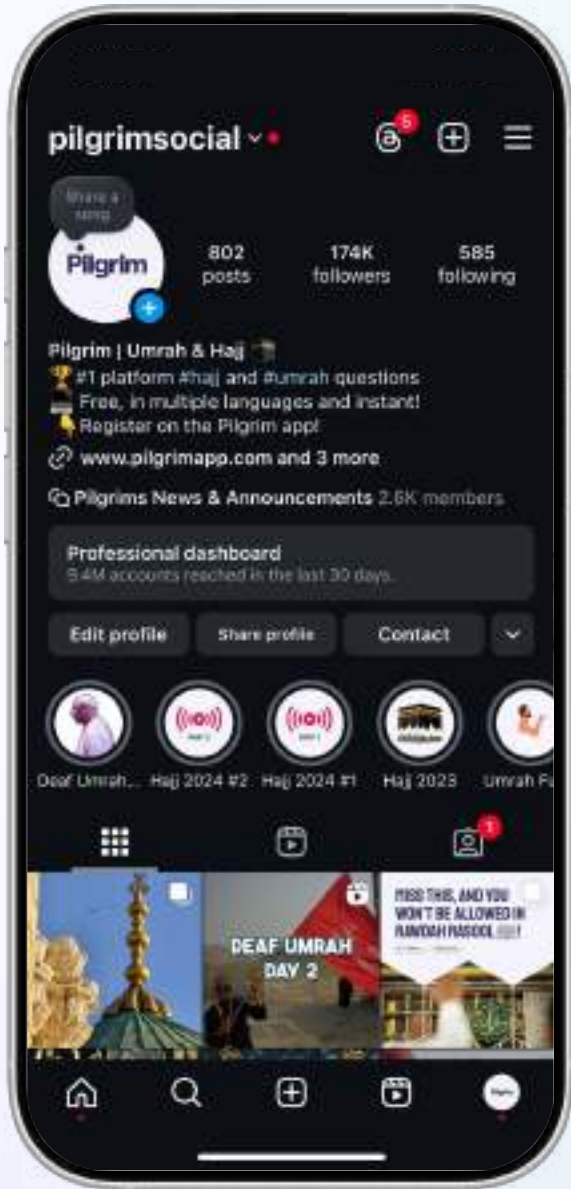


Social Media Growth

Our strategic objectives for social media growth in 2023 focused on increasing our follower base, enhancing engagement, and consistently delivering valuable content that aligns with our mission. By the end of December 2023, we had successfully grown our Instagram follower count to 39,626, an increase of 15,440 followers from August 1, 2023. This significant growth reflects our strong and consistent presence, which has been driven by a clear strategy to maintain a brand that resonates deeply with our audience.

Our overarching goal is to reach 100,000 followers by June 2024. This ambitious target is grounded in our commitment to providing value and education through our content. We have also prioritised improving our engagement with the audience by actively replying to direct messages and comments, thereby fostering a more interactive and responsive community. Consistency in posting has been key to maintaining our relevance, and we plan to continue this practice to ensure our brand stays impactful and top-of-mind.

From August 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, we observed substantial increases in several key performance metrics. During this period, our Instagram impressions reached a staggering 10.06 million, marking a 215% increase from the previous period, which recorded 3.19 million impressions. This dramatic rise in impressions indicates that our content is reaching a much broader audience, enhancing our visibility and impact.



Similarly, our reach—the number of unique accounts that have seen any of our posts during the specified date range—also saw significant growth. From August to December 2023, our reach expanded to 8.63 million, a 266% increase from the previous period's 2.63 million. These metrics underscore the effectiveness of our content strategy in not only attracting new followers but also in ensuring our posts are widely seen and engaged with.

Our activity on Instagram was robust during this period, with 123 new posts being made, leading to 79,939 profile visits. This activity level reflects our commitment to maintaining a strong and active presence on social media, which has been crucial to our growth and engagement efforts.

Our content strategy for 2023 emphasised consistency and relevance, with a posting frequency of four carousel posts, two image posts, and four reels per week. This approach ensured a steady stream of content that kept our audience engaged and informed.



The success of our content can be seen in our top-performing posts between August and December 2023. The standout post, titled "These 4 things are forbidden in Makkah," reached 496,522 people, garnered 28,906 likes, and received 730 comments. This post alone brought in 915 new followers, demonstrating the power of culturally and spiritually relevant content.



Another extraordinarily successful post was a Hadith, which reached 95,079 people, received 16,311 likes, and attracted 293 new followers. This post's performance highlights the importance of sharing content that resonates with our audience's spiritual and religious interests.



