



**Registered Charity Number: 1102722**

Oxfordshire Search and Rescue (OSAR)

**Also known as:** ERT Search and Rescue (ERTSAR)

# TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

**For the financial year ended 28 February 2025**

*(Reporting period: 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025)*

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# 1. Reference and Administrative Details

**Charity name:**

Original Name per Constitution      Oxfordshire Search and Rescue (OSAR)

Also known as      The Emergency Response Team Search and Rescue

**Registered charity number:**      1102722

**Other names charity is known by** ERT Search and Rescue (ERTSAR)

## Principal Office and Administrative Arrangements

During the reporting period, the Trustees resolved to relocate the charity's **administrative headquarters to London**. This decision was taken to strengthen governance effectiveness, regulatory engagement, and central coordination, and to enable improved access to appropriate pro bono and low-cost professional support for the charity.

This administrative relocation was a **governance and efficiency measure only** and did not alter the charity's charitable purposes, operational identity, or mission.

The charity **retained its established regional footprint**, including operational storage and legacy facilities in **Reading and Henley-on-Thames**. In addition, the charity may from time-to-time reference other smaller regional hubs or locations on its website or within project documentation. These locations exist for specific operational or project-related purposes and should not be regarded as permanent administrative offices, registered addresses, or full-time mailing locations.

This structure ensures continuity of charitable purpose, operational readiness, and local capability, while maintaining clear administrative oversight and governance control.

## Trustees Serving During the Reporting Period

The Trustees who served during the financial year **1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025** were:

- **Gary Foo**      Chair and Founding Trustee
- **Virginia Foo**      Founding Trustee
- **Paul Giles**      Secretary and Treasurer, Founding Trustee
- **Jamie Frost**      Trustee
- **Patrick Robinson**      Trustee
- **Luke Barton**      Trustee (*appointed during the reporting period*)

The Board of Trustees collectively provided strategic leadership, governance oversight, and fiduciary stewardship throughout the year.

## Custodian and Holding Trustees

In addition to the Trustees listed above, the charity continued to be supported by **Custodian and Holding Trustees**, in accordance with its long-standing governance and continuity arrangements.

Custodian and Holding Trustees serving during the reporting period were:

- **Justin S. Levine** Custodian / Holding Trustee
- **Asfandiyar Mo Niazi** Custodian / Holding Trustee

These roles exist to provide continuity of oversight, safeguarding and stewardship of charitable assets, and additional organisational resilience. Custodian and Holding Trustees operate in a distinct capacity from the operational governance exercised by the Board of Trustees, and all such arrangements are conducted transparently and in the best interests of the charity.

## Statement on Trustee Status, Remuneration, and Staffing

All Trustees, including Custodian and Holding Trustees, served **voluntarily and without remuneration** throughout the reporting period.

No Trustee received any salary, honorarium, benefit, or personal financial advantage from the charity.

The charity also employed **no paid staff** during the reporting period and operated entirely through volunteers.

Trustees, officers, and members routinely contributed professional time, leadership, and expertise without charge and, in many cases, met their own expenses personally in order to support the charity's humanitarian mission and ensure that charitable funds were preserved for public benefit.

## 2. Structure, Governance and Management

The Charity Number 1102722 was officially established in England and Wales in 2002 as an **unincorporated charitable association** governed by its **Constitution (2003/2004)**, together with subsequent Trustee resolutions, adopted governance policies, and Standing Operating Procedures.

The charity operates in accordance with the requirements of the **Charities Act 2011** and associated regulatory guidance. The charity is directed and controlled by a **Board of Trustees**, who act collectively and individually in accordance with their fiduciary duties and legal obligations. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity is administered lawfully, prudently, and exclusively in furtherance of its charitable Objects.

### Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is collectively responsible for:

- setting the **strategic direction** of the charity and ensuring its long-term sustainability,
- safeguarding and stewarding **charitable assets**, including funds, equipment, intellectual property, and reputation,
- ensuring **regulatory compliance and accountability**, including appropriate engagement with the Charity Commission and other relevant bodies,
- maintaining effective **financial oversight, internal controls, and risk management** arrangements,
- and ensuring that all activities undertaken by the charity **further its Objects and deliver demonstrable public benefit**.

Trustee decisions are taken collectively, recorded formally, and minuted appropriately. The Trustees maintain an active **minute book**, and all Trustees attest to their legal eligibility to act, confirm that they are not disqualified under charity law, and sign the minute book accordingly.

### Trustee eligibility, induction and standards

All Trustees serving during the reporting period confirm that they were **legally eligible to act as Trustees**, were not subject to any disqualification under charity law, and were able to properly discharge their fiduciary duties. Upon appointment, Trustees are provided with copies of the charity's Constitution, governance and standards documentation, and key policies and procedures. Trustees are expected to familiarise themselves with these documents and to act at all times in accordance with the charity's governance framework and agreed standards of conduct.

This approach ensures a consistent understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations across the Board and supports effective, collective decision-making.

## Federated and Affiliated Model

The charity also participates, on a **voluntary and non-controlling basis**, in a wider **federated and affiliated model of aligned humanitarian and emergency response organisations**, while remaining fully independent in its governance, finances, and regulatory responsibilities within England and Wales.

This federated model enables participating organisations to **voluntarily align on standards, doctrine, learning, and good practice**, and to access shared knowledge, experience, and non-financial resources developed across the wider network. Such collaboration supports quality, consistency, and professionalism, while allowing each organisation to retain full local autonomy and accountability.

The Trustees confirm that participation in this model does **not involve operational direction, governance control, or financial dependency**. No charitable funds were transferred to or received from any affiliated or international entity during the reporting period. Where systems, infrastructure, or resources are accessed across the federated network, these are provided **without charge** or supported personally by individuals, and not funded by the charity.

