



**Chartered
Institute for
Archaeologists**

Annual Review 2025/2026

CI/A Annual Review 2025/2026

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Introduction

Welcome to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Annual Review 2025–2026. This review outlines the work of the Institute between August 2025 and July 2026, together with our financial performance for the accounting period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Over the past twelve months we have continued to deliver the key objectives within our rolling three-year plan and further strengthened our focus on being the professional home for archaeologists. Throughout the year we have worked to ensure that our activities, services and resources support members at every stage of their careers, while continuing to promote professional standards and champion the value of archaeology.

We hope that members are beginning to see the benefits of the various initiatives and improvements being introduced. This review highlights many of the significant projects and achievements that have shaped our work, although it represents only a snapshot of the activity taking place across the Institute. Alongside these major developments sits a substantial amount of day-to-day work delivered by staff, volunteers, committees and groups that keeps ClfA functioning effectively and supporting the profession.

One of the most encouraging developments this year has been the growing number of new members choosing to volunteer their time and expertise. Our committees, groups and governance structures continue to benefit from the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment of volunteers, without whom much of the Institute's work simply would not be possible. Our inaugural Membership Day provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the breadth of volunteer activity across ClfA, while also highlighting the professional and personal benefits that volunteering can bring.

As we write this introduction, it is just over a year since we were formally appointed as Co-Chief Executive Officers. During that time, we have greatly valued the opportunity to speak with members from across the profession and to hear directly about the issues that matter most to you. Your feedback has helped shape our priorities and has informed our decision-making, and we are committed to ensuring this dialogue continues. We encourage members to keep sharing their views and ideas as we work together to strengthen the Institute and support the profession.

Finally, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to the ClfA staff team, whose energy, professionalism and enthusiasm have been instrumental in delivering the initiatives and improvements outlined in this review. Their commitment, alongside the dedication of our volunteers and the support of our members, continues to drive the Institute forward.

We hope you enjoy reading this review and learning more about the progress we have made together over the past year.

Kate Geary and Alex Llewellyn

ClfA Co-CEOs



Kate Geary



Alex Llewellyn

ClfA's Strategic Plan and three-year plan – what we are aiming to achieve

ClfA has long been a cornerstone of the archaeological profession, dedicated to advancing the profession and supporting its members. The objectives set in our ten-year Strategic Plan are

- that ClfA-accredited professionals will provide improved research and engagement, using fit-for-purpose technical and ethical standards for competence, education and practice, supported by useful guidance
- that more archaeologists will want their professionalism recognised. A larger, more diverse and inclusive profession will offer a wide range of expertise and better reflect its relevance to society
- that professional archaeologists will be more effectively promoting the many public benefits of archaeology, and will be more trusted and more valued as a result
- that ClfA will provide the governance and resources that enable the profession to flourish

As the heritage landscape evolves, so too must ClfA, to achieve these objectives.

Supporting the Strategic Plan is a more dynamic three-year rolling plan, developing ClfA into a vibrant professional body led by its members. This journey deals with two key issues facing the sector – continuing to demonstrate relevance to society and ensuring the sector is attractive to the next generation of archaeologists.

Through our three year rolling plan, ClfA aims to become a vibrant, member-led professional body, enhancing its relevance, impact and sustainability.

The three-year plan is ambitious, and the strategic milestones focus on efficiency, member engagement, innovation and consolidation, with the aim of

- attracting people to the sector
- supporting and developing member career and learning opportunities
- assuring society of the professionalism of members and Registered Organisations
- influencing policy- and decision-makers to keep heritage at the forefront of their minds

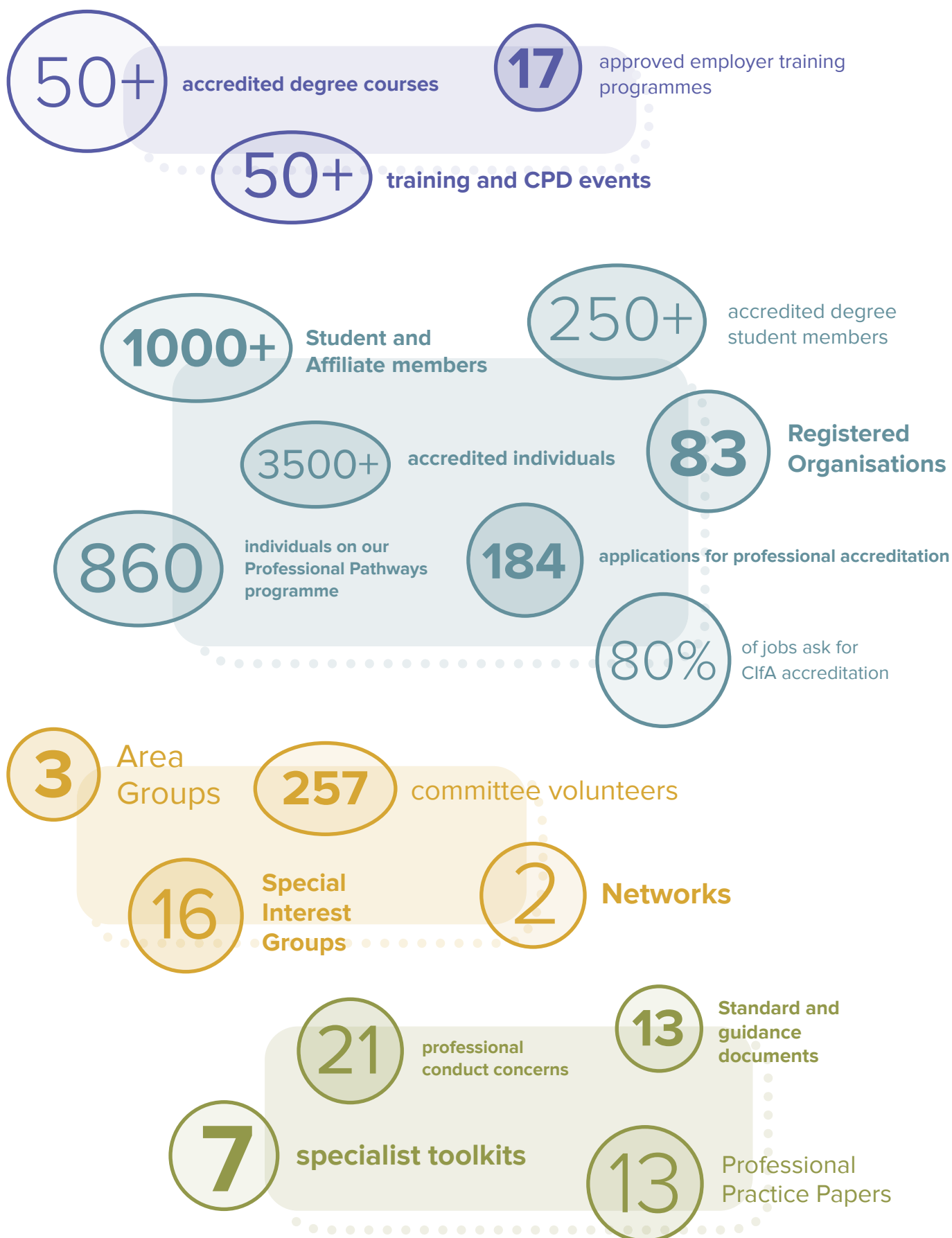
We want it to be clear that ClfA is the professional home for archaeologists, and for those archaeologists to recognise – and feel – the value they get from their professional body.

The three-year plan also aims for ClfA to become a sustainable organisation long-term. This will be achieved through managing costs, generating revenue and achieving returns on the investments in new initiatives.

This review provides a summary of the activities we have been undertaking since July 2025 to meet these aims.

Find our Strategic Plan at: www.archaeologists.net/mission

Highlights for 2025–2026



Attracting people to our sector

AIM: *ClfA will work with key partners to make the profession more appealing to those who are in the early stages of their career, looking to change careers and move into the sector and those currently in the sector but not part of the ClfA community.*

ClfA is the professional home for archaeologists. We are a network of thousands of professional archaeologists working together for high standards and career enhancement. Being part of ClfA connects you with professional communities, helping you to develop your knowledge and support your career journey.

