Severn Area Rescue Association
Annual Report and Accounts 2018

Multi-Disciplinary Volunteer Search and Rescue Team with over forty years of Lifeboat Service on the River Severn

Patron: The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst
Registered Charity 505504
FOREWORD

When asked to write this foreword, my first thought was how would I fill the page? I realise now the problem was not what to write about, but what to not write about. I can barely scratch the surface in the space I’m allowed. In short, SARA is a team of unpaid professionals, on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with disciplines including lifeboat rescue, land search & rescue, cliff, mud and swift-water rescue.

It’s easy to say the words ‘unpaid professionals’, but when you think about what the words actually mean, the dedication of the volunteers becomes a bit more apparent. Let’s focus on the word ‘professional’ for a moment. In order to allow SARA to operate with the emergency services, all crew are trained to the same professional standards as the emergency services. But to keep costs down, much of this training is delivered in-house by SARA volunteers who have gained the necessary qualifications to provide this training themselves. Put simply, SARA crew are trained to professional standards across their range of disciplines by other SARA crew who are professionally trained to train them.

The next important point to remember is not one person within SARA receives any financial recompense for any of the work they do for the organisation. This alone is difficult to comprehend when you consider the sheer amount of work involved, and the high levels of skill and professionalism required. But after the all-night callout in the dead of winter, having gone back to base and readied the kit for the next call-out, they still have their day jobs to do.

And when the training’s done, and the maintenance is done, and everything is cleaned and repaired and prepared for next time, there’s still the small matter of fundraising. As a self-funded organisation, SARA relies on its volunteers to give up even more time raising both awareness and funds, and this is often the time you will meet the real people behind the organisation. SARA is constantly on the lookout for new volunteers. Ask any of the existing volunteers what keeps them coming back and you’ll doubtless get a different answer from each of them, but new skills, adventure, teamwork, leadership opportunities and a huge sense of satisfaction will all feature somewhere.

We are of course grateful to all our SARA volunteers, but we are nothing without our supporters and benefactors; without large donations from big organisations, down to individual contributions thrown into buckets outside supermarkets.

And there’s another facet to SARA. As well as the outside face you meet at the public engagements, there’s an inside one as well; the often thankless task of tying the ends together to make the numbers work, to put the policies and procedures in place, to make sure everything is done by the book should our actions ever be called into question. The pages of this report will highlight a little of what goes on behind the scenes. As patron of this amazing group of people, I am immensely proud of all we do together as a team. Please do continue to support us so we can support you.

The Rt. Hon.
The Countess Bathurst
SARA in 2018
This is what our 170 volunteers achieved!

- **56** Lifeboat Launches
- **37** Land Searches
- **24** Inland Water Operations
- **100+** 4x4 Journeys Supporting the NHS in the snow
- **222,861** £ raised!
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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Name: Severn Area Rescue Association. Also known as Severn Rescue SARA
Registered Charity Number: 505504
Registered Address: The Lifeboat Station, Beachley, Chepstow NP16 7HH
Independent Accounts Examiner: Mr N Webb of Baldwins (Stourbridge) Ltd
Bankers: Lloyds Bank Plc

The Executive Committee is responsible for the overall running of the Association, in relation to all Financial, Safety, Legal and Operational matters. Those who served on the Executive Committee during the year were as follows:

Chairman: Mr C Cowley (to 8/3/18)
   Mr M Carwardine (from 8/3/18)
Deputy Chairman: Mr M Carwardine (to 8/3/18)
   Mr E Davy (from 8/3/18)
Secretary: Mrs S Dunlop (to 8/3/18)
   Mr I Roberts (from 8/3/18)
Treasurer: Mr I Jarvis
Fundraising Officer: Mr R Newhouse
Beachley Station Chair: Mr R Dainty
Tewkesbury Station Chair: Mr R Streeter (to 1/10/18)
   Mr E Davy (from 1/10/18)
Sharpness Station Chair: Mr G Dawe
Wyre Forest Station Chair: Mr J Bamforth

During 2018 a number of additional managers were additionally co-opted at the Executive level, following advertising of the posts to all members.

The Trustees, who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting, have final responsibility for the charity and its governance. Those who served as Trustees during the year were as follows:

Mr A Stanley
Mr JMJ Hewitt
Mr K Hadley
Mr J Cairns
Mr A Palmer
Mr M Fleming (appointed 8/3/18)

The Committees for the Beachley, Tewkesbury, Sharpness and Wyre Forest Rescue Stations are responsible for the day-to-day running of each of the respective rescue stations.