The Trustees consider that this approach strengthens the charity's **capability, resilience, and access to expertise**, while preserving clear governance boundaries, regulatory compliance, and local decision-making authority. Engagement within the federated framework supports the charity's ability to deliver public benefit in England and Wales, while benefiting from the collective knowledge and experience of a broader humanitarian network.

## Volunteer-led operational model

No paid staff were employed during the reporting period. Trustees, officers, and members routinely contributed professional time and expertise without charge and, where necessary, met their own expenses in order to support the charity's humanitarian mission.

The charity operates entirely through **volunteers**, many of whom are experienced professionals drawn from emergency services, healthcare, disaster response, business, logistics, leadership, executive management and governance backgrounds. This volunteer-led model is a deliberate and long-standing feature of the charity.

The Trustees consider this approach to be both effective and appropriate, enabling the charity to maintain high standards of professionalism and competence while exercising strict control over overheads and preserving charitable funds for direct public benefit.

## Governance Emphasis During the Year

The Trustees record that the **2024 to 2025 reporting year required exceptional governance focus.**

A substantial proportion of Trustee time and professional effort was directed toward ensuring that the charity continued to operate with clarity, integrity, and full regulatory compliance.

Key areas of governance activity during the year included:

- maintaining clear and lawful **continuity of governance and leadership,**
- ensuring that **all records, decisions, and financial controls** were robust, accurate, and transparent,
- engaging appropriately and professionally with **regulatory bodies and external stakeholders,**
- safeguarding charitable assets and **protecting intellectual property,**
- and reinforcing governance discipline and organisational resilience following a period of external challenge.

The Trustees note that this work, while not always visible externally, represents a significant and essential component of charitable activity. Strong governance protects public trust, donor confidence, and the charity's ability to deliver public benefit safely, ethically, and lawfully. The Trustees are satisfied that the charity emerged from this period with **strengthened governance arrangements**, clearer documentation, and enhanced organisational resilience.

## Charity Commission Regulatory Engagement and Compliance

During the reporting period, the Trustees engaged constructively with the Charity Commission as part of routine regulatory engagement and due-diligence oversight.

This included Trustee correspondence and a formal virtual meeting requested by the Commission to better understand the charity's structure, governance arrangements, and long-standing operating model.

The Trustees welcomed this engagement and provided full transparency regarding the charity's governance, financial management, operational independence, and compliance framework.

The Trustees note that all statutory filings, including Annual Returns and financial submissions, have been completed accurately, on time, and accepted without qualification in recent years.

The engagement also provided an opportunity for the Trustees to clarify matters arising from historic governance disruption and external representations made in earlier periods, and to reaffirm the charity's lawful continuity, asset stewardship, and exclusive authority to operate in furtherance of its charitable purposes.

Other matters discussed with the Commission primarily related to legacy administrative records from earlier periods, reflecting historic paper-based submission processes and regulatory system changes rather than any deficiency in current governance or management.

The Trustees are satisfied that these legacy matters do not affect the charity's lawful operation, charitable purpose, or delivery of public benefit.

The Trustees confirm that the charity continues to operate in full compliance with charity law and regulatory guidance. Governance, financial management, and reporting arrangements are subject to ongoing professional review, including independent legal and accounting oversight, and are considered appropriate, robust, and proportionate for a charity of this nature and scale.

At the time of this report, the Trustees and the Charity Commission are finalising the formal record of that engagement and any agreed administrative clarifications arising from it.

## Recruitment and Organisational Consolidation

During the reporting period, the Trustees made a **deliberate strategic decision to reduce active recruitment**. This decision was taken following careful consideration and reflected a responsible and proportionate governance approach.

The Trustees determined that the charity's best interests would be served by prioritising:

- consolidation and refinement of **existing programmes and activities**,
- strengthening governance, safeguarding, and operational processes,
- supporting and retaining existing volunteers and leadership,
- building organisational resilience and readiness rather than pursuing rapid expansion.

The Trustees consider this approach consistent with best practice in charity governance, particularly during periods of organisational review and consolidation, and in line with their duty to act prudently and in the charity's long-term best interests.

### 3. Objectives and Activities

#### Charitable Objects and Purpose

The Trustees confirm that **all activities undertaken during the reporting period were carried out in furtherance of the Charity's established charitable purposes**, as set out in its governing document and as consistently applied since the charity's formation.

The Trustees note that, as with many long-established charities, there have been **legacy administrative and correspondence matters on record**, arising primarily from historic changes in regulatory systems and record-keeping processes over time. The Trustees are satisfied that these matters do not affect the charity's underlying purpose, activities, or public benefit, and that the charity has at all times continued to operate in good faith and in alignment with its charitable aims.

The Trustees recognise that the **effective relief of suffering and distress** among individuals and communities at risk requires more than response activity alone. Accordingly, the charity's work encompasses a **whole-system approach** that includes preparedness, training, coordination, education, monitoring, and governance. These elements are necessary to maintain a **trained, competent, and safe search and rescue and humanitarian capability**, able to assist police and other agencies responsibly and effectively when required.

#### Principal Activities Undertaken to Further the Charity's Purposes

During the reporting year, the charity's activities were directed toward maintaining readiness, strengthening capability, and delivering public benefit via the following interrelated areas.

##### Search and Rescue (SAR)

The charity continued to maintain **search and rescue leadership, coordination, and readiness capability**, supporting the charity's ability to contribute to the search for missing persons and to assist individuals endangered by accident, environmental conditions, or other hazards.

