

Severn Area Rescue Association Annual Report and Accounts 2022

SARA



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



Registered Charity CIO 1193634

FOREWORD

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

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

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

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



FOREWORD

The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst

In 2022, SARA volunteers attended 95 separate operations:



and

Raised £274,205 to Support these Operations

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

Reference and Administrative Details

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

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

Objectives

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

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

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

The Achievement of the Objects of the Charity

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

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

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

Structure, Governance and Management

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

The Trustees of the CIO in the year were:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Operations of the Charity

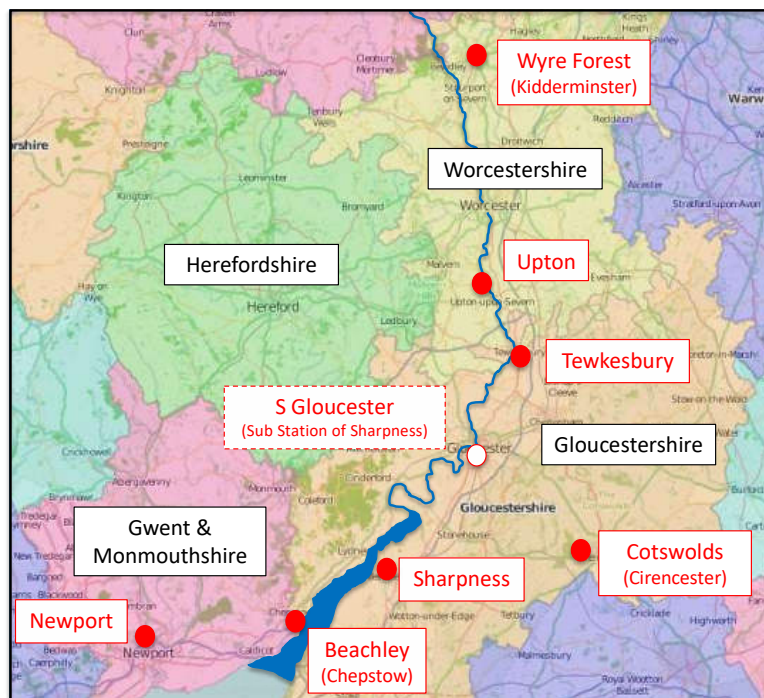
SARA's Mission Statement is:

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

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

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

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



The SARA Rescue Stations

Why SARA? A Short History!

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



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

Chair of Trustee's Report

In May 2022, I was privileged to be elected as Chair of the SARA Board of Trustees and joined three other Non-Executive Trustees who were new to the Board and to SARA. Approaching its 50th year next year, this is the first full year for SARA as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

You'll see from this report that SARA continues to provide much needed rescue and search capabilities for the communities surrounding the River Severn. Our operations remain in high demand in direct support of the Emergency Services and SARA provides a highly respected, and often relied upon capability. The organisation has ended the year in sound financial health, meeting its agreed aims for financial reserves; it remains a viable going concern with both improving income and ideas to reduce expenditure without a reduction of quality or service.

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

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

Keith Beckett
Chair of Trustees



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

CEO Report on 2022

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



Our much-delayed formal visit from HM Coastguard

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

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

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

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



The Voyage of the Dragalo

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

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

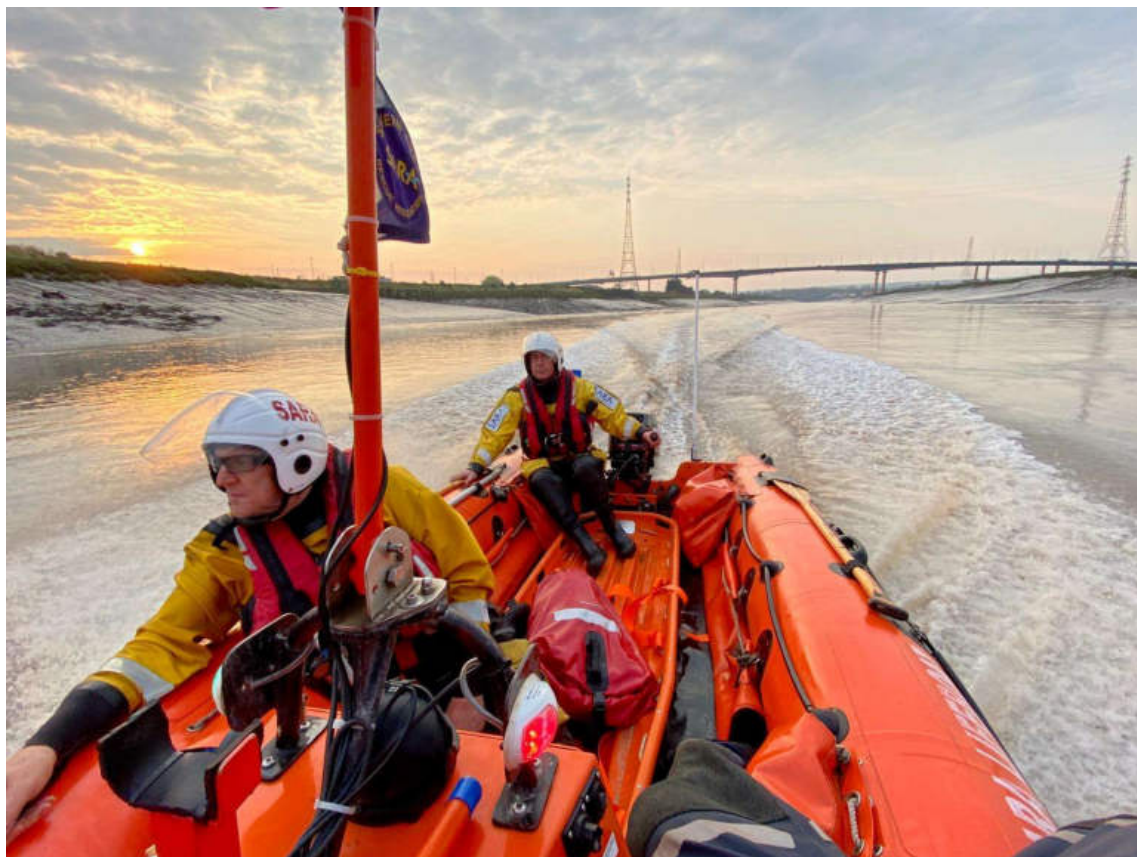
We remain Associate Members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and it is important that we continue to engage with this umbrella body to develop our relationship; benefitting not least from insurance covers and Medical licence to allow advanced casualty care provision for our communities.