The Association is made up entirely of volunteers. Until the 2018 AGM Mrs S Dunlop, a non-member, was co-opted as the Executive Secretary in a paid position, due to the long-standing lack of volunteer candidates for that position.
CONSTITUTION OBJECTIVES AND OPERATIONS

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as Severn Rescue, and as SARA, is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK, with approximately 170 volunteer personnel. SARA is also the second largest lifeboat service in the UK, with 14 operational boats of which 5 are declared Lifeboats.

Constitution

SARA is governed by its Constitution and is a registered charity. The objects of the Association, as stated in the Constitution (amended September 2018) are:

• The protection of life and property by the provision and maintenance of a rescue service with, in particular, specialist skills in marine and cliff rescue;
• To assist Government Departments and County and Local Authorities in their provision of emergency services;
• To advance public education in outdoor safety, particularly in and around water.

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

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 5 rescue stations attending over 100 callouts during the year, all tasked by the principal emergency services.
• Through the provision of Water Safety scenarios for schools and other interested groups to raise awareness for everyone, especially children, to become more ‘water aware’.
• Through the ongoing provision of recognised training courses held both internally and externally to promote the professionalism of the organisation.
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 and land search incidents

The principal area of marine operations comprises the Bristol Channel and the Severn, Wye, Avon, and Usk rivers. Land operations extend to South East Wales, the West of England and the Midlands. Typical situations involved vessels suffering breakdown or damage by grounding, becoming lost in severely restricted visibility, a particularly dangerous situation. As a Rescue Boat Organisation, SARA complies with the Rescue Boat Code of Practice (RBCP) (2013).

All SARA stations are members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) and SARA is part of the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA).

SARA works closely with the statutory emergency services – Police, Fire & Rescue Services and HM Coastguard – and also with neighbouring and related volunteer rescue organisations. These particularly include RNLI Portishead, Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and the South Wales Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA).

Further details of SARA Operational roles are provided in the Annex.

SARA Lifeboat 2 escorts a rescued cruiser back into the dock at Sharpness
Why SARA?

SARA was founded in 1973, with its headquarters then 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 1986 a second station was opened at Sharpness, primarily in response to a tragic loss of life in the Sharpness area.

In 1985 SARA also became an official Mountain Rescue Team in the role of Cliff rescue for the Wye valley. At that time the Fire Brigade had no role in relation to cliffs and rope rescue.

During the floods of July 2007 (the major adverse weather event that spawned the DEFRA National Flood Rescue Enhancement project), SARA was the first volunteer team to be tasked and the last to be stood down. In 2011 a Joint ‘Water Rescue Centre’ opened in Tewkesbury, as a strategic alliance between Gloucester Fire & Rescue Service, SARA and Gloucestershire County Council, following major flooding in Tewkesbury area.

A station was opened at Wyre Forest in 2004, to over the upper Severn area. In 2014 Wyre Forest Station moved into Hereford & Worcestershire Fire & Rescue Service facilities at Kidderminster, under a co-hosting arrangement.

In 2014 an equipment hub was placed in Newport, and in 2015 a base was established at Malpas Fire Station in Newport. Following a major bequest, new boats were purchased in 2016 and the Newport Lifeboat Station was established, within the Malpas Fire Station.

SARA Lifeboat 1 tows a small recovered craft back to the Beachley slipway, to be handed over to the waiting Coastguards
TRUSTEES’ REPORT

I am pleased to report on the significant progress made by the Teams and Organisation as a whole in the past year. Over the past few years increasing legislation and regulations have come into being and matters like the Rescue Boat Code, Insurance, Licensing, Health and Safety have required greater focus whilst the day to day running of six stations, also with a greater emphasis on training, has taken up more and more of the Executive Committee’s time.

Attendance at external meetings and forums and participation in exercises run by Statutory organisations and national bodies has also become a greater importance, all of which eats into the Organisation’s collective time and creates administrative requirements.

Following over two years of sometimes intense discussion SARA now has a revised Constitution that, amongst other general changes, brings the Constitution more in line with the Charity Commission Model Constitution, including forming a Board of Trustees structure to monitor and guide the Association on statutory and quasi legal matters. Cost and financial management, with a focus on an even-handed approach between the stations’ aspirations can become a major management challenge that the Trustees are able to oversee and advise upon.

