

Severn Area Rescue Association Annual Report and Accounts 2020



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

Registered Charity 505504

FOREWORD

As I sit at the laptop and look out of window, it is a different window I look out of this year, both physically and metaphorically. Many of our lives have changed now. I am reminded of the words 'new normal' that we heard so much in the middle of 2020. The trees still wave in the wind. The birds still fly in the sky. Yet many of life's other riches that we used to take for granted now seem like a distant memory from another lifetime.

It has been a frustrating 12 months for everybody, not least for the SARA volunteers who are known for their attitude of just getting out there and doing it, whatever the weather, whatever the circumstances. All of a sudden a circumstance has been thrown at them that has stopped them in their tracks. Live training on a cold, dark, wet (and what to everybody else would be a miserable) night, has all of a sudden been replaced by another hour in front of a screen in the endless pursuit of trying to keep skills and knowledge up to date.

It has also been a frustrating year for fundraising, as pretty much every fundraising event on the SARA calendar had to be cancelled. The funding streams are running dry, with no income from village fetes, duck races, river swims, firework displays... even the humble collection tins on the bar of your favourite pub. Fortunately some of SARA's latest recruits had some novel ideas for raising a few pounds, and careful funds management in recent years has given SARA some timely resilience.

But the callouts keep coming. Maybe not quite as many as in normal times, but the land crews and boat crews have both been busy recently, while the rope rescue capability remains ever present. And the floods either side of New Year saw the flood rescue teams called into action on a number of occasions. Skeleton crews have managed to keep the stations functioning, the vehicles roadworthy, the boats seaworthy. And behind the scenes the management teams have worked harder than ever updating policies and creating new procedures to deal with the ever-changing guidelines, as well as the direct threat from the virus itself.

Please do remember that SARA is a self-funded organisation, and as mentioned above, one whose fundraising has been severely hampered this year. Many of us as individuals will also feel the financial strain the last 12 months have put on us. Others may see new opportunities ahead, and perhaps a chance to explore new avenues or make a fresh start in life. Could this be the trigger you need to support SARA yourself? SARA volunteers report a huge sense of satisfaction, of purpose, of team work... that feeling of belonging. There are many opportunities available to support the association's vital work, whether you are 'outdoorsy' or not. Every small contribution helps, so please do consider SARA next time you are fundraising or looking for a charity to support. And if you are looking to get outdoors more, learn new skills or be a part of something special, look no further!

Whilst Covid continues to dominate the way we do things, let us not forget the impact it has already had. Our thoughts go out to all those who have suffered and lost throughout the crisis, and of course to Chris Lewis of the Patterdale Mountain Rescue team who, as you doubtless saw on the news recently, suffered life-changing injuries whilst going to the rescue of others. These are not easy times, and we all react differently to what is happening around us. So let us continue to pull together and support each other. At your time of need, SARA will still be there for you. I'd be so grateful if you could find it in your hearts to be there for them.



The Rt. Hon. The Countess Bathurst

In 2020, SARA volunteers attended 126 separate operations:



**54 Lifeboat
Launches**



**24 Land Searches
for Missing People**



32 Flood Taskings



**22 other Inland
Water Search
and Rescue
Incidents**

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Name	Severn Area Rescue Association. Also known as Severn Rescue and SARA
Registered Charity Number	505504
Registered Address	The Lifeboat Station, Beachley, Chepstow. NP16 7HH
Independent Accounts Examiner	Azets (formerly Baldwins & Co), Stourbridge
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc

The Trustees, who have final overall Legal responsibility for the Organisation and its Governance serve for a term of 3 years are appointed in rotation at the Annual General Meeting. Those who served as Trustees during the year were as follows:

J Hewitt (Chair of Trustees)	J Cairns
A Stanley	A Palmer
K Hadley	M Fleming

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

Chief Executive (CEO)	M Carwardine
Deputy CEO	E Davy
Secretary	I Roberts
Chief Financial Officer	I Jarvis
Fundraising Officer	R Newhouse
Beachley Station General Manager (GM)	R Dainty
Newport Station GM	M Duggan
Tewkesbury Station GM	A Toseland
Sharpness Station GM	D Palmer
Upton Station GM	M Nelson
Wyre Forest Station GM	D Gale

During 2020 a number of additional technical and specialist managers were co-opted at the Executive level.