This work included:

- maintaining leadership continuity and decision-making capacity,
- preserving institutional knowledge and operational doctrine,
- monitoring relevant risks and incident patterns,
- and sustaining readiness to support police and partner agencies when appropriate.

The Trustees regard this ongoing readiness as a core charitable activity, ensuring that the charity remains capable of responding safely and competently when called upon.



## Disaster Response and Coordination

The charity continued to support **disaster response and humanitarian coordination** through preparedness and situational awareness rather than through reactive or ad-hoc deployment.

Activities in this area included:

- monitoring domestic and international disasters and humanitarian emergencies,
- maintaining awareness of coordination frameworks and best practice,
- sustaining liaison and advisory capability,
- and ensuring leadership readiness to support or advise partner agencies if required.

The Trustees consider this work essential to responsible disaster response, ensuring that any assistance offered is informed, coordinated, and proportionate.

## Education, Training, Certification and Development

Education and training remained a key focus during the year, supporting both **public safety and responder competence**.

The charity undertook work to:

- develop and refine education and training frameworks,
- maintain guidance and learning materials,
- support professional development of volunteers and partners,
- and advance child safety education initiatives.

This work reflects the Trustees' view that education, training, and knowledge transfer are integral to reducing harm, improving outcomes, and sustaining a trained search and rescue capability over time.

## Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness

In addition to response-focused activities, the charity placed significant emphasis on **disaster risk reduction and preparedness**.

This included:

- monitoring environmental, climatic, and societal risks,
- reviewing emerging hazards and trends,
- maintaining organisational readiness and resilience,
- and supporting preventative approaches that reduce the likelihood and severity of harm before emergencies occur.

The Trustees consider this preventative focus to be a vital element of the charity's purpose, contributing to public benefit by reducing suffering and distress in advance rather than solely responding after the fact.

## Approach to Public Benefit

The Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit throughout the reporting period. Public benefit has been delivered not only through visible activity, but also through:

- sustained preparedness and situational monitoring of risks, hazards, and humanitarian needs,
- education, prevention, and public safety initiatives designed to reduce harm before emergencies occur,
- governance, safeguarding, and oversight activities that protect beneficiaries, volunteers, and charitable assets,
- the maintenance and development of specialist volunteer capability and institutional knowledge,
- leadership continuity and decision-making readiness to support safe and proportionate response when required,
- coordination, liaison, and advisory engagement that supports multi-agency effectiveness and resilience,
- development and stewardship of educational resources made freely available for public benefit,
- and the responsible management of charitable resources to ensure sustainability and long-term impact.

The Trustees recognise that public benefit in a specialist search and rescue and humanitarian charity is often delivered through **preparedness, competence, and prevention**, rather than solely through visible deployment or response.

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity's objectives and activities during the year were clearly directed toward public benefit, were proportionate to the charity's role and resources, and were fully consistent with the charity's charitable purpose.

In practice, this public benefit was realised through a combination of continuous readiness, structured governance, educational development, and the maintenance of safe and competent volunteer capability, ensuring the charity remained able to act responsibly and effectively in the public interest.

## 4. Achievements and Performance

### Overview of the Year

The **2024–2025 reporting year** was characterised by **sustained activity, consolidation, monitoring, foundational strengthening, and forward positioning**. While fewer public-facing events and formal training exercises were undertaken than in some earlier years, this was a **deliberate and proportionate outcome** of the Trustees' strategic focus on governance, preparedness, and organisational resilience.

Throughout the year, the Trustees and senior volunteers remained actively engaged across:

- governance and oversight,
- programme development and refinement,
- preparedness and situational monitoring,
- stakeholder engagement and liaison,
- and the preservation and strengthening of core operational capability.

The Trustees consider this period to have **significantly strengthened the organisation's foundations**, enhanced its internal discipline, and improved its readiness for future delivery. The year was therefore one of substance rather than spectacle, ensuring that the charity remained capable, credible, and compliant.

### Continuous Monitoring and Readiness

Throughout the reporting period, ERTSAR maintained a **24-hour, 365-day situational awareness posture**, consistent with its role as a specialist search and rescue and humanitarian organisation.

This monitoring activity encompassed:

- **domestic disasters and emergencies**,
- the **international tempo** of humanitarian and disaster response activity,
- **environmental, weather-related, and hydrometeorological hazards**,
- **humanitarian crises**, particularly those where the charity's specialist expertise may be relevant,
- and a range of **emerging and evolving risk patterns**.

This continuous monitoring function is recognised by the Trustees as a **core charitable activity**.

This ensures that any potential assistance or response is informed, proportionate, risk-aware, and appropriately coordinated with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies.

The Trustees emphasise that effective search and rescue and disaster response begins **well before deployment**, through awareness, planning, readiness, and informed decision-making.

## Search and Rescue and Disaster Coordination Capability

As a specialist operational organisation, with search and rescue explicitly reflected in its name and heritage, the charity continued throughout the year to maintain its **SAR and disaster coordination capability**.

This included sustained effort in:

- **leadership readiness and continuity**, ensuring that experienced decision-makers remain available and engaged,
- maintaining **liaison and interoperability awareness** with partner agencies and allied organisations,
- ongoing **review of operational doctrine, procedures, and professional standards**,
- **education, development, and public service initiatives**, including the free provision and maintenance of knowledge-sharing platforms such as the **UKSAR online forum**
- and continued engagement with **Local Resilience Forum environments across multiple jurisdictions**, supporting multi-agency understanding and preparedness.

These activities support public benefit by strengthening **collective readiness**, improving coordination, and ensuring that specialist volunteer capability remains safe, competent, and deployable when required.

