SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales · Charity number 1193634

Details

Other names	SARA, SEVERN RESCUE
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2021-02-23
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Severn Area Rescue Association The Lifeboat And Rescue Station Beachley Chepstow NP16 7HH
Phone	03448460226
Email	info@sara-rescue.org.uk
Website	www.sara-rescue.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE PROTECTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY BY THE PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF A RESCUE SERVICE (INCORPORATING BOTH MARINE OPERATIONS AND LAND OPERATIONS) WITH, IN PARTICULAR, SPECIALIST SKILLS IN SWIFT WATER / FLOOD, LAND SEARCH, LIFEBOATS, RESCUE BOATS, MARINE RESCUE AND CLIFF RESCUE.TO ASSIST GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES AND COUNTY AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THEIR PROVISION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES; ANDTO ADVANCE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN OUTDOOR SAFETY, PARTICULARLY IN AND AROUND WATER.FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE CIO'S OBJECTS, THE PRINCIPAL AREA OF MARINE OPERATIONS COMPRISES THE BRISTOL CHANNEL AND THE SEVERN, WYE, AVON, AND USK RIVERS (AND THEIR RESPECTIVE TRIBUTARIES) AND LAND OPERATIONS PRINCIPALLY EXTEND TO SOUTH EAST WALES, THE WEST OF ENGLAND AND THE MIDLANDS.

Activities: Lifeboat and inland search and rescue, including flood and cliff rescue and missing person search, on the Severn, Wye, Usk and other rivers, and across Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and parts of SE Wales, Herefordshire and beyond. Activities were conducted by SARA as Charity 505504 prior to 1 Jan 2022

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1193634

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Armed Forces/emergency Service Efficiency
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Gloucestershire
- Herefordshire
- Monmouthshire
- Shropshire
- Worcestershire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£403,956	£310,631	-	-
2024-12-31	£342,764	£315,842	-	-
2023-12-31	£356,821	£267,853	-	-
2022-12-31	£274,205	£268,036	-	-
2021-12-31	£274,205	£268,036	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Christopher John Burgess		2025-03-23
David Hill		2026-03-22
Gareth Raymond		2024-10-27
Judith Mary Harvey		2022-05-08
Keith Andrew Beckett CBE		2022-05-08
Mark George Carwardine		2022-01-01
Shaun Robinson Egan		2022-05-08

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1193634

SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1193634

Accounts

Severn Area Rescue Association
Annual Report and Accounts 2025



Multi-Disciplinary Volunteer Search and Rescue Team with Fifty Years of Lifeboat Service on the River Severn

Registered Charity CIO 1193634

FOREWORD

I am pleased to report that 2025 has been a steady and productive year for Severn Area Rescue Association, with 112 operations carried out across land search, lifeboat, inland water, flood response, and rope rescue disciplines. These figures reflect not only the continued demand for SARA's services, but also the breadth of capability now delivered by its volunteers. Flooding remains an ever-present and destructive threat to communities along the Severn and beyond, and SARA's readiness to respond is as vital today as it has been since the organisation's foundation.

Operational capability has been further strengthened this year with the successful introduction of the new Incident Command Unit (South). This vehicle has already had a significant impact on the efficiency and coordination of operations, and its value has been clearly recognised by partner emergency services. I would like to extend particular thanks to Kathy Donaldson and her team for the enormous effort involved in its development, conversion and deployment. Alongside this, I am encouraged by continued investment in people, with new team and search party leaders, helms and instructors being developed, and new operational and auxiliary members joining the organisation and being trained, ensuring experience is matched by a strong pipeline of new talent.

Considerable progress has also been made in developing SARA's future capabilities. I was particularly delighted to see SARA enhance its flood rescue resilience through the development of a dedicated team of MOD2 Flood First Responders in the Cotswolds, providing valuable support both locally and to neighbouring stations and agencies. As flooding events become more frequent and severe, this capability is of great importance to the communities SARA serves.

I am also delighted to see the continued development of the SARA Dog Unit during 2025. I am proud that the Bathurst Estate have been able to support this work by providing training environments to support the team's development. The emergence of both land and water search dog capabilities represents an incredibly exciting step forward for SARA.

The organisation itself has continued to evolve. The revised executive arrangements agreed at the 2025 AGM are now firmly in place and operating successfully, providing a structure well suited to the scale and diversity of SARA's activities.

My husband and I are once again proud to host the annual SARA Trail Run in Cirencester Park and to support training exercises across the Estate. Fundraising events such as these remain essential, not only in sustaining SARA financially, but also in strengthening the connection between volunteers and the communities they serve, and I would like to thank all who fundraise, and indeed donate towards this essential mission.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all members, operational, auxiliary and trainees for the extraordinary commitment you give week in and week out. You devote your time, skill and energy as volunteers, without expectation of reward, and the service you collectively provide is truly something to be proud of.



The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst

In 2025, SARA volunteers attended 112 separate operations:



Contents

	Page No.
Reference & Administrative Details	5
Objectives and Achievements	5
Structure, Governance and Management	6
SARA Overview & Brief History	7
Chair of Trustees Report	10
CEO Report	12
Fundraising	18
Review of Risks	18
Reserves Strategy	18
Financial Review	21
Independent Examiner's Report	23
Financial Statements	24
Notes to the Financial Statements	26
Appendix A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks	39
Appendix B: 1-Page Summary of SARA Capabilities	43



Reference and Administrative Details

The Severn Area Rescue Association is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. It is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI, with 14 operational boats, of which five are declared lifeboats, and approximately 250 personnel.

Registered Charity CIO Number	1193634
Registered Address	The Lifeboat Station, Beachley, Chepstow, NP16 7HH
Independent Accounts Examiner	Helen Tinsley FCCA, Azets, Wolverhampton
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc

Objectives

The objects of the Association, as stated in its Constitution are:

1. The protection of life and property by the provision and maintenance of a rescue service (incorporating both marine operations and land operations) with, in particular, specialist skills in swiftwater / flood, land search, lifeboats, rescue boats, marine rescue and cliff rescue;
2. To assist Government Departments and Agencies and County and Local Authorities in their provision of emergency services; and
3. To advance public education in outdoor safety, particularly in and around water.

The Association is non-profit making, and financed by voluntary contributions, grants from any public or private organisations, and any such fundraising activities or commercial arrangements as the Executive Committee recommends to the Trustees.

The Achievement of the Objects of the Charity

The strategy and policies followed by the Board, Executive and Senior Leadership Team during the course of 2025 have met the objects of the Charity in the following ways:

- Through the Association's 7 rescue stations and one sub-station attending 112 callouts during the year, all tasked by the principal emergency services.
- Through the provision of Water Safety scenarios for schools and other interested groups to raise awareness for everyone, especially children, to become more 'water aware'.
- Through the ongoing provision of recognised training courses held both internally and externally to promote the professionalism of the organisation.

The Trustees have given due regard to the guidance from the Charity Commission on public benefit and consulted with the emergency services across the relevant area, and are satisfied that the objectives and activities of SARA provide a public benefit.

Structure, Governance and Management

SARA is governed by its Constitution. Certain 'non-executive' powers are reserved for the Board of Trustees with specific powers delegated to the Executive. The Trustees have final overall legal responsibility for the organisation and its governance. Non-Executive Trustees serve for a term of three years, being appointed at the Annual General Meeting; the CEO, Deputy CEO and the CFO are ex-officio Trustees.

The Trustees of the CIO in the year were:

Keith Beckett (Chair of Trustees)
Mark Carwardine (Chief Executive Officer)
Judith Harvey
Gareth Raymond
Ian Morgan (to March 2025)
Shaun Egan (Deputy CEO)
Richard Newhouse (CFO, to March 2025)
Chris Burgess (CFO, from March 2025)

Until March 2025 the Executive Committee was responsible to the Trustees for running the Association. At the March AGM, this structure was replaced with a Senior Leadership Team ('SLT'), which is now responsible to the Trustees for the overall running of the association in relation to all financial, safety, legal and operational matters. Its members during the year from March were:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Mark Carwardine
Deputy CEO	Shaun Egan
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	Chris Burgess
General Executive Officer	David Hill
Chief Operating Officer	Dave Palmer
Director of Rescue Operations	Richard Dainty
Director of Training	Jordan Stevens
Fundraising Officer	vacancy
Association Secretary	Sally Holloway

Additional technical and specialist managers were co-opted at the Executive level being:

Executive Land Search Manager	John Dutton to Mar 25, thence Ian Roberts
Executive Rope Rescue Officer	Andy Torbet
Executive Inland Water Officer	Matt Davies
Medical Officer	Dr Jon Dallimore
Wellbeing Officer	Martin Holloway
Communications Equipment Manager	Chris Thornton
PR Officer	Richard Newhouse

The Committees for the Beachley, Newport, Tewkesbury, Sharpness, Upton, Cotswolds and Wyre Forest Rescue Stations, led by a General Manager are responsible for the day-to-day running of their respective Station.

The Operations of the Charity

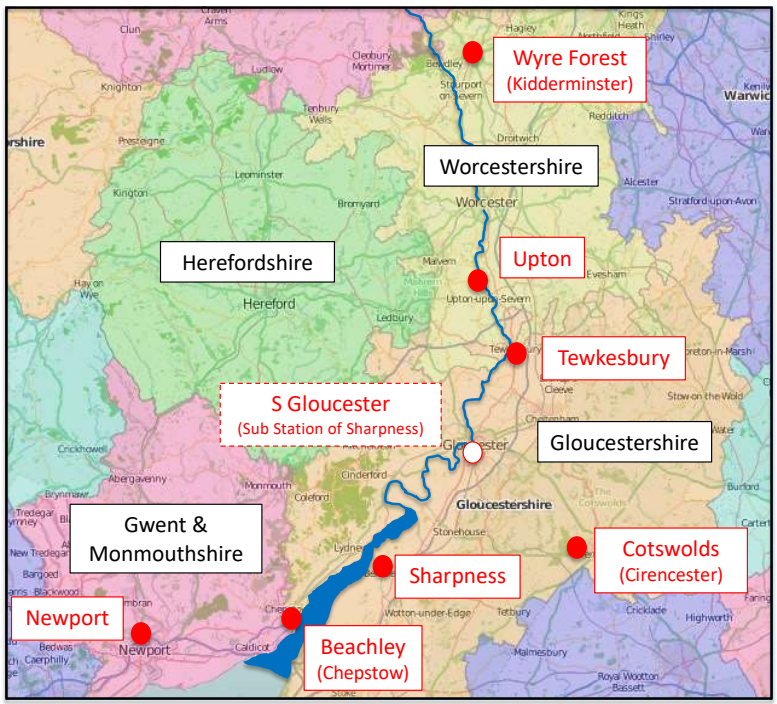
SARA's Mission Statement is:

> To protect life and property through the provision of a professionally trained, specialist rescue service for marine, flood and land search incidents

The principal area of marine operations comprises the Bristol Channel and the Severn, Wye, Avon, and Usk rivers. Typical situations involved vessels suffering breakdown or damage by grounding, becoming lost in severely restricted visibility - a particularly dangerous situation in the tidal Severn - and searching for missing people. As a Lifeboat Organisation, SARA complies with the Rescue Boat Code of Practice (RBCP) and is a founder member of the National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA).

Inland operations extend to the West of England and the Midlands and South-East Wales. SARA is an Associate Member of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and is part of the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA). SARA's technical and flood rescue standards are assured by qualifications from Rescue3Europe, which comply with national standards

SARA works closely with the statutory emergency services – Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance Services, likewise HM Coastguard – also with neighbouring and related volunteer rescue organisations. These particularly include the RNLI at Portishead, Penarth and Barry, the Coastguard helicopter based at St Athan, Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and the South Wales Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA(SW)), to name just a few. There is a strong mutual relationship with Gloucester Cave Rescue (GCRG) whose members often participate in land search operations as integrated search party members. Further details of SARA's operational roles are provided in the Annex.



The SARA Rescue Stations

Why SARA? A Short History!

The inaugural meeting to form the organisation which became SARA was held in 1973, and the charity was formally created in 1976, as 'The Severn Auxiliary Rescue Association', auxiliary to the Coastguard. Its headquarters were at Tutshill - near the current Beachley station. At this time the RNLI did not cover river estuaries, such as the River Severn. There was felt to be a need for rescue organisation responsible for this hazardous stretch of river, particularly following the closure of the Aust Ferry after the opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966. In 1985 SARA also became an official Mountain Rescue Team in the role of Cliff Rescue for the Wye Valley, and SARA Beachley Rescue Station was designated as a 'Mountain Rescue Post'.

In 1986 a second station was opened at Sharpness, primarily in response to a tragic loss of life in the Sharpness area and the name of the organisation was amended to what it is today. A station was opened at Wyre Forest in 2004, to cover the upper Severn area. In 2014 Wyre Forest Station moved into the Fire Station at Kidderminster, under a co-hosting arrangement, and in early 2021 moved again into the new Kidderminster Tri-Service 'Emergency Hub' Station.

In 2011, following major flooding, a Joint 'Water Rescue Centre' opened in Tewkesbury, as a strategic alliance between Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service, SARA and Gloucestershire County Council, and the new SARA Tewkesbury Station became SARA's fourth.

For many years, emergencies in Newport were attended to by crew from SARA Beachley. In 2014 an equipment hub was placed in Newport, and in 2015 a base was established at Malpas Fire Station. Following a major bequest, new boats were purchased in 2016 and the Newport Lifeboat Station was established, within the Malpas Fire Station, becoming independent from Beachley in 2019.

The small independent 'Water Emergency Incident Response' (WEIR) team at Upton-upon-Severn elected in 2019 to merge with SARA, forming SARA Upton Station in 2020. SARA's seventh station SARA Cotswolds, based at Cirencester Fire Station, was established in mid-2021 to provide a base in eastern Gloucestershire, initially for land search and now extended to rope and flood response.

In January 2021 the SARA Charity (#505504) transitioned to become a Charitable Incorporated organisation (CIO). The management of the organisation transitioned during 2025 to formalising a small 'Senior Leadership Team' to manage the routine running of the association on behalf of the Board.



Training in Flood Rescue, in the River Wye in Chepstow in April



The same boat, being used to evacuate residents to safety in flooded Monmouth in November

Chair of Trustees' Report

SARA has had another incredibly successful year in 2025, delivering much needed and appreciated lifesaving services to our local community.

After the AGM in 2025, I was delighted and proud to be able to serve for a further term as your Chair of Trustees. On behalf of myself, and all the Board of Trustees, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of SARA for the incredible dedication, professionalism and sheer hard work that adds up to make SARA so effective and well respected.

In what has been a challenging economic environment for the Charity Sector, SARA has remained healthy and resilient financially; largely thanks to the work of all of those that put the time and effort into our fundraising activities. The Board has reviewed our Reserves strategy and continues to support the operation of a Major Asset Replacement Fund that ensures that we are looking ahead and preparing for future outlay.

2025 has also been a year of bringing our Strategy to life, and of making improvements to our executive management structure. These changes are improving our effectiveness as an organisation, and making the very best use of the time that our volunteers can give to the myriad of tasks required to run SARA successfully. The Board also continue to champion strongly our 'Members Code', represented by the acronym SEARCH: Safety, Equality, Attitude, Respect, Care, and Honesty. It serves us well and is a constant reminder of the underpinning attributes that make us successful as an organisation staffed wholly by volunteers.

I very much look forward to what we can achieve together in 2026 as we continue to support the statutory lifesaving authorities and provide a vital service to the public.

Keith Beckett CBE FREng
Chair of Board of Trustees





Sharpness' SARA Lifeboat 4 at Speed



Some recently qualified members of Beachley's Land Search Team

CEO Report on 2025

As I write this at the start of 2026, our teams have not long concluded two searches which I feel demonstrate what we stand for. At both Tewkesbury and Cwmbran, we had been called out to reliable reports of someone sadly entering a river and then disappearing from sight. At the time of the incident and then for many days following, teams from across SARA were involved in searching for these two people. This period was characterised by significant rainfall, so the rivers rose and fell dramatically, and the searching was difficult and hazardous. Nevertheless, our teams persevered, working closely with the police and other emergency services.

Both were eventually brought to their sad conclusion - in the Cwmbran case on the 10th detailed search - thus enabling the families to have some closure. I am very grateful to the SARA volunteers, and their families, for their commitment in these operations and all of the others throughout the year.

For me the early part of the year was dominated by the organisational changes. After many years, and some long discussions, we decided to move away from having an executive committee comprising all the officers, which had reached around 25 in total. As proposed to and agreed at the March AGM we now have a much smaller 'Senior Leadership Team' (SLT) which runs the association. This has included creating new roles responsible for our Rescue Operations, our Training and for our general Operations. I was also delighted to on-board Chris Burgess as CFO. He joined us with considerable business experience, and has quickly found his way into our organisation and is making a significant contribution

SARA is a member of both MREW and NILA. Our membership of MREW is as an associate member, since the MREW transitioned to being a CIO in 2019. We remain keen to regain full member status and to increase the knowledge of SARA within MREW. To that end we hosted a visit from their Chief Executive Mike Park MBE in June. Following good feedback from the visit and some other conversations, we submitted a formal application for full membership in November. At the time of writing this application is pending consideration.



Deputy CEO Shaun Egan (centre) representing NILA at
the All Party Parliamentary Group for Search and Rescue

Shaun Egan, our deputy CEO, was accepted as a trustee of NILA in April. He has been particularly active since then in helping to represent NILA at the new All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Search and Rescue, attending meetings there alongside representatives for MREW, Cave and Lowland organisations. The very welcome announcement that the government would remove the requirement for search and rescue vehicles to pay road tax ('VED') was as a result of successful lobbying coordinated by this forum.

We have tried to proactively manage our good relationships with our tasking authorities. There was a 'very good' declared facility audit visit by the HM Coastguard team at Beachley, Sharpness and Newport in March, and we were able to have some very useful discussions.



The HM Coastguard Team with SARA 1 and the Beachley Leadership during an Inspection Visit

Our SARA Wyre Forest team has always been a slight anomaly in providing a Land Search but not a rope rescue capability. We have had a series of discussions with the tasking authorities in this regard, and in the autumn Herefordshire and Worcestershire fire service confirmed that they do have a requirement for SARA to develop a rope rescue capability in the north part of our area. Developing this based at our Wyre Forest station will be a key focus in 2026.

Our attendance at Emergency Service forums was amply rewarded with invitations to major exercises and other activities. A large train crash exercise organised by Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue was a highlight, with SARA providing the entire medical first response for over 100 'badly injured' exercise casualties. Not content with that, when one of the exercise casualties suffered a real medical emergency, the team then provided real casualty care, including medication, for an extended period until an actual ambulance arrived.

We were also again grateful to Avon & Somerset LRF for organising flood response training at Cardiff International White Water twice this November. Responders from across SARA always find these sessions very valuable.

This year we were able to equip the Cotswolds station with a flood response team, and they are now trained and equipped to the official 'DEFRA Mod 2' standards. In part this was due to reallocating some surplus equipment from other stations. We also bought a 4x4 vehicle for the Cotswolds station, so that they now have a satisfactory station fleet with a transit crew-van and a 4x4, both fully liveried.

I'm delighted with the current state of our vehicle fleet. Late in 2025 we bought a replacement 4x4 for SARA Tewkesbury, which has now come into service and replaces the ageing Land Rover there. This completes the urgent need to refresh our vehicle fleet.

We decided to invest in replacing the engines for one of our primary lifeboats, SARA Lifeboat 1, and in January that went off to Delta to receive new 4-stroke engines to replace the 10-year old 2-strokes. Not to be outdone, at Sharpness we replaced the entire stock of lifeboat helmets and have invested in on-board helmet communications on both SARA Lifeboats 2 and 4. We also disposed of the training boat at SARA Sharpness and the hovercraft neither of which had operational justification.

Dr John Dutton retired this year from the role of Executive Land Search Manager, a role which he has held for 15 years. During this time, he built the significant and highly professional land search capability which we have today and the Board is hugely grateful for his contribution. He continues to play a role in the leadership of the land search operation, both behind the scenes and as an active Search Manager.

Another huge achievement was Hannah Lowe, one of our team doctors from SARA Wyre Forest, completing the Montane Winter Spine Race MRT Challenger in January, the first SARA member to do so. Then in June she placed 3rd in the Montane Summer Spine MRT Challenge North. Well done Hannah!



John Dutton with his presentations for 15 years' service as Executive Land Search Manager



The awesome Hannah Lowe, who completed the Winter Spine Race MRT Challenger South

Internal training remains the main focus of our preparation for operations. Amongst many other achievements, we were delighted this year to have two members from SARA Tewkesbury qualify as additional Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Instructors, filling a long-standing gap at Tewkesbury which for some years has had to be covered by instructor members from elsewhere.

A focus for this year was revising and standardising the requirement for ongoing training for Lifeboat crew across our three lifeboat stations. Unlike other disciplines, lifeboat operations are very much station-focused, and different schemes had evolved. The lifeboat training design was very collaborative and has established a pattern which we will now extend out to other disciplines.

This year we have continued to play an active role in our regional rescue association SWERA. Teams from SARA attended medical, rope, and swiftwater training sessions organised by SWERA, and we are currently planning for SARA to host a regional training day later in 2026. During the year SARA members attended a number of operations, as well as training exercises, in support of SWERA teams and they have supported ours.

During 2025 the SARA Dog Unit continued to develop. The two dog teams officially accepted for training by NSARDA have continued to develop their skills in searching areas of woodland, heath and farmland for live people. It is hoped that in Autumn of 2026 these two dogs will be ready for assessment. There are a further three aspirant 'area live find 'search dog teams in training. Additionally, we now have an aspirant water search dog team who are close to passing the tests to become an accepted NSARDA trainee team. This dog team will look for people subsurface and will be an exciting development for us.

Water safety education continues to be an important aspect of our operations which is very important and easy to overlook. At our Beachley station, Tyler took on responsibility and initiated a program of visits and talks to schools across a wide area. It was not long before this was recognised by the public. He was proposed for and then awarded the Captain Robert Nairac Award of the Royal Society of St George, which was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire at a Ceremony in Gloucester. And then, as a result of that, he was invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace! Possibly the first serving member to be so invited as a result of the SARA service. I was rather envious, but it was thoroughly well deserved.





Tyler receiving the Captain Nairac Award from the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire,
and then at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party

Our operational and auxiliary team members invest enormous effort in the fundraising activity that sustains everything we do. This year, that work has again encompassed running races, concerts, dinners, raffles, open days, a golf day and much more. We are deeply grateful to the many individuals and organisations across our community whose generous support makes this service possible.

None of it would be possible, either, without the steadfast support of our volunteers' families. Behind every member who responds to a call-out is a partner, parent or child who lets them go — often at short notice, often in challenging circumstances, and invariably without complaint. On behalf of the whole organisation, I extend my sincere gratitude to each and every one of them.

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer





The CEO in his happy place, on a Rope Rescue training exercise at Wintours Leap in the Wye Valley



One of our local MPs being taken out on SARA Lifeboat 1



At the summit of Cairngorm, during Winter Training in February

Fundraising

SARA raises funds for services through applications to charitable foundations and trusts, bids for appropriate statutory contracts, supported by individual and corporate donations, and community fundraising activities and support.

SARA is registered with the Fundraising Regulator, has a Fundraising Complaints Policy and Procedure and adheres to The Code of Fundraising Practice. Any Fundraising Complaints received by the charity are recorded and acted upon as set out in the procedure. There were no complaints received about fundraising, or any other matters, during 2025.

SARA has no paid fundraisers and does not pay for the services of any fundraising organisation or people.

Review of Risks

The Trustees and Executive Committee conduct an ongoing review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and processes and controls are in place to mitigate those risks.

The Association has Standard Operating Procedures which each member must follow. Whilst SARA is not bound by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (as it is part of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) which is exempt from the above Act), the Trustees' policy is that the Association should use this legislation as 'good practice' for SARA operations.

SARA carries insurance policies to cover health and safety risks, include some insurance cover provided through policies arranged by Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW). The Executive Committee continues to monitor Insurance policies to ensure they are adequate for SARA's purposes.

Reserves Strategy

As an organisation providing emergency search and rescue services, SARA must be able to repair and replace critical operational equipment immediately — lives depend on it. The Trustees' reserves policy is therefore designed to ensure the Charity maintains the financial capacity to safeguard service delivery against significant unforeseeable changes in income or expenditure.

The Trustees' policy is to maintain unrestricted cash reserves equivalent to approximately five to six months of actual operational running costs excluding depreciation (circa. £100,000 to £125,000) providing working capital to manage fluctuations in income. At 31 December 2025, free unrestricted cash stood at £101,065

In addition, the Charity holds designated reserves totalling £130,218 to part fund planned capital expenditure on operational assets, including replacement vessels, vehicles and PPE. Restricted funds of £96,803 are held for specific named projects including vessel maintenance, training, rescue PPE and station development, as directed by donors, and are not available for general use. Fixed assets with a net book value of £309,683 are held for Search and Rescue operations and are therefore not available to fund operational costs. The Trustees consider the overall level of reserves to be appropriate given the Charity's reliance on irregular income streams and its significant ongoing capital commitments.



SARA Lifeboat 2, Lifeboat 4 and SARA 18 from SARA Sharpness,
at their popular Open Day in August



The happy Sharpness Team once the Open Day was finished!



A visit and cheque presentation at SARA Beachley



Festive Tesco staff aboard SARA Lifeboat 3 at the start of a Christmas fundraising collection

Financial Review

2025 has been another year of development for SARA which has seen continued significant investment in the Charity's assets.

During the year, two new Ford Rangers were acquired (for Cotswolds and Tewkesbury) as well as a new Launch Tractor and two new engines for SARA 1 at Beachley. In addition, there was a significant investment – funded entirely through local fundraising - in the new Helmet Communications system at Sharpness.

Grants, donations and legacies provide a vital income stream, alongside local fundraising activities, and are key elements in covering the Charity's running costs and supporting its investment plans. We are very grateful to all parties who have supported the Charity during the year and, of course, for the ongoing substantial efforts of the local station fundraising teams

The disposal of redundant assets has also contributed some welcome funds during the course of 2025, with further such assets to be disposed of during 2026.

As well as income generation, cost control is a vital component in ensuring that SARA's finances remain robust. Whilst we continue to invest heavily in PPE for members, other costs have been well controlled during the course of the year.

I am pleased to report that the Charity ended the financial year in a robust financial position with overall cash balances of £328,000 and net assets / reserves of £655,000. A high level of cash and reserves is critical to the ongoing success of the Charity given the significant investment that will be required to maintain and improve the Charity's assets in the coming years.

In December 2025, the Trustees reconfirmed a target for unrestricted cash reserves of £100,000. This target has been achieved whilst increasing the Major Asset Fund to £110,000 (following the investment of some of the 2024 balance during the year) and designating a further £20,000 in total to PPE funds.

Restricted funds at the year end, totalled £97,000 with the most significant elements representing monies raised for the Beachley Tractor Shed and for improvements (including a new engine) to Newport's SARA Lifeboat 14.

Although total unrestricted funds stand at £558,576, the majority of this is represented by fixed assets in operational use and funds designated by the Trustees for specific future purposes. Free unrestricted cash reserves available for general use amount to approximately £101,000, which is within the range agreed as part of the Charity's Reserves Strategy.

Many thanks to all of those SARA members, and other partners, who have assisted me during my first year with the Charity. Your support has been invaluable and very much appreciated.



Chris Burgess
Chief Financial Officer



Working with air ambulance, road ambulance and coastguard personnel
on a multi-agency training exercise in July



SARA Lifeboat 1 rescuing a disabled yacht in May

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SARA

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Severn Area Rescue Association (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the Trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or

2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or

3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 financial statements to be reached.

Azets

Helen Tinsley FCCA
Azets
First Floor
St David's Court
Union Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 3JE

Dated: 11 May 2026

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	107,450	163,581	271,031	155,168	80,167	235,335
Charitable activities	4	71,390	10,876	82,266	85,082	13,667	98,749
Other trading activities	5	384	-	384	620	-	620
Investments	6	8,662	-	8,662	6,757	-	6,757
Other income	7	41,613	-	41,613	1,303	-	1,303
Total income		229,499	174,457	403,956	248,930	93,834	342,764
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	8	10,749	-	10,749	10,460	2,258	12,718
Charitable activities	9	228,540	71,342	299,882	246,395	56,729	303,124
Total expenditure		239,289	71,342	310,631	256,855	58,987	315,842
Net income/(expenditure)		(9,790)	103,115	93,325	(7,925)	34,847	26,922
Transfers between funds		88,396	(88,396)	-	131	(131)	-
Net movement in funds	11	78,606	14,719	93,325	(7,794)	34,716	26,922
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 January 2025		479,970	82,084	562,054	487,764	47,368	535,132
Fund balances at 31 December 2025		558,576	96,803	655,379	479,970	82,084	562,054

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		309,683		236,501
Current assets					
Debtors	16	32,768		26,813	
Cash at bank and in hand		328,086		304,491	
		360,854		331,304	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(15,158)		(5,751)	
Net current assets			345,696		325,553
Total assets less current liabilities			655,379		562,054
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	18		96,803		82,084
Unrestricted funds	19		558,576		479,970
			655,379		562,054

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 23 APRIL 2026

.....

Mr C Burgess
Trustee

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as SARA is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. SARA is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the SARA constitution, the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The accounts are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are set aside by the trustees as a form of Unrestricted Fund, for the purpose of financing future purchases or replacement items.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. In this case income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised when the reclaimed tax is received.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

Grant income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Income from trading activites includes income earned from trading activites to raise funds for the charity.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP. Further detail is given in the Trustee's Annual Report.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes. Interest income is recognised as the charity's right to receive payment is established.

1.5 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions.

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs, and other administrative costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to cost of raising funds and expnditure on charitable activities on a basis consistent with use of resources.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land and buildings	straight line over 25 years
Plant and equipment	straight line over 4 & 5 years

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss.

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

1.11 Investment policy

Current asset investments are short term highly liquid investments and are held at fair value. These include cash on deposit and cash equivalents with a maturity of less than one year.

A subsidiary is an entity controlled by the charity. Control is the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the entity so as to obtain benefits from its activities.

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charity for UK tax purposes.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The only key accounting estimates included in the financial statements relate to the useful lives of the assets and the period over which they are depreciated. The trustees decide the useful life and determine the depreciation rates.