Our third top-performing post, titled "Don't let them misguide you," reached 63,982 people, garnered 10,210 likes, and received 56 comments, resulting in 228 new followers. The success of these posts illustrates the effectiveness of our content in driving both engagement and follower growth.

Video content, particularly reels, has been a significant driver of our social media success. Between August and December 2023, nine of our reels surpassed 1 million views, with the top-performing reel reaching an impressive 15.5 million views. This reel alone contributed to 10,871 new followers, underscoring the powerful impact of video content in expanding our reach and engaging our audience.

The performance of our reels highlights the importance of incorporating dynamic and visually engaging content into our social media strategy. As we move into 2024, we will continue to leverage video content to further enhance our engagement and growth.

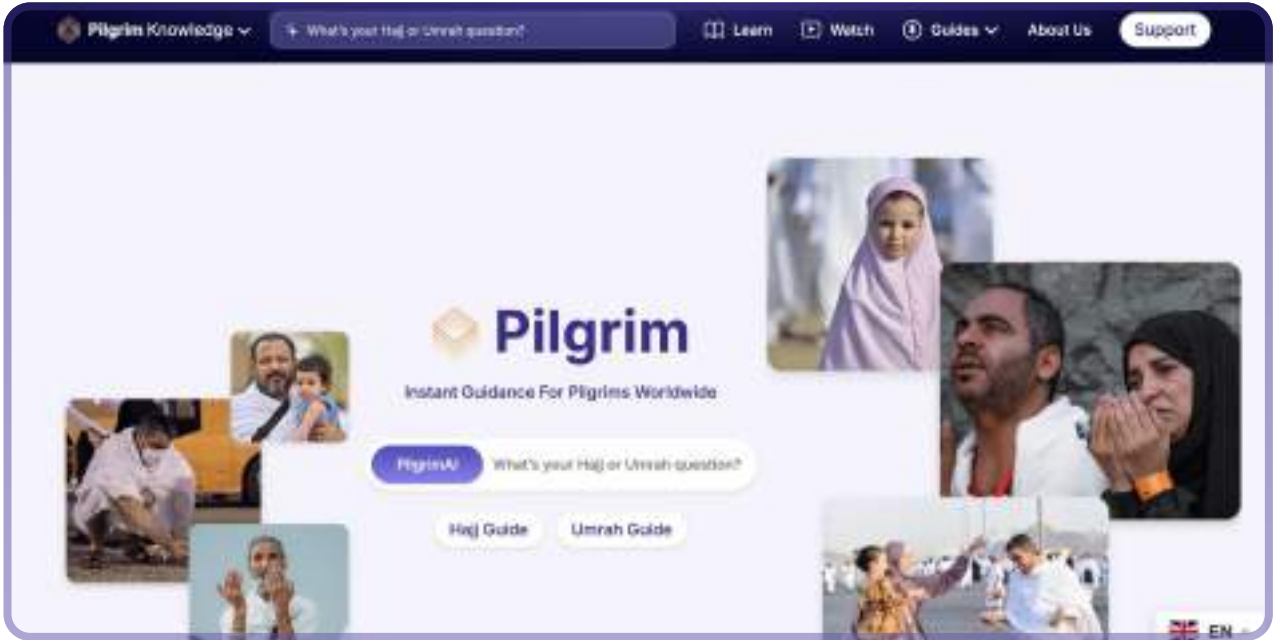
Video content, particularly reels, has been a significant driver of our social media success. Between August and December 2023, nine of our reels surpassed 1 million views, with the top-performing reel reaching an impressive 15.5 million views. This reel alone contributed to 10,871 new followers, underscoring the powerful impact of video content in expanding our reach and engaging our audience.

The performance of our reels highlights the importance of incorporating dynamic and visually engaging content into our social media strategy. As we move into 2024, we will continue to leverage video content to further enhance our engagement and growth.



Rebuild of Pilgrim.co

The primary goal of the Pilgrim.co rebuild was to modernise the website, ensuring it meets contemporary user expectations by enhancing usability, functionality, and content relevance. This project aimed to create a platform that not only reflects the cultural significance of pilgrimage but also provides an intuitive and engaging user experience. The rebuild introduced a modern, culturally resonant design aesthetic, combined with an intuitive user interface that facilitates easy navigation and consistent branding. The site now features a fully responsive design, ensuring seamless functionality across various devices, from desktops to smartphones.



