

# Refugee Rescue

Northern Ireland · Charity number 105156

## Details

Status	Overdue
Registered	2016-04-04
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland register</a>

## Contact

Address	Ballycastle Co Antrim Bt54 6jx BT54 6JX
Phone	07713008557
Email	<a href="mailto:accounts@refugeerescue.org">accounts@refugeerescue.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.refugeerescue.org">http://www.refugeerescue.org</a>

## Activities

**Purposes:** The relief of human suffering and the saving of lives of refugees and displaced people who are affected by war, conflict or other crisis by providing, or assisting in the provision of sea rescue. The relief of refugees in need by providing, or assisting in the provision of shelter and humanitarian support and by any other charitable means as the trustees see fit.

**What the charity does:** The advancement of health or the saving of lives, The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity

**How the charity works:** Advice/advocacy/information, Overseas aid/famine relief, Search and rescue

**Who the charity helps:** Asylum seekers/refugees, Overseas/developing countries

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-03-31	£20,841	£33,310	£0	0

# Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Mr Joby Fox		
Mr Paul Kerrigan		
Mr Richard Heard		

**Refugee Rescue**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 105156

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# Accounts

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**REFUGEE RESCUE  
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT  
1 APRIL 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024**



The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

### **Reference and administrative details**

Registered charity name: Refugee Rescue Registered charity number:

Charity Commission Number 105156 & HMRC Number NI00583

Charity's principal address: 58 Leyland Meadows, Ballycastle, BT54 6JX

### **The trustees**

The following trustees served the charity during the year;

Mr. Paul Kerrigan

Mr. Jamie Bourke

Mr. Richie Heard

Mr. Joby Fox

### **Structure, Governance, and Management**

Refugee Rescue is governed by a formally adopted constitution. The charity is managed by a Board of Trustees who meet regularly to oversee the organisation's strategic direction, operations, and compliance.

The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity adheres to its legal obligations under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and continues to serve its beneficiaries effectively.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The principal objective of the charity is to help alleviate the relief of human suffering and the saving of lives of refugees and displaced people who are affected by war, conflict or other crisis by providing, or assisting in the provision of sea rescue and the relief of refugees in need by providing, or assisting in the provision of shelter and humanitarian support and by any other charitable means as the trustees see fit.

The trustees have taken instruction on the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. They have considered in particular the obligations imposed under the public benefits test and can confirm that the charity meets the criteria set down therein. Refugee Rescue became registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 4 April 2016.

### **Achievements and Performance**

In 2023–2024, Refugee Rescue delivered a year of intense operational activity, marked by significant humanitarian interventions, ongoing vessel maintenance, expanded public engagement, and continued partnership working. Despite increased political hostility and legal restrictions targeting civil search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Central Mediterranean, the charity remained steadfast in its commitment to saving lives at sea. Central to this mission was Mo Chara, our fast rescue rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB), which was deployed from the SEA-EYE 4 across five major SAR missions in partnership with German NGO Sea-Eye.

The operational year began with a critical refit and maintenance phase for Mo Chara, carried out with the support of a dedicated team of volunteers and part-time technical specialists. In April 2023, work included engine servicing, antenna repairs, radar and radio testing, hatch replacements, and structural assessments. Following successful sea trials, Mo Chara was declared mission ready. This work was made possible through unrestricted voluntary donations received earlier in the year and marked a turning point after a financially constrained period in which fieldwork had been scaled back.

Additional shipyard work continued into late April as both Mo Chara and the SEA-EYE 4 underwent further maintenance. To enable comprehensive repairs, the vessels were dry-docked and surveyed, ensuring full accessibility for structural improvements and system checks. This period also saw the integration of new personnel into the Refugee Rescue team, including Richard Green, a maintenance assistant with a maritime background and NHS engineering experience, who undertook remote support from the UK and fieldwork on location.

As SEA-EYE 4 was relaunched in early May, final preparations for deployment resumed. Safety equipment was renewed, crew uniforms and gear replenished, and additional parts installed on Mo Chara to ensure operational resilience. Training sessions began in confined harbour settings and continued into open sea operations, preparing RHIB crews for high-risk rescues in volatile waters. Over the course of the year, several volunteers joined our engineering and maintenance team, including Guillem and Joan, both of whom made valuable contributions to ensuring Mo Chara's continual readiness.

Between May and March, Refugee Rescue participated in five major SAR missions. These operations occurred in some of the world's most dangerous maritime migration corridors — between Libya, Malta, Lampedusa, and southern Italy — where conditions for people in distress are often fatal. Across these missions, the crew of Mo Chara, in cooperation with Sea-Eye and German Doctors, directly contributed to the rescue of over 350 individuals, including children, unaccompanied minors, and survivors suffering from fuel poisoning, dehydration, trauma, and exposure.

One of the year's earliest missions resulted in the rescue of 17 people in calm seas, followed two days later by a second rescue of 32 more individuals in deteriorating weather conditions. All 49 survivors were brought to safety in the Italian port of Ortona. However, despite the professionalism and life-saving success of this mission, the SEA-EYE 4 was detained by Italian authorities for conducting a second rescue — a breach of new legislation which prohibits multiple rescues per deployment, a policy that fundamentally contradicts international maritime law and the duty to rescue.

This pattern of obstruction and criminalisation of SAR activities repeated throughout the year. On multiple occasions, Mo Chara and the SEA-EYE 4 were subjected to state interference, including threats from Libyan Coastguard vessels funded by the European Union. During one mission, our RHIB teams were aggressively charged by a Libyan patrol boat after attempting to render assistance to a boat in distress. On another, crews were forced to flee as the Libyan Coastguard captured the people before they could be rescued, preventing a humanitarian intervention.

Nevertheless, the teams continued their mission. Refugee Rescue and Sea-Eye completed operations that saved 114 people from three separate vessels, 106 individuals including 45 minors over Christmas, and 144 people during one of the final deployments of the year — some of whom had been at sea for up to five days. The onboard medical team, provided by German Doctors, was instrumental in saving the lives of unconscious survivors, administering critical fuel poisoning treatment in high-pressure scenarios, and facilitating emergency airlifts in extreme weather.

Alongside field operations, Refugee Rescue continued to engage in strategic communications and public outreach. In partnership with children's author and illustrator Kate Rafiq, the charity collaborated on *We Are Here* — a book that sensitively explores displacement through the eyes of a child. The publication was launched as part of Refugee Week 2023, with events held in Birmingham (hosted by Celebrating Sanctuary) and Belfast (in partnership with Belfast Exposed). Charity representatives, including Alex McMaster, led readings and presentations, further strengthening public awareness and encouraging fundraising support.

Over the course of the year, the charity launched targeted appeals to raise funds for equipment, including protective clothing, VHF radios, and new safety systems. Social media channels were used to share mission updates, training videos, and urgent funding needs. These appeals helped the organisation maintain transparency with supporters and generated contributions to enable maintenance and operations ahead of our next drydock period scheduled for January 2024.

Despite the continued success of our humanitarian efforts, the challenges Refugee Rescue faces are becoming more acute. In 2023 alone, over 2,000 people are estimated to have drowned or gone missing in the Central Mediterranean. In this climate, European policy increasingly prioritises deterrence and criminalisation over protection and rescue. Refugee Rescue continues to advocate for adherence to international maritime law and reaffirms its commitment to never turning away from people in distress at sea.

As 2023–2024 concluded, Mo Chara remains fully operational and has already begun missions in 2024. The team continues to train, deploy, and respond, even during festive periods such as Christmas and New Year. We are deeply grateful to our donors, volunteers, partners, and supporters who made this year possible — enabling Refugee Rescue to continue doing what it was founded to do: save lives at sea.

## **Financial Review**

From 2019–2020 to 2022–2023, Refugee Rescue experienced a sustained decline in income, reflecting the cessation of grant funding and a reduction in voluntary donations. Total income fell from £186,317.00 in 2019–2020 to £57,895.92 in 2020–2021, and then to £23,311.47 in both 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 — an overall reduction of 88% compared to 2020 levels.

Expenditure followed a similar trajectory, though the rate of reduction was less severe. Spending fell from £162,719.49 in 2019–2020 to £61,997.84 in 2020–2021, and then to £41,211.66 in 2021–2022, remaining at the same level in 2022–2023. These reductions reflect the charity’s strategic scaling back of activity in response to reduced income. However, the fall in income outpaced cost reductions, resulting in a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2019–2020, followed by a deficit of £4,101.92 in 2020–2021, and significant shortfalls of £17,900.19 in both 2021–2022 and 2022–2023.

These sustained deficits over two consecutive years placed the charity under financial pressure and required careful management to ensure that core operations could continue. Expenditure in 2022–2023 totaled £41,211.66, comprising £1,321.76 in fundraising costs and £39,889.90 on charitable activities. Income for the year was £23,311.47 — all of which was unrestricted. No restricted funds or grant income were received during the year.

The resulting net deficit of £17,900.19 reduced the charity’s available reserves significantly. Unrestricted funds brought forward at the start of the year (1 April 2022) stood at £20,713.45. By year-end (31 March 2023), reserves had fallen to £2,813.26, highlighting the urgency of renewed fundraising and donor engagement to support the charity’s continued humanitarian operations.

In 2023–2024, the charity experienced a modest recovery in income, with voluntary donations and reimbursements totaling £20,841.38. Although this represents a slight increase from the previous two years, it remains well below pre-2021 levels. Expenditure increased to £33,310.27, reflecting a necessary reinvestment in operations, including £26,892.41 in wages related to SAR craft maintenance and specialist training. As with the previous year, no grant income or restricted funds were received.

The charity recorded a net deficit of £12,468.89 for the year. However, due to a relatively strong opening balance of £27,371.33, it closed the year with £14,902.44 in unrestricted funds. While this position demonstrates short-term financial stability, the trustees remain mindful of the need to secure additional funding to support future operations and protect the organisation’s ability to respond to humanitarian crises. The charity continues to operate on a going concern basis and is actively pursuing strategic funding opportunities to support long-term resilience.

## **Related Party Transactions**

During the accounting period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, two trustees received a combined total of £16,900.00 for the provision of professional services to the charity. These services related specifically to the technical maintenance of the charity’s Atlantic 75 Search and Rescue (SAR) craft and the delivery of specialist training required for operational readiness.

Both trustees are volunteer members of the RNLI with extensive operational knowledge of the Atlantic 75 vessel and were engaged due to the highly specialised nature of the services provided. The Board of Trustees is satisfied that these services could not have been sourced externally without compromising operational continuity or safety standards.

All payments were made in accordance with the charity's governing document and conflict of interest policy. The trustees in question did not take part in any decision-making related to their own remuneration.

### **Trustee Reimbursements**

During the financial year ending 31 March 2024, a total of £1,009.82 was reimbursed to trustees in respect of out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the course of their duties. These expenses related specifically to travel and accommodation while undertaking activities on behalf of the charity. No trustee received remuneration or any other benefit for their role as a trustee, other than professional services disclosed separately under Related Party Transactions.