## Child Safe Heroes Programme

A significant area of work during the year was the **redevelopment and relaunch of the Child Safe Heroes programme**, a long-standing ERTSAR public safety and prevention initiative.

Work undertaken during the reporting period included:

- research into **common risks and threats affecting children**,
- review of **age-appropriate pedagogy** and safeguarding principles,
- drafting, editing, and refinement of **educational content and narratives**,
- **design, typesetting, and graphic development** to ensure materials are accessible and engaging,

- and preparation for **scalable dissemination** through schools, families, and community organisations.

The programme was intentionally designed by Trustee Gary Foo decades ago and has been revised and improved many times since, for **free and permissive use** by children, parents, teachers, and community groups, reflecting the charity's preventative and educational mission and building a safer more secure community at all ages.

The Trustees emphasise that **all original development and production costs associated with this programme were also personally funded by the Founding Trustees, with no charitable funds applied.**

This ensured that donated monies remained fully focused on relieving suffering and supporting vulnerable populations, while allowing the charity to continue advancing its educational objectives.

## Education, Training and Capability Development

Beyond the Child Safe Heroes programme, the charity continued to support **education, training, certification, and capability development** across its areas of expertise.

This work included:

- maintaining and refining **training frameworks and internal guidance**,
- reviewing and updating **standards, reference materials, and learning resources**,
- providing **mentoring and professional support** to volunteers and partner organisations,
- and preserving **institutional knowledge and specialist expertise** developed over many years.

The Trustees consider these activities essential to maintaining a **trained search and rescue capability** and ensuring that all charitable outcomes are delivered safely, ethically, and effectively.

## Media, Advocacy and Public Awareness

During the reporting period, the charity also undertook foundational work to strengthen its approach to public information, communications, and digital engagement.

This included the refresh and renewal of public information and social media practices, informed by appropriate Public Information Officer (PIO) training and emergency services communications principles. The Trustees consider responsible, accurate, and ethical public communication to be an important aspect of public benefit, particularly in relation to safety messaging, missing persons awareness, and humanitarian context.

While public-facing activity during the year remained measured and proportionate, this work establishes a sound platform for the future development of a nationally focused communications and public education programme, which the Trustees anticipate progressing further in the 2026–2027 period.

During the reporting year, the charity’s informative and award-winning short documentary *“The Missing & Lost: That Others May Live”* also continued to receive significant public engagement and re-sharing, with national and international recognition. The Trustees regard this work as an important contribution to:

- public education,
- awareness of missing persons,
- search and rescue issues across a range of hazards,
- and broader understanding of volunteer humanitarian response and community resilience.

Such media and advocacy activity supports public benefit by informing, educating, and engaging audiences beyond direct operational contexts.

## Organisational Resilience and Integrity

The Trustees note that the charity continued to operate to a **high standard of governance and transparency** during a period of external scrutiny.

Matters raised by third parties were addressed **appropriately and proportionately** through established governance processes, regulatory engagement, and adherence to charity law and best practice.

The Trustees consider that these matters were administrative in nature and did not detract from the charity’s mission or delivery of public benefit.

The Trustees record that throughout this period the organisation remained focused on its charitable purpose, continued to operate responsibly, and **emerged with strengthened governance arrangements, clearer documentation, and enhanced organisational resilience**.

## 5. Financials

### Financial Performance and Overview

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity remained in a **strong and stable financial position** throughout the reporting period, reflecting prudent financial management, disciplined expenditure, and continued confidence in the charity's mission and governance.

The charity's **consolidated financial position** for the year ended 28 February 2025 is summarised as follows:

- **Total income:** £51,090.64
- **Total expenditure:** £3,999.40
- **Net surplus:** £47,091.24
- **Closing funds (all accounts):** £58,711.22

The Trustees confirm that all income and expenditure during the year was applied solely in furtherance of the charity's purposes and in accordance with the charity's governing document.

The full financial statements for the reporting period are provided separately and form part of the annual return.

### Income and Funding Sources

The principal income received during the year was a legacy donation of £50,673.64, received from a long-standing supporter and benefactor of the charity.

This donation represents a significant expression of confidence in:

- the charity's mission and charitable purpose,
- the integrity and continuity of its leadership,
- and the robustness of its governance arrangements.

In addition to the legacy donation, the charity continued to receive smaller donations and support consistent with its scale and volunteer-led operating model.

The Trustees recognise the importance of maintaining public trust and donor confidence and remain committed to transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of all funds received.

## Legacy Donation and Stewardship

The Trustees record their **deep appreciation** for a significant legacy donation received during the reporting period, amounting to **£50,673.64**, gifted through the will of **Mr N. F. Berwick**, a significant supporter of the charity and the discussions and intent in further speaking to his son, the Executor of the Will, who is himself a Fire Responder and shared the intended benefit.

The Trustees also wish to acknowledge, with gratitude and respect, the **kindness, cooperation, and support of Mr Berwick's family**, including the executor of the estate, who engaged with the charity in a constructive, professional, and supportive manner throughout the legacy process. The Trustees are mindful of the generosity and care shown by the family in ensuring that Mr Berwick's wishes were honoured and directed toward charitable purpose.

This legacy represents a significant and meaningful expression of confidence in the charity's mission, leadership, and integrity. It is particularly valued given the charity's long-standing volunteer-led model and its focus on humanitarian service, preparedness, and public benefit rather than commercial or paid activity.

The Trustees recognise that a legacy gift carries a **special responsibility of stewardship**. Careful consideration has therefore been given to governance oversight, financial protection, and the long-term application of these funds. The Trustees are committed to ensuring that the legacy is applied **prudently, transparently, and strictly in furtherance of the charity's charitable purposes**, on the scale intended, so that it delivers lasting benefit and honours both the generosity and intent of Mr Berwick.

