



C.O.M.R.U.
CUMBRIA ORE MINES RESCUE
UNIT
REGISTERED CHARITY No 1001285



COMRU is affiliated to the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association and
The British Cave Rescue Council

COMRU Trustee Annual Report – 2025

Registered address:

The Secretary – COMRU, White Heath, Cross Lanes, Seascale, Cumbria, CA20 1EZ

Trustees:

Pre 2025 AGM – S. Vennard, R. Clark, T. Cubby,

Post 2025 AGM – S. Allsop, T. Binks, S. Carradice, P. Witheridge, P. Johnson, J. Kaines

Team structure and management:

Selection of Trustees

Membership of the team is open to any individual over the age of eighteen years who is interested in furthering its purposes, and who, by applying for membership, has indicated his, her or their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members set out in the constitution and rules.

The Committee consists of many elected officers, four of these are designated as trustee positions listed with the Charities Commission:

- Team Leader
- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The Trustees may also include up to two other persons nominated by the Team who would be voted for at the Annual General Meeting. These two additional trustees may, or may not, be directly linked to the Team.

Voting shall be by secret ballot for the appointment of trustees and committee members. At every Annual General Meeting of the members of the Team, the charity trustees in post for the previous twelve months shall retire from office; but may be reappointed.

The charity trustees will make available to each new charity trustee, on or before his, her or their first appointment:

- a. a copy of this constitution and any amendments made to it; and
- b. a copy of the teams latest Trustees' Annual Report and statement of accounts.

The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed in accordance with the 'Retirement and removal of charity trustees' section of the constitution, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit specified on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded.

The charity trustees maintain the membership admissions procedure. They delegate the practical application of the membership admissions procedure (consideration, selection, nomination, and voting), to the Committee; excepting 'appeals', which is actioned in consultation with the Committee.

The procedure:

1. may require applications for membership to be made in any reasonable way that they decide;
2. shall, if they approve an application for membership, notify the applicant of their decision within 21 days;
3. may refuse an application for membership if they believe that it is in the best interests of the team for them to do so;
4. shall, if they decide to refuse an application for membership, give the applicant their reasons for doing so, within 21 days of the decision being taken, and give the applicant the opportunity to appeal against the refusal; and
5. shall give fair consideration to any such appeal, and shall inform the applicant of their decision, but any decision to confirm refusal of the application for membership shall be final.

Role of Trustees

The charity Trustees have a legal duty to act in good faith and a statutory duty of care concerning the operation of the Team.

Trustees are expected to act in the best interests of the long-term sustainability of the Team in line with the charitable objectives and must ensure the resources of the team are utilised in line with the objectives of the Team as described in the constitution. The Trustees have a legal duty of care to Team members and must ensure adequate arrangements are in place. They provide overall assurance of the work of the Committee and assist in conflict resolution by acting as a group.

The Trustees delegate the responsibility for day-to-day management of the Team to a Committee which runs all operational aspects of the Team. However, the Trustees cannot delegate their legal responsibility and must retain sufficient oversight of the Team's activities to carry out their duties as Trustees.

Day to day running of the Team, leadership, operations and general expenditure are delegated to a Committee made up of individuals who, collectively, have the knowledge and experience to ensure the safe and effective running of the Team.

Role of the Committee and Leadership Group

The Committee has responsibility for the routine operation of the Team, including establishing operational standards, processes and systems for all aspects of the Team's operation.

The Committee is made up of a Leadership Group (Team Leader and up to 4 Deputies) and a number of officers with defined roles.

For operational decisions (assessment of individuals for operational roles, safe operating practices, response protocols, membership decisions, etc) the Leadership Group take the lead and have the final decision, with the support/advice of the wider Committee.

Other Committee decisions concerning the wider operation of the Team, administration, fundraising, etc, are made by simple majority of Committee members.

Sub groups may be established by the Committee for the purpose of supporting the Committee in key areas. These Groups typically report back to the full Committee meeting and have no delegated financial authority beyond that of the officers involved.

