

PEACE *pledge* UNION

Peace Pledge Union

Strategy 2024-2027

About us and our mission

The Peace Pledge Union (PPU) is the UK's oldest secular pacifist organisation. Ninety years ago, the PPU was founded when Dick Sheppard put out a call for people to sign the Peace Pledge. Signing the Pledge remains the basis of PPU membership to this day:

“War is a crime against humanity. I renounce war, and am therefore determined not to support any kind of war. I am also determined to work for the removal of all causes of war.”

Our role, as a leading pacifist voice in the UK, is to put pacifism into practice, resisting war and the causes of war today.

At a time when bloody conflicts around the world are fuelling global instability, when governments - including in the UK - are adopting ever more militaristic policies and when nonviolent approaches to conflict are marginalised, pacifism remains an urgent message that addresses the need for deep-rooted, systemic change.

We must ensure a pacifist perspective reaches as wide an audience as possible and contributes to interconnected movements and struggles. The **promotion of pacifism and nonviolence** through active resistance to war underpins all our campaigns and peace education work.

Pacifism involves more than resisting wars when they happen. As part of our **everyday militarism** campaign, we also resist the many ways that militarism affects our everyday lives, across culture, work, education and political discourse.

The PPU promotes and distributes the **white poppy**, which challenges the militarisation of Remembrance Day and offers a tangible alternative to the nationalism of mainstream remembrance. It is widely recognised, and provides a crucial bridge into our broader work throughout the year.

The strategy draws its ideas and strength from our membership, who have helped to shape its key ideas, and from our staff and elected Council who will seek to synthesise those ideas into a work plan to achieve our objectives.

We are in no doubt that together we can build on the PPU's ninety years of history by continuing to adapt to a changing world whilst remaining a relevant and defiant voice for pacifist values.

Current context

We start this strategy cycle with the PPU in a period of renewal. Mindful of our own operational challenges caused by the disruption of the pandemic, rising costs, a drop in legacy income, and the loss of some much-valued staff members, we have made significant steps to grow and develop. Over the last twelve months we have improved our stability, enlarged our membership, and are in process of making crucial financial savings, and increasing interest in and income from white poppies.

Over the course of this new strategy, we will adopt a small and clear set of priorities which will be our unwavering focus, to ensure we can both campaign more effectively and achieve financial stability.

Above all else, we are conscious of the need for the PPU to grow. We need to expand our reach and impact across our key campaigning areas. We need to **grow our membership**, ensuring that it becomes younger and more diverse, for the long-term strength of the organisation. We need to grow our income so that we can move rapidly towards **financial stability**.

This strategy, which will run until the end of 2027, allows for this transitional period of growth. Our aim, by the end of this period, is to place the organisation on a more stable footing, so that we can develop longer-term plans to ensure the PPU continues to grow and thrive.

Strategic areas

Across all the five areas outlined below, we will be guided by regular strategic consideration of our possible impact and reach. We will allow ourselves the flexibility to prioritise in light of opportunities and political developments.

We will avoid duplication with other organisations, so that we focus on objectives where we stand to make a unique contribution. We will also seek to collaborate with other organisations where appropriate, in order to make more effective use of our limited resources.

The strategic areas below will underpin rolling annual work plans outlining our aims in detail and identifying SMART objectives wherever possible.

1) Promoting pacifism and nonviolence

As a leading voice for pacifism in the UK, the PPU aims to raise the profile of pacifism in public discourse, articulating its relevance across a range of political contexts. We need to equip our members and supporters to promote pacifist, nonviolent perspectives, and actively resist war, alongside supporting our formal peace education work.

To achieve this strategic aim we will:

- Develop a programme to support and train our members and supporters to become advocates for pacifism and nonviolence. This will include promotion of active peaceful resistance to war.
- Develop our peace education programme to raise awareness of pacifism and nonviolence as widely as possible, focusing on the contexts where we can be most impactful and ensuring we are making a clear offer that can be readily adopted.
- Build our capacity to carry out both reactive and proactive media work, articulating a pacifist perspective on current events, while ensuring that all our efforts are targeted and prioritised according to impact and reach.
- Identify and develop ways that the PPU can effectively raise awareness of conscientious objection and support current COs around the world.