### **Statement of Compliance**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to beneficiaries.

### **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and applicable accounting standards. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees' approval of financial accounts

I confirm that:

- (i) To the best of my knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions entered into by the charity in the years 2023 and 2024<sup>1</sup>.

**Signed on behalf of the Trustees.**

PAUL KERRIGAN

**Date: Monday, April 21, 2025**

**Name: Paul Kerrigan**

**Position: Treasurer**

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<sup>1</sup> These accounts were ratified by the Board of Trustees via email communication, in accordance with the provisions of the charity's governing document permitting decisions by written resolution. Unanimous approval was recorded and a quorum of trustees participated in the decision.

## **Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Refugee Rescue.**

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st March 2024, which are set out in this report.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters. My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

#### **Signed:**

Kennith Cruickshank

**Name: KENNITH CRUICKSHANK**

**Date: Monday, April 21, 2025**

## **1. Accounting policies**

### **Basis of accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with 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).

The charity has adopted FRS 102 Section 1A and has taken advantage of the exemption from preparing a cash flow statement.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, which assumes that the charity will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The trustees consider this basis to be appropriate.

The charity is a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements are presented in Sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

### **Fund accounting**

The charity has one type of fund for which it is responsible and which require separate disclosure as follows:

#### *Restricted funds:*

Donations received which are earmarked by the donor for specific purposes. Such purposes are within the overall aims of the organisation.

#### *Unrestricted funds:*

Funds which are expendable at the discretion of the committee in the furtherance of the objects of the charity. In addition, funds may be held in order to finance capital investment and working capital.

### **Funding received**

Funding received is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

### **Other incoming resources**

Incoming resources, including investment income are credited to the statement of financial activities when receivable. Fundraising costs include those costs incurred to facilitate the charities objectives.

### **Charitable expenditure**

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

**Period: 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2023–2024 (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2022–2023 (£)</b>
Incoming resources			
Voluntary income	20,841.38	20,841.38	23,311.47
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>20,841.38</b>	<b>20,841.38</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>			
Costs of generating funds	0.00	0.00	1321.76
Charitable activities	33,310.27	33,310.27	39,889.90
– of which: Wages <sup>2</sup>	26,892.41	26,892.41	19,600.00
Total resources expended	33,310.27	33,310.27	41,211.66
<b>Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year</b>	<b>-(12,468.89)</b>	<b>-(12,468.89)</b>	<b>-(17,900.19)</b>
Reconciliation of funds			
Total funds brought forward	27,371.33	27,371.33	20,713.45
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>14,902.44</b>	<b>14,902.44</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared. All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

**<sup>2</sup> Related Party Transactions**

During the year, two trustees were remunerated for the provision of specialist professional services relating to SAR craft maintenance and technical training. These services, totaling £16,900.00, were essential to operational delivery and could not have been sourced externally without compromising safety and continuity. The payments were fully authorised, made in accordance with the charity's governing document and conflict of interest policy, and are further detailed in the notes to the accounts.

	<b>Restricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2024 (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2023 (£)</b>
<b>2. Voluntary income</b>				
Donations	0.00	20,841.38	20,841.38	23,311.47
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	-
	0.00	20,841.38	20,841.38	23,311.47

	<b>Restricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2024 (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2023 (£)</b>
<b>3. Fundraising costs</b>				
Fundraising Activity	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,321.76

	<b>Restricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2024 (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2023 (£)</b>
<b>4. Costs of charitable activities by fund type</b>				
Charitable Activities	0.00	33,310.27	33,310.27	39,889.90
Support Costs <sup>3</sup>	0.00	728.82	728.82	-

	<b>Restricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2024 (£)</b>	<b>Total Funds 2023 (£)</b>
<b>5. Costs of charitable activities by activity type</b>				
Charitable Activities	0.00	33,310.27	33,310.27	39,889.90

## 6. Employee numbers

The average number of persons employed by the charity during the reporting year amounted to Nil.

## 7. Unrestricted income funds

	<b>Balance at 1 April (£)</b>	<b>Incoming resources (£)</b>	<b>Outgoing resources (£)</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2024 (£)</b>
General Funds	27,371.33	20,841.38	33,310.27	14,902.44

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities (2023–2024)

<b>Asset</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>	<b>Depreciation to Date (£)</b>	<b>Net Book Value (£)</b>
RHIB Boat	15,000.00	7,000.00	8,000.00
Two Outboard Engines	20,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
PPE & Safety Equipment	5,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>40,000.00</b>	<b>19,500.00</b>	<b>20,500.00</b>
Current Assets (Cash at Bank)	-	-	14,902.44
Creditors	-	-	-
<b>Net Assets</b>			<b>35,402.44</b>

<sup>3</sup> Support costs of £728.82 relate to essential SAR Asset Maintenance software.

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**Refugee Rescue**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 105156

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# Accounts

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# **Refugee Rescue – Trustees’ Annual Report for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

**Charity Name: Refugee Rescue**

**Charity Number: NIC105156,**

**Principal Address: 58 Leyland Meadows,  
Ballycastle, BT54 6JX**

## **Structure, Governance, and Management**

Refugee Rescue is governed by a formally adopted constitution. The charity is managed by a Board of Trustees who meet regularly to oversee the organisation’s strategic direction, operations, and compliance. Trustees serving during this period included Mr. Paul Kerrigan, Joby Fox, Mr. Richie Heard and Mr. Jamie Bourke. The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity adheres to its legal obligations under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and continues to serve its beneficiaries effectively.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The primary purpose of Refugee Rescue is the relief of human suffering and the saving of lives among refugees and displaced people affected by war, conflict, or humanitarian crises. This is achieved by providing or assisting in sea rescue operations, offering shelter, safety, and humanitarian aid, and advocating for safe and legal routes to asylum. The trustees confirm that all activities undertaken during the year were carried out in line with the public benefit requirements set out by the Charity Commission.

## **Achievements and Performance**

The 2022–2023 reporting period marked a defining chapter in the development of Refugee Rescue as a humanitarian maritime organisation. Building on its transition from operations along the northern shore of Lesvos to the far more perilous Central Mediterranean, the organisation consolidated its operational identity as a skilled search and rescue (SAR) partner embedded within the broader civil fleet response. Most notably, Refugee Rescue continued its partnership with the German NGO Sea-Eye, maintaining an active crew presence aboard the SEA-EYE 4, a 53-metre SAR vessel that operates off the coasts of Libya, Tunisia, and Malta. In this context, Refugee Rescue provided both personnel and equipment, most significantly through the deployment of its dedicated RHIB (rigid-hulled inflatable boat), Mo Chara, which served as the vessel’s primary on-scene rescue craft. These operations took place in what remains the most lethal migratory sea route in the world.

Over the course of this period, Refugee Rescue directly contributed to the rescue and onboard care of over a thousand individuals, many of whom had fled violence, detention, or trafficking in countries such as Libya, Eritrea, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Among those rescued were pregnant women, children as young as five, unaccompanied minors, and survivors of extreme physical and psychological trauma. The organisation's crew carried out high-risk SAR operations in international waters, often in conditions of high swell and poor visibility, and increasingly in the absence of meaningful support from coastal state authorities. Several rescue missions took place

in Malta's SAR zone, with no engagement from Maltese authorities, and there were multiple recorded encounters where state or EU-funded assets, such as the Libyan Coast Guard, actively impeded or endangered the safety of the rescuers. In one such incident in early 2023, Libyan personnel pointed weapons at Mo Chara's unarmed crew during a live rescue.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue continued to uphold international maritime obligations and humanitarian principles. The RHIB team launched repeatedly from SEA-EYE 4, distributing lifejackets, stabilising overcrowded rubber boats and wooden vessels, and transferring survivors back to the main ship for medical attention and shelter. In a single December 2023 deployment, Mo Chara was instrumental in the rescue of 106 people from two unseaworthy vessels in rough seas. In several cases, the teams operated through the night and in worsening weather, demonstrating the high level of training and commitment among the crew.

This operational presence was made possible by Refugee Rescue's careful stewardship of its limited resources and its strategic partnership with Sea-Eye. By embedding skilled RHIB operators and support crew within Sea-Eye's framework, Refugee Rescue was able to participate in sustained missions of up to three weeks' duration, something that would be impossible to undertake independently. During this period, Mo Chara underwent a comprehensive maintenance and refitting programme, ensuring the vessel remained compliant with safety regulations and fully functional as a rapid-response asset. Volunteers and engineering staff dedicated significant time to maintaining the vessel between missions, and the organisation continued to plan for its eventual replacement or retirement with dignity, having played a role in the rescue of more than 16,000 people since its launch.

A core component of the organisation's work remained the recruitment and training of professional volunteer crew. Refugee Rescue facilitated a rolling programme of onboarding and capacity-building, ensuring that each team deployed aboard SEA-EYE 4 had the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to conduct rescues safely and compassionately. Training modules included SAR fundamentals, small boat handling, trauma response, and intercultural communication. New crew members were mentored by experienced personnel, including professionals with previous service in the RNLI, Royal Canadian Marine SAR, or other civilian rescue institutions. A number of volunteers progressed to lead positions within the RHIB team or deck operations after repeat deployments, contributing to a growing internal knowledge base and a culture of peer learning and accountability.

Onshore, Refugee Rescue remained active in public engagement and advocacy. The organisation contributed to international efforts to resist the growing criminalisation of SAR NGOs, particularly in response to legal action taken against rescuers in Italy, such as the high-profile Trapani case. Refugee Rescue joined joint statements and legal advocacy coalitions to assert the fundamental human right to be rescued at sea and to defend the legitimacy of civil rescue actors. These statements emphasised that saving lives must never be considered a criminal act, even as several European states moved to restrict the operations of independent humanitarian vessels.

Public communications remained a priority. Refugee Rescue issued statements, gave interviews, and participated in education and outreach events to raise awareness about the conditions faced by displaced people crossing the Mediterranean. Through social media and supporter networks,

the organisation highlighted both the individual stories of those rescued and the systemic issues driving migration and mortality at sea. These communications often included urgent calls for donations, as the organisation faced growing costs, including fuel, repairs, and medical supplies, while experiencing a reduction in unrestricted donor income across the sector. Despite this, the organisation managed to maintain full operational capacity during 2022 and much of 2023, launching multiple joint missions that collectively rescued more than 500 people in the latter year alone

During this period, Refugee Rescue further deepened its collaboration with other SAR and medical NGOs, including German Doctors and United4Rescue. These partnerships were not only logistical but ethical in nature, demonstrating the shared commitment of several civil society organisations to uphold life-saving norms even as EU migration policy moved increasingly toward deterrence and containment. Refugee Rescue contributed to shared safety protocols, operational debriefs, and policy discussions aimed at improving both mission effectiveness and survivor care standards.

