

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS
(Registered Charity No. 249901)

ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

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THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

ANNUAL REPORT

31ST DECEMBER 2023

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the Year Ended 31st December 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS102).

Objectives and activities for the public benefit

The objectives of the charity are

1. To help Catholic women to appreciate the Sacramental character, responsibilities, and permanence of marriage, and to live in unselfish love observing the laws of God and His Church;
2. To assist families to bring up their children as practising Catholics and public-spirited citizens;
3. To teach and defend Christian values in family life, and to ensure Catholic education for future generations;
4. To offer love, sympathy, and practical help to those in difficulty;
5. To foster vocations in life especially in Christian Marriage and Family Life and in the Priesthood and Religious Life.

One of the ways these objectives are met is through the provision of respite, convalescent holidays for members in need.

The Trustees confirm they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to Public Benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission in determining the activities undertaken by the Charity and consider that the activities carried out by the charity are for the public benefit.

Structure, governance and management

The Union of Catholic Mothers is a registered charity, number 249901, operating under its Constitution originally adopted in 1962 and amended September 1973, 24th March 1993, 25-27th March 1996, 25-27th May 2005, and 15-17th May 2018. The Trustees are the National President, National Treasurer and National Secretary. Trustees who served during the Year Ended 31st December 2023, and at the date of this report are:-

Mrs Joan Hodge – National President
 Mrs Sue Bickerstaffe – National Treasurer
 Mrs Cath Lydon – National Secretary

The Trustees meet regularly throughout the year to agree the strategic direction of the charity and areas of activity. The Trustees are assisted in the operation of the Charity by the National Committee, National Sub-Committees and the National Council and local activities are co-ordinated by each Diocesan Council.

An induction process operates for new Trustees, and from the point an individual is identified as a future trustee they work together with the existing trustees for six months in order to gain an understanding of the role before they take up their appointment.

The principal bankers of the Charity are National Westminster Bank, Royal Priors, 59 The Parade, Leamington Spa. CV32 4ZX

The Independent Examiner is Mr R.A. Prior, FCCA, FCIE, DChA, of W.H. Prior Chartered Certified Accountants, Railway Court, Doncaster. DN4 5FB

The principal address is that of the National Treasurer, 11 Fairhaven, Birch Green, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6RQ.

Key management personnel

The trustees comprise the key management personnel of the charity and are responsible for the operation on a day to day basis. There are no employees, and no trustee is remunerated.

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Review of achievements

This year we expected everything to be back to “normal” but flare ups of Covid and rail strikes impacted on National and Diocese planned events and visits. It is different since covid, but we are all doing our best to update UCM and encourage people to join us. Many foundations have changed the time they meet, and how often they now meet, so we can continue the excellent work with Faith, Fun and love for each other, and so we can continue to thrive in the future.

During the whole of this year the National Committee and members have been making plans to strengthen and grow our organisation by trying to improve our visibility, and hopefully extend our appeal as a viable and active organisation. Following on from our Autumn Meeting in October 2022 a National Committee working Party was set up to look at ways and means of doing this. This group led by our Deputy National President met by Zoom and face to face throughout the year developing ideas for recruitment, making ourselves more visible, increasing our appeal to others. They also talked to Diocese who were having some success in Recruitment A scarf and a Collar were mentioned and Our Welfare Officer and Public Service Officer worked so hard sourcing designs, fabrics, and suppliers. They were joined by our Media Officer who has been working on our Web site.

It has been mentioned often that the UCM are a Powerhouse of Prayer and that was reflected in all the Reports from Diocese, our UCM prayer and the Prayer for Vocations are said at all Foundation, Diocesan and National Meetings but increasingly most meetings now incorporate Prayers for Peace, and Leeds Diocese now incorporate a simple Prayer concerning “Our World” into all their meetings.

Mrs Marian Begley from St Margaret Mary’s foundation in Liverpool was nominated for an Irish in Britain Volunteer award and finished as a runner-up in the Outstanding individual Volunteer category. At the awards ceremony at the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith, she was given a trophy and a certificate.

This year has seen both an increase and decrease in numbers of priests due to corresponding increase and decrease in ordinations and retirement of priests. One Diocese alone reports 25 priests retiring in 2024, with 11 retirements in 2023 and 3 died in post and only one ordination in 2023! Other Diocese reported Ordinations of 2 and 3 priests with one reporting 4 which is the highest number since 1960. Most Diocese keep up to date with and support their Priests and Seminarians and many donate to Diocesan Seminary training funds, which supports our 5th Objective. One Liverpool Foundation provided refreshments after the first mass of newly ordained priest, Father Hugh Donleavy.

In the Summer we received a donation from Mrs Mary Margaret Smith from St Mathias (Southwark Diocese), as this Parish no longer has a UCM Foundation I was contacted by the Parish Priest Fr Sean. After quite a few emails and help from Mrs Mary Piper this donation was received into our bank account. I have sent a Thank you card a copy of the UCM News and the 75th Walsingham Pilgrimage book to her to her next of kin I also asked Bishop Alan to say Mass for her and her family.

Recruitment and Retention

Most diocese report some sort of recruitment activity; however, they also report failing numbers in Foundations and Foundations closing, often because members are unwilling or unable to volunteer to take office both at Foundation, Diocesan and National level. Sadly, we have lost 2 Diocese this year, Plymouth, and East Anglia. Plymouths surviving members have become independent members, and the 2 surviving Foundations in East Anglia have joined with Northampton Diocese. We must thank President Mrs Lorraine Richards and the Plymouth Diocesan Committee and members for continuing as long as they could and for their commitment to UCM by remaining as independent members.

Thanks also to East Anglia President Mrs Anne Emblem and the Diocesan Committee and members for their commitment to UCM by forging links with the Northampton Diocese and to President of Northampton Mrs Jenny Hyde and her Diocesan Committee and members for supporting and voting unanimously for the East Anglian Foundations to join with them in their Diocese. The Bishops of these three Diocese as well as Bishop Alan have been informed of the closure and amalgamation by our National President who has expressed the hope that we might be able to re-open these Diocese in the future.

It is not all doom and gloom most Diocese Hallam, Middlesbrough, Salford, A & B, Liverpool. have reported small numbers of enrolments as well as people stepping up to take Diocesan Officer roles. Portsmouth’s newest Foundation is still growing. Northampton Diocese reports that a “One Step Initiative” by their Parish Priest Fr Dave to highlight the different groups within the parish with a view to widening the community spirit and enlisting more help resulted in a very enthusiastic new member. One step, one member at a time!!!

Some foundations have changed meeting times to afternoons to facilitate elderly members who no longer want to go out in the dark, others have now split their meetings between afternoon and evenings. Some Foundations have reported difficulties in meeting as Parish rooms are no longer available to them. This also lends weight to what we have always said “how valuable is the help and support of our clergy” and to this end a letter was sent to all UCM Diocesan Bishops asking them through Ad Clerum to enlist the support and help of Parish Priests in our efforts to increase and maintain membership in the UCM.

