



Search & Rescue Dog Association

Ireland North

Annual Report

2025

Search Dogs Specialised In:

- Mountain Rescue
- Urban Search & Rescue
- Victim Recovery
- Open Countryside & Forests
- Trailing



sardain.co.uk



Search and Rescue Dog
Association Ireland North



@sardain1978



sarda_in

In Partnership With:



Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service



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1 : Chair Report

1. **Members contributions:** I want to extend my sincere thanks to all of you - our exceptional and generous volunteers who help make SARDA IN what it is, whether as bodies for our dogs to find in training, or our dedicated and professional dog handlers who continue to respond to callouts as often as their personal circumstances permit. Thanks a million also, to these quiet, behind the scenes people, who go well beyond the level of commitment normally associated with voluntary work such as:

Public Relations Officer, for her amazing work in promoting SARDA IN through social media and the media in general. She has achieved a major first in the UK and Ireland by securing an agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority and Easy Jet to allow our search dogs to travel within the cabin space and free of charge, to international emergencies and training events. She has also secured an arrangement with Stena Line to allow free travel on their vessels for our vehicles, handlers and dogs to attend training events in the UK. More recently, she has involved SARDA IN in the very first NI Blue Light Awards where three of our handlers won special recognition in three individual categories.

Fund Raiser, who never fails to surprise us with her positive, wholehearted support in organising Tesco collection days with the shop managers and our volunteers, and the street collections which means securing PSNI approval, as well as sorting out all the paraphernalia needed to make it work, not to mention the responsibility of counting and banking the proceeds.

Secretary for handling all our correspondence and being the link between us and the Department of Justice; for his tenacity in challenging other groups. He is also the brains behind the callout system we use and the new navigation/tracking radios we have recently acquired.

Treasurer - for keeping our finances in top shape and for charting a course through the maze of financial conundrums. He also generously and wisely chairs our Trustees meetings every month where he steers us faultlessly through the choppy waters brought about by conflicting views and the pressures of external forces.

Training Officer for his work in helping develop SARDA IN's resilience, and ability to respond to international disasters. He has spearheaded our training, organised assessments and persuaded big concerns to part with sizeable sums of money which we so badly needed. He has also developed the close ties we now enjoy with our international partners, in SARAIID and forged links with our colleagues across the water in the Fire Service.

Equipment Officer assisted as time permits by others, who have to deal with demands for replacing this or that piece of essential kit, or the urgent requests to supply equipment that will help keep us safe on international deployments.

Transport Officer who ensures our 5 vehicles remain taxed, MOT'd and roadworthy.

Seamstress who provides all our proudly worn qualified and trainee dog jackets with their high viz stirps and badges as well as keeping our fuel cards up to date.

A generous member who has helped secure our replacement Landrover and more recently landed a very welcome donation of new shelving racks for the containers.

2. **Callouts:** Our dog teams continue to assist the PSNI in searches for high risk missing persons, 24 hours, 7 days a week and 365 days in the year. We have had 38 callouts this year of which 3 resulted in successful finds, one by mountain search dog Floss in the Mourne, one by DVSD Nelly and one by Trailing dog Boirche. It is very important to remember that we cannot search everywhere - we are part of an overall response to search and rescue and very often our success is eliminating potential search areas to allow other SAR groups to focus elsewhere. That said, I believe we may still have some way to go before all our colleagues in SAR are happy with our becoming involved in operational searches. In addition, our HRD dogs have been involved this year in assisting the Independent Commission for the location of Victims' Remains (ICLVR) and that is set to continue. We have also been invited by the PSNI to extend our HRD dogs' remit with them.

Neil Powell

Chairman SARDA IN 02/05/2025

2 : Secretary Report

Alongside the general admin of running a VSAR Charity. This year we have successfully applied for membership of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), worked closely with UTV & Waddell Media (BBC) to ensure our status as the only NISAR search dog asset within N.I is rightly recognised in two Television programs, have a bespoke process in place for International Deployments, this process is greatly simplified by our MoU with Search and Rescue in Disasters (SARAD) and have continued to develop a good working relationship with the DoJ, Statutory Agencies and NISAR colleagues.

To summarise our year, just review our success throughout the year, culminating at the inaugural NI Blue Light Awards. This a reflection of the high regard SARDA IN is held by the Dept of Justice, PSNI, NIFRS, etc... and most importantly the public we try to help.

This recognition is due to everyone across our Team.