Delegation of Financial Authority

The Trustees have full authority to utilise the resources of the Team in line with the charity objectives and constitution, and must ensure appropriate control of the charity's funds.

Matters reserved for the Trustees

Any significant investment in addition to the annual spending plan and any non-routine expenditure > 10k in a year or which commits the team to > 5k per year on an ongoing basis should be referred to the Trustees.

Any purchase of land/property, any investments and any decision to employ people in support of Team activities must be agreed by the Trustees.

Any other expenditure which may be considered contentious (for example outside the bounds of normal Team activities, novel or unproven technology, or where there is doubt about alignment with the charity objectives) should be discussed with the Trustees.

For expediency, any expenditure requests to Trustees may be circulated by e-mail and may be approved through e-mail if the Trustees agree that is appropriate. Otherwise, a Trustees' meeting may be required.

For significant investment decisions which may impact on the long-term viability of the Team a joint meeting of Trustees and Committee may be appropriate. However, for large investments the Trustees clearly have the legal duty to make sure the expenditure is an appropriate use of Team funds and is in the long-term interests of the charity and as such will have the final decision.

Delegated Authorities

Authority for spending is delegated as follows (note that the process for spending Team funds requires dual authorisation from officers. This is a control on spending and the authorised signatories should ensure that the spending is in line with these delegated authorities):

- The Committee – Operational expenditure as set out in the annual expenditure plan, including replacement equipment, insurances, running costs, maintenance, inspection, training, rents and services necessary for the operation of the Team. (note matters reserved for the trustees).
- Equipment/communications/Medical – Spending on like for like replacement and restock of equipment to keep the team operating. Any decisions to enhance or update Team kit beyond this must be agreed at Committee.
- Training Officer – Routine training expenditure to support the training on the Team calendar. All commitment for expenditure beyond routine replacement and refresh must be approved by the Committee.
- All Officers – Minor expenditure for consumables and other minor expenses to the value of £200.

All non-routine funding decisions will be discussed and minuted at the Committee and the Committee minutes will be routinely circulated to Trustees to allow some independent oversight of the spending during the year.

Other Team members have no authority to spend or to commit to spending Team funds unless it is specifically identified in the Team's arrangements (for example re-fuelling of team vehicles). All expenditure requirements should be checked with a Committee member – this is made clear to all team members on joining the Team.

Team activities and objectives in the year:

As well as attending calls to assist (see 'performance') and continuing with the monthly team training program, 2025 has been a year of consolidation for the team. With an increasingly complex legislative landscape for voluntary rescue the team has worked hard to be proactive and remain fully compliant. Changes to Section 19 (response driving), increasing awareness of safeguarding and wellbeing needs, revised national rope rescue guidelines, and the decision to introduce enhanced DBS checks for all team members together placed significant additional workload on members and trustees, however all the above have been successfully actioned.

The proposed change of the current COMRU charity to a CIO agreed in 2024 has gone ahead and after much work our application was lodged with the Charities Commission in late summer of 2025. It is hoped that we will gain approval in the spring of 2026. From this work, a small number of areas were identified where updates or amendments to the team's current documentation were required, and this remedial work was done, approved, and shared with the team.

Our plans to work alongside Penrith Mountain Rescue Team (PMRT) to gain base facilities for COMRU have regrettably been forced to change. Increasing costs and a poor fundraising outlook required a revision of the project; and after advice from peers, it was agreed by both teams that for either organisation to move forward effectively it would be best to treat each team's needs separately. We continue to work with PMRT whilst each team reviews what the next actions should be.

Team achievements and performance:

Callouts (1st January 2025 to date)

There have been a limited number of calls to assist in underground or technical rope rescue incidents.

The COMRU lead drone operator has been tasked on several occasions to assist in searches for missing persons in the LDSAMRA area and provided multi-day support to a national response to the wildfires in East Yorkshire, led by the local Fire and Rescue Services.