Significant functionality upgrades were implemented to improve user interaction and engagement. Notable additions include an interactive AI-Chatbot that provides real-time assistance to users, helping them navigate the website and find relevant information quickly. The AI Video Summariser enhances the accessibility of YouTube content by offering concise video summaries, allowing users to grasp key information without watching entire videos. Additionally, an online visa checker was introduced, enabling users to check visa eligibility and requirements directly from the website. Integration with a CRM system via WordPress has streamlined data collection and analysis, enabling more informed decision-making and personalised user experiences. The Pilgrim.co rebuild was executed in four phases, starting with initial design and conceptualization, followed by the development of core functionalities and integration of AI tools. After beta testing and feedback collection, the project concluded with final adjustments, mobile optimisation, and live deployment in November 2023.

Umrah Fund- Umrah for the Deaf

In collaboration with Pilgrim, Al Isharah organised an Umrah trip from November 8th to 19th, 2023, specifically designed for Deaf Muslims. This partnership aimed to provide Deaf participants with the spiritual experience of Umrah while ensuring full accessibility through BSL interpretation and other support services.

Al Isharah is the UK's leading Islamic Deaf charity, dedicated to fostering education, inclusion, and equality for the Deaf Muslim community. Established in 2008, Al Isharah has been a pioneer in making Islamic teachings accessible to Deaf individuals through various services, including education, social inclusion, pastoral support, and British Sign Language (BSL) translations of religious content. Their mission is to ensure that Deaf Muslims can fully engage with their faith, from understanding the basics of Islam to performing the essential rituals of worship.



Key Deliverables of the Partnership:

BSL Interpretation: BSL interpreters were provided both pre-trip and during the Umrah, ensuring that Deaf participants could fully engage with the religious activities.

Educational Seminars: Four pre-trip seminars were conducted to educate participants on Umrah rituals in BSL.

Financial Support: The Sponsorship from Pilgrim subsidised the trip for 17 participants, covering costs like travel, accommodation, and additional support staff.

Logistical Management: Al Isharah handled all logistical aspects of the trip, including transportation, accommodation, and spiritual sessions, ensuring a smooth experience for the participants.

Case Studies:

ABDUL RAZZAK'S STORY

Abdul Razzak, a 63-year old man, a profoundly Deaf BSL user, grappling with the challenges of living with Cerebral Palsy and contending with Arthritis. Navigating the intricacies of life with multiple conditions often left him feeling isolated and disconnected. However, the prospect of undertaking the sacred pilgrimage of Umrah with Al Isharah ignited a spark of hope within him. The significance of this journey extended far beyond the spiritual realm; it was a testament to the power of accessibility. "We were able to recite in BSL during tawaf." "I'm really happy with going to Umrah and to see the Ka'bah so beautiful and big.



Al Isharah helped me and other deaf people. I really enjoyed walking around with the group and I'm happy there was a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter that helped us understand what to say. We were able to recite in BSL during tawaf. It made me really happy, refreshed and gave me peace. I really want to thank Al Isharah for helping me all around. It's really good having them there and I'm happy. | I want to thank Pilgrim. | I want to thank everyone." -A.Razzak "I want to thank Pilgrim."

ADAM & HAWA'S STORY

Having met many Muslims in his life, Adam (a profoundly Deaf BSL user) realised he wanted to become Muslim. He took his shahada (testimony of faith) in BSL and became Muslim in 2019, with Al Isharah's assistance. Prior to becoming Muslim, Adam was a Deaf rapper. Since his conversion, Adam has been on a journey finding his faith. As with many reverts to Islam, the transition into following an Islamic lifestyle was especially difficult.



Adam subsequently met Safya, who is also profoundly Deaf. After his marriage to Safiya in 2020, Adam found his new sense of identity conflicting with his old lifestyle. In the years that followed, conflicting values and the lack of access to Islam made his life and his marriage difficult. These difficulties led him to question his Islamic identity. “I was on the verge of losing my Iman.” “I was on the verge of losing my Iman. This Umrah couldn’t have come at a more ideal time. There were so many things I was questioning up until recently because my life had come to a crossroad. Coming here, seeing the Ka'bah, understanding what the Prophet had to do, made me feel like a true believer. I understood everything because it was in BSL. I came here with my wife who is also Deaf. For her, this was the most spiritually uplifting experience and we've both become closer now, Alhamdulillah. I only work part time, so had Pilgrim not supported us, it wouldn't have been possible” - Adam Taylor “I cried to Allah for all the people that made this happen.” “Alhamdulillah for being given the opportunity to fulfil this Umrah. I didn't think this was something I would be able to do anytime soon. This has really lifted my iman and allowed me to get closer to Allah. I cried to Allah for all the people that made this happen.” - Safya Hassan (Hawa)

AYSBULLAH & MATEULLAH'S STORY

Mateullah and Asybullah are brothers who sought Asylum in the UK after fleeing the conflict in Afghanistan. Life was especially difficult for Asybullah in Afghanistan who had little to no language growing up as a Deaf child. He found himself neglected and even ostracised at times. Amidst a war and amongst cultures that are yet to fully grasp how to make provisions for Deaf people, Asybullah found support only through select family members, who themselves felt overwhelmed at times.