It is hoped that making greater use of the Trustees will spread the responsibility load and enable better focus. This new Board comprising the original Trustees is now looking to widen its scope by recruiting new blood from outside the Organisation.

The number of callouts has been gradually creeping up over the years, particularly in the areas of Land Search and Rescue and inland Swift Water rescue, and inevitably results in the requirement for and management of more volunteers. I am pleased to report that the quality of Training has improved but at a significant cost of buying into outside resources. Where possible SARA has invested in the training of its own instructors and that has and continues to produce major savings to SARA.

SARA is much in debt to various Fire and Rescue Services for making accommodation available to some of the Teams for the housing of equipment and provision of training facilities. The Organisation’s long-term challenge is however to make what are temporary arrangements into permanent solutions by providing each station with its own premises: This could nevertheless take many years.

On behalf of the Trustees, I look forward to seeing further developments in the year ahead as the Association consolidates and works more and more in raising its standards in training, equipment and - in the longer term - premises. Most importantly that SARA continues to build the trust that endures and develops the already close relationship with the Statutory Emergency Services.

I look forward to seeing further developments in the year ahead.

Jim Hewitt
Chairman
On Behalf of the Trustees
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT

2018 has been an excellent year for SARA and I am very proud of what we have achieved. I would like to start by thanking my predecessor Chris Crowley for leaving the organisation in very good shape, upon which we have built this year.

We attended 109 separate callouts during the year – more than two a week – which is a reduced number from 2017 though there is no discernible reason or pattern. As always, sadly many were recovery tasks. I am always impressed with the way our teams deal with these incidents, and I am pleased that this year we have appointed a Welfare Officer (and a Deputy) to strengthen the way we support our volunteers. We look forward to having a network of welfare champions in place at stations in the next few months.

We continued to attend to vessels in distress in our waters, with a grounded yacht in St Pierre Pill providing the most dramatic photos! Thankfully she righted without incident on the incoming tide, though her crew spent an anxious few hours sitting outside the cabin through the small hours because they feared the worst.

2018 also saw two weekends of heavy snow, with the ‘Beast from the East’ Parts 1 and 2 in March. SARA 4x4 teams carried out well over 100 tasks over these weekends supporting the NHS – ferrying patients and medical staff around and rescuing the odd ambulance or police vehicle which had become stuck in the snow!

SARA Wyre Forest rescue an Ambulance, during the ‘Beast from the East’ storm in March

A major focus this year has been to develop our governance and management arrangements, in line with best practices. We have updated our constitution, clarifying the role of the Board of Trustees and other aspects of our management. I am delighted that Jim Hewitt, one of the founders of the organisation, has agreed to act as the Chair of Trustees and that Mervyn Fleming - until recently Chair of Beachley Station - has agreed to join the ranks of the Trustees.
No less important has been the recruitment of Ian Jarvis as our Chief Financial Officer, joining as a special member for this purpose. Ian has rapidly put in place a new online financial management system and revolutionised the level of financial visibility and insights, as well as control, available within the organisation. The organisation’s finances remain a cause for management focus, however Ian and his team of station treasurers has made this a lot easier to achieve! One of the most important activities we have completed in this area was our Insurance Portfolio review, resulting in some cost saving as well as a much better understanding of our position.

We have been delighted to fully welcome Lady Bathurst on board as our Patron this year, providing most helpful advice and guidance, as well as being a passionate advocate for SARA! Through her, we have also connected with the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire which has also been a source of valuable support. It was our pleasure to show the Warden around our HQ and show him what our Lifeboats can do.

We also hosted visits from four of the MPs which cover the SARA area. Whilst David TC Davies MP (for Monmouthshire) was enjoying a ride on SARA Lifeboat 1, the crew received a callout from the Police, to investigate an up-turned boat in Chepstow. The MP was able to assist; thankfully it turned out to be a false alarm! We also hosted visits by the Police and Crime Commissioners for two of the forces with which we operate – Gwent and Gloucestershire. We have a particularly good working relationship with Gloucestershire Police, with key members of our land search team now vetted and approved by them for handling sensitive information. A focus for 2019 will be to achieve a comparably close relationship with West Midlands and West Mercia Police Forces, which are mainly served by our Wyre Forest Station.

