



CONFERENCE *of* RELIGIOUS

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England & Wales

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

THE CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

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## Reference and administrative information Year to 30 September 2024

<b>Executive Committee</b>	<p>Sr Sarah Dobson CJ <i>elected Oct 2021 – elected joint leader in May 2024</i></p> <p>Sr Monica Matthews SHJC <i>appointed Oct 2019 – elected joint leader in May 2024</i></p> <p>Sr Anne Morris DHS <i>elected Oct 2021– elected joint leader in May 2024</i></p> <p>Sr Sue Berry CSF (Anglican Associate Member) <i>elected Sept 2017</i></p> <p>Sr Margaret Donovan HC <i>elected May 2019</i></p> <p>Fr Richard Reid CSsR <i>elected Oct 2021</i></p> <p>Sr Jen Bromham <i>elected November 2023</i></p> <p>Sr Jane Maltby RSCJ <i>elected Nov 2023</i></p> <p>Sr Mary Deane PBVM <i>elected May 2024</i></p> <p>Sr Ann Sullivan SP <i>elected May 2024</i></p> <p>Sr Catherine Lloyd RSCJ <i>elected Oct 2021 – stepped down from the Board in May 2024</i></p> <p>Sr Margo Murphy RNDM <i>elected May 2024 – stepped down from the Board in Sep 2024</i></p>
<b>Principal office</b>	<p>St Philomena's 70-71 Euston Square London NW1 1DJ</p>
<b>Auditor</b>	<p>Buzzacott Audit LLP 130 Wood Street London EC2V 6DL</p>
<b>Investment manager</b>	<p>CCLA Investment Management Limited Senator House 85 Queen Victoria Street London EC4V 4ET</p>
<b>Banker</b>	<p>The Royal Bank of Scotland plc 48 Haymarket London SW1Y 4SE</p>
<b>Solicitors</b>	<p>Stone King LLP Upper Borough Court (UBC) Upper Borough Walls Bath BA1 1RG</p>

## **Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024**

The members of the Executive Committee (ie the trustees) of the Conference of Religious (CoR) present their report together with the audited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 September 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 31 to 34 of the attached accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Conference of Religious (CoR) is a small charity, with around 243 members. Its formal membership consists of both the female and male Major Superiors of each institute and Superiors General in the Catholic Church (or their nominees) who work in England or Wales. Associate membership is offered to the superiors of Anglican Communities (since 1992) and to all Contemplative Superiors in England and Wales (since 2000).

### **Vision Statement of the Conference of Religious**

The Conference of Religious seeks to be a dynamic and proactive presence in the Church and the world today.

### **Mission statement of the Conference of Religious**

The Mission of CoR is to:

- ❖ enable the prophetic voice of Religious Congregations to be heard making Religious Life better known;
- ❖ unite its membership in collaborative initiatives translating Gospel vision into reality; and
- ❖ offer support to its membership and particularly those in positions of leadership.

### **Our Values**

All our activities are inspired by Gospel Values. The hallmarks of CoR are:

- ❖ unity in diversity
- ❖ justice
- ❖ integrity
- ❖ hope

### INTRODUCTION (continued)

#### **Our Aims and Objectives**

The object of the charity is to promote the welfare of apostolic institutes of Religious in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, while respecting the autonomy, nature and spirit of each other. This includes:

- ❖ effecting closer co-operation with each other and with various other religious bodies and individual bishops;
- ❖ providing representation with constituted authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil.

#### ***To create a Prophetic Voice that gives witness to the values of the Gospel***

- ❖ to be a prophetic, corporate, pro-active voice in the Church and in Society;
- ❖ in particular, to speak on behalf of people who live on the margins, promoting justice;
- ❖ to promote visible witness of the Good News of Jesus Christ, and Gospel values in reality today;
- ❖ to witness to the gift of community living; and
- ❖ to witness to unity in diversity.

#### ***To generate and participate in Networks that promote Collaboration***

- ❖ to actively promote collaboration amongst members;
- ❖ to find ways of improving communication between members;
- ❖ to promote greater links with Vicars for Religious;
- ❖ to seek greater dialogue with the Church and its agencies at national and local level;
- ❖ to foster coordinated liaison with the Bishops, nationally and in local dioceses;
- ❖ to build deeper ecumenical relationships; and

#### ***To serve and support Religious in England and Wales***

- ❖ to answer enquiries and to respond to members' needs;
- ❖ to develop structures of mutual support;
- ❖ to set up a professional database and informal group mailing systems;
- ❖ to find ways of sharing gifts, skills and resources, ideas, etc;
- ❖ to be active participants in Safeguarding initiatives in the Church in England and Wales;
- ❖ to participate in the work of Vocations and to support the National Office; and
- ❖ to encourage and support the formation of new Religious Life initiatives.

**INTRODUCTION** (continued)

**Our Aims and Objectives** (continued)

***To serve and support Religious in England and Wales*** (continued)

The charity pursues these objectives by operating through its Executive Committee and other committees and groups drawn from the expertise of the membership and professionals and coordinated through the Secretariat. The Secretariat disseminates information, organises conferences and meetings, provides advice and support to and maintains links with Religious and other bodies that have similar interests.

**Public benefit**

CoR exists to support and promote the work of Religious in England and Wales. The members of CoR are involved through their ministry in a wide range of activities including: education, pastoral support, healthcare, working with refugees and victims of modern-day slavery, chaplaincy and counselling, which are all of direct benefit to the public.

By providing increasing opportunities for collaboration and undertaking a range of other activities on behalf of its members that are outlined in this report, CoR assists in the provision of the public benefit, by our member congregations.

When setting the objectives and planning the work for the year and future activities, the members of the Executive Committee have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

**ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE**

**Message from the Leadership**

*I am writing in an active year for CoR as we find our feet again after a period of staff changes. All of us religious have been facing changes and challenges within our communities which perhaps seem small when we look around at the turmoil in the world around us. However, we have all been called into the leadership that we exercise – I doubt many of us would have chosen it ourselves – and we trust that by the faithful and creative exercising of our responsibilities we are playing our part in fulfilling this call.*

*Our foundress Mary Ward at the end of her life said to those with her, 'Cherish God's vocation in you ... may it be constant, efficacious and loving'. A recent gathering of UK Mary Ward sisters met under the title 'Cherish God's vocation in each other .....'. We hope that CoR will be an ongoing support and encouragement to cherish and support us all in our various vocations to work for the Reign of God.*

*Cath Lloyd rscj and I shared the leadership of the CoR executive during the time in which we were re-connecting with members and picking up some of the hopes and plans that had been temporarily laid aside.*

## Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

#### Message from the Leadership (continued)

*Cath has now left the executive due to commitments in her own congregation and we have once again formed a shared team to lead the executive board. Anne Morris dhs and Monica Matthews shcj have joined to carry this responsibility together. We also have new members on the executive board – Jane Maltby rscj whom you will know from her role in the collaboration events that have been taking place over the year, with Mary Deane pbvm and Ann Sullivan sp who are our new members. We are actively encouraging more leaders from mens' congregations to step forward and join the executive board.*

*We have been pleased at the enthusiasm with which the workshops around the country have been greeted, and the positive feedback from members. The planning group has already organised workshops for this coming year, but are still open to suggestion and requests.*

*We are holding the 2025 AGM meeting at Highgate House near Northampton, a new venue for us where we will have sole use of the house. We have refined the programme so that it will run as a two-day, one-night event. People were very keen to retain the social residential element, but at the same time, we wanted to keep costs down. We hope that this midlands venue may help reduce travel for some ... although inevitably not everyone! Our theme "Synodal Leadership - Forward Thinking – Outward Facing" expresses the hope that CoR is now in a place where we can face outward and forward with some confidence.*

*Sarah Dobson cj      Monica Matthews SCHJ      Anne Morris dhs*

*Sarah Dobson cj on behalf of the leadership group Monica Matthews shcj and Anne Morris dhs*

#### The Secretariat

Following the significant staff transitions in 2023, the small but experienced Secretariat, led by Susan Thomas as part time General Secretary, has actively listened and responded to the wishes of members and has worked to answer those requirements. Throughout the year, they have worked diligently to reestablish and introduce improved systems and practices, rebuild continuity and stability for members, and restore regular contact and build confidence in CoR.