In the UK, Asybullah found a sense of belonging with the Deaf Muslims in social and religious settings organised by Al Isharah. He also started to grasp the basics of Islam through language he began to acquire. Mateullah, being the hearing carer of Asybullah understands more than others the unique needs of his brother. “I was really worried about him understanding Islam. Alhamdulillah since he's found Al Isharah and has come to this guided Deaf Umrah, he has more Muslim friends now. From the very beginning of putting the ihram on, there were instructions on what Umrah is about and how to do it. This is something I would not have been able to translate to my brother or at all explain to him.” “Throughout this whole experience, I have seen that he has learned so much about Islam, which is a very important part that I wanted to play in his life. To teach him Islam and make sure he has got a strong faith in Allah. I felt elated the other day when he asked me, "What is Lord?" That's the first time he asked me anything about Islam.” - Mateullah Sameullakh

Cost Breakdown and Financial Overview

Pilgrim awarded a total of £20,150 to fund the initiative. The costs were allocated across various aspects of the trip:

Pre-Trip Training Seminars: actual spend of £2,770 resulting in a slight overspend.

BSL Interpreters & Staff: actual costs remaining within budget.

Subsidy for Deaf Pilgrims: actual costs coming in slightly under budget.

Accommodation & Travel Expenses: actual spend of £11,100, leading to a small overspend.

Overall, the project saw a minor overspend of £460 which was covered by Al Isharah.

Conclusion

The collaboration between Al Isharah and Pilgrim successfully facilitated a transformative experience for Deaf Muslims, enabling them to participate in Umrah with full accessibility. This initiative highlights the importance of inclusive spiritual opportunities and the power of strategic partnerships in achieving such goals.

Gratitude

Al Isharah extends its deepest gratitude to Pilgrim and all supporters who contributed to this life-changing journey. The positive outcomes of this initiative will undoubtedly inspire further efforts to support the Deaf Muslim community.

May Allah reward everyone involved and guide us to continue serving our community with excellence. Ameen

Pilgrim Knowledge

Since its inception in 2019, Pilgrim Knowledge has been dedicated to answering the most pressing questions pilgrims face. This year, we reached over 3 million pilgrims, with our resources expanding to include more than 300 educational videos, two in-depth courses, site guides, and publications. Our content is designed to cater to pilgrims who seek clear, simple, and spiritually enriching information as they prepare for their journeys.

Ziyarah Guides Project

Our Ziyarah Guides for Makkah, Madinah, and Jerusalem have garnered global recognition. These guides, which have been downloaded over 2,500 times, are now being expanded with translations into multiple languages, including Bangla, Arabic, French, and Urdu. We are redesigning these guides to improve accessibility and aim to distribute over 10,000 copies, both digitally and physically, by 2025.

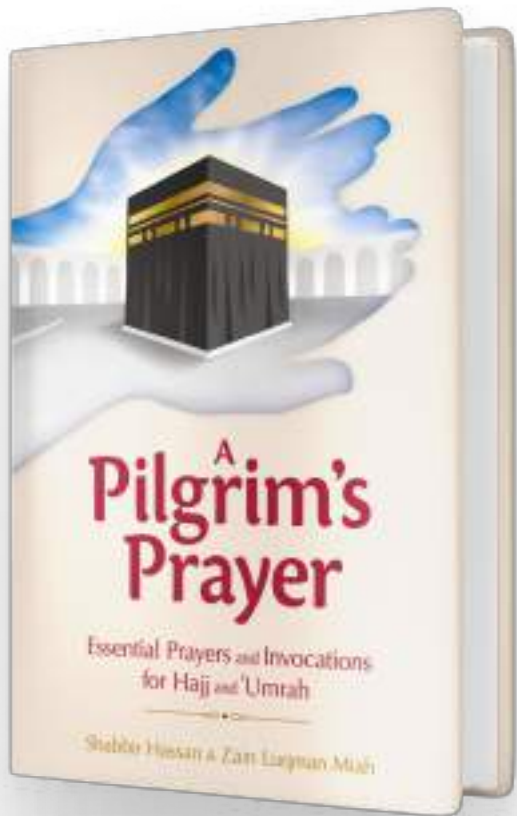


Dua book

In 2017, with the permission of Allah, we made the intention of wanting to help every Muslim respond to the call of Prophet Ibrahim, peace and blessings be upon him. Today, we are thankful that over 100,000 Muslims benefit from our content every month.