In the face of political hostility, regulatory obstruction, and persistent funding challenges, Refugee Rescue remained steadfast in its mission. The organisation's ability to carry out rescue operations in this environment is a testament to the courage and competence of its crew, the support of its partners and donors, and its unwavering belief that every life at sea is worth saving. The period 2022–2023 demonstrated not only the strategic value of cooperation across civil SAR actors, but also the moral urgency of maintaining a presence in waters where so many continue to disappear unseen. Through its work aboard SEA-EYE 4, its ongoing advocacy, and the enduring symbol of Mo Chara, Refugee Rescue continues to represent a vital, independent voice in one of the defining humanitarian challenges of our time.

## Financial Review

From 2019–2020 to 2022–2023, Refugee Rescue experienced a sustained decline in income, reflecting the cessation of grant funding and a reduction in voluntary donations. Total income fell from £186,317.00 in 2019–2020 to £57,895.92 in 2020–2021, and then to £23,311.47 in both 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 — an overall reduction of 88% compared to 2020 levels.

Expenditure followed a similar trajectory, though the rate of reduction was less severe. Spending fell from £162,719.49 in 2019–2020 to £61,997.84 in 2020–2021, and then to £41,211.66 in 2021–2022, remaining at the same level in 2022–2023. These reductions reflect the charity’s strategic scaling back of activity in response to reduced income. However, the fall in income outpaced cost reductions, resulting in a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2019–2020, followed by a deficit of £4,101.92 in 2020–2021, and significant shortfalls of £17,900.19 in both 2021–2022 and 2022–2023.

These sustained deficits over two consecutive years placed the charity under financial pressure and required careful management to ensure that core operations could continue. Expenditure in 2022–2023 totaled £41,211.66, comprising £1,321.76 in fundraising costs and £39,889.90 on charitable activities. Income for the year was £23,311.47 — all of which was unrestricted. No restricted funds or grant income were received during the year.

The resulting net deficit of £17,900.19 reduced the charity’s available reserves significantly. Unrestricted funds brought forward at the start of the year (1 April 2022) stood at £20,713.45. By year-end (31 March 2023), reserves had fallen to £2,813.26, highlighting the urgency of renewed fundraising and donor engagement to support the charity’s continued humanitarian operations.

## Trends and Considerations

The significant reduction in income over the reporting period, primarily due to the cessation of grant funding and reduced voluntary donations, has placed substantial financial strain on the charity. While expenditure has been reduced accordingly, it has not been sufficient to offset the decline in income, leading to consecutive deficits. Moving forward, the charity must:

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Explore new revenue streams, including partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and expanded donor outreach.
- **Improve Cost Management:** Identify further opportunities to streamline operations and reduce expenditure without compromising core activities.
- **Strengthen Donor Engagement:** Maintain transparency and highlight the impact of donations to inspire continued support.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remains steadfast in its mission. The organisation continues to rely on the generosity of individual donors and strategic partnerships to fund its vital work.

## Statement of Compliance

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to beneficiaries.

### **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and applicable accounting standards. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees' approval of financial accounts

I confirm that:

- (i) To the best of my knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions entered into by the charity in the years 2022 and 2023<sup>1</sup>.

**Signed on behalf of the Trustees.**

Paul Kerrigan

**Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025**

**Name: PAUL KERRIGAN**

**Position: Treasurer**

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<sup>1</sup> These accounts were ratified by the Board of Trustees via email communication on 18 April 2025, in accordance with the provisions of the charity's governing document permitting decisions by written resolution. Unanimous approval was recorded, and a quorum of trustees participated in the decision.

## **Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Refugee Rescue.**

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st March 2023, which are set out in this report.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters. My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

**Signed:**

Kennith Cruickshank

**Name: KENNITH CRUICKSHANK**

**Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025**

	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>
	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>			
Incoming resources from generating funds:			
Voluntary income	23,311.47	23,311.47	28,473.25
Grants			29,422.67
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>57,895.92</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>			
Costs of generating funds			
Fundraising costs	1,321.76	1,321.76	103.9
Charitable activities	39,889.90	39,889.90	60,676.08
of which: Wages <sup>2</sup>	19,600.00	19,600.00	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>61,997.84</b>
Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year	-(17,900.19)	-(17,900.19)	-(4,101.92)
Reconciliation of funds Total funds brought forward	20,713.45	20,713.45	23,597.51
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>19,495.59</b>

<sup>2</sup> During the accounting period, two trustees received payments for professional services specifically relating to the technical maintenance of the Search and Rescue (SAR) craft and delivery of specialist training essential to Refugee Rescue's operational activities. Due to the specific nature of our SAR craft (Atlantic 75), both trustees are RNLI volunteers who have extensive operational knowledge of this type of vessel. These services were integral to the charity's mission and could not be sourced externally without compromising operational continuity and safety standards.

## Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

### Accounting Basis

These accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and related regulations.

### Funds

All funds held during the year were unrestricted. No restricted or endowment funds were received or held.

### Charitable Activities

Expenditure of £39,889.90 was incurred on charitable activities, which includes:

Wages: £19,200.00

Equipment, training, fuel and running costs associated with operational delivery

### Fundraising Costs

Fundraising costs of £1,321.76 relate to event expenses and associated promotional materials.

### Fixed Assets

Although not required under receipts and payments accounting, the charity maintains records of fixed assets for internal management purposes.

Assets are shown net of depreciation as follows:

### Statement of Assets and Liabilities (2022–2023)

Asset	2021 Net Value (£)	Depreciation (£)	Net Value 2022 (£)
RHIB Boat	12,000.00	3,000.00	9,000.00
Two Outboard Engines	16,000.00	6,000.00	10,000.00
PPE & Safety Equipment	4,000.00	1,000.00	3,000.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>32,000.00</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>22,000.00</b>
Current Assets	–	–	2,813.26
Creditors	–	–	–
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>26,813.26</b>

### Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions during the year.



**Refugee Rescue**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 105156

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# Annual report

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# **Refugee Rescue – Trustees’ Annual Report for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

**Charity Name: Refugee Rescue**

**Charity Number: NIC105156,**

**Principal Address: 58 Leyland Meadows,  
Ballycastle, BT54 6JX**

## **Structure, Governance, and Management**

Refugee Rescue is governed by a formally adopted constitution. The charity is managed by a Board of Trustees who meet regularly to oversee the organisation’s strategic direction, operations, and compliance. Trustees serving during this period included Mr. Paul Kerrigan, Joby Fox, Mr. Richie Heard and Mr. Jamie Bourke. The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity adheres to its legal obligations under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and continues to serve its beneficiaries effectively.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The primary purpose of Refugee Rescue is the relief of human suffering and the saving of lives among refugees and displaced people affected by war, conflict, or humanitarian crises. This is achieved by providing or assisting in sea rescue operations, offering shelter, safety, and humanitarian aid, and advocating for safe and legal routes to asylum. The trustees confirm that all activities undertaken during the year were carried out in line with the public benefit requirements set out by the Charity Commission.

## **Achievements and Performance**

The 2022–2023 reporting period marked a defining chapter in the development of Refugee Rescue as a humanitarian maritime organisation. Building on its transition from operations along the northern shore of Lesvos to the far more perilous Central Mediterranean, the organisation consolidated its operational identity as a skilled search and rescue (SAR) partner embedded within the broader civil fleet response. Most notably, Refugee Rescue continued its partnership with the German NGO Sea-Eye, maintaining an active crew presence aboard the SEA-EYE 4, a 53-metre SAR vessel that operates off the coasts of Libya, Tunisia, and Malta. In this context, Refugee Rescue provided both personnel and equipment, most significantly through the deployment of its dedicated RHIB (rigid-hulled inflatable boat), Mo Chara, which served as the vessel’s primary on-scene rescue craft. These operations took place in what remains the most lethal migratory sea route in the world.

Over the course of this period, Refugee Rescue directly contributed to the rescue and onboard care of over a thousand individuals, many of whom had fled violence, detention, or trafficking in countries such as Libya, Eritrea, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Among those rescued were pregnant women, children as young as five, unaccompanied minors, and survivors of extreme physical and psychological trauma. The organisation's crew carried out high-risk SAR operations in international waters, often in conditions of high swell and poor visibility, and increasingly in the absence of meaningful support from coastal state authorities. Several rescue missions took place

in Malta's SAR zone, with no engagement from Maltese authorities, and there were multiple recorded encounters where state or EU-funded assets, such as the Libyan Coast Guard, actively impeded or endangered the safety of the rescuers. In one such incident in early 2023, Libyan personnel pointed weapons at Mo Chara's unarmed crew during a live rescue.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue continued to uphold international maritime obligations and humanitarian principles. The RHIB team launched repeatedly from SEA-EYE 4, distributing lifejackets, stabilising overcrowded rubber boats and wooden vessels, and transferring survivors back to the main ship for medical attention and shelter. In a single December 2023 deployment, Mo Chara was instrumental in the rescue of 106 people from two unseaworthy vessels in rough seas. In several cases, the teams operated through the night and in worsening weather, demonstrating the high level of training and commitment among the crew.

This operational presence was made possible by Refugee Rescue's careful stewardship of its limited resources and its strategic partnership with Sea-Eye. By embedding skilled RHIB operators and support crew within Sea-Eye's framework, Refugee Rescue was able to participate in sustained missions of up to three weeks' duration, something that would be impossible to undertake independently. During this period, Mo Chara underwent a comprehensive maintenance and refitting programme, ensuring the vessel remained compliant with safety regulations and fully functional as a rapid-response asset. Volunteers and engineering staff dedicated significant time to maintaining the vessel between missions, and the organisation continued to plan for its eventual replacement or retirement with dignity, having played a role in the rescue of more than 16,000 people since its launch.

A core component of the organisation's work remained the recruitment and training of professional volunteer crew. Refugee Rescue facilitated a rolling programme of onboarding and capacity-building, ensuring that each team deployed aboard SEA-EYE 4 had the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to conduct rescues safely and compassionately. Training modules included SAR fundamentals, small boat handling, trauma response, and intercultural communication. New crew members were mentored by experienced personnel, including professionals with previous service in the RNLI, Royal Canadian Marine SAR, or other civilian rescue institutions. A number of volunteers progressed to lead positions within the RHIB team or deck operations after repeat deployments, contributing to a growing internal knowledge base and a culture of peer learning and accountability.

Onshore, Refugee Rescue remained active in public engagement and advocacy. The organisation contributed to international efforts to resist the growing criminalisation of SAR NGOs, particularly in response to legal action taken against rescuers in Italy, such as the high-profile Trapani case. Refugee Rescue joined joint statements and legal advocacy coalitions to assert the fundamental human right to be rescued at sea and to defend the legitimacy of civil rescue actors. These statements emphasised that saving lives must never be considered a criminal act, even as several European states moved to restrict the operations of independent humanitarian vessels.