We have also developed our relationships with a number of important stakeholder organisations. A senior delegation from Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW) visited Beachley in April 2018 to observe a rope rescue demonstration. They pronounced themselves very satisfied in our capability to effect a safe system of work and gave us some good challenges to further improve. During the year we have developed a programme of external advisors helping us to enhance our skills, which we plan to build upon during 2019.
Hosting the senior leadership team from Mountain Rescue England and Wales

We have also increased our involvement in both the Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA), with SARA now providing a number of the officer roles within SWERA.

Late in 2017 the SARA Flood Rescue Teams were temporarily stood down by DEFRA (which coordinates flood response nationally), following a review of qualification requirements for such teams. At the same time SARA was successful in a funding bid for courses for the relevant qualifications - the Swiftwater and Flood Rescue Boat Operator (SFRBO) courses. Conducted largely on the Menai Straits, with its predictable fast flows, 12 members of SARA had completed this course by the end of the year and all four Flood Teams were back ‘online’.

Through the year our fundraising performance has been good, despite the Wild Wye Swim being cancelled at the last minute as a freak storm led to a very high and fast water in the Wye over the weekend in question. Ironically an All-Wales Flood Exercise, which we had been due to attend shortly before the Swim, was postponed due to a lack of water following the hot summer. We are grateful to the many supermarkets across our area for allowing us to hold collection events, as well as our many supporters and donors.

We have continued to benefit from government grants, with this year being the last of the 5-year DFT Inshore & Rescue Boat Grant Programme. During the year the new Lifeboat for
SARA Sharpness, for which funding was announced last year, was designed, and much of the build completed. We received further funding to replace many of our lifeboat drysuits, which take a considerable battering. Partly as a result of grants from DEFRA and from local government, we have replaced two of the fleet of elderly vehicles, at Gloucester and at Beachley. We are very conscious that we still operate an old (20+ years old) vehicle at each of Newport, Tewkesbury and Wyre Forest Stations, albeit alongside more modern vehicles.

A source of great pride and then great sadness during the year was Dyno, the search dog based at SARA Wyre Forest Station. Dyno attended a number of land search operations and was responsible for finding one elderly gentleman (alive and well) in December. However shortly afterwards he was taken ill, and very sadly passed away at the vets just before Christmas. At the time of writing, his handler Matt has taken on a new puppy, and is training him up (a long process!)

Our operational effectiveness was also bolstered by the qualification of 5 more MREW Casualty Carers. Our Medical Officer Hannah Bawdon and her team have set up an ongoing programme of training – actually two programmes, to cater for crew in the North and South of our area – and we hope to see the Cas Carer numbers increase in 2019. We are also grateful to Avon & Somerset Search and Rescue for allowing our team to attend their monthly training, at the Filton & now Almondsbury Great Western Air Ambulance base.

During 2018 we started on the road to the use of Digital VHF. We have bought a number of digital radios, but the transition to digital is a challenge for 2019. Another technology change has been the introduction of a standard online platform – D4H – across all our stations. Beachley had been using this for some time, and it has dramatically improved the planning of training and events, recording incidents and managing crew details and qualifications.

We have started to make greater use of the Office 365 systems, including Sharepoint and Skype for Business. This has enabled much greater information sharing and reduced our carbon footprint, enabling regional meetings to take place without transport costs and unnecessary time burdens. We plan to roll out Office 365 to every member in 2019, providing access to the shared information across SARA.
Filming a piece on SARA for ITV’s Fishlock’s Choice in Newport

SARA continues to provide an amazing service to the community, based solely on the work of our volunteers. I am proud of all that we have achieved this year and look forward to building upon it during 2019. I am grateful to the volunteers and to the families of our operational crew members, for allowing them to serve the community so well throughout this time.

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer

A SARA Lifeboat and Cliff Rescue Team operating together on the Wye at Chepstow
Land Team Winter Skills Training in Snowdonia

SARA Lifeboat 3 returns to Beachley from an early morning shout
RISKS AND INSURANCE

Review of risks

The Executive Committee continues to conduct a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and systems are in place to mitigate those risks.

The Association has Standard Operating Procedures which each member must follow, and a Health & Safety Policy implemented in 2003 is continually under review by the Executive Health & Safety Advisor. Whilst SARA is not bound by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, (as we are a part of Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) which is exempt from the above act) the Executive Committee policy is that - due to the fact that we work with other emergency services that are bound by this act - it follows that the organisation should take it on board as ‘best practice’.