Appropriate and proportionate recognition of this legacy has been discussed by the Trustees and will be undertaken respectfully, with due regard to privacy, and the wishes of the family.

The Trustees regard this legacy not only as a financial contribution, but as a **clear vote of confidence** in the charity's values, governance, and humanitarian commitment, and as an opportunity to strengthen the charity's resilience and capacity to serve vulnerable individuals and communities in the years ahead.

## Expenditure and Cost Discipline

Expenditure during the reporting period remained **deliberately low**, reflecting the charity's volunteer-led model and the Trustees' continued focus on financial prudence.

Trustees and members routinely met many costs personally, including:

- programme development expenses,
- administrative and professional costs,
- technology and communications support,
- and governance-related expenditure.



This approach ensured that charitable funds were preserved for public benefit and that the charity continued to operate with minimal overheads.

The Trustees consider this cost discipline to be both responsible and consistent with the charity's ethos of voluntary service.

## Financial Controls and Oversight

The Trustees maintained active oversight of the charity's financial affairs throughout the year.

This included:

- Regular review of bank balances and transactions,
- Reconciliation of accounts,
- Oversight of expenditure decisions,
- Ensuring that appropriate records were maintained.
- Transparent sharing of financials with Trustees and Members
- More than singular decisions and duplicate signatures on the bank mandate
- Professional financial and legal guidance on Charity Management (no cost to charity)

The charity operates multiple accounts for appropriate operational and stewardship purposes, including a primary operating account and designated reserve holdings.

Transfers between accounts were treated transparently and did not affect the charity's overall financial position.

The Trustees are satisfied that financial controls during the year were **appropriate, proportionate, and effective** for a charity of this size and complexity.

## Financial Position and Sustainability

The charity closed the reporting period with **£58,711.22 in total funds**, placing it in a strong position relative to recent years.

The Trustees consider this position to provide:

- increased organisational resilience,
- improved capacity to respond to future needs,
- and flexibility to support charitable activities responsibly.

The Trustees remain mindful that financial strength must be matched by continued good governance, compliance, and prudent decision-making. (All funds are unrestricted.)

## 6. Reserves Policy and Review

### Reserves Policy

The Trustees maintain a **prudent and proportionate reserves policy** designed to support the charity's emergency readiness, operational continuity, and organisational resilience.

Given the charity's role as a specialist, volunteer-led search and rescue and humanitarian organisation, the Trustees recognise the importance of retaining sufficient reserves to:

- ensure continuity of governance and administration,
- meet essential operating costs,
- respond responsibly to unforeseen events or urgent needs,
- and maintain readiness without reliance on immediate fundraising.

The reserves policy is reviewed regularly by the Trustees and reflects both the scale of the charity's activities and its low-overhead operating model.

### Level of Reserves Held

As at **28 February 2025**, the charity held **£9,000** in a designated reserve account.

This amount falls within the Trustees' approved reserves range of **£3,000 to £15,000**, which has been set to balance:

- financial prudence,
- operational flexibility,
- and responsible stewardship of charitable funds.

The Trustees consider this level of reserves to be **appropriate and proportionate** for a charity of this size, structure, and operating model.

### Rationale for the Reserves Level

In determining the appropriate level of reserves, the Trustees have taken into account:

- the charity's volunteer-led nature and absence of paid staff,
- historically low and tightly controlled operating costs,
- the need to preserve funds for public benefit rather than routine expenditure,
- Possible needs and charity protections to provide services to public benefit
- and the importance of maintaining sufficient liquidity to manage risk and uncertainty.

The Trustees are satisfied that the current reserves position supports stability while avoiding the accumulation of excessive funds that are not actively directed toward charitable purpose.

## Relationship Between Reserves and Other Funds

The Trustees distinguish clearly between **designated reserves** and other charitable funds held by the charity.

The designated reserve account exists to support continuity and readiness and is managed separately from funds that may be applied to specific charitable activities or held pending future strategic decisions.

The Trustees confirm that the presence of additional funds held by the charity does not alter the rationale or appropriateness of the reserves level and that all funds are subject to Trustee oversight and governance control.

## Ongoing Review

The Trustees will continue to review the reserves policy and reserve levels annually, or more frequently if circumstances require. Any adjustments to the reserves range or policy will be made following careful consideration including the following:

- Operational needs,
- Risk exposure,
- Appropriate fiscal management,
- Financial sustainability,
- And the charity's duty to apply funds responsibly in furtherance of its purposes.

In conducting this review, the Trustees will also take into account changes in the operating environment, regulatory expectations, and the charity's forward plans, including preparedness requirements and governance responsibilities.

The Trustees recognise that reserves are not an end in themselves, but a means of ensuring continuity, resilience, and responsible delivery of public benefit.

Accordingly, the Trustees will seek to balance the prudent retention of reserves with the timely and appropriate application of funds in support of the charity's charitable purposes.

## Financial Risk and Controls

The Trustees recognise that the effective governance of a charitable organisation requires the **active identification, assessment, and management of risk**. Risk management therefore remained a standing priority throughout the reporting period and was considered routinely as part of Trustee decision-making, oversight, and strategic planning.

The Trustees acknowledge that risk in a specialist, volunteer-led search and rescue and humanitarian organisation extends beyond financial matters alone and includes governance, operational, reputational, and intellectual considerations. Accordingly, risk management during the year was approached holistically and proportionately.

The Trustees actively managed risks relating to:

- governance and regulatory compliance,
- safeguarding of charitable assets, including financial and non-financial assets,
- financial controls and stewardship,
- operational safety and duty of care,
- reputational integrity and public trust.