Public communications remained a priority. Refugee Rescue issued statements, gave interviews, and participated in education and outreach events to raise awareness about the conditions faced by displaced people crossing the Mediterranean. Through social media and supporter networks,

the organisation highlighted both the individual stories of those rescued and the systemic issues driving migration and mortality at sea. These communications often included urgent calls for donations, as the organisation faced growing costs, including fuel, repairs, and medical supplies, while experiencing a reduction in unrestricted donor income across the sector. Despite this, the organisation managed to maintain full operational capacity during 2022 and much of 2023, launching multiple joint missions that collectively rescued more than 500 people in the latter year alone

During this period, Refugee Rescue further deepened its collaboration with other SAR and medical NGOs, including German Doctors and United4Rescue. These partnerships were not only logistical but ethical in nature, demonstrating the shared commitment of several civil society organisations to uphold life-saving norms even as EU migration policy moved increasingly toward deterrence and containment. Refugee Rescue contributed to shared safety protocols, operational debriefs, and policy discussions aimed at improving both mission effectiveness and survivor care standards.

In the face of political hostility, regulatory obstruction, and persistent funding challenges, Refugee Rescue remained steadfast in its mission. The organisation's ability to carry out rescue operations in this environment is a testament to the courage and competence of its crew, the support of its partners and donors, and its unwavering belief that every life at sea is worth saving. The period 2022–2023 demonstrated not only the strategic value of cooperation across civil SAR actors, but also the moral urgency of maintaining a presence in waters where so many continue to disappear unseen. Through its work aboard SEA-EYE 4, its ongoing advocacy, and the enduring symbol of Mo Chara, Refugee Rescue continues to represent a vital, independent voice in one of the defining humanitarian challenges of our time.

## Financial Review

From 2019–2020 to 2022–2023, Refugee Rescue experienced a sustained decline in income, reflecting the cessation of grant funding and a reduction in voluntary donations. Total income fell from £186,317.00 in 2019–2020 to £57,895.92 in 2020–2021, and then to £23,311.47 in both 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 — an overall reduction of 88% compared to 2020 levels.

Expenditure followed a similar trajectory, though the rate of reduction was less severe. Spending fell from £162,719.49 in 2019–2020 to £61,997.84 in 2020–2021, and then to £41,211.66 in 2021–2022, remaining at the same level in 2022–2023. These reductions reflect the charity’s strategic scaling back of activity in response to reduced income. However, the fall in income outpaced cost reductions, resulting in a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2019–2020, followed by a deficit of £4,101.92 in 2020–2021, and significant shortfalls of £17,900.19 in both 2021–2022 and 2022–2023.

These sustained deficits over two consecutive years placed the charity under financial pressure and required careful management to ensure that core operations could continue. Expenditure in 2022–2023 totaled £41,211.66, comprising £1,321.76 in fundraising costs and £39,889.90 on charitable activities. Income for the year was £23,311.47 — all of which was unrestricted. No restricted funds or grant income were received during the year.

The resulting net deficit of £17,900.19 reduced the charity’s available reserves significantly. Unrestricted funds brought forward at the start of the year (1 April 2022) stood at £20,713.45. By year-end (31 March 2023), reserves had fallen to £2,813.26, highlighting the urgency of renewed fundraising and donor engagement to support the charity’s continued humanitarian operations.

## Trends and Considerations

The significant reduction in income over the reporting period, primarily due to the cessation of grant funding and reduced voluntary donations, has placed substantial financial strain on the charity. While expenditure has been reduced accordingly, it has not been sufficient to offset the decline in income, leading to consecutive deficits. Moving forward, the charity must:

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Explore new revenue streams, including partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and expanded donor outreach.
- **Improve Cost Management:** Identify further opportunities to streamline operations and reduce expenditure without compromising core activities.
- **Strengthen Donor Engagement:** Maintain transparency and highlight the impact of donations to inspire continued support.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remains steadfast in its mission. The organisation continues to rely on the generosity of individual donors and strategic partnerships to fund its vital work.

## Statement of Compliance

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to beneficiaries.

### **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and applicable accounting standards. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees' approval of financial accounts

I confirm that:

- (i) To the best of my knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions entered into by the charity in the years 2022 and 2023<sup>1</sup>.

**Signed on behalf of the Trustees.**

Paul Kerrigan

**Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025**

**Name: PAUL KERRIGAN**

**Position: Treasurer**

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<sup>1</sup> These accounts were ratified by the Board of Trustees via email communication on 18 April 2025, in accordance with the provisions of the charity's governing document permitting decisions by written resolution. Unanimous approval was recorded, and a quorum of trustees participated in the decision.

## **Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Refugee Rescue.**

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st March 2023, which are set out in this report.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters. My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

**Signed:**

Kennith Cruickshank

**Name: KENNITH CRUICKSHANK**

**Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025**

	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>
	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>			
Incoming resources from generating funds:			
Voluntary income	23,311.47	23,311.47	28,473.25
Grants			29,422.67
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>57,895.92</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>			
Costs of generating funds			
Fundraising costs	1,321.76	1,321.76	103.9
Charitable activities	39,889.90	39,889.90	60,676.08
of which: Wages <sup>2</sup>	19,600.00	19,600.00	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>61,997.84</b>
Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year	-(17,900.19)	-(17,900.19)	-(4,101.92)
Reconciliation of funds Total funds brought forward	20,713.45	20,713.45	23,597.51
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>19,495.59</b>

<sup>2</sup> During the accounting period, two trustees received payments for professional services specifically relating to the technical maintenance of the Search and Rescue (SAR) craft and delivery of specialist training essential to Refugee Rescue's operational activities. Due to the specific nature of our SAR craft (Atlantic 75), both trustees are RNLI volunteers who have extensive operational knowledge of this type of vessel. These services were integral to the charity's mission and could not be sourced externally without compromising operational continuity and safety standards.

## Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

### Accounting Basis

These accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and related regulations.

### Funds

All funds held during the year were unrestricted. No restricted or endowment funds were received or held.

### Charitable Activities

Expenditure of £39,889.90 was incurred on charitable activities, which includes:

Wages: £19,200.00

Equipment, training, fuel and running costs associated with operational delivery

### Fundraising Costs

Fundraising costs of £1,321.76 relate to event expenses and associated promotional materials.

### Fixed Assets

Although not required under receipts and payments accounting, the charity maintains records of fixed assets for internal management purposes.

Assets are shown net of depreciation as follows:

### Statement of Assets and Liabilities (2022–2023)

Asset	2021 Net Value (£)	Depreciation (£)	Net Value 2022 (£)
RHIB Boat	12,000.00	3,000.00	9,000.00
Two Outboard Engines	16,000.00	6,000.00	10,000.00
PPE & Safety Equipment	4,000.00	1,000.00	3,000.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>32,000.00</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>22,000.00</b>
Current Assets	–	–	2,813.26
Creditors	–	–	–
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>26,813.26</b>

### Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions during the year.



**Refugee Rescue**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 105156

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# Annual return

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# **Refugee Rescue – Trustees’ Annual Report for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

**Charity Name: Refugee Rescue**

**Charity Number: NIC105156,**

**Principal Address: 58 Leyland Meadows,  
Ballycastle, BT54 6JX**

## **Structure, Governance, and Management**

Refugee Rescue is governed by a formally adopted constitution. The charity is managed by a Board of Trustees who meet regularly to oversee the organisation’s strategic direction, operations, and compliance. Trustees serving during this period included Mr. Paul Kerrigan, Joby Fox, Mr. Richie Heard and Mr. Jamie Bourke. The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity adheres to its legal obligations under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and continues to serve its beneficiaries effectively.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The primary purpose of Refugee Rescue is the relief of human suffering and the saving of lives among refugees and displaced people affected by war, conflict, or humanitarian crises. This is achieved by providing or assisting in sea rescue operations, offering shelter, safety, and humanitarian aid, and advocating for safe and legal routes to asylum. The trustees confirm that all activities undertaken during the year were carried out in line with the public benefit requirements set out by the Charity Commission.

## **Achievements and Performance**

The 2022–2023 reporting period marked a defining chapter in the development of Refugee Rescue as a humanitarian maritime organisation. Building on its transition from operations along the northern shore of Lesvos to the far more perilous Central Mediterranean, the organisation consolidated its operational identity as a skilled search and rescue (SAR) partner embedded within the broader civil fleet response. Most notably, Refugee Rescue continued its partnership with the German NGO Sea-Eye, maintaining an active crew presence aboard the SEA-EYE 4, a 53-metre SAR vessel that operates off the coasts of Libya, Tunisia, and Malta. In this context, Refugee Rescue provided both personnel and equipment, most significantly through the deployment of its dedicated RHIB (rigid-hulled inflatable boat), Mo Chara, which served as the vessel’s primary on-scene rescue craft. These operations took place in what remains the most lethal migratory sea route in the world.

Over the course of this period, Refugee Rescue directly contributed to the rescue and onboard care of over a thousand individuals, many of whom had fled violence, detention, or trafficking in countries such as Libya, Eritrea, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Among those rescued were pregnant women, children as young as five, unaccompanied minors, and survivors of extreme physical and psychological trauma. The organisation's crew carried out high-risk SAR operations in international waters, often in conditions of high swell and poor visibility, and increasingly in the absence of meaningful support from coastal state authorities. Several rescue missions took place

in Malta's SAR zone, with no engagement from Maltese authorities, and there were multiple recorded encounters where state or EU-funded assets, such as the Libyan Coast Guard, actively impeded or endangered the safety of the rescuers. In one such incident in early 2023, Libyan personnel pointed weapons at Mo Chara's unarmed crew during a live rescue.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue continued to uphold international maritime obligations and humanitarian principles. The RHIB team launched repeatedly from SEA-EYE 4, distributing lifejackets, stabilising overcrowded rubber boats and wooden vessels, and transferring survivors back to the main ship for medical attention and shelter. In a single December 2023 deployment, Mo Chara was instrumental in the rescue of 106 people from two unseaworthy vessels in rough seas. In several cases, the teams operated through the night and in worsening weather, demonstrating the high level of training and commitment among the crew.

This operational presence was made possible by Refugee Rescue's careful stewardship of its limited resources and its strategic partnership with Sea-Eye. By embedding skilled RHIB operators and support crew within Sea-Eye's framework, Refugee Rescue was able to participate in sustained missions of up to three weeks' duration, something that would be impossible to undertake independently. During this period, Mo Chara underwent a comprehensive maintenance and refitting programme, ensuring the vessel remained compliant with safety regulations and fully functional as a rapid-response asset. Volunteers and engineering staff dedicated significant time to maintaining the vessel between missions, and the organisation continued to plan for its eventual replacement or retirement with dignity, having played a role in the rescue of more than 16,000 people since its launch.

A core component of the organisation's work remained the recruitment and training of professional volunteer crew. Refugee Rescue facilitated a rolling programme of onboarding and capacity-building, ensuring that each team deployed aboard SEA-EYE 4 had the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to conduct rescues safely and compassionately. Training modules included SAR fundamentals, small boat handling, trauma response, and intercultural communication. New crew members were mentored by experienced personnel, including professionals with previous service in the RNLI, Royal Canadian Marine SAR, or other civilian rescue institutions. A number of volunteers progressed to lead positions within the RHIB team or deck operations after repeat deployments, contributing to a growing internal knowledge base and a culture of peer learning and accountability.