The Secretariat's priorities have been entirely focused on meeting the needs of members and significantly enhancing operations and member services through the development of a robust support structure. While critically evaluating and embedding new ways of working, they have ensured these align with CoR's commitment to effective and timely communication, professional support, and best use of financial resources.

The Secretariat is now efficiently operating entirely remotely, a strategic move that has significantly reduced the overhead costs associated with maintaining a physical premises. Members have responded positively to this initiative.

### **ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE** (continued)

#### **Vacating the offices at Euston Square**

In May 2024 the Executive Committee took the decision to vacate the offices rented from PSMG in Euston Square, London, having worked from those offices for many years. With the significant reduction in numbers in office staff, and small number of visitors to the site, it was agreed that CoR no longer required such a large space and therefore we tended notice to vacate. Conscious of expenditure and to ensure best use of CoR funds, this move has enabled us to make a significant saving on rent and overheads and redirect those funds to enhance Membership support. Over the years CoR have enjoyed the friendship and kindness offered by the PSMG sisters, so it was with some sadness that this decision was made and we thank them for their generosity and support.

Arrangements were made to move the equipment we were retaining to staff's home addresses, and also donated much of the unwanted office furniture to a local homeless charity and unwanted stationery to a local play school and sisters also shared some items with the overseas communities they visited in the summer. There were many sacred artifacts, some of which were retained, but those not required were given to Bruno Ormsby, specialists in sacred artifacts for onward sale. A total of £850 worth of artifacts were sold and the proceeds given to CoR. The remaining items are in their shop and also on their website, with the agreement to confirm to us once they are sold.

The IT support consultants attended Euston Square offices and removed the IT infrastructure and equipment and it is now housed in their offices, until it is required by us or sold on, with all proceeds returning to CoR.

#### **Keeping a presence in Euston Square**

The secretariat conducted an important project in terms of reviewing and reducing the Archives. This work is vital to ensure we adhere to financial and regulatory rules in terms of retaining documentation, but equally as important to ensure we retain elements of CoR's past work. To this end CoR employed a qualified archivist with specific Religious archive experience to work alongside the secretariate on this task.

On completion of the archiving all material outside the retention period was confidentially shredded by a company who provided a confidential destruction certificate.

With the archives reduced, CoR agreed with PSMG that they retain a single archive room until March 2025 and possibly longer. CoR also retains Euston Square as the registered charity address. This has been extremely beneficial in terms of easy access to the archives etc.

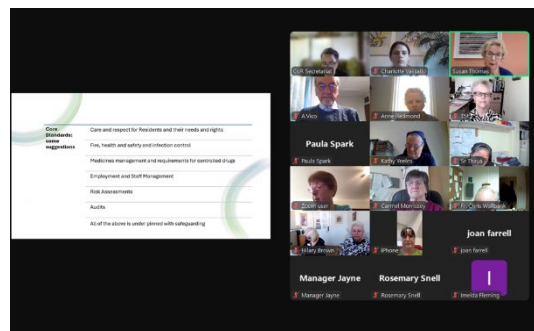


## Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

#### Meetings

Throughout the year, CoR has organised and conducted an increasingly large range of meetings, online and face to face, encompassing various topics and initiatives aimed at supporting its mission and Member s; many of these meetings are detailed below:



#### Annual General Meeting May 2024 – CoR The Way Forward

The Annual General Meeting of the Conference of Religious was held from 13th to 15th May 2024 at Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes. The theme, "CoR – The Way Forward," was expertly steered by facilitator Sarah Broscombe. Sarah worked closely with the AGM planning committee to organise the conference. Having previously facilitated CoR's 2023 AGM, she was very aware of the recent history and key topics to address, ensuring greater continuity for attendees and supporting CoR's intention to move forward.

The AGM began with a morning session for new leaders and members of CoR's leadership team. This meeting provided valuable insights into the responsibilities and challenges of leadership, ensuring they were aware of the support and assistance available from CoR on their journey through the often-difficult area of leadership.

On Monday afternoon, Sarah Broscombe and the CoR leadership team reflected on the organisation's performance over the past year, addressing staff changes, communication challenges with Members, and the need to rebuild trust and engagement. They highlighted the organisation's renewed vision and its commitment to moving forward with a stronger, more unified approach.

The second day focused on leadership for the future, including discussions on leadership models tailored to Congregations and the importance of safeguarding. Members explored how to maintain their core purpose in very challenging circumstances. Sarah facilitated small group discussions, encouraging participants to share experiences and common challenges. These sessions fostered meaningful discussions, and despite the differences faced by each congregation, many similarities emerged. Participants enjoyed analysing these shared experiences and exchanging thoughts on good practices, including what has worked well and what could be improved.

Sarah Dobson CJ presented information on CoR's current leadership structure consisting of a shared leadership with Cath Lloyd RSCJ. Members were informed that Cath Lloyd would be stepping down from the Executive due to other commitments. As no individual had come forward to take the role of President, it was therefore proposed that the role of President would now be shared by three Members: Sarah Dobson CJ, Anne Morris DHS, and Monica Matthews SHCJ. The Members debated this and unanimously approved CoR's shared leadership model for another year. This new model, with Executive Members sharing roles, reduces the workload on individuals while ensuring that Members' needs are appropriately met. It also allows the Executive to focus on specific areas of CoR's work, such as the Finance Committee and Health Care Sub-Group, both of which are now fully operational again.

## Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

#### Annual General Meeting May 2024 – CoR The Way Forward (continued)



Safeguarding was another key focus. Una Coogan CoR Safeguarding Lead, provided a detailed update on current safeguarding issues and processes, answering Member questions and directing further inquiries to the RLSS. Representatives from RLSS introduced their incoming CEO, Melissa Andrews and outlined future plans for safeguarding support.

Spiritual reflection was central to the AGM, with daily prayers and Mass offering space for quiet contemplation. The Papal Nuncio celebrated Mass on the second day, bringing a sense of unity and renewal to the gathering. That evening, a celebratory dinner provided an opportunity for Members to socialise and connect. During the dinner, Amanda Francis of Buzzacott was honoured for her years of service to CoR and many of its Members, receiving a heartfelt tribute and a floral arrangement in gratitude.

## Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

#### Annual General Meeting May 2024 – CoR The Way Forward (continued)

The final day included the adoption of CoR's annual accounts, presented by Amanda Francis, with updates from the Collaboration Group workshops and the Secretariat. The AGM concluded with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to CoR's mission, as well as strengthened connections among Members. This gathering successfully addressed key challenges while charting a clear path forward for the organisation.

#### Collaboration Committee Workshops

This group was set up following requests first raised by member Congregations in 2023, asking for help and support as they increasingly experience the challenges of diminishment, aging and even closure. Led by Sr Jane Maltby RSCJ, the Committee was made up of Sr Monica Matthews SHJC, Sr Margaret Donovan HC, Sr Kathleen Colmer OSU, Sr Ann Turner RC, Sr Jen Bromham IBVM and Sr Julie Rose SSHJM.

During 2024 six Collaboration Workshops on a variety of topics including change, healthcare in care homes, and Vias's, organised and delivered. The guiding principles for all the workshops were responding to member's needs, Charisms and spirituality; gospel values, vision of Religious life; fostering mission and life, and synodality.

The objectives were that participants would have the opportunity to share their concerns, their issues, and something of what they have already achieved, as well as receive professional input on the specific topics. It was agreed that each workshop would be evaluated, and follow-up collaboration/input discussed and proposed.

The Committee held regular planning meetings and worked to ensure all elements of the workshop programme were appropriately managed and delivered as smoothly as possible. It was agreed very early on, that the Committee wanted to have these workshops in person rather than online and this was also felt to be important to Members; not only to provide attendees with the option to learn more about the chosen topics, but also an opportunity for sharing of experiences, and expertise, to dialogue, to meet each other in person and to work in small networking groups.



#### Workshop Overview

Each of the topics were selected in relation to the needs of Membership and in response to Members' frequently asked questions. Up to two members from each Congregation were invited to attend any, or all of the sessions. It was also agreed that attendees did not need to be the same person for each session and might well include lay colleagues, who are often increasingly more involved in Congregational life at the administrative level.

**ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE** (continued)

**Collaboration Committee Workshops** (continued)

The six collaboration workshops during 2024 were:

- ◆ New/innovative leadership & ways of organising ourselves on 7th March 2024
- ◆ Change management on 12th April 2024
- ◆ Charity governance, civil law, and Canon law on 6th June 2024
- ◆ Financial and property management and planning on 27th June 2024
- ◆ Eldercare on 19th September 2024
- ◆ Visas on 23rd October 2024

*Presenters*

The range of experienced presenters for the workshops was extremely impressive in providing both informative and interactive content. The presenters were also most generous in giving their time and energy on these collaborative events for free, which included all those below:

- ◆ Sr Jane Maltby from Society of the Sacred Heart & CoREW
- ◆ Sr Monica Matthews from Society of the Holy Child Jesus & CoREW
- ◆ Sr Margaret Donovan from Sisters of the Holy Cross & CoREW
- ◆ Fr Paul Smyth from Claretian Missionaries
- ◆ Sr Cath Lloyd from Society of the Sacred Heart
- ◆ Susan Thomas from CoREW Secretariat
- ◆ Sr Anne Redmond from Sisters of Charity
- ◆ Sr Doreen Cunningham from Sisters of Nazareth Charitable Trust
- ◆ Sr Michelle Reily from Servite Sisters, Servants of Mary
- ◆ Amanda Francis from Buzzacott Accountants
- ◆ Tim Rutherford from Stone King Solicitors
- ◆ Julie Moktadir from Stone King Solicitors

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

#### Collaboration Committee Workshops (continued)

##### *Workshop Attendance*

There was no charge for those attending the sessions as this was covered by the annual membership fees. For those who were not members of CoR, including members of the APB, who wanted to attend, they were invited to attend at a cost of £10 per person, but places were limited due to the popularity of the workshops. With financial considerations always in mind, it was agreed that CoREW would provide refreshments and asked attendees to bring their own lunch.



There was excellent attendance for each of the Workshops with an average attendance rate of 60+ per event. Presentations and slides were shared with all workshop attendees for onward sharing and a reminder of content and information.

##### *Workshop Venues*

We listened to Members previous comments in relation to trainings and events provided which often included the feeling that events were somewhat London centric with venues often being in central London. The Committee therefore responded to this by ensuring that two of these workshops were delivered in Birmingham and one in Manchester, to provide those living further North with the option for less travel.

##### *Collaboration Workshop Feedback*

The workshops have received excellent feedback from attendees in terms of:

- ◆ the topics covered
- ◆ the presenters
- ◆ the presentations
- ◆ the opportunity for interaction and sharing experiences
- ◆ the venues
- ◆ the learning opportunities from working in small groups.



## Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

#### Collaboration Committee Workshops (continued)

##### *Collaboration Workshop Feedback (continued)*

Many Members have requested other topics or a repeat of specific workshops, and this, together with other more formal sources of feedback, will be the subject of a special Evaluation meeting of the Committee, together with the members of the secretariat in the coming weeks. It is therefore expected that, where possible, further workshops and seminars will be developed for a similar programme in 2025.



##### *Connections with the Wider Church*

Representatives of the Executive attend in the Mixed Commission meetings alongside several Bishops of England and Wales. Currently, these meetings are attended by Sr. Margaret Donovan HC and Sr. Anne Morris DHS, with Sr. Anne chairing the meetings whenever it is CoR's turn to host. Hosting responsibilities alternate, and the Commission meets twice a year. The meetings provide an opportunity for the Religious and Bishops to share what is happening in their lives and in the Church, and where we can work together and so become 'One Church'.

In addition to participating in the Mixed Commission meetings, CoR had the honour of welcoming the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, at the AGM in May 2024. The Archbishop celebrated Mass with CoR and its members, later joining the Gala Dinner where he engaged in conversations with several members of the Executive and meeting delegates.

### Safeguarding

Report from Sr Dr Una Coogan IBVM, Lead Religious for Safeguarding

*This year started marks the final year in our contracts signed with the CSSA. So, as we entered 2024, the plan was for Stephen Ashley, CEO of CSSA to meet with religious via zoom to discuss with them the new proposed structure of the CSSA and the new contracts. The meeting was not without its difficulties, but has led to the CSSA wanting to improve their relationship with religious Life Groups. The CSSA is moving the training and case management/consultation functions over to CaTEW and will operate with its main function as the regulator.*

*As part of my responsibilities, I am expected to go to the Bishops' conference in April and November along with the RLSS, CSSA. Lead Bishop for Safeguarding to brief the Bishops on the latest news/issues in safeguarding.*

**ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE** (continued)

**Safeguarding** (continued)

**CSSA**

*As part of my role with the CSSA, I continue to work on two of the CSSA's subcommittees, the Finance and General-Purpose committee and the Quality Assurance Committee. Work on the Quality Assurance Committee, has led to some work with Paul Threlfall, the CSSA's Safeguarding Quality Assurance Manager to change the wording on the Audit forms used for Religious. The copies of the draft were passed onto three RLG's for their feedback on the wording. Hopefully, these efforts have succeeded in making the audit process more applicable and accessible to RLGs. My thanks to those RLGs who agreed to help with this.*