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and gifts	88,070	59,992	148,062	90,667	33,400	124,067
Legacies	-	-	-	24,500	10,000	34,500
Grants	17,900	97,089	114,989	29,247	36,267	65,514
Sponsorships	650	6,500	7,150	2,190	500	2,690
Donated goods and services	830	-	830	8,564	-	8,564
	107,450	163,581	271,031	155,168	80,167	235,335

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Other charitable income						
Fundraising events	69,390	10,876	80,266	77,282	13,667	90,949
Service level agreement	2,000	-	2,000	7,800	-	7,800
	71,390	10,876	82,266	85,082	13,667	98,749

5 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Other income	384	620

6 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	8,662	6,757

7 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	41,613	866
Other income	-	437
	41,613	1,303

8 Expenditure on raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Fundraising and publicity						
Other fundraising costs	10,749	-	10,749	10,460	2,258	12,718

9 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Charitable activities 2025 £	Charitable activities 2024 £
Direct costs		
Depreciation and impairment	55,404	50,619
Fuel	13,843	11,788
Training Costs	14,960	18,928
Insurance	30,792	32,778
Consumables	19,764	18,299
Repairs and maintenance	57,069	72,273
Equipment purchase costs	77,704	60,798
Communications	4,995	9,592
Regulatory Compliance	-	1,057
	274,531	276,132
Share of support and governance costs (see note 10)		
Support	15,728	22,227
Governance	9,623	4,765
	299,882	303,124
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	228,540	246,395
Restricted funds	71,342	56,729
	299,882	303,124

10 Support costs allocated to activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Heat, Light and water	4,580	11,229
Printing, Post and stationary	767	244
Computer costs	1,733	3,329
Travel	610	619
Bank Charges	3,060	2,211
Other Support	2,855	3,375
Rent and Rates	2,123	1,220
Governance costs	9,623	4,765
	25,351	26,992
Analysed between:		
Charitable activities	25,351	26,992

10 Support costs allocated to activities **(Continued)**

Governance costs comprise:	**2025** **£**	**2024** **£**
Accountancy	4,972	4,200
Legal and professional	4,651	565
	9,623	4,765

11 Net movement in funds

	2025 **£**	**2024** **£**
The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Fees payable to the charity's independent examiner:		
- for the independent examination of the charity's financial statements	2,000	2,080
- for other financial services	2,972	2,120
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	55,404	50,619
Profit on disposal of tangible fixed assets	(41,613)	(866)

12 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration, benefits or expenses from the charity during the year.

13 Employees

There were no employees during the year.

14 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxationof Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings	Plant and equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1 January 2025	397,751	1,221,182	1,618,933
Additions	-	129,624	129,624
Disposals	-	(133,033)	(133,033)
At 31 December 2025	397,751	1,217,773	1,615,524
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 January 2025	283,446	1,098,986	1,382,432
Depreciation charged in the year	12,681	42,723	55,404
Eliminated in respect of disposals	-	(131,995)	(131,995)
At 31 December 2025	296,127	1,009,714	1,305,841
Carrying amount			
At 31 December 2025	101,624	208,059	309,683
At 31 December 2024	114,305	122,196	236,501

16 Debtors

	2025	2024
Amounts falling due within one year:	£	£
Trade debtors	483	1,138
Other debtors	8,647	4,690
Prepayments and accrued income	23,638	20,985
	32,768	26,813

17 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	8,658	1,369
Accruals and deferred income	6,500	4,382
	15,158	5,751

18 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 January 2025	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	At 31 December 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Glos OPPC Grant (1)	243	5,000	(4,948)	-	295
Inland water & flood rescue	-	14,339	(13,001)	-	1,338
Cotswold Station Start-up	1,147	-	(1,147)	-	-
Cotswold Station Crew Van	703	-	(8)	-	695
SARA Lifeboat 14 Engine Replacement	3,150	4,182	(2,268)	-	5,064
Sharpness Station Building Maintenance	2,354	1,750	(1,763)	-	2,341
SARA Lifeboat 6 Trailer Replacement	3,129	-	(3,129)	-	-
Other small restricted funds (2)	2,355	3,481	(1,382)	-	4,454
Newport - projects	-	13,400	-	-	13,400
Beachley Launch Tractor & Shed	34,722	29,967	2,000	(20,000)	46,689
Cotswolds Station New 4x4 Vehicle	11,055	-	(2,048)	(8,345)	662
PPE	16,857	34,921	(39,391)	-	12,387
Persimmon Homes Grant (3)	1,856	-	(1,856)	-	-
Mental Health First Aid Training	1,680	-	(163)	-	1,517
Beachley Sara 1 Enginge	-	44,481	-	(39,251)	5,230
Cotswolds - Flood rescue	-	1,135	(869)	-	266
Tewkesbury Station Replacement 4x4	1,680	2,540	-	(3,757)	463
S2/S4 Comms	-	18,617	(502)	(17,043)	1,072
Search Dog Unit	1,153	644	(867)	-	930
	82,084	174,457	(71,342)	(88,396)	96,803

18 Restricted funds **(Continued)**

Previous year:	At 1 January 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	At 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Glos OPPC Grant (1)	1,893	5,000	(6,650)	-	243
Cotswold Station Start-up	5,524	-	(4,377)	-	1,147
Cotswold Station Crew Van	1,741	800	(1,838)	-	703
SARA Lifeboat 14 Engine Replacement	1,150	2,000	-	-	3,150
Sharpness Station Building Maintenance	8,630	-	(6,276)	-	2,354
SARA Lifeboat 6 Trailer Replacement	3,129	-	-	-	3,129
Other small restricted funds (2)	-	7,857	(5,502)	-	2,355
Incident Control Unit Fit-out	7,746	-	(7,746)	-	-
Beachley Launch Tractor & Shed	1,506	37,127	(3,911)	-	34,722
Cotswolds Station New 4x4 Vehicle	250	10,805	-	-	11,055
PPE	8,021	11,412	(2,576)	-	16,857
Persimmon Homes Grant (3)	4,718	-	(2,862)	-	1,856
Mental Health First Aid Training	2,600	-	(920)	-	1,680
Sharpness Station New Pressure Washers	460	-	(388)	(72)	-
Tewkesbury Station Replacement 4x4	-	1,680	-	-	1,680
Estate of Annette Davey - SARA Sharpness	-	5,000	(4,941)	(59)	-
Search Dog Unit	-	1,153	-	-	1,153
Newport Station Replacement 4x4	-	11,000	(11,000)	-	-
	47,368	93,834	(58,987)	(131)	82,084

(1) Annual grant from Office of Police & Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, for equipment and training for land-based search and rescue.

(2) Restricted income amounts under £5,000, which were spent directly for the purposes given.

(3) Grant for technical rescue training and equipment.

Treatment of assets purchased using restricted funds - default position is to unrestrict the funds when the asset is purchased so there are no restrictions on the use of the asset..

These transfers total £88,396 as detailed below:

- £20,000 - Purchase of new tractor
- £8,345 - Purchase of Cotswold 4x4 vehicle
- £39,251 - Replacement of SARA 1 Boat engines
- £3,757 - Replacement of Tewkesbury vehicle
- £17,043 - S2/S4 Helmet communications system

19 Unrestricted funds

The Trustees recognise the important of maintaining the set of boats and vehicles, and ensuring their replacement on a timely basis. To this end of the Major asset fund has been established to aid in this endeavour.

	At 1 January 2025	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	At 31 December 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Major Assets Replacement (1)	120,000	-	(28,778)	18,778	110,000
Tewkesbury Station New Van Fit-out	919	-	(701)	-	218
PPE (3)	-	-	-	20,000	20,000
Beachley Launch Tractor	10,000	-	(10,000)	-	-
Purchase commitments H1 2025 (2)	4,700	-	(4,700)	-	-
Self Sponsored Kit	-	1,164	(1,164)	-	-
General funds	344,351	228,335	(193,947)	49,618	428,358
	479,970	229,499	(239,289)	88,396	558,576

Previous year:	At 1 January 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	At 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Major Assets Replacement (1)	80,000	60,000	(20,000)	-	120,000
Tewkesbury Station New Van Fit-out	1,006	-	(87)	-	919
Upton Station 4x4 Fit-out	4,970	-	(4,970)	-	-
Purchase commitments H1 2024	6,645	-	(6,645)	-	-
PPE	31,000	-	(31,000)	-	-
Beachley Launch Tractor	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Purchase commitments H1 2025 (2)	-	4,700	-	-	4,700
Incident Control Unit Fitout	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
General funds	364,143	164,230	(184,153)	131	344,351
	487,764	248,930	(256,855)	131	479,970

19 Unrestricted funds **(Continued)**

(1) The Major Assets Fund was initiated at the end of 2021 with £50,000 to support this, to be supplemented with other funds specifically raised for these purposes. It is envisaged that the use and replacement of monies within the Major Assets Fund will be an ongoing activity.
In 2025 £28,778 was used to replace Cotswold and Tewksbury vehicles, and the charity has decided to increase the fund to £110,000 at the year end.

(2) Purchases agreed in Q4 2024 but not executed by year-end, this has now been executed in 2025.

(3) The charity has decided to increase the PPE fund to £20,000 at the year end.

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
At 31 December 2025:			
Tangible assets	309,683	-	309,683
Current assets/(liabilities)	248,893	96,803	345,696
	558,576	96,803	655,379

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 December 2024:			
Tangible assets	236,501	-	236,501
Current assets/(liabilities)	243,469	82,084	325,553
	479,970	82,084	562,054

Cash at bank and in hand at the year end was £328,086, of which £96,803 was restricted, and £130,218 designated by the trustees for a particular purpose. This leaves an unrestricted cash balance of £101,065 at the year end date as follows:

	2025 £
Net Assets Above	**655,379**
Less: Fixed Assets in Operational Use	(309,683)
Less: Net Current Assets excluding Cash	(17,610)
Less: Restricted Cash Donated for a Specific Purpose	(96,803)
Less: Designated Cash Committed for a Specific Purpose	(130,218)
Free Unrestricted Cash	**101,065**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

21 Related party transactions

Transactions with related parties
During the year the charity entered into no transactions with related parties.

22 Subsidiaries

Details of the charity's subsidiaries during the year are as follows:

SARA Trading Limited - Registered in England (company number 11820156), incorporated 11 February 2019. The company had no share capital and was limited by guarantee. The charity has given a guarantee of £100, and is the relevant legal entity by virtue of the ability to appoint and remove trustees. The three officers of the company were also trustees of the charity. The company provided commercial training and organised events to raise funds for the charity. The company had net assets at 28 February 2025 of £12 (2024 : £305). The company made no donations to the charity during the year or prior year.

SARA Trading Limited was dissolved on 22 July 2025.

The charity is not required to prepare consolidated accounts.



SARA Lifeboat 1 at speed on the Wye (thanks to Chepstow Camera Club!)

Annex A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks

SARA is a multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue organisation and is the designated rescue service for an area of over 20,000 km^2 on and around the Severn. It provides:

- Lifeboat cover for large parts of the Rivers Severn, Wye, Usk and the Bristol Avon
- Cliff rescue, particularly for the lower Wye Valley climbing areas including Symonds Yat
- Mud rescue
- Swift water and flood rescue
- Land Search

SARA operates from seven rescue stations, at Newport, Chepstow (SARA Beachley), Sharpness, Tewkesbury, Upton-upon-Severn, Kidderminster (SARA Wyre Forest) and at Cirencester (SARA Cotswolds). SARA Crew receive 'callouts' through a combination of dedicated Pagers and through SMS messages using the SARCALL system.

Lifeboats and Mud Rescue

SARA is the designated rescue service for the Rivers Severn, Wye and Usk. The SARA lifeboats, based at Beachley, Sharpness and Newport are tasked by HM Coastguard, largely in response to 999 calls.

The River Severn below Gloucester is used for around 350 commercial ship transits per year, and many more by leisure craft of all types from dinghies and yachts to canal narrow boats and converted freighters and tall ships. The tidal range on the Severn at Beachley, and on the Wye at Chepstow, is 15 metres (the second highest in the World!), which means that the river changes within a few hours from a wide expanse of deep water, to narrow shallow channels weaving through extensive sandbanks.

In addition, the tidal current on the Severn reaches over 12 knots; this can lead to very turbulent river conditions in even a moderate wind. Most of the way to Gloucester the riverbed is very broad, with a narrow and winding navigable channel, marked with numerous buoys, beacons and transits. The margins of all the tidal rivers have wide and thick mudbanks below the high-tide levels, and in places the exposed mud leads out to rocky islands at low tide.

Typical incidents for SARA include vessels grounding or losing power hence requiring urgent assistance to avoid grounding. People have been rescued from islands or ledges where they were being cut off by the tide or actually plucked from the mud. On other occasions boats, and other floating hardware, are broken loose by the water and drift with the fast currents and have to be recovered. On average lifeboats are launched operationally around once a week (50-60 launches per year).

SARA's declared area of lifeboat operations, for which it is tasked by HM Coastguard, is the Severn, north from a line between Newport and Clevedon to Maisemore Weir near Gloucester, and the tributary rivers Wye (to Bigsweir Bridge), Usk (to the M4 Bridge) and the Avon (to Bristol Docks). If required in exceptional circumstances, SARA Lifeboats can extend beyond this area, using a re-fuelling stop at Newport, to operate north of a line from Barry to Weston Super Mare.

The SARA lifeboats area also features several high bridges – notably the M48 Severn Bridge but also the A48 in Chepstow and several in Newport. SARA is often called out to a 'person at risk' on a bridge. The majority, but sadly not all, are resolved directly by the Police. However, a lifeboat is always launched so as to be ready. Recoveries are therefore not uncommon, but SARA has successfully rescued people from the water below a bridge.

Land Search

SARA provides 'land search' capabilities, for missing persons, in support of the Police. SARA works with the Police Forces for Gloucestershire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire (West Mercia Police), and the West Midlands. These Police Forces request SARA support for 'Missing Person' searches in their respective areas, and teams from the various SARA Stations work together as appropriate to the search area location.

Such missing person searches can range in duration from less than an hour to spanning several days and may become 'recovery' rather than rescue operations. SARA is able to deploy one of its two Mobile 'Incident Control Units' (ICUs) to support such searches and other operations; searches are managed from the ICU, which is the focus for liaison with the Police and other agencies. SARA's MoUs with the Police are to assist with any search, in any terrain, for a vulnerable missing person – including urban searches if required.

SARA is also a member (Associate Member since Jan 2021) of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW). Generally, MR teams deploy into mountainous environments (or at least challenging ones); in the SARA area the more technical areas would include the Wye Valley, Forest of Dean, Wyre Forest or Cleeve Hill.

In addition, all neighbouring Search & Rescue and Mountain Rescue teams back each other up, providing mutual aide when required. SARA is frequently involved in operations involving the Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, West Mercia or Longtown teams, and less often Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Central Beacons.

Cliff Rescue

SARA Beachley is a specific base for the Cliff Rescue in the Lower Wye Valley, where the cliffs around Wintours Leap, Symonds Yat and other walls are a popular destination for climbers of all abilities. It is estimated that there are 3,000-4,000 climber-days per year in the Lower Wye Valley. There are also a number of disused quarries in the area, in which accidents involving non-climbers happen.

SARA has an MoU with Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) for effecting cliff rescue operations, and an increasingly close relationship with South Wales FRS (some of the cliffs are on the Welsh side of the Wye). The SARA rope rescue training is based on Rescue3 qualifications, also used by the Fire and Rescue services which facilitates interoperability. SARA has in-house Technician-level instructors.

There is a further close relationship with Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group (GCRG), which also has rope rescue trained personnel and relevant equipment, which are available as required. Conversely SARA is available to provide surface support to cave rescue operations and indeed is integral to the contingency plans for caves such at 'Otter Hole' in the Wye Valley. Rope rescue operations are thankfully rare, but joint exercises are conducted with the FRS and GCRG.

Inland Water and Flood Rescue

Swift Water is defined as 'that moving fast enough to produce sufficient force to present a life and safety hazard to a person entering it'. Operations in inland water are referred to as 'Swiftwater Rescue' or 'SRT' tasks – SRT being 'Swiftwater and Flood Rescue Technician', the national standard for rescuers. Inland water operations are sometimes life-saving rescues, however due to the time-sensitive nature of water incidents these are often search and if necessary, recovery operations. Their initiation is often by a combination of Police, FRS or Coastguard. Dependent on the water concerned, a small boat may be deployed, or a floating platform, in addition to crew directly in shallow water. SARA has the ability to launch such small boats in almost all rivers, with no requirement for slipway or road access to the riverbank. Such small boats are referred to as 'Rescue' boats; SARA prefers rigid rescue boats to reduce the risk of punctures from the use of inflatables.

SARA Swift Water crew are qualified to the national standard, and we have in-house instructors for DEFRA Mod 3 (rescuers) and Mod 4 (boat operators) under the Rescue3 scheme. The Swift Water Teams are also able to deploy on flood rescue operations nationally, as Flood Response Teams. DEFRA, through the National DEFRA Flood Rescue group, coordinate the Flood Response Team deployments nationally. SARA currently has 1 x 'Type B' and 5 x 'Type C' declared teams of 6, shared between its 7 Stations, which need to be ready for deployment anywhere in the country.

First Aid and Casualty Care

All SARA crew are trained, at minimum, in basic first aid. A number of SARA crew are further qualified to the much higher level of 'Remote Rescue Medical Technician' (RRMT, formerly 'Casualty Care') as defined by MREW. In addition, a number of crew are professional paramedics, nurses or serving as Community First Responders.

First aid equipment is carried during all searches and in all SARA vehicles; depending on the nature of the operation, equipment such as Oxygen, portable defibrillators, back- and neck-stabilization boards may be taken into the field.

Education and Training Provision

SARA provides training and education to the wider community through a variety of routes. These include:

1. Emergency Services Training. For the Emergency Services, SARA provides lifeboat training. For example, SARA Beachley has an ongoing relationship with the South West Ambulance Services Trust to provide structured, water-based rescue training for members of their Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART). This provides specialist knowledge, training and experience of working with boats, including in the tidal waters of the Severn Estuary.

2. School Visits. The SARA stations frequently host visits from and undertakes visits to local primary schools, Scouts and Guides Units, etc. These are designed to be educational as well as fun, informing young people of the dangers of the water and other aspects of the local area of which they may be unaware.

3. Outreach Activities. SARA frequently particulates in relevant 'community outreach' activities such as the Drowning Awareness Weeks, again providing education about the avoidance of risks as well as information concerning SARA and other emergency Services.

Event Safety Cover

Most years SARA also provides safety and first aid cover to local outdoor-based events, generally sports related. These are usually events which involve water, and/or off-road running, such as rowing regattas, raft races, triathlons and off-road running races. SARA undertakes this role for several reasons:

1. To support the local community. SARA has historically provided this service at a discount to the notional cost, in order to facilitate and support these local events to a greater extent than alternative organisations would be able to. The number of such races and events supported continues to rise, as local organisations realise the capabilities which SARA can bring to their events.

2. To raise SARA's profile. SARA is usually paid for providing the service, albeit at hugely discounted rates for community groups to enable these to be viable, but for many members of the public spectating, this is an excellent opportunity to see SARA in action.

3. To put SARA's skills into play 'in the field' and provide real-world experience.



Providing safety Cover for a Rowing Regatta, one of many which SARA covers each year

Annex B: Summary of SARA Capabilities

Inland Missing Person Search

- Foot based open-area search, including open area, wooded and steep / very steep terrain
- Able to establish and manage a safe system of work for other services on difficult terrain
- Water search, including from the bank, in the water on foot, on small inflatable craft and on small powered boats
- Field-based search control facility, independent of any infrastructure
- 4x4 vehicles capable of transporting a loaded stretcher to a road
- Search planning, management and record-keeping to Mountain Rescue standards

Water operations

- Boat- and foot-based search and rescue anywhere upstream from the M4 Second Severn Crossing (and below it if needed), at all water levels and all but the most extreme weather conditions
- Tidal water operations compliant with HM Coastguard Rescue Boat Code, with B-Class and D-Class lifeboats. B-Class capable of operating in almost all weathers and rescuing 6 x casualties at a time
- Inland water operations complaint with DEFRA Flood ConOps, with Type B (powered boat all-SRT) teams, all Rescue3 qualified
- Swiftwater teams able to operate in fast and/or shallow inland water by day or night, with and without inflatable rafts & platforms
- Able to launch & recover a small boat almost anywhere
- Water operations interface with land-based teams
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc.

Mud Rescue

- Able to operate on and across the tidal mud in the Severn and Wye Estuaries, whether accessed from the bank or from the water
- Able to extract a casualty from the mud, and transport them up to dry land or down to a boat

Cliff and Steep Ground (Gloucestershire-Based)

- Fully equipped team for working at height and on steeply sloping ground, all Rescue3-qualified.
- Focused on the Wye Valley climbing areas and Cotswolds, deployable across the SARA area
- Able to access and manage casualties, and transport up or down a slope / cliff
- Able to establish and operate off-vertical or horizontal systems eg cableway or high-line (aka Tirolean) systems
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc

Advanced First Aid

- Mountain Rescue-qualified Remote Rescue Medical Technicians (formerly 'Casualty Carers') on all callouts
- Team doctors usually deployed, else available as remote support to RRMTs.
- Provision of Advanced Life Support including use of airways and oxygen
- Management of trauma including spinal injuries
- Use of appropriate basic pain relief medication
- Capable of operating in any terrain, however steep or in water

Command and control

- 24x7 immediate response callout handling team able to discuss potential SARA response and mobilise accordingly
- JESIP-trained Incident Commander ('SARA OIC') deployed as part of any operation, plus team leaders within each operational team
- VHF and Airwave radios
- Land and water teams practiced at working with HMCG helicopter



Land Search Team Training at SARA Cotswolds



And the newly trained – and equipped - Water First Responders at SARA Cotswolds

SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1193634

Accounts

Severn Area Rescue Association
Annual Report and Accounts 2024

SARA



Multi-Disciplinary Volunteer Search and Rescue Team with Fifty Years of Lifeboat Service on the River Severn

Registered Charity CIO 1193634

FOREWORD

I am proud to report that 2024, SARA's 52nd year in operation, saw a record number of 'callouts' across the various disciplines and SARA stations. January again saw significant flooding in Gloucester and Tewkesbury, with many of the local crews assisting with rescue from flood waters and welfare checks. The power of the River Severn is a constant reminder of why SARA was started back in 1973.

There were many wonderful events held across the 7 stations in 2024, with the opportunity for the public to show support and engage with teams of volunteers at open days and fundraisers. These events are essential to SARA's continued operations as they generate significant income for the Charity, which remains a volunteer-only organisation with no central funding. As importantly, however, they are also a great opportunity both to get very close to the crews, their stories and equipment (and even ride on the boats) and for SARA to deliver on one of its key missions - to advance public safety, particularly in and around water

I am pleased to report that the new Board of Trustees has continued to drive the organisation forward, with the development of the excellent '2030 Strategy'. This provides a clear path for the Charity to thrive and excel alongside the professional and other voluntary search and rescue services with which SARA works on a regular basis. As ever, safety of the volunteers and maintaining rescue assets to the highest level are paramount.

I wish the Board, management teams and all the volunteers every success in 2025 and thank you for your continued support.



The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst

In 2024, SARA volunteers attended 150 separate operations:



Contents

	Page No.
Reference & Administrative Details	5
Objectives and Achievements	5
Structure, Governance and Management	6
SARA Overview & Brief History	7
Chair of Trustees Report	10
CEO Report	12
Fundraising	19
Review of Risks	19
Financial Review	22
Independent Examiner's Report	23
Financial Statements	24
Notes to the Financial Statements	26
Appendix A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks	40
Appendix B: 1-Page Summary of SARA Capabilities	44



Reference and Administrative Details

The Severn Area Rescue Association is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. It is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI, with 14 operational boats, of which five are declared lifeboats, and approximately 200 personnel.

Registered Charity CIO Number	1193634
Registered Address	The Lifeboat Station, Beachley, Chepstow, NP16 7HH
Independent Accounts Examiner	Helen Tinsley FCCA, Azets, Wolverhampton
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc

Objectives

The objects of the Association, as stated in its Constitution are:

1. The protection of life and property by the provision and maintenance of a rescue service incorporating both marine operations and land operations) with, in particular, specialist skills in swiftwater / flood, land search, lifeboats, rescue boats, marine rescue and cliff rescue;
2. To assist Government Departments and Agencies and County and Local Authorities in their provision of emergency services; and
3. To advance public education in outdoor safety, particularly in and around water.

The Association is non-profit making, and financed by voluntary contributions, grants from any public or private organisations, and any such fundraising activities or commercial arrangements as the Executive Committee recommends to the Trustees.

The Achievement of the Objects of the Charity

The policies adopted by the Executive Committee during the course of the year have met the objects of the Charity in the following ways:

- Through the Association's 7 rescue stations and one sub-station attending 150 callouts during the year, all tasked by the principal emergency services.
- Through the provision of Water Safety scenarios for schools and other interested groups to raise awareness for everyone, especially children, to become more 'water aware'.
- Through the ongoing provision of recognised training courses held both internally and externally to promote the professionalism of the organisation.

The Trustees have given due regard to the guidance from the Charity Commission on public benefit, and consulted with the emergency services across the relevant area, and are satisfied that the objectives and activities of SARA provide a public benefit.

Structure, Governance and Management

SARA is governed by its Constitution. Certain 'non-executive' powers are reserved for the Board of Trustees with specific powers delegated to the Executive. The Trustees have final overall legal responsibility for the organisation and its governance. Non-Executive Trustees serve for a term of three years, being appointed at the Annual General Meeting; the CEO, Deputy CEO and the CFO are ex-officio Trustees.

The Trustees of the CIO in the year were:

Keith Beckett (Chair of Trustees)
Mark Carwardine (Chief Executive Officer)
Judith Harvey
Ian Morgan
Shaun Egan (Deputy CEO)
Richard Newhouse (CFO)
Gareth Raymond from Nov 2024

The Executive Committee is responsible to the Trustees for the overall running of the association in relation to all financial, safety, legal and operational matters. Its members during the year were:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Mark Carwardine
Deputy CEO	Shaun Egan
Chief Financial Officer	Richard Newhouse
General Executive Officer	David Hill
Fundraising Officer	Joe Challinor from Dec 24
Association Secretary	Ian Roberts to Mar 24, thence Sally Holloway
Beachley Station General Manager	Mark Powell
Newport Station General Manager	Richard Dainty
Tewkesbury Station General Manager	Alan Martin
Sharpness Station General Manager	David Palmer
Upton Station General Manager	David Williams
Wyre Forest Station General Manager	Ian Lofthouse
Cotswolds Station General Manager	John Dutton to Oct 24, thence David Wright

Additional technical and specialist managers were co-opted at the Executive level being:

Executive Land Search Manager	John Dutton
Executive Rope Rescue Officer	Andy Torbet
Executive Inland Water Officer	Matt Davies from Mar 24
Medical Officer	Jon Dallimore
Wellbeing Officer	Kathy Donaldson to Mar 24, thence Martin Holloway
Communications Equipment Manager	Chris Thornton
PR Officer	Richard Newhouse

The Committees for the Beachley, Newport, Tewkesbury, Sharpness, Upton, Cotswolds and Wyre Forest Rescue Stations are responsible for the day-to-day running of each respective Station.

The Operations of the Charity

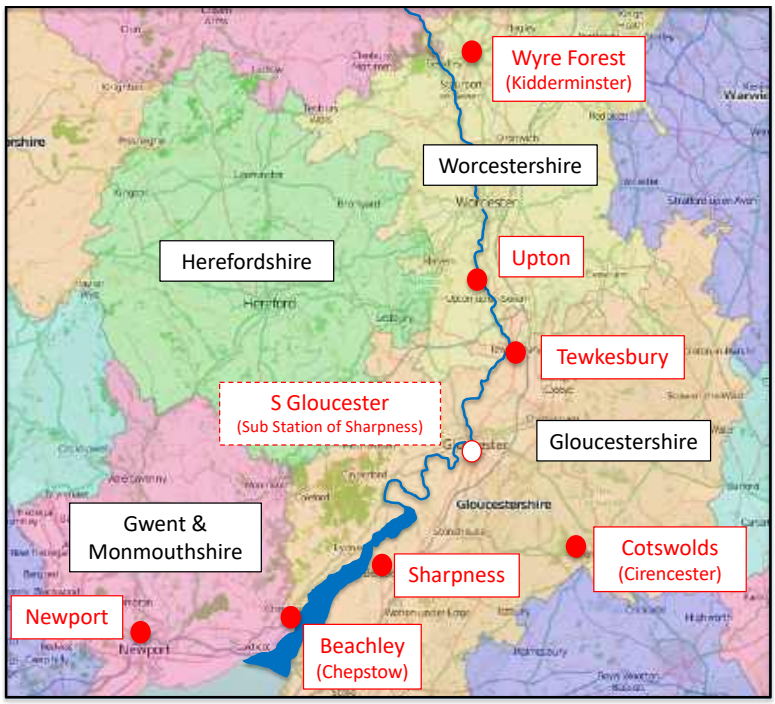
SARA's Mission Statement is:

> To protect life and property through the provision of a professionally trained, specialist rescue service for marine, flood and land search incidents

The principal area of marine operations comprises the Bristol Channel and the Severn, Wye, Avon, and Usk rivers. Typical situations involved vessels suffering breakdown or damage by grounding, becoming lost in severely restricted visibility - a particularly dangerous situation in the tidal Severn - and searching for missing people. As a Lifeboat Organisation, SARA complies with the Rescue Boat Code of Practice (RBCP) and is a founder member of the National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA).

Inland operations extend to the West of England and the Midlands and South-East Wales. SARA is an Associate Member of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and is part of the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA). SARA's technical and flood rescue standards are assured by qualifications from Rescue3Europe, which comply with national standards

SARA works closely with the statutory emergency services – Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance Services, likewise HM Coastguard – also with neighbouring and related volunteer rescue organisations. These particularly include the RNLI at Portishead, Penarth and Barry, the Coastguard helicopter based at St Athan, Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and the South Wales Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA(SW)), to name just a few. There is a strong mutual relationship with Gloucester Cave Rescue (GCRG) whose members often participate in land search operations as integrated search party members. Further details of SARA's operational roles are provided in the Annex.



The SARA Rescue Stations

Why SARA? A Short History!

The inaugural meeting to form the organisation which became SARA was held in 1973, and the charity was formally created in 1976, as 'The Severn Auxiliary Rescue Association'. Its headquarters were at Tutshill - near the current Beachley station. At this time the RNLI did not cover river estuaries, such as the River Severn. There was felt to be a need for rescue organisation responsible for this hazardous stretch of river, particularly following the closure of the Aust Ferry after the opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966. In 1985 SARA also became an official Mountain Rescue Team in the role of Cliff Rescue for the Wye Valley, and SARA Beachley Station was designated as a 'Mountain Rescue Post'.

In 1986 a second station was opened at Sharpness, primarily in response to a tragic loss of life in the Sharpness area and the name of the organisation was amended to what it is today. A station was opened at Wyre Forest in 2004, to cover the upper Severn area. In 2014 Wyre Forest Station moved into the Fire Station at Kidderminster, under a co-hosting arrangement, and in early 2021 moved again into the new Kidderminster Tri-Service 'Emergency Hub' Station.

In 2011, following major flooding, a Joint 'Water Rescue Centre' opened in Tewkesbury, as a strategic alliance between Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service, SARA and Gloucestershire County Council, and the new SARA Tewkesbury Station became SARA's fourth.

For many years, emergencies in Newport were attended to by crew from SARA Beachley. In 2014 an equipment hub was placed in Newport, and in 2015 a base was established at Malpas Fire Station. Following a major bequest, new boats were purchased in 2016 and the Newport Lifeboat Station was established, within the Malpas Fire Station, becoming independent from Beachley in 2019.

The small independent 'Water Emergency Incident Response' (WEIR) team at Upton-upon-Severn elected in 2019 to merge with SARA, forming SARA Upton Station in 2020. SARA's seventh station SARA Cotswolds, based at Cirencester Fire Station, was established in mid-2021 to provide a base for land search in eastern Gloucestershire.