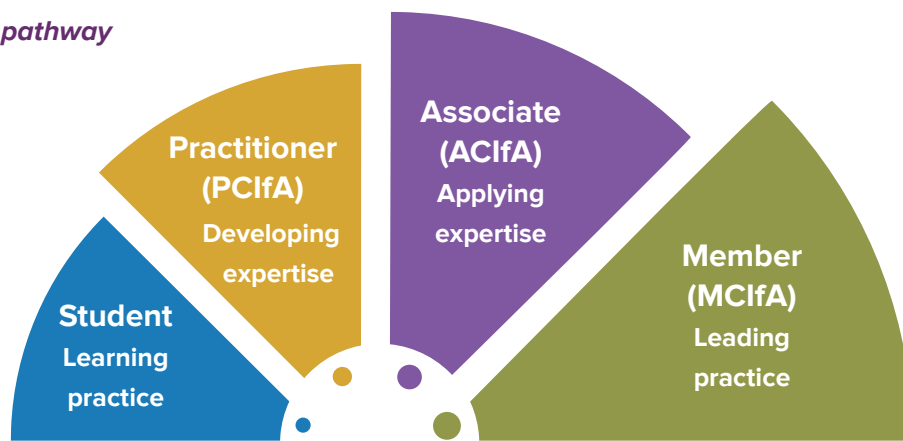
Promoting professional accreditation

Professional accreditation is a formal recognition of an individual's skills, knowledge and behaviours and that these are used to carry out work effectively to professional standards. We want to clearly demonstrate to archaeologists the importance of individual accreditation, and to work with employers to help them understand the benefit of employing accredited archaeologists.

“ Achieving MCIfA accreditation reflects my commitment to ethical practice, evidence-based decision-making and the creation of public benefit through responsible heritage management. I hope it will also help me contribute more actively to the profession, support others in their own development, and continue building a strong and accountable heritage practice. ” MCIfA

Over the past year, we have taken steps to promote accreditation pathways and strengthen understanding of accreditation across the sector. A series of ‘accreditation tea break’ sessions has been introduced to support individuals considering professional accreditation. These sessions have been tailored to specific groups, including local authority archaeologists, Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) and academics and provide a welcoming space to discuss the accreditation process and ask questions. To ensure these events are relevant and engaging, we have worked closely with member volunteers from each specialism. These tea breaks run alongside our accreditation workshops, and we have also been increasing the number of talks to staff working for our Registered Organisations.

“ Gaining a professional accreditation has ... enabled me to be more present in conversations with stakeholders, project managers and leading figures within Community Archaeology. ” PCIfA

ClfA accreditation pathway

We have undertaken a review of the Affiliate membership grade, involving a discussion workshop with Advisory Council, to clarify its purpose as a non-accredited membership offer and to ensure this is better understood. A dedicated webpage has been introduced with clearer guidance on who the grade is for and how it fits within the wider membership structure. We have also circulated a bulletin to Affiliate members to reinforce this messaging, explain the purpose of the category, and encourage progression to accredited grades where appropriate.

In addition to these digital and member-focused initiatives, ClfA's presence at sector events has helped raise awareness of the Institute, its members and its specialist groups. Volunteers from our Groups have also helped to support this. For example, our Heritage Crime Group committee attended the Emergency Services Show, where they promoted ClfA accreditation, the Group's networks and wider ClfA activity to a broad audience. The event proved highly successful, offering valuable opportunities to build connections and highlight the role of heritage professionals in supporting public services.

We have also continued to promote ClfA at regular events throughout the year, including the Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) conference, the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) conference and the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME) Forum. Our attendance at University Archaeology Day included delivering a lunchtime talk on 'What you can do with an archaeology degree', which provided an opportunity to showcase career pathways and highlight the value of professional accreditation.

Clarifying our offer to members

We want to be clear about our offer to members, thus encouraging people to join ClfA and contribute to the community and resources ClfA provides.

In January we held our first online Membership Day looking at the value of engagement. The aim of the event was to highlight each members' individual relationship with ClfA, exploring how to get the best from the resources offered to members, and ways to become more involved. Topics covered included member journeys and reflections, recent advocacy work, professional development plans, updates to the standards and guidance, and opportunities to meet and network with other ClfA members.

We have made significant progress in clarifying the distinction between individual accreditation and Registered Organisation (RO) status. The Registered Organisations web pages have been reorganised to better articulate the value of organisational registration and to guide applicants through the process. The updated content now more closely mirrors the structure and clarity of the accredited members' pages, providing a more consistent user experience. Enhancements include clearer guidance, frequently asked questions and the introduction of testimonials to demonstrate the benefits of registration in practice. Further updates are planned to continue strengthening this resource.

Improvements have continued to be made to the digital member experience. The member area landing page on our website has been updated to better showcase the breadth of resources available, helping members more easily access the tools and information designed to support their professional practice, and easily renew their membership annually.

Finally, we continue to explore how best to support retired members. Research is ongoing into additional benefits tailored to this group alongside introducing a periodic bulletin highlighting areas of ClfA's work and activity that may be of interest. This will help ensure retired members remain connected and informed, and aware of opportunities to stay engaged with the Institute.



Improving our communications

This year has seen continued progress in strengthening how we understand, engage with, and support our members, with a particular focus on improving communications and ensuring that benefits are clear, accessible and relevant across all membership grades.

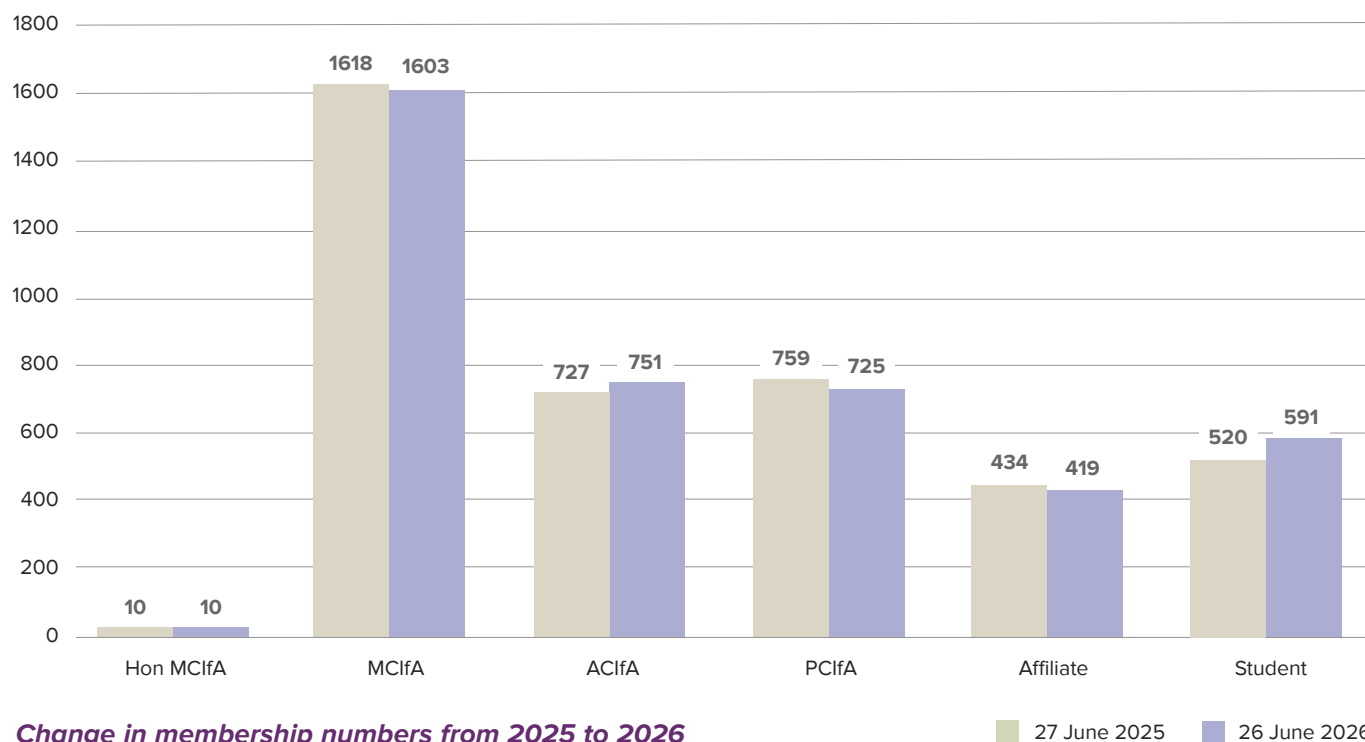
Our biennial membership survey was circulated in September. The survey was refreshed to include new questions on how members engage with ClfA's communication channels. The feedback from this will help address existing gaps in quantitative data and provide a more comprehensive picture of audience behaviour. The findings will play an important role in meeting our three-year plan objectives, particularly in improving communication with members.