Insurances

The charity has in place the following insurances:

- Public Liability
- Marine Insurance (covering all boats, trailers, engines etc.)
- Launch Vehicles specialist insurance,
- Motor Insurance for all mobile rescue units
- Personal Accident Liability
- Buildings Insurance cover (Beachley Station)
- Buildings Contents liability (Beachley, Sharpness and Wyre Forest)
- Medical Indemnity Insurance
- Trustees Liability Insurance

Additional insurance cover is provided through Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) via our membership of the South West England Rescue Association and by various Police Authorities within our operational areas by whom we are tasked and cover is provided for callouts and training. The Executive Committee continues to monitor Insurance policies.

The cost of Insurance cover has increased again; from £15,840 in 2016 and £27,825 in 2017 to £34,864 in 2018.
Water Rescue training on the Wye at Bigsweir Bridge

A SARA Fundraising Event in Chepstow

The SARA Sharpness crew mark the 100th Anniversary of the end of WW1
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 2018 as set out on pages 19-29.

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

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

I understand that this has been done in order for financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

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
Baldwins (Stourbridge) Limited
First Floor, Copthall House, 1 New Road
Stourbridge. DY8 1PH

Dated: 27 April 2019
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

Statement of financial activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unrestricted funds</th>
<th>Restricted funds</th>
<th>Total 2018</th>
<th>Total 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations and legacies</td>
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<td>116,819</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charitable activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36,153</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other trading activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6,950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16,958</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>176,891</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,970</strong></td>
<td><strong>222,861</strong></td>
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<td>Expenditure on:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising funds</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9,231</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charitable activities</td>
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<td>129,526</td>
<td>120,691</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total resources expended</strong></td>
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<td><strong>138,757</strong></td>
<td><strong>120,691</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Net (expenditure)/income for the year/Net movement in funds</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund balances at 1 January 2018</td>
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<td>24,569</td>
<td>402,456</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund balances at 31 December 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>62,703</strong></td>
<td><strong>327,735</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed assets</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>330,718</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73,835</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand</td>
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<td>136,304</td>
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<td><strong>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(150,419)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>59,720</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets less current liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>390,438</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income funds</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted funds</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>327,735</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted funds</td>
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<td>62,703</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unrestricted funds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>390,438</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 27 April 2019

Mr J Hewitt  
Trustees

Mr A Stanley  
Trustee
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

1. Accounting policies
Charity information The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as SARA is the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK. SARA is also the largest independent lifeboat service in the UK, second only to the RNLI, with 14 operational boats and approximately 170 personnel.

1.1 Accounting convention
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the SARA Constitution, the Charities Act 2011 and “Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)” (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). 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 financial statements have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102 rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice, which is referred to in the Regulations, but which has since been withdrawn.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

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

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

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and represents amounts receivable for goods and services provided in the normal course of business, net of discounts, VAT and other sales related taxes.

1.5 Resources expended
Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

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

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

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

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.
1.7 Impairment of fixed assets
At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

Intangible assets with indefinite useful lives and intangible assets not yet available for use are tested for impairment annually, and whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired.

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.

2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

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

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

3 Donations and legacies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted funds</th>
<th>Restricted funds</th>
<th>Total 2018</th>
<th>Total 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations and gifts</td>
<td>£83,923</td>
<td>£28,257</td>
<td>£112,180</td>
<td>£117,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Income</td>
<td>£32,896</td>
<td>£17,713</td>
<td>£50,609</td>
<td>£41,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£116,819</td>
<td>£45,970</td>
<td>£162,789</td>
<td>£159,441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the year ended 31 December 2017

|                              | £114,359           | £45,082          | £159,441   |

4 Charitable activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Events</td>
<td>£35,695</td>
<td>£9,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>£458</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£36,153</td>
<td>£9,940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5  Other trading activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018 (£)</td>
<td>2017 (£)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales of Goods</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>5,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental Income</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Trading Income</td>
<td>5,259</td>
<td>8,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6,950</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,853</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6  Investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018 (£)</td>
<td>2017 (£)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest receivable</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7  Other Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018 (£)</td>
<td>2017 (£)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets</td>
<td>16,958</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8  Raising Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017 (£)</td>
<td>2016 (£)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising &amp; Publicity</td>
<td>9,231</td>
<td>8,397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 Charitable Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Total 2018 £</th>
<th>Total 2017 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and Impairment</td>
<td></td>
<td>100,352</td>
<td>103,806</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>15,160</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18,519</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>6,315</td>
<td>11,934</td>
<td>18,249</td>
<td>4,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>34,864</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42,526</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumables</td>
<td>6,117</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>23,646</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42,699</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Purchases</td>
<td>15,989</td>
<td>8,405</td>
<td>24,394</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102,091</td>
<td>222,782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Share of Support Costs (see note 10) | 25,575 | - | 25,575 | 31,563 |
| Share of Governance Costs (see note 10) | 1,860 | - | 1,860 | 2,359 |