Onshore, Refugee Rescue remained active in public engagement and advocacy. The organisation contributed to international efforts to resist the growing criminalisation of SAR NGOs, particularly in response to legal action taken against rescuers in Italy, such as the high-profile Trapani case. Refugee Rescue joined joint statements and legal advocacy coalitions to assert the fundamental human right to be rescued at sea and to defend the legitimacy of civil rescue actors. These statements emphasised that saving lives must never be considered a criminal act, even as several European states moved to restrict the operations of independent humanitarian vessels.

Public communications remained a priority. Refugee Rescue issued statements, gave interviews, and participated in education and outreach events to raise awareness about the conditions faced by displaced people crossing the Mediterranean. Through social media and supporter networks,

the organisation highlighted both the individual stories of those rescued and the systemic issues driving migration and mortality at sea. These communications often included urgent calls for donations, as the organisation faced growing costs, including fuel, repairs, and medical supplies, while experiencing a reduction in unrestricted donor income across the sector. Despite this, the organisation managed to maintain full operational capacity during 2022 and much of 2023, launching multiple joint missions that collectively rescued more than 500 people in the latter year alone

During this period, Refugee Rescue further deepened its collaboration with other SAR and medical NGOs, including German Doctors and United4Rescue. These partnerships were not only logistical but ethical in nature, demonstrating the shared commitment of several civil society organisations to uphold life-saving norms even as EU migration policy moved increasingly toward deterrence and containment. Refugee Rescue contributed to shared safety protocols, operational debriefs, and policy discussions aimed at improving both mission effectiveness and survivor care standards.

In the face of political hostility, regulatory obstruction, and persistent funding challenges, Refugee Rescue remained steadfast in its mission. The organisation's ability to carry out rescue operations in this environment is a testament to the courage and competence of its crew, the support of its partners and donors, and its unwavering belief that every life at sea is worth saving. The period 2022–2023 demonstrated not only the strategic value of cooperation across civil SAR actors, but also the moral urgency of maintaining a presence in waters where so many continue to disappear unseen. Through its work aboard SEA-EYE 4, its ongoing advocacy, and the enduring symbol of Mo Chara, Refugee Rescue continues to represent a vital, independent voice in one of the defining humanitarian challenges of our time.

## Financial Review

From 2019–2020 to 2022–2023, Refugee Rescue experienced a sustained decline in income, reflecting the cessation of grant funding and a reduction in voluntary donations. Total income fell from £186,317.00 in 2019–2020 to £57,895.92 in 2020–2021, and then to £23,311.47 in both 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 — an overall reduction of 88% compared to 2020 levels.

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These sustained deficits over two consecutive years placed the charity under financial pressure and required careful management to ensure that core operations could continue. Expenditure in 2022–2023 totaled £41,211.66, comprising £1,321.76 in fundraising costs and £39,889.90 on charitable activities. Income for the year was £23,311.47 — all of which was unrestricted. No restricted funds or grant income were received during the year.

The resulting net deficit of £17,900.19 reduced the charity’s available reserves significantly. Unrestricted funds brought forward at the start of the year (1 April 2022) stood at £20,713.45. By year-end (31 March 2023), reserves had fallen to £2,813.26, highlighting the urgency of renewed fundraising and donor engagement to support the charity’s continued humanitarian operations.

## Trends and Considerations

The significant reduction in income over the reporting period, primarily due to the cessation of grant funding and reduced voluntary donations, has placed substantial financial strain on the charity. While expenditure has been reduced accordingly, it has not been sufficient to offset the decline in income, leading to consecutive deficits. Moving forward, the charity must:

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Explore new revenue streams, including partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and expanded donor outreach.
- **Improve Cost Management:** Identify further opportunities to streamline operations and reduce expenditure without compromising core activities.
- **Strengthen Donor Engagement:** Maintain transparency and highlight the impact of donations to inspire continued support.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remains steadfast in its mission. The organisation continues to rely on the generosity of individual donors and strategic partnerships to fund its vital work.

## Statement of Compliance

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to beneficiaries.

### **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and applicable accounting standards. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Trustees' approval of financial accounts

I confirm that:

- (i) To the best of my knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions entered into by the charity in the years 2022 and 2023<sup>1</sup>.

**Signed on behalf of the Trustees.**

Paul Kerrigan

**Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025**

**Name: PAUL KERRIGAN**

**Position: Treasurer**

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<sup>1</sup> These accounts were ratified by the Board of Trustees via email communication on 18 April 2025, in accordance with the provisions of the charity's governing document permitting decisions by written resolution. Unanimous approval was recorded, and a quorum of trustees participated in the decision.

## **Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Refugee Rescue.**

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st March 2023, which are set out in this report.

### **Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters. My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

**Signed:**

Kennith Cruickshank

**Name: KENNITH CRUICKSHANK**

**Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025**

	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>
	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>			
Incoming resources from generating funds:			
Voluntary income	23,311.47	23,311.47	28,473.25
Grants			29,422.67
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>57,895.92</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>			
Costs of generating funds			
Fundraising costs	1,321.76	1,321.76	103.9
Charitable activities	39,889.90	39,889.90	60,676.08
of which: Wages <sup>2</sup>	19,600.00	19,600.00	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>61,997.84</b>
Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year	-(17,900.19)	-(17,900.19)	-(4,101.92)
Reconciliation of funds Total funds brought forward	20,713.45	20,713.45	23,597.51
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>19,495.59</b>

<sup>2</sup> During the accounting period, two trustees received payments for professional services specifically relating to the technical maintenance of the Search and Rescue (SAR) craft and delivery of specialist training essential to Refugee Rescue's operational activities. Due to the specific nature of our SAR craft (Atlantic 75), both trustees are RNLI volunteers who have extensive operational knowledge of this type of vessel. These services were integral to the charity's mission and could not be sourced externally without compromising operational continuity and safety standards.

## Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

### Accounting Basis

These accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and related regulations.

### Funds

All funds held during the year were unrestricted. No restricted or endowment funds were received or held.

### Charitable Activities

Expenditure of £39,889.90 was incurred on charitable activities, which includes:

Wages: £19,200.00

Equipment, training, fuel and running costs associated with operational delivery

### Fundraising Costs

Fundraising costs of £1,321.76 relate to event expenses and associated promotional materials.

### Fixed Assets

Although not required under receipts and payments accounting, the charity maintains records of fixed assets for internal management purposes.

Assets are shown net of depreciation as follows:

### Statement of Assets and Liabilities (2022–2023)

Asset	2021 Net Value (£)	Depreciation (£)	Net Value 2022 (£)
RHIB Boat	12,000.00	3,000.00	9,000.00
Two Outboard Engines	16,000.00	6,000.00	10,000.00
PPE & Safety Equipment	4,000.00	1,000.00	3,000.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>32,000.00</b>	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>22,000.00</b>
Current Assets	–	–	2,813.26
Creditors	–	–	–
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>26,813.26</b>

### Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions during the year.



**Refugee Rescue**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 105156

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# Accounts

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**REFUGEE RESCUE  
FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS**

**1 APRIL 2020  
31 MARCH 2022**



**Charity Number 105156**

## **REFUGEE RESCUE**

### **Trustees Annual Report**

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The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the years ended 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022.

#### **Reference and administrative details**

Registered charity name: Refugee Rescue

Registered charity number: Charity Commission Number 105156 & HMRC Number

NI00583 Charity's principal address: 58 Leyland Meadows, Ballycastle, BT54 6JX

#### **The trustees**

The following trustees served the charity during the year;

Mr. Paul Kerrigan

Mr. Richie Heard

Mr. Joby Fox

#### **Structure, governance and management**

The charity is governed by a formally adopted constitution.

The charity is constituted by a board of trustees who manage and direct the charity and are responsible for the appointment of new trustees to the board. The board of trustees meet on a monthly basis to facilitate effective operations and ensure the charity delivers the services specified.

#### **Objectives**

The principal objective of the charity is to help alleviate the relief of human suffering and the saving of lives of refugees and displaced people who are affected by war, conflict or other crisis by providing, or assisting in the provision of sea rescue and the relief of refugees in need by providing, or assisting in the provision of shelter and humanitarian support and by any other charitable means as the trustees see fit.

The trustees have taken instruction on the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. They have considered in particular the obligations imposed under the public benefits test and can confirm that the charity meets the criteria set down therein. Refugee Rescue became registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 4 April 2016.

#### **Achievements and performance**

Refugee Rescue is a skilled Search and Rescue (SAR) crew, a humanitarian and non-political NGO founded in 2015. Refugee Rescue remains as the only humanitarian and professional search and rescue left on the Northern Shore of Lesvos, Greece. People are still crossing the short stretch between Turkey and Lesvos every day. Our skilled crew operates on our rescue boat 'Mo Chara', an ex-RNLI Atlantic 7. With the help of Mo Chara, we can get people into safety fast

The purposes of our charity may lead to the following harm that it is a potentially dangerous situation for the crew in the rescue boat but we can show that this harm is outweighed by the benefits through having a skilled and trained crew. The direct benefit is that refugees will be provided with shelter and humanitarian aid as and when needed. These benefits will be evidenced through the health and wellbeing of the refugees in that they will feel safe and have the basics in life to survive. There is no harm flowing from this purpose, and there should be no private benefit.

The reporting period of 2021 to 2023 presented significant challenges for Refugee Rescue. These years were marked by operational transitions, sustained global crises, and increased scrutiny of humanitarian efforts across the Mediterranean region. Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remained steadfast in its commitment to saving lives and supporting displaced individuals seeking safety.

#### **Transition to the Central Mediterranean**

During this reporting period, Refugee Rescue made the strategic decision to relocate its operations from the North Shore of Lesvos, Greece, to the Central Mediterranean. This move was motivated by the need to address the evolving humanitarian crisis and the absence of sufficient search and rescue (SAR) assets in this region. Partnering with the German NGO SEA-EYE, Refugee Rescue expanded its capacity to deliver life-saving operations and ensure a continued presence where it

was most needed. This partnership exemplifies the organisation's adaptability and commitment to collaborative approaches in addressing the refugee crisis.

### **Operations on Lesbos**

Refugee Rescue continued to operate on the North Shore of Lesbos during the early part of this period. Volunteers and staff worked tirelessly to provide a stable presence, ensuring the safety and dignity of those making the perilous crossing from Turkey. Despite the blistering summer heat and harsh winter conditions, the SAR team demonstrated exceptional dedication, assisting over 4,000 people in shortened operational timescales.

However, ongoing challenges, including an upsurge in right-wing violence and the global spread of COVID-19, led to difficult decisions. In early 2020, operations were paused, and staff, crew, and volunteers were evacuated to ensure their safety. Even during periods when the rescue boat *Mo Chara* was out of the water for maintenance or due to travel restrictions, Refugee Rescue continued advocacy and campaigning efforts, working to ensure that displaced people arriving in Greece by sea were supported and protected.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The global pandemic significantly impacted Refugee Rescue's operations. Health concerns for both the crew and the local population in Skala Sikamineas necessitated suspensions of active operations on Lesbos. Lockdowns and travel bans further restricted the ability to respond at sea. Despite these setbacks, Refugee Rescue maintained its presence through remote advocacy, raising awareness about the plight of refugees and holding European authorities accountable for their policies and actions.

