Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	1	January	2025		31	December	2025

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name THE FRIENDS OF CRESSING TEMPLE

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any) 1166431

Charity's principal address

CRESSING TEMPLE BARNS
WITHAM ROAD
BRAINTREE
ESSEX
Postcode CM77 8PD

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Suzanne Lowe	Chair		
2	Jane Palmer	Membership Secretary		
3	David Andrews			
4	Lesley Killin			
5	Monika Curry			

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution dated 4th August 2015 as amended on 12th December 2020	
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Unincorporated small company charity	
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Elected at the AGM	

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

We have a strong working relationship with Essex County Council, owners of the Cressing site. They are supportive of our work and appreciate the contribution our volunteers and fundraising bring to Cressing Temple.

We are also reliant on the support of the two horticulturalists employed by Essex County Council.

The trustees do not consider there are any major risks as there are no liabilities, other than those covered through our insurance. There is a dependency on the voluntary efforts of the members and officers.

This year has seen us progress toward and create a new and separate Charitable Incorporated Organisation, The Friends of Cressing Temple CIO, that this charity merged into from December 1st 2025 under a new Charity Number - 1214589.

Hence this is our final Trustee Annual Report for The Friends of Cressing Temple Unincorporated charity – Charity Number – 1166431.The trustees will apply during 2026 to the Charities Commission for the charity to be removed from the charities register once all closing activities have been completed.

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

To conserve, enhance and develop the historic site at Cressing Temple, including the Walled Garden, the Cullen Garden and the Jubilee Orchard, as a unique historical, social and horticultural record and educational resource.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

In deciding our programme of activity and development the Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

The Trustees aim to further develop an inclusive culture in the charity's ways of working. Valuing diversity and equality and ensuring equal opportunities.

One of the Friend's objectives is to raise money in support of the site and gardens. We have continued from last year in growing our activities and income streams.

We have experienced a very good year regarding income through grants and fundraising/trading activities, progressing ambitions from last year's report to fundraise for a new community garden building and a project to celebrate the Working Farm history and heritage of Cressing Temple.

This year marked the 30th Anniversary since the Walled Garden was redesigned to its current Tudor lay out. To mark this, we held two events.

- In June a Tudor themed day, open and free to the public with historic reenactors and demonstrations on the use of Tudor gardens and produce of the time, including soapmaking, pot Pourri, fabric dying, distilling and use of herbs etc.
- In July a talk from Sandra Nicholson, who researched and designed the original planting plan for the garden.

We held a successful Apple Day in October. Our income this year on the event was up from last year. This event is the main focus for our community facing events, enabling us to engage wider across Essex and helping us raise our profile locally and funds.

Apple day and plant sales remain our main sources of unrestricted income.

Our regular rhythm of workshops, such as willow weaving, continues and income has remained stable from these and sales of garden produce, honey and craft items.

The number of garden volunteers is 46, and the number of Friends including volunteers, members, committee and Trustees is 90. Volunteers play a key role in sustaining the high standard of the gardens and increasingly in activities relating to the heritage of the site such as digitising archive documents and restoration of farm machinery.

This public benefit is embedded in our constitution and at the forefront of the Trustees and officers' activity. All give their services voluntarily and in the interests of the charity and its objectives and draw no personal fiduciary benefit from their roles.

The gardens provide both historical and environmental interest to the local community and wider society with hands-on experience and involvement. We have a well-established partnership with Trustlinks a local mental health charity who provide weekly sessions for their clients, reflecting the benefit and impact gardening and environmental activities can provide for growing skills, providing time with nature and tackling isolation.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

We are active in seeking grants for key elements of our work and in this year have raised funding from 2 Lottery grant funders – Arts Council and Community Fund alongside more locally available grants from Braintree District Council and existing grants awarded last year from Indaver Rivenhall and Essex Community Foundation.

The Friends of Cressing Temple could not operate without the generous and willing help of all our volunteers.

A total of 6,928 volunteer hours were recorded this year, the equivalent of 989 days or approx. 4 fulltime posts and an equivalent of a valuable £84,590 at national minimum wage equivalent.

The number of volunteer hours is a significant increase from last year due to improved reporting across all volunteers and expansion of the volunteer offer, with projects such as the working farm attracting new volunteers.