|                                | 129,526 | 120,691 | 250,217 | 253,901 |

Analysis By Fund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Total 2017 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Funds</td>
<td>129,526</td>
<td>129,526</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td>120,691</td>
<td>120,691</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For The Year Ended 31 December 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds</th>
<th>Restricted Funds</th>
<th>Total 2017 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Funds</td>
<td>147,577</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>147,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td>106,323</td>
<td>106,323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                                | 147,577            | 106,324          | 253,901       |
10  Support Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Costs</th>
<th>Governance Costs</th>
<th>Total 2018</th>
<th>Total 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat Light and Water</td>
<td>3,065</td>
<td>3,065</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone, SMS and Broadband</td>
<td>12,778</td>
<td>12,778</td>
<td>16,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing, Postage &amp; Stationery</td>
<td>3,872</td>
<td>3,872</td>
<td>8,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Costs</td>
<td>2,681</td>
<td>2,681</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Costs</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Charges</td>
<td>2,037</td>
<td>2,037</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Support Costs</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountancy &amp; Audit Fees</td>
<td>1,585</td>
<td>1,585</td>
<td>2,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal &amp; Professional</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25,575</td>
<td>1,860</td>
<td>27,435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysed Between:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charitable Activities</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25,575</td>
<td>1,860</td>
<td>27,435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11  Trustees

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

12  Employees

There were no employees during the year.

13  Tangible Fixed Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freehold land and buildings £</th>
<th>Plant and equipment £</th>
<th>Total £</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 1 January 2018</td>
<td>387,901</td>
<td>920,154</td>
<td>1,308,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions</td>
<td>4,675</td>
<td>23,937</td>
<td>28,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposals</td>
<td></td>
<td>(76,500)</td>
<td>(76,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At 31 December 2018</td>
<td>392,576</td>
<td>867,591</td>
<td>1,260,167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depreciation and impairment

| Cost                          | 195,272               | 710,325 | 905,597 |
| Depreciation charged in the year | 12,287               | 88,065  | 100,352 |
| Eliminated in respect of disposals | -                    | (76,500)| (76,500) |
At 31 December 2018  |  207,559  |  721,890  |  929,449  
---|---|---|---
Carrying amount  
At 31 December 2018  |  185,017  |  145,701  |  330,718  
---|---|---|---
At 31 December 2017  |  192,628  |  209,828  |  402,456  
---|---|---|---

14 Financial instruments  
2018  |  2017  
---|---
Carrying amount of financial assets  
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost  |  196,664  |  25,789  
---|---
Carrying amount of financial liabilities  
Measured at amortised cost  |  150,419  |  1,220  
---|---

15 Debtors  
Amounts falling due within one year  
2018  |  2017  
---|---
Trade Debtors  |  360  |  -  
Other Debtors  |  62,277  |  -  
Prepayments & Accrued Income  |  11,198  |  -  
---|---
73,835  |  -  

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year  
2018  |  2017  
---|---
Trade creditors  |  18,050  |  1,220  
Accruals & deferred income  |  132,369  |  -  
---|---
150,419  |  1,220  

17 Restricted Funds  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At 1 January 2018</th>
<th>Incoming Resources</th>
<th>Resources At 31 December 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fixed Asset Fund  |  402,456  | -  | (92,976)  |  309,480  
Lifesaving Equipment Fund  |  -  |  14,804  | (7,956)  |  6,848  
Vehicle Fund  |  -  |  10,305  | (7,376)  |  2,929  
Training Fund  |  -  |  12,720  | (11,936)  |  784  
Sharpness Lifeboat Fund  |  -  |  5,124  | (449)  |  4,675  
FLIR Fund  |  -  |  3,019  | -  |  3,019  
---|---|---|---|
402,456  |  45,972  | (120,693)  |  327,735  
---|---|---|---|
18 Analysis of Net assets Between Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund balances at 31 December 2018 are represented by</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tangible assets</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>330,718</td>
<td>330,718</td>
<td>402,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets (liabilities)</strong></td>
<td>62,703</td>
<td>(2,983)</td>
<td>59,720</td>
<td>24,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fund balances at 31 December 2018</strong></td>
<td>62,703</td>
<td>327,735</td>
<td>390,438</td>
<td>427,025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 Capital Commitments