**Working Parties**

*This year I have also worked on several working groups firstly with Religious who 'own' parishes and the Religious Groups who work in parishes. After various meetings, a Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted and was sent to religious groups for their comments. It is now being checked to ensure that there are no legal gaps in the safeguarding provision in the MoU. The final draft of the MoU is in the final stages of review and will be circulated once all necessary checks have been completed. Hopefully it will act as a guide to both religious and dioceses on who to contact if there are any safeguarding issues re training, DBS, consultation and case management when involving religious who work or have an agreement with a diocese. At present I am working with a small working party to look at the financial contribution paid by religious life groups to help finance the CSSA. This working party is only starting its work, but it is hoped that by the middle of 2025 we will come up with a scheme that is acceptable both to the religious life groups and to the CSSA.*

**Conferences**

*I have attended several conferences this year, meeting various members of the safeguarding community. Firstly, the RLSS conference at the end of February where I had the opportunity to introduce myself to many of the religious there.*

*In May I was glad to be able to attend part of the CoR AGM to speak about the current issues in Safeguarding. One of the issues raised was the need for Religious to give a mandate to a small group of people to represent all the Religious in safeguarding. A questionnaire was sent out to ask for the mandate and asking for names to be nominated for this group. From the completed questionnaires, the overwhelming majority were in favour of the mandate and names of people to join the group have been raised. We will have a small group of three religious, a representative from RLSS and myself to represent the Religious in safeguarding matters. Confirming participation from the religious to join this group has been challenging but hopefully we will manage to get there. We still need one more religious preferable male to join the group. This group of five representatives of the Religious Life groups will join five representatives of the dioceses to work together as a new strategic board for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. This new body will be called the Strategic Council for Catholic Safeguarding- SCCS. We have had our first meeting where we considered how this will fit within the existing structures and its overall function within the Church. There are joint chairs for this new body – Bishop Paul Mason as Lead Bishop for Safeguarding and myself as Lead Religious for Safeguarding.*

**ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE** (continued)

**Safeguarding** (continued)

**Conferences** (continued)

*I also attended one of the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator's Conferences which was useful in understanding the Dioceses plans and issues regarding safeguarding, one of which is how to plan for religious coming to work in diocese from abroad.*

*In June, I went to the International Safeguarding Conference 2024 in Rome. This year's theme was Safeguarding and Disability, which was held from 18-21 June at the Pontifical Gregorian University. It was an interesting conference and it was good too network with others involved in safeguarding from around the world. In 2025 the conference which will be on 'Women in the Church'. I hope it will be well attended by religious from the UK. I have been able to advertise it well in advance to encourage others to join it, particularly given the year's conference topic. It would be beneficial, if religious groups in the UK with members in Africa or Asia could facilitate the attendance of someone from their own religious group at the conference.*

*The most recently attended conference was the Vicars for Religious conference in Hinsley Hall. It was also attended by Bishop Paul Mason, the lead Bishop for safeguarding. Together, we provided an update on safeguarding and its structure in the church and answered questions on how vicars for religious could help to create a network to allow safeguarding information to pass more freely between religious groups and the diocese in which they are situated, and the group mandated for safeguarding.*

**Canon Law**

*I have been asked by several religious to lend support with Canon law issues and I'm happy to assist where I can. Following this, the RLSS arranged an online seminar with Father Christopher Hancock and myself, and several survivors of sexual abuse to address questions posed by the survivors about canon law and its use in abuse cases. This proved to be a difficult online seminar for us as canonists, as the survivors are firm in their view that canon law is used to protect the offender rather than the survivor. To say that the canonists disagreed with this view would be an understatement!*

*The RLSS and CSSA will often ask for help on strategic canon law advise and I try to help.*

*I have recently attended an online course run by St Paul's University, Ottawa on Penal Law and the investigation of cases. The course was excellent and I hope eventually to be able to write a simple guide for safeguarding leads on good canon law practice when an accusation is made. When finished I am happy to make it available to others.*

**Interviews**

*This year I was invited to take part in the interviews to find the new CEO of the RLSS when Melissa Andrews was appointed. I was also asked to seek the views of a small group of religious on the work Anne O'Brien has achieved over the past three years as Chair of the RLSS. She was open to being reappointed as the chair of the RLSS for another three years.*



**ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE** (continued)

**Safeguarding** (continued)

**Interviews** (continued)

*The religious responded very positively to Anne and her role. So I have written a letter in support of Anne's reappointment for another three years. She was successfully re appointed.*

*As a board member I was involved in interviewing the new chair for the CSSA in December as Nazir Afzal has stepped down after three years. Mike Cunningham was successful and has been appointed by CaTEW for a three year term.*

*After one year in the job I can say that I am enjoying it. There is so much work to be done to ensure that we do act as one church that the views of RLG'S are heard and that we can create a safe church for all. In the year ahead I look forward to working more closely with CoR, with the CSSA, RLSS and the religious. One hope for next year to be able to create with the help of the RLSS an accessible database of Religious.*

**Safeguarding Elderly Religious Project**

The Safeguarding Elderly Religious Project is a collaborative initiative between the Conference of Religious (CoR) and the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS), focused on enhancing the safety and well-being of elderly Religious across England and Wales. Endorsed by the Executive in April and supported by funding from Porticus, this project seeks to address practical and operational safeguarding concerns within Religious communities, particularly regarding the care and support of elderly members. With an average age of 82 among those in Religious communities, many require some form of care, making this initiative both timely and essential.

Both CoR and RLSS bring extensive experience in safeguarding, training, governance, and human resources within community and health care settings. This expertise is instrumental in developing and implementing best practices for the care of older Religious members. The project aims to foster a collaborative approach by engaging directly with Congregations and their lay staff, creating tailored training materials, information forums, and safeguarding resources.

Significant progress has been made in achieving the project's objectives. A dedicated working group, chaired by Susan Thomas, General Secretary of CoR, has been established. This group, which includes RLSS representatives and experienced Religious leaders such as Jane Bertelsen FMDM, meets monthly to drive the initiative forward. Additionally, CoR has launched a monthly online care forum designed to support those overseeing both registered and unregistered care homes, as well as those providing care within community houses has been established. The forum has generated strong interest from Religious and their lay staff, with the first session attracting over 60 participants.

**ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE** (continued)

**Safeguarding Elderly Religious Project** (continued)

Recognising the number of unregistered care facilities, work has commenced on developing a set of core standards to ensure that all care settings operate within a framework based on current best practices. These standards aim to provide clear guidelines and benchmarks for safeguarding and care, particularly in settings outside formal regulatory frameworks such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Additionally, CoR has initiated the development of a geographical map of Religious care provisions, encouraging members to share information about their facilities and locations. This initiative ensures that previously unidentified care facilities receive the necessary support and recognition.

Engagement with Religious care facilities has been a key component of this project. Two RLSS staff members have been actively visiting care homes and community houses following responses to a distributed questionnaire on elderly care. Insights gathered have highlighted a critical need for targeted training on memory loss, mental health, and personal care procedures. Furthermore, discussions have revealed the importance of addressing leadership accountability and care planning. These themes are shaping the agenda for CoR's monthly care forums.