Davy Fraser

Secretary SARDA IN

3 : Treasurer Report

Date Range: 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025

Opening Balance	33,151.02	Expenditure	66,446.18
Closing Balance	17,264.21	Income	50,559.37
Difference	15,886.81	Difference	15,886.81

Item	INCOME
General donations ¹	7,932.44
Named donations ²	6,260.00
Social media donations ³	1,542.54
Grants from Charities ⁴	23,409.97
Dept of Justice payments ⁵	9,023.04
Refunds ⁶	2,183.10
Interest Business Reserve Accounts	208.28
Total	50,559.37
Item	EXPENDITURE
Purchase of Land Rover from JHair Motors	20,100.00
Fuel and other vehicle costs ⁷	10,004.97
Equipment/Health and Safety ⁸	21,414.20
Training and Assessment ⁹	5,560.00
Administration ¹⁰	6,974.52
International currency card	2,013.00
Withdrawal error (repayment within INCOME: Refunds)	379.49
Total	66,446.18

Dugald McCullough, Treasurer
May 2025

¹ Includes street collections and other unidentified in-payments

² M McCallan 5,000.00; Frances Mary McCallan 500.00; S Synnott 600.00; Reilly Collins 100.00; Brain Injury Unit 30.00; M. Hook £30.00 (six monthly payments of £5 April-Sept)

³ Paypal: 1,310.47; SumUp: 131.77; CAFGYE: 100.50

⁴ Halifax Foundation 20,000.00 for Land Rover; UKSAR 3,409.97 for Training

⁵ The Department of Justice NISAR funding scheme covers 100% of agreed outlays in relation to some training, administration, health & safety equipment, and response vehicle costs.

⁶ JHair Motors re. Land Rover 1,550.00; SARDA Scotland expenses 253.61; Withdrawal error refund 379.49

⁷ Includes a) recurrent fuel costs on Morgan Fuel account: 60%; b) MOTs, vehicle tax, repairs, etc: 40%

⁸ Includes range of protective clothing; comms equipment; dog jackets and vet bills for vaccinations

⁹ With SARDA Scotland; USAR; First Aid Training; Mountain Skills (Tollymore)

¹⁰ Includes monthly telecoms service charge, website cost, postage, stationery, insurance, accountant's fee, printing, fundraising materials, zoom account, and IRO membership fees

4 : Training Officer Report

Current Qualified Search Dogs

- **USAR Search Dogs:** Floss, Bodhi, Buzz, and Meg
- **Mountain Search Dogs:** Floss, Tess, Bodhi, Dexter, and Bella
- **Cadaver Dogs:** Nelly, Bee, Rosie, and Luna
- **Trailing Dogs:** Magnus, Fen, Harley, and Boirche
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Total: 17 Search Dogs

Trainee Search Dogs

- Boriche, Nova, Bobbie, and Lyra

Joint Exercises and Operations

SARDA IN has conducted joint exercises with CSR and NIF&RS, focusing on specific search dog training exercises. Joint operations continue with other search teams on all operational callouts attended. A new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed upon with SARAID (International USAR volunteer team) to ensure international deployment of USAR search dogs. The MOU was signed during a joint training event at the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Training Centre, where USAR dogs participated in a full operational readiness weekend exercise.

Callouts and Training Events

- **2024-25 Total Callouts:** 38
- **Completed Training Events 2024-25:**
 - 8 members completed their Mountain Leader Navigation at TNOC.
 - 4 new trainees commenced official SARDA training with their dogs, having completed their canine obedience/stock test.
 - New members and bodies are working to complete the navigation course at TNOC in September.
 - 3 members attended the PSNI Jessip training-major incident training.
 - We hoisted our national assessment in Newcastle 14-16th Feb 2025 with all 3 dog/handlers passing their assessment and 1 assessor attended the SARDA Scotland Assessment in April 2025.
 - A new training schedule focuses on different disciplines each month, and all handlers are reminded to complete log books between training sessions.

- **International Partnerships**

We have entered into a unique partnership with EasyJet UK to assist us with free travel to all International call out for humanitarian assistance for earthquakes across the globe.



We signed a MOU with SARAI UK – the only INSARAG registered light Team in UK as a partner in the work of USAR disaster response.

Successes

SARDA IN received funding from the National lottery-awards for all- totalling £20K for new upgraded Land Rover -vehicle.

We completed 2 very successful local TV documentaries both respectively BBC and ITV these both received National coverage and much acclaim for our profile and the use of search dogs.

The inaugural NI Blue light awards -SARDA IN received 3 x awards for our Handlers- Animal trainer of the year-Raph, Emerging talent-Rosie and Lifetime achievement award-Neil.

Pic from Waddel media for BBC – ‘Pet saving lives’



Summary

SARDA IN extends a big thank you to all the bodies who continue to attend training in all weather conditions. Without their support, the training of search dogs would not be as successful. Internationally, SARDA IN continues its partnerships with SARAID UK, positioning the organisation strongly for international USAR responses worldwide. A matrix has been completed for all members' training progression and search dog training to ensure accountability and accurate record-keeping of progression. SARDA IN is in a very strong position with its qualified search dogs and aims to ensure this progression continues in the future.

