

3rd Draft July 2026

The **NEWMAN ASSOCIATION**

Promoting open discussion and greater
understanding in today's Church

Annual Report 2025-6

www.newman.org.uk

The Newman Association is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), charity no. 1006769. Registered office: Swallow & Company Commercial House Bridge Road Stokesley North Yorkshire TS9 5AA.

Email: info@newman.org.uk Website: www.newman.org.uk. Member of Pax Romana – International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL 2025-6

*** denotes Council members who are also Trustees**

President

Alex Mthobi*
Eastbourne and Bexhill Circle
Email: president@newman.org.uk
(elected President September 2025)

Vice-President

Brian Hamill*
York Circle
Email: brianhamilluk@yahoo.co.uk
(Elected Vice-President Sept 2025)

Secretary

Sophie Rudge*
Unattached
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Treasurer

Anthony Baker*
Hertfordshire Circle
Email: treasurer@newman.org.uk

Chaplain

Mgr Patrick Kilgariff
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Journal Editor

Barry Riley
Ealing Circle
Email: barryriley@btinternet.com

Membership Registrar

Cindy Hamill
York Circle
Email: cindyhamilluk@yahoo.com
(appointed as Membership Registrar
December 2022)

Council Members

Barbara Bolgiano*
Hertfordshire Circle
(Elected June 2023)
Email: b.bolgiano@outlook.com

Carole O'Toole*
Unattached
(Elected June 2023)
Email: carolegtotoole@aol.com

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2025–26

My first task as President of the Newman Association is to pay tribute to Brian Hamill for his dedicated and thoughtful leadership over recent years. His President's review last year highlighted challenges facing the Association but provided a hopeful foundation for the future. Brian championed a more inclusive and ecumenical vision for the Association, strengthened our national communications, maintained links with partner organisations and encouraged renewed engagement with universities and younger generations. His leadership has left us much to build upon.

I am encouraged by the positive developments during the past year. Despite our modest membership numbers nationally, the Association has continued to welcome new members, and several Circles have flourished. The Association has continued its support for the National Board of Catholic Women and the National Council for Lay Associations. In addition, we have been active in Pax Romana (of which more below) and of the relatively new Catholic European Women's movement Andante. The developing partnership with the Margaret Beaufort Institute at Cambridge is exciting. They will provide us with a series of YouTube videos which the individual Circles can download and use to reflect on the continuing relevance of St John Henry Newman's thought for the Church today.

As national President and contact person for ICMICA Pax Romana, I have strengthened links with colleagues across the wider Catholic international intellectual community, identifying opportunities for cooperation in learning and shared witness. We continue to support Pax Romana through our annual subscription and by attending Conferences. In November 2025 we also contributed to enable two Ukrainian delegates to attend the Pax Romana World Assembly in Portugal.

We continued the services of (non- member) Michael Hamill on a commercial basis for maintaining the current website and providing IT services. The current website (www.newman.org.uk, originally designed over 10 years ago) needs to be more attractive and flexible, and Council has taken first steps to commission a new website - of which more will be reported next year. We have also started a new initiative to engage with Catholic University chaplains across the United Kingdom to encourage members of Catholic student societies to continue links with the Newman Association after their graduation. This is intended to develop the Awards scheme which we have used intermittently to encourage student life and thought in our Catholic Higher Education institutions over the past few years. This initiative has benefited the Centre of Catholic Studies at Durham University at their Early Careers Conference this year and London University in a day conference on ethics. Both these institutions have responded with articles for the Newman Journal provided by students who have enjoyed these grants.

The Journal itself has undergone a major change this year with the retirement of Barry Riley who has edited this popular magazine for a considerable number of years and I would very much like to offer him my own thanks and that of the whole Association for all the dedicated work he has put into its publication and wish him a happy retirement. We have fortunately managed to find a new editor in Iain Hubert, who has now become a member of the York Circle. Although his background is not primarily in publishing, he has experience of producing pamphlets and other material in the political sphere and his contacts will prove valuable for developing new angles for the Journal.

The Newsletter has continued to come out on a regular basis under the guidance of Barbara Bolgiano who takes much time and effort in contacting the various Circles for their news and updates to keep us all informed about the ongoing life of the Association. So, I offer her my sincere thanks for all this incredible work.