Alongside this, we have circulated a specific survey about social media and communications with members to help us understand how members engage with our communications. The results of this will inform what channels we use and help us tailor our communications better to different groups of members. We are particularly keen to understand the view of Student and Affiliate members, where response rates have traditionally been lower.



These initiatives will help us to better understand our members, enhance communication and ensure that the value of ClfA membership is clear at every stage of a professional career.

Current membership statistics



Membership of CIfA now stands at 4099 (26 June 2026). Of these members, 3089 are accredited professionals (PCIfA, ACIfA and MCIfA) who have demonstrated their technical and ethical competence to the Validation committee. We ran a successful 'rejoiner amnesty' at the start of 2026, with 61 people rejoining successfully. Eight people used the fast track to PCIfA with an NVQ or Apprenticeship.

There is strong support from our non-accredited membership (Student and Affiliate); we now have 1010 non-accredited members (26 June 2026). More than 250 students studying on accredited programmes are benefiting from free Student membership, helping them engage early with professional practice.

For more information about professional accreditation, registration and our Professional Pathways visit <https://www.archaeologists.net/join>

Read more about individual member stories and why they have become accredited at <https://www.archaeologists.net/join/testimonies>

Download our 'About accreditation' booklet at <https://www.archaeologists.net/work/profession>

Supporting and developing member career and learning opportunities

AIM: *As a professional body ClfA will support members throughout their entire career, providing better CPD, events and networking opportunities.*

Our approach to supporting member career and learning opportunities has two strands: formal qualifications and continuous professional development (CPD)

Providing training courses and learning opportunities for our members

Our aim is to provide accessible training and CPD which is relevant across different roles and career stages.

Our learning opportunities include introductory short online workshops or e-learning modules, bite-sized specialist 'lunch-and-learns' and webinars through to in-person training days and conferences.

Over the past year, ClfA has continued to expand its programme of professional development, bringing together archaeologists at all stages of their careers to share knowledge, build skills and strengthen connections across the sector.

CPD Continuing Professional Development



E-learning



Conferences
& events



Magazines
& journals



Lunch & learns



Committees/
volunteering

Our fifth week-long innovation festival was held in October. The festival brought together members and non-members providing an opportunity to showcase and celebrate the innovative practices and approaches being undertaken across the historic environment sector, while offering opportunities for wider discussion about the challenges to implementing innovation in archaeological research.

The annual ClfA conference, held in Edinburgh at the end of April, welcomed 307 participants under the theme *Building connections*. The event offered over 30 hours of CPD, and well as a valuable opportunity for in-person engagement, enabling delegates to exchange ideas, form new collaborations and reflect on the evolving challenges and opportunities facing archaeology.

In June, ClfA delivered its first Strategic Leadership Summit, aimed at members in senior and emerging leadership roles. The Summit focused on national approaches to addressing key challenges in archaeology, exploring how sector strategies are being used to respond and what further action is needed to ensure archaeology continues to deliver public benefit. The event also created space for members developing their leadership careers to present impactful projects and reflect on their professional journeys, fostering both peer learning and inspiration.

We have also launched a new Perspectives in Practice series of ClfA-approved CPD workshops. The first sessions have focused on desk-based assessments (DBAs) and brought together practitioners from across the sector, with

presentations from those working for local authorities and consultancies, to explore differing perspectives on their preparation and review. The workshops have provided valuable insight into shared challenges and expectations, with discussions directly informing ongoing work on professional practice and Standards and guidance.



This focus on professional growth has been supported by a wide-ranging training programme. Over the course of the year, more than 50 training events were delivered, many made possible through the dedication of volunteers from Area and Special Interest Groups. Topics spanned core and emerging areas of practice, including project management, archaeology in the media, osteoarchaeology, sampling strategies, heritage crime, digital data practices, non-designated heritage assets, climate adaptation for heritage, marine archaeology, professional ethics, archaeological archives and more. Together, these sessions have helped equip members with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the sector's evolving demands.

To ensure this offer remains relevant and coherent, a review of ClfA's CPD provision is underway. This work maps existing events, digital content and resources against the developing 'professional curriculum', helping to identify gaps, strengthen progression pathways and enhance the overall learning experience. In parallel, new 'boost bundles' are being developed. These are targeted CPD resource packages designed to complement workshops and provide additional tailored support for delegates.

ClfA's commitment to knowledge-sharing is also reflected in our magazine, *The Archaeologist*. Recent issues have explored themes such as non-intrusive approaches to archaeological research and evaluation, and information management – guest-edited by our Information Management Special Interest Group – alongside an open theme showcasing the breadth of work across the historic environment sector. Featuring contributions from members and specialists, the publication continues to provide valuable insight into current practice, innovation and research.

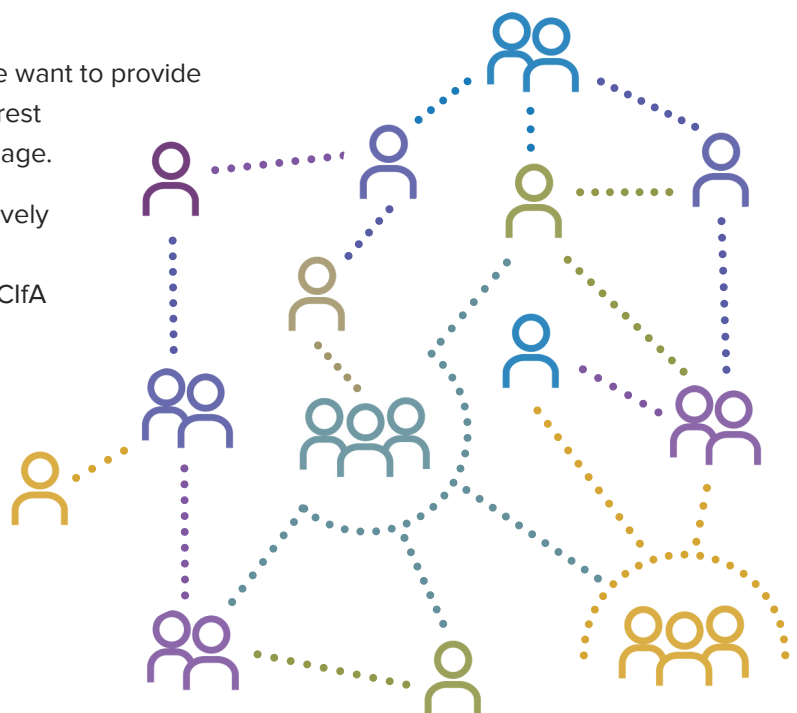
One of the major benefits of joining ClfA is having access to our incredibly active network of Area and Special Interest Groups, through which you can increase your knowledge in all aspects of professional archaeology.

Networking opportunities

As the professional home for archaeologists, we want to provide a community through our Area and Special Interest Groups to enable members to network and engage.

Our volunteers on these Groups have been actively supporting the delivery of our three-year plan through delivering CPD events, and promoting ClfA at specialist events and conferences.

This year we have seen the launch of a new specialist network for geoarchaeology and paleoenvironmental work. This is the second network to be established, joining our neurodiversity network. Both are promoted through our networks webpage and are free to join for ClfA members.



Strengthening qualifications, apprenticeships and skills development

Our work to strengthen and diversify entry routes into archaeology focuses on supporting regulated qualifications, including degree programmes and apprenticeships, as well as structured training schemes delivered by employers. By clearly linking the skills developed through these programmes to the competence and commitment requirements for CIfA accreditation, we are creating defined pathways to professional status for those pursuing a career in archaeology.