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

The Association is made up entirely of volunteers.

CONSTITUTION OBJECTIVES AND OPERATIONS

The Severn Area Rescue Association, also known as Severn Rescue, and as SARA, is one of the largest independent multi-disciplinary volunteer search and rescue team in the UK, with approximately 180 volunteer personnel. SARA is also a major lifeboat service in the UK, with 14 operational boats, of which 5 are declared Lifeboats.

Constitution

SARA is governed by its Constitution and is a registered charity. The objects of the Association, as stated in the Constitution (amended September 2020) are:

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

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

The Achievement of the Objects of the Charity

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

- Through the Association's 6 rescue stations and one sub-station attending over 100 callouts during the year, all tasked by the principal emergency services.
- Through the provision of Water Safety scenarios for schools and other interested groups to raise awareness for everyone, especially children, to become more 'water aware'.
- Through the ongoing provision of recognised training courses held both internally and externally to promote the professionalism of the organisation.

Beachley's inland water
Rescue Boat 5 on an
early morning callout at
Brockweir, in the Wye Valley



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 and lost or despondent people. As a Rescue Boat Organisation, SARA complies with the Rescue Boat Code of Practice (RBCP) (2013). Land 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 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 RNLI Portishead, Penarth and Barry, Longtown Mountain Rescue Team and the South Wales Search and Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA), 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 Operational Stations

Why SARA?

SARA was founded in 1973, with its headquarters 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 cover the upper Severn area. In 2014 Wyre Forest Station moved into the Fire Station at Kidderminster, under a co-hosting arrangement, and it is due to move in early 2020 into the new Kidderminster Tri-Service Station.

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 Sharpness attend a flooding incident, not far from their station

TRUSTEES' REPORT

2020 was a challenging year for SARA, as for so many organisations in the voluntary sector, but I am pleased to report that we ended the year in a strong position.

Operationally, we provided a full range of rescue services throughout the year, rapidly adapting to the demands of Covid and developing appropriate 'covid-safe' procedures which were applauded by our emergency services partners. We responded to a slightly increased in the number of callouts than in the past two years, reflecting in the large number of flood rescue callouts both earlier in 2020 and at the end of the year and a slightly reduced number of missing person searches, no doubt due to the periods of lockdown.

All of our rescue stations remained fully operational throughout the year, with the Executive Committee maintaining a close eye on any cases of Covid amongst our members and on the stocks of PPE.

The new rescue station at Upton upon Severn, incorporated at the beginning of 2020 has been engaged in training under difficult Covid 19 conditions and I am pleased to say that the team with increased membership is now operational.

We also finished the year in a good and secure position financially, despite the cessation of many of our traditional income streams primarily due to the pandemic. We were however fortunate to secure some significant grants. and we have managed our expenditure. We are also very appreciative of the significant local support, from the public, local businesses and councils. Our members have also been very imaginative on their fundraising activities during this difficult period, and we are very grateful to everyone who has supported SARA's work.

I would particularly like to express our thanks to the late Steve Cox and his family. Steve was the Executive Treasurer for a long period and passed away in 2019 at the age of 93. SARA is extremely grateful to him and his family for their generous bequest in his name, and we have renamed the important 'training room' at our Beachley HQ in his honour.

We have also focused significant attention to our small property portfolio this year. At Upton Marina, the Licence to Occupy was negotiated and included a small increase in the site area. Using our own professional resources, we removed an old Asbestos roof covering the Second World War building and replacing with a new insulated steel covering. The lease of the Sharpness Pier Head building comes to an end in September 2021 and the discussions for renewal with the landlords, the Canal & River Trust, are already well advanced. The SARA Sharpness team are engaged in significant refurbishment and upgrading of this historic listed building, and has undertaken some spectacularly successful fundraising activities to support this work.

Much has been achieved by the different management committees working 'virtually' this year, but perhaps most noteworthy is that during the year we have made excellent progress towards becoming a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation' (CIO). Led by a small working group, the whole complex exercise has involved the whole of the organisation's membership, with a series of EGMs held online, with secure voting, to formally inform the members and obtain their approval along the way. Straying briefly from the strict 2020 activities, I am very pleased to announce that our detailed application for CIO status, submitted during the early part of 2021, has been approved by the Charity Commission.