2) Growing our campaigns against everyday militarism

Over the last decade, the PPU has been carving out a niche in defining and opposing 'everyday militarism'. This has included demonstrating against events like Armed Forces Day, speaking out against military recruitment practices, and speaking out against pro-military political rhetoric in the media. We are looking to grow our visibility, reach and

impact in this area, through activities led by the PPU core team and through supporting others in their own actions.

To achieve this strategic aim, we will:

- Develop an action plan to challenge everyday militarism throughout the year, focusing on high-profile instances such as Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Day and military recruitment advertising, and building on campaigns such as No Pride in War.
- Work with PPU members and supporters around the UK to challenge local instances of everyday militarism. Improve connections to and between PPU members in order to support increased awareness of, and active opposition to, everyday militarism among this group of dedicated pacifists.
- Equip our members, supporters and local groups with the tools they need, such as printed resources and online materials, to run effective campaigns against everyday militarism in their communities.
- Raise awareness of everyday militarism through our media and social media work, drawing attention to the prevalence of this issue and the various forms it takes.

3) Expanding the reach of white poppies

The white poppy campaign remains the most high-profile aspect of the PPU's work. As well as being an important symbol, presenting an alternative, peaceful and inclusive vision of remembrance, it also provides an effective route into our wider campaigning and pacifist politics.

To achieve this strategic aim, we will:

- Work to increase white poppy sales every year, so that more people see them and ask questions about what the white poppy means today.
- Identify ways to bring white poppy supporters into our wider work at other times of year, making the most of opportunities to recruit new members.
- Empower members and supporters to develop a culture of peace around the white poppy, building on our network of activists organising ceremonies and other remembrance activities.

4) Growing our membership, ensuring it becomes younger and more diverse

Whilst the PPU's membership has grown substantially since mid-2023 due to efforts of our staff and growing interest in our campaigns, the organisation's membership demographic continues to be unrepresentative of the wider UK population. As we seek to grow in the years ahead, not only do we want to continue to increase membership numbers, we also want to secure a more active and diverse membership, which can adapt the PPU's mission for the modern world.

To achieve this strategic aim, we will:

- Seek to double our membership numbers over the course of this strategy.
- Develop a clear roadmap for how to use all tools at our disposal in the promotion of the PPU's work beyond our current comfort zone, in order to introduce ourselves to fresh audiences. Begin to put actions highlighted on this roadmap into motion, to promote the rapid development of our membership base.
- Work with PPU members to identify membership options which allow us to grow membership income whilst keeping the PPU accessible to all.
- Connect with other groups, organisations, movements and causes to highlight interconnections between their focus and the PPU. Work in a collaborative way where appropriate, for the mutual benefit of all.

5) Achieving financial security for the PPU to safeguard our long-term future

Having negotiated choppy financial waters over recent years, the urgency of the PPU's financial situation has eased to a certain extent. However, stability remains elusive, and more needs to be done in order to stabilise and then grow the organisation. This is particularly the case if we are to grow as much and as quickly as we wish, so we can continue to be the leading pacifist voice in Britain for another 90+ years. Fundamentally, for our education, outreach and campaigning work to bloom, we need to become more financially sustainable.

To achieve this strategic aim, we will:

- Increase membership income through a combination of an enlarged member base alongside an increase in membership subscription fees. As the membership fees haven't increased for a number of years, an increase is overdue and necessary, but should be balanced with the need to ensure membership remains accessible.
- Increase income from white poppies and other materials we sell to £100,000 a year, thereby ensuring that our education, outreach and campaigning work is sustainable and impactful.

- Consider and explore all options for the future of PeaceWorks, the current PPU office building, to ensure the building is not a drain on our resources or even generates an income.
- Develop a rolling fundraising programme that boosts income from grants, appeals and legacies.
- Maximise individual donations by ensuring the infrastructure surrounding this is well considered and fully functional, and by making the most of opportunities for donations through our campaigning and outreach work.