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The Committee continue to meet regularly normally on Zoom, but individual members have managed to meet, and ad hoc meetings have taken place by Zoom and face to face, at The FCJ Centre in London and at Wistaston. The Re-launch group also met face to face during the summer in London at the Festival Hall coffee lounge area thereby minimising the cost to the UCM. I continue to send WUCWO monthly Newsletters and Catholic Universe to the National Committee and Diocese, for distribution to members and other information or correspondence requested by National Officers.

Early in the year we had the sad news that Mrs Val James a Past National President and Win Brookstone a past National Study Officer had died. Mrs Joan Hodge our National President attended the Requiem Mass and funeral of Mrs James. I have also sent out numerous messages of sad news following the deaths of Past and present Diocesan Committee members, from Shrewsbury, Liverpool, Northampton, Plymouth, and Portsmouth. For all those who mourn we pray for comfort and consolation.

There was a recurring theme throughout the Annual Reports I received this year and that was of support between Diocese and between Parish Lay and ecumenical organisations. Diocese invite and attend neighbouring diocese Diocesan Meetings particularly AGMs, local Pilgrimages, Rosary Rally's, Annual Masses, and they share Speakers. Foundations do the same with neighbouring Foundations and local groups, CWL, NBCW, KSC, SVP, Mothers Union. Foundations near each other that belong to different Diocese have even had a joint days out! The National Committee also emulate this with Officers helping each other especially at their busy times. All Diocese participate in the Daily Mass scheme which is organised and distributed by our National Vice President Mrs Mariann French. This ensures that Holy Mass is said for UCM intentions every day. Some churches only have Mass on the weekend, so members will attend online if they can, or say the Rosary if they can't. Many of our Members attend Daily Mass, and many say our UCM prayers daily. Many like to go to online Mass at Walsingham but some find places further afield. What a blessing for those members who are unable to attend through illness or frailty. Holy Mass is offered for the repose of the souls of members recently deceased. It is always sad to lose ladies who have been members for many years. Masses were held for: The homeless, The Housebound also the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and Deceased members. Some comments from members below

"We are such a support for each other, both locally and nationally, and for our Priests, and that is a gift above all other."

A Member on 60 years in Northampton UCM "it was a way of increasing my faith; sharing my faith with others; helping others to live their faith".

Our National President Mrs Joan Hodge has attended.

Southwark Pilgrimage to Aylesford Priory Mass and Rosary Way, our Media Officer Mrs Jean Lopez-Lopez also attended. UCM Wales AGM.

National Study

Mass to celebrate the founding of CAFOD at Southwark Cathedral

Salford Diocese Mass & AGM our National Secretary Mrs Cath Lydon also attended.

Arundel Cathedral Pilgrimage

CWL's pilgrimage mass at Portsmouth Cathedral

Walsingham Pilgrimage

Clifton Diocese Mass and AGM

Westminster Diocese Presidential Mass

Arundel and Brighton's AGM

Catholic Women Praying Together

Members of Committee have also attended.

Walsingham Pilgrimage

National Study

Chesham Foundation Presentation of 60 year certificate.

Portsmouth AGM

Liverpool Bi-monthly Mass and Liverpool Business meeting

Southwark Pilgrimage to Aylesford Priory Mass & Rosary Way

Salford Diocese Mass & AGM

Requiem Mass for Lucy Thornhill Liverpool Archdiocesan Secretary.

AGM of Plymouth Diocese and their single foundation in Exmouth

Salford Diocese Committee meeting

Margaret McDonald attended the funeral of Pauline Porter past National President of Scotland UCM

Catholic Women Praying Together

NCLA Autumn Meeting

Wistaston

NHRS Meeting

Working Party Meeting

National Officers have tried to visit as many Dioceses as possible throughout the year, and Diocese are encouraged to invite the National President at least once during her term of Office. All Diocese have a named National Officer as a Liaison Officer.

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National Study

The last National Study Days were in 2019, everything was ready for the days in March 2020 when we went into lock down. It was therefore wonderful to go to Wistaston Hall in Crewe in March for our first National Study Days since the pandemic. As well as a change of venue from The Hayes in Derby, there was a change in format with only a 1 night stay. The Retreat House was a welcoming place with excellent food and facilities. Every Diocese was represented, and feedback was for the most part very encouraging. Thanks to our 2 Vice Presidents Mrs Mariann French and Mrs Monica Ovel for all their hard work.

The topic for this year's Study was Pope Francis' Encyclical Fratelli Tutti. The opening words of Fratelli Tutti means 'All brothers' in Italian and are taken from the writings of St. Francis of Assisi, one of the major inspirations for Pope Francis' third encyclical written on fraternity and social friendship; inspired by St Francis and his love for the poor, marginalised and everyone and everything created. He hoped that because of the problems during the pandemic, we might 'rediscover a sense of common humanity.'

The Walk and Talk sessions in which we got together with another participant from another diocese and exchanged ideas and experiences was particularly welcomed.

Following on from Study most Diocese did cascade some or all of the Study to their members, and it is clear that members value Study events. Many Diocese hold their own Study events and Retreats in addition to National Study. Middlesbrough Diocese held a Study Day on Contemplative Prayer, Northampton Diocesan a Women in Ministry workshop post the local Synod conversations.

Following discussion at National Council the Vice Presidents have booked next year's Study the theme will be based on Youth.

National Council

The format of our National Meetings have changed. Reports from National Officers are now forwarded to Diocese in advance of meetings to allow time to include group activities and feedback from our members. This has led to some vigorous discussion and debate. We also introduced a Box for Members to put in questions, ideas, and suggestions. We were able to address some of these at the end of Council those we couldn't we addressed and sent out with the Minutes of National Council. One of the questions asked at National Council was Media accessibility for unsighted members? The National Secretary contacted Mrs Margaret McNicholas a Past UCM National President who used to record an audio copy of the UCM News for unsighted members with Galloways (this was stopped during the Pandemic), and the National Secretary also sent an email to all Diocese asking for names of all members who would require an audio version of UCM News. Mrs McNicholas phoned and visited Galloways nobody got back to her and as none of the Diocese replied to Mrs Lydon's email it was decided that as most Computers now offered reading of text as a standard, we would pursue this no further.

This year's annual National Council meeting was held in May at the Hayes in Derbyshire and was hosted by Salford Diocese led by their President Mrs Kathleen Henderson-Playfair. As always, we had a good time meeting old friend and making new and learned a lot. **Sadly, one of our members who was New To council reported being disappointed by lack of friendliness from members. However, another new to Council was impressed with how things are run and would be taking ideas back to Council.**

This year 75 people attended, and we were joined on the Thursday by Bishop John Arnold of Salford. At Mass on Thursday our outgoing National Treasurer Mrs Margaret Kerbey was presented with the Gold Medal Benemerenti. Margaret had served as Liverpool Archdiocesan Treasurer for five years before becoming National Treasurer and before that had been her Parish Foundation President as well as being a lifelong hard working member of her Parish, Archdiocese, and local Community.