A Missing Person Search Briefing in the Cotswolds





Training in Flood Rescue, from a vehicle in the dark, at Cardiff White Water in October

Chair of Trustees' Report

I am delighted to report that SARA goes from strength to strength, having had a busy and successful 2024. There have been significantly more call-outs this year than last, and this level of support to our communities doesn't happen without the dedicated, professional and enthusiastic members that form the SARA family. I would like to pass on most sincere thanks from the Board of Trustees for the commitment of all our members, whether directly operational or in vital support roles; you are at the heart of our mission and are very much valued for the Service you provide.

The Board of Trustees has seen some personnel changes. Ben Nyland had joined us but, due to personal commitments also had to retire from the Board in 2024. We also recruited Gareth Raymond as a co-opted Trustee who brings significant financial expertise to the non-Executive Board membership; his candidature will be presented to the AGM in March 2025, where I very much hope he will be elected. Additionally, Richard Newhouse had announced that he wished to step back as SARA's CFO. We are lucky to have recruited Chris Burgess to replace Richard. Chris joins us with significant business and financial expertise and his full appointment will also be subject to election at the Mar 25 AGM.

We published the SARA Strategy in 2024. This document sets the direction for SARA over the next 5 years and will be used by the Board to guide and inform decision making.

In accordance with this Strategy, the Board has focussed on SARA's continued financial health, and ensuring that our funds are spent in direct support of our Charitable mission. Our strategy also states that we will ensure that we have the right standard of equipment and facilities to ensure our people are safe and well equipped to deal with the hazardous circumstances they face. So, it is really pleasing that our accounts report a near doubling of spend on the necessary equipment, facilities and repairs, whilst also retaining a healthy overall financial position. I'm also glad to say that our vision of operating very much as 'One SARA' has been guiding the way that this spend has been achieved. 'One SARA' recognises the unique needs of each station and discipline but, also very much recognises the benefits and efficiencies we get by being mutually supportive and coherent.

The Board's focus on safety led to a significant safety exercise being conducted in the Autumn of 2024 at Beachley. This was a great success, in particular because we learnt a lot of valuable lessons and I'm keen that we repeat the format again in 2025, perhaps focussed on a different discipline and station.

Additionally in 2024, the Board supported an expansion of SARA's services to include a dog section and drone capability. Both are in development and not yet 'declared' facilities but, when fully qualified, will add significant value to the SARA overall capability.

Finally, the Board has been supporting the Executive in examining the organisation and governance of SARA to seek an efficient and effective set of arrangements that will properly support SARA's planned scope and scale of activity in the future. These draft arrangements are being concluded and will be presented to the Mar 25 AGM for agreement as they will require some changes to the SARA Constitution.

SARA is a healthy and financially sound Charity that is absolutely focussed on delivering high quality lifesaving and rescue services to the Communities it serves; I look forward to continuing our success and improvements through 2025.

Keith Beckett
Chair of Trustees





Presenting founding Chairman Jim Hewitt with his Certificate for 50 Years' Service



SARA Lifeboat 2 escorts a motor cruiser which had reported an engine fire



Some recently qualified members of Beachley's Land Search Team

CEO Report on 2024

2024 was book-ended by flood response. In February we were in action in Gloucester Tewkesbury, and we were delighted to be invited to meet HRH Duke of Gloucester in Tewkesbury when he came to look at the damage caused by the flooding. Storm FRED in November caused extensive flooding in the Monmouth area. At one point in the Sunday evening we had four flood teams in action at the same time, and then two of those teams were then sent to Yate in South Gloucestershire to assist with the response there.

SARA declares 6 flood rescue teams on the National Asset Register (NAR), more than any other organisation in the country. In December we hosted another of the three yearly Assurance Visits from the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC), who administer the NAR, this time at SARA Sharpness. I am delighted to say that we received another very positive report.





Flood Response operations in Monmouthshire in November

Another highlight of the year was also at Sharpness. On a beautiful evening in July many members from across the organisation were awarded the King's Coronation Medal, recognising 5 or more years of service at the time of King Charles' Coronation in 2023, as shown on the front cover of this report. The medals were presented by our Chairman, and then a BBQ was enjoyed by all.

With 150 callouts last year, 2024 was our busiest since records began. There is rarely any particular pattern, unlike some teams in tourist hotspots, but one factor this year was the increasing number of callouts at Newport. The close relationship between our team in Newport and the local Fire Service is a factor here, and has led to at least one life being saved by our lifeboat. Similarly in Gloucester the team at SARA Sharpness work closely with Fire Service, and there was a successful rescue from the water in May.

Sadly in our area there are a lot of searches which we know will not lead to a rescue, often over several days or over a longer period. During 2024 there were several long-running lifeboat searches in the Severn, the last of which was brought to a conclusion in early 2025. Another in the River Ebbw near Newport had involved a number of stations taking the lead on different days, with multiple searches at different states of the river. The recovery came eventually, towards the end of another

long day of searching, with crews from both Beachley and Newport combining skills to overcome difficult access to the location.

As well as operations in our area, we have provided 'mutual aide; support to Wiltshire Search & Rescue ('WilSAR') on multiple occasions, also to Oxfordshire SAR and Longtown Mountain Rescue Team. And they have supported our operations, both with people and with specialist equipment.

Sometimes a year goes by without any call for our technical rope rescue. This year we had two callouts in close succession on the Wintours Leap cliffs near Chepstow. One was for an injured climber, and sadly one involved a fatality. The many practice sessions we have run with the 'Larkin Frame', which helps to get a stretcher up and over the cliff edge, paid off. A little later there was a search involving a cliff above the River Severn above Gloucester, and the ropes came out again – that time the missing person was found safe somewhere else.

In 2023 we bought the base vehicle for a new Incident Command Unit (ICU), to be based in Gloucestershire. A small, dedicated team worked on that through the winter and early part for 2024, and delivered a stunning result for a fraction of the cost which some other teams have paid. The new ICU(South) was commissioned at a small ceremony at Beachley in September, attended by some key donors, and representatives of important organisations.



The new Incident Control Unit (South)

This year MREW Casualty Carers, our advanced first aiders, became known as 'Remote Rescue Medical Technicians' (RRMTs). A training course for new and re-qualifying RRMTs, jointly run with Avon & Somerset Search & Rescue, culminated in an exam weekend in June, and in a separate course some of our more experienced RRMTs were trained and qualified to formally verify death. This should reduce issues on callouts, particularly the unnecessary involvement of already busy ambulance crews. Later in the year we had the first training in the use of Penthox as a pain relief medicine, following its inclusion in the MREW Drugs Formulary; this will allow us to phase out the use of Entonox.

Participation in 'multi-agency' training, with other volunteer teams and with the emergency services, continued apace. There was a spectacular rope rescue training exercise at Portishead docks, using one of the large cranes, superbly organised by our friends at Prusik Rescue, and a multi-team land

training day in the Forest of Dean, organised by Glos Cave Rescue. In the autumn there was a flurry of flood rescue training exercises at Cardiff White Water Centre, one of which included a session in the evening with the lights off, to practice working in the dark. We hosted Gloucestershire Fire Service at a rope rescue event near Chepstow in the summer, and later they invited us to join in a terrorism-response exercise at the Fire Service College.



One of our RRMTs dealing with several 'exercise casualties' on a multi-agency exercise

We have maintained our strategy of creating and using internal instructors where possible. With the help of a Government (UK SAR) grant we now have two more flood rescue boat operator instructors in addition to our SRT instructors, all with the Rescue3 scheme. At the time of writing we now have 18 such boat operators qualified. We also upskilled our rope rescue instructors, so that we now have four 'Rope Rescue Technician Instructors' and have run our first internal RRT course. On the land search side, 8 search party leaders did the MREW 'Search Planning and Management (SPM1) course, further strengthening our search management capability, and two others attended the annual MREW Party Leader Course in North Wales.

The Search Dog Unit we set up in 2023, affiliated to NSARDA, continues to develop. Training has been intense, and during 2024 2 dogs passed the stock test (providing confidence that they will not chase sheep!) and have been formally accepted as 'Trainee Search Dogs').

I am delighted that the organisation has continued to deliver as much as it has. But it does involve a lot of hard work in the management teams to make it all happen, and really too much falls to too few people, and there are always some vacancies in our management structure. In order to try to increase our efficiency, we have spent quite some time in the latter part of the year considering the setup of our management arrangements. One of the simpler ideas has been to give the rescue stations greater flexibility in how they set up their management committees. Each station differs in its capabilities and in size, so one format definitely does not suit all.

At the SARA level, we realised that we have retained the same Executive Team arrangement that we had with just 2 stations focusing on lifeboat operations, despite now having 7 stations and a much more complex set of operations. After much debate we have now decided to establish a Senior

Leadership Team with a greater range of SARA-level roles. I very much look forward to bedding in the new system during 2025.

I am eternally grateful to all of our team members, both operational and supporting members who are all volunteers, for making all of this possible. Also to those who also serve on the management teams at station and at the association level; very few of who joined SARA to get involved in these matters. And, as always, for the support of their families. Thank you all!

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer





Practising rescue operations in a frozen Upton Marina



A 4x4 Driver Training Course in the Mendips



A Rope Rescue Training Exercise using a crane at Avonmouth Docks



,

And another on Fly Wall in the Wye Valley

Fundraising

SARA raises funds for services through applications to charitable foundations and trusts, bids for appropriate statutory contracts, supported by individual and corporate donations, and community fundraising activities and support.

SARA is registered with the Fundraising Regulator, has a Fundraising Complaints Policy and Procedure and adheres to The Code of Fundraising Practice. Any Fundraising Complaints received by the charity are recorded and acted upon as set out in the procedure. There were no complaints received about fundraising, or any other matters, during 2024.

SARA has no paid fundraisers and does not pay for the services of any fundraising organisation or people.

Review of Risks

The Trustees and Executive Committee conduct an ongoing review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and processes and controls are in place to mitigate those risks.

The Association has Standard Operating Procedures which each member must follow. Whilst SARA is not bound by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (as it is part of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) which is exempt from the above Act), the Trustees' policy is that the Association should use this legislation as 'good practice' for SARA operations.

SARA carries insurance policies to cover health and safety risks, include some insurance cover provided through policies arranged by Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW). The Executive Committee continues to monitor Insurance policies to ensure they are adequate for SARA's purposes.



SARA Lifeboat 3 'Swift and Bold' rescuing ducks on the River Wye at Chepstow, following the annual Great SARA Duck race



Ready for an Open Day at Kidderminster Fire Station



All set for a day of fundraising in the sun



‘Cardboard Dave’ hosting a visit of local Brownies to SARA Upton



SARA Wyre Forest helping Santa to visit their area!

Financial Review

2024 was another strong year for SARA financially, thanks in large part to our generous supporters and hard-working fundraisers. We are particularly grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Police and Crime Commissioners, a number of local charitable funds, and our local councils. Also noteworthy is that we have, finally, opened two investment accounts during the year (with CAF and CCLA). The result of that is the increased interest income this year, at £6.7k.

In December the Board confirmed that an appropriate target level of unrestricted reserves is £100k, roughly 6 months operating costs. We closed the year with just under £87k, though we are anticipating the proceeds from the disposal of several assets in the first half of 2025.

We are holding a large restricted fund which will pay for the new Beachley Launch Tractor (now on order), and the 'shed' to house it (still being designed). We added £60k to the Major Asset Fund, and this has just enabled us to order replacement engines for SARA Lifeboat 1 (now 10 years old), and two new 4x4 vehicles.

Spending this year included two other 4x4 vehicles, to replace older one at our Sharpness and Newport stations. We spent heavily on rescue PPE for our crew, including the £31k which was designated for that purpose at the end of 2023. Some of the other investments are described in the CEO's report.

My thanks to everyone who has helped with the book-keeping, with passing through invoices promptly, with helping to keep costs down and submit spend requests ahead of time. These all make my role easier, and enable me to help ensure that funds are there when we need them, so we can continue to help other people when they need it the most.

I am stepping down as CFO, having done two years officially in the role and several before in contributing to running the finances. I am remaining in SARA as an operational member, and am delighted to be able to hand over to Chris Burgess with the finances in good shape.

Richard Newhouse
Chief Financial Officer





The fleet of Land Search vehicles, on a callout in the summer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SARA

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Severn Area Rescue Association (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2024

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the Trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 financial statements to be reached.



Helen Tinsley FCCA
Azets
First Floor
St David's Court
Union Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 3JE

Dated: 23 May 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	155,168	80,167	235,335	177,931	65,770	243,701
Charitable activities	4	85,082	13,667	98,749	80,804	7,832	88,636
Other trading activities	5	620	-	620	1,279	-	1,279
Investments	6	6,757	-	6,757	1,812	-	1,812
Other income	7	1,303	-	1,303	21,393	-	21,393
Total income		248,930	93,834	342,764	283,219	73,602	356,821
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	8	10,460	2,258	12,718	13,153	-	13,153
Charitable activities	9	246,395	56,729	303,124	227,788	26,912	254,700
Total expenditure		256,855	58,987	315,842	240,941	26,912	267,853
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers		(7,925)	34,847	26,922	42,278	46,690	88,968
Gross transfers between funds		131	(131)	-	40,461	(40,461)	-
Net (expenditure)/income for the year/ Net movement in funds		(7,794)	34,716	26,922	82,739	6,229	88,968
Fund balances at 1 January 2024		487,764	47,368	535,132	405,025	41,139	446,164
Fund balances at 31 December 2024		479,970	82,084	562,054	487,764	47,368	535,132

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	**14**		236,501		247,134
Current assets					
Debtors	**15**	26,813		40,374	
Cash at bank and in hand		304,491		259,600	
		331,304		299,974	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**16**	(5,751)		(11,976)	
Net current assets			325,553		287,998
Total assets less current liabilities			562,054		535,132
Income funds					
Restricted funds	**17**		82,084		47,368
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	**18**	135,619		123,621	
General unrestricted funds		344,351		364,143	
			479,970		487,764
			562,054		535,132

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 23 March 2025

Mr R J Newhouse
Trustee

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as SARA is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. SARA is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the SARA constitution, the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland” (“FRS 102”) and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The accounts are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

The charity is a public benefit entity.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are set aside by the Trustees as a form of Unrestricted Fund, for the purpose of financing future purchases or replacement items.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless perfomance conditions require deferral of the amount. In this case income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covernant is recognised when the reclaimed tax is received.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Grant income is recognised when the chairty is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Income from trading activites includes income earned from trading activites to raise funds for the charity.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP. Further detail is given in the Trustee's Annual Report.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes. Interest income is recognised as the charity's right to receive payment is established.

1.5 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions.

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs, and other administrative costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to cost of raising funds and expnditure on charitable activities on a basis consistent with use of resources.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land and buildings	straight line over 25 years
Plant and equipment	straight line over 4 & 5 years

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

1.11 Investment policy

Current asset investments are short term highly liquid investments and are held at fair value. These include cash on deposit and cash equivalents with a maturity of less than one year.

A subsidiary is an entity controlled by the charity. Control is the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the entity so as to obtain benefits from its activities.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.12 Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charity for UK tax purposes.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The only key accounting estimates included in the financial statements relate to the useful lives of the assets and the period over which they are depreciated. The trustees decide the useful life and determine the depreciation rates.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	90,667	33,400	124,067	60,391	20,325	80,716
Legacies receivable	24,500	10,000	34,500	82,135	-	82,135
Grant Income	29,247	36,267	65,514	31,913	45,445	77,358
Sponsorships	2,190	500	2,690	1,092	-	1,092
Donated goods and services	8,564	-	8,564	2,400	-	2,400
	155,168	80,167	235,335	177,931	65,770	243,701

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable activities 2024 £	Charitable activities 2023 £
Fundraising events	90,949	86,486
Service level agreement	7,800	2,000
Charitable rental income	-	150
	98,749	88,636
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	85,082	80,804
Restricted funds	13,667	7,832
	98,749	88,636

5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Other trading income	620	1,279

6 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Interest receivable	6,757	1,812

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

7 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	866	15,200
Other income	437	6,193
	1,303	21,393

8 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Fundraising and publicity				
Other fundraising costs	10,460	2,258	12,718	13,153
	10,460	2,258	12,718	13,153

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

9 Charitable activities

	Charitable activities 2024 £	Charitable activities 2023 £
Depreciation and impairment	50,619	56,445
Fuel	11,788	15,353
Training	18,928	20,441
Insurance	32,778	36,911
Consumables	18,299	8,953
Repairs and maintenance	72,273	38,235
Equipment purchases	60,798	39,489
Communications	9,592	9,139
Regulatory compliance	1,057	1,081
	276,132	226,047
Share of support costs (see note 10)	22,227	21,875
Share of governance costs (see note 10)	4,765	6,778
	303,124	254,700
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	246,395	227,788
Restricted funds	56,729	26,912
	303,124	254,700

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

10 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2024	Support costs	Governance costs	2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Heat, light and water	11,229	-	11,229	12,970	-	12,970
Printing, postage and stationery	244	-	244	308	-	308
Computer costs	3,329	-	3,329	2,031	-	2,031
Travel costs	619	-	619	219	-	219
Bank charges	2,211	-	2,211	2,566	-	2,566
Other support costs	3,375	-	3,375	2,380	-	2,380
Rent and rates	1,220	-	1,220	1,401	-	1,401
Accountancy fees	-	4,200	4,200	-	6,668	6,668
Legal and professional	-	565	565	-	110	110
	22,227	4,765	26,992	21,875	6,778	28,653
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	22,227	4,765	26,992	21,875	6,778	28,653

Accountancy fees contain costs for the independent examination of £2,080 (2023: £1,950) and other accountancy services of £2,120 (2023: £4,718).

11 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration, benefits or expenses from the charity during the year.

12 Employees

There were no employees during the year.

13 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxationof Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

14 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings	Plant and equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1 January 2024	397,751	1,203,444	1,601,195
Additions	-	40,560	40,560
Disposals	-	(22,822)	(22,822)
At 31 December 2024	397,751	1,221,182	1,618,933
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 January 2024	270,765	1,083,295	1,354,060
Depreciation charged in the year	12,681	37,938	50,619
Eliminated in respect of disposals	-	(22,247)	(22,247)
At 31 December 2024	283,446	1,098,986	1,382,432
Carrying amount			
At 31 December 2024	114,305	122,196	236,501
At 31 December 2023	126,985	120,149	247,134

15 Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	1,138	7,534
Other debtors	4,690	9,803
Prepayments and accrued income	20,985	23,037
	26,813	40,374

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	1,369	5,622
Accruals and deferred income	4,382	6,354
	5,751	11,976

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

17 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

		Movement in funds				Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 January 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 January 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Glos OPPC Grant (1)	1,126	5,000	(4,233)	-	1,893	5,000	(6,650)	-	243
Beachley Station CCTV & Vehicle Radio	2,625	-	(2,423)	(202)	-	-	-	-	-
Cotswold Station Start-up	10,129	419	(434)	(4,590)	5,524	-	(4,377)	-	1,147
Cotswold Station Crew Van	16,984	5,426	-	(20,669)	1,741	800	(1,838)	-	703
SARA Lifeboat 14 Engine Replacement	1,150	-	-	-	1,150	2,000	-	-	3,150
Sharpness Station Building Maintenance	4,996	4,323	(689)	-	8,630	-	(6,276)	-	2,354
SARA Lifeboat 6 Trailer Replacement	3,129	-	-	-	3,129	-	-	-	3,129
Other small restricted funds (2)	1,000	8,141	(9,141)	-	-	7,857	(5,502)	-	2,355
Incident Control Unit Fit-out	-	8,500	(754)	-	7,746	-	(7,746)	-	-
Beachley Launch Tractor & Shed	-	1,506	-	-	1,506	37,127	(3,911)	-	34,722
Cotswolds Station New 4x4 Vehicle	-	250	-	-	250	10,805	-	-	11,055
PPE	-	15,937	(7,916)	-	8,021	11,412	(2,576)	-	16,857
Persimmon Homes Grant (3)	-	5,000	(282)	-	4,718	-	(2,862)	-	1,856
Mental Health First Aid Training	-	2,600	-	-	2,600	-	(920)	-	1,680
Sharpness Station New Pressure Washers	-	1,500	(1,040)	-	460	-	(388)	(72)	-
Upton Station Vehicle Replacement	-	15,000	-	(15,000)	-	-	-	-	-
Tewkesbury Station Replacement 4x4	-	-	-	-	-	1,680	-	-	1,680
Estate of Annette Davey - SARA Sharpness	-	-	-	-	-	5,000	(4,941)	(59)	-
Search Dog Unit	-	-	-	-	-	1,153	-	-	1,153
Newport Station Replacement 4x4	-	-	-	-	-	11,000	(11,000)	-	-
	41,139	73,602	(26,912)	(40,461)	47,368	93,834	(58,987)	(131)	82,084

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

17 Restricted funds **(Continued)**

(1) Annual grant from Office of Police & Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, for equipment and training for land-based search and rescue.

(2) Restricted income amounts under £5,000, which were spent directly for the purposes given. In 2024 this included a £3,500 government grant for Flood Boat Operator instructor training, £2,500 specifically for equipment for Wyre Forest Station and funds a memorial bench at SARA Sharpness.

(3) Grant for technical rescue training and equipment.

Treatment of assets purchased using restricted funds - default position is to unrestrict the asset when purchased and transfer to unrestricted funds.

There have been transfers in the year of the small remaining balances in some of the restricted fund items back into unrestricted funds. These transfers total £131 and are not considered material for the accounts.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

18 Designated funds

The trustees recognise the importance of maintaining the set of boats and vehicles, and ensuring their replacements on a timely basis. To this end a Major Asset Fund has been established to aid in this endeavour.

		Movement in funds			Movement in funds		
	Balance at 1 January 2023	Transfers in	Transfers out	Balance at 1 January 2024	Transfers in	Transfers out	Balance at 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Major Assets Replacement (1)	50,000	54,000	(24,000)	80,000	60,000	(20,000)	120,000
Tewkesbury Station New Van Fit-out	-	26,265	(25,259)	1,006	-	(87)	919
Upton Station 4x4 Fit-out	-	10,000	(5,030)	4,970	-	(4,970)	-
Purchase commitments H1 2024	-	6,645	-	6,645	-	(6,645)	-
PPE	-	31,000	-	31,000	-	(31,000)	-
Beachley Launch Tractor	-	-	-	-	10,000	-	10,000
Purchase commitments H1 2025 (2)	-	-	-	-	4,700	-	4,700
Incident Control Unit Fitout	-	-	-	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
	50,000	127,910	(54,289)	123,621	84,700	(72,702)	135,619

(1) The Major Assets Fund was initiated at the end of 2021 with £50,000 to support this, to be supplemented with other funds specifically raised for these purposes. It is envisaged that the use and replacement of monies within the Major Assets Fund will be an ongoing activity.

(2) Purchases agreed in Q4 2024 but not executed by year-end, target completion by end of Q1 2025.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

19 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Fund balances at 31 December 2024 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	236,501	-	236,501	247,134	-	247,134
Current assets/(liabilities)	243,469	82,084	325,553	240,630	47,368	287,998
	479,970	82,084	562,054	487,764	47,368	535,132

Cash at bank and in hand at the year end was £304,491, of which £82,084 was restricted, and £135,619 designated by the trustees for a particular purpose. This leaves an unrestricted cash balance of £86,788 at the year end date.

20 Related party transactions

Transactions with related parties

During the year the charity entered into no transactions with related parties.

21 Subsidiaries

Details of the charity's subsidiaries at 31 December 2024 are as follows:

SARA Trading Limited - Registered in England (company number 11820156), incorporated 11 February 2019. The company has no share capital and is limited by guarantee. The charity has given a guarantee of £100, and is the relevant legal entity by virtue of the ability to appoint and remove trustees. The three officers of the company are also trustees of the charity. The company provides commercial training and organises events to raise funds for the charity. The company had net assets at 28 February 2024 of £305 (2023 : £13,831). The company made no donations to the charity during the year (2023: £18.500).

The charity is not required to prepare consolidated accounts.

22 Contingent liability

As referred to in note 21, in the unlikely event of the subsidiary company SARA Trading Limited being wound up, the charity have guaranteed a payment of £100.

Annex A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks

SARA is a multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue organisation and is the designated rescue service for an area of over 20,000 km^2 on and around the Severn. It provides:

- Lifeboat cover for large parts of the Rivers Severn, Wye, Usk and the Bristol Avon*
- Cliff rescue, particularly for the lower Wye Valley climbing areas including Symonds Yat
- Mud rescue
- Swift water and flood rescue
- Land Search

SARA operates from seven rescue stations, at Newport, Chepstow (SARA Beachley), Sharpness, Tewkesbury, Upton-upon-Severn, Kidderminster (SARA Wyre Forest) and at Cirencester (SARA Cotswolds). SARA Crew receive 'callouts' through a combination of dedicated Pagers and through SMS messages using the SARCALL system.

Lifeboats and Mud Rescue

SARA is the designated rescue service for the Rivers Severn, Wye and Usk. The SARA lifeboats, based at Beachley, Sharpness and Newport are tasked by HM Coastguard, largely in response to 999 calls.

The River Severn below Gloucester is used for around 350 commercial ship transits per year and the lower Wye around 150. The Severn also has over 500 registered leisure craft transits between Gloucester and Sharpness alone each year, and many more that are not counted. The tidal range on the Severn at Beachley, and on the Wye at Chepstow, is 15 metres (the second highest in the World!), which means that the river changes within a few hours from a wide expanse of deep water, to narrow shallow channels weaving through extensive sandbanks.

In addition, the tidal current on the Severn reaches 12 knots; this can lead to very turbulent river conditions in even a moderate wind. Most of the way to Gloucester the riverbed is very broad, with a narrow and winding navigable channel, marked with numerous buoys, beacons and transits. The margins of all the tidal rivers have wide and thick mudbanks below the high-tide levels, and in places the exposed mud leads out to rocky islands at low tide.

Typical incidents for SARA include vessels grounding, or losing power hence requiring urgent assistance to avoid grounding. People have been rescued from islands or ledges where they were being cut off by the tide, or actually plucked from the mud. On other occasions boats, and other floating hardware, are broken loose by the water and drift with the fast currents and have to be recovered. On average lifeboats are launched operationally around once a week (50-60 launches per year).

*SARA's declared area of lifeboat operations, for which it is tasked by HM Coastguard, is the Severn, north from a line between Newport and Clevedon to Maisemore Weir near Gloucester, and the tributary rivers Wye (to Bigsweir Bridge), Usk (to the M4 Bridge) and the Avon (to Bristol Docks). If required in exceptional circumstances, SARA Lifeboats can extend beyond this area, using a re-fuelling stop at Newport, to operate north of a line from Barry to Weston Super Mare.

The SARA lifeboats area also features several high bridges – notably the M48 Severn Bridge but also the A48 in Chepstow and several in Newport. SARA is often called out to a 'person at risk' on a bridge. The majority, but sadly not all, are resolved directly by the Police. However, a lifeboat is always launched so as to be ready. Recoveries are therefore not uncommon, but SARA has successfully rescued people from the water below a bridge.

Land Search

SARA provides land search capabilities in support of the Police. SARA has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in place with the Police Forces for Gloucestershire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, the West Midlands, Shropshire, West Mercia and Warwickshire. These Police Forces request SARA support for 'Missing Person' searches in their respective areas, and teams from the various SARA Stations work together as appropriate to the search area location.

Such missing person searches can range in duration from less than an hour to spanning several days and may become 'recovery' rather than rescue operations. SARA is able to deploy one of its two Mobile 'Incident Control Units' (ICUs) to support such searches and other operations; searches are managed from the ICU, which is the focus for liaison with the Police and other agencies. SARA's MoUs with the Police are to assist with any search, in any terrain, for a vulnerable missing person – including urban searches if required.

SARA is also a member (Associate Member since Jan 2021) of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW). Generally, MR teams deploy into mountainous environments (or at least challenging ones); in the SARA area the more technical areas would include the Wye Valley, Forest of Dean, Wyre Forest or Cleeve Hill.

In addition, all neighbouring Search & Rescue and Mountain Rescue teams back each other up, providing mutual aide when required. SARA is frequently involved in operations involving the Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, West Mercia or Longtown teams, and less often Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Central Beacons.

Cliff Rescue

SARA Beachley is a specific base for the Cliff Rescue in the Lower Wye Valley, where the cliffs around Wintours Leap, Symonds Yat and other walls are a popular destination for climbers of all abilities. It is estimated that there are 3,000-4,000 climber-days per year in the Lower Wye Valley. There are also a number of disused quarries in the area, in which accidents involving non-climbers happen.

SARA has an MoU with Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) for effecting cliff rescue operations, and an increasingly close relationship with South Wales FRS (some of the cliffs are on the Welsh side of the Wye). The SARA rope rescue training is based on Rescue3 qualifications, also used by the Fire and Rescue services which facilitates interoperability. SARA has in-house Technician-level instructors.

There is a further close relationship with Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group (GCRG), which also has rope rescue trained personnel and relevant equipment, which are available as required. Conversely SARA is available to provide surface support to cave rescue operations, and indeed is integral to the contingency plans for caves such at 'Otter Hole' in the Wye Valley. Rope rescue operations are thankfully rare, but joint exercises are conducted with the FRS and GCRG.

Inland Water and Flood Rescue

Swift Water is defined as 'that moving fast enough to produce sufficient force to present a life and safety hazard to a person entering it'. Operations in inland water' are referred to as 'Swiftwater Rescue' or 'SRT' tasks and include life-saving rescue. However, due to the time-sensitive nature of water incidents these are often search and if necessary, recovery operations. Their initiation is often by a combination of Police, FRS or Coastguard. Dependent on the water concerned, a small boat may be deployed, or a floating platform, in addition to crew directly in shallow water. SARA has the ability to launch such small boats in almost all rivers, with no requirement for slipway or road access to the riverbank. Such small boats are referred to as 'Rescue' boats; SARA prefers rigid rescue boats to reduce the risk of punctures from the use of inflatables.

SARA Swift Water crew are qualified to the national standard, and we have in-house instructors for DEFRA Mod 3 (rescuers) and Mod 4 (boat operators) under the Rescue3 scheme. The Swift Water Teams are also able to deploy on flood rescue operations nationally, as Flood Response Teams. DEFRA, through the National DEFRA Flood Rescue group, coordinate the Flood Response Team deployments nationally. SARA has 2 x 'Type B' and 4 x 'Type C' declared teams of 7, shared between its 7 Stations, which need to be ready for deployment anywhere in the country. SARA has a proven track record of deploying around the UK on such incidents including Essex (2014), Devon (2014) and Yorkshire (2015/16).

First Aid and Casualty Care

All SARA crew are trained, at minimum, in basic first aid. A number of SARA crew are further qualified to the much higher level of 'Casualty Care' as defined by MREW. In addition, a number of crew are professional paramedics, nurses or serving as Community First Responders.

First aid equipment is carried during all searches and in all SARA vehicles; depending on the nature of the operation, equipment such as Oxygen, portable defibrillators, back- and neck-stabilization boards may be taken into the field.