Raph O'Connor

Training Officer
1.5.25

5 : Comms/P.R. Officer Report

Callouts

2024	2025
<p>MAY - BBC filming Maggi & Ally 'Pets Saving Lives' (NP & CO'C) Day 1 filming The Repair Shop Home filming BBC 'Pets Saving Lives' Training & Filming Day with Waddell Media Culloden Hotel Mackle Foods Awards Night **3 callouts**</p>	<p>JANUARY – (RO'C, NP, DF, DP, TH, CO'C & MMcC) USAR Preparedness Training @ TNOC BBC 'The Repair Shop' aired Training Day (KW) 1st Squirrel Talk & Demo Content filming 'Blue Light Awards' x 2 days **1 callout**</p>
<p>JUNE - Training Day & Tesco Door Collection Dungannon UTV 'Dogs with Jobs' meet up **6 callouts**</p>	<p>FEBRUARY – Awarded NI Prestige Award SARDA IN Assessment with SARDA Scotland (Being assessed - NP, DP & DF) (NP & RO'C) NICVA Funding Fayre (NP, KW, DP, MMcC, RO'C, TH & RR) 'NI Blue Light Awards' ceremony @ Culloden Hotel – SARDA IN won 3 categories & finalists in 5 **4 callouts**</p>
<p>JULY - Newcastle Street Collection £979.55 Matthew Mc Callan Pony Drive £500 Collieology facebook post Newcastle RNLI Family Fun Day **2 callouts**</p>	<p>MARCH – (NP, DP, TH, DF & RO'C) Ballymena ladies rugby photo shoot with SARDA IN logo on training jerseys Training Day & Colin King photos (TH) Assessing @ SARDA Scotland assessment weekend (MMcC & RO'C) Supported 'Hike for Harry' (NP) BBC Radio Ulster John Toal Show 'Lifetime Achievement Award' Shortlisted for 'Global Search & Rescue Excellence' Awards in London (16th May) – (NP) 'Lifetime Achievement' Award Monitoring earthquake in Maynamar **NO callouts**</p>

AUGUST - 'Pooches Rainbow Rehoming' Clonamany Agri Show Newcastle Tesco Door Collection UTV 'Dogs with Jobs' episode 1 aired BBC 'Pets Saving Lives' available Training Day **4 callouts**	APRIL – Supporting (CB) first marathon in Belfast 4 th May GoFundme page (Target £500) Received photos (2000) from Colin King Newcastle Street Collection £1127.18 (DF, DG, TH & DP) Ballymena Tesco Door Collection £1321.50 (RO'C & CO'C) Caught 'Faith' little collie dumped in Donard Park running x 4 weeks 'Give Us A Paw' publicity post New Website launched **3 Callouts**
September – Training Day x 2 Joint training with SARAID UK 'Operational Readiness & Assessment' exercise x 4 days **4 callouts**	MAY – (CB) running Belfast Marathon – BBC NI tv appearance and interview arranged on the day (4 th May) (CO'C) 10 month strategy meeting with Natalie re: website (GB, Maggie, DP & Fiona) RNLI 200yr Gala Ball @ Slieve Donard Hotel (NP & RO'C) Attending 'Global Search & Rescue Excellence' Awards, London (NP,RO'C, TH & MMcC) Joint training exercise with SARAID UK in Morton on the Marsh (DF) Attending NICVA meeting (RO'C) Attending Coffee Morning @ Glen Fold + £450 donation
October – 'Give Us A Paw' prints begin Training Day NI Veterans Awards (RR) Crowne Plaza **3 callouts**	
NOVEMBER – Multi-Agency exercise with MMRT Easyjet photo shoot Belfast International Airport Training Day Easyjet Presentation & Demo (Luton Airport) Official Easyjet partnership with SARDA IN announcement (media) Snugborough Christmas Market **3 callouts**	

DECEMBER – Donation & Photo shoot with Frances Mc Callan £5000 + Drone Halifax Stormont Meeting Acquired Brain Injury Unit, Knockbracken First SARDA IN Christmas Night Out Training Day Belfast Street Collection **5 callouts**	
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Over the past year as PRO for SARDA IN, I've handled a wide range of responsibilities including media relations, press releases, social media management, branding and event coverage. I have coordinated interviews, supported internal communications (including monthly reports for trustees meetings), maintained sponsor relationships and played a key role in public engagement, fundraising efforts, website development and achieving a bespoke partnership with easyJet. As I step down ahead of the AGM, I'm proud of what we've achieved and very grateful for the support of the team. I look forward to continuing to support SARDA IN in whatever way I can and wish the next PRO every success.

6 : Fundraising Officer Report

Details of all our Fundraising activities are contained in the Treasurers report.

Trustees would like to publicly acknowledge the time and commitment Catherine has shown to this role, it is really appreciated.

7 : Equipment Officer Report

The following equipment has been sourced throughout the past year to support SARDA IN both in local deployments and for International work;

- Simoco radios with GPS tracking.
- MR mapping software to facilitate tracking of members on callouts.
- TV/Laptop installed in VW vehicle.
- Replacement Landrover Defender (with dog boxes)
- Following operational readiness test, additional USAR (collapsed structure) PPE and equipment to support operations (Tent, MSR wisperlite stove, catering equipment, thermarest mats, batteries)
- Updates to cloud based phone system used by the PSNI to task SARDA IN.
- Shelving installed in container.
- Various clothing items for promotional work.

This list is by no means exhaustive but highlights, the resilience we have built into our operational abilities both home and abroad.

Finally, a thank you to those who have assisted throughout the year, with equipment checks, stock taking, reorganising and housekeeping.

Trevor Hartley

Equipment Officer