Volunteer activities and opportunities range across an increasing variety of activities, at the core is garden planting and maintenance work in the Tudor, Cullen and Community gardens and Jubilee orchard. We have seen a growth in our heritage focused work through the Working Farm project, which has harnessed skills to research, develop and create interpretation and trails throughout the site, bringing to life the rich history of agriculture over the centuries at Cressing Temple. We also have an active craft group providing items for sale to assist with fundraising and a small group of archive volunteers. Alongside, the essential supervision, management and administrative activities and duties incumbent on a successful charity.

Section D Achievements and performance

In our last report we detailed our priorities for 2025 as below;

- to apply to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
- to secure a lease with Essex County Council for the Community Garden building area
- To plan for celebrations to mark the 30th Anniversary of the Tudor Walled garden restoration and opening
- to plan and deliver a successful 2025 Apple Day.
- to apply to the Arts Council for funding for the working farm/farm machinery project focusing on several machines.
- to plan and raise funding for a new community building in the Community Garden.
- to grow our outreach locally and within Braintree District

We have successfully fulfilled all the above and are now working to consolidate and build on the success of the original Friends of Cressing Temple.

On the 1st December 2025 we merged to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Section D Achievements and performance

We celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the garden with two well attended events and held another successful Apple Day which was attended by over 1300 people, proving its value to our fundraising and unrestricted funds, but also the interest and engagement locally, the strength of partnership with the Head Gardeners and other staff at Essex County Council. Exemplifying the work of the Friends of Cressing Temple at its best.

To demonstrate this, having secured a long-term lease with Essex County Council in March 2025 for part of the Community Garden. The trustees designated £5,000 from the Apple Day profits towards the cost of the new Community Building, where that is now situated.

This year has seen our total income reach £80,331 up from £42,538 last year and reflecting a good year of fundraising and successful grant applications.

We have secured 2 large grants this year totalling £46,655

- From Community Fund - to support our long hoped for new building in the community garden, providing improved facilities and space for our garden volunteers and additional meeting space for ourselves, partners and courses. In kind contributions from Essex CC providing the base and preparation for the wooden building.
- From the Arts Council to support the Working Farm project building on last year's work to scope the interest and potential for such a project. The project will improve interpretation and the visitor experience, providing insight into role of Cressing Temple as a working farm over the last 900 years. It will harness and build on the experience of existing and attract new volunteers to our work. The project will launch in September 2026 with new trails, films and improved signposting.

These alongside donations, subscriptions and interest totalling £48,024.

Plant and herb sales continue to be our main source of trading income. This year's total of £15,341 a 38% increase in sales from last year, and a providing a healthy profit margin.

Sales of craft, books and honey was down from last year at £3,000.

We increased our outreach activities at local events in the year attending and presenting and/or providing stands at 6 community events organised by local parish councils and community groups including Braintree District Council.

The use of contactless payments via sum-up continues to provide most payments for plants/events and garden produce and donations are also facilitated by our Payaz terminal.

We have benefitted from the volunteer support worker this year due to our Essex Community Foundation Grant of last year, the postholder bringing valued energy, capacity and resource to improve our offer and support to volunteers including improved induction to new volunteers.

Work continues to digitise the archive material, with close liaison with the Essex Record Office, to ensure preservation and accessibility of the rich historical records we have of Cressing Temple, with Farm records contributing to the picture we have been able to build for the Working farm project.

We have a strong partnership working established with Trustlinks who provide weekly therapeutic gardening sessions for their beneficiaries on Fridays and they helped facilitate a donation of a kitchen from Wickes for the new building.

We continued to provide governance via regular committee meetings across 2025 and moved to establish a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation – The Friends of Cressing Temple CIO which went live following the merger on 1st December 2025 having been unanimously approved by our members at our EGM on 2nd November 2025.

Section D Achievements and performance

Our key priorities for the CIO in 2026 are;

- To fully kit out and maximise use of the new Community Building
- to plan and deliver a successful 2026 Apple Day.
- to launch the Working farm Project in September and sustain and build on the activity and educational/tour assets and plan for future years.
- to continue to grow our outreach locally and within Braintree District
- to continue and sustain the volunteer support role

Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves	All reserves of the charity transferred to The Friends of Cressing Temple CIO at close of business on 1 December 2025 as set out in the Merger Agreement dated 2 November 2025. This charity ceased to trade from 2 December 2025 and any liabilities for this charity from this date will be settled by the CIO.
Details of any funds materially in deficit	None.