Education and Training Provision

SARA provides training and education to the wider community through a variety of routes. These include:

1. Emergency Services Training. For the Emergency Services, SARA provides lifeboat training. For example, SARA Beachley has an ongoing relationship with the South West Ambulance Services Trust to provide structured, water-based rescue training for members of their Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART). This provides specialist knowledge, training and experience of working with boats, including in the tidal waters of the Severn Estuary.

2. School Visits. The SARA stations frequently host visits from and undertakes visits to local primary schools, Scouts and Guides Units, etc. These are designed to be educational as well as fun, informing young people of the dangers of the water and other aspects of the local area of which they may be unaware.

3. Outreach Activities. SARA frequently particulates in relevant 'community outreach' activities such as the Drowning Awareness Weeks, again providing education about the avoidance of risks as well as information concerning SARA and other emergency Services.

Event Safety Cover

Most years SARA also provides safety and first aid cover to local outdoor-based events, generally sports related. These are usually events which involve water, and/or off-road running, such as rowing regattas, raft races, triathlons and off-road running races. SARA undertakes this role for several reasons:

1. To support the local community. SARA has historically provided this service at a discount to the notional cost, in order to facilitate and support these local events to a greater extent than alternative organisations would be able to. The number of such races and events supported continues to rise, as local organisations realise the capabilities which SARA can bring to their events.

2. To raise SARA's profile. SARA is usually paid for providing the service, albeit at hugely discounted rates for community groups to enable these to be viable, but for many members of the public spectating, this is an excellent opportunity to see SARA in action.

3. To put SARA's skills into play 'in the field' and provide real-world experience.



Providing safety Cover for a Rowing Regatta, one of many which SARA covers each year

Annex B: Summary of SARA Capabilities

Inland Missing Person Search

- Foot based open-area search, including open area, wooded and steep / very steep terrain
- Able to establish and manage a safe system of work for other services on difficult terrain
- Water search, including from the bank, in the water on foot, on small inflatable craft and on small powered boats
- Field-based search control facility, independent of any infrastructure
- 4x4 vehicles capable of transporting a loaded stretcher to a road
- Search planning, management and record-keeping to Mountain Rescue standards

Water operations

- Boat- and foot-based search and rescue anywhere upstream from the M4 Second Severn Crossing (and below it if needed), at all water levels and all but the most extreme weather conditions
- Tidal water operations compliant with HM Coastguard Rescue Boat Code, with B-Class and D-Class lifeboats. B-Class capable of operating in almost all weathers and rescuing 6 x casualties at a time
- Inland water operations complaint with DEFRA Flood ConOps, with Type B (powered boat all-SRT) teams, all Rescue3 qualified
- Swiftwater teams able to operate in fast and/or shallow inland water by day or night, with and without inflatable rafts & platforms
- Able to launch & recover a small boat almost anywhere
- Water operations interface with land-based teams
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc.

Mud Rescue

- Able to operate on and across the tidal mud in the Severn and Wye Estuaries, whether accessed from the bank or from the water
- Able to extract a casualty from the mud, and transport them up to dry land or down to a boat

Cliff and Steep Ground (Gloucestershire-Based)

- Fully equipped team for working at height and on steeply sloping ground, all Rescue3-qualified.
- Focused on the Wye Valley climbing areas and Cotswolds, deployable across the SARA area
- Able to access and manage casualties, and transport up or down a slope / cliff
- Able to establish and operate off-vertical or horizontal systems eg cableway or high-line (aka Tirolean) systems
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc

Advanced First Aid

- Mountain Rescue-qualified Remote Rescue Medical Technicians (formerly ‘Casualty Carers’) on all callouts
- Team doctors usually deployed, else available as remote support to RRMTs.
- Provision of Advanced Life Support including use of airways and oxygen
- Management of trauma including spinal injuries
- Use of appropriate basic pain relief medication
- Capable of operating in any terrain, however steep or in water

Command and control

- 24x7 immediate response callout handling team able to discuss potential SARA response and mobilise accordingly
- JESIP-trained Incident Commander (‘SARA OIC’) deployed as part of any operation, plus team leaders within each operational team
- VHF and Airwave radios
- Land and water teams practiced at working with HMCG helicopter

In Memory



Hugh Inwood, who passed away in January 2024



The Memorial Bench, at SARA Sharpness

SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1193634

Accounts

Severn Area Rescue Association
Annual Report and Accounts 2023

SARA



Multi-Disciplinary Volunteer Search and Rescue Team with Fifty Years of Lifeboat Service on the River Severn

Registered Charity CIO 1193634

FOREWORD

In 2023, SARA celebrated its 50th anniversary with a celebratory reception held in our home at Cirencester Park, attended by the local community, including business leaders and key stakeholders.

As well as looking forward to a positive future, it was a time to reflect upon the journey the organisation has taken over the last 50 years. It was a wonderful opportunity to take a look at the many facets of SARA capabilities. With a display of some of the rescue crafts and vehicles, it gave guests the chance to ask the crews about the work they carry out as volunteers.

SARA has gone from strength to strength in the last 12 months. My personal highlight was in May, with the official opening of the new rescue station here in Cirencester, which has come about after a year of hard work and fundraising. Improving response times across the county, widening the net for recruitment, and providing specialist land search and rope rescue capability, this new station is already proving its worth in supporting our communities.

Another year of search and rescue on land and water has taken its toll on equipment, and in the 12 months ahead boats, vehicles and safety equipment will all require replacement. It is so important we never rest on our laurels and I am sure you will join me in continuing your wonderful support of SARA by getting behind the exciting fundraising events planned 2024.



The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst



In 2023, SARA volunteers attended 107 separate operations:



Contents

	Page No.
Reference & Administrative Details	5
Objectives and Achievements	5
Structure, Governance and Management	6
SARA Overview & Brief History	7
Chair of Trustees Report	10
CEO Report	12
Financial Review	20
Review of Risks	21
Fundraising	22
Independent Examiner's Report	23
Financial Statements	24
Notes to the Financial Statements	26
Appendix A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks	35
Appendix B: 1-Page Summary of SARA Capabilities	39



SARA Lifeboat 3 'Swift and Bold' heads up the River Wye, under Chepstow Town Bridge

Reference and Administrative Details

The Severn Area Rescue Association is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. It is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI, with 14 operational boats, of which five are declared lifeboats, and approximately 200 personnel.

Registered Charity CIO Number	1193634
Registered Address	The Lifeboat Station, Beachley, Chepstow, NP16 7HH
Independent Accounts Examiner	Jane Swann BA(Hons) BFP FCA , Azets, Stourbridge
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc

Objectives

The objects of the Association, as stated in its Constitution are:

1. The protection of life and property by the provision and maintenance of a rescue service incorporating both marine operations and land operations) with, in particular, specialist skills in swiftwater/flood, land search, lifeboats, rescue boats, marine rescue and cliff rescue;
2. To assist Government Departments and Agencies and County and Local Authorities in their provision of emergency services; and
3. To advance public education in outdoor safety, particularly in and around water.

The Association is non-profit making, and financed by voluntary contributions, grants from any public or private organisations, and any such fundraising activities or commercial arrangements as the Executive Committee recommends to the Trustees.

The Achievement of the Objects of the Charity

The policies adopted by the Executive Committee during the course of the year have met the objects of the Charity in the following ways:

- Through the Association's 7 rescue stations and one sub-station attending 107 callouts during the year, all tasked by the principal emergency services.
- Through the provision of Water Safety scenarios for schools and other interested groups to raise awareness for everyone, especially children, to become more 'water aware'.
- Through the ongoing provision of recognised training courses held both internally and externally to promote the professionalism of the organisation.

The Trustees have given due regard to the guidance from the Charity Commission on public benefit, and consulted with the emergency services across the relevant area, and are satisfied that the objectives and activities of SARA provide a public benefit.

Structure, Governance and Management

SARA is governed by its Constitution. Certain 'non-executive' powers are reserved for the Board of Trustees with specific powers delegated to the Executive. The Trustees have final overall legal responsibility for the organisation and its governance. Non-Executive Trustees serve for a term of three years, being appointed at the Annual General Meeting; the CEO, Deputy CEO and the CFO are ex-officio Trustees.

The Trustees of the CIO in the year were:

Keith Beckett (Chair of Trustees)	
Mark Carwardine (Chief Executive Officer)	
Judith Harvey	
Ian Morgan	
Shaun Egan (Deputy CEO)	
Ian Jarvis (Chief Finance Officer)	Until 31 January 2023
Mervyn Fleming	Until 11 May 2023
Alan Stanley	Until 11 May 2023
John Cairns	Until 11 May 2023
Vanessa Powell	Until 21 September 2023

Richard Newhouse was appointed as CFO on 17 Feb 2023 and as a Trustee 11 May 2023

The Executive Committee is responsible to the Trustees for the overall running of the association in relation to all financial, safety, legal and operational matters. Its members during the year were:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Mark Carwardine
Deputy CEO	Shaun Egan
Chief Financial Officer	Ian Jarvis to Jan 23, thence Richard Newhouse
Association Secretary	Ian Roberts
Beachley Station General Manager	Lee Morris to April 2023
Newport Station General Manager	Richard Dainty
Tewkesbury Station General Manager	Matt Gardner to March 2023, thence Rich Young to Nov 2023
Sharpness Station General Manager	David Palmer
Upton Station General Manager	Peter Sherwood
Wyre Forest Station General Manager	Ian Lofthouse
Cotswolds Station General Manager	John Dutton

Additional technical and specialist managers were co-opted at the Executive level being:

Executive Land Search Manager	John Dutton
Executive Rope Rescue Officer	Andy Torbet
Medical Officer	Jon Dallimore
Wellbeing Officer	Kathy Donaldson
IT Manager	Rob Jervis
Communications Equipment Manager	Chris Thornton
PR Officer	Richard Newhouse
Executive Finance Manager	Helen Morris to Aug 2023

The Committees for the Beachley, Newport, Tewkesbury, Sharpness, Upton, Cotswolds and Wyre Forest Rescue Stations are responsible for the day-to-day running of each respective Station.

The Operations of the Charity

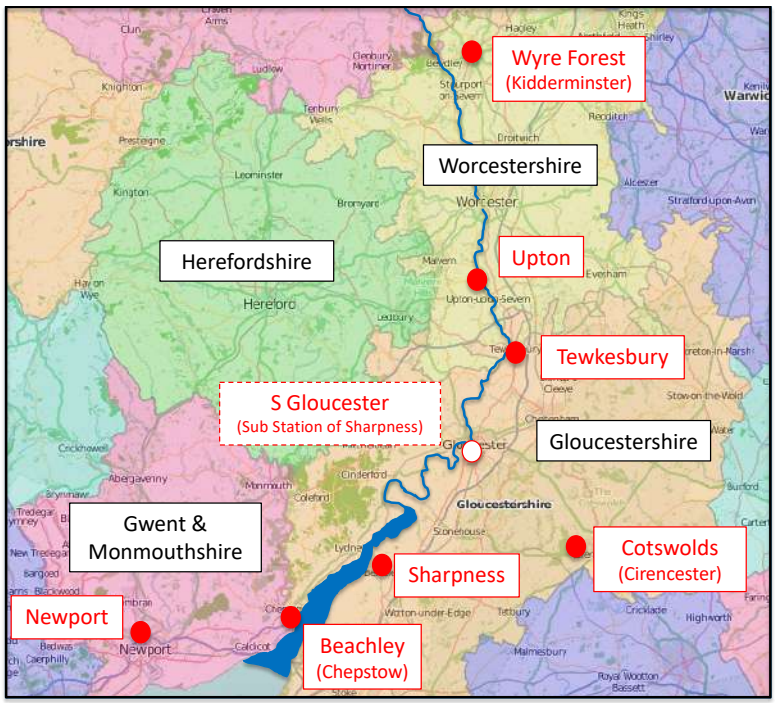
SARA's Mission Statement is:

> To protect life and property through the provision of a professionally trained, specialist rescue service for marine, flood and land search incidents

The principal area of marine operations comprises the Bristol Channel and the Severn, Wye, Avon, and Usk rivers. Typical situations involved vessels suffering breakdown or damage by grounding, becoming lost in severely restricted visibility - a particularly dangerous situation in the tidal Severn - and searching for missing people. As a Lifeboat Organisation, SARA complies with the Rescue Boat Code of Practice (RBCP) and is a founder member of the National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA).

Inland operations extend to the West of England and the Midlands and South-East Wales. SARA is an Associate Member of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and is part of the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA). SARA's technical and flood rescue standards are assured by qualifications from Rescue3Europe, which comply with national standards

SARA works closely with the statutory emergency services – Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance Services, likewise HM Coastguard – also with neighbouring and related volunteer rescue organisations. These particularly include the RNLI at Portishead, Penarth and Barry, the Coastguard helicopter based at St Athan, Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and both the South Wales Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA(SW)), to name just a few. There is a strong mutual relationship with Gloucester Cave Rescue (GCRG) whose members often participate in land search operations as integrated search party members. Further details of SARA's operational roles are provided in the Annex.



The SARA Rescue Stations

Why SARA? A Short History!

The inaugural meeting to form the organisation which became SARA was held in 1973, and the charity was formally created in 1976, as 'The Severn Auxiliary Rescue Association'. Its headquarters were at Tutshill - near the current Beachley station. At this time the RNLI did not cover river estuaries, such as the River Severn. There was felt to be a need for rescue organisation responsible for this hazardous stretch of river, particularly following the closure of the Aust Ferry after the opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966. In 1985 SARA also became an official Mountain Rescue Team in the role of Cliff Rescue for the Wye Valley, and SARA Beachley Station was designated as a 'Mountain Rescue Post'.

In 1986 a second station was opened at Sharpness, primarily in response to a tragic loss of life in the Sharpness area and the name of the organisation was amended to what it is today. A station was opened at Wyre Forest in 2004, to cover the upper Severn area. In 2014 Wyre Forest Station moved into the Fire Station at Kidderminster, under a co-hosting arrangement, and in early 2021 moved again into the new Kidderminster Tri-Service 'Emergency Hub' Station.

In 2011, following major flooding, a Joint 'Water Rescue Centre' opened in Tewkesbury, as a strategic alliance between Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service, SARA and Gloucestershire County Council, and the new SARA Tewkesbury Station became SARA's fourth.

For many years, emergencies in Newport were attended to by crew from SARA Beachley. In 2014 an equipment hub was placed in Newport, and in 2015 a base was established at Malpas Fire Station. Following a major bequest, new boats were purchased in 2016 and the Newport Lifeboat Station was established, within the Malpas Fire Station, becoming independent from Beachley in 2019.

The small independent 'Water Emergency Incident Response' (WEIR) team at Upton-upon-Severn elected in 2019 to merge with SARA, forming SARA Upton Station in 2020. SARA's seventh station SARA Cotswolds, based at Cirencester Fire Station, was established in mid-2021 to provide a base for land search in eastern Gloucestershire.



The Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper MP, and his team, are briefed on what not to touch, before being taken out on SARA Lifeboat 1 during a visit in connection with World Drowning Prevention Day, in August



One of the SARA Team Doctors training in the Wye Valley



Taking visitors from HM Coastguard out on a lifeboat for a familiarisation trip

Chair of Trustees' Report

For the Board of Trustees, 2023 has been a year of exploration, understanding and analysis, coupled with supporting improvements and strategy development. As the year ends, it is great to be able to report that SARA completes its 50th year of rescue services to the Community in a very healthy, vibrant and active state.

Most importantly, SARA has been as in-demand as ever; reacting professionally to the rescue demands set by our tasking authorities and providing much needed rescue support to the public. A wide breadth of fundraising activity has meant that SARA ends the year in a healthy financial state and the Trustees are very grateful to all who spend time, energy and effort to drive this success. A robust balance sheet also allows for some much-needed investments, and both the Board and Executive Committee are keen to continue to make more improvements. This will require continued focus on our income, and we are keen to recruit further support in this area, particularly a Fundraising Officer to sit on the Executive Committee.

Outreach to our Tasking Authorities this year has provided demonstrable underpinning of the need for SARA's services, and has also provided the evidence that we are focused on provision of the right rescue services. This is an important demonstration that we continue to meet our Charitable Objectives and drives our future Mission and Purpose.

I am very grateful to our Patron, Lady Bathurst for her continued strong support to SARA, both at our events and in particular, for opening her home to host a 50th year celebration where we thanked our supporters and recruited some more.

Looking forward to 2024, the Board is ambitious to continue support the Members and make further improvements. We are convinced that we will be stronger acting as 'One SARA' and this will be a consistent theme. We will publish our Strategy that will define the organisation that we aspire to be, and will guide decision making through to 2030. To achieve our aims, we will strengthen the experience and contribution available to both the Board and the Executive Committee by seeking to broaden the support to the vital non-operational aspects of SARA.
Now, in 2024, we will learn from our exploration and analysis, and move to driving even greater delivery of improvements and to strengthen SARA's capability to be successful for the long-term

Finally, the Trustees are proud of what SARA has achieved this year and pass on our heartfelt thanks and admiration to all of our members who, after all, are the people that make this success possible.

Keith Beckett
Chair of Trustees







The Formal Opening of SARA Cotswolds Station, by Lady Bathurst, in May

CEO Report on 2023

2023 was a good year for SARA, with further progress as an organisation and a continued need for our skills and capabilities in our areas of operation. However, as I write this I am conscious that 2024 started very sadly for us all.

Early in January we were learned of the death of John Cairns, who had been the chairman of SARA Wyre Forest for a time and, until quite recently, a trustee of the organisation. Only a few days later, we were again devastated to learn of the death of Hugh Inwood who was serving as the deputy general manager of SARA Sharpness Lifeboat Station. Hugh had been a member for five years and his passing leaves a huge void in the organisation.

I am of course very grateful to both for their contributions to SARA, and our thoughts and best wishes as an organisation are with their families.



John Cairns



Hugh Inwood

In addition to John Cairns, both Jim Hewitt and Alan Stanley stood down as Trustees at the 2023 AGM. I would like to pay tribute to them, to Alan Palmer who also stood down in 2022 for personal reasons, and to others who served as Trustees in recent years. Their long dedication to SARA has been truly remarkable and hugely valued.

I would also like to thank Vanessa Powell and Belinda Johnson for their contributions. Vanessa joined us in 2022 as a non-executive Trustee, and Belinda as the Executive Fundraising Officer; both were obliged to stand down during 2023 for personal reasons and we wish them both well.

2023 was the year in which we celebrated our 50th anniversary, since the initial meetings of the organisation in 1973 which later became SARA. There were a number of press engagements and interviews throughout the year, most notably those on BBC Points West and ITV West, headed up by our founding chairman Jim Hewitt. We also held an Anniversary reception in October, hosted by our patron Lady Bathurst who was kind enough to host the reception at her family home in Cirencester. The evening allowed us to host both senior stakeholders of the emergency organisations that we support and potential future sponsors, sharing information on our mission, resources, skills and capabilities.

To mark the 50th anniversary the Trustees also initiated a new award named after our founder, ‘The Jim Hewitt Award for Exceptional Endeavour in Search and Rescue’. The first such award was presented to the crew of SARA Lifeboat 3 from Beachley who had used their initiative to search for, and subsequently rescue, a kayaker in great difficulty whilst they were engaged on another search in the lower part of the Severn Estuary in August.

A further highlight of 2023 was the formal opening of our station in Cirencester, SARA Cotswolds. A sunny summer morning saw a significant group assemble for speeches from Lady Bathurst, our Chairman Keith Beckett and the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire Police; and included a demonstration of our rope rescue capability. I'm very grateful to our general manager John Dutton and his team for their hard work in getting SARA Cotswolds off the ground, and operating as a fully functioning base for search and rescue in eastern Gloucestershire.

Our search and rescue services have been in demand this year as much as ever, with our callout count again exceeding 100. There is rarely any discernible pattern to these incidents, with the three callouts to the Wye Valley cliffs occurring within just a few weeks of each other. As was the case in these incidents, many of the casualties we deal with go on to make full recoveries, and the callouts have a happy ending.

That was even the case at the end of a long evening in June, which saw an inland water rescue team and a lifeboat working with fire service colleagues to rescue a cow from the tidal River Wye. The lifeboat ended up beached and incredibly muddy but the cow was reunited with her calf and the farmer was very happy!



Rescuing a cow from the tidal River Wye



Launching for a search near Hereford

Our Sharpness lifeboats assisted various sailing boats who had either mechanical issues requiring a tow to safety, or had slightly misjudged the rate of falling tides in particularly sandy areas of the river and needed a rescue to safety before returning to their vessels in time to refloat with the next high tide.

We of course continue our flood responses where necessary and have been recognised in the media for this work assisting those unfortunate enough to be affected.

However, as with every year, our volunteers also deal with fatalities and I am proud of the professionalism which they display. The teams' involvement with the tragic death of a teenager at Lechlade at the end of April was one of our most difficult callouts of the year, but by no means the only one.

I am grateful for the hard work of our Wellbeing team in supporting team members involved in these callouts, and I was delighted that towards the end of the year we secured a grant to enable some of them to be formally trained as instructors in Mental Health First Aid.

This year we conducted a review of our activities with each of our tasking authorities which proved extremely useful. The Coastguard, who oversee our lifeboat operations, successfully conducted very formal 'declared facility reviews 'of our stations at Beachley and Sharpness and were both impressed and pleased to be able to continue our work with them.

The need for an in-house search dog capability has been evident for some years since on many searches we rely on search dogs brought in from other teams - in many cases from considerable distances. As a result of much hard work by a small team, we formally established a dog unit towards the end of last year, accredited to NSARDA (the National Search and Rescue Dogs Association). At the time of writing we have 4 search dogs (and their handlers) going through training in order to become fully accredited to national standards.

It's been a long standing part of our strategy to train our volunteers in-house as much as we can, and last year I was delighted that we qualified three additional instructors in swift-water rescue and an additional instructor in rope rescue. As I write this I know that they are all planning training courses for other volunteers.

As well as our own training, we train with other search and rescue teams as much as we can. We participated in a major exercise run by Wiltshire SAR, and in fact another has just taken place in February. Two parties of swift-water rescuers from across SARA joined multi-agency training at Cardiff White Water Centre, and a rope rescue team participated in a different multi-agency session in a quarry in the Mendips, and at the end of September we enjoyed a two-day SWERA training weekend.



A joint rope rescue exercise with Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service

Our vehicle fleet saw quite a rotation in 2023. We finally replaced an old Landrover at SARA Upton (with significant support from The Turner Trust) and the old crew van at SARA Tewksbury. We bought a new crew van for SARA Cotswolds - which is the first vehicle for that station - as a result of their significant fund raising efforts. In September we bought a base vehicle for the next Incident Control Unit, replacing a second-hand unit we bought in 2015. It has just entered service, and is a huge credit to the team who designed the interior and fitted it out, much of it themselves. We are very grateful to the Office of the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, and other private donors, for their support with this project.



The new SARA Mobile 14, launching a boat at Upton Marina

This year there has been a huge amount of energy going into fundraising events. The SARA Sharpness open day in August is always popular and this year raised in excess of £7000, and in September we successfully held the Wild Wye Swim where once again entrants swam up to 10.5 kilometres down the River Wye, with SARA providing safety cover all the way. We raised around £15,000 from that day. There have been dozens of collection events, a sponsored abseil, our members have been sponsored to walk the Jurassic Coast and to Everest Base Camp, and our friends in the community have donated the proceeds from concerts, cold water swims, and many other events - to help us to help other people.

Other volunteers provide services which keep our services running 24 x7 x 365 – maintaining our fleets of vehicles and boats, organising and minuting meetings, ordering clothing, planning training etc ….. I could write a very long list. I am grateful to all of them for giving of their time - the value is clear to us all.

We provide first aid cover for a number of events run by other organisations- particularly sports organisations such as rowing clubs - and we have seen the demand for these services increase this year as other providers have started to take a step back. As a result we've reviewed and formalised our internal policy around providing such services so that we may be confident of providing the appropriate level of cover for each event. It is important that we do not over-reach ourselves, or going beyond what a voluntary search and rescue organisation can and should provide.

It continues to be important for us engage with the local community as much as possible across our areas of operation. A good example is escorting Santa in the run up to Christmas to visit communities

in Newport and Kidderminster! We also invite relevant stakeholders to visit us as much as possible, and amongst those who did so this year was Mark Harper MP, in his capacity as Secretary of State for Transport, and Chief Constable Rod Hansen.

There were two significant and unusual engagements in Chepstow this summer. Firstly the Town Council had asked for all help with getting the famous Union Jack flag repainted for the Coronation; There has been a flag painted on the cliff wall in Chepstow Harbour since the Silver Jubilee of George V, and the Council were keen to get it repainted in time. This provided an opportunity for a small SARA team to demonstrate their ability to work at very low water levels to enable the counsellor to safely access and repaint the flag.

A second job requiring such skill involved ensuring the safety of, and helping a team from the local archaeological society investigating the remains of the Roman crossing just upstream from Chepstow Castle. This is normally safely preserved under the mud, but on 2 occasions SARA crews were able to help the archaeologists to locate, fully assess, and document the remains - news of which has been spread around the world.

So, as we wrap up the end of our 50th year, I reflect upon the organization that we are today with c.200 members spread over 7 stations across a significant geographical footprint; providing an array of specialist (and hugely well regarded) search and rescue services to our communities, saving lives and helping people in their darkest hours.

Looking through the archive of black and white photos from SARAs early days in the 1970's it is a **real** source of inspiration – a small group of community minded individuals gathering together to do what they can to help people in need and asking for nothing in return. That spirit of community endeavour remains, it is at the heart of everything we do and continues to drive the development of the organization.

And, as is evident from the stories I have related (which are only a small fraction of those I could have chosen), I believe that the Association is in excellent health after 50 years.

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer





The kayak rescue, which earned the crew
the first 'Jim Hewitt Award for Exceptional Endeavour in Search and Rescue'



Which was presented by Chair Keith Beckett at the 50th Anniversary Reception



Helping Chepstow Town Council to repaint the Chepstow Harbour Flag, ahead of the Coronation



Providing a Water Safety Talk to a Local School

Financial Review

Currently SARA is in good financial shape, with around £250k in the bank. There are, however, significant challenges ahead so there is no room for complacency at this point.

Much of our funds are either in the form of Restricted Funds, given to us for specific purposes and not yet spent, or have been Designated by the Board for specific purposes (these purposes are all laid out in Notes 17 and 18 to the Accounts). We finished the year with just over £88k in Unrestricted Cash; slightly below the target figure of £100k for Unrestricted Reserves which the Board reviewed in November and confirmed as an appropriate target level. At the time of writing this figure has climbed to around £95k, and I expect to achieve the target level by the middle of 2024.

2023 was a very good year for fundraising, with some great income generation going on. We were fortunate to receive two bequests for £30k each. The Wild Wye Swim made about £15k, the Sharpness Open Day a little over £9k, we had a sponsored abseil and the first Cirencester Slog, Pauline trekked to Everest Base Camp and Sam walked the Jurassic Coast. The various Police and Crime Commissioners gave us in total £17.5k, and we had various corporate grants and donations. Plus of course a lot of members' time went into providing safety and first cover at regattas and other events, and the myriad bucket collections, village fetes etc that keep SARA in the public eye and together make a lot of money as well. A really fantastic effort all round! And we have been working though our 'overhead costs', trying to save money where we can do so without any operational impact - this is an ongoing process!

In 2023, as well as maintaining our capabilities we funded a lot of training to enhance our skills, including more Advanced Powerboat Certificate of Competence courses, external Land Search skills courses, another Rope Rescue and more SRT instructors, and we re-certified all the existing SRT instructors. The 'business as usual' costs would make a long list! On top of that we have bought new crew vans for SARA Cotswolds and Tewkesbury, a new 4x4 for Upton (with help from the £15k Turner Trust) and a new ICU vehicle, also putting aside enough funds to complete the fitting out all of these vehicles.

One of the issues many members experience is the quality of the PPE they are issued or have to use. Most of it is very much fit for purpose but we all know there are quite a few leaky drysuits. In December the Board allocated £30k for stations to buy PPE by the end of 2024, on top of anything that they have raised for that purpose.

We also have a big challenge in the coming years with refitting and replacing our lifeboats, and replacing the remaining land rovers. We were very fortunate with government grants in the 5 or 6 years before Covid, but the big 'DFT Rescue Boat Grant Programme' is now finished. At the end of last year we put aside £50k for 'Major Asset Replacements'. £30k of that was still left at the end of 2023, with £10k allocated for each of the target replacement vehicles at Newport, Tewkesbury and Beachley. At the end of 2023 the Board put aside another £50k towards the cost of the lifeboat replacements, and we will aim to build that up further in the next few years.

My thanks to everyone who has helped with the book-keeping, with passing through invoices promptly, with helping to keep costs down and submit spend requests ahead of time. These all make my role easier, and enable me to help ensure that funds are there when we need them, so we can continue to help other people when they need it the most.

Richard Newhouse
Chief Financial Officer from Feb 2023



Fundraising

SARA raises funds for services through applications to charitable foundations and trusts, bids for appropriate statutory contracts, supported by individual and corporate donations, and community fundraising activities and support.

SARA is registered with the Fundraising Regulator, has a Fundraising Complaints Policy and Procedure and adheres to The Code of Fundraising Practice. Any Fundraising Complaints received by the charity are recorded and acted upon as set out in the procedure. There were no complains received about fundraising, or any other matters, during 2023.

SARA has no paid fundraisers and does not pay for the services of any fundraising organisation or people.



Fundraising at the Caldicot 999 Day in August 2023

Review of Risks

The Trustees and Executive Committee conduct an ongoing review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and processes and controls are in place to mitigate those risks.

The Association has Standard Operating Procedures which each member must follow. Whilst SARA is not bound by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (as it is part of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) which is exempt from the above Act), the Trustee's policy is that the Association should use this legislation as 'good practice' for SARA operations.

SARA carries insurance policies to cover health and safety risks, include some insurance cover provided through Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW). The Executive Committee continues to monitor Insurance policies to ensure they are adequate for SARA's purposes.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SARA

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Severn Area Rescue Association (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2023

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the Trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 financial statements to be reached.

Jane Swann BA(Hons) BFP FCA
Azets
First Floor, Copthall House
Stourbridge
West Midlands
DY8 1PH

Dated: 26 March 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	**3**	177,931	65,770	243,701	187,744	52,864	240,608
Charitable activities	**4**	80,804	7,832	88,636	23,590	-	23,590
Other trading activities	**5**	1,279	-	1,279	658	-	658
Investments	**6**	1,812	-	1,812	84	-	84
Other income	**7**	21,393	-	21,393	9,265	-	9,265
Total income		283,219	73,602	356,821	221,341	52,864	274,205
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	**8**	13,153	-	13,153	8,986	1,747	10,733
Charitable activities	**9**	227,788	26,912	254,700	230,152	27,151	257,303
Total expenditure		240,941	26,912	267,853	239,138	28,898	268,036
Net incoming resources before transfers		42,278	46,690	88,968	(17,797)	23,966	6,169
Gross transfers between funds		40,461	(40,461)	-	9,674	(9,674)	-
Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds		82,739	6,229	88,968	(8,123)	14,292	6,169
Fund balances at 1 January 2023		405,025	41,139	446,164	413,148	26,847	439,995
Fund balances at 31 December 2023		487,764	47,368	535,132	405,025	41,139	446,164

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	**14**		247,134		214,711
Current assets					
Debtors	**15**	40,374		42,248	
Cash at bank and in hand		259,600		218,939	
		299,974		261,187	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**16**	(11,976)		(29,734)	
Net current assets			287,998		231,453
Total assets less current liabilities			535,132		446,164
Income funds					
Restricted funds	**17**		47,368		41,139
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	**18**	123,621		50,000	
General unrestricted funds		364,143		355,025	
			487,764		405,025
			535,132		446,164

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 26 March 2024

.....
Mr R J Newhouse
Trustee

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as SARA, is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. SARA is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the SARA constitution, the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland” (“FRS 102”) and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The accounts are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

The charity is a public benefit entity.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are set aside by the Trustees as a form of Unrestricted Fund, for the purpose of financing future purchases or replacement items.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. In this case income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised when the reclaimed tax is received.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Grant income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Income from trading activities includes income earned from trading activities to raise funds for the charity.

