

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



TEAM LEADER'S REPORT:

2023 was another busy year for Aberdyfi SaRT with 53 callouts. These were mainly in response to alerts from North Wales and Dyfed Powys Police forces but also in support of our neighbouring teams South Snowdonia and Brecon.

The 53 callouts resulted in 39 deployments, 12 investigations and 4 no actions.

The figures for 2022 for comparison were 57, 43, 7 and 7 respectively.

Total people hours in 2023 spent on these callouts was 1,265hrs compared with 1,766hrs for 2022.

Much of the disparity in these figures was the result of a number of technical and difficult rescues long 2022 which required a higher degree of people power. In addition, 2022 had a number of multi day searches which also added to the total hours.

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The figures for the first 3 months of 2024 stand at 8 callouts resulting in 4 deployments, 3 investigations and 1 no action. By comparison, the same period in 2023 was 11, 6, 5 and 0 respectively.

The team continues to move forward and adapt to the requirements of Search and Rescue which results in both challenges and opportunities. One example of this is the recent introduction of Gearlog which is a digital system for recording and managing equipment checks. Credit must be given to all the officers and team members with areas of responsibility who work so hard to make things happen.

This last year has seen the introduction of an operations group with regular meetings to concentrate on purely operational issues; to examine the deployment procedures and ensure that different areas of responsibility such as medical, technical and vehicles are all interacting effectively to result in an efficient and safe response for casualties.

There are still potential challenges for the future such as the continued search for a base to give us a central location for our vehicles and equipment. The main challenge in this search is to enhance our operational ability and not to disadvantage ourselves from our present position.

In the early months 2024 Snowdonia SOS was aired on the BBC from filming compiled in 2022, this showed the team and indeed the whole North Wales Mountain Rescue community in a very positive light.



I am proud to be part of a team that continues to diversify with a more balanced gender, age and experience split. I am also continue to be amazed at the dedication of individuals to the team and personal training commitments.

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All in all, the team is in a good position moving forward with a wide range of skills and experience which will put us in a robust position for the future. This can be seen in the efficiency and professionalism shown on the callouts carried out so far this year.

Phil Britton Team Leader

Footnote, all statistical figures from MREW database.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

A summary balance sheet for the financial year April 2023 to March 2024 is attached. This shows funds at the end of the financial year standing at £45,772.41.

The summary shows a surplus of income over expenditure of £16,579.98 for the year.

Expenditure of £14,172 was slightly down on recent years, whereas income of £30,752 was considerably greater due primarily to an extremely generous legacy of £10,000 which was received unexpectedly in February 2024. Other donations were also strong this year, led by the raffle of the Idris Chair created and donated by a team member, which raised a total of £3,558.



These factors result in a balance of approximately three times routine annual expenditure. The Committee has set a target level for reserves at between one and two times annual expenditure. Expenditure is “lumpy” and has been historically a little low this year so we are not complacent but the financial picture is generally healthy.

A VAT claim for £1,549.87 is now being submitted to cover expenditure in the 2023-4 financial year which is very similar to the claim for the previous year (£1,567.89) which was received in May 2023.

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Late in the financial year a deposit account was opened to gain interest on most of the reserves being held.

The legacy gift has taken the annual income over the Charity Commission threshold of £25k which requires us to submit an independent examiner's report from a suitably qualified financial professional. This was not necessary for '22-23 but was done for the previous year due to a large one-off grant.

In January 2023 we introduced a scheme to enable team members to claim a contribution towards fuel costs incurred in attending callouts. In January 2024 this was extended to include training and other team activities. There has been very limited take-up but this is considered to be a first step in a gradual move towards a model which compensates team members for the actual costs of their involvement with the team.

Paul Aslin

EQUIPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT :

The Team has need to use a great deal of equipment over the course of a year helping members of the public who have got into trouble in remote places. We work in the mountains and on moors in all weather, all times of day and night, and in all conditions underfoot. Therefore, we all have in our rucksacks plenty of clothing – waterproof jackets and trousers and insulated jackets to keep us warm and dry. We work in the dark so a headtorch is essential.

We use technical equipment too – so for protection we need harnesses, helmets, and leather gloves. Accessing steep cliffs requires ropes and the means to build secure anchors. An injured casualty may require a stretcher, warm bag to be put into, or even a vacuum mattress to stop further damage to broken bones. All this requires constant upkeep and replacements as things wear out, get damaged on a rescue, or simply go beyond their lifespan.

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This year, for example, we have had to buy almost 500 metres of rope, replace out-of-date flares (for helicopters to locate us on a dark hillside), medical drugs, and specialist equipment. We have also taken on 9 new recruits, all of whom need to be kitted out and trained to use technical equipment.