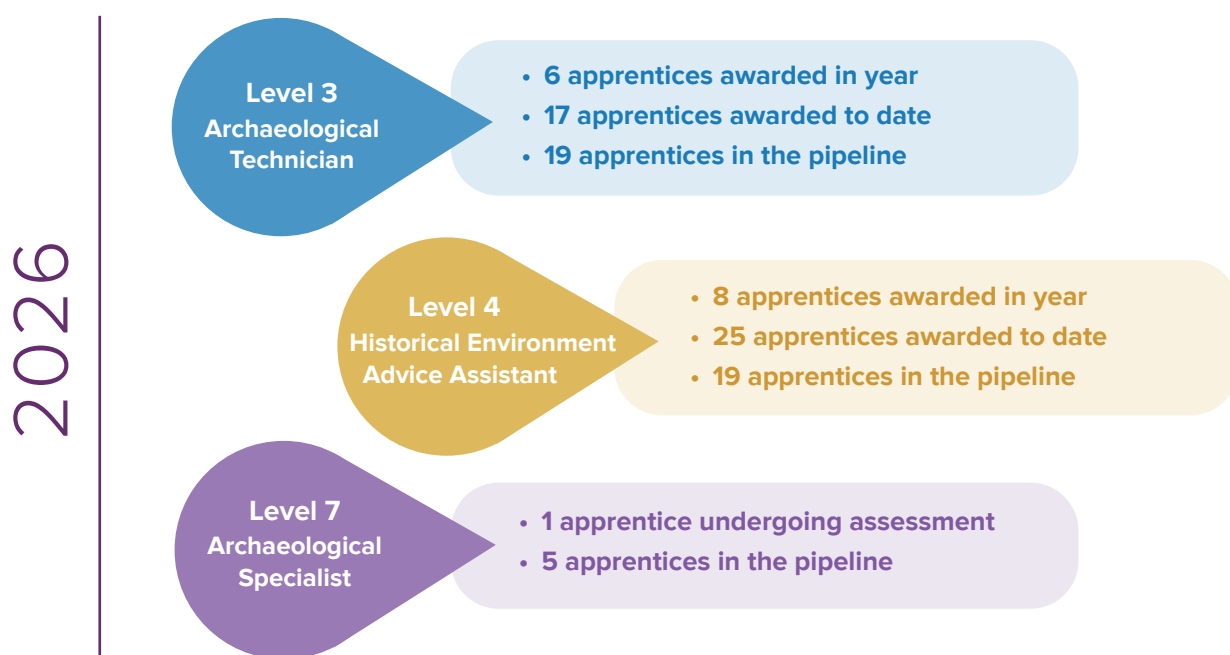
This year has seen continued progress across CIfA's qualifications and apprenticeships work, supporting the development of a skilled, resilient and future-ready workforce.



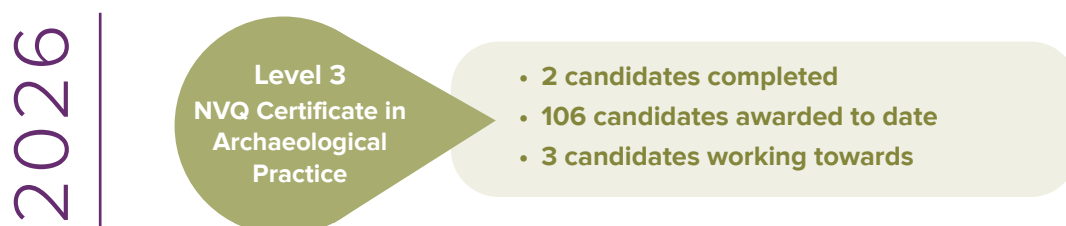
All compliance actions arising from Ofqual and SQA audits have been successfully completed and signed off, with no outstanding issues. The 2025 Statement of Compliance has also been submitted to Ofqual, confirming continued adherence to regulatory requirements.

Delivery of apprenticeships in England continues to move forward at pace. At Level 3, candidates are progressing steadily, with several already certificated and others moving through assessment. End-point assessments continue to be completed for Level 4 Historic Environment Advice Assistant apprentices. Encouragingly, the most recent Level 4 cohort achieved strong results, with a mix of passes and distinctions awarded.

Awards and candidates: apprenticeship qualifications



Awards and candidates: NVQs



We have also recruited and inducted a new intake of assessors, with further standardisation training planned to ensure consistency in future assessments.

We have engaged with the ongoing reform of post-16 qualifications and the creation of Skills England to ensure that the sector continues to have access to vocational qualification routes. This has included exploring new options for the delivery of archaeological specialist training following withdrawal of funding for most Level 7 apprenticeships by the Westminster government.

In Scotland, development of the Modern Apprenticeship framework has reached a key milestone, progressing into Stage 3 of the development process. The Technical Expert Group, comprising eleven employers, has played a central role in shaping job roles, work functions and associated National Occupational Standards. This work is complemented by the establishment of a Qualification Development Team to review and update selected standards, with consultation taking place across the UK. Several meetings of a separate Qualification Development Team for the Scottish Professional Development Award have also taken place, as part of grant-funded work supporting Scotland's Archaeology Strategy.

A notable highlight this year has been the launch of the first cross-border archaeology apprenticeship, developed in collaboration with ClfA. This initiative demonstrates the growing maturity and flexibility of apprenticeship provision, opening up new opportunities for both employers and learners. We have successfully secured funding from Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland to develop further resources to support employers to engage with apprenticeships.

Additionally, ClfA's accredited degree programmes continue to play a vital role in preparing the next generation of professionals for careers in the historic environment sector. By embedding professional standards within their teaching, these programmes ensure that graduates develop the practical skills, knowledge and behaviours valued by employers. Increasing emphasis is being placed on equipping students for the workplace, providing a strong foundation for those choosing to pursue careers in archaeology.

For more information about ClfA Qualifications visit <https://www.archaeologists.net/cifaqualifications>

For more information about professional development and training opportunities visit <https://www.archaeologists.net/events>

For more information about accredited degrees visit <https://www.archaeologists.net/careers/kit/skills/degrees>

Assuring society of the professionalism of our members

AIM: *ClfA will continue to drive the use of standards across the entire profession and look to provide better support to members in the understanding and application of guidance and standards.*

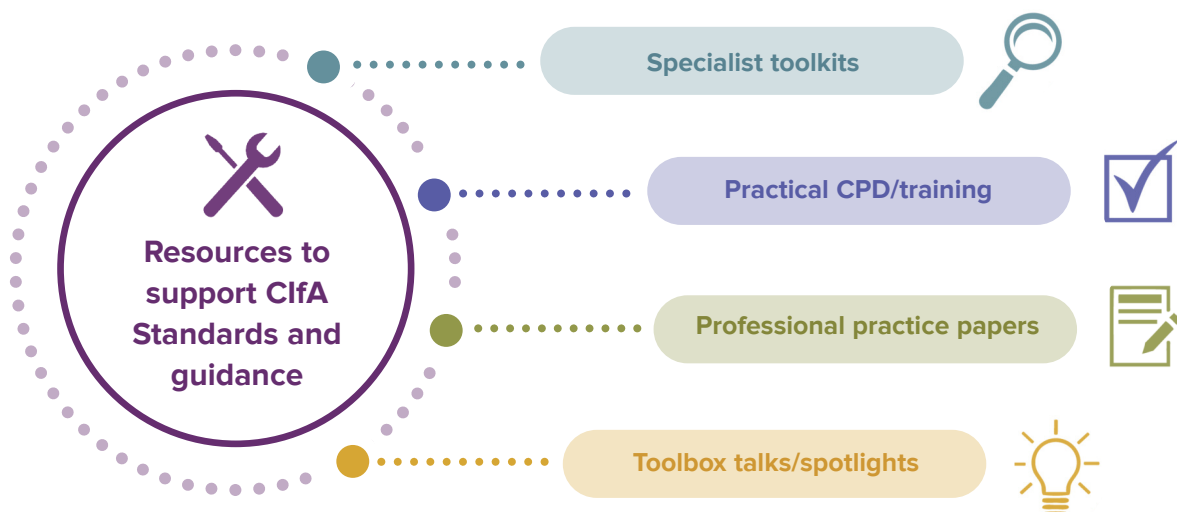
A core priority for ClfA is to provide assurance to society that archaeologists accredited by us, along with organisations on our register, are competent, trustworthy and committed to delivering high-quality outcomes and meaningful impact. We aim to achieve this by

- championing professional standards, ensuring our members understand their importance and consistently apply them in their archaeological work
- supporting continuous professional development (CPD) and facilitating knowledge exchange, helping members build both technical expertise and ethical awareness while deepening their understanding of ClfA's regulatory framework
- maintaining and evolving our guidance, through regular review and updates to our documents and resources so they remain relevant, practical and fit for purpose
- leveraging sector expertise, drawing on the insight of our specialist panels, working groups and committees to provide informed advice on standards and their real-world application

Strengthening standards, guidance and professional practice

Further progress has been made in strengthening the understanding and application of ClfA's Standards and guidance, alongside supporting professional development across the sector.

