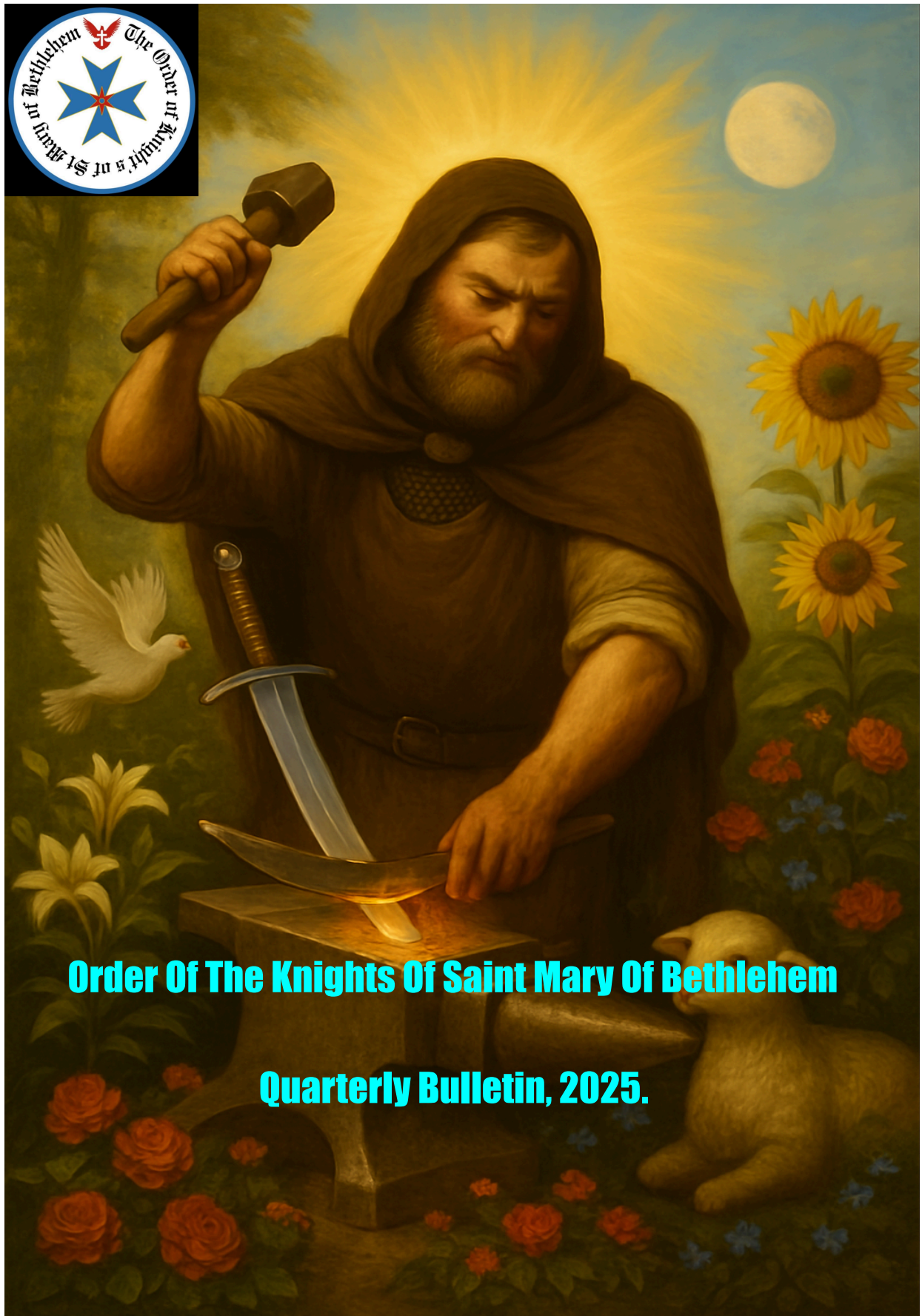




Order Of The Knights Of Saint Mary Of Bethlehem

Quarterly Bulletin, 2025.