Our Welfare Officer Mrs Vivienne O'Byrne presented a slide show on UCM Renewal based on the work the Re-Launch Working group had been doing, giving ideas for members to discuss.

History of UCM

The need to preserve the essence of what UCM is but embrace changes and move forward in the 21st century

	What Membership of UCM means
United in	Faith Fellowship
Commitment to	Faith Family & Community
Maintaining our	Faith in action

Making ourselves visible, we currently have badges and Lanyards, maybe scarves and or collars would make us more visible, we definitely need a better functioning Web Site

Could we reach out to more people, newly retired, similar groups in parish and local Community, young people? Review and update our recruiting material?

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Merging with other Foundations, sharing Officer duties, changing our Meeting times, attracting more/different type of Independent Member, Supporting Independent Members. Becoming more pro-active in Parishes and Diocese, having Diocese taking Leads in specific areas. What should/could be on our Web site. The need to speak to our Bishops for their support in whatever we decide to do.

All members took part in small group discussions led by Mrs O'Byrne, Mrs Davis and Mrs Lopez-Lopez and were encouraged to take this information to their Parish Foundations. A copy of the Slide show was sent to all Diocese for dissemination.

“Let us not forget that the Holy Family were once homeless and refugees fleeing Herod, and Jesus himself was a prisoner condemned to die cruelly on the cross.”

The themes above were highlighted in the presentations given by Bishop John Arnold of the Diocese of Salford and by Bishop Alan Williams of Brentwood. In this context, both Bishop John Arnold and Bishop Alan Williams in their presentations paid tribute to the work of the UCM in their Parishes and Communities. We thank them both for their inspiring and informative presentations.

Bishop John's talk was on 'hope' - If we are going to look at hope we have to look at the challenges that we face today. Our world is a broken mess at the moment so much is going wrong. If we look at political conflict: war in Ukraine and Sudan, Syria on boiling point, Israel/Palestine always on the edge of more violence, Yemen which has gone quiet but it is a warring territory, Myanmar where there is genocide by the military, threats by China over Taiwan and North Korea making endless threats against South Korea. There is also Pakistan with the abduction of their former Prime Minister.

On the social side we have 100M refugees in our world at the moment. A shooting in America - just 8 victims this time, but it is the 199th mass killing this year in the USA.

The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. 1.2billion people in the world do not even have clean water to drink. Bishop John is the lead at the Bishops Conference on the environment. We need to persuade people that we are facing a global challenge. Climate change - Bishop John has made a list of those items relating to the environment that he has heard about on the news. This list runs to four pages, but it is not a complete list. The list was given to the bishops at the Bishops Conference in April. The flooding in Pakistan covered a third of the country and 30m plus Pakistanis lost their homes. In Bangladesh, 6m people lost their homes in floods. 25,000 families a week could lose their homes in Bangladesh because of the loss of land to the sea. Since Bishop John made his last list, he has started another one, and this list is two thirds of a page. There have been another ten climate change damage/destructive incidents: Spain, Panama, UK, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

We are living in a world with all sorts of difficulties and problems. What are we going to do? Are we going to say: “Oh, what a depressing world,” or are we going to counter it with a sense of our faith? The challenges we face are something like the challenges the disciples faced after Jesus' resurrection. Jesus tells the disciples to go out to the whole world, preach the good news and baptise. The disciples were completely overwhelmed but they did what Jesus asked of them. We are not just faced with the economic and political situation, but the individualism that is within our society, where people are not thinking about others any more, they have their house, their computer, they get what they want, when they want it and it is delivered to the door in 20 minutes, and we are closing in on ourselves, and we are forgetting the community aspect. That is why we are so important because the UCM isn't about individuals, it is about common welfare and wellbeing of those around us and of taking our faith to the communities in which we live, not just our church communities but the wider circles of our communities that may not have any sense of faith at all, showing them that we have faith and it does make a difference. Pope Francis reminds us that each and everyone of us are missionary disciples, and that we have all got our part to play. We might think that we haven't got any real influence, or impact on people, but in fact we are those people who can and will make a difference. We are ambassadors for Christ. We are dedicated by Jesus Christ to carry on his work with his authority. Pope Francis said: “The biggest dams and reservoirs in the world are made up of single drops of water.” Perhaps this is what we can be, even as single drops of water, when we come together, we do make an impact. We can make change happen. We can't leave climate change and all the other problems to the politicians and to industry. They will have to change, but we can make them change by the way that we live our faith. 85% of the world's population have faith in one of the major faiths. All the faiths in their different ways have a reverence for creation and the environment. If we can engage with young people showing them that the church is involved with the environment and repairing climate change, we will draw many young people back to a sense of faith because they are so articulate about the environment, and if they can see that the church makes it something that is really important, we have a wonderful opportunity of drawing them back. As you know as you look around our parishes, they are missing to a large extent. There are not many young families at all. Bishop John said we shouldn't despair. If we are determined to be those drops of water together, we will provide the resources we need to make our world a better place. The most important commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and secondly, to love your neighbour as yourself. Our direct love of God means to be looking for the good of our brothers and sisters around the world; caring for them and recognising that we have done a lot of damage - mainly from the prosperous North, but we can change our ways and science is well versed to make those changes. We have to demand that those changes are made, and that comes from our individual efforts even though they may seem to be irrelevant or too small, but change can and will happen. Bishop John thanked the UCM for all that we achieve, and

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felt that we do have an impact far greater than we may appreciate in our parishes, and he hoped that we can promote new membership, new activities and see a growth in that sense of family stability, care and security that seems to be so lacking for so many of our young people today.

Bishop Alan talked about God, Us and the UCM. Bishop Alan reminded us of the saying: 'Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and forever.' Not a lot has changed over the last two thousand years. Jesus Christ has been the same as he always will be. Whether you meet Him in the sacraments, through the word of God in the church, or in prayer time He is the same Jesus. The problem is that Christianity has been too successful over the last two thousand years. Christendom is fine except it is on its way out. The popes have been saying for quite a long time that things are falling apart. We need to go back to where we began with Jesus Christ. Since Easter we have been having daily readings in our mass which gives us images of God the Good Shepherd: I am the true Vine, you are the branches. I am the living bread and the living water. This is to get across to us what God can do for us. We are so astonished at being fed by the Eucharist, divine adoration, and prayer. When people meet God in Christ there is always a bit of a shock and surprise. We need to be prepared for that unique moment of being caught. When you pray, say what you most want from Almighty God? God in Christ always produces missionaries, and you never ever get left by yourself. Firstly, God really does come down to us on this earth. Secondly, He really does care about each one of us uniquely, and thirdly we are people with a mission.

God is too big for us and yet we have to somehow come up to all of this. God became human for our sake. Bishop Alan reminded us of the parable of the lost sheep. In what circumstances would you leave the 99 sheep in the wilderness and go and search for the lost sheep. Imagine if that lost sheep was your son, your daughter, your husband, your grandson, or your granddaughter, you would absolutely leave the 99. Of course, you would. Why, because that is the astonishing love of God for each one of us. For God, each one of us is the most important person in the world. That is quite a shocking truth because it is a bit too big for us and it is quite disturbing, but that is who He is. How upsetting is it to lose your own Son on the cross? It is as upsetting as our own death is for God.