We have successfully secured funding from Historic England to develop a ClfA Toolkit for Post-Excavation Stratigraphic Analysis, converting the content of the published *Archaeologists Guide to Good Practice Handbook* (May et al 2024). This new Toolkit will sit alongside ClfA's other Toolkits with integration and signposting between resources, especially the Toolkit for Managing Digital Data (Dig Digital).



We also have funding from Historic England to undertake the second phase of a project focused on enhancing and promoting ClfA Standards and guidance on archaeological practice. The project focuses on the strategic review of the landscape of standards and guidance across the UK historic environment sector, looking in more detail at the documentation available, its use, its accessibility and the roles and responsibilities associated with its provision and enforcement. This work will inform the development and review of existing and future ClfA Standards and guidance and will support archaeological practice by creating opportunities for increased communication and collaboration on guidance development and encouraging more comprehensive signposting.

A new Toolbox Talk on ClfA's ethical practice framework has been developed to increase awareness of ClfA's *Code of conduct* and Standards and guidance, highlighting their purpose and practical value. This forms part of the growing ClfA Toolbox Talk series, which has been refreshed with a new template and clearly branded as a dedicated ClfA resource. Currently aimed at Registered Organisations as a member benefit, the series is designed to provide accessible, practical guidance that can be used within teams to support good practice. Additional talks are planned, expanding this resource over time.

Our Professional Standards Advisory Panel met to review the quality of reporting across the profession, drawing on feedback gathered through ClfA's inspection and validation processes, as well as input from partners such as ALGAO. The Panel identified opportunities for improvement and recommended a programme of action, including the development of quality assurance training and targeted guidance to help early career archaeologists better understand the range of report types.

Reviewing and updating our resources

We have also been working to enhance ClfA's ethical practice framework and professional guidance, ensuring that these remain robust, transparent and responsive to the evolving needs of the sector.

A key development has been the amendment to Principle 5 of the *Code of conduct*, which was approved by members following the 2025 AGM. The updated *Code* has now been published on the website, alongside a revised version of the Professional Conduct Regulations. These updates ensure that ClfA's ethical practice framework remains clear, relevant and aligned with current professional expectations. Reflecting these changes, the Ethics Practice Paper and related policy statements have also been reviewed and updated, providing consistency across all supporting documents.

Alongside this, important progress has been made in updating and developing ClfA's suite of Standards and guidance. In February, a revised *Standard and guidance for forensic archaeologists* was launched following a comprehensive two-year review led by the Forensic Archaeology Expert Panel (FAEP). Due to its specialist nature, and to ensure practitioners meet the highest standards required for forensic archaeological practice, this document differs in style to others in the suite, encompassing seven Standards, each with their own supporting guidance.

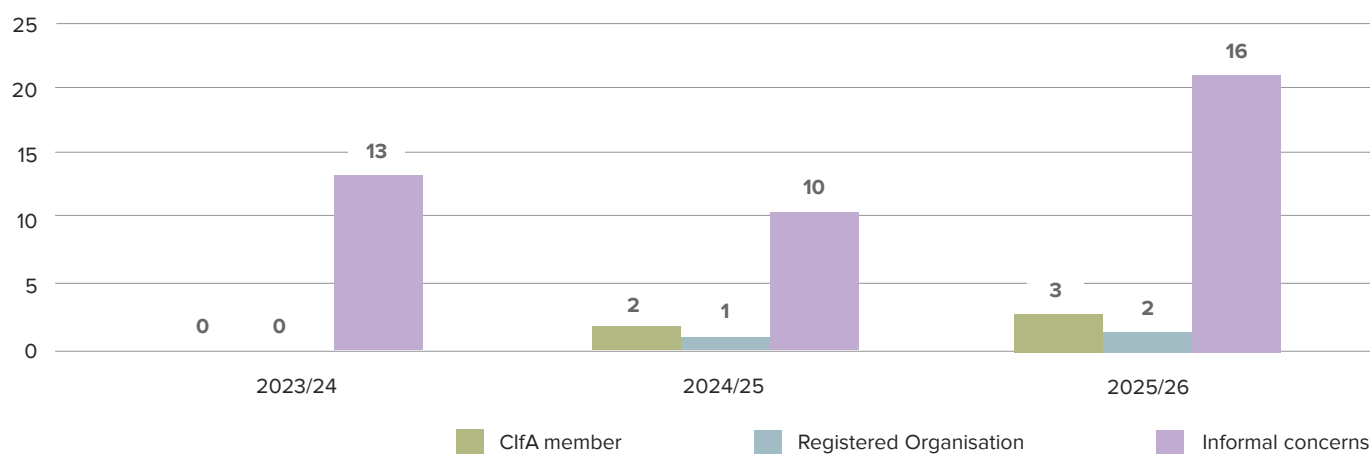
The *Standard and guidance for the investigation and recording of buildings or structures of architectural and historic interest* has also been updated. This was managed by ClfA and delivered by a working group of historic buildings specialists from ClfA's Buildings Archaeology Group, the ClfA Standards Panel and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). The new version comprises a separate Standard and supporting universal guidance, following the format adopted for the *Standards and guidance for archaeological excavation*, *archaeological field evaluation* and *archaeological monitoring and recording*, published in 2023. The remaining Standards and guidance documents are gradually being converted to this format with the *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessments* next on the list. For the latter, insights gathered through the Perspectives in Practice CPD workshops on desk-based assessments that took place in February and June will play an important role in shaping this work.

In addition to strengthening Standards and guidance, improvements have been made to the professional conduct area of the website to make processes clearer and information more accessible. Content has been streamlined to better guide those considering submitting an allegation, supported by the introduction of a new anonymous checklist created using Microsoft Forms. This tool helps users determine whether their concerns are relevant to ClfA's professional conduct process and meet the necessary thresholds before proceeding, while also providing ClfA with valuable data on engagement with the process.

All accredited individuals and Registered Organisations commit to upholding the Institute's *Code of conduct*, which promotes those standards of conduct and self-discipline required in the pursuit of the study and care of the physical evidence of the human past and working in the public interest. The professional conduct process provides a clear and robust process for investigating concerns about professional practice or behaviour, helping to maintain trust and confidence and demonstrating our members' commitment to delivering high-quality outcomes.



Over the last twelve months we have dealt with 21 queries and/or concerns about practice. Of these, five were submitted as formal allegations. One formal allegation reported in our last Annual Review (August 2024–July 2025) resulted in a formal reprimand that was published in *The Archaeologist* magazine (Issue 128).



Number of formal and informal allegations received in the last three years

The Registered Organisation scheme

Our Registered Organisation scheme helps archaeological organisations to demonstrate their expertise and experience to their clients, colleagues and society.



There are currently 83 Registered Organisations. In addition, three new organisations have applied to join the scheme.

The ClfA Registered Organisations (RO) scheme continues to provide an important framework for quality assurance and continuous improvement across a diverse range of organisations working within the historic environment sector. While archaeology is often most publicly associated with excavation and fieldwork, the scheme is not a fieldwork accreditation. It applies to organisations wherever archaeological and heritage services are delivered, encompassing consultancy and advisory services, research, post-excavation and specialist analysis, archives and digital data management, public engagement, curatorial services, historic buildings work and community programmes as well as field investigations.