As I come to the end of this Report, I would like to mention in particular two events of the year: the first was the excellent talk at our AGM in September 2025 given by David McLoughlin with the title “*Newman on Francis on the Synodal Process. Are we Seeing the Future of the Church?*” This talk can be found on our website under the recorded talks link. The second was the Association Retreat at Ampleforth Abbey led by our Chaplain, Mgr Patrick Kilgarrieff who brought his wide experience and deep spirituality to all his talks and conversations.

Membership numbers remain a challenge, as Brian Hamill acknowledged in last year's review, with a gradual continuing national decline over many years. However, I believe there is much reason for hope. The dedication of our members, the quality of discussion within our Circles and the continuing witness of the Newman tradition provide a strong basis for renewal. Our future will depend not simply on numbers, but on our willingness to welcome new people, encourage fresh leadership and continue engaging with contemporary issues through faith, reason and open dialogue.

I am deeply grateful to all members of Council for their encouragement, wisdom and support in the past year, especially to Sophie Rudge as Secretary and to Anthony Baker as Treasurer. Cindy Hamill, though not an elected member of Council, continues to manage our membership records with great dedication. I warmly invite all members to remain active in the life of the Association, to continue supporting their Circles and encourage others to join us. Together we can build on the strong foundations laid by previous leaders and look to the future with confidence, faith and hope.

Alex Mthobi, President

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR 2025-6

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended January 31, 2026.

Objectives

The object of the Newman Association is to further the mission to the world of the Christian religion with particular reference to the Roman Catholic Church and in the light of the life and work of Saint John Henry Newman, by promoting greater understanding of the Christian faith and the application of its principles to the contemporary world.

Much of the activity of the Association is carried out in local “Circles”, though some members are “unattached” where no Circle exists locally. These activities, typically talks or conferences on religious, artistic, and philosophical subjects, are open to non-members, including people of any, or no, faith. The trustees confirm that in governing the Association they have had regard to the Charity Commission statement on public benefit.

Structure, Governance and Management- Governing Document

The Newman Association was founded in 1942 as a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 1 May 1947 and registered as a charity on 13 December 1991.

The new Constitution as a C.I.O. was adopted by the membership in June 2022 and approved by the Charities Commission in November 2022. Further adjustments were made following

resolutions passed at the 2024 Annual General Meeting and with the approval of the Charities Commission. These later adjustments provide for membership of the Association to be available to anyone professing the Christian faith, whereas previously non-Roman Catholics were eligible only to become associate members.

Recruitment and Appointment of Council and Trustees

The charity trustees are the principal members of the Association's Council. The Council may also include advisory members such as the chaplain and the editor of *The Newman* journal. Trustees are elected for a period of 3 years, but may be re-elected for a further term. The trustees may appoint a replacement trustee to fill a casual vacancy, and may also co-opt up to three further trustees, but such appointed/co-opted trustees automatically retire at the following Annual General Meeting.

A trustee may serve for sets of two 3-year periods, after which they must cease office for at least a year, after which they may stand for re-election at a general meeting, as specified in the constitution. Council normally meets at least four times each year, which may be in person or by electronic means. The Association's success in meeting its aims and objectives is assessed each year in the President's review.

New trustees are directed to the Charities Commission website, in particular to those sections outlining the legal obligations of trustees under charity law. They also receive a copy of the previous year's annual report and accounts and a representative selection of the Association's current literature. All trustees are encouraged to make themselves aware of information published by the Charity Commission and to keep abreast of developments in charity governance.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

Charities law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the financial year and of its surplus or deficit for the financial year. In doing so the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently:
- Make sound judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue on that basis.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In accordance with charities law, as trustees, we confirm that:

- So far as we are aware there is no relevant audit information of which the Association's independent examiner is unaware and
- As the trustees, we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information.

Financial Review

The trustees have reviewed the required level of the financial reserve. The total funds available in January 2026 were just in excess of £117,000, a decrease of around £13,000 compared with January 2025. £11,000 of the deficit resulted from the decline in value of the investment in the CCLA Charities Ethical Investment Fund, outweighing the £8000 investment gains of the previous year. Despite these fluctuations, investment in the CCLA fund offers a longer term hedge against inflation in the operating costs of the Association. Any increase in the Association current subscription rates would probably reduce revenue by encouraging further decline in a membership, already declining as an aging membership is not adequately replaced by younger recruits.