Mitigation strategies were reviewed and updated as appropriate during the year, reflecting both internal review and the wider external operating context.

## Governance and Regulatory Risk

The Trustees remained mindful of the importance of maintaining **lawful, continuous, and clear governance arrangements**. During the reporting period, particular attention was given to:

- ensuring clarity of Trustee roles, responsibilities, and authority,
- maintaining accurate, contemporaneous records and decision-making documentation,
- engaging appropriately and professionally with regulatory bodies and external stakeholders,
- ensuring that governance practices remained aligned with charity law, regulatory guidance, and recognised best practice.

The Trustees are satisfied that governance risks were managed responsibly and that the charity operated throughout the year within a **clear, lawful, and accountable governance framework**.

## Safeguarding of Charitable Assets

Safeguarding of charitable assets remained a key area of Trustee oversight. The Trustees recognise that charitable assets include not only funds and physical equipment, but also **intellectual property, data, systems, and the charity's public identity and reputation.**

Measures in place during the reporting period included:

- clear Trustee oversight of both financial and non-financial assets,
- appropriate controls over access to, use of, and authority over charitable resources,
- strengthened stewardship of intellectual property, educational materials, branding, and digital assets,
- review of data handling and information governance practices,
- and reinforcement of expectations around ethical conduct and appropriate use of charity resources.

The Trustees consider these measures to be **proportionate, necessary, and effective** for a volunteer-led charity of this size and complexity. They further consider that strengthened asset stewardship supports long-term sustainability, protects public trust, and ensures that charitable resources are applied solely in furtherance of the charity's purposes.

## Overall Risk Management Approach

The Trustees emphasise that risk management is an ongoing and evolving process rather than a one-time exercise. Lessons learned over time have informed a more structured, disciplined, and forward-looking approach to risk identification and mitigation.

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity's approach to risk during the reporting period was **responsible, proportionate, and effective**, and that it contributed positively to organisational resilience, stability, and confidence in the charity's governance.

The Trustees actively monitored financial risks through:

- regular review of bank balances and transactions,
- oversight of expenditure decisions,
- maintenance of clear financial records,
- and disciplined control of costs.

The charity's low-overhead operating model, absence of paid staff, and prudent reserves policy contributed to financial stability and reduced exposure to financial risk.

The Trustees are satisfied that financial controls during the year were appropriate and that charitable funds were protected and applied responsibly.

## Operational Safety and Duty of Care

Given the nature of the charity's work, the Trustees remained attentive to risks associated with operational safety and duty of care.

Although fewer operational deployments and public activities took place during the reporting period, the Trustees ensured that:

- safety considerations remained embedded in planning and preparedness activities,
- operational doctrine and standards continued to be reviewed and strengthened,
- and readiness was maintained without compromising safety or welfare.

The Trustees consider this cautious and disciplined approach to be consistent with their duty to protect volunteers, beneficiaries, and partner organisations.

## Reputational Integrity

The Trustees recognise that reputational integrity is a vital asset for a charitable organisation, underpinning public trust, donor confidence, and effective partnership working.

During the year, the Trustees addressed reputational risks through:

- transparent governance and decision-making,
- adherence to charity law and regulatory guidance,
- proportionate and appropriate engagement with external parties,
- and a continued focus on the charity's mission and values.

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity maintained its reputation for integrity, professionalism, and humanitarian commitment throughout the reporting period.

## Ongoing Risk Management

Risk management remains an ongoing process rather than a static exercise. The Trustees will continue to:

- review and assess risks regularly,
- adapt mitigation strategies as circumstances evolve,
- and ensure that risk considerations inform strategic and operational decisions.

The Trustees consider that the charity's approach to risk during the reporting period was **responsible, proportionate, and effective**, and that it contributed positively to organisational resilience and stability.

## 8. Plans for Future Periods

Looking forward, the Trustees have considered the charity's priorities for future periods in the context of its **charitable purposes, governance responsibilities, financial position, and operating environment**.

The Trustees recognise that the charity operates in a complex and evolving landscape, where public trust, regulatory compliance, and operational readiness are essential. Accordingly, future planning has been undertaken with a focus on **long-term sustainability, organisational resilience, and responsible delivery of public benefit**.

The Trustees remain committed to ensuring that future activity is **measured, ethical, and aligned with charitable purpose**, recognising that long-term impact is best achieved through preparedness, education, and sound governance rather than short-term or reactive expansion. This approach reflects both the charity's experience and the Trustees' duty to act prudently in the best interests of the organisation and its beneficiaries.

Accordingly, the Trustees intend to:

- maintain **search and rescue and disaster response readiness**,
- continue responsible expansion of the **Child Safe Heroes** programme,
- strengthen **education, training, and capability development**,
- build on **organisational stability and resilience**,
- and steward the **legacy donation** in alignment with charitable purpose.

### Child Safe Heroes Programme Development

The Trustees intend to continue the responsible development and expansion of the **Child Safe Heroes** programme as a core public safety and prevention initiative.

Future activity is expected to focus on:

- refining, updating and enhancing educational content,
- supporting wider permissive use by children, parents, educators, and organisations,
- ensuring safeguarding, age-appropriate learning, and accessibility remain central,
- and enabling scalable dissemination without creating undue additional expenses and cost or administrative burden.

The Trustees consider this programme to represent a meaningful opportunity to reduce harm and improve safety outcomes through education and prevention especially to the youth. The additional benefit is that the teachers will also enhance their knowledge through delivery.

## Search and Rescue (SAR)

The Trustees intend to maintain the charity's **search and rescue capability**, with particular focus on missing and vulnerable persons.