At the time of writing, we are in the process of preparing documentation that sits behind the new CIO Constitution and transferring all assets to the new CIO in accordance with Charity legislation. The CIO according to Charity law is a completely new organisation and with a new registration number.

My thanks go once again to our CEO Mark Carwardine, the team leaders, station managers, and the Executive Committee for the complex hard work in guiding the day-to-day activities of SARA to the level of public affection and recognition that it enjoys today. None of our successes would be possible without the dedicated membership, past and present, that makes this unpaid lifesaving and almost regional multi-disciplined emergency service work.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to the families of our members, whose routines can be turned upside down at, at any time of the day or night in the event of a shout with no prior notice. Your support for your loved ones' volunteering makes all the difference, and is very much appreciated.

Jim Hewitt
Chairman
On Behalf of the Trustees



Theme for the Year... As shown in this photo, the SARA area includes both England and Wales, with all the complexity during the pandemic that this has entailed.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

In early 2020 we all heard some early reports of a virus outbreak in China, but it was not until early March that we realised what a serious effect it would have upon us all. By that time, SARA had already been through an exceptionally busy period, responding to flooding incidents in the Rivers Severn, Wye and Usk following Storm Dennis in mid-February. Over the course of three weeks, SARA flood teams were deployed 29 times, with 6 teams being deployed simultaneously on two occasions. Several people were rescued from their cars, including one lady who had been stranded on top of hers for 12 hours, as well as numerous sets of welfare checks being conducted for flooded residents. We also provided a contingency rescue team to Bewdley on several nights, as the River Severn threatened to overtop the temporary flood barrier there, and later we joined other emergency services to meet the Prime Minister when he visited Bewdley to thank everyone involved.

We celebrated the incorporation of the new station at Upton-upon-Severn into the SARA organisation at the start of the year. They have now been fully integrated into the organisation and provide a very welcome addition to our response capabilities. In February we conducted another winter skills training weekend in Snowdonia, and at the start of March we again hosted our MP Mark Harper on a visit to Beachley to discuss areas in which we would benefit from his further support.

And then it all changed. I am very proud of the way in which SARA responded to the Covid pandemic. We took the decision to suspend face-face training and fundraising on 12 March, ahead of the national lockdown announcements. The team then worked hard to develop appropriate procedures and source appropriate PPE so that we could continue to operate in a 'Covid-safe' manner. These have been enhanced through the year, and we have been supported in this by guidance from Mountain Rescue and UK SAR as well as from our members who are Health Care Professionals.

We have maintained our full range of search and rescue capabilities throughout, and indeed in the first national Lockdown we provided Gloucestershire Police with a contingency capability of vehicles and drivers, 3 sets per day on a rota-basis for 3 months. And I am pleased to say that there were no instances of any sign of Covid transmission through SARA activities.

Several SARA members did, however, contract Covid through their lives outside of SARA during the year. Most had relatively mild infections although one, a paramedic, was hospitalised quite early on with a severe case and remained significantly weakened for several months. I was delighted and relieved that he recovered towards the end of the year and at the time of writing has regained full strength.

SARA continued to be tasked throughout the year, including during the periods of lockdown. Our lifeboat operations included rescuing or attending to small cruisers, yachts and large dinghies which had got into difficulties or run aground, some kayakers who had underestimated the tidal flow and people cut off by the tidal waters.

Away from the lifeboats and Spring floods, the inland water teams were also pretty busy in 2020. Amongst other tasks, there were five different water rescue or search callouts to the Wye at Monmouth, during the year, including one on Christmas Day. Sadly two of these tasks involved fatalities, underlining the seriousness of the inland waters in our area.

The number of missing person searches we were tasked to was reduced this year, most likely as a result of Covid. Unlike some other forces, Gloucestershire Police saw a lower number of missing persons overall. Nevertheless the land search teams were deployed a number of times in the Forest of Dean, across Gloucestershire and further north, with several missing people being found alive and delivered to the appropriate care provider.

Supporting our operations, training has been one of the big challenges of the year. We generally suspended face-face training during the lockdown periods, which varied across SARA in the autumn as the Welsh and English governments imposed & lifted lockdowns at different times, with our Beachley Station aiming to comply with the 'most strict' country at any given time. When the situation eased, we resumed training with the most safety-critical skills being prioritised – mindful as winter approached that another lockdown was likely so we got as many people as possible fully up-to-date before the shutters came down again.