Alongside the evergreen collection of short videos and articles we have already produced, we wanted to create a companion that merges the beauty of du'ā to the transformative journey of Pilgrimage. We hope this book serves as a road-map of prayers as you journey on in fulfilling one of the greatest obligations to your lord.

Our dearest thanks to Shaykh Shams Ad Duha, Shaykh Abul Barakat Hassan (Mishkat), Ustadh Farhan Mahmood, Salah Sharieff from Wordsmiths Limited, Jannah Haque and Pilgrim team members Mohammed Nur and Adel Chowdhury for their unwavering support in helping us get this book completed.



Future Plan for 2024

Looking ahead to 2024, we intend to prioritise content diversification to broaden our appeal and engage a wider audience. To achieve this, we plan to introduce new content formats such as videos, infographics, and interactive tools, which will cater to varying user preferences and help reduce our overall bounce rate.

Additionally, by identifying and capitalising on emerging trends within our industry, we aim to capture new audiences and establish Pilgrim as a leader in these areas.

We will also implement advanced SEO strategies to improve our visibility in search engine results. Initiatives such as schema markup and AI-driven optimisation will enhance how our content is displayed, providing a competitive edge. Furthermore, improving the mobile user experience through a mobile-first approach and personalising user interactions will be vital as we cater to our growing mobile audience.

Investing in advanced analytics tools will play a central role in our strategy for continuous improvement. By conducting regular monitoring and A/B testing, we aim to stay ahead in a competitive market. Leveraging data-driven insights will guide our decisions, ensuring sustained growth and allowing us to build on the successes of 2023.

Data-driven development will remain at the heart of our efforts, ensuring that new features and services align closely with user needs and behaviours. By integrating advanced analytics platforms and CRM tools, we can better tailor content and features to meet user expectations, driving engagement and satisfaction. Expanding the use of AI within our platforms will further enhance personalisation, improve user engagement insights, and optimise our content delivery strategies.

To support the growing demands on our platforms, we will invest in upgrading our technical infrastructure. This will involve adopting cloud-based solutions for scalability, implementing enhanced security measures to protect user data, and streamlining our backend systems to enable continuous innovation. As part of our growth strategy, we also aim to explore partnerships and collaborations to extend Pilgrim's reach globally. Special attention will be given to underserved regions, ensuring our platforms remain accessible and relevant to a diverse audience.

Expanding our guide offerings will remain a key focus in 2024. By mid-year, we plan to launch new guides for Makkah, Madinah, and women pilgrims. These additions will not only provide essential information but will also incorporate user feedback to address evolving needs. This initiative aligns with our commitment to offering valuable, practical resources to our audience.

Another priority for 2024 is to strengthen our social media presence. Our goal is to grow our Instagram following to 100,000 by June, achieved through consistent posting, valuable content, and improved responsiveness to direct messages and comments. Introducing more interactive and user-generated content will help foster a sense of community and deepen audience engagement.

Reflecting on 2023, it was a year of growth and innovation for Pilgrim. Building on the foundations established, we are committed to enhancing the digital pilgrimage experience through user-centric design, innovative solutions, and data-driven decision-making. By continuing to evolve and expand our offerings, we aim to remain a trusted and valuable companion for pilgrims worldwide, delivering an unparalleled digital experience that meets the diverse needs of our community.



Fundraising and Income Generation

Ramadan Referrals

Ramadan Referrals proved to be a pivotal fundraising period for our faith-based charity as we tapped into the generosity and charitable spirit of Muslims worldwide during this sacred month. Leveraging the fundraising opportunities provided by our trusted platform, LaunchGood, we embarked on a multifaceted approach to raise vital funds.



In 2019, LaunchGood introduced the Ramadan challenge, enabling donors to automate their giving throughout the entire month. This initiative garnered immense interest, prompting us to incentivise sign-ups with LaunchGood's attractive offerings, including sign-up boosters and a prestigious top prize for the most registrations within the first 15 days leading up to Ramadan. Capitalising on these incentives, we witnessed a surge in participant registrations, significantly boosting our fundraising potential.

To further enhance our digital presence and broaden our reach, Pilgrim proactively identified influential online personalities and volunteers who graciously lent their support by creating compelling content that resonated with our target audience. This strategic collaboration amplified awareness of our Ramadan campaign and showcased our organisation's mission and impact.

Through these concerted efforts, our charity was able to tap into the immense goodwill and generosity associated with Ramadan, driving impactful fundraising outcomes and advancing our noble cause. The success of Ramadan Referrals 2023 underscores the power of collaboration, innovation, and community engagement in realising our mission of making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

Dhul Hijjah

As the second busiest month for Pilgrim, Dhul Hijjah received heightened attention as we aimed to deliver comprehensive guidance and essential information relating to the major pilgrimage.