The Catholic Church is not very good at telling the world what we do. We are the world's leading health provider; we are the world's leading humanitarian saviour. Next week Bishop Alan is going to try and lobby Tory politicians about the migrant's bill. He also mentioned the document: "Love the Stranger" - you can get a link on Goggle for the document. The UCM's first five objectives are reflected in this document. Pope Pius XII as far back as 1952 said: "Every migrant family is Jesus, Mary and Joseph." The migrant situation is going to get worse - Ukraine, Sudan etc. Where are we in all of this? We know what Christ would do. Would we do the same thing? Every migrant has a name.

We live in a dangerous place particularly for young people. Human trafficking and slavery is still happening. We have a Catholic church in Kings Cross where the Sisters of Mercy look after trafficked women. How do we treat migrants in this country? We don't let them work. Our system is very unjust. We can't cope with the problem, so it gets worse and worse. As we move from Christendom to something very different, we are not going to stop that process, but we are hopefully going to reconnect with our Catholic Christian faith and get it right. The UCM are a people of hope. It is not about individuals, it is about the work of God, hopefully, through the UCM.

Autumn Meeting

At our Autumn National Council meeting in October 2023 representatives from all our Diocese attended. We would like to thank the Diocesan President of Birmingham Mrs Eileen Priest and her members for hosting the meeting. This was a very busy and lively meeting. There was a lot of items for discussion including the future of the UCM Walsingham Pilgrimage. The Walsingham sub Committee put forward the following options for discussion.

Option 1 – Continue as before but raising the cost by £15, plus £5 for a chair, a total of £20 per person.

Option 2 – Have a weekend pilgrimage by joining up with another pilgrimage, because currently there are no free weekends.

Option 3 – Remain at the Basilica. The Bureau have agreed that we can do this.

The Walsingham sub-committee gave an outline of the proposal including advantages and disadvantages. Members had lots of questions. They were then asked to be asked to consider the proposals and the discussions during lunch and we could then discuss further.

The discussion was lively, and a straw poll of delegates was taken, and it became apparent that only 2 Diocese were strongly in favour of going to Abbey Grounds Therefore the Walsingham Sub committee at their Meeting with the Shrine administrators will discuss Option 3 to remain at the Basilica for 2024 Pilgrimage

The 'option' chosen will only be for the 2024 Walsingham pilgrimage. The Walsingham Sub-Committee and National Committee will then decide which is the most practical option.

Joan thanked the Walsingham Sub-Committee for all the work they have done. Mary Wardle asked Mary Piper to come forward so we could thank her for all the work she has done, as she was not thanked when she finished last year. Mary Piper said she had enjoyed it very much. The National Committee would like to thank Mary Piper for all her hard work and also her husband Stephen who attended the Pilgrimage on Mary's behalf when she couldn't and was always available to ferry people in his car.

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Record Keeping and Archiving

As we are in our 110th year the thorny subject of records and archiving was raised, garages, spare bedrooms and attics are no longer able to sustain the amount of paper that has been generated by our organisation and it is with dread new officers meet with retiring officers to handover. I myself inherited boxes and boxes of paper when I took over as National Secretary, they went straight from Kate's garage to mine. I spent a lot of time archiving over the summer. This included 2 suitcases of documents given to me at National Council which were received from Jane Keenan's daughter in law of previous National President Anne Gallagher. I have sent Jane a message of thanks for sending them to us the Archivist was quite keen to receive them. I asked him to look over the Archive Document which I had prepared to give out to Diocese for themselves and Foundations and he thought the document was ok. This was given to all Diocese at the Autumn Meeting and attached to the Autumn meeting Minutes when they were sent out.

I have since received from the Archivist Mr Neil Sayer the following.

Deposited 17 July 2023 (acc. 185).

RAS 47 Union of Catholic Mothers

National Council agenda papers 1970s-2000s

National Council meetings minutes 2012-2019

National Committee meetings minutes 1982-1989, 2012-2019

Annual report 2016

AGM minutes 2012-2019

Executive/Diocesan officers' meetings minutes 2012-2016

"The Way Forward": replies to questionnaires and minutes of meetings about the future of the UCM 2014-2021

Correspondence files (3) 2003-2020

National Board of Catholic Women meetings minutes and miscellaneous papers 1973-2000

Annual accounts for UCM dioceses 2014-2016

National Study Days – talks and other papers 1964-1994.

Photographs of various national and branch events 1980s-2000s

CVs of officers for election 1970s-1990s

Various secretarial papers 1980s-2000s

Centenary Mass papers 2013

AGM and business meetings minutes and correspondence 2011-2015, 2019-2021

This included papers and photographs bought from Southwark to National Council by Mary & Steven Piper there was a fair amount of duplication of the records already in the UCM archive, and I've sent the duplicates for shredding, but there was also a lot that filled in gaps in the minutes and agenda papers.

Thank You

I had requests from both Clifton & Brentwood Diocese re Diocesan Directory Entry, and I have replied to both, (both these entries now have my name and detail on as Clifton Diocese has no dedicated Secretary, and Brentwood no UCM). This document was given to all Diocese at the Autumn Meeting for them to use when they were updating their own Diocesan Directory

Reports received at the Autumn Meeting:

WUCWO Mrs Val Ward gave an overview of the General Assembly of WUCWO at Assisi. There were 67 organisations, along with 832 participants and 38 countries. A talk was given on Women on the road to the synodal church. A talk on Women in the church – Women's status in the church has been a constant concern since Vatican II. The role of women in youth ministry in a synodal church – The role of a woman is designed by herself; we constantly have to prove ourselves. The church is still represented by men. There are responsible roles for the women in the Vatican, but not always in the dioceses or parishes, and a change in attitude is needed. The Church needs to take responsibility for its mistake. The church welcomes everyone. Speaking with your heart to promote the language of peace – Men and women need to listen.

Mary our Mother participates with women. Mary is the Disciple of the Lord. She followed and realised Jesus's position in the world. Mary was not afraid of confrontation. The discernment of Mary, Mary ponders in her heart, God is always at her side. The companionship of Mary, her son is a gift that does not belong to her, she would never come between him and his Father to possess his love. The characteristics of Mary, imitate Mary, don't just listen, but be aware of what she is saying.

Val then gave an overview of the sessions, resolutions, voting, candidates, funding pertaining to WUCWO. One of the things that came out of the discussions, mainly from the African countries, was that women must change the way they raise their children, boys are not superior but that is how they are raised in some countries.

Mrs Anne Emblem proposed a vote of thanks on Val's last report on WUCWO. Val said it had been a wonderful experience. Joan thanked Val for representing the UCM for the last five years.