Highlights of our face-face training this year included a third winter skills weekend in Snowdonia before Covid hit, a great joint training exercise with South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in the Wye Valley and the start of a programme of training & qualifying in-house Swiftwater & Flood Rescue Boat Operator Instructors. We were fortunate to secure a grant for this latter programme, and look forward to the first set of instructors qualifying in 2021.

Like so many organisations across the country we got used to delivering training online, with regular 'Teams' sessions being organised by our instructors and team leaders. Whilst we have focused upon ensuring our operational crew refresh safety critical skills, I feel for the many trainees who have either signed up looking forward to getting stuck in but have had to wait, or had their journey to operational status extended by reduced face-to-face training opportunities. I thank them for sticking with us, and as I write this in 2021 I know that some are on the verge of completing their training.

The way that we bring the money in has also taken a big hit through 2020. The traditional methods such as bucket collections and safety cover at events, regattas and marathons etc have all but disappeared thanks to COVID-19. I'm delighted to say that many of our members have thought outside of the box to plug the gap through sponsored endurance walks and runs, through reaching out to local business, parish and local authorities and National Lottery – to the extent that the existential crisis experienced by so many other charities has been averted for SARA.

I would like to pay tribute to all involved in the Sharpness Building project – both in the Fundraising appeal and in the building work execution. The SARA Lifeboat Station at Sharpness is housed mainly in the Old Dock House; this building has been our base since 1996, and is home to two small lifeboats, a hovercraft and the operations room for the team. The Old Dock House is a Grade 2 listed building, leased by SARA, and it sits in a prominent location which means that it gets lashed by the weather. It has been in desperate need of repairs - over the years the volunteer crew members have made running repairs to the building but by 2020 specialist help was required to maintain the building to a suitable standard. We estimated that the total cost of repairs was in the region of £25,000.

First to pick up the baton were Tim and Natalie from Tewkesbury, who in August walked and sailed the length of SARA's area, from our Wyre Forest Station to the station at Newport. The in September a team from Sharpness completed the Dock-Dock Challenge, walking from

Gloucester to Sharpness Docks in full lifeboat PPE – and on quite a warm day! By the time winter arrived, the campaign had raised around £20,000 and the most critical work had been completed – very competently managed by the Sharpness Station Manager Joe.

Rather unexpectedly, the summer of 2020 also saw SARA appearing on BBC One three times in close succession – this in addition to our flood crews popping up on the news several times in February. Film crews had attended several of our land search callouts in 2019, as part of filming for the ‘Reported Missing’ series which was focusing on Gloucestershire Police. In the end we just featured in one episode, showing the first of two callouts searching for the same chap on different occasions. We had also filmed a piece on Water Safety for the One Show in 2019, and this aired in the summer. BBC Countryfile got in touch during the first lockdown, looking for items which local (to the Wye Valley) presenter Kate Humble and her film-maker husband could film. They joined us on a training session at Symonds Yat, and set the efficiency record – taking just 90 minutes to film everything for a 5 minute segment. Yes, the filming does get in the way of training a little, but we also find that the pressure of ‘getting everything exactly right’ imposes a very useful discipline, so we are delighted to take these opportunities. And most publicity is good & very welcome publicity!

Another piece of great news from this year was the marriage of James Bamforth and Katie Harris, both long-serving members of the SARA Wyre Forest team.

One thing that I think we have all gained an understanding of through 2020 is the value and importance of well-being. We need to look after ourselves and each other; we all can and do experience wobbles brought about by stress. Our Wellbeing Officer has developed a network of trained wellbeing champions who have are able to have a structured conversation with team members who may be having trouble processing an incident, or be struggling with their mental health due to extraneous events. Often this conversation, and on going support, will be enough to help someone to rationalise their thoughts, but if not, the Wellbeing Champions can signpost them to professional help from either the SARA medical officer, trained counsellors at the mental health charity MIND or NHS counsellors.