To support our fundraising efforts during Dhul Hijjah, we utilised a combination of purchasing targeted marketing packages and implementing a referral challenge, akin to our successful approach during Ramadan. However, the scale of these activities was comparatively smaller, allowing us to allocate more resources and focus on optimising our website. Recognising the importance of our online presence, we prioritised ensuring that our website was fully prepared to manage the anticipated surge in visitors from around the world.

We believe that an exceptional online experience plays a pivotal role in building trust, fostering engagement, and facilitating successful interactions with our organisation. Our preparedness for the increased viewership during Dhul Hijjah reflects our commitment to delivering comprehensive guidance and supporting individuals undertaking the major pilgrimage.

As we approach this important period, we are confident that our efforts in website preparation will yield positive results, enabling us to effectively serve our audience and provide them with the necessary resources to navigate their pilgrimage journeys. We remain dedicated to continually improving and refining our online platforms to meet the evolving needs of our user.



Financial review

For the year ending 31 December 2023, Pilgrim's total income amounted to £959,261, an increase from £678,246 in 2022. This growth was driven by notable contributions across multiple areas:

- 1. Donations and Legacies:** Donations and gift aid totalled £86,961, reflecting a significant increase compared to the prior year's total of £28,953. This uplift was primarily attributable to enhanced donor engagement and an improved gift aid recovery process.
- 2. Charitable Activities:** Income from the Referral Challenge was a major contributor, generating £821,011, compared to £638,643 in 2022.
- 3. Investment Income:** Pilgrim benefited from income on Kiings claims investment amounting to £7,945, up from £1,250 in the previous year.
- 4. Other Income:** Income from sales of books, Ziyarah guides, admin fees and, one off fund raising events reached £43,345, an increase from £9,400 in 2022.

Total expenditure for the year stood at £596,958, compared to £541,038 in 2022. Despite the rise in costs, Pilgrim maintained robust financial stewardship to achieve its objectives effectively.

Reserves Policy

Pilgrim's reserves policy ensures financial sustainability and the ability to manage risks and uncertainties effectively. As of 31 December 2023, the organisation held total reserves of £693,900.

- Restricted Funds:** These amounted to £27,918, earmarked for specific projects or purposes aligned with donor intentions.
- Unrestricted Funds:** Standing at £665,982, these provide essential flexibility for operational needs and strategic priorities.

The reserves are maintained to cover unforeseen circumstances, including short-term income fluctuations, and to support planned investments in the organisation's charitable activities. The trustees continue to review the reserves policy annually to ensure it aligns with Pilgrim's strategic goals and the changing financial landscape.

Our future plans for generating funds are grounded in a strategy that combines tangible product offerings with prudent financial investments, ensuring a sustainable income stream to support our operations. A portion of our funding will come from the sales of the Dua Book and the Ziyarah Guide. These thoughtfully crafted resources not only serve as valuable tools for our audience but also contribute to the financial foundation needed to maintain and expand our services. In addition to product sales, we will strategically invest in assets and stocks to diversify our income sources. This approach will provide a steady and reliable stream of revenue, ensuring that we can meet operational costs and continue to deliver a high standard of service to our audience. Through careful selection and management of these investments, we aim to achieve long-term financial stability while remaining aligned with our mission and values.

By combining these efforts, we hope to create a balanced funding strategy that not only covers the costs of running and improving our platforms but also enables us to explore new initiatives and innovations. This sustainable approach reflects our commitment to both financial responsibility and the continued growth of our offerings.



Structure, Governance, and Management

Pilgrim Support operates as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), a structure specifically designed for charitable entities in the United Kingdom. The charity was officially registered on 17th March 2020 and has been committed to its mission ever since. Our Trustees serve on a voluntary basis, receiving no personal benefits from the charity. Any expenses they incur in the course of their duties are transparently reported in the financial notes.

The Trustees regularly review the charity’s goals, activities, and impact to ensure alignment with our mission. This report provides an overview of our achievements and the positive outcomes generated by our work throughout 2023. Additionally, the review process enables the Trustees to assess whether our efforts continue to address the charity’s core objectives. Typically, Trustees are appointed for a three-year term and may be reappointed for an additional term.

The Trustees remain committed to fulfilling their roles effectively within the charity sector by staying informed and up to date through relevant training and continued professional development (CPD). They actively engage with sector-specific guidance, attend training sessions, and participate in opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills, ensuring they uphold best practices and meet their responsibilities in line with current regulatory and governance standards.