The pandemic underscored the inequalities faced by displaced individuals, including lack of access to healthcare and basic necessities, as well as restrictions on movement in overcrowded facilities like Moria. Refugee Rescue used its platform to highlight these injustices and advocate for safe and legal routes to asylum.

### **Partnership with SEA-EYE**

The partnership with SEA-EYE marked a pivotal development during this period. Refugee Rescue deployed its resources and expertise to the Central Mediterranean, where SAR efforts are critically needed due to the high volume of dangerous crossings. Working aboard SEA-EYE's vessels, Refugee Rescue played a key role in operations that saved thousands of lives. This partnership reinforced the organisation's mission to adapt to emerging needs while maintaining its core values of solidarity, humanity, and justice.

### **Challenges and Achievements**

The period 2021 to 2022 saw continued challenges for NGOs operating in the Mediterranean. Refugee Rescue, like others, faced intense scrutiny for its humanitarian work. Despite these obstacles, the organisation demonstrated resilience and resolve:

**Lives Saved:** Refugee Rescue contributed to the rescue and support of thousands of individuals, many of whom were women and children.

**Advocacy:** The organisation remained vocal about the failures of European authorities to provide safe and legal pathways for asylum seekers.

**Collaboration:** Partnering with SEA-EYE enhanced operational capacity and extended the reach of SAR efforts in the Mediterranean.

### **Reflections and Future Outlook**

The reporting period highlighted the ongoing need for SAR operations as a vital safety net for those fleeing war, persecution, and economic hardship. While the challenges faced were significant, Refugee Rescue's ability to adapt, collaborate, and advocate ensured that it continued to provide critical support to vulnerable populations.

Refugee Rescue remains committed to its mission of saving lives at sea and advocating for

systemic change to ensure safe passage for displaced individuals. The lessons learned during this period will inform future operations and strengthen the organisation's resolve to address the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean.

### **Conclusion**

The years 2021 to 2022 were defined by resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles. Refugee Rescue's volunteers, staff, and partners have once again demonstrated the power of collective action in the face of adversity. The charity remains steadfast in its vision of a world where no life is needlessly lost at sea and where the dignity and rights of displaced individuals are upheld.

### **Financial Review**

The detailed results for the reporting years and the charity's financial position at year-end are presented in the attached financial statements.

From 2020 to 2021, total income fell sharply from £186,317 to £57,895.92, reflecting the cessation of grant funding and a reduction in voluntary income. This downward trend continued in 2022, with total income further declining to £23,311.47, marking an 85% decrease compared to 2020 levels.

Expenditure also decreased from £162,719.49 in 2020 to £61,997.84 in 2021, and further to £41,211.66 in 2022, as the charity scaled back its activities to align with reduced funding. However, the decline in income outpaced the reduction in expenditure, resulting in consecutive net deficits of £4,101.92 in 2021 and £17,900.19 in 2022, compared to a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2020. These figures highlight the growing financial pressures faced by the organisation, requiring strategic adjustments to ensure sustainability and the continuation of critical operations.

### **Income**

For the financial year ending 31 March 2022, Refugee Rescue's total unrestricted incoming resources amounted to £23,311.47, a decline from £57,895.92 in the previous year and significantly lower than £186,317.00 in 2020. No restricted funds were recorded during this reporting period.

The decline in income was largely due to the cessation of grant funding after 2021, compounded by reduced voluntary donations. These factors significantly impacted the charity's ability to sustain its previous level of activities.

### **Expenditure**

Total resources expended for the year ending 31 March 2022 were £41,211.66, down from £61,997.84 in 2021 and £162,719.49 in 2020. A detailed breakdown of the 2022 expenditure is as follows:

Fundraising Costs: £1,321.76, representing a slight increase from £103.90 in 2021.

Charitable Activities: £39,889.90, a decline from £60,676.08 in 2021 and £162,719.49 in 2020.

### **Net Position**

The charity recorded a net deficit of £(17,900.19) for the year ending 31 March 2022, a significant increase from the deficit of £(4,101.92) in 2021. This follows a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2020.

### **Reserves**

At the start of the year (1 April 2021), the total unrestricted funds brought forward were £20,713.45. By year-end (31 March 2022), the total unrestricted funds carried forward had decreased to £2,813.26, reflecting the operating deficit for the year.

## **Trends and Considerations**

The significant reduction in income over the reporting period, primarily due to the cessation of grant funding and reduced voluntary donations, has placed substantial financial strain on the charity. While expenditure has been reduced accordingly, it has not been sufficient to offset the decline in income, leading to consecutive deficits.

### **Moving forward, the charity must:**

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Explore new revenue streams, including partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and expanded donor outreach.
- **Improve Cost Management:** Identify further opportunities to streamline operations and reduce expenditure without compromising core activities.
- **Strengthen Donor Engagement:** Maintain transparency and highlight the impact of donations to inspire continued support.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remains steadfast in its mission. The organisation continues to rely on the generosity of individual donors and strategic partnerships to fund its vital work.

## **Statement of Compliance**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to beneficiaries.

## **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and applicable accounting standards. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **Trustees approval of financial accounts**

I confirm that:

- (i) To the best of my knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions entered into by the charity in the years 2021 and 2022.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

*Paul Kerrigan*

**Date: 03/12/2024**

**Paul Kerrigan Treasurer**

## Independent Examiners Report

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Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Refugee Rescue. I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st March 2021, which are set out in this report.

Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Signed:

*Jamie Bourke*

Jamie Bourke

**Date: 12/01/2025**

**REFUGEE RESCUE**  
**Statement of financial activities**

	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020</b>
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	-	23,311.47	23,311.47	28,473.25	84,874.00
Grants	-	-	-	29,422.67	101,443.00
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>57,895.92</b>	<b>186,317.00</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds					
Fundraising costs		1,321.76	1,321.76	103.9	
Charitable activities		39,889.90	39,889.90	60,676.08	162,719.49
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>61,997.84</b>	<b>162,719.49</b>
Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year		-(17,900.19)	-(17,900.19)	-(4,101.92)	23,597.51
Reconciliation of funds Total funds brought forward		20,713.45	20,713.45	23,597.51	
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>19,495.59</b>	<b>23,597.51</b>

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>2021 (£)</b>	<b>Depreciation (£)</b>	<b>Net Value (£)</b>
RHIB Boat	15,000.00	3,000.00	12,000.00
Two Outboard Engines	20,000.00	4,000.00	16,000.00
PPE and safety Equipment	5,000.00	1,000.00	4,000.00
Total Fixed Assets	40,000.00	8,000.00	32,000.00
Current Assets	19,495.59	-	19,495.59
Creditors (Amounts Falling Due within One Year)	-	-	-
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>59,495.59</b>	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>51,495.59</b>

## **1. Accounting policies**

### **Basis of accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The charity is adopting FRS 102 Section 1A and is taking the exemption from preparing a cashflow statement.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Charity will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The trustees believe that it is appropriate for the financial statements to be prepared on the going concern basis.

The entity is a Public Benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements are presented in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

### **Fund accounting**

The charity has one type of fund for which it is responsible, and which require separate disclosure as follows:

#### *Restricted funds:*

Donations received which are earmarked by the donor for specific purposes. Such purposes are within the overall aims of the organisation.

#### *Unrestricted funds:*

Funds which are expendable at the discretion of the committee in the furtherance of the objects of the charity. In addition, funds may be held in order to finance capital investment and working capital.

### **Funding received**

Funding received is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

### **Other incoming resources**

Incoming resources including investment income are credited to the statement of financial activities when receivable.

### **Fundraising costs**

Fundraising costs include those costs incurred to facilitate the charities objectives.

### **Charitable expenditure**

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

**Refugee Rescue**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 105156

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# Annual report

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**REFUGEE RESCUE  
FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS**

**1 APRIL 2020  
31 MARCH 2022**



**Charity Number 105156**

## **REFUGEE RESCUE**

### **Trustees Annual Report**

---

The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the years ended 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022.

#### **Reference and administrative details**

Registered charity name: Refugee Rescue

Registered charity number: Charity Commission Number 105156 & HMRC Number

NI00583 Charity's principal address: 58 Leyland Meadows, Ballycastle, BT54 6JX

#### **The trustees**

The following trustees served the charity during the year;

Mr. Paul Kerrigan

Mr. Richie Heard

Mr. Joby Fox

#### **Structure, governance and management**

The charity is governed by a formally adopted constitution.

The charity is constituted by a board of trustees who manage and direct the charity and are responsible for the appointment of new trustees to the board. The board of trustees meet on a monthly basis to facilitate effective operations and ensure the charity delivers the services specified.

#### **Objectives**

The principal objective of the charity is to help alleviate the relief of human suffering and the saving of lives of refugees and displaced people who are affected by war, conflict or other crisis by providing, or assisting in the provision of sea rescue and the relief of refugees in need by providing, or assisting in the provision of shelter and humanitarian support and by any other charitable means as the trustees see fit.

The trustees have taken instruction on the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. They have considered in particular the obligations imposed under the public benefits test and can confirm that the charity meets the criteria set down therein. Refugee Rescue became registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 4 April 2016.

#### **Achievements and performance**

Refugee Rescue is a skilled Search and Rescue (SAR) crew, a humanitarian and non-political NGO founded in 2015. Refugee Rescue remains as the only humanitarian and professional search and rescue left on the Northern Shore of Lesbos, Greece. People are still crossing the short stretch between Turkey and Lesbos every day. Our skilled crew operates on our rescue boat 'Mo Chara', an ex-RNLI Atlantic 7. With the help of Mo Chara, we can get people into safety fast

The purposes of our charity may lead to the following harm that it is a potentially dangerous situation for the crew in the rescue boat but we can show that this harm is outweighed by the benefits through having a skilled and trained crew. The direct benefit is that refugees will be provided with shelter and humanitarian aid as and when needed. These benefits will be evidenced through the health and wellbeing of the refugees in that they will feel safe and have the basics in life to survive. There is no harm flowing from this purpose, and there should be no private benefit.

The reporting period of 2021 to 2023 presented significant challenges for Refugee Rescue. These years were marked by operational transitions, sustained global crises, and increased scrutiny of humanitarian efforts across the Mediterranean region. Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remained steadfast in its commitment to saving lives and supporting displaced individuals seeking safety.

#### **Transition to the Central Mediterranean**

During this reporting period, Refugee Rescue made the strategic decision to relocate its operations from the North Shore of Lesbos, Greece, to the Central Mediterranean. This move was motivated by the need to address the evolving humanitarian crisis and the absence of sufficient search and rescue (SAR) assets in this region. Partnering with the German NGO SEA-EYE, Refugee Rescue expanded its capacity to deliver life-saving operations and ensure a continued presence where it

was most needed. This partnership exemplifies the organisation's adaptability and commitment to collaborative approaches in addressing the refugee crisis.