There are many different roles within SARA, not all of them as visible as others, but all involve huge amounts of time and/or skill – there are those who burn the midnight oil fixing damaged equipment and maintaining our fleets of vehicles, engines and vessels; those who spend time planning the various training sessions and developing training plans; those who write our policies and procedures; those who attend meetings to discuss and agree action plans and strategies; those who plan fundraising events; those who run marathons, walk miles, swim, bike and sleep outdoors for SARA. That they do this (in addition to responding when the call comes) without the spotlight on them and without any expectation of acknowledgement really sums up the spirit of SARA.

Mark Carwardine
Chief Executive Officer



A SARA Casualty Carer on a cliff rescue training exercise in a quarry near Chepstow



A badly injured casualty awaits our attention – fortunately a dummy, placed by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service as part of a joint training exercise with them in the Wye Valley



SARA featured in one episode of Reported Missing Series 3, filmed during 2019



Filming for Countryfile with Kate Humble, and her husband-producer



Pre-Covid filming for The One Show, with SARA team member Andy Torbet doing the interviewing



Land Team Winter Skills Training in Snowdonia in February, the third such annual trip (and the one with the least snow)



SARA Lifeboat 2 from Sharpness rescues a dinghy near Lydney



Flood team training at Tintern

RISKS AND INSURANCE

Review of risks

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

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

Insurances

The charity has in place the following insurances:

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

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

The cost of Insurance cover has been stabilised, partly through the disposal of un-needed assets. It grew from £15,840 in 2016 to £33,431 in 2019; this year it was £32,553.





The SARA Sharpness Dock-to-Dock Team complete their Challenge



Mark Harper MP, with CEO Mark Carwardine and Chair of Trustees Jim Hewitt, at SARA Beachley shortly before Covid arrived

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

On this page in the 2019 Annual Report I wrote about the work that had been undertaken in that year to stabilise the funding position of the charity through an emphasis on raising unrestricted funds, controlling expenditure and selling surplus assets. It is difficult to imagine what would have happened in 2020 if the actions of the year before had not been so successful.

The headline figures in these accounts point to both an increased income and the overall surplus that we have been striving for in recent years. The income increase was secured by three major factors – firstly, the most amazingly generous legacy that we received from the Cox family; secondly the ingenuity and drive of many of the members who found new ways to raise the much needed funds; and thirdly from additional targeted government grant support which more than doubled to £63K. Whilst we continued to bear down on costs wherever possible we faced significant cost pressures for PPE, especially in the early part of the year.

So we head into 2021 in a satisfactory financial position but one that we must always strive to improve. SARA is heavily reliant on its land and water assets and the costs of their upkeep to the exacting standards required for lifesaving activity is significant. We have been able to delay some of these costs in the past year with the lower activity levels but they are very much on the horizon and whilst the anticipated reopening of the economy will be a very pleasing sight for us all it really can't come quickly enough for SARA.



Lifeboat crew at Beachley race to launch SARA Lifeboat 3, with SARA Lifeboat 1 already in the water at the Beachley slipway.

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 2020

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

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

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

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

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

Dated: 3 April 2021

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

Statement of financial activities

		Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £	Unrestricted Funds 2019 £	Restricted Funds 2019 £	Total 2019 £
Notes							
Income and Endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	257,670	40,114	297,784	133,161	69,987	203,148
Charitable activities	4	5,050	-	5,050	25,155	-	25,155
Other trading activities	5	645	-	645	11,267	-	11,267
Investments	6	49	-	49	27	-	27
Other Income	7	15	-	15	23,377	-	23,377
Total income		263,429	40,114	303,543	192,987	69,987	262,974
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	8	1,170	-	1,170	5,978	-	-
Charitable activities	9	173,207	123,900	297,107	117,835	144,034	261,869
Total resources expended		174,377	123,900	298,277	123,813	144,034	267,847
Net (expenditure)/income for the year							
Net movement in funds		89,052	(83,786)	5,266	69,174	(74,047)	(4,873)
Fund balances at 1 January		131,877	253,688	385,565	62,703	327,735	390,438
Fund balances at 31 December		220,929	169,902	390,831	131,877	253,688	385,565