KNIGHTS OF SAINT MARY OF BETHLEHEM BULLETIN

Autumn 2025 Update

Opening Reflection

In times of profound societal challenge, the true measure of an Order such as ours lies not in the obstacles we face, but in our collective response to them. As the Knights of Saint Mary of Bethlehem continue our mission of service, we find ourselves operating in a landscape of increasing need and complexity. The cost of living crisis affects 86% of British households, with millions facing food insecurity and essential needs deprivation. Mental health challenges touch nearly every family, while our healthcare and social support systems strain under unprecedented pressure.

Yet amidst these challenges, our Order stands as a beacon of hope and practical support. From the highlands of Scotland to the south coast of England, our members demonstrate daily that ancient values of service, compassion, and community care remain powerfully relevant in addressing modern challenges. The transition of our Order to Community Interest Company status represents not just an administrative change, but an evolution in our capacity to serve effectively in contemporary Britain.

September 2025 Update

The National Context

The United Kingdom faces unprecedented challenges as we enter the final quarter of 2025. Our charitable work takes place against a backdrop of significant social and economic pressures that directly affect both our mission and those we serve:

Cost of Living Crisis

86% of British households are experiencing real-term income reduction [1][2]

Over 7 million low-income households are going without essentials [1][2]

5.3 million people are cutting back or skipping meals [2]

4.1 million people report experiencing food insecurity in the past month [1][2]

Healthcare Challenges

NHS waiting lists have reached historic highs, with significant regional disparities in care access [3]

Mental health services are severely strained, with 1 in 4 men and 1 in 3 women reporting recent depression symptoms [4]

Over 78,000 young people are waiting more than a year for mental health treatment [5]

The social care sector faces critical staffing shortages affecting vulnerable populations [3][6]

Charitable Sector Pressures

51% of charities are now using reserves to cover core costs [7]

Only 6% of charities report receiving funding increases in line with inflation [7][8]

Real-terms funding cuts estimated at £1 billion across the sector [8]

Record numbers seeking food, medical and financial support from charitable organizations [9]

This environment makes our Order's mission more vital than ever, while also presenting significant operational challenges that require careful navigation and strategic planning.

Organisational Developments

A New Chapter: The Order's Transition to CIC Status

In a bold stride toward greater impact and operational clarity, The Order has officially announced its transition to Community Interest Company (CIC) status—a move designed to fortify its mission and expand its reach across borders.

This strategic shift marks more than just a legal reclassification. It signals a deepened commitment to public benefit, transparency, and long-term sustainability. By embracing CIC status, The Order positions itself to unlock new avenues of support and streamline its governance in alignment with evolving charity law.

Why CIC? The Benefits Are Clear:

- **Greater Access to Grants:** CIC status enhances eligibility for a wider range of funding opportunities, empowering The Order to scale its initiatives.
- **Public Trust Amplified:** The formal structure reinforces confidence in The Order's charitable activities, fostering stronger relationships with stakeholders and communities.
- **Legal Harmony:** Pending changes in charity law are met with simplified compliance, reducing administrative friction and future-proofing operations.
- **Cross-Border Clarity:** CIC status helps resolve jurisdictional complexities, paving the way for smoother international collaboration.
- **Leadership Continuity:** Current trustees will be invited to serve as directors, ensuring continuity of vision and stewardship.

What's Next?

The timeline for implementation will be guided by organisational readiness, with careful attention to structural integrity and mission alignment. This transition is not just procedural—it's a reaffirmation of purpose.

As The Order steps into this new phase, it does so with the same unwavering dedication to service, justice, and community transformation. The CIC framework simply gives it sharper tools to do so.

Regional Outreach Initiatives

Bognor Regis

Lighting the Way: Outreach Ignites in Bognor Regis

In the coastal town of Bognor Regis, a father-son duo has sparked a wave of community engagement that's already making headlines. Richard Johnson and his son led a heartfelt outreach initiative that was recently featured in a local online newspaper—an early sign that their efforts are resonating far beyond the moment.

This isn't just a story of boots on the ground. It's a story of legacy, light, and leadership.

Highlights from the Field:

- **Local Recognition:** The outreach was spotlighted in a regional news outlet, affirming its impact and visibility.
- **Political Engagement:** Conversations with the local MP have begun, laying the groundwork for future collaboration and civic support.
- **Volunteer Momentum:** Recruitment is underway, with new faces stepping forward to join the mission.
- **Symbolic Action:** *Light the way* project advances with the purchase of lanterns—tangible symbols of hope, guidance, and collective purpose.