The collaboration between CoR and RLSS has been pivotal in leveraging their shared expertise to develop best practices and address gaps in elderly care provision. CoR will also oversee joint reporting to Porticus, manage the project budget, and provide strategic direction. Susan Thomas and Jane Bertelsen will offer essential guidance on Religious healthcare provision and community care.

This initiative represents a significant step forward in safeguarding and improving the care and support provided to elderly Religious members. The commitment of CoR and RLSS to this vital work ensures that the well-being and dignity of elderly Religious remain a priority, fostering a culture of safety and best practice across all care settings.

**Health and Care Group**

Led by Sr Monica Matthews SHCJ, the Healthcare Group has continued to provide advice and support to Members in relation to issues of healthcare. Supported by Religious who have a background in healthcare working in partnership with experienced lay staff, a range of advice and support is provided.

This year the work of this group has extended to encompass the monthly online care forum and the face to face healthcare workshops being held as part of the collaboration committee's work.

Further initiatives and events are planned and will include advice on mental health, CQC registration, employment of staff and care in non registered community settings.

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

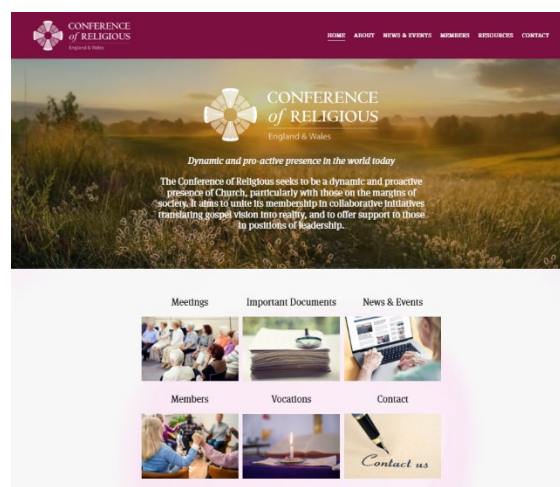
#### Online Media and the CoRespondent

As part of CoR's commitment to improving communication and streamlining processes, we have transitioned from a monthly newsletter to providing updates directly on the redeveloped website. This significant change includes the launch of an "Upcoming News & Events" page and a secure members' section, accessible via a unique password. This shift allows members to access regular updates at their convenience, from any device, offering greater flexibility compared to the fixed schedules of a traditional newsletter.

While this change was a substantial adjustment for many members, it has already proven to be a positive step forward. To support members through the transition, the secretariat offered assistance with navigating the updated site and resolving any technical issues. The website's new user-friendly design, with a built-in search function and organised content tags such as 'AGM' and 'Safeguarding,' ensures quick and easy access to relevant information.

A key benefit of this new approach is our ability to monitor website traffic, providing valuable insights into member engagement—something we couldn't track with the newsletter. This information allows us to better understand how members interact with the site and informs future improvements.

As we continue to develop the website, additional features including a "Useful Contacts" and "Useful Documents" page are being implemented to further enhance the site. The transition has also allowed CoR to reallocate resources more effectively, reducing the time and costs associated with producing a monthly newsletter. Email communication is still be used for urgent updates, ensuring that crucial information is communicated promptly.



We remain committed to maintaining and continually improving the website to keep it relevant, up-to-date, and a valuable resource for all our members.

#### Collaboration with others

CoR continues to work to represent Religious, share information and develop relationships with others in the Church and the wider community through a variety of means. Sometimes this is done by the Executive, for example via the previously mentioned, Mixed Commission Meetings, to represent the views of Religious to the Bishops.

### ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

#### *Collaboration with others (continued)*

We also collaborate with organisations such as the Union of the Catholic European Superiors Major, Union of International Superiors General, Association of Major Religious Superiors in Ireland, and the Association of Provincial Bursars. Those who sit on the committees and groups ensure that CoR is kept abreast of activities and developments elsewhere including:

- ◆ CBCEW Department of Social Justice – A member of the Executive regularly attends the Department of Social Justice meetings, which take place approximately three times a year. These meetings bring together Bishops responsible for various areas, assisted by laypeople who support them in preparing papers on key issues such as Life Issues, Marriage and Family Life, CSAN, Environment, and Human Rights. The meetings are always held in person, allowing for meaningful discussions and the opportunity to engage directly with others in attendance. This setting fosters collaboration and the sharing of information where possible. Attending these meetings has proven to be an enlightening experience, offering deeper insight into the Church's work behind the scenes and the significant efforts being made in the realm of social justice. We support and share information where possible.
- ◆ Anglican Committees – Sister Margaret Shepard NDS sits on the Anglican Committees and Sister Sue Berry CSF is the Anglican representative on the CoR Executive.
- ◆ The National Office of Vocations – through which we support Vocations work by funding the role of Religious Life Promoter.

### FUTURE PLANS

We are currently in the process of developing an updated strategic plan to guide our work in the coming years. This plan will outline the key priorities, objectives, and the steps needed to strengthen our mission and impact. One of the main focuses will be planning sustainable ways to stay both responsive and supportive to our membership. This will ensure that the plan aligns with the needs of religious communities and reflects our shared commitment to safeguarding, social justice, and effective governance.

The new strategic plan will provide a clear framework for decision-making and resource allocation, ensuring that our initiatives remain focused and effective. As we work through this process, we will continue to engage with members to refine our vision and goals. Updates on the plan's progress will be shared in due course, with consultation and implementation expected to begin in the near future.

The work of the Collaboration Committee will take up much of the coming year and this work will provide an opportunity for exploring how Religious might collaborate with respect to the challenges they are facing.

### FINANCIAL REVIEW

#### Results for the year

The statement of financial activities shows that net expenditure for the year before gains on investments was £42,714 (2023: net expenditure of £109,145 before gains on investments). Net gains on the revaluation of investments were £117,749 (2023: net gains of £27,517) leading to an overall increase in funds of £74,765 (2023: decrease in funds of £81,628).

Income comprised mainly of membership fees, income from meetings and investment income. Some members continued to subscribe amounts in excess of their actual fees so that those members whose resources are more limited are not prevented from participating in conferences and other activities. Expenditure reflects the work of CoR.

#### *Investment policy and performance*

The charity's investments, managed by CCLA Investment Management Limited, were valued at £1,079,824 (2023: £962,345) at the year-end date.

The investment managers operate within specific ethical guidelines which are set out and reviewed periodically by the Executive Committee. The ethical guidelines mean that the charity cannot invest in any company connected with armaments, gambling, tobacco, alcohol, contraception and known social injustice in the third world. The charity's investment policy is to maintain a balance between capital growth and income, so that, over the long term, the real value of assets will be maintained.

In accordance with the above policy, investments were held in COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund Income Units and COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund Accumulation Units during the year. The holding returned a total yield (income and capital) of 14% for the year (2023: 4%).

#### *Raising funds*

The charity aims to achieve best practice in the way in which it communicates with members and other supporters. It takes care with both the tone of its communications and the accuracy of its data to minimise the pressures on members and supporters. It applies best practice to protect members' and supporters' data and never sells data, it never swaps data and ensures that communication preferences can be changed at any time. The charity manages its own activities in respect to raising funds and does not employ the services of professional fundraisers. The charity undertakes to react to and investigate any complaints regarding its activities for raising funds and to learn from them and improve its service. During the year, the charity received no complaints about such activities.