All these items of equipment have to be monitored and twice yearly inspected. Recording all this work has this year been transferred from paper files to a software database system called Gearlog.

Hopefully this will aid all the team in keeping track of this vital kit and knowing when to replace it, thus keeping us all a little safer in the world of Mountain Rescue.

Neil Champion

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT:

The team held 26 whole team training events throughout the year. This amounts to a figure of approximately 2000 volunteer hours of training time.

We have been covering the basic competencies and pick up any training needs in a rolling program this operates on a two-year cycle.

We have also expanded our range of training to include more mental health awareness and team cohesion.

Helicopter training is fundamental to the team's operational capability. We regularly update our online training and as a team we are almost up to date

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with live training, thwarted this year by a maintenance issue on the aircraft on the day of training.

As a team we are well prepared to react to the majority of incidents including regular rope and steep ground training, missing person search practices and water safety and search.

In the coming year we are aiming to roll out a standard of water safety search and rescue, continue with live helicopter training and prepare for the weather and conditions the mountains throw at us.

As always I am really impressed and grateful for all the hard work both people arranging the training events and attending the events put in.

Thank you to all volunteers.

Rob Goodsell

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT:



There is a medical aspect to most call-outs for our team. Whether it's aiding a lost walker who is getting progressively colder, attending to someone with a pre-existing medical condition, or providing assistance to an injured individual, it's essential our team are prepared with the necessary medical training and equipment.

Over the past year, we've witnessed a notable increase in the proficiency of our casualty carers, attributable to the further training they've undertaken. Consequently, we've upgraded our medical kit to ensure we're equipped to handle a diverse array of emergencies.

For example, we've expanded the diagnostic equipment available in our medical bags and bolstered our supply of life-saving aids such as i-gels and

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celox. Additionally, we have updated our vacuum mattresses, which are crucial for safely extracting injured individuals from challenging terrain.

Our commitment to staying up-to-date with evolving medical practices is reflected in the ongoing refinement of our casualty care syllabus and the continual evaluation and enhancement of our drug inventory.

Presently, we have a team of 20 operational members adept in casualty care who carry essential medical kit with them in addition to the larger medical bags kept in the vehicles. Their training is refreshed regularly, and this year, we collaborated with neighbouring teams, South Snowdonia and Aberglaslyn Mountain Rescue, for a joint training weekend, which was kindly hosted at Coed y Brenin.



Furthermore, we organised a comprehensive mass casualty-training event working with trainee doctors. Throughout the year, multiple full-day scenario-based training exercises engaged the entire team, facilitating the optimisation of our response protocols for challenging situations.

Esther Tew

IT OFFICER'S REPORT:

As with all other MREW Teams, all ASART Team members are included on the MREW G-suite email system and all new probationers have been assigned a Team email address for all future correspondence on MR matters.

This ensures compliance with the GDPR and eliminates the potential of sending confidential data to an incorrect personal email address. It also

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confirms to outside Agencies and other bodies that the email is a formal Team correspondence.

The G-suite secure document storage makes provision for each Team member to store MR related documents and this is where all materials should be kept for GDPR compliance.

Trainee Team members moving up to Full Team status are in the process of signing up to the North Wales Police Data Sharing Agreement which is a legal requirement of Team membership.

The full capabilities of the Digital Mobile Radios and repeater systems will be explored in the near future to ensure that the Team can make full use of the system. This includes Zello which is a phone or PC based application that enables two way communications through the repeaters of the DMR system which is then accessible via the internet.

This is a work in progress and the Team are exploring the best way to make use of the application.

The digital radios can revert to the analogue channels for working with other Teams and Agencies who are yet to implement the system and can provide a separate channel for use during incidents where additional communication routes are needed.

The G-Suite Meet application is still used for any online meetings as it is a part of the system provided by MREW.

The Team maintains an online presence on platforms such as Facebook and X as well as regular updates of incidents on the Team website. A section detailing the history of mountain rescue and the origins of the Team has now been added to the website.

What3Words is becoming more prevalent and recognised by the general public with the 3 word descriptor being provided for locations and addresses similar to postcodes.

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As with all new technology, the Team has to be conversant with the application and how to translate a given three word location to Ordnance Survey Grid Coordinates to work with our mapping applications.

The Ordnance Survey are currently offering free access to their mapping application for all individual Team members within MREW. This can be a substantial cost saving.

SARCALL is the established method of notifying Team members of training events or call-outs, in the format of an SMS sent to members' registered mobile telephones. Team members respond with a positive, a delayed or a negative response where possible so that call handlers and the Team Leader on the hill have an idea of resources available.