Through regular peer review, Registered Organisations demonstrate their commitment to ClfA's professional standards, ethical practice and public benefit. The scheme assesses not simply what organisations do but how they do it – examining professional competence, governance, quality assurance processes, staff development, fair employment practices and organisational accountability.

Improving consistency and confidence in inspections

This year has seen a focused effort to strengthen the consistency and quality of Registered Organisation (RO) inspections. Additional guidance has been developed to assist panel members in carrying out inspections, helping to ensure a shared understanding of expectations and greater consistency in approach. These consist of a suite of short, accessible training videos and supporting resources offering a practical insight into the inspection process, clarifying what is being assessed and why, and providing a consistent reference point for all those involved. These enhancements are improving confidence among panel members and supporting a more consistent, transparent and robust inspection process across the RO scheme.

In the past year, 24 organisations were registered following inspection (including 2 new organisations). In total they received 3 conditions, 34 recommendations to implement and 37 recommendations for consideration. These covered areas such as reporting, project design, publications, training and development, archives and public benefit.

The maturity of the scheme is increasingly reflected in review outcomes, with fewer conditions being applied across the register. This demonstrates the strong systems and professional cultures now embedded within many Registered Organisations. Recommendations continue to play an important role, providing a framework for continuous quality improvement and helping organisations to identify opportunities for development, innovation and the sharing of good practice.

A particular strength of the scheme remains its peer review model, which creates a dynamic community of practice. The exchange of experience, expertise and ideas between reviewers and organisations helps foster learning across the register and contributes to the ongoing development of professional standards.

Supporting future professionals through accredited degrees

Encouragingly, all university departments whose programmes were accredited in 2020 have now successfully achieved second-term accreditation through to 2030. A new application from the University of Exeter has also been approved. Increased capacity to support the degree accreditation process has been provided by a new Senior Administrative Assistant, strengthening delivery of this work.

A review of the criteria and processes for degree accreditation is now underway, reflecting a commitment to maintaining high standards and ensuring that accreditation remains relevant and robust. A dedicated working group has met to agree terms of reference and establish priorities for Board approval.

For more information about professional standards in archaeology, including the Toolkits, visit <https://www.archaeologists.net/work/standards>

For more information about the professional conduct process visit www.archaeologists.net/work/conduct

For more information about the Registered Organisations scheme visit <https://www.archaeologists.net/register/ro>

Influencing policy- and decision-makers to keep heritage at the forefront of their minds

AIM: *To work with organisations and governments across the UK and more widely to influence heritage-focused decisions. ClfA's engagement will continue to uphold its commitment to advancing the profession and supporting ClfA members, ensuring a bright and prosperous future for all.*

ClfA has a vital role in ensuring that archaeology is represented in policy discussions and understood by the key audiences archaeologists need to engage with, including politicians, government officials, various agencies, wider historic environment interests, client sectors and other partners. ClfA's influence is rooted in its members' expertise, mobilised and enabled by the resources ClfA dedicates to policy, advocacy and external relations.

The three-year aim for this area of ClfA's work is to develop the ways that ClfA mobilises its members, catalyses vital policy discussions and turns positive thinking into proactive action.

Driving advocacy, policy engagement and sector guidance

A significant focus this year has been on the development of new guidance to support emerging areas of practice. We secured funding from Historic England to lead a project to develop a collaborative *Archaeology and Solar Farms Good Practice Guide*, which was formally launched at a Parliamentary reception in June. The Guide seeks to formalise good practice, helping solar developers to integrate archaeological considerations from early in the project planning processes through to final design. It will also assist heritage professionals in ensuring proportionate approaches, for example to evaluation timing and focused trenching. It is anticipated that the Guide will reduce friction at solar farm consenting and help to inform and set expectations for all stakeholders ahead of site-specific negotiations on applications for solar farm consents. The Guide was collaboratively produced with representatives from the archaeology and solar sectors and is jointly badged by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), ClfA, the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME), Historic England and Solar Energy UK (SEUK).

Alongside this, ClfA has contributed to revisions of Historic England Advice Note 15 on renewable energy and Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change guidance on place and landscape, helping to ensure that heritage considerations are embedded within the evolving sustainability agenda.



ClfA has remained actively engaged in legislative and policy developments, including continued lobbying on the Planning and Infrastructure Act, which has now received Royal Assent, and the ongoing Devolution Bill as it progresses through the House of Lords. Engagement with government departments has included attending Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) meetings to discuss progress on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the resilience of local authority services, as well as submitting consultation responses on NPPF reforms, changes to the statutory consultee system in England, new towns and planning fees. Positive engagement with Historic England and other sector partners has helped to shape coordinated responses and identify next steps.

In Scotland, ClfA is re-engaging with agri-environment regulation development, where heritage has yet to be fully integrated despite earlier successes in influencing primary legislation. Following the withdrawal of Planning Advice Note 2/2011, ClfA worked closely with Historic Environment Scotland and ALGAO:Scotland to support the development of updated approaches to planning and archaeology.

Finally, ClfA has also undertaken internal consultation with its Advisory Council and staff to refine its advocacy objectives, ensuring that future work is clearly focused and aligned with member and sector priorities.

Sector skills advocacy and influence

We have continued to play an active role in shaping the future of the historic environment sector through collaboration, advocacy and contribution to key strategic initiatives. This includes being part of the steering group for Historic Environment Skills Forum (for England) and as part of the project board for Archaeology 2030 (in Northern Ireland). We continue to lead Aim 5 of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy and this year ClfA has taken a lead role for the development of the next iteration of the strategy.

ClfA has joined the advisory board for the new *Heritage Survey Platform* project, led by Open Past(s) and funded by Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland. This important initiative will deliver the next iteration of *Profiling the Profession*, helping to build a clearer, data-driven understanding of the sector's workforce. Our involvement ensures that professional standards and workforce needs remain central to its development.

We have also contributed to the latest *Skills Investment Plan* annual report in Scotland, highlighting progress within the Archaeology Pillar. This includes the provision of a case study on vocational qualifications, demonstrating the value of alternative pathways into the profession and the importance of developing a skilled and diverse workforce. Our work on this was showcased at the 2026 Scottish Historic Environment Forum (SHEF) through a presentation to sector leaders.

Strengthening partnerships and sharing insight across the sector

Strategic relationships have remained a central priority over the past year, supporting ClfA's commitment to collaboration and sector-wide improvement. A particularly productive meeting with Historic England's Co-Chief Executives allowed us to highlight the alignments between ClfA's objectives and Historic England's new Strategic Plan for 2026–2031. This discussion identified clear areas of shared focus, laying the groundwork for closer cooperation in the years ahead.

Partnership working has also been strengthened through the establishment of regular liaison meetings with ALGAO UK and ICON. These allow for more consistent dialogue, helping to identify common priorities and opportunities for closer collaboration.

We are partnering with other professional bodies to emphasise to government how the professional sector can play a stronger, more structured role in delivering national priorities, promoting the value of professional skills and competence in delivering the government's missions. This work is supported by 60 professional bodies and trade associations. Alongside this strategic engagement, ClfA has continued to play a key role in bringing professionals together to exchange knowledge, explore emerging challenges and strengthen collaboration. In October, a successful Thought Leadership event was delivered in partnership with the National Highways Archaeology Community. Hosted by WSP, the event brought together around 50 representatives from Tier 1 contractors, clients, designers and archaeological organisations. Discussions focused on lessons learned from major infrastructure projects, offering valuable insights into the complexities of delivering large-scale schemes and highlighting opportunities to improve practice across disciplines.

ClfA has an ongoing and valued knowledge partnership agreement with National Highways, recognising National Highways' role as a major client and funder of archaeological research. We aim to develop similar relationships with other major client bodies in the coming years.

Building on this collaborative approach, a joint event with the Institution of Environmental Sciences' Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) community explored the important issue of digital carbon, encouraging cross-sector dialogue on sustainability and the role of digital practices in reducing environmental impact.

Details of our consultation responses are available at <https://www.archaeologists.net/advocacy/consultations>

Reforming our governance and administrative processes

AIM: *for ClfA to be more efficient and effective in what we do and to ensure that our people are empowered to deliver the outcomes of our Strategic Plan.*

To achieve the aspirations in our Strategic Plan and three-year plan, the Institute needs to be efficient and effective so that it is sustainable and fit for the future.