Search and rescue activity is directed toward individuals who may be at heightened risk due to age, health, environmental conditions, or circumstance, including:

- missing children and young people,
- vulnerable adults,
- elderly or at-risk individuals,
- and persons endangered through incident, accident or exposure.

Future SAR-related activity will continue to emphasise:

- preparedness and situational awareness,
- leadership continuity and informed decision-making,
- preservation of operational doctrine, professional standards, and institutional knowledge,
- and constructive engagement with police and other statutory and voluntary partners.

The Trustees consider the maintenance of SAR readiness to be a **core charitable function** and a clear public benefit, ensuring that the charity remains capable of supporting safe, proportionate, and coordinated responses when assistance is required.

## Disaster Readiness, Response and Coordination

The Trustees also intend to maintain the charity's **disaster readiness and response capability**, recognising that effective humanitarian response depends on advance preparation, coordination, and situational awareness.

This work relates to natural and environmental hazards that may impact individuals and communities, including:

- flooding and severe weather,
- storms and extreme wind events,
- snow, ice, and hazardous winter conditions affecting roads and waterways,
- earthquakes and other large-scale natural hazards,
- and humanitarian emergencies requiring coordination support.



Future activity in this area will include:

- ongoing monitoring of domestic and international risks and emergencies,
- maintaining leadership readiness and decision-making capability,
- preserving operational and coordination doctrine,
- and sustaining informed engagement with multi-agency coordination environments.

The Trustees consider disaster readiness itself to be a **public benefit**, as it enables safer, more effective, and more coordinated responses when emergencies occur, even where direct deployment is not required.

## Education, Training, and Capability

Building on existing work, the Trustees plan to continue strengthening **education, training, certification, and capability development**.

Future priorities may include:

- maintaining and updating training frameworks and guidance,
- supporting professional development and mentoring,
- preserving specialist knowledge and experience,
- and enabling learning and knowledge-sharing that supports safe and effective charitable activity.

These activities underpin both operational readiness and broader public benefit.

## Organisational Stability and Governance

The Trustees recognise that recent experience has reinforced the importance of **robust governance, structural resilience, and organisational clarity**.

Looking ahead, the Trustees will continue to:

- review governance arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose,
- consider structural and strategic adaptations where appropriate,
- strengthen internal processes, safeguards, and accountability,
- and ensure that the charity is protected against undue risk while remaining transparent and compliant.

Any future changes will be approached carefully, informed by regulatory guidance and best practice, and implemented only where they clearly support the charity's long-term interests.

## Federated Model, Independence, and Collaborative Alignment

As stated in Section 2 of this TAR, the Charity Trustees note that the charity operates as part of a broader **federated model** of aligned humanitarian and emergency response organisations, through which common standards, learning, and resources may be shared voluntarily in support of charitable purpose.

Within this model, the charity in England and Wales remains **fully independent in its governance, decision-making, and regulatory obligations**. The Trustees confirm that during the reporting period there was **no operational direction, governance interference, or financial control exercised by any external or international body**.

Participation in the federated model is voluntary and collaborative in nature. It enables the charity to benefit from shared experience, best practice, and access to non-financial resources, including learning materials, doctrine, licenses, software, IP (Intellectual Property) and technical knowledge, without compromising its independence or accountability under UK charity law.

The Trustees further confirm that **no charitable funds were transferred to or received from any federated or international entity during the reporting period**.

Where infrastructure, systems, or support services have been made available, these have been provided **without charge** or met personally by individuals, and not by the charity, ensuring that charitable funds remained fully protected and applied solely for public benefit within England and Wales.

The Trustees consider that this federated approach strengthens the charity's resilience and capability while preserving clear governance boundaries, local accountability, and regulatory compliance. Looking ahead, the Trustees intend to continue engaging constructively within this model in a manner that supports the charity's charitable purposes, enhances local reach and impact, and maintains full independence and transparency.

## Stewardship of Financial Resources

The Trustees will continue to exercise **careful stewardship** of the charity's financial resources, including the legacy funds received during the reporting period.

Future financial decisions will be guided by:

- alignment with charitable purpose,
- prudence and proportionality,
- long-term sustainability,
- and the duty to apply funds responsibly for public benefit.

The Trustees do not anticipate significant increases in routine expenditure and remain committed to a low-overhead, volunteer-led operating model.

## Outlook

The Trustees remain confident in the charity's mission, vision, values, and the commitment and capability of its people. The charity enters the coming period in a position of organisational stability, strengthened governance, and improved readiness, underpinned by sound financial stewardship and a clear sense of purpose.

The Trustees believe that the charity is well positioned to continue delivering public benefit responsibly, ethically, and effectively in future periods. Recent experience has reinforced the importance of preparedness, discipline, and strong governance, and the charity is better placed as a result to respond to future challenges and opportunities in a measured and proportionate manner.

Looking ahead, the Trustees will continue to balance ambition with prudence. Growth and development will be pursued thoughtfully, ensuring that any expansion of activity is aligned with charitable purpose, supported by appropriate governance and capability, and undertaken in a way that protects public trust.

The charity will continue to prioritise quality, safety, and integrity over scale or visibility.

The Trustees are optimistic about the charity's future and its ability to make a meaningful contribution to public safety, resilience, and humanitarian preparedness.

They remain committed to evolving the charity's activities in a way that strengthens impact, preserves independence, and upholds the highest standards of governance, accountability, and trust whilst providing high level humanitarian, SAR (Search and Rescue) and Disaster Response services to ensure a more safe and more secure community and people and alleviating suffering pursuant to our charitable objectives.