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 2020

	Notes	2020		2019	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13		294,829		371,791
Current assets					
Debtors	15	35,070		44,388	
Cash at bank and in hand		174,976		121,027	
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
		210,046		165,415	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(114,044)		(151,641)	
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
Net current assets			96,002		13,774
			<hr/>		<hr/>
Total assets less current liabilities			390,831		385,565
			<hr/>		<hr/>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	17	169,902		253,688	
Unrestricted funds		220,929		131,877	
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
		390,831		385,565	
		<hr/>		<hr/>	

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 12 April 2021


J Hewitt
Trustee


A Stanley
Trustee

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

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

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

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 Charitable funds

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

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

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

1.4 Income

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

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

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

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

1.5 Expenditure

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

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

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

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

Freehold land and buildings:	Straight line over 25 years
Plant and equipment:	Straight line over 5 years

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

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

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

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

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

1.9 Financial instruments

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

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

Basic financial assets

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

Basic financial liabilities

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

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

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

Derecognition of financial liabilities

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

2. Critical accounting estimates and judgements

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

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

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	222,335	2,514	224,849	145,924
Grant Income	35,335	37,600	72,935	57,224
	<u>257,670</u>	<u>40,114</u>	<u>297,784</u>	<u>203,148</u>
For the year ended 31 December 2019	<u>133,161</u>	<u>69,987</u>		<u>203,148</u>

4 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Fundraising Events	4,550	24,905
Sponsorships	500	250
	<u>5,050</u>	<u>25,155</u>

5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Sale of Goods	431	18
Rental Income	214	42
Other Trading Income	-	11,207
	<u>645</u>	<u>11,267</u>

6 Investments

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Interest receivable	49	27
	<u>49</u>	<u>27</u>

7 Other Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Net gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets	15	23,377
	<u>15</u>	<u>23,377</u>

8 Raising Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Fundraising & Publicity	1,170	5,978
	<u>1,170</u>	<u>5,978</u>

9 Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Depreciation and Impairment	-	87,354	87,354	107,146
Fuel	11,029	-	11,029	15,689
Training	11,849	-	11,849	7,374
Insurance	32,408	-	32,408	33,431
Consumables	25,264	-	25,264	17,738
Repairs & Maintenance	51,048	-	51,048	13,869
Equipment Purchases	48,875	-	48,875	42,800
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	180,473	87,354	267,827	238,047
Share of Support Costs (see note 10)	25,470	-	25,470	21,627
Share of Governance Costs (see note 10)	3,810	-	3,810	2,195
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	209,753	87,354	297,107	261,869
<hr/>				
Analysis by Fund				
Unrestricted Funds	173,207	-	173,207	
Restricted Funds	36,546	87,354	123,900	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	209,753	87,354	297,107	
<hr/>				
For the Year Ended 31 December 2019				
Unrestricted Funds	117,834	1		117,835
Restricted Funds	-	144,034		144,034
	<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>
	117,834	144,035		261,869
	<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>

10 Support Costs

	Support Costs	Governance Costs	Total 2020	Total 2019
	£	£	£	£
Heat Light and Water	5,656	-	5,656	3,245
Phone, SMS and Broadband	10,336	-	10,336	10,155
Printing, Postage & Stationery	316	-	316	1,573
Support Costs	1,633	-	1,633	-
Computer Costs	4,254	-	4,254	3,439
Travel Costs	1,089	-	1,089	617
Bank Charges	982	-	982	960
Other Support Costs	139	-	139	838
Support Costs Heading 9	1,065	-	1,065	800
Accountancy & Audit Fees	-	1,625	1,625	2,140
Legal & Professional	-	2,185	2,185	55
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	25,470	3,810	29,280	23,822
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Analysed Between:				
Charitable Activities	25,470	3,810	29,280	23,822
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Accountancy fees contain costs for the independent examination of £1,500 (2019: £1,400)

11 Trustees

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

12 Employees

There were no employees during the year nor in 2019.