Over the past year, ClfA has continued to strengthen its governance and support the effective leadership of its Board of Directors. A dedicated training session was delivered in partnership with the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN), focused on the responsibilities and roles of Board members as Directors of the Institute. This session provided valuable insight into good practice in professional body governance, reinforcing the importance of accountability and strategic oversight. The learning gained will directly inform improvements to the induction materials provided to future Board members and volunteers, ensuring they are well equipped to contribute from the outset.

Alongside this, the Board, via a small working group of Board members and staff, has been undertaking a comprehensive review of ClfA's Royal Charter and bylaws. This work is focused on ensuring that these foundational documents remain clear, relevant and fit for purpose. Key objectives of the review include improving clarity through concise, accessible language, reducing duplication, and where appropriate, streamlining content by transferring operational detail into the Regulations.

The review is also identifying any gaps or inconsistencies in relation to ClfA's current activities and operations, ensuring that governance arrangements accurately reflect how the Institute functions today. Importantly, it is being approached with a view to future-proofing, creating a framework that is robust yet flexible enough to support the Institute's continued development.

During the year the Board has also adopted an updated Financial Plan. This document provides details of the financial management strategies of ClfA, a review of financial risk to the organisation and details of the organisation's financial policies and procedures. It also takes account of the aspirations in the rolling three-year plan to implement cost efficiencies, increase productivity and generate income to support the sustainability of the Institute.

For more information about ClfA's governance visit www.archaeologists.net/about/governance

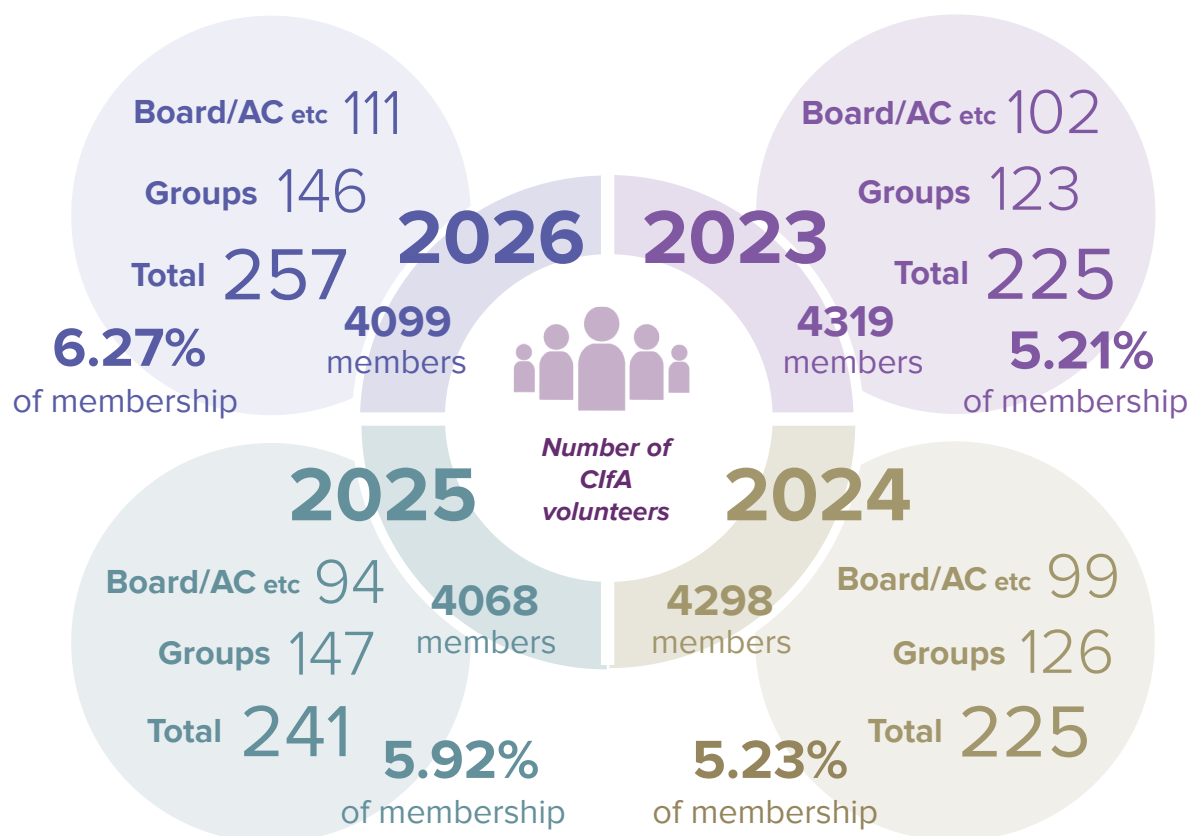
Celebrating our volunteers

A remarkable amount of the work highlighted in this Annual Review would simply not be possible without the dedication, expertise and commitment of our volunteers. While ClfA operates with the equivalent of 15.5 full-time staff, the Institute's ability to deliver on its objectives, support members and champion professional archaeology relies heavily on the contribution of members who generously give their time and knowledge.

Over the past year, ClfA has benefited from the support of 257 volunteers. Of these, 111 accredited members have served on the Board of Directors, Advisory Council and key committees including Validation, Registration, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Accredited Degrees. These individuals contribute significant time and professional expertise to help guide the Institute's strategic direction, support governance and ensure that high professional standards are maintained, and some volunteer for multiple committees.

A further 146 members from across all membership grades have been involved in Area and Special Interest Group committees, filling 155 volunteer roles.

These groups continue to play a vital role in supporting members through networking opportunities, professional knowledge-sharing, continuing professional development (CPD) events and training activities. They also contribute specialist expertise to consultations, guidance development and resources such as the ClfA Toolkits.



“ I find it really rewarding that the time I give supports archaeology as a profession and contributes to the future of the sector, especially those just starting out. ”

This year has also seen a renewed focus on strengthening and promoting volunteering across the Institute. Volunteering resources have been comprehensively updated, including the development of a valuable resource for Registered Organisations highlighting the benefits of supporting staff involvement in ClfA activities. Written by former Board Chair Pen Foreman and circulated directly to Registered Organisations in February, the guidance reinforces the professional and organisational value that volunteering brings and encourages employers to actively support staff engagement.

“ Volunteering with ClfA has helped me to develop skills I wouldn’t have gained otherwise, which I can add to job descriptions. ”

To further celebrate the contribution of volunteers, an article highlighting their importance to ClfA was featured in the June edition of *The Archaeologist* as part of Volunteers’ Week. In addition, recordings from the volunteering section of Membership Day have been used to promote volunteering opportunities and Group activities through the ClfA website and Professional Pathways bulletins, helping raise awareness of the many ways members can get involved.

A particularly significant achievement this year has been the growth of the Validation committee, which now has the largest number of members in its history. This expanded capacity has brought a broader range of skills, experience and professional perspectives to the accreditation process, while also enabling the committee to manage increasing application volumes more effectively. This has been especially important in responding to the growing number of Associate (AClfA) applications and ensuring that applicants continue to receive a robust, timely and high-quality assessment experience.

“ Seeing behind the scenes of the work that goes on at ClfA has been really inspiring, and I have enjoyed the chance to participate. ”

Board and ClfA staff extend their sincere thanks to every volunteer who has contributed to the Institute this year. Their generosity, professionalism and enthusiasm strengthen ClfA in countless ways and play a fundamental role in advancing professional archaeology. We would also like to recognise and thank the organisations and employers who support volunteering by enabling their staff to dedicate valuable time to the Institute.