#### *Reserves policy*

The members of the Executive Committee consider that it is essential to have in place an appropriate amount of working capital so that the charity may meet its liabilities as and when they fall due. To meet this objective, the members of the Executive Committee consider that funds available for working capital and held as free reserves should be equivalent to at least six months' operating expenses.

## Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024

### FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

#### Results for the year (continued)

##### *Financial position*

At 30 September 2024, the charity had total net assets of £1,190,560 (2023: £1,115,795).

Included within these total funds are restricted funds amounting to £53,624 to fund safeguarding advisory and associated activities in the future (2023: £53,624).

£1,079,824 (2023: £962,345) of these net assets comprise the charity's investment portfolio and represent a designated fund called the capital reserve fund. Demographic data relating to membership of religious congregations, together with the lower number of current vocations, continue to indicate that further reductions in income may be expected in future years.

The charity will rely more and more on investment income in order to fund its charitable work. Consequently, the members of the Executive Committee have set aside, or designated, the value tied up in the charity's investment portfolio as a capital reserve in order to provide a level of assurance that investment income will continue to be generated in future years and thereby 'finance' the charity's work in the long term.

Free reserves at 30 September 2024 stood at £56,397 (2023: £96,696). Comparing this to the charity's reserves policy set out above, the charity's free reserves are slightly below the level required. However, the Executive Committee believes that the reserves will be sufficient to enable CoR to continue to operate and do not expect material concerns to arise over the charity's financial position. The Executive Committee, therefore, is content with the level of free reserves which will be reviewed again in the light of the Strategic Plan that will take shape during 2025.

### PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Executive is continuing to work on assessing the main risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the specific operational areas of the charity, its investments, and its finances. A Risk Register is prepared and updated for each Executive Committee meeting. The Executive believes that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring controls exist over key financial systems, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the charity, it has established effective systems to mitigate those risks. These systems are also frequently reviewed with a view to possible updates and improvements.

#### **Loss of key personnel**

The Executive notes the importance of consistency in staff and key personnel within the organisation. It recognises the challenges that the loss of personnel can have on an organisation that relies on a relatively small team of people. To assist in mitigating this risk, a number of strategies are in place. Some of the Executive Trustees hold positions on external bodies, which are important to the effective functioning of CoR. There are also Religious and lay people who participate in aspects of CoR such as its Finance Committee and in respect of safeguarding.

**PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES** (continued)

**Reliance on limited income sources**

The reliance on one single source of income continues to be a significant risk to the future ability of CoR to provide the service that the members require. The main source of income is the membership fees which are decreasing as numbers of those in Religious life diminish. The number of members is decreasing, resulting in a decrease in the income derived from congregations. This is reflected once again in the budget for 2024/2025.

The Executive also recognises that it receives professional support from its professional advisors. The charity is indebted to these firms for their advice and guidance.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Constitution**

The Conference is governed by its own statutes and is registered with the Charity Commission (Charity Registration No. 277024). The property of the Conference is vested in a Trust, regulated by a trust deed dated 20 November 1978, as amended by deeds of variation dated 4 March 1992 and 20 September 2001.

CoR is administered by an Executive Committee, members of which constitute the trustees of the charity. At 30 September 2024, the Executive Committee comprises of a joint leadership team, and seven other members, as listed on page 1.

The responsibility for representing the charity at meetings of other ecclesiastical and civil bodies falls mainly on members of the Executive Committee. However, the day-to-day management of the charity has been delegated to the General Secretary. The Executive Committee monitors progress by meeting bi-monthly.

The Executive Committee also maintains financial control by approving the annual budget and receiving management accounts which are prepared on a quarterly basis by their accountants.

***Executive Committee***

As stated above, members of the Executive Committee constitute the trustees of the charity.

They are incorporated under the provisions of section 251 of the Charities Act 2011 as “The trustees of the Conference of Religious of England and Wales”.

Members of the Executive Committee, who served during the year or who were in office at the date on which this report was signed, are set out on page 1.

They are appointed by means of nomination and election procedures at the charity's Annual General Meeting. Each member is elected for a period of three years and is eligible to serve for a maximum of two terms.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT** (continued)

**Constitution** (continued)

***Key management personnel***

The members of the Executive Committee consider that they, together with the General Secretary, comprise the key management of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis.

None of the members of the Executive Committee are remunerated for their services to the charity. The remuneration of the General Secretary and other staff members is considered annually by the Executive Committee and any increments to the salary are agreed and ratified.

**STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee is responsible for preparing the report of the Executive Committee and accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Executive Committee to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and expenditure of the charity for that period.

In preparing these accounts, the Executive Committee is required to:

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

The Executive Committee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable it to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, applicable Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the trust deed. The Executive Committee is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



## Report of the Executive Committee Year to 30 September 2024

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Executive would like to thank the members of the current Secretariat for their support and commitment to CoR throughout this difficult year.

Signed on behalf of the Executive Committee:



Sarah Dobson CJ

Member of the Executive Committee

Approved on: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025



**CONFERENCE *of* RELIGIOUS**  
England & Wales

## **Independent auditor's report Year to 30 September 2024**

### **Independent auditor's report to the members of the Executive Committee of The Conference of Religious in England and Wales**

#### **Opinion**

We have audited the accounts of The Conference of Religious in England and Wales (the 'charity') for the year ended 30 September 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the principal accounting policies and the notes to the accounts. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the accounts:

- ◆ give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 30 September 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- ◆ have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- ◆ have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

#### **Basis for opinion**

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

#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

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

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

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

## **Independent auditor's report Year to 30 September 2024**

### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, including the report of the Executive Committee, other than the accounts and our auditor's report thereon. The members of the Executive Committee are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the accounts does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

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

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

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

### **Responsibilities of the members of the Executive Committee**

As explained more fully in the statement of responsibilities of the Executive Committee, the members of the Executive Committee (who are the charity's trustees) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Executive Committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

## Independent auditor's report Year to 30 September 2024

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these accounts.

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

### ***How the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud***

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

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

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

- ◆ Making enquiries of management and representatives from the Executive Committee as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and

## Independent auditor's report Year to 30 September 2024

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

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

- ◆ Considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

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

- ◆ Performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- ◆ Tested and reviewed journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- ◆ Carried out substantive testing of expenditure including the authorisation thereof;
- ◆ Assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- ◆ Investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

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

- ◆ Agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- ◆ Reading the minutes of meetings of the Executive Committee; and
- ◆ Enquiring of as to actual and potential litigation and claims.