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings £	Plant and equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 January 2020	397,751	954,135	1,351,886
Additions	-	10,390	10,390
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 December 2020	397,751	964,525	1,362,276
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 January 2020	220,042	760,051	980,093
Depreciation charged in the year	12,681	74,673	87,354
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 December 2020	232,723	834,724	1,067,447
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carrying amount			
At 31 December 2020	165,028	129,801	294,829
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 December 2019	177,708	194,083	371,791
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

14 Financial Instruments

	2020 £	2019 £
Carrying amount of financial assets		
Debt instruments measured at amortised	435	4,060
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carrying amount of financial liabilities		
Measured at amortised cost	114,044	151,641
	<hr/>	<hr/>

15 Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year	2020 £	2019 £
Trade Debtors	435	4,060
Other Debtors	14,966	6,727
Prepayments & Accrued Income	19,669	33,601
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	35,070	44,388
	<hr/>	<hr/>

16 Creditors:

Amounts falling due within one year	2020 £	2019 £
Trade creditors	21,612	22,393
Accruals & deferred Income	92,432	129,248
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	114,044	151,641
	<hr/>	<hr/>

17 Restricted Funds

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

	Movement in Funds			Movement in Funds			Balance at
	Balance at 1 January 2019 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Balance at 1 January 2020 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	31 December 2020 £
Fixed Asset Fund	309,482		(107,146)	202,336	-	(87,354)	114,982
Lifesaving Equipment Fund	6,848	26,704	(17,176)	16,376	7,087	(14,985)	8,478
Vehicle Fund	2,929	12,236	(3,492)	11,673	1,000	(3,162)	9,511
Training Fund	784	-	-	784	100	(75)	809
Sharpness Lifeboat Fund	4,675	944	-	5,619	1,414	(2,208)	4,825
FLIR Fund	3,017	11,183	-	14,200	-	-	14,200
DFT Grant Fund		10,980	(8,280)	2,700	-	-	2,700
Bags of Help		7,940	(7,940)		-	-	-
Sharpness Building Fund					19,313	(9,626)	9,687
SFRBO-I Fund					11,200	(6,490)	4,710
	327,735	69,987	(144,034)	253,688	40,114	(123,900)	169,902

18 Analysis of Net assets Between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £	Unrestricted Funds 2019 £	Restricted Funds 2019 £	Total 2019 £
Fund balances at 31 December are represented by:						
Tangible assets	294,829	-	294,829	371,791	-	371,791
Current assets (liabilities)	96,002	-	96,002	13,774	-	13,774
	390,831	-	390,831	385,565	-	385,565

19 Capital Commitments

At 31 December the charity had capital commitments as follows:

	2020 £	2019 £
Contracted for but not provided in the financial statements:		
Acquisition of property, plant and equipment	-	10,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	-	10,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>

20 Related party transactions

	2020 £	2019 £
Transactions with related parties		
During the year the charity entered into the following transactions with related parties:		
Key management personnel	-	1,046
	<hr/>	<hr/>

21 Subsidiaries

Details of the charity's subsidiaries at 31 December 2020 are as follows:

SARA Trading Limited - Registered in England (company number 11820156), incorporated 11 February 2019. A company with no share capital and limited by guarantee. The charity has given a guarantee of £100, and is the relevant legal entity by virtue of the ability to appoint and remove trustees. The four officers of the company are members of the management team of the charity. The company provides commercial training and organises events to raise funds for the charity. The first financial statements of the company were prepared for the period ending 29 February 2020. The company had net assets at 29 February 2020 of £155 and as the surplus was minimal, the company has not donated surplus income to the charity.

The charity is not required to prepare consolidated accounts.



Water rescue training for the SARA Upton Team as they came online this year



4x4 Training in January – one of effects of Covid was to reduce close-contact training such as this



An 'exercise casualty' is assessed by a Casualty Carer wearing Covid PPE



Another 'exercise casualty' is carried out by a water rescue team

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

In 2020 SARA operated from six rescue stations, at Newport, Chepstow (Beachley), Sharpness, Tewkesbury, Upton-upon-Severn and Kidderminster (Wyre Forest). In 2020 SARA deployed on 126 separate tasks, including 54 lifeboat deployments and 24 land search tasks— some callouts requiring a mix of capabilities. SARA Crew receive 'callouts' through a combination of dedicated Pagers and through SMS messages.

Lifeboats and Mud Rescue

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

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

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

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

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

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

Land Search

SARA provides land search capabilities in support of the Police 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 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 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.



Covid-safe First Aid training at Kidderminster Fire Station

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 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 – though sadly not on 2020 - 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.



"We told you what would happen if you didn't listen..."



A lovely sign put out by local residents when they knew SARA was running a training exercise



Summoning the 'Exercise Helicopter' at the end of a water rescue exercise