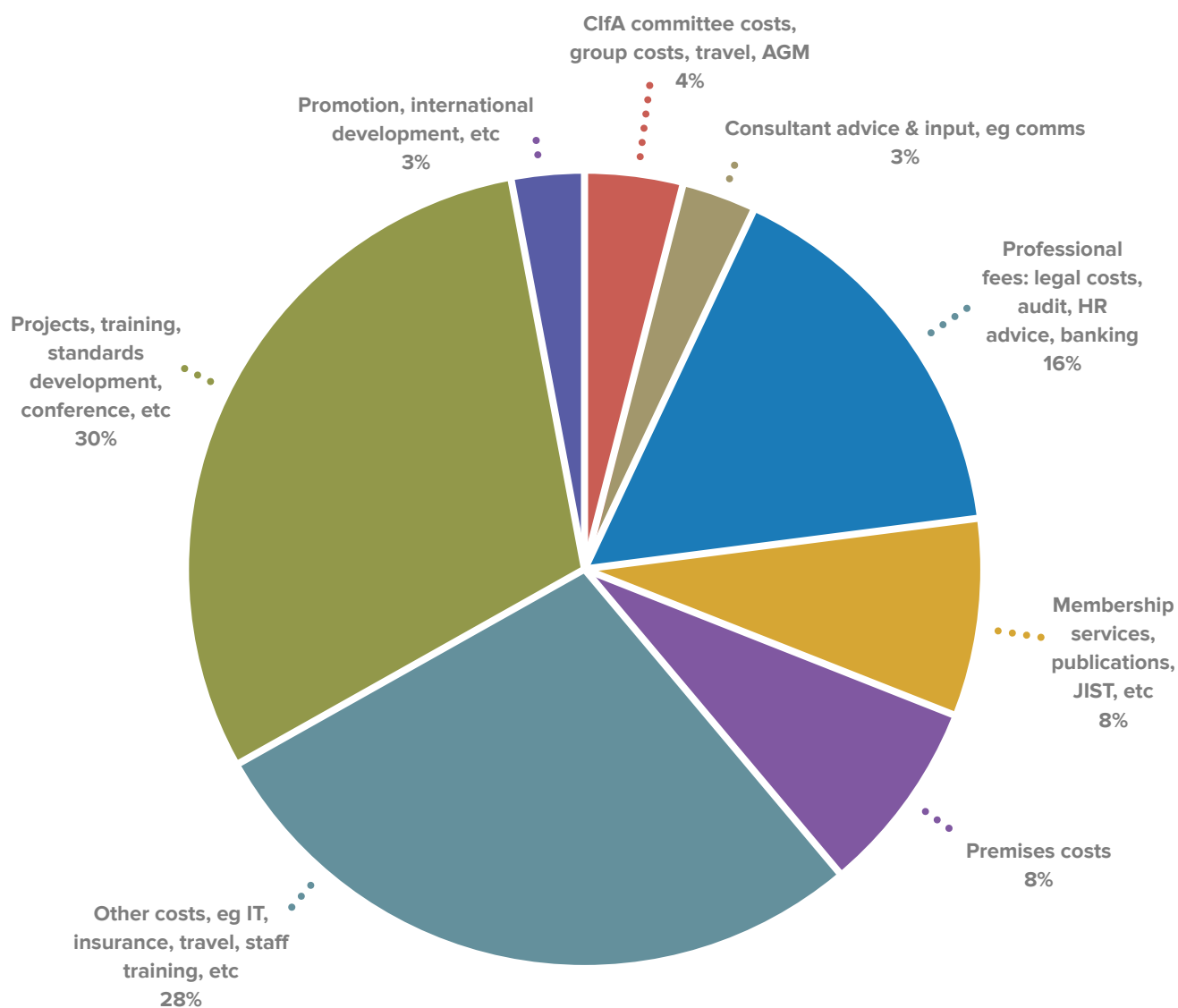
For more information about getting involved with ClfA visit <https://www.archaeologists.net/involved> or email us at admin@archaeologists.net

Accounts from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

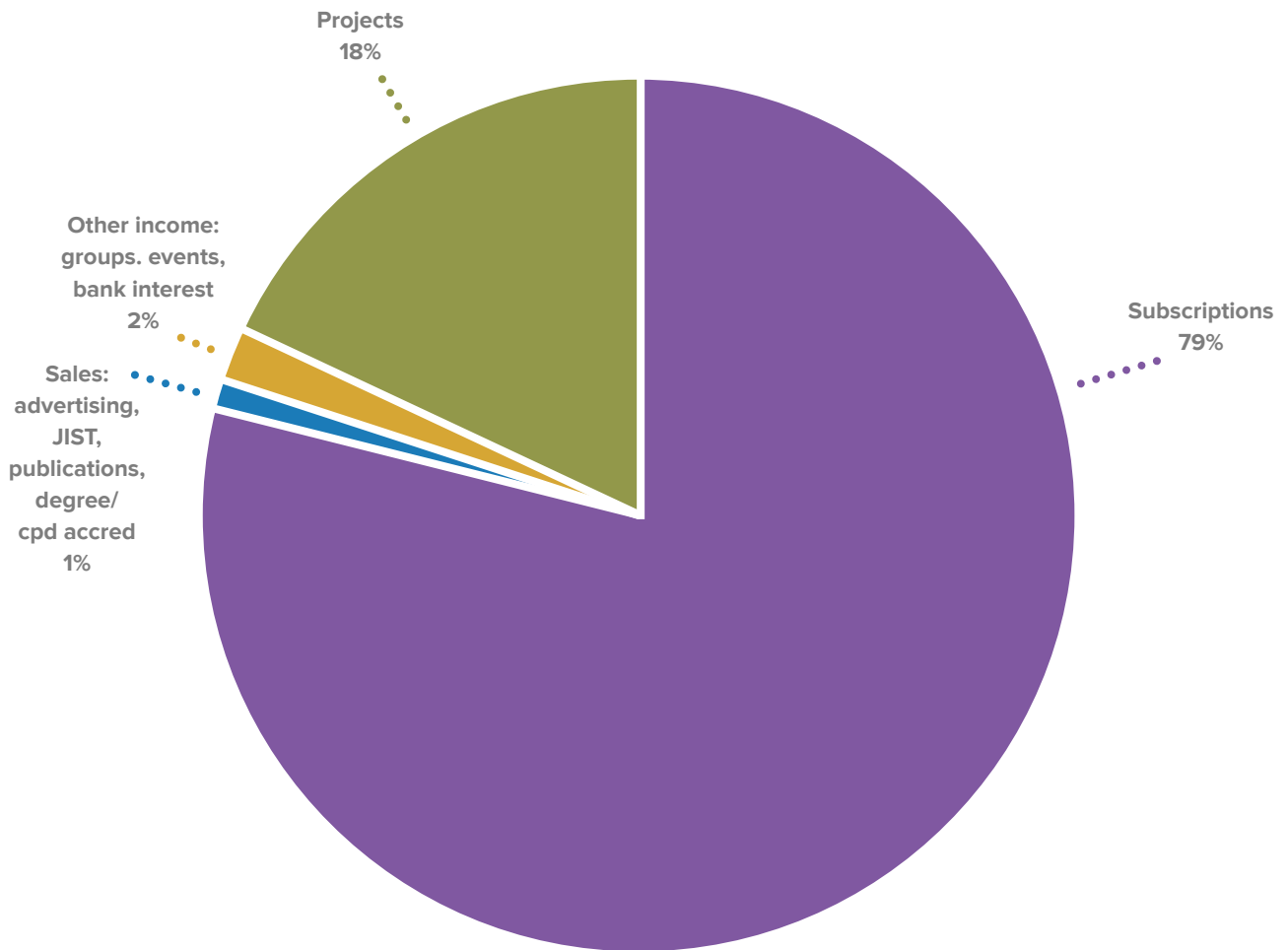
ClfA's accounts have been audited by Bronsens Accountants. Under our Charter, the Institute is required to provide details of its income and expenditure to members for consideration at the Annual General Meeting.

Although not specified in the Charter, the Board has agreed to have these prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. Detailed income and expenditure accounts, financial statements and Honorary Treasurer report are available on the ClfA website at www.archaeologists.net/annual-reviews-and-accounts

In addition to the costs of employing staff to run the Institute and deliver the work highlighted in this review to meet the objectives for the Strategic Plan, your subscription fees, along with external project funding and event fees, have been invested in the following areas:



ClfA expenditure April 2025 to March 2026



ClfA income April 2025 to March 2026

The background of the entire page is a solid dark purple. Overlaid on this are several large, light purple geometric shapes. These include a large 'X' shape in the upper left, a large 'V' shape in the upper right, and a large 'L' shape in the lower left. These shapes are composed of thick, slightly irregular lines, giving them a hand-drawn or architectural feel. They overlap each other and the dark purple background.

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