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

All fundraising is to support the gardens and wider site and is mainly achieved through trading, member activities, members fees, donations and grants.

We are grateful for the funding received by The National Lottery; Arts Council and Community Fund grants, Indaver Rivenhall, Essex Community Foundation and Braintree District Council supporting our work this year.

We are grateful to our partners – Trustlinks, Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, Cressing Community Shed, Braintree Beekeepers, Essex Beekeeping Association, who all continue to support and provide a thriving community hub at Cressing.

The charity's activities provide benefit and interest to the local and wider society with hands-on experiences and involvement. The gardens demonstrate the power of horticulture and other skills to improve people's lives.

Section F Other optional information

Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

☐ **Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	SUZANNE LOWE	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	CHAIR	
Date	23/09/2026	

The Friends of Cressing Temple
Registered charity number 1166431
Receipts and payments accounts/SOFA
For the year to 31 December 2025

	Free Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Designated Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Year Ended 31 Dec 2025 Total funds to the nearest £	Year Ended 31 Dec 2024 Total funds to the nearest £
Receipts					
Braintree District Council - community garden	-		-	-	2,450
Essex Community Foundation - Volunteer support	-		-	-	7,750
Grants & Contributions towards Working Farm Project	-		25,015	25,015	1,520
Grants for new Community Building	-		21,640	21,640	-
Donations	483		-	483	1,786
Membership subscriptions	440		-	440	330
Bank Interest Received	446		-	446	238
Total Grants, Contributions, Interest and Donations	**1,369**	-	**46,655**	**48,024**	**14,074**
Fundraising Activities					
Apple Day & Sales	7,044			7,044	5,324
Events / Workshops / Tours	3,775			3,775	3,939
Trading Activities					
Plants / Herbs Sales	15,341			15,341	11,087
Community Garden Sales	2,478			2,478	2,268
Books / Crafts / Honey Sales	3,000			3,000	5,551
Other	669			669	295
Total Receipts from Activities	**32,307**	**-**	**-**	**32,307**	**28,464**
Total Receipts	**33,676**	**-**	**46,655**	**80,331**	**42,538**
Payments					
Working Farm Project	-		1,410	1,410	1,020
Volunteer support programme	-		2,464	2,464	-
Essex Community Fund Community garden	-		2,309	2,309	-
New Community Building	-		6,713	6,713	-
Community Garden	360		-	360	453
IT Equipment	460		-	460	1,455
Tools & Equipment	16		-	16	1,900
Total Assets Purchased	**836**	**-**	**12,896**	**13,732**	**4,828**
Plants, Produce and Herbs cost	8,746			8,746	7,905
Events / Workshops / Tours	2,292			2,292	1,152
Apple Day cost	1,759			1,759	1,091
Garden maintenance	4,117			4,117	4,533
Books / Crafts / Honey cost	1,334			1,334	2,450
Contract worker	4,741			4,741	4,793
Office consumables	1,501			1,501	779
Insurance & Professional Fees	-			-	426
Other	753			753	861
Total Payments	**26,079**	**-**	**12,896**	**38,975**	**28,818**
Net of receipts/(payments)	**7,597**	**-**	**33,759**	**41,356**	**13,720**
Total Funds Brought Forward	21,410	323	10,700	32,433	18,713
Transfer to Designated - Community Building	(5,000)	5,000			
Total Funds at date of Merger 1st December 2025	**24,007**	**5,323**	**44,459**	**73,789**	
Transferred to The Friends of Cressing Temple CIO	(24,007)	(5,323)	(44,459)	(73,789)	
Total Funds as at 31st December	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**32,433**

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	
Print Name	SUZANNE LOWE
Position	CHAIR OF TRUSTEES
Date of Approval	23rd September 2026

CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	THE FRIENDS OF CRESSING TEMPLE		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2025	**Charity no (if any)**	1166431
Set out on pages	1-7		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention ~~(other than that disclosed below *)~~ in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: Kevin Caddy **Date:** 23/9/26

Name: KEVIN CADDY

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Address: TANGLEWOOD OAK ROAD
LITTLE MAPLESTEAD
HALSTEAD, ESSEX CO9 2RU