In 2023, we made several key adjustments to our management structure to enhance efficiency and ensure more sustainable growth.

Our CEO has taken on a comprehensive range of responsibilities, including program management for Pilgrim Knowledge, Umrah Fund, lead design management, marketing, and internal UX design.

Our Finance Director oversees finance management, operational accounts, payroll, donor management, and legacy fundraising.

We have engaged several contractors on a minimum six-month term to support critical functions, including design, website development, SEO management, and social media engagement. This team collaboration ensures that tasks are handled by experts in their respective fields, allowing us to maintain high standards in all our operations.

Statement of Trustees’ Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees’ Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Charity law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law.

Under charity law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charitable Incorporated Organisation will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Charity’s Constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

On behalf of the board:



Shabbir Hassan Chair of Trustees

Date: 19/12/2024

Pilgrim

Independent Examiner’s Report to the Trustees of Pilgrim

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (“the Act”).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity’s accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act, and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner’s statement

Since the Charity’s gross income exceeded £250,000, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- 1. the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- 2. the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- 3. the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a ‘true and fair’ view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Moore Kingston Smith LLP

Samir Chandoo
For and On Behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP
9 Appold Street
London
EC2A 2AP

Date: 19 December 2024

Statement of Financial Activities

		Restricted funds year ended 2023 £	Unrestricted funds year ended 2023 £	Total year ended 2023 £	Total year ended 2022 £
	Notes				
Income from					
Donations, grants and legacies	2	55	86,906	86,961	28,953
Charitable activities	3	-	821,011	821,011	638,643
Investment income	4	-	7,945	7,945	1,250
Other Income	5	38,881	4,464	43,345	9,400
Total income		38,936	920,325	959,261	678,346
Expenditure on	6				
Raising funds		-	124,661	124,661	87,576
Charitable activities		49,026	423,272	472,298	453,462
Total		49,026	547,932	596,978	541,038
Net income		(10,090)	372,393	362,303	137,208
Net movement in funds		(10,090)	372,393	362,303	137,208
Total funds brought forward		38,008	293,589	331,596	194,388
Total funds brought forward		27,918	665,982	693,900	331,596

All activities relate to continuing operations

Balance sheet

		2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
	Note				
Current Assets					
Investments	10	35,000		35,000	
Debtors	11	16,361		-	
Cash in Bank and in hand		658,734		296,596	
		710,95		331,596	
Creditors: amount falling due within one year	12	16,195		-	
Net current assets			693,900		331,596
Net assets			693,900		331,596
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	13		665,982		293,589
Restricted funds	13		27,918		38,008
			693,900		331,596

The notes on pages 31 to 36 form part of these accounts.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

Approved by the trustees on 19/12/2024 and signed on their behalf by:


Shabbir Hassan

Statement of cash flow

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash generated from operating activities	362,137	102,208
Net cash provided from operating activities		
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	362,137	102,208
Change in cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	296,596	194,388
Change in cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	658,734	296,596

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Net income for reporting period (As per the statement of financial activities)	362,303	137,208
Adjustments for:		
Decrease/(increase) in current assets	-	(35,000)
Increase/(decrease) in debtors	(16,361)	-
Increase in creditors	16,195	-
Net cash provided by operating activities	362,137	102,208

Accounting Policies

Charity Information

The Pilgrim Support is a charitable incorporated organisation, registered on 17th March 2020 (charity number 1188594). The registered office is 83 Hastings Street, Luton, LU1 5DN.

The charity meets the definition of a public entity under FRS 102.

Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a ‘true and fair’ view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a ‘true and fair view’. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities Preparing Their Accounts in Accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005, which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound.

Critical Accounting Estimates and Use of Judgements

In preparing financial statements, it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates, and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

In the view of the trustees, in applying the accounting policies adopted, no judgements were required that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements, nor do any estimates or assumptions made carry a significant risk of material adjustment in the next financial year.

Going Concern

The trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees have made this assessment for a period of at least one year from the date of approval of the financial statements. After making enquiries, the trustees have concluded that there is a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and there are no material uncertainties affecting this assumption. The charity therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements.

Income

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, so it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Grants are recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they are receivable or any requirement imposed on the grant is fulfilled.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure once there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses, including support costs which include governance costs, are allocated to charitable activities in the statement of financial activities.

Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practices, and these costs are included within support costs.

Grants and donations payable are payments made to third parties in the furtherance of the charitable objectives of the charity. Single or multi-year grants are accounted for when either the recipient has a reasonable expectation that they will receive a grant and the trustees have agreed to pay the grant without condition, or the recipient has a reasonable expectation that they will receive a grant and any condition attaching to the grant is outside of the control of the charity.