NCLA Mrs Margaret Kerbey attended the National Council of Lay Associations bi-annual meeting on behalf of our Deputy National President Mrs Margaret McDonald. Her Report included an update from the Reverend Canon Christopher Thomas, General Secretary of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England, and Wales of news from CBCEW and the on-going Synod. The Synod was started in 2021 at parish level. Notes on all the national syntheses, documents, and updates etc are available on

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the CBCEW website. She also outlined the number of organisations who attended and gave their Reports. Our former National President Mrs Val Ward is chair of the NCLA. We would like to thank Mrs Margaret McDonald, Mrs Margaret Kerbey and Mrs Val Ward for all their hard work.

Catholic Women Praying Together Mrs Anne Emblem has sent out invitations to dioceses inviting them to the Mass at St George's Cathedral, Southwark on the 15th November 2023 at 2.00 pm. This is CWPT's third such mass since they were formed, and Anne hopes that many of us will join them. Anne explained that the CWPT grew out of the Catholic Woman of the Year Lunch. This was a grand event organised primarily by the UCM and CWL with help from a few other organisations. In 2018 after the 50th anniversary event it became clear that not only was there a fall in applicants for Catholic Woman of the Year, but a significant fall in people willing to pay for the lunch; therefore, it was decided to take a new approach with the emphasis being on prayer rather than a lunch.

The theme of this year's mass is: 'Affirming the church's teaching on marriage and family life'. Everyone is welcome to attend, but Anne realises that it is not practical for those in the north to travel to Southwark. Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served after mass.

Our National President Mrs Joan Hodge thanked Anne for all her work on our behalf.

Re-launch This report was given by Mrs Margaret McDonald, Mrs Jean Lopez-Lopez, Mrs Vivienne O'Byrne, and Mrs Sarah Davis this included.

Updates on scarves and collars including pricing.

A script to help with recruitment to UCM at Parish level,

Letter to be sent to all Bishops re recruitment.

Advertising in the UCM news for Independent Members

Walsingham

Our 76th Annual Pilgrimage led by Shrewsbury Diocese took place on the July 4th. If the definition of Pilgrimage means "to step out of ourselves, a spiritual journey in which we leave comforts behind, incur costs and face difficulties", then the Shrewsbury diocese experienced all of the above.

As many of you have heard the coach which was due to take the Pilgrims from the Wirral did not arrive. It had broken down and they could not get a replacement. A discussion took place, and seven ladies were able to go by car, with grateful thanks to Mrs Paddy Roberts and Father Mario. It was a great disappointment to pilgrims that they could not attend only 18 Shrewsbury Diocese UCM members instead of 40 attended. Having all arrived safely, there was a further problem for the many UCM ladies staying at the Bureau, when there was a power cut in the village. Dinner had to be sourced from further away and the ladies were each treated to a very large portion of fish and chips. Our Pilgrimage was led by Bishop Alan Williams SM and Fr Robert who attended on behalf of Bishop Mark Davies supported as always by Priests and Deacons from our Diocese and Foundations. The number of pilgrims was up on last year. Most people enjoyed the pilgrimage despite the threat of rain. Prayer petitions which were collated and read by our National Vice Presidents were very relevant to each diocese and this year included a prayer petition on behalf of our Diocesan Independent members from our PSO Mrs Sarah Davis. Fr Robert commented on the wonderful singing at the service for the sick. Both Bishop Alan and Bishop Mark Davies reflections delivered by Fr Robert were welcomed by us all.

Welfare and NHRHS

Our National Welfare Officer contacts Diocesan Officers new to the role to welcome them and to ensure they have been given the *Union of Catholic Mothers Safeguarding information and Education documents*, which includes the Safeguarding Policy. She has devised new forms for annual Welfare reports; one for the Diocese and one for Foundations to complete and she is in regular contact with the NHRHS administrator Mrs Paddy Roberts and Mrs Anne Emblem who will take over from Paddy as NHRHS administrator in 2024.

Three accident report forms were received this year.

Diocese regularly raise awareness of our NHRHS encouraging members to use it and to raise funds for it.

Donations have continued to be received from dioceses but understandably have dropped, it is a difficult time for all members with the loss of foundations, and dioceses.

Accommodation has also been affected, with the closure of retreat centres, B & B hotels, nursing homes, convalescent homes, though coach trips, short holiday breaks seem popular, and applications to use the service have begun to come in again. Unfortunately, holiday parks and caravans have proved to be expensive. We are now able to offer financial support to home carers for help in the home, for a few hours, to enable them to have some respite. As yet we have had no requests for this help.

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED (CONTINUED): 31ST DECEMBER 2023

Where there is dedicated Welfare Officer information given to Members on Welfare issues is both diverse and plentiful and members support and sign petitions and write to MPs in support of pro-life groups e.g SPUC and Life. Information has been forwarded to members re **BUFFER ZONES** at Abortion Clinics **ABORTION COERCION** especially "pills by post" **RSHE**, **THE HIGHER EDUCATION [FREEDOM of SPEECH] BILL** frequent harassment of pro-life university students. (Salford) Welfare officer Magella Turner Southwark Diocesan Welfare Office, has been doing Fraud talks, advising that all foundations should ensure that all charities we donate to are morally sound to avoid fraud. They also reiterate that all foundations and Diocese should donate to NRHS, as it is the UCM's charity.

Welfare activities are many and varied. Sometimes it just involves spending time together socially, Crafty events are popular as are meals out together; BBQ's or just a general coffee and a catch up. Big birthdays and Anniversaries are celebrated UCM are good at cake and parties. Members help each other at sad times too. They support frail and housebound parishioners particularly UCM members who are unable to attend meetings. They keep in touch through phone and email and reports from friends who have visited. Other activities include delivering birthday cards to members, visiting housebound, sick, and bereaved members congratulations and get-well cards. One member organizes trips and events for over 50's in her community. another an annual Christmas lunch. Many members now have a "WhatsApp" group.

Increasing levels of poverty and hardship faced by many communities has led members to be involved in local groups and initiatives. They volunteer and take part local activities. Foundations have raised money for UCM, and other charities in various ways, both locally and nationally. It is no surprise that a lot of these charities include collecting for food banks, supplying clothes, toiletries, and financial donations with the following local and National organisations, Zarach (buying beds for kids) SVP CAFOD, ACN (aid to the Church in Need, Missio, Caritas, Salford Disability Fellowship, H.C.P.T, Dementia and Alzheimer's Charities, Hospitals, Hospices and Cancer Support, Bury Young Carers, Homeless Youth, Cornerstone, Loaves and Fishes, Mother and Baby Home, Sands, Air Ambulance UK, various Lourdes Groups, Ancilla.

Most of the UCM charity fund raising involve fun and social activities, Bingo coffee mornings, cake sales, quizzes, even skipping and rowing!! Nearly new sales, parish Poverty Lunch, operating a soup kitchen during Lent or serving lunches in the autumn to young and old.

Two Foundations have supported overseas projects for many years, an orphanage in Uganda and a project in the Philippines, and raised £400 and £815.80 respectively, through various sales, including re-gifting and bring and buy sales and a mini Christmas bazaar. Others have raised money for Marys Meals, Syrian and Turkish earthquake appeals, Christmas gifts for seafarers, distributed at the Seaman's Mission. A Diocesan Youth trip to Rome. Various shoeboxes for Christmas Child Appeals.