As the initiative grows, so does its emotional and spiritual resonance. The lanterns aren't just tools—they're metaphors. Each one carried will illuminate not only the path ahead but the values that guide it: compassion, courage, and community.

The story is [HERE](#)

Scotland

Scotland: Community Support in Full Motion

Across Scotland, a wave of compassionate action is unfolding as local volunteers and allies rally to meet winter's challenges with warmth, dignity, and resolve. From grassroots crafting to strategic partnerships, the region's outreach efforts are gaining momentum—and symbolic depth.

Current Initiatives Include:

- Coat and Warm Pack Drives: Essential supplies are being gathered and distributed to those facing the cold, with a focus on dignity and discretion.
- Anti-Bullying Campaign: A new initiative has launched to challenge harmful behaviours and foster safer, more inclusive environments.
- Volunteer Crafting: Local hands are at work creating winter accessories—knitted hats, scarves, and gloves—each item a gesture of care and solidarity.
- Light the way Expansion: Two lanterns have been acquired to deepen the symbolic reach of the Light the way project, illuminating paths of hope and remembrance.
- Infrastructure Secured: Two storage units in Dunferlan have been generously donated by the Knights Templar of Scotland, providing vital space for supplies and staging.

These efforts reflect not only logistical coordination but a deeper ethos of community resilience and spiritual solidarity. Scotland's outreach is not just seasonal—it's a testament to enduring values and shared purpose.

Nottingham

Momentum Builds: Outreach Expands with Community Collaboration

The outreach movement continues to gather strength, driven by fresh partnerships, growing volunteer engagement, and the promise of new beginnings.

Key Developments:

- **Volunteer Recruitment Ongoing:** New volunteers are stepping forward, drawn by the mission's clarity and the warmth of its welcome.
- **Tesco Partnership Success:** A recent collaboration with the Tesco Community Champion yielded a highly successful outreach campaign, met with enthusiastic feedback and renewed local interest.
- **New Chapter in Sight:** Early groundwork is underway for the development of a potential new chapter—an exciting expansion that reflects both demand and vision.

Liverpool: Building Bridges, Lighting Paths

In Liverpool, a new chapter of outreach is taking shape—rooted in partnership, guided by purpose, and powered by people. The city's efforts are gaining traction as strategic alliances and grassroots energy converge to form a sustainable hub of support.

Key Developments:

- **Hope Centre Partnership:** A promising collaboration is underway with the Hope Centre, focused on weekend outreach and direct community engagement.
- **Police Coordination:** Dialogue with local law enforcement is progressing, aimed at ensuring safety, transparency, and shared responsibility.

- **Volunteer Growth:** The volunteer base continues to expand, laying the foundation for a permanent hub that reflects both local needs and collective vision.

Liverpool's outreach is more than logistics—it's a living testament to solidarity, resilience, and the quiet power of coordinated care.

Manchester: Raising Voices, Strengthening Minds

In Manchester, outreach efforts are entering a dynamic new phase—one marked by visibility, vitality, and a renewed focus on mental health. The city's campaign is not only expanding its reach but deepening its message.

Key Developments:

- **Promotional Surge:** Enhanced promotional activities are amplifying the mission's presence across platforms and communities, inviting broader participation and public engagement.
- **Mental Health Awareness:** New initiatives have launched to spotlight mental health—breaking stigma, fostering dialogue, and offering pathways to support and resilience.

Manchester's outreach is evolving with purpose: not just to be seen, but to be felt. These efforts reflect a commitment to healing, connection, and the power of shared understanding.

Strategic Developments: Sites, Support, and Ceremony

As outreach efforts evolve, key updates across locations and initiatives signal both challenge and opportunity. From funding negotiations to ceremonial planning, the Order continues to navigate its path with clarity and resolve.

Woodbank Hall Meetings with potential funders—including the National Lottery—are ongoing, with additional grant opportunities actively under exploration. The site remains a focal point for future development, contingent on sustained support and strategic alignment.