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

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

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

## **Independent auditor's report Year to 30 September 2024**

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the members of the Executive Committee, (who are the charity's trustees), as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Executive Committee those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the members of the Executive Committee, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



1 May 2025

Buzzacott Audit LLP  
Statutory Auditor  
130 Wood Street  
London  
EC2V 6DL

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

## Statement of financial activities Year to 30 September 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Investments and interest receivable	1	21,604	—	<b>21,604</b>	19,088
Charitable activities	2	152,408	—	<b>152,408</b>	130,195
<b>Total income</b>		<b>174,012</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>174,012</b>	149,283
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities					
. Promotion of the welfare of Apostolic Institutes of Religious in England and Wales	3	216,726	—	<b>216,726</b>	258,428
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>216,726</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>216,726</b>	258,428
<b>Net expenditure before investment gains (losses)</b>	4	(42,714)	—	<b>(42,714)</b>	(109,145)
<b>Net investment losses gains (losses)</b>	8	117,479	—	<b>117,479</b>	27,517
<b>Net expenditure and net movement in funds</b>		<b>74,765</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>74,765</b>	(81,628)
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 October 2023		1,062,171	53,624	<b>1,115,795</b>	1,197,423
Fund balances carried forward at 30 September 2024		<b>1,136,936</b>	<b>53,624</b>	<b>1,190,560</b>	1,115,795

All income and expenditure in the year to 30 September 2024 related to unrestricted funds.

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

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

## Balance sheet 30 September 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	7		715		3,130
Investments	8		1,079,824		962,345
			<b>1,080,539</b>		965,475
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	9	12,963		5,324	
Short term deposits		—		150,000	
Cash at bank and in hand		171,169		116,455	
		<b>184,132</b>		271,779	
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(74,111)		(121,459)	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<b>110,021</b>		150,320
<b>Total net assets</b>			<b>1,190,560</b>		1,115,795
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>					
Unrestricted funds					
. General funds			56,397		96,696
. Tangible fixed assets fund	11		715		3,130
. Designated funds	12		1,079,824		962,345
			<b>1,136,936</b>		1,062,171
Restricted funds	13		53,624		53,624
			<b>1,190,560</b>		1,115,795

Approved by the members of the Executive Committee and signed on their behalf by:



Sarah Dobson CJ

Member of the Executive Committee

Approved on: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025



## **Principal accounting policies** Year to 30 September 2024

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

### **Basis of preparation**

These accounts have been prepared for the year to 30 September 2024 with comparative information provided for the year to 30 September 2023.

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

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

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

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

### **Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement**

Preparation of the accounts requires the Executive Committee and management to make significant judgements and estimates. No significant judgements or estimates have been made in the preparation of these financial statements.

### **Assessment of going concern**

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

Free reserves at 30 September 2024 stood at £56,397 (2023 £96,696). Comparing this to the charity's reserves policy set out above, the charity's free reserves are slightly below the level required. However, the Executive Committee believes that the reserves will be sufficient to enable CoR to continue to operate and do not expect material concerns to arise over the charity's financial position. The Executive Committee, therefore, is content with the level of free reserves which will be reviewed again in the light of the Strategic Plan that will take shape during 2024.

The Executive Committee believes that the reserves will be sufficient to enable CoR to operate and does not expect material concerns to arise over the charity's financial position.

The Executive Committee is of the opinion that the charity will have sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

## **Principal accounting policies** Year to 30 September 2024

### **Statement of cash flows**

The accounts do not include a statement of cash flows because the charity is considered a small charity and is therefore exempt from the requirement to prepare such a statement under the Charities SORP FRS 102.

### **Income recognition**

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

Income comprises investment income and interest receivable and income from charitable activities, principally the income derived from membership subscriptions and financial contributions towards meetings.

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

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

Income comprising annual membership subscriptions is credited to the statement of financial activities on an accruals basis with reference to the period covered by the subscription. Income in respect to meetings and other events is credited to the statement of financial activities when invoiced and is accounted for net of any discounts and/or rebates.

### **Expenditure recognition**

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

All expenditure incurred by the charity relates directly or indirectly to the principal charitable objective of the charity i.e. promoting the welfare of Apostolic Institutes of Religious in England and Wales. Within this heading, expenditure is categorised between the key areas of activity and is analysed in note 3 to these accounts. Indirect expenditure comprises support costs and governance costs. Support costs include all expenditure on financial procedures, the provision of office services and general administration. Governance costs comprise the costs of public accountability (including audit costs). All support and governance costs are allocated to activities in the ratio of the direct expenditure on each activity.

## **Principal accounting policies Year to 30 September 2024**

### **Tangible fixed assets**

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

Depreciation is provided on office furniture and equipment purchased outright on a straight-line basis at rates of 20% and 25% per annum respectively.

### **Investments**

Listed investments are a form of basic financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction value and subsequently measured at their fair value as at the balance sheet date using the closing quoted market price.

The charity does not acquire put options, derivatives or other complex financial instruments.

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

### **Debtors**

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

### **Cash at bank and in hand and short term deposits**

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

### **Creditors and provisions**

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

## **Principal accounting policies** Year to 30 September 2024

### **Funds structure**

The unrestricted funds of the charity represent those funds which are freely available for use in furtherance of the charity's objectives at the discretion of the members of the Executive Committee. Within the total unrestricted funds of the charity, the members of the Executive Committee have designated amounts for specific purposes and have identified those non-liquid funds represented by the tangible fixed assets and fixed asset investments. Those funds not designated or represented by tangible fixed assets or fixed asset investments are classified as general funds.

### **Pension costs**

Contributions payable to defined contribution pension schemes and/or personal pension plans are accounted for in the year in which they are payable.

## Notes to the accounts Year to 30 September 2024

### 1 Income from investments and interest receivable

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Investment income				
. Unit trusts and common investment funds	16,372	—	<b>16,372</b>	16,110
Bank interest	5,232	—	<b>5,232</b>	2,978
	<b>21,604</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>21,604</b>	<b>19,088</b>

### 2 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Membership subscriptions	121,232	—	<b>121,232</b>	98,920
Meetings	30,403	—	<b>30,403</b>	20,383
Other income	48	—	<b>48</b>	215
Grants receivable	725	—	<b>725</b>	10,677
	<b>152,408</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>152,408</b>	<b>130,195</b>

### 3 Expenditure on charitable activities:

#### *Promotion of the welfare of Apostolic Institutes of Religious in England and Wales*

	Direct staff costs £	Other direct costs £	Total Direct costs £	Support staff £	Other support costs £	Total support costs £	Total 2024 £
Safeguarding	8,539	5,630	14,169	6,124	25,660	31,784	45,953
Members Meetings	—	44,559	44,559	—	—	—	44,559
Advocacy	8,954	—	8,954	6,422	26,908	33,330	42,284
Vocations	—	9,589	9,589	—	—	—	9,589
Development	6,179	4,559	10,738	4,431	18,568	22,999	33,737
Communications	6,790	8,539	15,329	4,870	20,405	25,275	40,604
	<b>30,462</b>	<b>72,876</b>	<b>103,338</b>	<b>21,847</b>	<b>91,541</b>	<b>113,388</b>	<b>216,726</b>

	Direct staff costs £	Other direct costs £	Total Direct costs £	Support staff £	Other support costs £	Total support costs £	Total 2023 £
<i>Safeguarding</i>	4,886	—	4,886	5,863	12,086	17,949	22,835
<i>Members Meetings</i>	16,593	13,834	30,427	19,909	41,042	60,951	91,378
<i>Advocacy</i>	11,706	—	11,706	14,046	28,956	43,002	54,708
<i>Vocations</i>	—	14,000	14,000	—	—	—	14,000
<i>Development</i>	7,679	—	7,679	9,214	18,995	28,209	35,888
<i>Communications</i>	8,477	—	8,477	10,172	20,970	31,142	39,619
	<b>49,341</b>	<b>27,834</b>	<b>77,175</b>	<b>59,204</b>	<b>122,049</b>	<b>181,253</b>	<b>258,428</b>

