



The first years of their reign

Since becoming our new King and Queen in 2022, the couple have certainly made their mark

They've set about
modernising the monarchy

It's a job he waited a lifetime for and, following his coronation, it was straight down to business for the newly crowned King Charles.

Since acceding to the throne in September 2022, King Charles, 76, has certainly made his mark. But it seems his goal has been far more about stability than change. One insider has described him as 'steering the ship, not rocking it'.

On the first anniversary of his reign, it was said the King spent the day 'quietly and privately' at Balmoral, with 'prayers and reflections' on the life of his

mother, Queen Elizabeth II. According to historian Heather Jones, the King's understated first year seemed mainly focused on gaining public acceptance.

It's no secret that he wasn't a top choice for many Brits when he became king in 2022, but his popularity is growing. In July 2023, just 47% of the public had a favourable opinion of King Charles. Jump to September 2024, and that number boomed to 63%.

Becoming King, Charles quickly set to work. His coronation was a hit, carefully curated to represent a modern Britain – one that was

diverse and multi-faith. With Queen Camilla, 77, by his side, he began patching up European friendships that had found themselves on frostier territory following Brexit.

His first state visit to Germany was a diplomatic success, involving a historic speech to the German parliament, dotted with jokes about *Monty Python* and the Lionesses' football success.

Another priority was finances. Even in a cost-of-living crisis, vast amounts of public money goes towards funding the institution. 'Slimming down' the monarchy

was a priority for Charles, and removing Prince Harry, 40, and Prince Andrew, 64, from the royal bankroll sufficed. According to reports last year, various measures, including cutting back on the number of staff and turning thermostats down within palace walls, have slashed royal spending and saved taxpayers around £20 million.

The King also turned his attention to the concerns of the public. In his first Christmas speech, he referenced the 'great anxiety and hardship' of those who were struggling to 'keep their

families fed and warm'. While the Government at the time seemed to fall short in helping, King Charles set about campaigning – supporting food banks through his charitable fund, The Coronation Food Project.

Last year proved a big year for the King and Queen in their working life. There was an official state visit to Australia and Samoa in October, with their Majesties meeting the locals in



Camilla stopped
to chat to Miriam

Sydney. Alongside an iconic balcony appearance for Trooping the Colour, there was also the yearly tradition of a Christmas Day walk. Last Summer, Queen Camilla was spotted mingling with Miriam Margolyes at the Queen's Reading Room Literary Festival. In December, she and Charles were a loved-up image as they showed their support for the Military Wives Choir. On their many walkabouts, the pair are showered in love by the crowds

of people waiting to see them – with the King even securing a kiss on the cheek from one 91-year-old well-wisher.

Camilla herself has taken to being Queen like a duck to water – despite it never being a role she expected. Opening up recently about Camilla's first year as Queen, Princess Anne said, 'Her understanding of the role and

how much difference it makes to the King has been absolutely outstanding. This role is not

something that she'd be a natural for, but she does it really well. She provides that change of speed and tone, and that's equally important.'

And a change of speed Camilla certainly brings. Speaking to *Woman's Hour* and *BBC Breakfast* back in 2022, Camilla described

'He's
steering
the boat'



King Charles
kickstarted 2025 with
a visit to Aberdeen



A round of applause for
the Military Wives Choir



On the famous Palace balcony

becoming Queen as a 'great honour'. Using her first few years to help modernise the monarchy, the mum-of-two scrapped the archaic sounding ladies-in-waiting for the more friendly 'Queen's Companions'. She's also campaigned tirelessly against domestic violence, even releasing her own documentary on the subject.

While a success, 2024 brought struggles for the royal family. Last January, just two weeks into the new year, Kensington Palace announced that the Princess of Wales had undergone abdominal surgery – revealing months later she was also having preventative chemotherapy following a cancer diagnosis. It later emerged that the King was also facing his own cancer battle, spending the next three months away from public-facing duties to undergo chemotherapy.

Having two of their most senior working royals out of action left the firm rather shorthanded. However, the rest of the family stepped up – with Prince William and Queen Camilla becoming much more present.

Indeed, Camilla's workload

doubled. She stood in for the King at the annual Maundy service last March, as well as on a two-day solo trip to Northern Ireland. With

insiders saying she was both 'resilient' and 'proud' to be doing her duty, former royal butler Paul Burrell described her as a 'guiding force', saying, 'I think she

is the stabiliser.'

By autumn, the tables had turned. In November, Camilla was forced to pull out of several royal events after developing a chest infection – later revealed to be pneumonia. She missed the Festival of Remembrance,



Their Majesties on an official state visit to Sydney



King Charles won many people's approval in his first year

They're fast winning over public opinion



The Queen has been recovering from a bout of pneumonia



Remembrance Sunday and the Royal Variety Performance. When a Qatari state visit took place in December last year, the Princess of Wales – who had returned to public duties over the summer – stepped in alongside her father-in-law for any outdoor aspects, while Camilla remained indoors.

According to reports, the Queen

spoke of her health at a recent Women's Aid reception in

December. When asked how she was feeling, she was reported as saying, 'I am still a bit tired. It catches up a bit.'

Being crowned at 73 years old has left him one of the best prepared rulers the UK has ever seen, spending over 50 years prepping for the crown he knew

would one day sit upon his head. Some may view King Charles as simply keeping the seat warm for the future ruler expected to revolutionise the monarchy: his son, Prince William.

However, as one royal expert put it, 'To be described as a "caretaker king" is doing him a great disservice. We are unlikely to celebrate the silver jubilee of King Charles – but he clearly has a lot to offer. We have yet to see some of his potential.'

'Charles has a lot to offer'

By Lettie Roberts. Pictures: Landmark Media, PA Images, Associated Press, Many