Income generated and expenditure incurred directly by Circles is included in the financial report. Circles need funds from the centre to organise new programmes of talks and discussion. In 2025-6 £1950 was provided in grants to four Circles which requested funds. With the increasing obstacles in operating local bank accounts, the Trustees are encouraging Circles to close local bank accounts and operate an imprest cash system to fund local events from the main national account.

In addition, further IT activity to enable Circles to provide a wider coverage of on-screen lectures is likely to require further expenditure, to add to substantial costs in a planned radical redesign of the Association website (www.newman.org.uk)

The trustees therefore judge that the gap between operational income and expenditure may well increase over the next years, and believe it prudent to retain a reserve balance of around £100,000, with a significant proportion being held in the CCLA or similar investment fund. Nevertheless the Trustees continue to assess opportunities to make further grants to external (mainly educational) institutions in support of projects which promote the Association's objectives.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 22 July 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

Alex Mthobi, President

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended January 31, 2026

Balance Sheet		
2025		2026
£		£
122,788	Net assets brought forward	130,589
7,800	Net gain/(loss) in the year	(13,268)
130,589	Net assets carried forward	117,321
	Represented by:	
102,753	COIF Charities investment Fund	91,888
15,490	Cash in banks managed by Newman Council	16,820
11,776	Cash in Circles banks	10,096
3,835	Debtors and prepayments	1,800
133,854	Gross Assets	120,603
(3,265)	Less liabilities	(3,282)
130,589	Net Assets	117,321

2024-5	Income and Expenditure	2025-6
	Income	
8,749	Membership subscriptions	8,348
193	Donations	270
1,735	Gift Aid Receipts	1,814
0	National events -retreat	1,020
7,054	Circles Income (note1)	5,259
2,873	Bank and investment income	2,916
7,038	Increase/ (decrease) in value of COIF investment	(10,866)
-	Other income	-
27,642	Net income	8,761
	Expenditure	
0	National events (Ampleforth retreat)	1,190
1,894	Newman Journal	1,884
307	Public liability insurance	355
8,904	Circles expenditure - note 1	7,543
1,044	Annual general meeting and national lecture	1,560
375	Council meetings (incl.UK travel)	420
1,584	Website maintenance costs	1,584
845	IT/Zoom services	827
791	Pax Romana, Andante and national subscriptions (note2)	1,156
900	Donations to educational institutions (note 3)	3,417
3,198	Other expenses (note 4)	2,093
19,842	Total expenditure	22,031
7,800	Overall Surplus/(Deficit)	(13,268)

The notes below form part of these accounts.

2024-5	Notes on Financial Statement	2025-6
3,416	Note 1 Circles Income Meetings	3,318
2,118	Functions	1,917
1,520	Other	24
7,054	Total	5,259
6,753	Circles expenditure Meetings	5,304
1,431	Functions	1,910
720	Other	329
8,904	Total	7,543
600	Note2 Pax Romana subscriptions	181
	Pax Romana meetings and conference travel	784
146	Andante (European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations)	146
45	National Board of Catholic Women	45

0	National Council for Lay Associations		0
	Note 3 Grants		
	University of Durham CCS		1000
900	University of Hertfordshire Catholic Students Society		1000
	University of London Newman House Course		1000
	Support for Ukrainian delegates at Pax Romana Lisbon Conference		417
900	Total grants made in year		3417
	Note 4 Miscellaneous expenditure		
256	Bank charges		215
557	Direct debit collection charges		112
700	Chaplain's honorarium		800
950	Examiner fee		480
420	Registered office services		240
280	Miscellaneous postage and stationery		163
35	Other small items		83
3,198	Total		2.093

The trustees acknowledge with thanks the receipt in 2025-6 of a legacy from the estate of the late Mrs Jane Kluth, an unattached member, previously of the former Chester Circle.