## Notes to the accounts Year to 30 September 2024

### 4 Net expenditure before investment gains (losses)

This is stated after charging:

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs (note 5)	95,968	108,545
Audit costs including VAT		
. Statutory audit services	10,600	9,701
Depreciation	1,593	2,280

### 5 Staff costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs during the year were as follows:		
Wages and salaries	49,243	65,192
Severance costs	—	40,000
Social security costs	2,059	3,044
Pension costs	1,007	309
	52,309	108,545
Consultancy	43,659	—
	95,968	108,545
Staff costs per function were as follows:		
Safeguarding	13,093	4,886
Vocation	1,589	—
Leaders' meetings	14,467	16,593
Advice and information	19,234	11,706
Development	14,613	7,679
Communications	11,481	8,477
Governance	15,846	43,978
Support	5,645	15,226
	95,968	108,545

No employee was paid £60,000 or more (including benefits) during the year (2023 – one employee was paid between £90,000 and £100,000, including benefits). During the year the charity paid severance pay totalling £Nil (2023: £40,000 to one employee).

The average number of employees during the year, including consultants, (by head count), analysed by function, was as follows:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Secretariat (safeguarding, advice and information, members' meetings, advocacy, vocations, formation)	3.6	1.2
Support	0.2	0.2
	3.8	1.4

## Notes to the accounts Year to 30 September 2024

### 5 Staff costs (continued)

#### ***Remuneration of key management personnel***

The members of the Executive Committee, together with the General Secretary, comprise the key management of the charity. The remuneration paid to key management personnel during the year ended 30 September 2024 was £31,779 (2023 – £93,365). No member of the Executive Committee received any remuneration in connection with his or her services during the year (2023 – £nil).

Two members of the Executive Committee were reimbursed expenses during the year of £384 (2023: £1,254 to two members) in respect to travel and meeting expenses in connection with their duties as members of the Executive Committee.

### 6 Taxation

The Conference of Religious in England and Wales is a registered charity and, therefore, is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities.

### 7 Tangible fixed assets

	Office furniture and equipment £
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 October 2023	9,123
Disposals	(1,460)
At 30 September 2024	<u>7,663</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>	
At 1 October 2023	5,993
Charge for year	1,593
Disposals	(638)
At 30 September 2024	<u>6,948</u>
<b>Net book values</b>	
At 30 September 2023	3,130
At 30 September 2024	<u>715</u>

## Notes to the accounts Year to 30 September 2024

### 8 Investments

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Listed investments</b>		
Market value at 1 October 2023	962,345	984,828
Disposal proceeds	—	(50,000)
Realised gains on disposal	—	1,838
Unrealised investment gains	117,479	25,679
<b>Market value at 30 September 2024</b>	<b>1,079,824</b>	<b>962,345</b>
<b>Cost of listed investments at 30 September 2024</b>	<b>642,324</b>	<b>642,324</b>

At 30 September 2024, the listed investments comprised holdings in the following two Common Investment Funds managed by CCLA Investment Management Limited:

Holding	Market value at 30 September 2024 £	Percentage of portfolio %
COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund Income Units	578,712	53.6
COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund Accumulation Units	501,112	46.4
	<b>1,079,824</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Holding	Market value at 30 September 2023 £	Percentage of portfolio %
COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund Income Units	522,560	54.3
COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund Accumulation Units	439,785	45.7
	<b>962,345</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 9 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Prepayments and accrued income	12,963	5,324

### 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Membership subscriptions received in advance	29,470	80,325
Accruals	22,558	21,580
Other creditors	22,083	19,554
	<b>74,111</b>	<b>121,459</b>



## Notes to the accounts Year to 30 September 2024

### 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (continued)

The movement in membership subscriptions received in advance is reconciled below.

	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income brought forward	80,325	33,818
Released in year	(80,325)	(33,818)
Deferred in year	29,470	80,325
Deferred income carried forward	29,470	80,325

### 11 Tangible fixed asset fund

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 October 2023	3,130	5,410
Movement in year	(2,415)	(2,280)
At 30 September 2024	715	3,130

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

### 12 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated fund which has been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the members of the Executive Committee for specific purposes:

	At 1 October 2023 £	New designations £	Utilised/ released £	At 30 September 2024 £
Capital reserve fund	962,345	117,479	—	1,079,824

	At 1 October 2022 £	New designations £	Utilised/ released £	At 30 September 2023 £
Capital reserve fund	984,829	(22,484)	—	962,345

## Notes to the accounts Year to 30 September 2024

### 12 Designated funds (continued)

The charity will rely more and more on investment income in order to fund its charitable work. Consequently, the members of the Executive Committee believe it prudent to set aside, or designate, the value tied up in the charity's investment portfolio as a capital reserve in order to provide a level of assurance that investment income will continue to be generated in future years and thereby 'finance' the charity's work in the long term.

### 13 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include the following restricted funds to be applied for specific purposes:

	At 1 October 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2024 £
Safeguarding project	53,624	—	—	53,624

	At 1 October 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 30 September 2023 £
Safeguarding project	53,624	—	—	53,624

The safeguarding project fund is to be applied towards the cost of specific safeguarding advisory and associated activities.

### 14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	General funds £	Tangible fixed assets funds £	Designated funds £	Total 2024 £
<b>Fund balances at 30 September 2024 are represented by:</b>					
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	715	—	715
Investments	—	—	—	1,079,824	1,079,824
Net current assets	53,624	56,397	—	—	110,021
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>53,624</b>	<b>56,397</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>1,079,824</b>	<b>1,190,560</b>

## Notes to the accounts Year to 30 September 2024

### 14 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

	Restricted funds £	General funds £	Tangible fixed assets funds £	Designated funds £	Total 2023 £
<i>Fund balances at 30 September 2023 are represented by:</i>					
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	3,130	—	3,130
Investments	—	—	—	962,345	962,345
Net current assets	53,624	96,696	—	—	150,320
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>53,624</b>	<b>96,696</b>	<b>3,130</b>	<b>962,345</b>	<b>1,115,795</b>

	<b>Total 2024 £</b>	Total 2023 £
<b>Reconciliation of movements in unrealised gains on investment assets:</b>		
Unrealised gains at 1 October 2023	<b>320,021</b>	313,151
Net unrealised gains (losses) arising in the year	<b>117,479</b>	6,870
<b>Unrealised gains at 30 September 2024</b>	<b>437,500</b>	320,021

### 15 Financial commitments

At 30 September 2024 the charity was committed to pay £Nil in respect to rent and service charges payable (2023: £12,000).

### 16 Transactions with related parties

The religious congregations to which the members of the Executive Committee belong are all members of the charity and pay membership subscriptions to the charity. All such payments are made to the charity on an arm's length basis.

During the year, the congregations to which the members of the Executive Committee belong made contributions to the charity totalling £30,905 (2023 – £20,405). These contributions consist of membership fees and donations.

During the year, the charity incurred rent and service charges totaling £18,000 (2023 - £12,000) payable to the Poor Servants of the Mother of God (PSMG). PSMG, are members of the Conference of Religious in England and Wales.