No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP. Further detail is given in the Trustee's Annual Report.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes. Interest income is recognised as the charity's right to receive payment is established.

1.5 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions.

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs, and other administrative costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on a basis consistent with use of resources.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land and buildings	straight line over 25 years
Plant and equipment	straight line over 4 & 5 years

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

1.11 Investment policy

Current asset investments are short term highly liquid investments and are held at fair value. These include cash on deposit and cash equivalents with a maturity of less than one year.

A subsidiary is an entity controlled by the charity. Control is the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the entity so as to obtain benefits from its activities.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.12 Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charity for UK tax purposes.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The only key accounting estimates included in the financial statements relate to the useful lives of the assets and the period over which they are depreciated. The trustees decide the useful life and determine the depreciation rates.

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2023	2023	2023	2022	2022	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	60,391	20,325	80,716	151,486	31,607	183,093
Legacies receivable	82,135	-	82,135	5,000	-	5,000
Grant Income	31,913	45,445	77,358	31,258	21,257	52,515
Sponsorships	1,092	-	1,092	-	-	-
Donated goods and services	2,400	-	2,400	-	-	-
	177,931	65,770	243,701	187,744	52,864	240,608

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable activities 2023 £	Charitable activities 2022 £
Fundraising events	86,486	21,590
Service level agreement	2,000	2,000
Charitable rental income	150	-
	88,636	23,590
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	80,804	23,590
Restricted funds	7,832	-
	88,636	23,590

5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Sale of goods	-	25
Commercial sponsorship	-	500
Other trading income	1,279	133
Other trading activities	1,279	658

6 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Interest receivable	1,812	84

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

7 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	15,200	2,250
Other income	6,193	7,015
	21,393	9,265

8 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Fundraising and publicity				
Other fundraising costs	13,153	8,986	1,747	10,733
	13,153	8,986	1,747	10,733

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

9 Charitable activities

	Charitable activities 2023 £	Charitable activities 2022 £
Depreciation and impairment	56,445	54,491
Fuel	15,353	19,258
Training	20,441	24,021
Insurance	36,911	37,912
Consumables	8,953	5,195
Repairs and maintenance	38,235	42,514
Equipment purchases	39,489	41,359
Communications	9,139	11,641
Regulatory compliance	1,081	2,138
	226,047	238,529
Share of support costs (see note 10)	21,875	15,553
Share of governance costs (see note 10)	6,778	3,221
	254,700	257,303
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	227,788	230,152
Restricted funds	26,912	27,151
	254,700	257,303

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

10 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2023	Support costs	Governance costs	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Heat, light and water	12,970	-	12,970	8,776	-	8,776
Printing, postage and stationery	308	-	308	646	-	646
Computer costs	2,031	-	2,031	1,130	-	1,130
Travel costs	219	-	219	408	-	408
Bank charges	2,566	-	2,566	2,666	-	2,666
Other support costs	2,380	-	2,380	1,346	-	1,346
Rent and rates	1,401	-	1,401	581	-	581
Accountancy fees	-	6,668	6,668	-	3,136	3,136
Legal and professional	-	110	110	-	85	85
	21,875	6,778	28,653	15,553	3,221	18,774
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	21,875	6,778	28,653	15,553	3,221	18,774

Accountancy fees contain costs for the independent examination of £1,950 (2022: £2,300) and other accountancy services of £1,800 (2022: £1,750).

11 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration, benefits or expenses from the charity during the year.

12 Employees

There were no employees during the year.

13 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

14 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings	Plant and equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1 January 2023	397,751	1,129,576	1,527,327
Additions	-	88,868	88,868
Disposals	-	(15,000)	(15,000)
At 31 December 2023	397,751	1,203,444	1,601,195
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 January 2023	258,085	1,054,531	1,312,616
Depreciation charged in the year	12,681	43,764	56,445
Eliminated in respect of disposals	-	(15,000)	(15,000)
At 31 December 2023	270,766	1,083,295	1,354,061
Carrying amount			
At 31 December 2023	126,985	120,149	247,134
At 31 December 2022	139,666	75,045	214,711

15 Debtors

	2023	2022
Amounts falling due within one year:	£	£
Trade debtors	7,534	4,596
Other debtors	9,803	9,764
Prepayments and accrued income	23,037	27,888
	40,374	42,248

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	5,622	12,518
Accruals and deferred income	6,354	17,216
	11,976	29,734

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

17 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

		Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 January 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Glos OPPC Grant [1]	1,126	5,000	(4,233)	-	1,893
Beachley Station CCTV & Vehicle Radio	2,625	-	(2,423)	(202)	-
Cotswold Station Start-up	10,129	419	(434)	(4,590)	5,524
Cotswold Station Crew Van	16,984	5,426	-	(20,669)	1,741
SARA Lifeboat 14 Engine Replacement	1,150	-	-	-	1,150
Sharpness Station Building Maintenance	4,996	4,323	(689)	-	8,630
SARA Lifeboat 6 Trailer Replacement	3,129	-	-	-	3,129
Other small restricted funds [2]	1,000	8,141	(9,141)	-	-
Incident Control Unit Fit-out	-	8,500	(754)	-	7,746
Beachley Launch Tractor Replacement	-	1,506	-	-	1,506
Cotswolds Station New 4x4 Vehicle	-	250	-	-	250
PPE	-	15,937	(7,916)	-	8,021
Persimmon Homes Grant [3]	-	5,000	(282)	-	4,718
Mental Health First Aid Training	-	2,600	-	-	2,600
Sharpness Station New Pressure Washers	-	1,500	(1,040)	-	460
Upton Station Vehicle Replacement	-	15,000	-	(15,000)	-
	41,139	73,602	(26,912)	(40,461)	47,368

(1) Annual grant from Office of Police & Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, for equipment and training for land-based search and rescue.

(2) Restricted income amounts under £5,000, which were spend directly for the purposes given. In 2023 this included a £2,900 government grant for Swiftwater Rescue Instructor training, which was combined with an existing £1,000 fund for that purpose, £2,100 specifically for equipment for Wyre Forest Station and £1,070 for waterproof aide memoires for casualty carers.

(3) Grant for technical rescue training and equipment.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

18 Designated funds

The trustees recognise the importance of maintaining the set of boats and vehicles, and ensuring their replacements on a timely basis. The Major Assets Fund was initiated last year with £50,000 to support the purchase of replacing major assets, to be supplemented with other funds specifically raised for these purposes. It is envisaged that the use and replacement of monies within the Major Assets Fund will be an ongoing activity.

	Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 January 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£
Major Assets Replacement [1]	50,000	54,000	(24,000)	80,000
Tewkesbury Station New Van Fit-out	-	26,265	(25,259)	1,006
Upton Station 4x4 Fit-out	-	10,000	(5,030)	4,970
Purchase commitments H1 2024 [2]	-	6,645	-	6,645
PPE [3]	-	31,000	-	31,000
	50,000	127,910	(54,289)	123,621

(1) The trustees recognise the importance of maintaining the set of boats, vehicles and buildings, and ensuring their replacements or major maintenance work is effected on a timely basis. The Major Assets Fund was initiated at the end of 2021 with £50,000 to support this, to be supplemented with other funds specifically raised for these purposes. It is envisaged that the use and replacement of monies within the Major Assets Fund will be an ongoing activity.

(2) Purchases agreed in Q4 2023 but not executed by year-end, target completion by end of Q1 2024.

(3) Funds allocated to rescue stations in late 2023, pro-rata based on crew numbers, to be spent on PPE during 2024.

19 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023	Restricted funds 2023	Total 2023	Unrestricted funds 2022	Restricted funds 2022	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 December 2023 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	247,134	-	247,134	214,711	-	214,711
Current assets/(liabilities)	240,630	47,368	287,998	190,314	41,139	231,453
	487,764	47,368	535,132	405,025	41,139	446,164

Cash at bank and in hand at the year end was £259,600, of which £47,368 was restricted, and £123,621 designated by the trustees for a particular purpose.

This left an unrestricted cash balance of £88,611 at the year-end date.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

---

20 Related party transactions

Transactions with related parties

During the year the charity entered into the following transactions with related parties:

SARA commissions minor repairs to drysuits from Merv Fleming Associates, a business operated by Mervyn Fleming, a trustee of this charity until 11 May 2023. The total value of related party transactions between Merv Fleming Associates and SARA was £507 in 2023 (£513 in 2022) and the work was performed at a discounted commercial rate for SARA.

Accounting software was supplied through Vertis Accounting, a company of which Ian Jarvis, a trustee of this charity until 31 January 2023, was director. The total value of related party transactions between Vertis Accounting and SARA was £126 (net of VAT) in 2023 (£491 in 2022).

21 Subsidiaries

Details of the charity's subsidiaries at 31 December 2023 are as follows:

SARA Trading Limited - Registered in England (company number 11820156), incorporated 11 February 2019. The company has no share capital and is limited by guarantee. The charity has given a guarantee of £100, and is the relevant legal entity by virtue of the ability to appoint and remove trustees. The four officers of the company are also trustees of the charity. The company provides commercial training and organises events to raise funds for the charity. The company had net assets at 28 February 2023 of £13,831 (2022 : £7,750). The company made donations of £18,500 to the charity during the year.

The charity is not required to prepare consolidated accounts.

22 Contingent liability

As referred to in note 21, in the unlikely event of the subsidiary company SARA Trading Limited being wound up, the charity has guaranteed a payment of £100.

Annex A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks

SARA is a multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue organisation and is the designated rescue service for an area of over 20,000 km^2 on and around the Severn. It provides:

- Lifeboat cover for large parts of the Rivers Severn, Wye, Usk and the Bristol Avon*
- Cliff rescue, particularly for the lower Wye Valley climbing areas including Symonds Yat
- Mud rescue
- Swift water and flood rescue
- Land Search

SARA operates from seven rescue stations, at Newport, Chepstow (SARA Beachley), Sharpness, Tewkesbury, Upton-upon-Severn, Kidderminster (SARA Wyre Forest) and at Cirencester (SARA Cotswolds). SARA Crew receive 'callouts' through a combination of dedicated Pagers and through SMS messages using the SARCALL system.

Lifeboats and Mud Rescue

SARA is the designated rescue service for the Rivers Severn, Wye and Usk. The SARA lifeboats, based at Beachley, Sharpness and Newport are tasked by HM Coastguard, largely in response to 999 calls.

The River Severn below Gloucester is used for around 350 commercial ship transits per year and the lower Wye around 150. The Severn also has over 500 registered leisure craft transits between Gloucester and Sharpness alone each year, and many more that are not counted. The tidal range on the Severn at Beachley, and on the Wye at Chepstow, is 15 metres (the second highest in the World!), which means that the river changes within a few hours from a wide expanse of deep water, to narrow shallow channels weaving through extensive sandbanks.

In addition, the tidal current on the Severn reaches 12 knots; this can lead to very turbulent river conditions in even a moderate wind. Most of the way to Gloucester the riverbed is very broad, with a narrow and winding navigable channel, marked with numerous buoys, beacons and transits. The margins of all the tidal rivers have wide and thick mudbanks below the high-tide levels, and in places the exposed mud leads out to rocky islands at low tide.

Typical incidents for SARA include vessels grounding, or losing power hence requiring urgent assistance to avoid grounding. People have been rescued from islands or ledges where they were being cut off by the tide, or actually plucked from the mud. On other occasions boats, and other floating hardware, are broken loose by the water and drift with the fast currents and have to be recovered. On average lifeboats are launched operationally around once a week (50-60 launches per year).

*SARA's declared area of lifeboat operations, for which it is tasked by HM Coastguard, is the Severn, north from a line between Newport and Clevedon to Maisemore Weir near Gloucester, and the tributary rivers Wye (to Bigsweir Bridge), Usk (to the M4 Bridge) and the Avon (to Bristol Docks). If required in exceptional circumstances, SARA Lifeboats can extend beyond this area, using a re-fuelling stop at Newport, to operate north of a line from Barry to Weston Super Mare.

The SARA lifeboats area also features several high bridges – notably the M48 Severn Bridge but also the A48 in Chepstow and several in Newport. SARA is often called out to a 'person at risk' on a bridge. The majority, but sadly not all, are resolved directly by the Police. However, a lifeboat is always launched so as to be ready. Recoveries are therefore not uncommon, but SARA has successfully rescued people from the water below a bridge.

Land Search

SARA provides land search capabilities in support of the Police. SARA has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in place with the Police Forces for Gloucestershire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, the West Midlands, Shropshire, West Mercia and Warwickshire. These Police Forces request SARA support for 'Missing Person' searches in their respective areas, and teams from the various SARA Stations work together as appropriate to the search area location.

Such missing person searches can range in duration from less than an hour to spanning several days and may become 'recovery' rather than rescue operations. SARA is able to deploy one of its two Mobile 'Incident Support Units' (ISUs) to support such searches and other operations; searches are managed from the ISU, which is the focus for liaison with the Police and other agencies. SARA's MoUs with the Police are to assist with any search, in any terrain, for a vulnerable missing person – including urban searches if required.

SARA is also a member (Associate Member since Jan 2021) of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW). Generally, MR teams deploy into mountainous environments (or at least challenging ones); in the SARA area the more technical areas would include the Wye Valley, Forest of Dean, Wyre Forest or Cleeve Hill.

In addition, all neighbouring MR teams back each other up, so SARA is considered a backup for Longtown MR Team, and other teams in the Brecon Beacons. One example was the extensive search for April Jones around Machynlleth; SARA did not deploy as many other MR teams did but was put on high alert to back fill for any jobs in these teams' areas.

Cliff Rescue

SARA Beachley is a specific base for the Cliff Rescue in the Lower Wye Valley, where the cliffs around Wyntours Leap, Symonds Yat and other walls are a popular destination for climbers of all abilities. It is estimated that there are 3,000-4,000 climber-days per year in the Lower Wye Valley. There are also a number of disused quarries in the area, in which accidents involving non-climbers happen.

SARA has an MoU with Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) for effecting cliff rescue operations, and an increasingly close relationship with South Wales FRS (some of the cliffs are on the Welsh side of the Wye). The SARA rope rescue training is based on Rescue3 qualifications, also used by the Fire and Rescue services which facilitates interoperability.

There is a further close relationship with Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group (GCRG), which also has rope rescue trained personnel and relevant equipment, which are available as required. Conversely SARA is available to provide surface support to cave rescue operations, and indeed is integral to the contingency plans for caves such at 'Otter Hole' in the Wye Valley. Rope rescue operations are thankfully rare, but joint exercises are conducted with the FRS and GCRG.

Swift Water and Flood Rescue

Swift Water is defined as 'that moving fast enough to produce sufficient force to present a life and safety hazard to a person entering it'. Operations in 'swift water' are referred to as 'SRT' tasks and include life-saving rescue. However, due to the time-sensitive nature of water incidents these are often search and if necessary recovery operations. Their initiation is often by a combination of Police, FRS or Coastguard. Dependent on the water concerned, a small boat may be deployed, or a floating platform, in addition to crew directly in shallow water. SARA has the ability to launch such small boats in almost all rivers, with no requirement for slipway or road access to the riverbank. Such small boats are referred to as 'Rescue' boats; SARA prefers rigid rescue boats to reduce the risk of punctures from the use of inflatables.

SARA Swift Water crew are qualified as 'Swift Water and Flood Rescue Technicians', which is the national standard. The Swift Water Teams are also able to deploy on flood rescue operations nationally, as Flood Response Teams. DEFRA, through the National DEFRA Flood Rescue group, coordinate the Flood Response Team deployments nationally. SARA has 2 x 'Type B' and 4 x 'Type C' declared teams of 7, shared between its 7 Stations, which need to be ready for deployment anywhere in the country. SARA has a proven track record of deploying around the UK on such incidents including Essex (2014), Devon (2014) and Yorkshire (2015/16).

First Aid and Casualty Care

All SARA crew are trained, at minimum, in basic first aid. A number of SARA crew are further qualified to the much higher level of 'Casualty Care' as defined by MREW. In addition, a number of crew are professional paramedics, nurses or serving as Community First Responders.

First aid equipment is carried during all searches and in all SARA vehicles; depending on the nature of the operation, equipment such as Oxygen, portable defibrillators, back- and neck-stabilization boards may be taken into the field.

Education and Training Provision

SARA provides training and education to the wider community through a variety of routes. These include:

1. Emergency Services Training. For the Emergency Services, SARA provides lifeboat training. For example, SARA Beachley has an ongoing relationship with the South West Ambulance Services Trust to provide structured, water-based rescue training for members of their Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART). This provides specialist knowledge, training and experience of working with boats, including in the tidal waters of the Severn Estuary.

2. School Visits. Covid-permitting, the SARA stations frequently host visits from and undertakes visits to local primary schools, Scouts and Guides Units, etc. These are designed to be educational as well as fun, informing young people of the dangers of the water and other aspects of the local area of which they may be unaware.

3. Outreach Activities. SARA frequently particulates in relevant 'community outreach' activities such as the Drowning Awareness Weeks, again providing education about the avoidance of risks as well as information concerning SARA and other emergency Services.

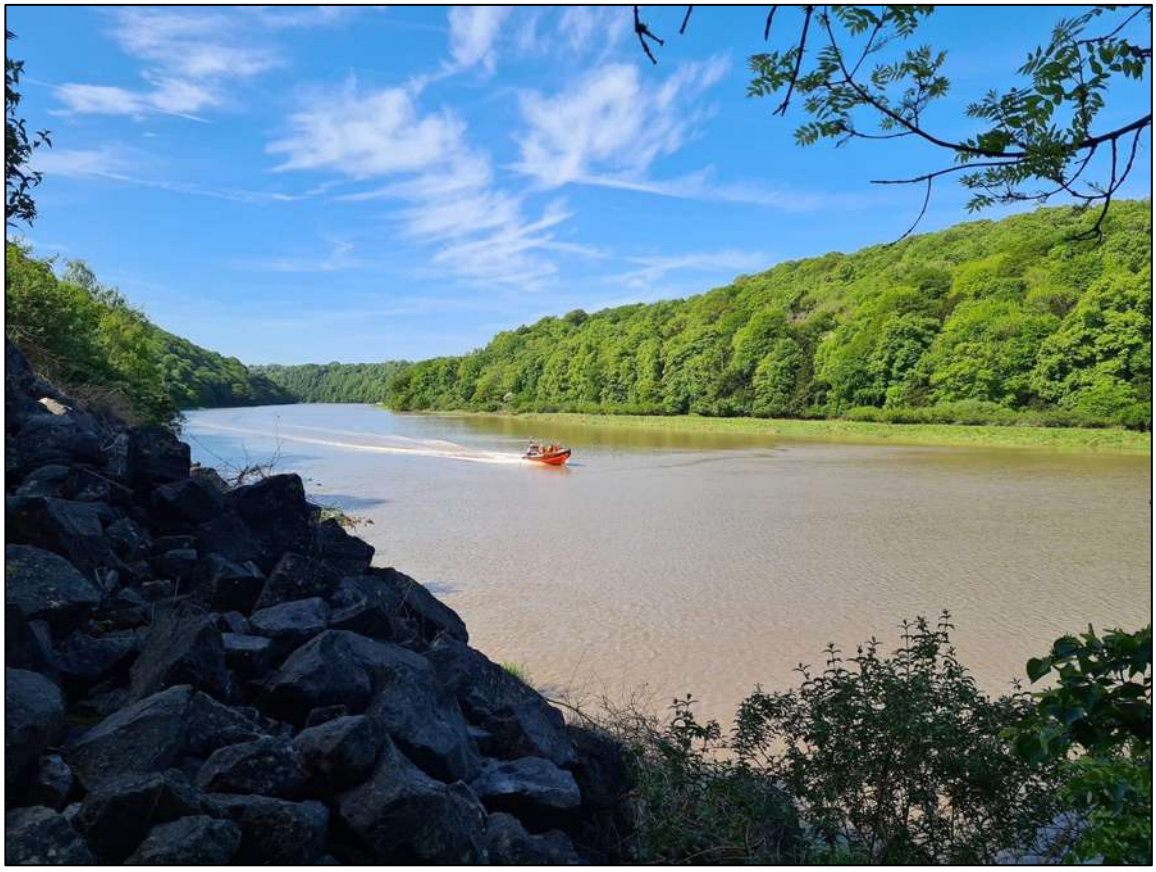
Event Safety Cover

Most years SARA also provides safety and first aid cover to local outdoor-based events, generally sports related. These are usually events which involve water, and/or off-road running, such as rowing regattas, raft races, triathlons and off-road running races. SARA undertakes this role for several reasons:

1. To support the local community. SARA has historically provided this service at a discount to the notional cost, in order to facilitate and support these local events to a greater extent than alternative organisations would be able to. The number of such races and events supported continues to rise, as local organisations realise the capabilities which SARA can bring to their events.

2. To raise SARA's profile. SARA is usually paid for providing the service, albeit at hugely discounted rates for community groups to enable these to be viable, but for many members of the public spectating, this is an excellent opportunity to see SARA in action.

3. To put SARA's skills into play 'in the field' and provide real-world experience.



SARA Lifeboat 1 'The Jim Hewitt' on the River Wye near Woodcroft Quarry

Annex B: Summary of SARA Capabilities

Inland Missing Person Search

- Foot based open-area search, including open area, wooded and steep / very steep terrain
- Able to establish and manage a safe system of work for other services on difficult terrain
- Water search, including from the bank, in the water on foot, on small inflatable craft and on small powered boats
- Field-based search control facility, independent of any infrastructure
- 4x4 vehicles capable of transporting a loaded stretcher to a road
- Search planning, management and record-keeping to Mountain Rescue standards

Water operations

- Boat- and foot-based search and rescue anywhere upstream from the M4 Second Severn Crossing (and below it if needed), at all water levels and all but the most extreme weather conditions
- Tidal water operations compliant with HM Coastguard Rescue Boat Code, with B-Class and D-Class lifeboats. B-Class capable of operating in all weathers and rescuing 6 x casualties at a time
- Inland water operations complaint with DEFRA Flood ConOps, with Type B (powered boat all-SRT) teams, all Rescue3 qualified
- Swiftwater teams able to operate in fast and/or shallow inland water by day or night, with and without inflatable rafts & platforms
- Able to launch & recover a small boat almost anywhere
- Water operations interface with land-based teams
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc.

Mud Rescue

- Able to operate on and across the tidal mud in the Severn and Wye Estuaries, whether accessed from the bank or from the water
- Able to extract a casualty from the mud, and transport them up to dry land or down to a boat

Cliff and Steep Ground (Gloucestershire-Based)

- Fully equipped team for working at height and on steeply sloping ground, all Rescue3-qualified.
- Focused on the Wye Valley climbing areas and Cotswolds, deployable across the SARA area
- Able to access and manage casualties, and transport up or down a slope / cliff
- Able to establish and operate off-vertical or horizontal systems eg cableway or high-line (aka Tirolean) systems
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc

Advanced First Aid

- Mountain Rescue-qualified Remote Rescue Medical Technicians (formerly ‘Casualty Carers’) on all callouts
- Team doctors usually deployed, else available as remote support to RRMTs.
- Provision of Advanced Life Support including use of airways and oxygen
- Management of trauma including spinal injuries
- Use of appropriate basic pain relief medication
- Capable of operating in any terrain, however steep or in water

Command and control

- 24x7 immediate response callout handling team able to discuss potential SARA response and mobilise accordingly
- JESIP-trained Incident Commander (‘SARA OIC’) deployed as part of any operation, plus team leaders within each operational team
- VHF and Airwave radios
- Land and water teams practiced at working with HMCG helicopter

SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1193634

Accounts

Severn Area Rescue Association
Annual Report and Accounts 2022

SARA



Multi-Disciplinary Volunteer Search and Rescue Team with Fifty Years of Lifeboat Service on the River Severn

Registered Charity CIO 1193634

FOREWORD

As Covid restrictions faded away, I've been delighted to hear of the increased training which took place in 2022. SARA's numbers were swollen by several sets of new operational crew members across the various stations throughout the year, who all completed rigorous training programmes. I would also like to congratulate those who passed courses to become Rope Rescue Instructors and Swiftwater and Flood Boat Instructors, as well as those trained by the newly qualified instructors to become effective in the respective disciplines as well as their primary roles as lifeboat crew or land searchers. These qualifications are of vital importance in ensuring that all operations are as professional, efficient and safe as they possibly can be.

The first few months of the year for SARA were dominated by flood relief operations following a succession of heavy storms. Teams across the region were deployed, not least to provide support to local communities as water levels rose and Severe Flood Warnings were announced. These efforts resulted in television coverage as the national press reported on the flooding, and BBC Countryfile even featured SARA in an episode in March!

In September, SARA was proud to become one of the founding members of National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA), a newly established charity aiming to support and represent the UK's many independent lifeboats. SARA's membership with NILA will enable us to gain greater representation in parliament, raise our profile nationally and gain access to other similar groups to share best practice.

2023 marks SARA's 50th anniversary, a milestone which will be celebrated in style to raise awareness of the excellent work done by the organisation. 50 years in operation is a remarkable achievement, and the region's communities have benefitted hugely from SARA's dedication. However, the cost of maintaining equipment, vehicles and stations, even purchasing new uniforms for crew members, continues to rise. As usual, SARA will be holding several fundraising events throughout the year and I urge you and your families to come and support this vital organisation. Equally, if you'd like to get involved with SARA – whether operationally or with administration, management or fundraising – please do get in touch. The teams are always grateful for additional support!



FOREWORD

The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst

In 2022, SARA volunteers attended 95 separate operations:



and

Raised £274,205 to Support these Operations

Contents

	Page No.
Reference & Administrative Details	5
Objectives and Achievements	5
Structure, Governance and Management	6
SARA Overview & Brief History	7
Chair of Trustees Report	10
CEO Report	12
Financial Review	21
Review of Risks	22
Fundraising	23
Independent Examiner's Report	24
Financial Statements	25
Notes to the Financial Statements	27
Appendix A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks	36
Appendix B: 1-Page Summary of SARA Capabilities	40



SARA and Coastguard members on the slipway at Beachley,
on the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II, 8 Sept 2022

Reference and Administrative Details

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as Severn Rescue and SARA, is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. It is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI, with 14 operational boats, of which five are declared lifeboats, and approximately 200 personnel.

Registered Charity CIO Number	1193634
Registered Address	The Lifeboat Station, Beachley, Chepstow, NP16 7HH
Independent Accounts Examiner	Azets, Stourbridge
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc

Objectives

On 1 January 2022, the SARA CIO (1193634) took over in totality the assets, liabilities and operations of the SARA Charity 505504. The objects of the Association, as stated in its CIO Constitution are:

1. The protection of life and property by the provision and maintenance of a rescue service incorporating both marine operations and land operations) with, in particular, specialist skills in swiftwater/flood, land search, lifeboats, rescue boats, marine rescue and cliff rescue;
2. To assist Government Departments and Agencies and County and Local Authorities in their provision of emergency services; and
3. To advance public education in outdoor safety, particularly in and around water.

The Association is non-profit making, and financed by voluntary contributions, grants from any public or private organisations, and any such fundraising activities or commercial arrangements as the Executive Committee recommends to the Trustees.

The Achievement of the Objects of the Charity

The policies adopted by the Executive Committee during the course of the year have met the objects of the Charity in the following ways:

- Through the Association's 7 rescue stations and one sub-station attending 95 callouts during the year, all tasked by the principal emergency services.
- Through the provision of Water Safety scenarios for schools and other interested groups to raise awareness for everyone, especially children, to become more 'water aware'.
- Through the ongoing provision of recognised training courses held both internally and externally to promote the professionalism of the organisation.

The Trustees have given due regard to the guidance from the Charity Commission on public benefit and are satisfied that the objectives and activities of SARA provide a public benefit.

Structure, Governance and Management

SARA is governed by its Constitution. Certain 'non-executive' powers are reserved for the Board of Trustees with specific powers delegated to the Executive. The Trustees have final overall legal responsibility for the organisation and its governance. Non-Executive Trustees serve for a term of three years, being appointed at the Annual General Meeting; the CEO, Deputy CEO and the CFO are ex-officio Trustees

The Trustees of the CIO in the year were:

Mervyn Fleming	Cont'd from the 505504 Charity, until 11 May 2023
Alan Stanley	Cont'd from the 505504 Charity, until 11 May 2023
John Cairns	Cont'd from the 505504 Charity, until 11 May 2023
Mark Carwardine (Chief Executive Officer)	Appointed 1 January 2022
Ian Jarvis (Chief Finance Officer)	Appointed 1 January 2022, until 31 January 2023
Keith Beckett (Chair of Trustees)	Appointed 8 May 2022
Judith Harvey	Appointed 8 May 2022
Vanessa Powell	Appointed 8 May 2022
Ian Morgan	Appointed 8 May 2022
Shaun Egan (Deputy CEO)	Appointed 8 May 2022

Richard Newhouse was appointed as CFO on 17 February 2023 and as a Trustee 11 May 2023

The Executive Committee is responsible to the Trustees for the overall running of the association in relation to all financial, safety, legal and operational matters. Its members during the year were:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Mark Carwardine
Deputy CEO	Shaun Egan from May 2022
Association Secretary	Ian Roberts
Chief Financial Officer	Ian Jarvis to Jan 23, thence Richard Newhouse
Executive Fundraising Officer	Richard Newhouse to May 2022 Belinda Johnson from October 2022
Beachley Station General Manager	Rich Dainty to April 2022 Lee Morris from August 2022
Newport Station General Manager	Richard Dainty
Tewkesbury Station General Manager	Matt Gardner
Sharpness Station General Manager	David Palmer
Upton Station General Manager	Martin Nelson to April 2022 Peter Sherwood from August 2022
Wyre Forest Station General Manager	Dan Gale
Cotswolds Station General Manager	John Dutton

Additional technical and specialist managers were co-opted at the Executive level being:

Executive Land Search Manager	John Dutton
Inland Water Officer	Mark Iggulden
Vehicle & Driver Standards Officer	Dave Deveney
Medical Officer	Jon Dallimore
Wellbeing Officer	Kathy Donaldson
IT Manager	Rob Jervis
Communications Equipment Manager	Chris Thornton
PR Officer	Richard Newhouse
Executive Finance Manager	Helen Morris

The Committees for the Beachley, Newport, Tewkesbury, Sharpness, Upton, Cotswolds and Wyre Forest Rescue Stations are responsible for the day-to-day running of each respective Station.