Allocation of Support Costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity, but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back-office costs, finance, and governance costs which support the charity’s activities. Support costs for a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Where support costs relate to several activities, support costs have been allocated to each of the activities on the basis of the number of direct staff supported during the period in the relevant activity.

Governance support costs are allocated on the basis of support activities provided on clearly interpreted governance matters.

Financial Instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 Basic Financial Instruments and Section 12 Other Financial Instruments Issues of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments. Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Cash and cash equivalents include cash at banks and in hand and short-term deposits with a maturity date of three months or less.

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £5,000 are capitalised at cost. Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Fixtures & Fittings: 33.33% straight line
Office Equipment: 33.33% straight line

The charity's fixed assets have been fully depreciated.

Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors, or the terms of the appeal specified by a project, as to how they may be used. The donation and income deriving from them will be used in accordance with the specific purposes.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the Trustees for specific purposes. The purposes and uses of the designated funds are set out in the notes to the accounts. The charity currently has no designated funds.

Volunteers

Pilgrim appreciates the hard work and dedication of its volunteers across the United Kingdom. Almost 100 volunteers engaged in a number of activities, including campaigning and domestic programmes. The contribution of volunteers is not recognised in the accounts as it is impractical to value given the absence of a reliable measurement basis.

Notes

	Restricted 2023 £	Unrestricted 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
2 Donations and legacies				
Donations	55	6,344	6,399	507
Gift aid	-	80,562	80,562	28,446
	55	86,906	86,961	28,953
3 Charitable activities	-	821,011	821,011	638,643
Income from referral challenge		821,011	821,011	638,643
4 Investment income	-	7,945	7,945	1,250
Income from kings claim investment		7,945	7,945	1,250
5 Other Income	38,881	4,464	43,345	9,400
Other miscellaneous	38,881	4,464	43,345	9,400
	38,936	920,325	959,261	678,246

6 Total resources expanded

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Contractors	39,372	33,381
Fundraising	124,661	87,576
Marketing	326,129	223,230
Knowledge	15,841	37,526
Umrah fund	30,750	74,223
Pilgrim fund	2,435	-
Subscriptions	10,359	7,914
Utilities/rent	2,300	2,350
Insurance	-	496
Website	-	940
Maintenance-KCL	105	-
Miscellaneous	37,206	14,848
IE/Accountancy fees	7,800	-
Acquisitions	-	58,544
	596,958	541,038

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2023 £	2022 £
Raising funds	-	124,661	124,661	87,576
Charitable activities	49,026	415,472	464,498	453,462
Governance and support costs (See note 7)	-	7,800	7,800	-
	49,026	547,932	596,958	541,038

7 Governance and support costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Independent examiner remuneration	7,800	-
	7,800	-

8 Staff cost and trustee remuneration

There were no employees whose annual emoluments were were £60,000 or more

None of the trustees received remuneration in year 2022 (2022: £nil). No trustees received reimbursement of expenses during the period (2022: £nil).

Key management personnel include the trustees. The total employer benefits, including pension costs, of the charity's key management personnel were £nil (2022: £nil).

9 Taxation

The CIO, being a registered charity, is not liable for corporation tax in respect of this operations for the year.

10 Investment

	2023 £	2022 £
Current asset investment	35,000	35,000
	35,000	35,000

11 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Gift aid receivable	16,361	-
	16,361	-

12	Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	2023	2022
		£	£
	Other creditors	8,395	-
	Accruals and deferred income	7,800	-
		16,195	-

13	Analysis of funds	Balance at 1/1/2023	Income	Expenditure	Transfer	Balance at 12/31/2023
		£	£	£	£	£
	Restricted funds	38,008	38,936	(49,026)	-	27,918
	Unrestricted funds	293,589	920,325	(547,932)	-	665,982
	Total 2023	331,596	959,261	596,958	-	696,900

Disclaimer

Whilst we take reasonable efforts to ensure that the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date at the date of printing, Pilgrim does not make any representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, in respect of the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of the information. To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, Pilgrim specifically disclaims any liability for errors, inaccuracies or omissions in this publication and for any loss or damage resulting from its use or your reliance upon it. Where this publication contains information from third-party sources, this information is provided 'as is' and should not be interpreted as any form of approval of its accuracy, completeness or usefulness by Pilgrim.

If this publication is translated in any other language, the English version shall always prevail in case of any discrepancy or inconsistency between the English version and any translation. The information and contents of this publication and any non-contractual disputes or claims that may arise from it are governed by English law. The exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales will apply. thepilgrim.co



Help muslims respond the call of Ibrahim