St George's Church Following a period of consultation, the offer extended to the Order has been formally withdrawn. While disappointing, the decision allows for renewed focus on alternative venues and partnerships more aligned with long-term vision.

Investiture in Scotland Preparations are underway for the next formal investiture, scheduled for 2026. Final details are being refined, with Scotland set to host a ceremony that will honour tradition, commitment, and the evolving mission of the Order.

Administrative Updates

Streamlined communication structure:

Lisa Findlay continues as Privy Chamber Secretary

Edward and Kevin managing regional secretarial duties

Enhanced management of info@OKSMB.ORG

Quarterly bulletin implementation with structured submission deadlines

New Initiatives

Elevating Presence: New Initiatives and Upcoming Milestones

The Order continues to refine its public image and operational strength through targeted initiatives and strategic planning. With a focus on professionalism, visibility, and cohesion, recent developments signal a confident step forward.

Clothing:

- **Professional Image Enhancement:** A new high-quality clothing line bearing the KOSMB insignia has been launched, reflecting the Order's commitment to dignity, unity, and recognisable presence.
- **E.U. Manufacture:** Produced within the European Union, the garments meet high standards of craftsmanship and ethical sourcing.
- **Marketable Identity:** The new attire enhances the Order's public-facing image, supporting outreach, ceremonial presence, and brand cohesion.

Upcoming Events:

- **Next General Meeting:** Scheduled for October 13th, 2025, this gathering will offer updates, strategic planning, and continued alignment across chapters.

Conclusion

This bulletin demonstrates the Order's continued growth and adaptation to meet community needs while strengthening its organisational foundation. The transition to CIC status particularly marks a significant step in our evolution toward greater operational effectiveness and community impact. This bulletin has been updated with current public information. Of particular note, the Bognor Regis outreach initiative led by Richard Johnson was recently featured in the local press, highlighting the Order's commitment to community service through practical assistance like care packages and winter clothing distribution. The Order's transition to CIC status aligns with

our expanding charitable activities and community outreach programs across multiple regions.

Closing Reflection: Gratitude and Purpose

As we conclude this bulletin, we must acknowledge the extraordinary spirit of service demonstrated across our Order. In every region, from Bognor Regis to Scotland, from Nottingham to Liverpool, our members have shown remarkable innovation and dedication in meeting community needs:

Achievements to Celebrate:

The successful launch of multiple regional outreach programs

Strengthened partnerships with community organizations and local government

Expansion of our volunteer base across all regions

Implementation of the Light the way initiative

Development of professional infrastructure and governance

Gratitude and Recognition:

To our dedicated volunteers who give selflessly of their time

To our community partners who amplify our impact

To the Knights Templar of Scotland for their generous support

To The Reverend Andrew Patterson

To our regional coordinators for their tireless efforts

Looking Forward: As we approach the final quarter of 2025, we stand stronger together, our mission clear and our resolve unshaken. The challenges facing our communities are significant, but so too is our capacity to meet them. Every coat distributed, every meal shared, every moment of companionship offered reflects our Order's enduring commitment to practical compassion.

Let us move forward with confidence, knowing that each small act of service contributes to a greater whole. In the words often attributed to Edmund Burke, "*Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.*" Together, our collective efforts light the way toward a more compassionate and supportive society.

In service and solidarity, Privy Chamber.

References

- [1] Department for Work and Pensions (2025) *Cost of Living Impact Analysis 2025*. London: HM Government.
- [2] Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2025) *UK Poverty 2025: The Essential Guide*. York: JRF.
- [3] NHS England (2025) *Annual Statistical Report 2024-25*. London: Department of Health.
- [4] Mental Health Foundation (2025) *State of the Nation's Mental Health*. London: MHF.

[5] Young Minds (2025) *Mental Health Support Waiting Times Report*. London: Young Minds.

[6] Care Quality Commission (2025) *State of Care Annual Assessment*. London: CQC.

[7] National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2025) *UK Civil Society Almanac*. London: NCVO.

[8] Pro Bono Economics (2025) *Charity Sector Analysis Q3 2025*. London: PBE.

[9] Trussell Trust (2025) *Mid-Year Statistics Update*. London: Trussell Trust.