The Operations of the Charity

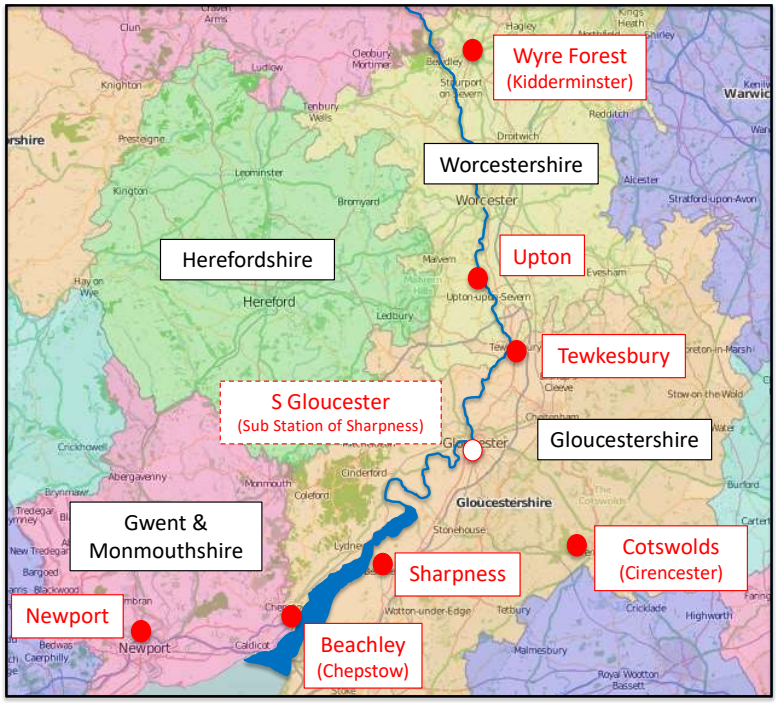
SARA's Mission Statement is:

> To protect life and property through the provision of a professionally trained, specialist rescue service for marine, flood and land search incidents

The principal area of marine operations comprises the Bristol Channel and the Severn, Wye, Avon, and Usk rivers. Typical situations involved vessels suffering breakdown or damage by grounding, becoming lost in severely restricted visibility - a particularly dangerous situation in the tidal Severn - and searching for missing people. As a Lifeboat Organisation, SARA complies with the Rescue Boat Code of Practice (RBCP) and is a founder member of the National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA).

Inland operations extend to the West of England and the Midlands and South-East Wales. SARA is a member of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and SARA is part of the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA). SARA's technical and flood rescue standards are assured by qualifications from Rescue3Europe, which comply with national standards

SARA works closely with the statutory emergency services – Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance Services, likewise HM Coastguard – also with neighbouring and related volunteer rescue organisations. These particularly include the RNLI at Portishead, Penarth and Barry, the Coastguard helicopter based at St Athan, Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and both the South Wales Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA(SW)) and K9 Serve-On Search Dogs, to name just a few. There is a strong mutual relationship with Gloucester Cave Rescue (GCRG) whose members often participate in land search operations as integrated search party members. Further details of SARA's operational roles are provided in the Annex.



The SARA Rescue Stations

Why SARA? A Short History!

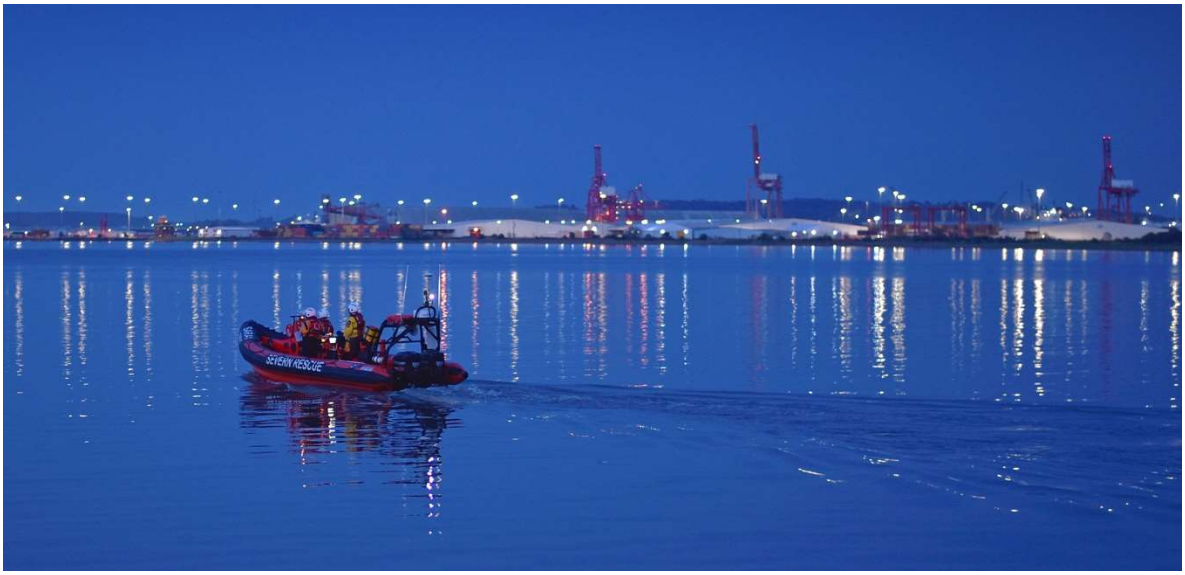
The inaugural meeting to form the organisation which became SARA was held in 1973, and the charity was formally created in 1976, as 'The Severn Auxiliary Rescue Association'. Its headquarters were at Tutshill - near the current Beachley station. At this time the RNLI did not cover river estuaries, such as the River Severn. There was felt to be a need for rescue organisation responsible for this hazardous stretch of river, particularly following the closure of the Aust Ferry after the opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966. In 1985 SARA also became an official Mountain Rescue Team in the role of Cliff Rescue for the Wye Valley, and SARA Beachley Station was designated as a 'Mountain Rescue Post'.

In 1986 a second station was opened at Sharpness, primarily in response to a tragic loss of life in the Sharpness area and the name of the organisation was amended to what it is today. A station was opened at Wyre Forest in 2004, to cover the upper Severn area. In 2014 Wyre Forest Station moved into the Fire Station at Kidderminster, under a co-hosting arrangement, and in early 2021 moved again into the new Kidderminster Tri-Service 'Emergency Hub' Station.

In 2011, following major flooding, a Joint 'Water Rescue Centre' opened in Tewkesbury, as a strategic alliance between Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service, SARA and Gloucestershire County Council, and the new SARA Tewkesbury Station became SARA's fourth.

For many years, emergencies in Newport were attended to by crew from SARA Beachley. In 2014 an equipment hub was placed in Newport, and in 2015 a base was established at Malpas Fire Station. Following a major bequest, new boats were purchased in 2016 and the Newport Lifeboat Station was established, within the Malpas Fire Station, becoming independent from Beachley in 2019.

The small independent 'Water Emergency Incident Response' (WEIR) team at Upton-upon-Severn elected in 2019 to merge with SARA, forming SARA Upton Station in 2020. SARA's seventh station SARA Cotswolds, based at Cirencester Fire Station, was established in mid-2021 to provide a base for land search in eastern Gloucestershire.



SARA Lifeboat 1 off Portishead one evening, as a set of Helms prepare for their forthcoming RYA/MCA Advanced Powerboat Certificate of Competence Exams



Training with HART (Hazardous Area Response Team) Paramedics in the Wye Valley in the Spring…



… and working with HART Paramedics on a callout in the Wye Valley in the Autumn…

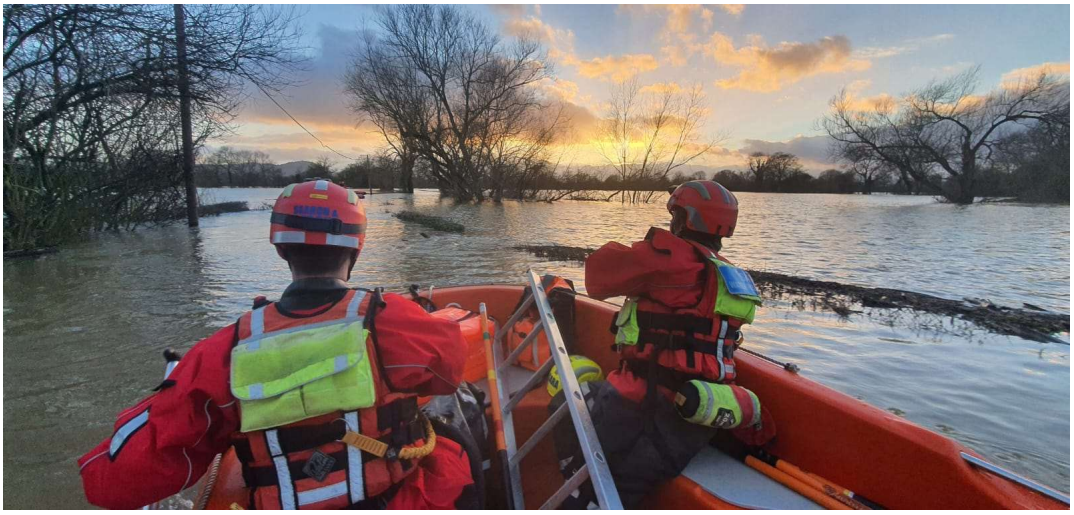
Chair of Trustee's Report

In May 2022, I was privileged to be elected as Chair of the SARA Board of Trustees and joined three other Non-Executive Trustees who were new to the Board and to SARA. Approaching its 50th year next year, this is the first full year for SARA as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
You'll see from this report that SARA continues to provide much needed rescue and search capabilities for the communities surrounding the River Severn. Our operations remain in high demand in direct support of the Emergency Services and SARA provides a highly respected, and often relied upon capability. The organisation has ended the year in sound financial health, meeting its agreed aims for financial reserves; it remains a viable going concern with both improving income and ideas to reduce expenditure without a reduction of quality or service.

The Board has spent considerable time connecting with members and familiarising new Trustees with the operations, capabilities and ways of working. Determined to foster a culture of continuous improvement, and risk reduction, the Board has examined SARA's risk profile and is looking to strengthen mitigations in a number of areas. Additionally, the Board has determined to set a longer term strategy for SARA in the coming year, based on a clear view of the requirement and a vision for how best to meet this requirement. Perhaps most importantly, the Board will take into account the views of the members, collected through the Member Survey, and will work to ensure that our volunteers' experience is the best it can be whilst continuing to meet the aims of SARA.

I am immensely proud of what SARA has achieved, and continues to achieve, in promoting the preservation of life in the Severn Area. I am confident that the Trustees, the Officers and the Members will ensure the continued provision of the highest quality rescue services for our communities.

Keith Beckett
Chair of Trustees







Flood Response on the Upper Severn in February, including meeting the Floods Minister (we did ask for a repeat of the 2017 DEFRA Flood Maintenance Grant!)

CEO Report on 2022

2022 was in many ways a good year for SARA, but it got off to a very sad start with the sudden illness and passing of our friend and colleague Malcolm Bradley in January. He was a long-standing member of our Beachley Station and many SARA members lined the lane at the crematorium for his funeral. Equally sadly, he was followed in July by Martin Brace who passed away after a stroke and a short illness. They are both very much missed.

After much hard work in 2020 and 2021, on 1 January 2022 we transitioned to being a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, or CIO. All of our assets and operations transferred into the 'new legal entity, and we gained a new charity number, but otherwise it has been business as usual for almost everything. Our long-standing chair and one of the founder-members of SARA, Jim Hewitt, was instrumental in achieving CIO status and he stood down as a Trustee at the end of 2021 and was awarded lifetime membership. I would like to pay tribute to Jim and thank him for his many years of dedicated service. We are also indebted to Omar Al-Nuaimi from SARA Beachley for lending his legal expertise to manage the CIO transition.

Becoming a CIO did open the door to recruiting new Trustees, and we were delighted to welcome 4 new Trustee colleagues. They are all drawn from outside of SARA and bring a wealth of senior-level experience. We were grateful in particular that Keith Beckett felt able to take on the Chairmanship of SARA. As CEO a significant focus of mine was on supporting and on-boarding the new Non-Exec Trustees; to allow the newly comprised Board to get up to speed with the (often fairly complex) workings of the organisation, the challenges we face and to start thinking about our overall Strategy document and vision for the next 5 years.

The early part of 2022 was also marked by some intense flooding, mainly in the upper Severn Area. SARA flood teams from our northern stations deployed multiple times through the following week; in total we had 8 team deployments, including house evacuations by boat in Melverley as well as welfare checks in Bewdley. SARA stations further south remained on standby as there were numerous flood warnings issued in their local areas. Thankfully, the peak on the Severn did not coincide with high tide and the River Wye peaked below its 2020 levels and did not burst its banks, and the southern teams were not required.



SARA Search Control, late one night on the edge of Gloucester

Our land and inland water teams supported the police on over 50 missing person searches. A number of these searches included joint operations with our neighbouring volunteer teams, something which has increased in recent years with better collaboration outside of callouts. The Sonar capability based at SARA Wyre Forest had its first deployment in November; this helped to determine that the body of the missing man was not in the area of focus and sadly he was later found further downstream. This was one of many 'recovery operations' undertaken by the teams, and managing the mental well-being of those involved is a key focus area for our management teams.

On one notable missing person search in the Forest of Dean, after several hours the missing lady was located safe by Police some distance away, but not before our teams had found a different vulnerable lady in the woods in distress. They were able to get her into the care of the police officers in attendance before returning to their original task!

Lifeboat taskings also included searches for missing people – some of whom are sadly found deceased, also upturned boats, one swan in difficulty and two dogs. More than one callout involved yachts which had run aground on the Severn sand and mud banks, a significant risk in our area. In such cases we work with the Coastguard to ensure that everyone onboard a grounded yacht is okay, and also to help ensure that damage to the vessels as they refloat – often in a strong current – is minimised.



A safe but rather muddy dog, in the Severn near Sharpness

One of our more dramatic rescue callouts was as part of a successful multi-agency operation in October. We were called out - to Redbrook in the Wye valley - shortly after 7pm on a Monday, to support South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Gloucestershire and Hereford & Worcester Fire Services were also attending with their boats – along with police and ambulances from two services each and a police helicopter. A man had been reported as entering the River Wye, and as our first team members arrived a second man was also in the river. As the SARA team was assembling the second man was rescued just below Redbrook by the fire service; we assisted with getting him to the waiting medics. The Coastguard helicopter then arrived overhead and spotted the first man further downstream. He was rescued into a fire service boat and then assessed by the SARA team doctor at the riverbank before being taken to an ambulance. Having been in the river in the pitch dark for well over an hour he was lucky to be in a good condition!

We ran two scenario exercises with Cave Rescue to practice moving a casualty from the mouth of remote caves in the Wye Valley up to an ambulance. One of these included putting a 170m long cableway across the River Wye (see photo on p22), hopefully something we won't ever have to do in anger but at least we now know we can do it.

Training this year included getting all our coxswains qualified with the RYA Advanced Powerboat Certificate of Competence, a major advance in our effort to comply with the highest professional standard. Many thanks to everyone who worked hard to achieve this.

For several years we have had a number of our volunteers qualified as Swiftwater & Flood Rescue instructors through the Rescue3Europe system; this year we had a big push to get our rope rescue to the same level. Four team members qualified as Rope Operator Instructors in the Spring, and then in the Autumn went on to do a 'Specialist' course (the top level), which will enable them to upgrade to being Rope Technician (ie 'supervisor') instructors in 2023 or 2024. The rope rescue instructor training will continue in 2023, and we plan to qualify another cohort of Swiftwater instructors. This year we also saw a number of courses being delivered by our Swiftwater Boat Operator Instructors who had qualified last year, and at least one of the newly qualified helms was in action on the February flood deployments.

Working well alongside other emergency services is a key factor in successful rescues. We were delighted to see Kev Adcock from Glos Fire & Rescue again in October, delivering a second set of seminars on effective Incident Command. An important part of that is using the JESIP (Joint Emergency Services interoperability Programme) Framework and other standard material, which is now being baked into our internal training. We have also sent some of our more senior members on specific JESIP training run by various Police and Fire Services.

At the end of January, postponed several times due to Covid, we hosted a formal inspection visit from senior officers of HMCG. The scope of the visit covered the three SARA lifeboats stations - Beachley Sharpness and Newport. Considerable work by SARA personnel over a protracted period culminated in the successful renewal of Declared Facility Status for SARA. It is a source of great pride to our crews that at that meeting, based on the inspection of our systems and processes and our operational track record, SARA were commended by Alun Newsome (HMCG Divisional Commander Wales & West of England) for setting the 'Gold Standard' for Declared Facilities within the Independent Lifeboat sector, something which he has reiterated subsequently.



Kev Adcock from Glos Fire Service running a workshop in Incident Command



Our much-delayed formal visit from HM Coastguard

A mere fortnight later we also hosted a visit by Glyn Saunders from the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT). On behalf of the Home Office, they inspect the organisations which host declared Flood Rescue Teams, of which SARA has 6. They visit organisations every 3 years, previously visiting us at SARA Wyre Forest in late 2018. Once again we received a very good report, and were graded 'Outstanding' in two aspects of the inspection.

With both of these visits, the discussions which are held alongside the formal inspections are very valuable, and we appreciate the support of the officers in these organisations as well as the hard work of the SARA volunteers which goes into maintaining these services.

Our fundraising efforts managed to return to almost full steam, following the disruption of the Covid pandemic. Our volunteers were out in many villages, towns and cities across the area and the support of our local community was very evident. Our flagship fundraising event 'The Wild Wye Swim' was all set to take place in September, but sadly had to be cancelled as the River Wye was running very low all summer; other events such as the Monmouth Raft Race were also cancelled in 2022. This was a big blow for our income in 2022 but we are hopeful that it will run in 2023. On a smaller scale, the Wild Wye SwimRun, first held last year, was held again and many new runners safely ran the 13km and swam across the Wye.

The most spectacular (and oddest) fundraising event though was the Voyage of the Dragalo. The dragalo is a 4-person dragon-shaped (if you use your imagination) pedalo, belonging to one of the new recruits at our Upton Station. Somehow he persuaded 3 friends to pedal it down the Severn in the summer, all the way from Stourport to Beachley – using the canal to get from Gloucester to Sharpness. Along the way they raised an impressive £1,600 for the setup of the new Cotswolds Station, as well as getting very sore and sunburned. I am not entirely sure if they are all still friends!





The Voyage of the Dragalo

We are also grateful to our donors in local and district councils, Rotary and Lions clubs, and organisations like WCS Group and Renishaw which are loyal supporters. We were the annual adopted charity for the Cotswold Edge Golf Club, which was a wonderful partnership. We are particularly grateful to the Police and Crime Commissioners of Gloucestershire and of West Mercia, both of whom provide funds on an ongoing basis.

As CEO I have been involved with the development and formation of NILA working with members from various other independent lifeboat organisations and the MP Anthony Mangnall to put in place the structure for an organisation which will hopefully raise the profile of all independent lifeboats and bring us out from the shadow of the RNLI.

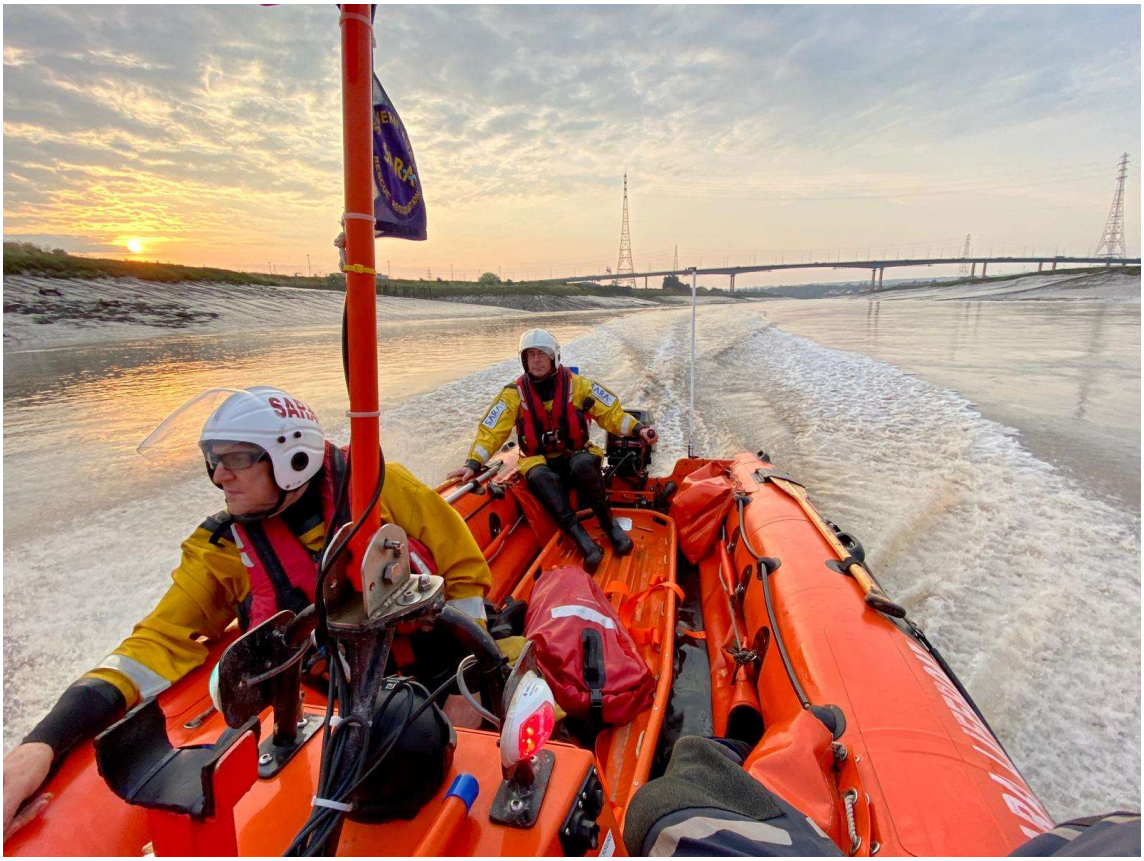
We remain Associate Members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and it is important that we continue to engage with this umbrella body to develop our relationship; benefitting not least from insurance covers and Medical licence to allow advanced casualty care provision for our communities.

SARA is a member team of the regional grouping South West England Rescue Association (SWERA) along with various other voluntary SAR teams including Gloucester Cave Rescue Group, Avon and Somerset SAR, Wiltshire Search and Rescue, Dorset Search and Rescue, Mendip Cave Rescue and others. SARA maintains a strong leadership role within this regional organisation, and it has become a more effective organisation within recent years, both of which I am keen to continue. SARA hosted a large training event for SWERA in July, which was very well received and I am delighted that Wiltshire SAR are planning one for Autumn 2023.

Lastly one of my highlights of the year was to be able to present Platinum Jubilee Medals at each of our SARA Stations. These were awarded to all members of the voluntary emergency services who had served 5 years at the date of the actual Jubilee (70 years from Queen Elizabeth's Accession), with 77 being awarded to SARA members.

I'd like to conclude by thanking the families of our volunteers. Having a family member turn out at unpredictable times, for an unknown duration, and returning muddy and tired, sometimes emotionally strained, is not easy. Providing the service we do entails a great deal of sacrifice by those around our members as well as from them directly and as CEO I am profoundly grateful.

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer



An early morning callout to the River Avon at low water









Presentation of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medals to SARA Members by the CEO at SARA Wyre Forest (top), Beachley (middle, to founder Jim Hewitt and to long-standing Station Chair Merv Fleming) and at SARA Sharpness (bottom)



A Search Exercise on Cleeve Hill



Flood Rescue Wading training in Monmouth



A Steep Ground Casualty Evacuation Exercise in the Forest of Dean



A wet night for a Missing Person Search in the Forest of Dean



Nice and dry for Search Control in the Village Hall though

Financial Review

2022 saw a return to almost the pre-pandemic levels of fundraising activities and income, though unsurprisingly the benefit we receive from cash collecting tins in pubs, shops etc has declined and will likely never recover from the general shift away from cash. However the donations received at collection events remain strong. It was unfortunate that the Wild Wye Swim could not run in 2022 but we benefitted from a generous legacy and some significant grants. Both Gloucestershire and West Mercia Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners provide ongoing financial support and we have hosted a funded junior doctor placement for the year which we hope will become an ongoing arrangement. Overall our ongoing income streams now contribute around £25,000 per year.

In this, its first full year of operations, the new SARA Cotswolds Station was allowed to 'keep' all the income it raised to fund its start-up needs. There were some impressive sponsored events and they delivered nearly £15,000 from a Crowdfunding campaign through Spacehive and were successful with a National Lottery bid for nearly £10,000 towards their much-needed vehicle. Most of the 'start-up' costs were incurred this year, with some purchases remaining for 2023 along with the vehicle.

Successful fundraising campaigns this year also funded two new boat engines as well as the Cotswolds new equipment, and a UK SAR grant funded training for missing person search managers. In addition we were able to train and qualify all our lifeboat helms and coxswains to the Advanced Powerboat CoC level and to qualify a first tranche of Rope Rescue Instructors. At the start of the year we also purchased a new crew vehicle for missing person search, and converted an existing trailer into a mobile search control unit to replace, on a trial basis, the old ISU(S) which was retired and sold during the year.

We have maintained our focus on retaining unrestricted funds for general purpose use and to build the reserves. We have maintained an Unrestricted Reserve of £100,000 (in addition to an operating balance of £20,000) and I am delighted that at the end of this year we were able to designate £50,000 for Major Asset Replacements. There is much need of this, as four of our 4x4 vehicles are now end-of life and both boats and other vehicles will require replacement in the next few years.

The year finished with SARA in a good financial position, with a much healthier bank balance than for many years but with significant challenges ahead so there is no room for complacency at this point.

Richard Newhouse

CFO from Feb 2023





The Search Control Trailer, more popular with some than others!

Review of Risks

The Trustees and Executive Committee conduct an ongoing review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and processes and controls are in place to mitigate those risks.

With respect to financial risk, the significant and unexpected rise in inflation over 2022 combined with the 'cost of living' crisis led the Trustees to establish a Financial Sustainability sub-committee early in the year. This group is working with the General Managers to identify cost reductions which can be made and contingency plans which can be deployed to ensure SARA's financial resources can sustain it over the next one to two years, even if income drops in that time. An asset review is being undertaken to identify surplus assets, with the aim of generating income from the sale of low-use non-essential items whilst saving repair, maintenance and insurance costs.

The Association has Standard Operating Procedures which each member must follow. Whilst SARA is not bound by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (as it is part of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) which is exempt from the above Act), the Executive Committee policy is that the Association should use this legislation as 'good practice' for SARA operations.

SARA carries insurance policies to cover health and safety risks. Additional insurance cover is provided through Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW). The Executive Committee continues to monitor Insurance policies to ensure they are adequate for SARAs purposes.



A stretcher on a 170m-long cableway across the River Wye; exercising a possible contingency plan for moving an injured caver from the mouth of Otter Hole cave to an ambulance, in April 2022

Fundraising

SARA raises funds for services through applications to charitable foundations and trusts, bids for appropriate statutory contracts, supported by individual and corporate donations, and community fundraising activities and support.

SARA is registered with the Fundraising Regulator, has a Fundraising Complaints Policy and Procedure and adheres to The Code of Fundraising Practice.

Any Fundraising Complaints received by the charity are recorded and acted upon as set out in the procedure.

SARA has no paid fundraisers and does not pay for the services of any fundraising organisation or people.



What Shopper at this Tesco could decline to make a donation?

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SARA

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Severn Area Rescue Association (the Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2022

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the Trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 financial statements to be reached.

Nicholas Webb FCA
Azets
First Floor, Copthall House, 1 New Road
Stourbridge. DY8 1PH

Dated: 27th September 2023

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Statement of Financial Activities

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds	Unrestricted Funds: Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022	Total Funds 2021
		£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	4	187,744	-	52,864	240,608	-
Charitable activities	5	23,590	-	-	23,590	-
Other income	6	9,265	-	-	9,265	-
Other trading activities	7	658	-	-	658	-
Investments	7	84	-	-	84	-
Total income		221,341	-	52,864	274,205	-
Expenditure on:						
Fundraising costs	10	8,986	-	1,747	10,733	-
Charitable activities	11	230,152	-	27,151	257,303	-
Total resources expended		239,138	-	28,898	268,036	-
Net income / expenditure		(17,797)	-	23,966	6,169	-
Gross transfers between funds	18	(40,326)	50,000	(9,674)	-	-
Net movement in funds		(58,123)	50,000	14,292	6,169	-
Fund balances at 31 December 2021		-	-	-	-	-
Balances transferred from SARA 505504 on 1 January 2022*		249,744	-	126,135	375,879	-
Adjustments to transferred balances	20	163,404	-	(99,288)	64,116	-
Fund balances at 31 December 2022		355,025	50,000	41,139	446,164	-

*All assets, liabilities and operations of SARA Charity number 505504 were transferred in their totality to SARA CIO Charity number 1193634 with effect from 1 January 2022.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2022

	Notes	2022		2021
		£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets	15		214,711	-
Current assets				
Debtors	16	42,248		-
Cash at bank and in hand		218,939		-
Total current assets		261,187		-
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(29,734)		-
Net current assets			231,453	-
Total assets less current liabilities			446,164	-
Reserves				
Restricted Funds	18		41,139	-
Unrestricted Funds:				
General Funds		355,025		-
Designated Fund: Asset Replacement	19	50,000		-
			405,025	-
			446,164	-

These accounts were approved by the Trustees on 27th September 2023 and signed on behalf of the board by

……..
Richard Newhouse CFO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

1. Accounting policies

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the SARA Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)' (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The accounts are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are set aside by the Trustees as a firm of Unrestricted Fund, for the purpose of financing the future purchase / replacement major assets. In this case, the major assets are likely to be buildings, lifeboats and other specialist vehicles.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees aim to hold in [unrestricted] reserve, sufficient funds to cover the principle costs of SARA in the event of a sudden 'economic shock' in terms of reduced income or major item of expenditure (such as replacement of a critical asset). In the case of expenditure, this amount would allow SARA to operate for around six months in the absence of any income being received during that time. The Trustees, advised by the Chief Finance Officer, believe a reserve of £100,000 is sufficient for this purpose at any one time.

1.4 Income

- Cash and other donations are recognised on receipt.
- Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised when the reclaimed tax is received.
- Legacies are recognised on receipt.
- Grant income is recognised on receipt.
- Income earned from charitable activities is recognised once SARA becomes legally entitled to it, performance conditions have been met (if any), the amounts are certain and it is probable the income will be received.

1.5 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are measured initially at cost and measured subsequently at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses. In the case of assets purchased by the CIO, depreciation is recognised to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land and buildings:	Straight line over 25 years
Lifeboats	Straight line over 5 years
Vehicles	Straight line over 5 years
Equipment:	Straight line over 4 years

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

Assets transferred to the CIO from SARA Charity 505504 have been included at their cost net of depreciation at the date of transfer, 1 January 2022, and are depreciated in accordance with the depreciation policy as above.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At the reporting end date, the Charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated to determine the extent of that impairment loss.