Trustee remuneration and related party transactions

No trustee received any remuneration during the year 2025-6 (2024-5 nil). Specialist IT skills needed for the maintenance of the website and to provide electronic links with Circles continued to be provided by Michael Hamill of Smarts Group, son of a trustee. In 2025-6 Smarts Group was paid £2439 (VAT inclusive) (2024-5: also £2439). The trustees remain satisfied that the provision of such services is essential, and that the arrangement with Michael Hamill is good value and does not commit the Association in any long term way.

Otherwise, no trustee or any other person related to the charity has any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the year, save as a potential beneficiary of the charity in the normal course of its activities (2024-5: none).

£ 320 expenses for travel to Council meetings were reimbursed to six trustees in the course of the year (2024-5: £213 to six trustees).

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 22 July 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

Alex Mthobi
President & Trustee

Anthony Baker
Treasurer & Trustee

**EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THE NEWMAN ASSOCIATION**

(2026 Examiner's report to be inserted)

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

This membership report covers the period from 1 February 2025 until the 31 January 2026.

Since the last annual report the Newman Association has been delighted to welcome thirteen new members to the association: Mr Valentine Ogbu, unattached; Dr Colins Imoh, unattached; Mr Ken Ng'ang'a Ngugi, Eastbourne & Bexhill; Ms Deirdre Golden, Hertfordshire; Mr James McDonnell and Mrs Marie McDonnell, Wimbledon; Ms Sarah Walker, Cleveland; Mrs Mary McKeon, Eastbourne & Bexhill; Mr David Giles & Mrs Johanna Giles, Eastbourne & Bexhill; Mrs Gillian Meyer, Eastbourne & Bexhill; Mrs Marie Taylor, Cleveland and Mr Iain Hubert, York.

Circle	Number of members		Change
	31/01/25	31/01/26	
Birmingham	9	8	-1
Cleveland	25	25	0
Coventry	38	32	-6
Ealing	18	20	2
Eastbourne & Bexhill	9	14	5
Edinburgh	12	12	0
Glasgow	22	24	2
Hertfordshire	48	46	-2
Manchester & North Cheshire	30	25	-5
North Gloucestershire	20	17	-3
North Merseyside	14	14	0
Overseas	3	3	0
Tyneside	20	18	-2
Unattached	81	64	-17
Wimbledon	16	17	1
Worcester	26	27	1
Wrexham closed during 2025	13	10	-3
York	21	18	-3
Total	425	394	-31

The decrease in membership is about 7 percent this year in the period from 1st February 2025 to 31st January 2026.

There are fifteen active circles which have a wide variety of face-to-face meetings throughout the year. Some of the meetings from some circles are available on a Zoom link and the Newsletter is an excellent source of information for this.

If you are unattached do make sure we have an up-to-date email address to send a Newsletter directly to you by contacting membership@newman.org.uk

Please could members let me know of any new contact details. I thank all those have sent greetings when replying to the annual membership request in February.

Some members have become ill and need care or have resigned their membership and there are those members and ex-members who have died.

In Memoriam – Requiescant in Pace

In the period February 2025 – January 2026, the Newman Association was notified of the deaths of the following members:

Kevin Down (Oct 2025) Worcester; Barbara Hirsz (Dec 2025) North Gloucestershire; Susan Auchinvole (Nov 2025) Hertfordshire; David Taylor (June 2025) Worcester; Veronica Hammond (June 2025) Coventry; Sally McNeill (March 2025) Hertfordshire; Jane Kluth (April 2025) Manchester & NC; Thomas Pilkington (October 2023) Wimbledon; Bernard Patrick Whim (October 2023) Manchester & NC; David J Taylor (June 2025) Worcester; James J Coghlan (June 2025) Birmingham; Peter Smith (2025) Hertfordshire; Sister J Bird (December 2023) Manchester & NC; Sister Patricia Harriss (August 2025) York; Hugh O'Hare (October 2025) formerly Wrexham; Susan Notley (Sept 2025) York; Miss M Carroll (July 2025) Coventry; Mrs E M Hunt (March 2025) Coventry; Mr A F Hughes (August 2025) formerly Croydon.

We hold all of these and their families in our prayers. May they and other departed members all rest in peace.

Cindy Hamill
Membership Registrar

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