Justice and Peace

Cost of living, poverty, homelessness & housing.
Life and Education
Refugees & migration
Care of creation.
Racial justice.
International peace

These are some of the areas of concern and worry for our members who regularly support through Prayer and practical help charities in these areas. Not all Diocese have a dedicated Justice and Peace Officer but for those who do the work they do in raising awareness and providing information to members is nothing short of inspiring. Through these officers they are made aware of many and diverse issues e.g war in Yemen, Afghanistan, and the worsening situation in these countries for women and girls. Homes for Ukraine Refugees, Persecuted Christians, MAG (Mines Advisory Group deminers and areas in the world where landmines and unexploded bombs threaten so many lives and livelihoods). These J & P Officers normally attend and are part of their Diocesan J & P group and so have access to information and resources. Our members pray, sign petitions, send messages to their MP's. Most Diocesan and Foundation Meetings now incorporate prayer for Peace and Our World into their Meetings. Additionally, and probably as a result of the Pandemic information is sent to Diocese by email from the Catholic Bishops Conference Website, Justice & Peace Network Web site, through online editions of Newspapers, Catholic Universe, and the Catholic Directory. Petitions have been forwarded on a range of issues e.g Child Euthanasia, Comprehensive Sexuality Reform, Gender Reform (SNP). Fund raising within Diocese has also been amazing with local charities who work in the areas outlined above benefitting hugely.

Media

The UCM News continues to be edited produced and distributed although there are still some issues with distribution. The Web site is now up and running with lots of information including Committee and Diocesan details. Mrs Sarah Davis our National Public Service Officer helped by phoning Diocesan Secretaries to remind them of the information required. The Newspaper is available online through the Website and our Media Officer Mrs Jean Lopez-Lopez is working on increasing the information available on activities within the Diocese. As well as articles from Diocese and Foundations our National Vice President Mrs Mariann French wrote an article about cycling the Camino, and Mrs Val Ward on attending the WUCWO General Assembly in Assisi, and the Working Party on the Re-Launch.

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

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We recently had an article on UCM published in the Catholic Herald. The National Committee has agreed that our Media Officer should receive training and support to enable her to keep the Web site current and operational. Our Media Officer also continues to monitor and post to our Facebook page. She keeps us up to date with Vatican News, CBCEW news and events, and our regular blogger Mrs Margaret Roberts keeps us up to date with Saints of the day and her daily Mass outings.

The online Universe Catholic Weekly Newspaper has been available to our members for over a year now the National Secretary receives it and sends it out weekly. Most computers now offer the capacity to read text out loud including Newspapers. Many Dioceses now send regular Newsletters to their Foundations and Foundations use their Parish Newsletters and Bulletins to advertise meetings and speakers. Diocese send UCM News to past Officers, Bishops and Independent members and Diocese try and send something to UCM News for each publication. Some Dioceses are able to contribute regularly to their own Diocesan Catholic Newspaper. In response to a suggestion made by a Foundation President Middlesbrough Diocese Media Officer, has started putting together an events calendar to enable them to participate in and support activities with other foundations, e.g., the Rosary rally, without any clashes. "I hope that, for next year, the calendar would prove to be more effective and that we would be able to attend activities promoted by each foundation". The National Committee have done something similar for themselves so that we can attend regular events e.g Catholic Women Praying Together.

Diocesan Independent Members

Whilst gathering information for the UCM website our Public Service Officer Mrs Sarah Davis also managed to talk to most Diocese re Diocesan Independent members in their Diocese. This research confirms that currently most of these members are older women who are no longer to attend Foundation meetings due to age and infirmity. Foundations and Diocese report high levels of support for these members although there are some who are in areas without either diocesan or foundations support. An advert in the UCM News is aimed to make all aware of the *possibility* of being a Diocesan Member and to encourage membership. Our intention is to attract potentially younger women who can contribute via available technology, perhaps initially passively, but hopefully in time, more overtly and contribute their talents to the organisation. Sarah also worked tirelessly on producing "Scarves" something she is still working on.

Diocesan and Foundation activities

Most Foundations celebrate Masses regularly. They also have a Diocesan Annual Mass celebration. Our members are very involved in support of church activity. They took active roles at both Parish Foundation and Diocesan level during the Synod and in post synodal conversations and activities and many of our members supported the World Day of Prayer written by the Women of Taiwan in their local churches. Some Foundations also led and organised the service in their area. One member said, "This is always a joy to attend and gives us a chance to share with our sisters in other faiths".

Whilst many Diocese report problems mainly with aging membership and the reluctance from members to take office there was a high level of parish and diocesan activity reported by all. Members continue to organise attend and take part in spiritual and social life of their parishes and Diocese. They have taken part in Diocesan Formation, reading to local schoolchildren. They are Sacristans, Eucharistic Ministers, Readers of the Word, Catechists. They have attended Lenten and Advent reflections, Meditations, Stations of the Cross, Benediction, saying the Rosary & Divine Mercy Chaplet on a weekly basis, Rosary Rally's, Christm Mass.

They have taken part in National, Diocesan, Foundation and Parish Pilgrimages to Walsingham Knock, Northern Spain, Schoenstatt, Aylesford.

All this as well as all those activities that are done and have been done year in year out by the women of the Parish and often go unnoticed, flower arranging; laundering altar linen; church cleaning; altar serving; Welcoming; counting teams; Summer Christmas and Easter Fayres, weddings, funerals, baptism, catering at events etc. As with women everywhere, we UCM Members are used to multi-tasking, we are here, there, and everywhere.

Members continue to enjoy a variety of interesting speakers at their meetings including book reviews; flower arranging; famous Queens; personal histories; visit to Lourdes; May customs; bee keeping; assistance dogs; trip to Oberammergau; making jewellery; childhood in Poland under the Nazi and Communist regimes; Street Pastors etc. Talks on defibrillators, Talking Newspaper, SCAMS, talk from Parish Sister, slide show and updates on their chosen charity, general discussion sessions. blood bikes, Air ambulance, Photographs, Sir Isaac Newton, Music, and Poetry Evenings. Women in Ministry, Climate change, Developing Spirituality, Religious Poetry, The Ethics of a Just War, Women at the Periphery, using a defibrillator, local history Wellbeing, will writing. Suicide Prevention, Air Ambulance, Lace making, the work of local councillors, gentle exercises and dance, Flower demonstration, Operatic Society, physiotherapist how to prevent falls and take care of our bones as we age, life as a 'Bobby' in Liverpool, Water Aid, Oscar Romero, and an army Padre.