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments. Financial instruments are recognised in the Charity's Balance Sheet when the Charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set-off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

2. Related party transactions

SARA commissions minor repairs to drysuits from Merv Fleming Associates, a business operated by Mervyn Fleming, a trustee of this Charity. The total value of related party transactions between Merv Fleming Associates and SARA was £513 in 2022 and the work was performed at a discounted commercial rate (less than commercial price) for SARA.

Accounting software is supplied through Vertis Accounting, a company of which Ian Jarvis, a trustee of this Charity, is Director. The total value of related party transactions between Vertis Accounting and SARA was £491 (net of VAT) in 2022.

3. Subsidiary undertakings

The Charity sole subsidiary at 31 December 2022 is SARA Trading Limited - Registered in England (company number 11820156), incorporated 11 February 2019. This is a company with no share capital and limited by guarantee. The Charity has given a guarantee of £100 and is the relevant legal entity by virtue of the ability to appoint and remove trustees. The four officers of the Company are members of the management team of the Charity. The Company provides commercial training and organises events to raise funds for the Charity. The company had net assets at 28 February 2022 of £7,750 (2021: £17,348). The Company donated £7,550 to SARA during the year (being the remaining proceeds of the 2021 Wild Wye Swim). Consolidated accounts are not required.

4. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Donations and gifts	151,486	31,607	183,093	-
Grant income (see Note 9)	31,258	21,257	52,515	-
Legacies	5,000	-	5,000	-
	187,744	52,864	240,608	-

5. Charitable activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Fundraising activities	21,590	-
Service level agreement	2,000	-
	23,590	-

6. Other income

	2022 £	2021 £
Other income	7,015	-
Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	2,250	-
	9,265	-

7. Other trading activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Commercial sponsorship	500	-
Other trading income	133	-
Sales of goods	25	-
	658	-

8. Investments

	2022 £	2021 £
Interest received	84	-

9. Grants

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Local government grants	3,370	2,357	5,727	-
Other grants	27,888	18,900	46,788	-
	31,258	21,257	52,515	-

10. Raising funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Costs of raising funds	7,521	1,747	9,268	-
Cost of sales	1,465	-	1,465	-
	8,986	1,747	10,733	-

11. Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Depreciation and impairment	54,491	-	54,491	-
Repairs and maintenance	34,592	7,922	42,514	-
Equipment purchases	22,901	18,458	41,359	-
Insurance	37,912	-	37,912	-
Training	24,021	-	24,021	-
Fuel	19,258	-	19,258	-
Communications	11,641	-	11,641	-
Consumables	4,497	698	5,195	-
Regulatory compliance	2,138	-	2,138	-
	211,451	27,078	238,529	-
Share of support costs (see note 13)	15,480	73	15,553	-
Share of governance costs (see note 13)	3,221	-	3,221	-
	230,152	27,151	257,303	-

12. Support costs

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 £	2021 £
Support Costs				
Heat, light and water	8,776	-	8,776	-
Bank and finance charges	2,666	-	2,666	-
Other support costs	1,346	-	1,346	-
Computer costs	1,130	-	1,130	-
Printing, postage and stationery	573	73	646	-
Rent and rates	581	-	581	-
Travel costs	408	-	408	-
	15,480	73	15,553	-
Governance costs				
Accountancy and independent examination fees	3,136	-	3,136	-
Legal and professional fees	85	-	85	-
	3,221	-	3,221	-
Total support Costs	18,701	73	18,774	-

13. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from SARA during the year.

14. Employees

There were no employees during the year.

15. Fixed assets

	Freehold land & buildings £	Lifeboats £	Vehicles £	Equipment £	Total £
Cost:					
At 31 December 2021	-	-	-	-	-
Transferred from SARA 505504	397,751	614,745	244,126	246,727	1,503,349
Additions	-	7,263	21,715	-	28,978
Disposals	-	-	(5,000)	-	(5,000)
At 31 December 2022	397,751	622,008	260,841	246,727	1,527,327
Depreciation:					
At 31 December 2021	-	-	-	-	-
Transferred from SARA 505504	245,404	560,668	238,621	218,432	1,263,125
Charge for the year	12,681	25,073	7,524	9,213	54,491
Disposals	-	-	(5,000)	-	(5,000)
At 31 December 2022	258,085	585,741	241,145	227,645	1,312,616
Carrying Amount:					
At 31 December 2021	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 December 2022	139,666	36,267	19,696	19,082	214,711

The Trustees have taken the opportunity to restate the cost and accumulated depreciation values of the assets upon transfer from SARA 505504.

16. Debtors and prepayments

	2022 £	2021 £
Debtors	5,116	-
Provision for Bad Debts	(520)	-
Prepayments, accrued income and other debtors	27,888	-
VAT account balance	9,764	-
	42,248	-

17. Creditors and accrued income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	12,518	-	12,518	-
Accruals and deferred income	2,216	15,000	17,216	-
	14,734	15,000	29,734	-

18. Restricted Funds

All assets, liabilities and operations of SARA Charity 505504 were transferred in their totality to SARA CIO Charity 1193634 with effect from 1 January 2022. Adjustments have then been made to the Restricted Funds transferred as, in the case of assets in the Restricted Funds, no restrictions or conditions remain over the use of those assets so the preferred policy has been adopted of holding these assets in Unrestricted Funds. In addition, some cash funds were grouped within the Asset Funds: these have been separated out to provide greater transparency about the use of separate Restricted Funds managed by the CIO.

In the year, funds were transferred from Restricted Funds to Unrestricted Funds on the purchase of the assets for which the Restricted Funds had been received. The CIO Charity's total funds now include Restricted Funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific (restricted) purposes:

				Movements in Year				
Restricted Funds:	Brought Forward 1 Jan 2022 £	Transfer From SARA 505504 £	Adjustments on Transfer £	Transfers In Year £	Funds In £	Funds Out £	Year End Accrual £	Closing Balance 31 Dec 2022 £
Lifeboat Asset Fund	-	56,253	(56,253)	-	-	-	-	-
Other Assets Fund	-	50,415	(50,415)	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicle Asset Fund	-	3,944	(3,944)	-	-	-	-	-
Central Glouc OPPC Grant	-	-	-	-	5,000	(3,874)	-	1,126
Beachley Land Crew PPE	-	-	-	-	607	(607)	-	-
Beachley CCTV Equipment	-	-	2,625	-	-	-	-	2,625
Beachley Vehicle Fund	-	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-	-	-
Cotswolds Start Up/Station Devel.	-	5,026	1,288	-	18,360	(14,545)	-	10,129
Cotswolds New Vehicle	-	-	-	-	16,984	-	-	16,984
Newport SARA 14 Engine	-	-	-	-	1,150	-	-	1,150
Newport Vehicle Fund	-	-	510	94	-	(604)	-	-
Sharpness Building Refurbishment	-	7,304	-	-	150	(2,458)	-	4,996
Sharpness SARA 6 Trailer			-	-	3,129	-	-	3,129
Sharpness SARA 4 Engine	-	1,378	-	(6,952)	5,574	-	-	-
Sharpness PPE	-	-	400	-	500	(900)	-	-
Sharpness Racking for SM8	-	-	945	5	-	(950)	-	-
Sharpness Lifesaving Equipment	-	-	770	-	-	(770)	-	-
Wyre Forest Equipment	-	1,815	985	-	410	(3,210)	-	-
WF SRT Instructor Training	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	1,000
WF New Vehicle Fund	-	-	-	-	15,000	-	(15,000)	-
WF Vehicles	-	-	801	179	-	(980)	-	-
	-	126,135	(99,288)	(9,674)	67,864	(28,898)	(15,000)	41,139

19. Designated funds

The Trustees recognize the importance of maintaining the set of boats and vehicles, and ensuring their replacements on a timely basis. The Major Assets Fund has been initiated with £50,000 to support the purchase of replacement major assets, to be supplemented with other funds specifically raised for these purposes. It is envisaged that the use and replenishment of monies within the MAF will be an ongoing activity.

		Movements in Year			
Designated Funds:	Brought Forward 1 Jan 2022 £	Transfers In Year £	Funds In £	Funds Out £	Closing Balance 31 Dec 2022 £
Major Asset Replacement Fund	-	50,000	-	-	50,000
	-	50,000	-	-	50,000

20. Transfer of funds from SARA Charity 505504: amendments to brought in balances

While the accumulated funds of SARA 505504 were taken over entirely by the CIO, adjustments on transfer have been made where the accounting policies of the CIO differ to the accounting policies of SARA 505504, to prevent distortion of the CIO accounts. In addition to adjustments to Restricted Funds explained in Note 19, grants received to fund some fixed assets were recognised as Deferred Income and released over the life of the asset by SARA 505504. A different accounting policy has been agreed for the new CIO with grant income being recognised when received. Therefore, remaining deferred grants balances were transferred to accumulated unrestricted funds on transfer.

Adjustments to opening balances:	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
Release of deferred grant income	64,116	-	64,116
Adjustment of Restricted Funds	99,288	(99,288)	-
	163,404	(99,288)	64,116

21. Analysis of net assets between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
	General £	Designated £	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 December are represented by					
Tangible assets	214,711	-	-	214,711	-
Debtors	42,248	-	-	42,248	-
Cash and cash equivalents	112,800	50,000	56,139	218,939	-
Creditors	(14,734)	-	(15,000)	(29,734)	-
	355,025	50,000	41,139	446,164	-

22. Funds held as Custodian Trustee

No funds are held as custodian trustee.

23. Exemptions from disclosure

No exemptions from disclosure have been applied.

Annex A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks

SARA is a multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue organisation and is the designated rescue service for an area of over 20,000 km^2 on and around the Severn. It provides:

- Lifeboat cover for large parts of the Rivers Severn, Wye, Usk and the Bristol Avon*
- Cliff rescue, particularly for the lower Wye Valley climbing areas including Symonds Yat
- Mud rescue
- Swift water and flood rescue
- Land Search

SARA operates from seven rescue stations, at Newport, Chepstow (SARA Beachley), Sharpness, Tewkesbury, Upton-upon-Severn, Kidderminster (SARA Wyre Forest) and at Cirencester (SARA Cotswolds). SARA Crew receive 'callouts' through a combination of dedicated Pagers and through SMS messages using the SARCALL system.

Lifeboats and Mud Rescue

SARA is the designated rescue service for the Rivers Severn, Wye and Usk. The SARA lifeboats, based at Beachley, Sharpness and Newport are tasked by HM Coastguard, largely in response to 999 calls.

The River Severn below Gloucester is used for around 350 commercial ship transits per year and the lower Wye around 150. The Severn also has over 500 registered leisure craft transits between Gloucester and Sharpness alone each year, and many more that are not counted. The tidal range on the Severn at Beachley, and on the Wye at Chepstow, is 15 metres (the second highest in the World!), which means that the river changes within a few hours from a wide expanse of deep water, to narrow shallow channels weaving through extensive sandbanks.

In addition, the tidal current on the Severn reaches 12 knots; this can lead to very turbulent river conditions in even a moderate wind. Most of the way to Gloucester the riverbed is very broad, with a narrow and winding navigable channel, marked with numerous buoys, beacons and transits. The margins of all the tidal rivers have wide and thick mudbanks below the high-tide levels, and in places the exposed mud leads out to rocky islands at low tide.

Typical incidents for SARA include vessels grounding, or losing power hence requiring urgent assistance to avoid grounding. People have been rescued from islands or ledges where they were being cut off by the tide, or actually plucked from the mud. On other occasions boats, and other floating hardware, are broken loose by the water and drift with the fast currents and have to be recovered. On average lifeboats are launched operationally around once a week (50-60 launches per year).

*SARA's declared area of lifeboat operations, for which it is tasked by HM Coastguard, is the Severn, north from a line between Newport and Clevedon to Maisemore Weir near Gloucester, and the tributary rivers Wye (to Bigsweir Bridge), Usk (to the M4 Bridge) and the Avon (to Bristol Docks). If required in exceptional circumstances, SARA Lifeboats can extend beyond this area, using a re-fuelling stop at Newport, to operate north of a line from Barry to Weston Super Mare.

The SARA lifeboats area also features several high bridges – notably the M48 Severn Bridge but also the A48 in Chepstow and several in Newport. SARA is often called out to a 'person at risk' on a bridge. The majority, but sadly not all, are resolved directly by the Police. However, a lifeboat is always launched so as to be ready. Recoveries are therefore not uncommon, but SARA has successfully rescued people from the water below a bridge.

Land Search

SARA provides land search capabilities in support of the Police. SARA has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in place with the Police Forces for Gloucestershire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, the West Midlands, Shropshire, West Mercia and Warwickshire. These Police Forces request SARA support for 'Missing Person' searches in their respective areas, and teams from the various SARA Stations work together as appropriate to the search area location.

Such missing person searches can range in duration from less than an hour to spanning several days and may become 'recovery' rather than rescue operations. SARA is able to deploy one of its two Mobile 'Incident Support Units' (ISUs) to support such searches and other operations; searches are managed from the ISU, which is the focus for liaison with the Police and other agencies. SARA's MoUs with the Police are to assist with any search, in any terrain, for a vulnerable missing person – including urban searches if required.

SARA is also a member (Associate Member since Jan 2021) of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW). Generally, MR teams deploy into mountainous environments (or at least challenging ones); in the SARA area the more technical areas would include the Wye Valley, Forest of Dean, Wyre Forest or Cleeve Hill.

In addition, all neighbouring MR teams back each other up, so SARA is considered a backup for Longtown MR Team, and other teams in the Brecon Beacons. One example was the extensive search for April Jones around Machynlleth; SARA did not deploy as many other MR teams did but was put on high alert to back fill for any jobs in these teams' areas.

Cliff Rescue

SARA Beachley is a specific base for the Cliff Rescue in the Lower Wye Valley, where the cliffs around Wyntours Leap, Symonds Yat and other walls are a popular destination for climbers of all abilities. It is estimated that there are 3,000-4,000 climber-days per year in the Lower Wye Valley. There are also a number of disused quarries in the area, in which accidents involving non-climbers happen.

SARA has an MoU with Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) for effecting cliff rescue operations, and an increasingly close relationship with South Wales FRS (some of the cliffs are on the Welsh side of the Wye). The SARA rope rescue training is based on Rescue3 qualifications, also used by the Fire and Rescue services which facilitates interoperability.

There is a further close relationship with Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group (GCRG), which also has rope rescue trained personnel and relevant equipment, which are available as required. Conversely SARA is available to provide surface support to cave rescue operations, and indeed is integral to the contingency plans for caves such at 'Otter Hole' in the Wye Valley. Rope rescue operations are thankfully rare, but joint exercises are conducted with the FRS and GCRG.

Swift Water and Flood Rescue

Swift Water is defined as 'that moving fast enough to produce sufficient force to present a life and safety hazard to a person entering it'. Operations in 'swift water' are referred to as 'SRT' tasks and include life-saving rescue. However, due to the time-sensitive nature of water incidents these are often search and if necessary recovery operations. Their initiation is often by a combination of Police, FRS or Coastguard. Dependent on the water concerned, a small boat may be deployed, or a floating platform, in addition to crew directly in shallow water. SARA has the ability to launch such small boats in almost all rivers, with no requirement for slipway or road access to the riverbank. Such small boats are referred to as 'Rescue' boats; SARA prefers rigid rescue boats to reduce the risk of punctures from the use of inflatables.

SARA Swift Water crew are qualified as 'Swift Water and Flood Rescue Technicians', which is the national standard. The Swift Water Teams are also able to deploy on flood rescue operations nationally, as Flood Response Teams. DEFRA, through the National DEFRA Flood Rescue group, coordinate the Flood Response Team deployments nationally. SARA has 2 x 'Type B' and 4 x 'Type C' declared teams of 7, shared between its 7 Stations, which need to be ready for deployment anywhere in the country. SARA has a proven track record of deploying around the UK on such incidents including Essex (2014), Devon (2014) and Yorkshire (2015/16).

First Aid and Casualty Care

All SARA crew are trained, at minimum, in basic first aid. A number of SARA crew are further qualified to the much higher level of 'Casualty Care' as defined by MREW. In addition, a number of crew are professional paramedics, nurses or serving as Community First Responders.

First aid equipment is carried during all searches and in all SARA vehicles; depending on the nature of the operation, equipment such as Oxygen, portable defibrillators, back- and neck-stabilization boards may be taken into the field.

Education and Training Provision

SARA provides training and education to the wider community through a variety of routes. These include:

1. Emergency Services Training. For the Emergency Services, SARA provides lifeboat training. For example, SARA Beachley has an ongoing relationship with the South West Ambulance Services Trust to provide structured, water-based rescue training for members of their Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART). This provides specialist knowledge, training and experience of working with boats, including in the tidal waters of the Severn Estuary.

2. School Visits. Covid-permitting, the SARA stations frequently host visits from and undertakes visits to local primary schools, Scouts and Guides Units, etc. These are designed to be educational as well as fun, informing young people of the dangers of the water and other aspects of the local area of which they may be unaware.

3. Outreach Activities. SARA frequently particulates in relevant 'community outreach' activities such as the Drowning Awareness Weeks, again providing education about the avoidance of risks as well as information concerning SARA and other emergency Services.

Event Safety Cover

Most years SARA also provides safety and first aid cover to local outdoor-based events, generally sports related. These are usually events which involve water, and/or off-road running, such as rowing regattas, raft races, triathlons and off-road running races. SARA undertakes this role for several reasons:

1. To support the local community. SARA has historically provided this service at a discount to the notional cost, in order to facilitate and support these local events to a greater extent than alternative organisations would be able to. The number of such races and events supported continues to rise, as local organisations realise the capabilities which SARA can bring to their events.

2. To raise SARA's profile. SARA is usually paid for providing the service, albeit at hugely discounted rates for community groups to enable these to be viable, but for many members of the public spectating, this is an excellent opportunity to see SARA in action.

3. To put SARA's skills into play 'in the field' and provide real-world experience.



Spot the Swiftwater Rescue Team!
Training in the dark in the Severn at low water at Beachley

Annex B: Summary of SARA Capabilities

Inland Missing Person Search
- Foot based open-area search, including open area, wooded and steep / very steep terrain
- Able to establish and manage a safe system of work for other services on difficult terrain
- Water search, including from the bank, in the water on foot, on small inflatable craft and on small powered boats
- Field-based search control facility, independent of any infrastructure
- 4x4 vehicles capable of transporting a loaded stretcher to a road
- Search planning, management and record-keeping to Mountain Rescue standards

Water operations
- Boat- and foot-based search and rescue anywhere upstream from the M4 Second Severn Crossing (and below it if needed), at all water levels and all but the most extreme weather conditions
- Tidal water operations compliant with HM Coastguard Rescue Boat Code, with B-Class and D-Class lifeboats. B-Class capable of operating in all weathers and rescuing 6 x casualties at a time
- Inland water operations complaint with DEFRA Flood ConOps, with Type B (powered boat all-SRT) teams, all Rescue3 qualified
- Swiftwater teams able to operate in fast and/or shallow inland water by day or night, with and without inflatable rafts & platforms
- Able to launch & recover a small boat almost anywhere
- Water operations interface with land-based teams
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc.

Mud Rescue
- Able to operate on and across the tidal mud in the Severn and Wye Estuaries, whether accessed from the bank or from the water
- Able to extract a casualty from the mud, and transport them up to dry land or down to a boat

Cliff and Steep Ground (Gloucestershire-Based)
- Fully equipped team for working at height and on steeply sloping ground, all Rescue3-qualified.
- Focused on the Wye Valley climbing areas and Cotswolds, deployable across the SARA area
- Able to access and manage casualties, and transport up or down a slope / cliff
- Able to establish and operate off-vertical or horizontal systems eg cableway or high-line (aka Tirolean) systems
- Able to equip and transport specialists eg Ambulance HART, forensic officers etc

Advanced First Aid
- Mountain Rescue-qualified ‘Casualty Carers’ on all callouts
- Team doctors usually deployed, else available as remote support to Casualty Carers.
- Provision of Advanced Life Support including use of airways and oxygen
- Management of trauma including spinal injuries
- Use of appropriate basic pain relief medication
- Capable of operating in any terrain, however steep or in water

Command and control
- 24x7 immediate response callout handling team able to discuss potential SARA response and mobilise accordingly
- JESIP-trained Incident Commander (‘SARA OIC’) deployed as part of any operation, plus team leaders within each operational team
- VHF and Airwave radios
- Land and water teams practiced at working with HMCG helicopter

SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION

England & Wales - Charity number 1193634

Accounts

Severn Area Rescue Association
Annual Report and Accounts 2021



Multi-Disciplinary Volunteer Search and Rescue Team with over Forty-Five Years of Lifeboat Service on the River Severn

Registered Charity CIO 1193634

Note

Until 1 January 2022 SARA operated as a Registered Charity, no 505504. The SARA CIO was established during 2021, and the entirety of the organisation was transferred into the CIO on 1 January 2022. The SARA CIO was dormant during 2021.

All of the activities described in this report were therefore conducted under the 505504 Charity.

Financial Review

For the period ended 31 December 2021 the CIO has remained dormant with the expectation of taking on all the assets and liabilities as well as all the search and rescue operations of the SARA charity number 505504 from 1 January 2022. The Charity has received no income and no costs have been incurred during the period covered by these accounts.

The remainder of the financial information relates to the 505504 Charity and is included here for completeness.

Exemptions From Disclosure and Other Exemptions

There has been no independent examination of the financial statements of Severn Area Rescue Association CIO for the period ended 31 December 2021 as there have been no transactions in the new charity to that date.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows. As the charity has been dormant, only a Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet have been prepared at 31 December 2021; no other financial disclosures are considered necessary.

FOREWORD

I think I can speak for all of us in saying that 2021 was a great deal better than 2020. It has not, though, been without its challenges, especially from a charity perspective. Fundraising remained difficult and, of course, operating in a COVID environment was a constant battle. However, with very few cases within the organisation in the almost two years that we have been living with the virus, the time spent writing and following new procedures was, and remains, worthwhile, and the sacrifices made to the detriment of fundraising and training have paid off. One cannot help but be impressed with the way in which SARA has maintained its operational capability and continued to serve its communities.

In parallel with operations and training, the year's largest project has been the work to change SARA's status from a 'standard' charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Volunteers from within SARA were able to complete most of the work, obviating the need for the charity to use valued funds. As a result, SARA is in an excellent position to go forward with a new governance structure and a wider Trustee base. On a somewhat smaller scale, I was delighted to see the formation of a new SARA station at Cirencester.

With people unable to travel as freely, 'staycations' became the thing. Large numbers of tourists visited the Severn area to take part in sailing, hiking, biking, and climbing, and with increased activity came additional pressure on the rescue services. Overall, there were 113 callouts in 2021 across all disciplines. The majority were within our own area, but SARA was occasionally asked to provide support to neighbouring rescue teams and, in turn, they also supported SARA. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the rescue services SARA work with. We frequently train together and can seamlessly integrate when it matters.

An army may march on its stomach but charities 'march' on funding. A professional search and rescue service depends on the funds to train and equip. Please do keep supporting these wonderful volunteers and what they do. SARA also needs YOU. People are the most valuable asset; not only operationally but also in fundraising, admin, vehicle and station maintenance, equipment management and many other roles across the organisation. If you can spare a few hours a week, please do get in touch with your local station.

Thank you for your support over the last 12 months.



The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst

In 2021, SARA volunteers attended 113 separate operations:



*SOME CALLOUTS INVOLVE MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

and

Raised £178,000 to Support these Operations

Contents

	Page No.
Reference and Administrative Details	6
Constitution Objectives and Operations	7
Trustees' Report	10
Chief Executive Officer's Report	12
Risk & Insurance	18
Chief Financial Officer's Report	19
Independent Examiners Report	20
Financial Statements	21
Notes to the Financial Statements	25
Annex: Operational Roles and Tasks	35



Sharpness' SARA Lifeboat 4 attends a Grounded Yacht in April

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Name	Severn Area Rescue Association. Also known as Severn Rescue and SARA
Registered Charity Number	505504 (Charity CIO 1193634 from 1 Jan 2022)
Registered Address	The Lifeboat Station, Beachley, Chepstow. NP16 7HH
Independent Accounts Examiner	Azets, Stourbridge
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc

The Trustees, who have final overall Legal responsibility for the Organisation and its Governance serve for a term of 3 years are appointed in rotation at the Annual General Meeting. Those who served as Trustees during the year were as follows:

J Hewitt (Chair of Trustees)	J Cairns
A Stanley	A Palmer
M Fleming	

The Executive Committee is responsible to the Trustees for the overall running of the association, in relation to all Financial, Safety, Legal and Operational matters. Those who served on the Executive Committee during the year were as follows:

Chief Executive (CEO)	M Carwardine
Deputy CEO	E Davy
Secretary	I Roberts
Chief Financial Officer	I Jarvis
Fundraising Officer	R Newhouse
Beachley Station General Manager (GM)	R Dainty
Newport Station GM	M Duggan
Tewkesbury Station GM	A Toseland / M Gardner
Sharpness Station GM	D Palmer
Upton Station GM	M Nelson
Wyre Forest Station GM	D Gale
Cotswolds Station GM	J Dutton

During 2021 a number of additional technical and specialist managers were co-opted at the Executive level.

The Committees for the Beachley, Newport, Tewkesbury, Sharpness, Upton, Cotswolds and Wyre Forest Rescue Stations are responsible for the day-to-day running of each of the respective rescue stations.

The Association is made up entirely of volunteers.



CONSTITUTION OBJECTIVES AND OPERATIONS

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as Severn Rescue, and as SARA, is one of the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK, with approximately 180 volunteer personnel. SARA is also a major lifeboat service in the UK, with 14 operational boats, of which 5 are declared Lifeboats.

Constitution

SARA is governed by its Constitution and is a registered charity. The objects of the Association, as stated in the Constitution are:

- The protection of life and property by the provision and maintenance of a rescue service with, in particular, specialist skills in marine and cliff rescue;
- To assist Government Departments and County and Local Authorities in their provision of emergency services;
- To advance public education in outdoor safety, particularly in and around water.

The Association is non-profit making, and financed by voluntary contributions, grants from any public or private organisations, and any such fundraising activities or commercial arrangements as the Executive Committee recommends to the Trustees.

The Achievement of the Objects of the Charity

The policies adopted by the Executive Committee during the course of the year have met the objects of the Charity in the following ways:

- Through the Association's 7 rescue stations and one sub-station attending over 100 callouts during the year, all tasked by the principal emergency services.
- Through the provision of Water Safety scenarios for schools and other interested groups to raise awareness for everyone, especially children, to become more 'water aware'.
- Through the ongoing provision of recognised training courses held both internally and externally to promote the professionalism of the organisation.



One of Wyre Forest's inland rescue boats, SARA 26 'Stuart Frost' on a search callout on the Wye south of Hereford

The Operations of the Charity

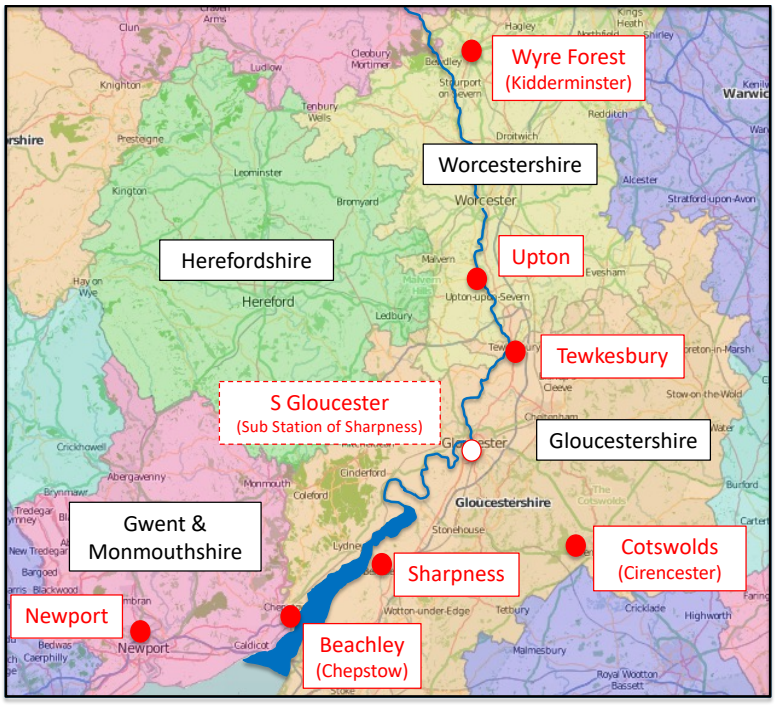
SARA's Mission Statement is:

> To protect life and property through the provision of a professionally trained, specialist rescue service for marine, flood and land search incidents

The principal area of marine operations comprises the Bristol Channel and the Severn, Wye, Avon, and Usk rivers. Typical situations involved vessels suffering breakdown or damage by grounding, becoming lost in severely restricted visibility - a particularly dangerous situation in the tidal Severn - and searching for missing people. As a Lifeboat Organisation, SARA complies with the Rescue Boat Code of Practice (RBCP) and is a founder member of the National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA).

Inland operations extend to the West of England and the Midlands and South-East Wales. SARA is a member of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and SARA is part of the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA). SARA's technical and flood rescue standards are assured by qualifications from Rescue3Europe, which comply with national standards

SARA works closely with the statutory emergency services – Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance Services, likewise HM Coastguard – also with neighbouring and related volunteer rescue organisations. These particularly include the RNLI at Portishead, Penarth and Barry, the Coastguard helicopter based at St Athan, Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and both the South Wales Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA(SW)) and K9 Serve-On Search Dogs, to name just a few. There is a strong mutual relationship with Gloucester Cave Rescue (GCRG) whose members often participate in land search operations as integrated search party members. Further details of SARA's operational roles are provided in the Annex.



The SARA Rescue Stations

Why SARA? A Short History!

The inaugural meeting to form the organisation which became SARA was held in 1973, and the charity was formally created in 1976, as 'The Severn Auxiliary Rescue Association'. Its headquarters were at Tutshill - near the current Beachley station. At this time the RNLI did not cover river estuaries, such as the River Severn. There was felt to be a need for rescue organisation responsible for this hazardous stretch of river, particularly following the closure of the Aust Ferry after the opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966. In 1985 SARA also became an official Mountain Rescue Team in the role of Cliff Rescue for the Wye Valley, and SARA Beachley Station was designated as a 'Mountain Rescue Post'.

In 1986 a second station was opened at Sharpness, primarily in response to a tragic loss of life in the Sharpness area and the name of the organisation was amended to what it is today. A station was opened at Wyre Forest in 2004, to cover the upper Severn area. In 2014 Wyre Forest Station moved into the Fire Station at Kidderminster, under a co-hosting arrangement, and in early 2021 moved again into the new Kidderminster Tri-Service 'Emergency Hub' Station.

In 2011, following major flooding, a Joint 'Water Rescue Centre' opened in Tewkesbury, as a strategic alliance between Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service, SARA and Gloucestershire County Council, and the new SARA Tewkesbury Station became SARA's fourth.

For many years, emergencies in Newport were attended to by crew from SARA Beachley. In 2014 an equipment hub was placed in Newport, and in 2015 a base was established at Malpas Fire Station. Following a major bequest, new boats were purchased in 2016 and the Newport Lifeboat Station was established, within the Malpas Fire Station, becoming independent from Beachley in 2019.