The Team has an email notification facility as a back up or due to inadequate mobile signal and this can be set up for anyone that requires it.

An additional back up system using a cascade list of telephone numbers is also available in the event of a problem with the local mobile network. Built in redundancy is vital to maintain communications within the Team and other agencies.

The Team is now using Gearlog, an online database, for the registration of all Team and personal issue equipment and for subsequent inspections and checks. All Team and personal issue equipment have smart tags which will make identification and logging of equipment a quicker process.

There are minor issues which are in the process of being resolved and it is expected that the increased functionality of the professional version of Gearlog will be utilised in the near future.

Huw Evans

ROPE RESCUE OFFICER'S REPORT :

Rope Rescue Capability: Aberdyfi Search and Rescue Team (ASART) maintains a full technical rope rescue capability for all of the crags and steep ground across the Team's area and is often called on for assistance by neighbouring teams. As part of the capability ASART has a specialist rope rescue group that assists the full team with rope rescue.

Membership: The rope rescue group has 22 active members having grown slightly from 18 in 2023. Of these 8 have an in-date Rescue 3 Rope Rescue Technician's (RRT) qualification and 9 have an in-date Rescue 3 Rope Rescue Operator's (RRO) qualification.



Call outs: There were two call outs involving full technical rope rescue in the last year. The first involved the extraction of a mountain biker with a femur fracture up a steep forestry track to a waiting Coastguard helicopter. The second was at the request of South Snowdonia Search and Rescue Team (SSSART) to assist with a multiagency call out to a walker who had fallen ~20 m from a waterfall near Coed-y-Brenin. Working closely with members from SSSART a Dual Capability Two Tension Rope System was constructed to extract the casualty, who had a femoral artery bleed, up a steep bank above the waterfall. This wasn't required in

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the end as the Coastguard helicopter was able to make a long winch rescue. The rope system was then used to safely extract the remaining personnel on site including mountain rescue team members and ambulance crew.

Training: The rope rescue group trains several times a year and each training has been well attended. The group also trains

the rest of the team in full rope rescue and rescues from steep ground.



External training has taken the form of Rescue 3 RRO and RRT courses and we have been fortunate to have had five places provided at cost by R3 SAR, four places funded by LIBOR, four places funded by MREW, and two places provided at cost on a course run by North East Wales Search and Rescue. We are very grateful for this generosity.

Sam Doyle

WATER OFFICER'S REPORT:

In the period of the last 12 months the team has maintained its Swift and Flood Water Response capability.

This capability enables the team to deploy to water related incidents, both, within our own geographical area or to support wider regional deployments along with other responding agencies.

Certification / Qualifications.

- 11 Team members currently hold valid Mod 3 - Swift and Flood Water Rescue Technician (SRT) Certification.
- The above has reduced from 12 the previous year following one team member standing down from the team.
- The water team continues to benefit from a Rescue 3 Regional Instructor within in membership delivering focussed and accredited water training.

Training

Aberdyfi Search and Rescue have continued operate a combined (SRT) training calendar with South Snowdonia Search and Rescue.

These joint training sessions have continued to work well; not only has this approach afforded greater scope in terms of training content / delivery but,

better inter-team working has developed which improves Regional Operational Resilience.



Six STR Training Sessions ran in the period with one Full team “Water awareness” session held for non-water qualified members plus an introductory session for new trainees.

Call Outs

There has been 1 operational deployments for the Teams Swift and Flood Water Rescue Technicians in the period.

Ian Pilcher

FUNDRAISING OFFICER'S REPORT:

As with previous years, the team continues to recognise and value the donations and financial support it receives from members of the public and businesses within local communities.

It is only through such support that the Aberdyfi Search and Rescue can maintain its operational status.

Through the year we have maintained and strengthen existing relationships as well as developing the profile of the Team and more widely Mountain Rescue England and Wales.

Donations

General fundraising activity has continued within the year, and we have seen a steady flow of donations in the period; be they from one off donations linked to a rescue, fundraising activities, the team providing event support or through local businesses.

Income from cash collection boxes has similarly continued and we remain grateful to those businesses who continue to support the team by having a collection box on their premises.

Notable in the year was the team's "Idris Chair" Prize Draw project which, through face to face ticket sales at various events (Aberdyfi Food Festival and Cadair Fell Race) plus online Crowd Funder ticket sales resulted in £3,613.27 income for the team.

Within the year, the team also started trialling team merchandise with the sale of branded Team mugs.