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED (CONTINUED): 31ST DECEMBER 2023

A lot of our members have been out and about too visiting, Garden Centres, exhibition “The Man in the Shroud” York, Westminster Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, well they looked through the golden gates! They’ve been to the Cinema, Southport, Barr Convent where they celebrated the mass in honour of St Margaret Clitherow. During July and August many foundations enjoy a trip out, and some of the places they visited where: Bodnant Gardens St Winefrids Well, Wales, York, Chester, gardens; a barge tour around Albert Dock, Newydd, Llangollen, home to two aristocratic ladies affectionately known as the “Ladies of Llangollen. Afternoon Teas, Christmas meals, Summer Soiree, Fashion Show, Plant Evening.

Annual and Summer Retreats, Masses, Rosary Rally’s Diocesan meetings, and Masses are always well attended. Salford Diocese held a retreat **“Our Way Together”** “In the Diocese and in Our Deaneries. It was a wonderful opportunity as Mothers to come together in prayer and reflect upon how God’s plan of Love enlightens our minds and Hearts. During our time together we had the opportunity share with each other. How our journey starts with listening to the Holy Spirit

All foundations celebrate milestone birthdays and anniversaries at their meetings.

Big birthdays and Anniversaries are celebrated UCM are good at cake and parties. Foundation 1st 20th 40th 70th 75th 85th anniversary celebration Portsmouth cancelled because of Covid.

Congratulations to Jo Allan on her 100th birthday and Ann McGeever on her 90th Birthday. Ann was Past President, Secretary and Treasurer. (Middlesbrough)

Diamond and Golden Wedding anniversaries were celebrated.

This year lots of us also celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III.

UCM forwarded two proposals to be discussed at the NCWGB AGM both were around child poverty, one school meals and one on 2 child, Child Benefit Cap. Our Vice President Mrs Monica Ovel is our representative on NCWGB but has had problems in making contact as the UCM representative. The National Committee would like to thank Mrs Anne Emblem for forwarding information to us.

We have received and forwarded reports and updates from both National Justice and Peace, Bishops Conference and CAFOD.

Some closing remarks from Diocesan Presidents and Secretaries

Ok I know there is a lot of work involved and it can get a bit stressful but when the evening is upon us, the place is buzzing, the room is full to capacity (we had a waiting list!), everyone is having such a great time you just can’t not have a smile on your face and enjoy the atmosphere in the room

It takes women to create and sustain a community! We are these women, and we should be proud of us!

Finally, it is so lovely to be back in UCM, at National, Diocesan and Foundation level, it is different since covid, but we are all doing our best to update UCM and encourage people to join us.

And From Me

Thanks to you all. I received reports from all Diocese, I think that might be a record. Within those reports there were Members who dealt with serious illnesses, and family crisis, you know who you are, and we were all supported by members of our Diocese and Committees, you too know who you are.

Financial Review

The Charity is reliant on the support of its Members through their subscriptions, donations, and fundraising. For the Year Ended 31st December 2023 there was a deficit of £6,165 (2022: deficit £52,297). In 2022 there had been the deliberate decision not to charge a Membership Subscription in and the much lower deficit in 2023 reflects the reinstatement of subscriptions. Total expenditure in was very similar to 2022 at £95,806 (2022: £96,969).

Reserves

In view of the national nature of the Charity’s activities, the Trustees aim to maintain free reserves in unrestricted funds at a level that equates to 2 years’ unrestricted expenditure. The balance held as unrestricted funds as at 31st December 2023 was £137,994 of which £127,811 is regarded as free reserves after allowing for £10,183 tied up in tangible fixed assets. This represents approximately 116 months’ unrestricted annual expenditure, which is below the target level of reserves.

Plans for the future

As an organisation we are committed to increasing our membership. We will explore ways of working to fulfil our objective to ensure Catholic education for future generations as part of our mission to teach and defend Christian values in family life.

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS**ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED (CONTINUED): 31ST DECEMBER 2023****Risk Assessment**

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to its operations and finances. By monitoring the level of reserves, ensuring control over financial systems and examining the operational risks faced, the Trustees believes that effective systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements 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 charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity, and of the incoming resources and application of resources, of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to: -

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice 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 charity will continue its activities.

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

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by the trustees on 10th May 2024 and signed on their behalf by:-

Mrs. C. Lydon
Trustee & National Secretary

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

I report on the accounts of The Union of Catholic Mothers for the Year Ended 31st December 2023, which are set out on pages 14 to 21.

Respective responsibilities of Trustee and Examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent Examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to: -

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- 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 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.

R.A. Prior, FCCA, FCIE, DChA,
Chartered Certified Accountant
Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners

W. H. Prior,
Chartered Certified Accountants
Railway Court,
Doncaster. DN4 5FB

10th May 2024

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

	<u>Note</u>	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	2022
		£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations and legacies	2	12,378	758	13,136	6,757
Charitable activities	3	68,292	-	68,292	32,476
Other trading activities	4	5,959	-	5,959	4,965
Investment Income – Bank Interest		2,158	96	2,254	474
TOTAL INCOME		88,787	854	89,641	44,672
Expenditure					
Expenditure on raising funds - fundraising	5	-	-	-	-
Expenditure on Charitable activities					
National Conference & Annual Meeting		22,897	-	22,897	20,395
Officers & Representatives Travel		9,414	-	9,414	6,007
Study Conference & Media Days		338	-	338	535
Pilgrimages		32,530	-	32,530	31,855
Thanksgiving Mass		-	-	-	4,303
Other Charitable Activities		28,977	1,650	30,627	33,874
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		94,156	1,650	95,806	96,969
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(5,369)	(796)	(6,165)	(52,297)
Balances brought forward at 1st January 2023		143,363	18,462	161,825	214,122
Balances carried forward at 31st December 2023		137,994	17,666	155,660	161,825

The notes on pages 16 to 21 form part of these financial statements

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2023

		2023	2022
	Note	£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	8	10,183	10,426
Current assets			
Stock		3,700	3,254
Debtors and Prepayments	9	1,400	3,231
Cash at bank and in hand	10	142,465	146,900
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		147,565	153,385
Liabilities: amounts falling due within one year	11	(2,088)	(1,986)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net current assets		145,477	151,399
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets	14	155,660	161,825
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
 <u>Represented by:</u>			
Restricted Funds	12	17,666	18,462
Unrestricted Funds	13	137,994	143,363
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		155,660	161,825
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The financial statements on pages 14 to 21 were approved by the trustees on 10th May 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Mrs J. Hodge
Trustee (National President)

Mrs S. Bickerstaffe
Trustee (National Treasurer)

The notes on pages 16 to 21 form part of these financial statements

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) “*Accounting and Reporting by Charities*” (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

Income

All income is treated as unrestricted income, unless the donor has placed restrictions on the manner in which the donation or grant may be spent, in which case it is treated as restricted income. The restricted funds are detailed in Note 12. Designated Funds represent amounts set aside for specific areas of expenditure by the Trustees and are detailed in Note 13. Legacies are recognised following the granting of probate when the administrator/executor of the Estate has communicated the entitlement in writing.

Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Direct Charitable expenditure including support costs and governance costs (costs involving public accountability and compliance with regulation and good practice). Expenditure is recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Third Party Collections and Funds

Collections, and other funds raised, for the benefit of third party charities do not represent income or expenditure for The Union of Catholic Mothers. Consequently they are not included in the Statement of Financial Activities as income or expenditure. Any balance held by the charity as at the Balance Sheet date for a third party charity is shown as a liability and reflected in Creditors (Note 11).

Branches

The charity operates nationally through a branch structure based largely around the dioceses of the Catholic Church in England. These financial statements reflect the transactions, and assets and liabilities, of the National and Diocesan Committees. Individual Foundations are distinct from the charity itself and do not operate under the charitable registration of The Union of Catholic Mothers. The transactions, assets and liabilities of Foundations are therefore not reflected in these financial statements.

Fixed Assets

All fixed assets with an original cost of in excess of £250 are capitalised. Depreciation of fixed assets is provided on the straight-line method at the following rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life:

Regalia, Badges & Banners	:	2% on cost
Diocese Equipment	:	25% on cost
Office Equipment	:	12.5% on cost
Computer Equipment	:	33.33% on cost

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

2 Donations

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 TOTAL £	2022 TOTAL £
Donations & Grants	5,412	758	6,170	3,617
Collections	2,330	-	2,330	1,394
Gift Aid Tax	1,474	-	1,474	-
Diocesan Levies	2,788	-	2,788	1,366
Special Projects	374	-	374	380
	<u>12,378</u>	<u>758</u>	<u>13,136</u>	<u>6,757</u>

3 Income from Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 TOTAL £	2022 TOTAL £
Members' Subscriptions	35,452	-	35,452	2,334
Other charitable activities	2,268	-	2,268	1,741
Pilgrimages	30,572	-	30,572	28,401
	<u>68,292</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>68,292</u>	<u>32,476</u>

4 Income from Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 TOTAL £	2022 TOTAL £
Sale of Regalia, Diaries, etc.	4,302	-	4,302	3,402
Fund-raising	1,563	-	1,657	1,563
	<u>5,959</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,959</u>	<u>4,965</u>

5 Expenditure on raising funds - Fundraising

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 TOTAL £	2022 TOTAL £
Fund-raising costs	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

6 Governance costs (Support cost included in Direct Charitable Expenditure)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 TOTAL £	2022 TOTAL £
Trustees' expenses reimbursed	767	-	767	490
Independent Examiner's Fees	2,088	-	2,088	1,986
Other Accountancy fees (Branches)	80	-	80	80
	<u>2,935</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,935</u>	<u>2,556</u>

7 Related Party Transactions & Trustees' Expenses

The trustees, in common with all members of The Union of Catholic Mothers, all give their time freely without any form of remuneration or benefit in kind. There are no employees of the charity. Expenses reimbursed to the three trustees totalled £767 (£490). There were no other identified Related Party Transactions.

8 Fixed assets

Cost	Regalia, Badges & Banners £	Dioceses Equipment £	Office Equipment £	Total £
1st January 2023	12,127	2,912	10,260	25,299
31 st December 2023	<u>12,127</u>	<u>2,912</u>	<u>10,260</u>	<u>25,299</u>
Depreciation				
1st January 2023	1,701	2,912	10,260	14,873
Charge for the Year	243	-	-	243
31 st December 2023	<u>1,944</u>	<u>2,912</u>	<u>10,260</u>	<u>15,116</u>
Net book values				
31st December 2023	<u>10,183</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,183</u>
31st December 2022	<u>10,426</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,426</u>

All fixed assets are held by the charity for use in meeting its charitable objectives.

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

9 Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year		
Debtors	-	-
Prepayments	1,400	3,231
	<u>1,400</u>	<u>3,231</u>
	<u><u>1,400</u></u>	<u><u>3,231</u></u>

10 Cash at bank and in hand

	2023	2022
	£	£
Cash at Bank	142,200	146,894
Cash in Hand	266	6
	<u>142,465</u>	<u>146,900</u>
	<u><u>142,465</u></u>	<u><u>146,900</u></u>

11 Liabilities: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accruals	2,088	1,986
	<u>2,088</u>	<u>1,986</u>
	<u><u>2,088</u></u>	<u><u>1,986</u></u>

12 Restricted Funds

	Balance 1.1.23 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance 31.12.23 £
National Holidays & Rest Home	13,078	854	(1,650)	-	12,282
Conference Reserve	5,384	-	-	-	5,384
	18,462	854	(1,650)	-	17,666

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

12 Restricted Funds (Continued)

The balances on Restricted Funds represent amounts received for specified purposes, which have not been expended at the Balance Sheet date.

(a) National Holidays & Rest Home

This fund exists as a result of donations received to provide respite, convalescent holidays for those in need, and represents the balance of donations that have not yet been expended.

(c) Conference Reserve

This fund reflects the balance of income received in order to meet the costs of the National President's attendance at International Conferences.

(d) Other

Other restricted held represent the balance of funds received specifically for projects in individual dioceses, or at National level. Other restricted funds do not include amounts raised for, but not yet remitted to, other charities. Such funds are not an asset of the charity and are shown in Creditors (note 11).

13 Unrestricted Funds

	Balance 1.1.23 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Balance 31.12.23 £
<u>Designated Fund</u>					
Fixed Asset Fund	10,426	-	(243)	-	10,183
Diocesan Committees	33,179	28,513	(30,581)	-	31,111
Walsingham Sub-Committee	-	16,334	(15,389)	-	945
Conference Reserve	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
General Fund	98,758	43,940	(47,943)	-	94,755
	143,363	88,787	(94,156)	-	137,994

Designated Funds are amounts which have been put aside at the discretion of the Trustees for specific projects.

(a) Fixed Asset Fund:

This fund comprises the amount of the net book value of fixed assets as at the Balance Sheet date, excluding any fixed assets that are part of a Restricted Fund. The unrestricted reserves represented by fixed assets are not readily available to meet ongoing expenditure and the existence of this fund recognises this concept.

(b) Diocesan Committees:

This fund represents the amounts held by Diocesan Committees, designated for use in each diocese.

(c) Conference Reserve:

This fund reflects the amount designated by the Trustees towards meeting the future costs of the National President's attendance at International Conferences.

(d) General Fund:

This represents unrestricted income carried forward to expend in future years.

THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

14 Analysis of Net Assets between Funds

	Tangible Fixed Assets £	Net Current Assets £	2023 TOTAL £	2022 TOTAL £
<u>Restricted Funds</u>				
National Holidays & Rest Home	-	12,282	12,282	13,078
Conference Reserve	-	5,384	5,384	5,384
Other	-	-	-	-
<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>				
Fixed Asset Fund	10,183	-	10,183	10,426
Diocesan Committees	-	31,111	31,111	37,947
Walsingham Sub-Committee	-	945	945	-
Conference Reserve	-	1,000	1,000	1,000
General Fund	-	94,755	94,755	98,758
	<u>10,183</u>	<u>145,477</u>	<u>155,660</u>	<u>161,825</u>

15 Capital Commitments

There were no Capital Commitments as at 31st December 2023 (2022: Nil).