The small independent 'Water Emergency Incident Response' (WEIR) team at Upton-upon-Severn elected in 2019 to merge with SARA, forming SARA Upton Station in 2020. SARA's seventh station SARA Cotswolds, based at Cirencester Fire Station, was established in mid-2021 to provide a base for land search in eastern Gloucestershire.



Attending an Asthmatic Patient in the Forest of Dean

TRUSTEES' REPORT

This will be the final Annual Report for the original SARA Charity, number 505504, as we transferred on 1 January 2022 to a new status as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO. Little will change for SARA, at least from the outside, as we remain a fully volunteer organisation with unchanged aims, rescue services and tasking authorities. We now comprise 7 operational stations, with a new station added at Cirencester (SARA Cotswolds), to provide a much-needed base and additional resources for land (i.e. missing person) searches in eastern Gloucestershire.

At the end of 2021 we were more than 18 months into the Covid Pandemic, but I am delighted to report that SARA remains in an excellent state, fully operational with good numbers of properly equipped volunteer rescuers and a healthy bank balance. We concluded the year with around £150,500 in Unrestricted Reserves in the bank, supplemented by another £20,000 in the operating account, in addition to £15,500 in restricted amounts for ongoing projects. We benefitted from some generous grants and legacies during the year, and were able to take advantage of the opportunities for effective fundraising activities when Covid restrictions allowed. This has allowed us to make some important investments in our capability, such as replacing most of our inland water drysuits as well as opening the new station.

Our overall Callout Count was remarkably consistent with previous years. SARA did not see the huge growth in callouts related to 'staycation misadventures' which plagued some Mountain Rescue Teams, though we too had an increased number of callouts related to leisure activities. The cliff rescue team was called upon more than in recent years, and worked with the statutory emergency services several times during the year.

Much effort was dedicated this year to preparing for a formal visit from HM Coastguard, which was delayed several times by Covid. I am happy to report that when they did visit, in January 2022, SARA's Declared Facility Agreement was renewed for a further 5 years and they described SARA as setting the 'gold standard' for independent lifeboat organisations. I am also pleased that after a number of years of discussion, the 'National Independent Lifeboat Association' (NILA) has now been formed and SARA has played a significant role in this.

At the start of 2021 SARA was transitioned to the status of an 'Associate Member' of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW), a decision partly related to MREW's decision not to accept our regional association SWERA as a recognised regional body. Thus far Associate Membership status has not had a negative effect on SARA, but we will continue to manage that relationship carefully.

As ever I would like to pay tribute to our dedicated volunteers, and to all of our donors and supporters who make it all possible. I would also like to thank the emergency services for their support and assistance.

Lastly I thank and pay tribute to Jim Hewitt, the founding Chairman of the Association, who has again been Chair of the Trustees for the past 4 years and retired from the Board at the end of 2021. The organisation owes him a great deal and his continuing support is much appreciated.

Alan Stanley
Trustee
On Behalf of the Board

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

2021 was another year in which I have been very proud to have been part of this organisation. It was dominated and book-ended by Covid restriction, but in spite of that we maintained our operational capability throughout, responding to well over 100 callouts and made substantial progress in many areas, some of which I outline below. That we can do all this with an entirely volunteer organisation is in many ways incredible, and I am grateful to everyone involved – both inside the organisation and supporting us from outside.

I would like to start by paying tribute to Malcolm Bradley, who tragically passed away very suddenly in January 2022. Malcolm was a SARA member at Beachley for 10 years, serving as the station medical manager, as a radio operator manning the Operations Room, supporting fundraising events and latterly also as a 'Deployment & Launch Authority' (DLA) responsible for deploying appropriate assets to a callout. He supported many lifeboat operations in which I was involved from the station Operations Room and his friendly voice on the radio or cheery smile in the station was always reassuring. Whatever he was asked, the reply would be 'Yep, no problem', and that's a big part of how we will all remember him. Friendly, helpful, a true gentleman who was proud to be a member of SARA. We miss him dearly, as a friend as well as a colleague.

The first key development last year was that in July we were able to open a new SARA Station, SARA Cotswolds. The absence of a base for land or missing person search crew in the eastern side of Gloucestershire has been felt for many years, and we are grateful to Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service for making available space within the Cirencester Fire Station. The station – SARA's 7th – was set up by a core of experienced members who were previously part of the SARA Tewkesbury team, but actually lived much closed to Cirencester. As I write this they are coming to the end of the training of a first cohort of new team members. The SARA Cotswolds team was one of the regional winners for the Calor Rural Community Fund, and recipients of a generous grant from the Screwfix Foundation, both of which will help the physical setup of the station, and they have already become a fixture at important local events such as the Cotswolds Show and events at Badminton House.



The second key development during 2021 was that we achieved the transition to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status, which involved two EGMs during the year as well a significant amount of paperwork. Many thanks to Jim Hewitt for leading this work, ably supported by Beachley team member Omar al-Nuaimi and others across the organisation.

The transition to CIO status was the culmination of Jim Hewitt's final term as Chair of Trustees, and he retired at the end of the year, a year which had been especially challenging for him personally. Jim was the founding Chairman of SARA and for many years the force behind its development, and we owe him a great deal. He is a Life Member of SARA and we know we can count on his support for many years to come.

Operationally, 2021 did not have any of the spectacular floods which we saw in 2020, and indeed which returned in 2022, but there were other very busy periods and overall we responded to 113 separate callouts – and there were plenty of other contacts from the emergency services which did not result in a callout for a variety of reasons. Two especially busy weekends were the late May Bank Holiday, which saw 6 separate callouts, and one in October which saw 5.

We are often asked to explain or describe any pattern or trends behind our callouts, and these remain elusive. There seems to be a steady mix of misadventure, accidents and mechanical issues on boats for both locals and tourists, people missing as a consequence of mental illnesses such as Alzheimer's and mental health issues, property issues involving the rivers (drifting boats or other items etc), a few animals or birds in distress and a few false alarms. Some incidents are resolved quickly, others less so. One case this summer in the Forest of Dean involved the teams being called out by the police on 5 separate days, with both land and boat search teams being involved on 3 of those days.

Amongst the most dramatic operations for the teams were a pair of yachts which had run aground near Lydney in May, ably attended to by the SARA Sharpness and Beachley lifeboat crews, and a chap rescued from the River Wye in Chepstow, in the small hours, by the SARA Newport lifeboat. She happened to be on the road already returning from an earlier callout and was urgently diverted. They were assisted by a police helicopter, which used its powerful searchlight to assist their rapid passage back to the Beachley slipway (and sent us some photos afterwards!).



In October the rope rescue team played a leading role in rescuing three climbers at Woodcroft Quarry - one of whom had quite a bad head injury – working seamlessly with the Fire and Ambulance Services as they arrived. This is a venue at which we train regularly, and it was great to see the training paying off.

A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes to support our operations. One of the most important workstreams is the on-going work to remain compliant with the Declared Facility Agreement with the Coastguard. As well as regular training and maintenance, this year we have progressed towards all our night-time helms & Cox'ns achieving the RYA Advanced Powerboat Certificate and are now focussed upon completion of the RYA/MCA Advanced Powerboat Certificate of Competence through 2022

Another example is the team of Beachley coxswains who spent many evenings adapting and refurbishing a trailer which has been acquired from the RNLI as a new and significantly more robust trailer for SARA Lifeboat 1. This was finally put into service in October, and the old one retired to be sold off.

In the autumn we conducted a first online 'members' survey'. The results were generally reassuring but the survey highlighted some areas for management attention, which was our hope, and a small series of workstreams have been initiated as a result. We hope to make such surveys a regular occurrence.



We have maintained routine training as far as possible given the Covid restrictions, but 2021 also saw some significant advances in this area. In June we ran – jointly with ASSAR – two successive 2-day Casualty Care training and qualification weekends in the Mendips, and were able to qualify or re-certify 9 SARA members in this important advanced first aid area. Many thanks to our medical Officer Dr Jon Dallimore for getting this organised in his first year, along with 'Paramedic Pete' Sadler from ASSAR.

We also trained and qualified the first tranche of Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Boat Operator Instructors (SFRBO-Is), and ran a Search Controller training course for 11 team members. The latter has already resulted in two of the attendees being signed-off to work as fully independent search controllers, which adds significant resilience to our search capability.

Technical training included another Fall Protection Equipment Inspection Course – organised by our regional association SWERA – and another Rope Rescue Supervisor Course. We have also run multiple training courses for new team members and upskilling of existing ones in swift-water & flood rescue, and almost all members are now trained to at least Swiftwater First responder standard.

Fundraising activities remained a challenge during 2021, with significant limitations during the periods of Covid restrictions at the start the year in particular, but here also there were some wonderful highlights. 4 trainee members of our Wyre Forest Station raised over £3,000 by walking the length of the 'SARA Severn' from the Wyre Forest to the Beachley Station, Lynsey swam Ullswater End to End and Rachel Brown 'Raced to the Stones' (that's a 100km race on the Ridgeway) – all raising money for SARA. We were fortunate to receive a bequest of £20,000 and Chepstow Town Council approved a generous grant of £6,000 in addition to their regular support contribution.



Our flagship fundraising events of The Wild Wye Swim, the Sharpness Open Day and the Chepstow Duck Race were all held again in 2021. Having been cancelled in 2020 we ran the Wild Wye Swim over 2 days – which was popular with the swimmers but less so with the fishery owners so we won't be repeating that format – and raised £20,000. The Beachley team also organised the first edition of another new (and smaller) event, the 'Wild Wye SwimRun' based at Chepstow. This includes a 100m swim across the tidal Wye below Tintern, with SARA providing several boats as safety cover. Other new SARA-organised events are being discussed… watch this space!

We maintained an occasional presence on national TV. In February our flood boat training was featured on BBC Crimewatch Live!, filmed in Monmouth the previous month, and then in July we were the subject of a feature on ITV Wales Coast & Country.

I would like to pay tribute to SARA Tewkesbury member, and Olympic para-athlete, Mel Nichols, who in October completed a continuous hand cycle journey of over 4000 miles over 10 weeks, around the permitter UK, setting a world record for the longest, unsupported hand cycling. A truly inspiring achievement.

I am eternally grateful to all of our team members, both operational and supporting members who are all volunteers, for making all of this possible, in SARA's 48th year. I would like to pay particular thanks to the small teams of 'DLAs' who respond immediately to contact from the emergency services, and to Search Controllers who are the cornerstone of our search efforts. Also to those who also serve on the management teams at station and at the association level; very few of who joined SARA to get involved in these matters. Thank you one and all!

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer



Hosting the Chief Fire Officer and his Deputy at Beachley, together with the Deputy CEO and Fundraising Officer



Working with HART Team Paramedics to move an Injured Climber in the Wye Valley



A SARA Tewkesbury Fundraising event in Cheltenham



A Competitor in the Wild Wye SwimRun completes her crossing of the River Wye



Crowds return to the SARA Sharpness Open Day



A Paramedic explaining equipment they can use in a Technical Rescue, on a training day in the Mendips



Supporting the campaign to improve Water Quality in the River Wye

RISKS AND INSURANCE

Review of risks

The Executive Committee continues to conduct a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and systems are in place to mitigate those risks.

The Association has Standard Operating Procedures which each member must follow, and a Health & Safety Policy implemented in 2003 is continually under review by the Executive Health & Safety Advisor. Whilst SARA is not bound by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, (as we are a part of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) which is exempt from the above act) the Executive Committee policy is that – due to the fact that we work with other emergency services that are bound by this act – it follows that the organisation should take it on board as 'best practice'.

Insurances

The charity has in place the following insurances:

- Public Liability
- Marine Insurance (covering all boats, trailers, engines etc.)
- Launch Vehicles specialist insurance,
- Motor Insurance for all mobile rescue units
- Buildings Insurance cover (Beachley Station)
- Buildings Contents liability (Beachley, Sharpness and Wyre Forest)
- Medical Indemnity Insurance
- Trustees Liability Insurance

Additional insurance cover is provided through Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) via our membership of the South West England Rescue Association and by various Police Authorities within our operational areas, by whom we are tasked and cover is provided for callouts and training. The Executive Committee continues to monitor Insurance policies.

The cost of Insurance cover has grown from £15,840 in 2016 to £35,706 in 2021.



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

It will come as little surprise that the continuation of Covid-19 restrictions into and through 2021 presented significant financial and operational challenges for SARA. I am though delighted that these accounts show that the overall income was only around 10% lower than in 2019 before Covid-19 surfaced. The sources of this income were though quite different, compared to 2019, with less income from fundraising and collection activity and significantly more from online and corporate donations. This reflects the way that the charity has succeeded in adapting to the economic realities that we have faced.

Our continued focus on costs also produced a favourable result compared to 2019 with overall costs some £15k lower. Much of this reduction reflected the investment in PPE in 2020 and the consequently lower costs in 2021. There are of course cost pressures with fuel and utilities and these look set to continue into 2022 and beyond.

The charity therefore ends the year with assets slightly less than £400K with two thirds of this value accounted for in the fixed assets – chiefly buildings, lifeboats and vehicles. £170k of unrestricted assets are being held in liquid bank balances. This represents approximately 8 months of operating costs and is therefore 2 months ahead of our target to maintain a financial reserve of £100k.

These are of course the final accounts for the charity in its current form. The assets and liabilities of the charity will pass to the new Severn Area Rescue Association CIO on 1 January 2022. This is a fundamental change in the governance of the charity but on the ground the hard work and dedication of the past will continue into the new organisation which will begin life in a healthy, though not overly comfortable, financial state.



The CEO as Rope Rescue Team Leader, working with the leads from Fire and Ambulance Services on a Cliff Rescue in the Wye Valley

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SARA

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Severn Area Rescue Association (the 505504 Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2021

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the Trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no 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 the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 financial statements to be reached.

Nicholas Webb
Azets
First Floor, Copthall House, 1 New Road
Stourbridge. DY8 1PH

Dated: 6 September 2022

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021: SARA CIO 1193634

Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA)

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2021 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies		0	0	0
Charitable activities		0	0	0
Other trading activities		0	0	0
Investments		0	0	0
Other Income		0	0	0
Total income		**0**	**0**	**0**
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		0	0	0
Charitable activities		0	0	0
Total resources expended		**0**	**0**	**0**
Gross transfers between funds		0	0	0
Net (expenditure)/income for the year		0	0	0
Fund balances at 31 December		0	0	0

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2021

	2021
	£
Fixed assets	
Tangible assets	0
Current assets	
Debtors	0
Cash at bank and in hand	0
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	0
Net current assets	0
Total assets less current liabilities	0
Income funds	
Restricted funds	0
Unrestricted funds	0
	0

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021: SARA CHARITY 505504

Statement of financial activities

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Income and Endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	165,864	53,587	219,451	257,670	40,114	297,784
Charitable activities	4	8,168	-	8,168	5,050	-	5,050
Other trading activities	5	4,023	200	4,223	645	-	645
Investments	6	16	-	16	49	-	49
Other Income	7	5,295	-	5,295	15	-	15
Total income		183,366	53,787	237,153	263,429	40,114	303,543
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	8	5,018	-	5,018	1,170	-	1,170
Charitable activities	9	155,911	91,176	247,087	173,207	123,900	297,107
Total resources expended		160,929	91,176	252,105	174,377	123,900	298,277
Net incoming/ (outgoing) resources before transfers		22,437	(37,389)	(14,952)	89,052	(83,786)	5,266
Gross transfers between funds		6,378	(6,378)				
Net (expenditure)/income for the year / Net movement in funds		28,815	(43,767)	(14,952)	89,052	(83,786)	5,266
Fund balances at 1 January		220,929	169,902	390,831	131,877	253,688	385,565
Fund balances at 31 December		249,744	126,135	375,879	220,929	169,902	390,831

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £	2020 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	**13**		240,223		294,829
Current assets					
Debtors	**14**	32,661		35,070	
Cash at bank and in hand		186,200		174,976	
		218,861		210.046	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**15**	(83,205)		(114,044)	
Net current assets			135,656		96,002
Total assets less current liabilities			375,879		390,831
Income funds					
Restricted funds	**16**		126,135		169,902
Unrestricted funds			249,744		220,929
			375,879		390,831

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 6 September 2022

J Hewitt
Trustee

A Stanley
Trustee

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

1. Accounting policies

Charity information

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as SARA is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. SARA is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI, with 14 operational boats and approximately 200 personnel.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the SARA Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The accounts are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Grant income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

1.5 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Freehold land and buildings:	Straight line over 25 years
Plant and equipment:	Straight line over 5 years

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments. Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the SARA's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	142,046	12,471	154,517	224,849
Grant Income	23,818	41,116	64,934	72,935
	165,864	53,587	219,451	297,784

4 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Fundraising Events	7,918	4,550
Sponsorships	250	500
	8,168	5,050

5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Other Income	1,376	-	1,376	-
Sale of Goods	2,381	200	2,581	431
Rental Income	266	-	266	214
Other Trading Income	4,023	200	4,223	645

6 Investments

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Interest receivable	16	49

7 Other Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	5,295	15

8 Raising Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Fundraising & Publicity	5,018	1,170

9 Charitable Activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Depreciation and Impairment	64,567	87,354
Fuel	15,561	11,029
Training	15,814	11,849
Insurance	35,706	32,408
Consumables	28,497	25,264
Repairs & Maintenance	15,526	51,048
Equipment Purchases	41,344	48,875
Interest Paid	915	-
	217,930	267,827
Share of Support Costs (see note 10)	22,880	25,470
Share of Governance Costs (see note 10)	6,277	3,810
	247,087	297,107
Analysis by Fund		
Unrestricted Funds	155,911	173,207
Restricted Funds	91,176	123,900
	247,087	297,107

10 Support Costs

	Support Costs	Governance Costs	Total 2021	Support Costs	Governance Costs	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Heat Light and Water	5,861	-	5,861	5,656	-	5,656
Phone, SMS and Broadband	13,942	-	13,942	10,336	-	10,336
Support Costs	(1,633)	-	(1,633)	1,633	-	1,633
Printing, Postage & Stationery	596	-	596	316	-	316
Computer Costs	2,285	-	2,285	4,254	-	4,254
Travel Costs	215	-	215	1,089	-	1,089
Bank Charges	1,015	-	1,015	982	-	982
Other Support Costs	199	-	199	139	-	139
Rent	400	-	400	1,065	-	1,065
Accountancy & Audit Fees	-	1,950	1,950	-	1,625	1,625
Legal & Professional	-	4,327	4,327	-	2,185	2,185
	22,880	6,277	29,157	25,470	3,810	29,280
Analysed Between:						
Charitable Activities	22,880	6,277	29,157	25,470	3,810	23,822

Accountancy fees contain costs for the independent examination of £1,950 (2020: £1,500)
Legal & Profession fees contain costs related to the transition to CIO status

11 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the SARA during the year.

12 Employees

There were no employees during the year nor in 2021.

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings	Plant and equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost			
At 1 January 2021	397,751	964,525	1,362,276
Additions	-	9,962	9,962
At 31 December 2021	397,751	974,487	1,372,238
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 January 2021	232,723	834,725	1,067,448
Depreciation charged in the year	12,681	51,886	64,567
At 31 December 2021	245,404	886,611	1,132,015
Carrying amount			
At 31 December 2021	152,347	87,876	240,223
At 31 December 2020	165,028	129,801	294,829

14 Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade Debtors	518	435
Other Debtors	10,016	14,966
Prepayments & Accrued Income	22,127	19,669
	32,661	35,070

15 Creditors:

Amounts falling due within one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	15,789	21,612
Accruals & deferred Income	67,416	92,432
	83,205	114,044

16 Restricted Funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in Funds			Movement in Funds				
	Balance at 1 January 2020	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Balance at 1 January 2021	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 Dec 2021
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Fixed Asset Fund	202,336		(87,354)	114,982	-	(64,567)		50,415
Lifesaving Eqpt Fund	16,376	7,087	(14,985)	8,478	1,400	(4,711)	(5.167)	
Vehicle Fund	11,673	1,000	(3,162)	9,511	3,945	(1,313)	(8,199)	3,944
Training Fund	784	100	(75)	809	-	(25)	(784)	
Sharpness Lifeboat Fund	5,619	1,414	(2,208)	4,825	27,016	(260)	24,672	56,253
FLIR Fund	14,200	-	-	14,200	-	-	(14,200)	-
DFT Fund	2,700	-	-	2,700	-	-	(2,700)	-
Sharpness Building Fund	-	19,313	(9,626)	9,687	1,552	(3,936)	-	7,303
SFRBO-I Fund	-	11,200	(6,490)	4,710	-	(4,710)	-	-
Lifeboat 4 Engine Fund	-	-	-	-	1,378	-	-	1,378
Wyre Forest Eqpt Fund	-	-	-	-	12,181	(10,366)	-	1,815
Cotswolds Stn Start Up Fund	-	-	-	-	6,315	(1,288)	-	5,027
	253,688	40,114	(123,900)	169,902	53,787	(91,176)	(6,378)	126,135

The FLIR fund is for the Infra Red search camera system.

The DFT fund is a Department for Transport grant for the purchase of SARA Lifeboat 2.

The SFRBO Instructor Fund is for training and qualification of the Flood Boat Operator Instructors.

The Lifeboat 4 Engine fund is a lifeboat engine replacement project.

The remaining restricted funds are to be spent on equipment or building maintenance as stated above.

17 Analysis of Net assets Between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Fund balances at 31 December are represented by:						
Tangible assets	129,612	110,611	240,223	151,311	143,518	294,829
Debtors	32,661	-	32,661	35,070	-	35,070
Cash and cash equivalents	170,676	15,524	186,200	148,592	26,384	174,976
Creditors	(83,205)	-	(83,205)	(114,044)	-	(114,044)
	249,744	126,135	375,879	220,929	169,902	390,831

18 Related party transactions

During the year the charity entered into no transactions with related parties.

19 Subsidiaries

Details of the charity's subsidiaries at 31 December 2021 are as follows:

SARA Trading Limited - Registered in England (company number 11820156), incorporated 11 February 2019. A company with no share capital and limited by guarantee. The charity has given a guarantee of £100, and is the relevant legal entity by virtue of the ability to appoint and remove trustees. The four officers of the company are members of the management team of the charity. The company provides commercial training and organises events to raise funds for the charity. The company had net assets at 28 February 2022 of £7,750 (2021: £17,348). The company made donations of £16,500 to the charity during the year.

The subsidiary company is not required to prepare consolidated accounts.



Police and SARA Team Members wait for a Briefing at a Search near Birdlip in Gloucestershire





The SARA Water Team Fitness Test involves Swimming, then moving a Simulated Casualty and then delivering CPR for two minutes

ANNEX: OPERATIONAL ROLES AND TASKS

SARA is a multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue organisation and is the designated rescue service for an area of over 20,000 km^2 on and around the Severn. It provides:

- Lifeboat cover for large parts of the Rivers Severn, Wye, Usk and the Bristol Avon*
- Cliff rescue, particularly for the lower Wye Valley climbing areas including Symonds Yat
- Mud rescue
- Swift water and flood rescue
- Land Search

At the start of 2021 SARA operated from six rescue stations, at Newport, Chepstow (Beachley), Sharpness, Tewkesbury, Upton-upon-Severn and Kidderminster (Wyre Forest). A new station at Cirencester – SARA Cotswolds – came online in mid-2021. SARA Crew receive 'callouts' through a combination of dedicated Pagers and through SMS messages using the SARCALLsystem.

Lifeboats and Mud Rescue

SARA is the designated rescue service for the Rivers Severn, Wye and Usk. The SARA lifeboats, based at Beachley and Sharpness are tasked by HM Coastguard, largely in response to 999 calls.

The River Severn below Gloucester is used for around 350 commercial ship transits per year and the lower Wye around 150. The Severn also has over 500 registered leisure craft transits between Gloucester and Sharpness alone each year, and many more that are not counted. The tidal range on the Severn at Beachley, and on the Wye at Chepstow, is 15 metres (the second highest in the World!), which means that the river changes within a few hours from a wide expanse of deep water, to narrow shallow channels weaving through extensive sandbanks.

In addition, the tidal current on the Severn reaches 12 knots; this can lead to very turbulent river conditions in even a moderate wind. Most of the way to Gloucester the riverbed is very broad, with a narrow and winding navigable channel, marked with numerous buoys, beacons and transits. The margins of all the tidal rivers have wide and thick mudbanks below the high-tide levels, and in places the exposed mud leads out to rocky islands at low tide.

Typical incidents for SARA include vessels grounding, or losing power hence requiring urgent assistance to avoid grounding. People have been rescued from islands or ledges where they were being cut off by the tide, or actually plucked from the mud. On other occasions boats, and other floating hardware, are broken loose by the water and drift with the fast currents and have to be recovered. On average lifeboats are launched operationally around once a week (50-60 launches per year).

*SARA's declared area of lifeboat operations, for which it is tasked by HM Coastguard, is the Severn, north from a line between Newport and Clevedon to Maisemore Weir near Gloucester, and the tributary rivers Wye (to Bigsweir Bridge), Usk (to the M4 Bridge) and the Avon (to Bristol Docks). If required in exceptional circumstances, SARA Lifeboats can extend beyond this area, using a re-fuelling stop at Newport, to operate north of a line from Barry to Weston Super Mare.

The SARA lifeboats area also features several high bridges – notably the M48 Severn Bridge but also the A48 in Chepstow and several in Newport. SARA is often called out to a 'person at risk' on a bridge. The majority, but sadly not all, are resolved directly by the Police. However, a lifeboat is always launched so as to be ready. Recoveries are therefore not uncommon, but SARA has successfully rescued people from the water below a bridge.

Land Search

SARA provides land search capabilities in support of the Police. SARA has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in place with the Police Forces for Gloucestershire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, the West Midlands, Shropshire, West Mercia and Warwickshire. These Police Forces request SARA support for 'Missing Person' searches in their respective areas, and teams from the various SARA Stations work together as appropriate to the search area location.

Such missing person searches can range in duration from less than an hour to spanning several days and may become 'recovery' rather than rescue operations. SARA is able to deploy one of its two Mobile 'Incident Support Units' (ISUs) to support such searches and other operations; searches are managed from the ISU, which is the focus for liaison with the Police and other agencies. SARA's MoUs with the Police are to assist with any search, in any terrain, for a vulnerable missing person – including urban searches if required.

SARA is also a member (Associate Member since Jan 2021) of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW). Generally, MR teams deploy into mountainous environments (or at least challenging ones); in the SARA area the more technical areas would include the Wye Valley, Forest of Dean, Wyre Forest or Cleeve Hill.

In addition, all neighbouring MR teams back each other up, so SARA is considered a backup for Longtown MR Team, and other teams in the Brecon Beacons. One example was the extensive search for April Jones around Machynlleth; SARA did not deploy as many other MR teams did but was put on high alert to back fill for any jobs in these teams' areas.

Cliff Rescue

SARA Beachley is a specific base for the Cliff Rescue in the Lower Wye Valley, where the cliffs around Wyntours Leap, Symonds Yat and other walls are a popular destination for climbers of all abilities. It is estimated that there are 3,000-4,000 climber-days per year in the Lower Wye Valley. There are also a number of disused quarries in the area, in which accidents involving non-climbers happen.

SARA has an MoU with Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) for effecting cliff rescue operations, and an increasingly close relationship with South Wales FRS (some of the cliffs are on the Welsh side of the Wye). The SARA rope rescue training is based on Rescue3 qualifications, also used by the Fire and Rescue services which facilitates interoperability.

There is a further close relationship with Gloucestershire Cave Rescue Group (GCRG), which also has rope rescue trained personnel and relevant equipment, which are available as required. Conversely SARA is available to provide surface support to cave rescue operations, and indeed is integral to the contingency plans for caves such at 'Otter Hole' in the Wye Valley. Rope rescue operations are thankfully rare, but joint exercises are conducted with the FRS and GCRG – including a test of an Otter Hole casualty evacuation scenario in October 2021.

Swift Water and Flood Rescue

Swift Water is defined as 'that moving fast enough to produce sufficient force to present a life and safety hazard to a person entering it'. Operations in 'swift water' are referred to as 'SRT' tasks and include life-saving rescue. However, due to the time-sensitive nature of water incidents these are often search and if necessary recovery operations. Their initiation is often by a combination of Police, FRS or Coastguard. Dependent on the water concerned, a small boat may be deployed, or a floating platform, in addition to crew directly in shallow water. SARA has the ability to launch such small boats in almost all rivers, with no requirement for slipway or road access to the riverbank. Such small boats are referred to as 'Rescue' boats; SARA prefers rigid rescue boats to reduce the risk of punctures from the use of inflatables.

SARA Swift Water crew are qualified as 'Swift Water and Flood Rescue Technicians', which is the national standard. The Swift Water Teams are also able to deploy on flood rescue operations nationally, as Flood Response Teams. DEFRA, through the National DEFRA Flood Rescue group, coordinate the Flood Response Team deployments nationally. SARA has 2 x 'Type B' and 4 x 'Type C' declared teams of 7, shared between its 7 Stations, which need to be ready for deployment anywhere in the country. SARA has a proven track record of deploying around the UK on such incidents including Essex (2014), Devon (2014) and Yorkshire (2015/16).



Wading Practice in the Monnow in Monmouth

First Aid and Casualty Care

All SARA crew are trained, at minimum, in basic first aid. A number of SARA crew are further qualified to the much higher level of 'Casualty Care' as defined by MREW. In addition, a number of crew are professional paramedics, nurses or serving as Community First Responders.

First aid equipment is carried during all searches and in all SARA vehicles; depending on the nature of the operation, equipment such as Oxygen, portable defibrillators, back- and neck-stabilization boards may be taken into the field.

Education and Training Provision

SARA provides training and education to the wider community through a variety of routes. These include:

1. Emergency Services Training. For the Emergency Services, SARA provides lifeboat training. For example, SARA Beachley has an ongoing relationship with the South West Ambulance Services Trust to provide structured, water-based rescue training for members of their Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART). This provides specialist knowledge, training and experience of working with boats, including in the tidal waters of the Severn Estuary.
2. School Visits. Covid-permitting, the SARA stations frequently host visits from and undertakes visits to local primary schools, Scouts and Guides Units, etc. These are designed to be educational as well as fun, informing young people of the dangers of the water and other aspects of the local area of which they may be unaware.
3. Outreach Activities. SARA frequently particulates in relevant 'community outreach' activities such as the Drowning Awareness Weeks, again providing education about the avoidance of risks as well as information concerning SARA and other emergency Services.

Event Safety Cover

Most years SARA also provides safety and first aid cover to local outdoor-based events, generally sports related. These are usually events which involve water, and/or off-road running, such as rowing regattas, raft races, triathlons and off-road running races. SARA undertakes this role for several reasons:

1. To support the local community. SARA has historically provided this service at a discount to the notional cost, in order to facilitate and support these local events to a greater extent than alternative organisations would be able to. The number of such races and events supported continues to rise, as local organisations realise the capabilities which SARA can bring to their events.

2. To raise SARA's profile. SARA is usually paid for providing the service, albeit at hugely discounted rates for community groups to enable these to be viable, but for many members of the public spectating, this is an excellent opportunity to see SARA in action.

3. To put SARA's skills into play 'in the field' and provide real-world experience.