### **Operations on Lesbos**

Refugee Rescue continued to operate on the North Shore of Lesbos during the early part of this period. Volunteers and staff worked tirelessly to provide a stable presence, ensuring the safety and dignity of those making the perilous crossing from Turkey. Despite the blistering summer heat and harsh winter conditions, the SAR team demonstrated exceptional dedication, assisting over 4,000 people in shortened operational timescales.

However, ongoing challenges, including an upsurge in right-wing violence and the global spread of COVID-19, led to difficult decisions. In early 2020, operations were paused, and staff, crew, and volunteers were evacuated to ensure their safety. Even during periods when the rescue boat *Mo Chara* was out of the water for maintenance or due to travel restrictions, Refugee Rescue continued advocacy and campaigning efforts, working to ensure that displaced people arriving in Greece by sea were supported and protected.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The global pandemic significantly impacted Refugee Rescue's operations. Health concerns for both the crew and the local population in Skala Sikamineas necessitated suspensions of active operations on Lesbos. Lockdowns and travel bans further restricted the ability to respond at sea. Despite these setbacks, Refugee Rescue maintained its presence through remote advocacy, raising awareness about the plight of refugees and holding European authorities accountable for their policies and actions.

The pandemic underscored the inequalities faced by displaced individuals, including lack of access to healthcare and basic necessities, as well as restrictions on movement in overcrowded facilities like Moria. Refugee Rescue used its platform to highlight these injustices and advocate for safe and legal routes to asylum.

### **Partnership with SEA-EYE**

The partnership with SEA-EYE marked a pivotal development during this period. Refugee Rescue deployed its resources and expertise to the Central Mediterranean, where SAR efforts are critically needed due to the high volume of dangerous crossings. Working aboard SEA-EYE's vessels, Refugee Rescue played a key role in operations that saved thousands of lives. This partnership reinforced the organisation's mission to adapt to emerging needs while maintaining its core values of solidarity, humanity, and justice.

### **Challenges and Achievements**

The period 2021 to 2022 saw continued challenges for NGOs operating in the Mediterranean. Refugee Rescue, like others, faced intense scrutiny for its humanitarian work. Despite these obstacles, the organisation demonstrated resilience and resolve:

**Lives Saved:** Refugee Rescue contributed to the rescue and support of thousands of individuals, many of whom were women and children.

**Advocacy:** The organisation remained vocal about the failures of European authorities to provide safe and legal pathways for asylum seekers.

**Collaboration:** Partnering with SEA-EYE enhanced operational capacity and extended the reach of SAR efforts in the Mediterranean.

### **Reflections and Future Outlook**

The reporting period highlighted the ongoing need for SAR operations as a vital safety net for those fleeing war, persecution, and economic hardship. While the challenges faced were significant, Refugee Rescue's ability to adapt, collaborate, and advocate ensured that it continued to provide critical support to vulnerable populations.

Refugee Rescue remains committed to its mission of saving lives at sea and advocating for

systemic change to ensure safe passage for displaced individuals. The lessons learned during this period will inform future operations and strengthen the organisation's resolve to address the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean.

### **Conclusion**

The years 2021 to 2022 were defined by resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles. Refugee Rescue's volunteers, staff, and partners have once again demonstrated the power of collective action in the face of adversity. The charity remains steadfast in its vision of a world where no life is needlessly lost at sea and where the dignity and rights of displaced individuals are upheld.

### **Financial Review**

The detailed results for the reporting years and the charity's financial position at year-end are presented in the attached financial statements.

From 2020 to 2021, total income fell sharply from £186,317 to £57,895.92, reflecting the cessation of grant funding and a reduction in voluntary income. This downward trend continued in 2022, with total income further declining to £23,311.47, marking an 85% decrease compared to 2020 levels.

Expenditure also decreased from £162,719.49 in 2020 to £61,997.84 in 2021, and further to £41,211.66 in 2022, as the charity scaled back its activities to align with reduced funding. However, the decline in income outpaced the reduction in expenditure, resulting in consecutive net deficits of £4,101.92 in 2021 and £17,900.19 in 2022, compared to a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2020. These figures highlight the growing financial pressures faced by the organisation, requiring strategic adjustments to ensure sustainability and the continuation of critical operations.

### **Income**

For the financial year ending 31 March 2022, Refugee Rescue's total unrestricted incoming resources amounted to £23,311.47, a decline from £57,895.92 in the previous year and significantly lower than £186,317.00 in 2020. No restricted funds were recorded during this reporting period.

The decline in income was largely due to the cessation of grant funding after 2021, compounded by reduced voluntary donations. These factors significantly impacted the charity's ability to sustain its previous level of activities.

### **Expenditure**

Total resources expended for the year ending 31 March 2022 were £41,211.66, down from £61,997.84 in 2021 and £162,719.49 in 2020. A detailed breakdown of the 2022 expenditure is as follows:

Fundraising Costs: £1,321.76, representing a slight increase from £103.90 in 2021.

Charitable Activities: £39,889.90, a decline from £60,676.08 in 2021 and £162,719.49 in 2020.

### **Net Position**

The charity recorded a net deficit of £(17,900.19) for the year ending 31 March 2022, a significant increase from the deficit of £(4,101.92) in 2021. This follows a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2020.

### **Reserves**

At the start of the year (1 April 2021), the total unrestricted funds brought forward were £20,713.45. By year-end (31 March 2022), the total unrestricted funds carried forward had decreased to £2,813.26, reflecting the operating deficit for the year.

## **Trends and Considerations**

The significant reduction in income over the reporting period, primarily due to the cessation of grant funding and reduced voluntary donations, has placed substantial financial strain on the charity. While expenditure has been reduced accordingly, it has not been sufficient to offset the decline in income, leading to consecutive deficits.

### **Moving forward, the charity must:**

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Explore new revenue streams, including partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and expanded donor outreach.
- **Improve Cost Management:** Identify further opportunities to streamline operations and reduce expenditure without compromising core activities.
- **Strengthen Donor Engagement:** Maintain transparency and highlight the impact of donations to inspire continued support.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remains steadfast in its mission. The organisation continues to rely on the generosity of individual donors and strategic partnerships to fund its vital work.

## **Statement of Compliance**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to beneficiaries.

## **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and applicable accounting standards. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **Trustees approval of financial accounts**

I confirm that:

- (i) To the best of my knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions entered into by the charity in the years 2021 and 2022.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

*Paul Kerrigan*

**Date: 03/12/2024**

**Paul Kerrigan Treasurer**

## Independent Examiners Report

---

Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Refugee Rescue. I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st March 2021, which are set out in this report.

Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Signed:

*Jamie Bourke*

Jamie Bourke

**Date: 12/01/2025**

**REFUGEE RESCUE**  
**Statement of financial activities**

	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020</b>
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	-	23,311.47	23,311.47	28,473.25	84,874.00
Grants	-	-	-	29,422.67	101,443.00
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>57,895.92</b>	<b>186,317.00</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds					
Fundraising costs		1,321.76	1,321.76	103.9	
Charitable activities		39,889.90	39,889.90	60,676.08	162,719.49
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>61,997.84</b>	<b>162,719.49</b>
Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year		-(17,900.19)	-(17,900.19)	-(4,101.92)	23,597.51
Reconciliation of funds Total funds brought forward		20,713.45	20,713.45	23,597.51	
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>19,495.59</b>	<b>23,597.51</b>

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>2021 (£)</b>	<b>Depreciation (£)</b>	<b>Net Value (£)</b>
RHIB Boat	15,000.00	3,000.00	12,000.00
Two Outboard Engines	20,000.00	4,000.00	16,000.00
PPE and safety Equipment	5,000.00	1,000.00	4,000.00
Total Fixed Assets	40,000.00	8,000.00	32,000.00
Current Assets	19,495.59	-	19,495.59
Creditors (Amounts Falling Due within One Year)	-	-	-
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>59,495.59</b>	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>51,495.59</b>

## **1. Accounting policies**

### **Basis of accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The charity is adopting FRS 102 Section 1A and is taking the exemption from preparing a cashflow statement.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Charity will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The trustees believe that it is appropriate for the financial statements to be prepared on the going concern basis.

The entity is a Public Benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements are presented in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

### **Fund accounting**

The charity has one type of fund for which it is responsible, and which require separate disclosure as follows:

#### *Restricted funds:*

Donations received which are earmarked by the donor for specific purposes. Such purposes are within the overall aims of the organisation.

#### *Unrestricted funds:*

Funds which are expendable at the discretion of the committee in the furtherance of the objects of the charity. In addition, funds may be held in order to finance capital investment and working capital.

### **Funding received**

Funding received is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

### **Other incoming resources**

Incoming resources including investment income are credited to the statement of financial activities when receivable.

### **Fundraising costs**

Fundraising costs include those costs incurred to facilitate the charities objectives.

### **Charitable expenditure**

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

**Refugee Rescue**

Northern Ireland - Charity number 105156

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# Annual return

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**REFUGEE RESCUE  
FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS**

**1 APRIL 2020  
31 MARCH 2022**



**Charity Number 105156**

## **REFUGEE RESCUE**

### **Trustees Annual Report**

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The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the years ended 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022.

#### **Reference and administrative details**

Registered charity name: Refugee Rescue

Registered charity number: Charity Commission Number 105156 & HMRC Number

NI00583 Charity's principal address: 58 Leyland Meadows, Ballycastle, BT54 6JX

#### **The trustees**

The following trustees served the charity during the year;

Mr. Paul Kerrigan

Mr. Richie Heard

Mr. Joby Fox

#### **Structure, governance and management**

The charity is governed by a formally adopted constitution.

The charity is constituted by a board of trustees who manage and direct the charity and are responsible for the appointment of new trustees to the board. The board of trustees meet on a monthly basis to facilitate effective operations and ensure the charity delivers the services specified.

#### **Objectives**

The principal objective of the charity is to help alleviate the relief of human suffering and the saving of lives of refugees and displaced people who are affected by war, conflict or other crisis by providing, or assisting in the provision of sea rescue and the relief of refugees in need by providing, or assisting in the provision of shelter and humanitarian support and by any other charitable means as the trustees see fit.

The trustees have taken instruction on the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. They have considered in particular the obligations imposed under the public benefits test and can confirm that the charity meets the criteria set down therein. Refugee Rescue became registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 4 April 2016.

#### **Achievements and performance**

Refugee Rescue is a skilled Search and Rescue (SAR) crew, a humanitarian and non-political NGO founded in 2015. Refugee Rescue remains as the only humanitarian and professional search and rescue left on the Northern Shore of Lesbos, Greece. People are still crossing the short stretch between Turkey and Lesbos every day. Our skilled crew operates on our rescue boat 'Mo Chara', an ex-RNLI Atlantic 7. With the help of Mo Chara, we can get people into safety fast

The purposes of our charity may lead to the following harm that it is a potentially dangerous situation for the crew in the rescue boat but we can show that this harm is outweighed by the benefits through having a skilled and trained crew. The direct benefit is that refugees will be provided with shelter and humanitarian aid as and when needed. These benefits will be evidenced through the health and wellbeing of the refugees in that they will feel safe and have the basics in life to survive. There is no harm flowing from this purpose, and there should be no private benefit.