At 31 December 2018 the charity had capital commitments as follows:

- Contracted for but not provided in the financial statements
- Acquisition of a new lifeboat for the Sharpness Station 110,500 -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Commitments</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of a new lifeboat for the Sharpness Station</td>
<td>110,500</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Related Party Transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2017 – none)
Demonstrating our Cliff Rescue Capabilities in Chepstow
The Sharpness Lifeboat crew work with the RSPCA to rescue a swan with a broken wing, before it was taken to a swan sanctuary for recovery and eventual rehabilitation.
ANNEX: OPERATIONAL ROLES AND TASKS
SARA is a multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue organisation and is the designated rescue service for an area of over 20,000 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 currently operates from six bases, at Newport, Chepstow (Beachley), Sharpness, South Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Kidderminster (Wyre Forest). The need for SARA has generally been increasing year on year. The variety and range of callouts is also increasing. Typical incidents involve boats or persons in difficulty on one of the rivers SARA cover, but searches for missing persons, animal rescue and flood relief are also becoming common.

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

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

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

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

*SARA's declared area of lifeboat operations, for which it is tasked by HM Coastguard, is the Severn, north from a line between Newport and Clevedon to Maisemore Weir near Gloucester, and the tributary rivers Wye (to Bigsweir Bridge), Usk (to the M4 Bridge) and the Avon (to Bristol Docks). If required in exceptional circumstances, SARA Lifeboats can extend beyond this area, using a re-fuelling stop at Newport, to operate north of a line from Barry to Weston Super Mare.
The SARA lifeboats area also features several high bridges – notably the M48 Severn Bridge but also the A48 in Chepstow and several in Newport. SARA is often called out to a ‘person at risk’ on a bridge. The majority, but sadly not all, are resolved directly by the Police. However, a lifeboat is always launched so as to be ready. Recoveries are therefore not uncommon, but SARA has successfully rescued people from the water below a bridge. In 2017 there were 22 such bridge-related callouts, and 18 in 2018.

**Land Search**

SARA provides land search capabilities in support of the Police and is part of the South West England Rescue Association (SWERA). 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 vehicle-based ‘Mobile Incident Control 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 - so it could even be an urban search if required.

SARA is also a member of Mountain Rescue England and Wales (MREW). Mountain Rescue (MR) involves search as much as it does technical rescue and casualty care; in principle, this could be anywhere. Generally, MR teams deploy into mountainous environments (or at least challenging ones); in the SARA area this 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 in recent years was an extensive search 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 intentionally to Fire and Rescue specification and standards to facilitate interoperability.

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

Rope rescue operations are thankfully rare, but joint exercises are conducted with the FRS and GCRG.

Swift Water and Flood Rescue

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

SARA Swift Water crew are qualified as ‘Swift Water and Flood Rescue Technicians’, which is the national standard. The Swift Water Teams are also able to deploy on flood rescue operations nationally, as Flood Response Teams. DEFRA, through the National DEFRA Flood Rescue group, coordinate the Flood Response Team deployments nationally. SARA has 2 x ‘Type B’ and 2 x ‘Type C’ declared teams of 7, shared between its 4 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.

Callouts

SARA Crew receive ‘callouts’ through a combination of dedicated Pagers and through SMS messages. In 2018 SARA deployed on 108 separate tasks, including 56 lifeboat deployments and 37 land search tasks— some callouts requiring a mix of capabilities.
Education and Training Provision

SARA provides training and education through a variety of routes. These include:

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

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

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

Event Safety Cover

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 the Monmouth Raft Race and Aquathlon, Redditch Iso-Man Triathlon, Offa’s ‘Orror and Devauden 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. For many members of the public spectating, this is an excellent opportunity to see SARA in action and contributes to raising funds both directly and indirectly. 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.
Night-time training in Newport, with SARA Lifeboat 14 and Rescue 19

Helping Santa to tour the town in Hagley
Newport’s SARA Lifeboat 14 and Mobile 20 all ready for a Helmsman's Wedding

Sharpness’ SARA Lifeboat 2 heads home in the sunset