## 9. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duties under the **Charities Act 2011**, including acting in the best interests of the charity, managing resources responsibly, exercising reasonable care and skill, and ensuring accountability and transparency.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable charity law, regulations, and good governance practice.

The Trustees are fully aware that charity law requires financial statements to be prepared for each financial year which give a **true and fair view** of the charity's financial position and of its income and expenditure for that period.

In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Trustees have exercised informed judgement and oversight. In preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements, the Trustees have:

- selected and applied appropriate accounting policies consistently,
- observed the methods and principles applicable to charities,
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable, prudent, and proportionate,
- confirmed that applicable accounting standards and recommended practice have been followed, with any material departures disclosed and explained,
- prepared the financial statements on a going concern basis, having satisfied themselves that this remains appropriate.

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining **adequate and accurate accounting records** which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable compliance with the requirements of charity law.

They are also responsible for the **safeguarding of the charity's assets**, including financial, physical, intellectual, and reputational assets, and for taking reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent and detect fraud, error, or other irregularities.

The Trustees confirm that they have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that they are aware of any relevant audit or independent examination information and that the charity's examiner is provided with all information necessary to carry out their role effectively.

The Trustees further confirm that they have **complied with their statutory and fiduciary duties** under charity law, including acting collectively and individually in the best interests of the charity, managing resources responsibly, exercising reasonable care and skill, and ensuring appropriate accountability and transparency.

## 10. Declaration

The Trustees declare that this Trustees' Annual Report has been **approved by the Board of Trustees** and is submitted as the official Trustees' Annual Report for **Registered Charity Number 1102722**, (*The Emergency Response Team Search and Rescue (ERTSAR), also known as Oxfordshire Search and Rescue (OSAR)*) for the financial year **1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025**.

The Trustees confirm that this report accurately reflects the charity's activities, governance, and financial position during the reporting period and has been prepared in accordance with charity law and applicable regulatory guidance.

In approving this report, the Trustees further confirm that they have exercised their collective and individual fiduciary duties with due care, skill, and diligence throughout the reporting period.

The Trustees confirm that appropriate governance arrangements were maintained, including regular oversight, informed decision-making, proper financial management, and transparent record-keeping. Trustees met and communicated as required to discharge their responsibilities effectively, and mechanisms were in place to enable Trustees to raise concerns, seek clarification, challenge decisions constructively, and obtain advice or support where necessary.

The Trustees are satisfied that the charity has been managed responsibly, ethically, and in accordance with the principles of good governance, accountability, and stewardship expected of a registered charity.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



**Gary Foo**  
Chair



**Paul Giles**  
Secretary and Treasurer

For the Reporting Period:	1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025
Draft date of approval:	30 November 2025
Final date of approval:	27 December 2025

## APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

OXFORDSHIRE SEARCH AND RESCUE (OSAR) AKA  
Emergency Response Team Search & Rescue (ERTSAR)

1102722

### Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01-Mar-24	To	28-Feb-25
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#### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations - Events	-	-	-	-	-
Donations - Non-Events	417	-	-	417	-
Bequest	50,674	-	-	50,674	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>51,091</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,091</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>51,091</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,091</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
PayPal Fees	9	-	-	9	-
Storage Rental	2920.04	-	-	2,920	-
Medical Gas (Unavailable Equipment)	620.1	-	-	620	-
Office Expenses	140.34	-	-	140	-
Supporter Recognition / Donor Steward	35.83	-	-	36	-
Storage Unit Repairs and Locks	274	-	-	274	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,999</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>47,092</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>47,092</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>					
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>11,625</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,625</b>	<b>11,703.98</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>58,717</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>58,717</b>	<b>11,704</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Lloyds Current account	49,202	-	-
	Wise Reserve account	9,000	-	-
	Paypal	509	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>58,711</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-



	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b> (These are currently taken by other parties without permission and retained by them. Still on our ledger as bought and owned by us.)	Land Rover Vehicle Rescue 41	Unrestricted	-	-
	Marine 1 Rescue RIB Boat	Unrestricted	-	-
	Trailer for Boat	Unrestricted	-	-
	SAR 1 Inflatable Boat	Unrestricted	-	-
	Trailer for Boat	Unrestricted	-	-
	SAR 2 Inflatable Boar	Unrestricted	-	-
	Trailer for Boat	Unrestricted	-	-
	Various Medical Gear, AEDs, Kit	Unrestricted	-	-
	Various Rescue Equipment	Unrestricted	-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

CCXX R2 accounts (SS)

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Gary Foo (Chair)	22-Dec-25
	Paul Giles (Treasurer)	22-Dec-25

## APPENDIX B: INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF ACCOUNTS



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's  
report on the accounts**

Section A		Independent Examiner's Report	
<b>Report to the trustees/ members of</b>	The Emergency Response Team Search and Rescue (ERT SAR) Oxfordshire Search and Rescue (OSAR)		
<b>On accounts for the year ended</b>	28 February 2025	<b>Charity no (if any)</b>	1102722
<b>Set out on pages</b>	On attached Report		
<b>Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner</b>	<p>The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,</li> <li>• to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and</li> <li>• to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.</li> </ul>		
<b>Basis of independent examiner's statement</b>	<p>My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.</p>		
<b>Independent examiner's statement</b>	<p>In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or</li> <li>• the accounts do not accord with the accounting records</li> </ul> <p>I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.</p>		
<b>Signed:</b>			<b>Date:</b> 27 December 2025
<b>Name:</b>	Francis Harris		
<b>Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):</b>	Chartered Certified Accountant ACCA		
<b>Address:</b>	Suite 11, 1st Floor, Hawley Manor Hawley Road Hawley Kent DA1 1PX		



<b>Section B</b>	<b>Disclosure</b>
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Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.