The reporting period of 2021 to 2023 presented significant challenges for Refugee Rescue. These years were marked by operational transitions, sustained global crises, and increased scrutiny of humanitarian efforts across the Mediterranean region. Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remained steadfast in its commitment to saving lives and supporting displaced individuals seeking safety.

#### **Transition to the Central Mediterranean**

During this reporting period, Refugee Rescue made the strategic decision to relocate its operations from the North Shore of Lesbos, Greece, to the Central Mediterranean. This move was motivated by the need to address the evolving humanitarian crisis and the absence of sufficient search and rescue (SAR) assets in this region. Partnering with the German NGO SEA-EYE, Refugee Rescue expanded its capacity to deliver life-saving operations and ensure a continued presence where it

was most needed. This partnership exemplifies the organisation's adaptability and commitment to collaborative approaches in addressing the refugee crisis.

### **Operations on Lesbos**

Refugee Rescue continued to operate on the North Shore of Lesbos during the early part of this period. Volunteers and staff worked tirelessly to provide a stable presence, ensuring the safety and dignity of those making the perilous crossing from Turkey. Despite the blistering summer heat and harsh winter conditions, the SAR team demonstrated exceptional dedication, assisting over 4,000 people in shortened operational timescales.

However, ongoing challenges, including an upsurge in right-wing violence and the global spread of COVID-19, led to difficult decisions. In early 2020, operations were paused, and staff, crew, and volunteers were evacuated to ensure their safety. Even during periods when the rescue boat *Mo Chara* was out of the water for maintenance or due to travel restrictions, Refugee Rescue continued advocacy and campaigning efforts, working to ensure that displaced people arriving in Greece by sea were supported and protected.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

The global pandemic significantly impacted Refugee Rescue's operations. Health concerns for both the crew and the local population in Skala Sikamineas necessitated suspensions of active operations on Lesbos. Lockdowns and travel bans further restricted the ability to respond at sea. Despite these setbacks, Refugee Rescue maintained its presence through remote advocacy, raising awareness about the plight of refugees and holding European authorities accountable for their policies and actions.

The pandemic underscored the inequalities faced by displaced individuals, including lack of access to healthcare and basic necessities, as well as restrictions on movement in overcrowded facilities like Moria. Refugee Rescue used its platform to highlight these injustices and advocate for safe and legal routes to asylum.

### **Partnership with SEA-EYE**

The partnership with SEA-EYE marked a pivotal development during this period. Refugee Rescue deployed its resources and expertise to the Central Mediterranean, where SAR efforts are critically needed due to the high volume of dangerous crossings. Working aboard SEA-EYE's vessels, Refugee Rescue played a key role in operations that saved thousands of lives. This partnership reinforced the organisation's mission to adapt to emerging needs while maintaining its core values of solidarity, humanity, and justice.

### **Challenges and Achievements**

The period 2021 to 2022 saw continued challenges for NGOs operating in the Mediterranean. Refugee Rescue, like others, faced intense scrutiny for its humanitarian work. Despite these obstacles, the organisation demonstrated resilience and resolve:

**Lives Saved:** Refugee Rescue contributed to the rescue and support of thousands of individuals, many of whom were women and children.

**Advocacy:** The organisation remained vocal about the failures of European authorities to provide safe and legal pathways for asylum seekers.

**Collaboration:** Partnering with SEA-EYE enhanced operational capacity and extended the reach of SAR efforts in the Mediterranean.

### **Reflections and Future Outlook**

The reporting period highlighted the ongoing need for SAR operations as a vital safety net for those fleeing war, persecution, and economic hardship. While the challenges faced were significant, Refugee Rescue's ability to adapt, collaborate, and advocate ensured that it continued to provide critical support to vulnerable populations.

Refugee Rescue remains committed to its mission of saving lives at sea and advocating for

systemic change to ensure safe passage for displaced individuals. The lessons learned during this period will inform future operations and strengthen the organisation's resolve to address the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean.

### **Conclusion**

The years 2021 to 2022 were defined by resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to humanitarian principles. Refugee Rescue's volunteers, staff, and partners have once again demonstrated the power of collective action in the face of adversity. The charity remains steadfast in its vision of a world where no life is needlessly lost at sea and where the dignity and rights of displaced individuals are upheld.

### **Financial Review**

The detailed results for the reporting years and the charity's financial position at year-end are presented in the attached financial statements.

From 2020 to 2021, total income fell sharply from £186,317 to £57,895.92, reflecting the cessation of grant funding and a reduction in voluntary income. This downward trend continued in 2022, with total income further declining to £23,311.47, marking an 85% decrease compared to 2020 levels.

Expenditure also decreased from £162,719.49 in 2020 to £61,997.84 in 2021, and further to £41,211.66 in 2022, as the charity scaled back its activities to align with reduced funding. However, the decline in income outpaced the reduction in expenditure, resulting in consecutive net deficits of £4,101.92 in 2021 and £17,900.19 in 2022, compared to a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2020. These figures highlight the growing financial pressures faced by the organisation, requiring strategic adjustments to ensure sustainability and the continuation of critical operations.

### **Income**

For the financial year ending 31 March 2022, Refugee Rescue's total unrestricted incoming resources amounted to £23,311.47, a decline from £57,895.92 in the previous year and significantly lower than £186,317.00 in 2020. No restricted funds were recorded during this reporting period.

The decline in income was largely due to the cessation of grant funding after 2021, compounded by reduced voluntary donations. These factors significantly impacted the charity's ability to sustain its previous level of activities.

### **Expenditure**

Total resources expended for the year ending 31 March 2022 were £41,211.66, down from £61,997.84 in 2021 and £162,719.49 in 2020. A detailed breakdown of the 2022 expenditure is as follows:

Fundraising Costs: £1,321.76, representing a slight increase from £103.90 in 2021.

Charitable Activities: £39,889.90, a decline from £60,676.08 in 2021 and £162,719.49 in 2020.

### **Net Position**

The charity recorded a net deficit of £(17,900.19) for the year ending 31 March 2022, a significant increase from the deficit of £(4,101.92) in 2021. This follows a surplus of £23,597.51 in 2020.

### **Reserves**

At the start of the year (1 April 2021), the total unrestricted funds brought forward were £20,713.45. By year-end (31 March 2022), the total unrestricted funds carried forward had decreased to £2,813.26, reflecting the operating deficit for the year.

## **Trends and Considerations**

The significant reduction in income over the reporting period, primarily due to the cessation of grant funding and reduced voluntary donations, has placed substantial financial strain on the charity. While expenditure has been reduced accordingly, it has not been sufficient to offset the decline in income, leading to consecutive deficits.

### **Moving forward, the charity must:**

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Explore new revenue streams, including partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and expanded donor outreach.
- **Improve Cost Management:** Identify further opportunities to streamline operations and reduce expenditure without compromising core activities.
- **Strengthen Donor Engagement:** Maintain transparency and highlight the impact of donations to inspire continued support.

Despite these challenges, Refugee Rescue remains steadfast in its mission. The organisation continues to rely on the generosity of individual donors and strategic partnerships to fund its vital work.

## **Statement of Compliance**

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to beneficiaries.

## **Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of the incoming and outgoing resources for the year then ended.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, making judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. The Trustees must also prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and applicable accounting standards. The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## **Trustees approval of financial accounts**

I confirm that:

- (i) To the best of my knowledge and belief, the accounting records reflect all the transactions entered into by the charity in the years 2021 and 2022.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

*Paul Kerrigan*

**Date: 03/12/2024**

**Paul Kerrigan Treasurer**

## Independent Examiners Report

---

Independent examiner's report to the charity trustees of Refugee Rescue. I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st March 2021, which are set out in this report.

Respective responsibilities of charity trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 65 of the Charities Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Commission under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

I have examined your charity accounts as required under section 65 of the Charities Act and my examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland under section 65(9)(b) of the Charities Act.

My examination included a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as charity trustees concerning any such matters.

My role is to state whether any material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe:

1. That accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 63 of the Charities Act
2. That the accounts do not accord with those accounting records
3. That the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
4. That there is further information needed for a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination and have no concerns in respect of the matters (1) to (4) listed above and, in connection with following the Directions of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention.

Signed:

*Jamie Bourke*

Jamie Bourke

**Date: 12/01/2025**

**REFUGEE RESCUE**  
**Statement of financial activities**

	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021</b>	<b>Total Funds 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020</b>
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	-	23,311.47	23,311.47	28,473.25	84,874.00
Grants	-	-	-	29,422.67	101,443.00
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>23,311.47</b>	<b>57,895.92</b>	<b>186,317.00</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds					
Fundraising costs		1,321.76	1,321.76	103.9	
Charitable activities		39,889.90	39,889.90	60,676.08	162,719.49
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>41,211.66</b>	<b>61,997.84</b>	<b>162,719.49</b>
Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year		-(17,900.19)	-(17,900.19)	-(4,101.92)	23,597.51
Reconciliation of funds Total funds brought forward		20,713.45	20,713.45	23,597.51	
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>2,813.26</b>	<b>19,495.59</b>	<b>23,597.51</b>

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>2021 (£)</b>	<b>Depreciation (£)</b>	<b>Net Value (£)</b>
RHIB Boat	15,000.00	3,000.00	12,000.00
Two Outboard Engines	20,000.00	4,000.00	16,000.00
PPE and safety Equipment	5,000.00	1,000.00	4,000.00
Total Fixed Assets	40,000.00	8,000.00	32,000.00
Current Assets	19,495.59	-	19,495.59
Creditors (Amounts Falling Due within One Year)	-	-	-
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>59,495.59</b>	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>51,495.59</b>

## **1. Accounting policies**

### **Basis of accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The charity is adopting FRS 102 Section 1A and is taking the exemption from preparing a cashflow statement.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Charity will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The trustees believe that it is appropriate for the financial statements to be prepared on the going concern basis.

The entity is a Public Benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements are presented in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

### **Fund accounting**

The charity has one type of fund for which it is responsible, and which require separate disclosure as follows:

#### *Restricted funds:*

Donations received which are earmarked by the donor for specific purposes. Such purposes are within the overall aims of the organisation.

#### *Unrestricted funds:*

Funds which are expendable at the discretion of the committee in the furtherance of the objects of the charity. In addition, funds may be held in order to finance capital investment and working capital.

### **Funding received**

Funding received is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable.

### **Other incoming resources**

Incoming resources including investment income are credited to the statement of financial activities when receivable.

### **Fundraising costs**

Fundraising costs include those costs incurred to facilitate the charities objectives.

### **Charitable expenditure**

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.