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

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

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

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer



An early morning callout to the River Avon at low water



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



A Search Exercise on Cleeve Hill



Flood Rescue Wading training in Monmouth



A Steep Ground Casualty Evacuation Exercise in the Forest of Dean



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



Nice and dry for Search Control in the Village Hall though

Financial Review

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

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

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

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

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

Richard Newhouse
CFO from Feb 2023



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

Review of Risks

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

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

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

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



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

Fundraising

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

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

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

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



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

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SARA

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

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

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

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

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

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

Dated: 27th September 2023

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Statement of Financial Activities

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

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

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2022

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

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

.....
Richard Newhouse CFO

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

1. Accounting policies

1.1 Accounting convention

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

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

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

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

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 Charitable funds

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

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

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

Reserves Policy

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

1.4 Income

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

1.5 Expenditure

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

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

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

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

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

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

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

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

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

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

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

1.9 Financial instruments

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

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

Basic financial assets

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

Basic financial liabilities

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

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

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

Derecognition of financial liabilities

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

1.10 Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

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

2. Related party transactions

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

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

3. Subsidiary undertakings

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

4. Donations and legacies

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

5. Charitable activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Fundraising activities	21,590	-
Service level agreement	2,000	-
	<u>23,590</u>	<u>-</u>

6. Other income

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

7. Other trading activities

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

8. Investments

	2022 £	2021 £
Interest received	84	-

9. Grants

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

10. Raising funds

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

11. **Charitable activities**

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

12. **Support costs**

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

13. Trustees

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

14. Employees

There were no employees during the year.

15. Fixed assets

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

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

16. Debtors and prepayments

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

17. Creditors and accrued income

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

18. Restricted Funds

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

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

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

19. Designated funds

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

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

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

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

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

21. Analysis of net assets between Funds

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

22. Funds held as Custodian Trustee

No funds are held as custodian trustee.

23. Exemptions from disclosure

No exemptions from disclosure have been applied.

Annex A: SARA's Operational Role and Tasks

SARA is a multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue organisation and is the designated rescue service for an area of over 20,000 km² on and around the Severn. It provides:

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

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

Lifeboats and Mud Rescue

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

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

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

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

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

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

Land Search

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

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

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

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

Cliff Rescue

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

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

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

Swift Water and Flood Rescue

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

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

First Aid and Casualty Care

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

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

Education and Training Provision

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

1. Emergency Services Training. For the Emergency Services, SARA provides lifeboat training. For example, SARA Beachley has an ongoing relationship with the South West Ambulance Services Trust to provide structured, water-based rescue training for members of their Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART). This provides specialist knowledge, training and experience of working with boats, including in the tidal waters of the Severn Estuary.
2. School Visits. Covid-permitting, the SARA stations frequently host visits from and undertakes visits to local primary schools, Scouts and Guides Units, etc. These are designed to be educational as well as fun, informing young people of the dangers of the water and other aspects of the local area of which they may be unaware.
3. Outreach Activities. SARA frequently participates in relevant 'community outreach' activities such as the Drowning Awareness Weeks, again providing education about the avoidance of risks as well as information concerning SARA and other emergency Services.

Event Safety Cover

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

1. To support the local community. SARA has historically provided this service at a discount to the notional cost, in order to facilitate and support these local events to a greater extent than alternative organisations would be able to. The number of such races and events supported continues to rise, as local organisations realise the capabilities which SARA can bring to their events.
2. To raise SARA's profile. SARA is usually paid for providing the service, albeit at hugely discounted rates for community groups to enable these to be viable, but for many members of the public spectating, this is an excellent opportunity to see SARA in action.
3. To put SARA's skills into play 'in the field' and provide real-world experience.



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

Annex B: Summary of SARA Capabilities

Inland Missing Person Search

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

Water operations

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

Mud Rescue

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

Cliff and Steep Ground (Gloucestershire-Based)

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

Advanced First Aid

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

Command and control

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