Sales of mugs have been steady, with opportunity to purchase at events, collection days and through Art Works in Aberdyfi who, also generously

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selected the team as its nominated charity. Developing their own range of gifts (Keyrings, greeting cards and coasters) featuring art work of the local landscape by local artist Nick Coldham, proceeds of sales have been donated to the team for which we give our thanks and recognition.



In November 2023 Ian Pilcher, stood down from the role of Fundraising Officer for the team after a tenure of 6 years in post, handing over to Matt Young.

PRESS OFFICER'S REPORT:

Beyond a regular presence on social media channels, and reports in local and occasionally national press outlets, probably the biggest public relations event for some years has been (finally) the screening of the BBC's "SOS Extreme Rescues."

The Team enjoys a reasonable prominence within the 12 episodes of this fly-on-the-wall look at rescues in North Wales, with at least 6 Team volunteers featuring in "talking-head" interviews along the way. With footage from as early as 2021, it seems like it has been a long wait, but the results are perhaps worth that wait.



For most of the Team, the filming was reasonably unintrusive and we were able to get along with business as usual without too much interference. Those called for interview found the process a little more inconvenient, and for the Press Officer there were times when dealing with request became almost a full time occupation.

As the BBC are sufficiently pleased with the production to have announced

the commissioning of a second series, there will likely be a wide range of opinions, based on vastly differing experiences, as to whether we get involved in future programmes or just be happy with the work already done. Either way, it might be safe to say we got another 15 minutes of fame for our efforts.

To mark the Teams 50th birthday, an in-depth look at the history of the organisation was added to the website. Hopefully, it will stand as a resource to be built-upon in the future as new chapters in the Team's story are written.

Graham O'Hanlon

WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT:

As a team we are still understanding, making adjustments to the new role of Welfare/Wellbeing officer. As a team we are broadly doing the same as others in the region, some are doing more and some are doing less. The role takes direction from team members and team management if we do need to make subtle changes to the procedures we have created. So far in 2024 13 welfare calls have been made and had one team member requested for additional support from an historic incident they were involved in. All team members within the team know how to contact the welfare officer and understand the role of the welfare officer in supporting the wellbeing of individual members.

Gareth Davies

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR:

2023 was a notable year in terms of it being the 50th Anniversary of the team's formation. It was an opportunity to reflect and celebrate the contribution and commitment of current and past team members and the many achievements/rescues resolved. Expressions of thanks from local communities and helped members of the public were testimony to the work done.



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It has also been a busy year with callouts, many challenging. We undertook a filming project resulting in SOS -Extreme Rescues: for the BBC, along with other teams in Eryri National Park. This has been well received by viewers, many of whom had little knowledge of the work we volunteer for.



This work is only possible through the commitment and energy of our volunteers. Much is undertaken away from the view of the public. Training, maintenance, fundraising and much more results in the assistance given to people in trouble on our patch.

Our thanks to the individuals and groups who have donated funds to the team to help meet running costs. Without these we would struggle to provide a relevant response to the many challenging rescues in our area.

Diolch/Thank you..

Dave Williams

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Appendix

Aberdyfi Search and Rescue Team.
Statement of accounts 2023-2024

As of

31 Mar 24

Balance Brought Forward 1/4/23

£29,192.43

Current Account

Income

Income Box	£540.20
Income Donation	£25,575.82
Income Online	£2,187.41
Income VAT refund	£1,567.89
Income MR Grant	£500.00
Income misc	£346.87

Expenditure

Administration	-£869.64
Building & Storage	-£3,489.09
Training	-£1,111.90
Medical	-£1,849.30
Vehicle	-£2,266.57
Fuel	-£1,521.16
Equipment	-£3,064.22

-£14,171.88 £30,718.19

Annual surplus/defecit

£16,546.31

Transfers

Trans to/from deposit -£40,000.00

Current Account balance at 31/3/24

£5,738.74

Deposit Account

In	£40,000.00
Out	£0.00
Interest	£33.67

Deposit Account balance at 31/3/24

£40,033.67

Total at 31/3/24

£45,772.41

**Aberdyfi Search and Rescue Team.
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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF TIM CHWILIO AC ACHUB ABERDYFI /
ABERDYFI SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM**

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of TIM CHWILIO AC ACHUB ABERDYFI / ABERDYFI SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM (Aberdyfi SART) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity Trustees of Aberdyfi SART 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 all 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 in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of Aberdyfi SART as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

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

SIGNED:



NAME:

SIMON LONGWORTH FCA (SHECHEM LTD)

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies: **FCA (ICAEW)**

Address: **Gwyndy, Llancynfelyn, Machynlleth SY20 8PU**

Date: 31st July 2024