Additionally, some background support has been given as requested by teams involved with searches, flood preparations etc. This has involved only one or two persons from the team on each occasion.

Operational support to other agencies

The team has continued to attend a wide range of events in support of, or liaising with, other agencies including the United Kingdom Search and Rescue coordination group (UKSAR), Cumbria Search and Rescue (CSAR), Cumbria Fire and Rescue (CFRS), Cumbria Police, HM Coastguard, and local Government.

COMRU continues to be well represented within the national body, the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC). A team member has become the Vice Chair of BCRC; and sits on the MREW/BCRC Rescue Benevolent Fund. The BCRC Training Officer post remains vacant currently and two members are supporting BCRC in this area. The cave/mine rescue team peer review process continues in BCRC. Two members will be assisting with the next peer review.

Although an underground team, COMRU contributes heavily to the management roles of the Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA). A member remains on the SILVER command group and is a key regional coordinator of the SARCALL system.

Other members hold the LDSAMRA Equipment Officer and LDSAMRA Vehicles Officer posts.

Funding:

We have this year reviewed and updated our policies on finance, reserves, and donations in line with the latest Charity Commission guidance.

Through ongoing financial prudence and good management, the teams financial position remains strong. The latest accounts indicate we have sufficient funds to maintain our operational readiness without impacting on our set aside running reserves (3 years average running costs – see team funding policy).

We continue to receive donations from grants, businesses, and members of the public, and this year the totals received in this way have allowed the team to maintain the service and improve its essential personal PPE.

A percentage of the team’s routine running costs are covered by regular donations from the LDSAMRA ‘Fairness fund’. This is recognised as a risk factor to the team but following detailed discussions with LDSAMRA in 2025 the Committee and Trustees are reassured that LDSAMRA see COMRU as an integral part of the regional emergency response and wish to support it financially in the long term.

Document produced by: P. Witheridge – 29.01.2025

Date issued: January 2026

Issued to: Committee, Trustees, Charity Commission.

End of document.

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Cumbrian Ore Mines Rescue Unit - Charity no. 1001285

Year ended 4th April 2025

	2025	2024
Donations/ Grants	£ 7,687.21	£ 1,659.05
LDSAMRA	£ 35,000.00	£ 17,000.00
Bank Interest	£ 943.49	£ 915.19
Vehicle Refund	£ 155.75	£ 120.50
Equipment Refund	£ 312.00	£ -
Rescon Admissions	£ 2,698.47	£ -
Petty Cash/ Merchandise	£ 75.00	£ -
Merchandise	£ 545.60	£ -
	<u>£ 47,417.52</u>	<u>£ 19,694.74</u>

Rescon	£ 4,669.19	£ -
Equipment	£ 8,357.95	£ 3,978.10
Fuel	£ -	£ 405.14
Oxygen	£ 677.16	£ -
Medical	£ 2,684.67	£ 2,389.75
Vehicle	£ 1,744.43	£ 13,730.28
Subscriptions	£ 235.00	£ 744.60
Insurance	£ -	£ -
Training	£ 200.00	£ -
IT	£ 54.99	£ -
Sundry	£ 46.03	£ 261.29
VAT Refund	£ -	£ -
	<u>18,669.42</u>	<u>£ 21,509.16</u>

Surplus/(Defecit) for year	<u>28,748.10</u>	<u>-£ 1,814.42</u>
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Bank balances at end of year

Current Account	£ 19,071.27	£ 6,341.66
Business Call Account	£ 63,410.72	£ 62,711.17
Business Bank Instant Account	£ 39,913.11	£ 24,669.17
	<u>£ 122,395.10</u>	<u>93,722.00</u>

Petty Cash	£ 75.00	£ -
Total	<u>£ 122,470.10</u>	<u>£ 93,722.00</u>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
Cumbrian Ore Mines Rescue Unit

On accounts for the year ended

4 April 2025

**Charity no
(if any)**

1001285

Set out on pages

2 – 3 Above

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 4th April 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

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 accounts to be reached.

Signed: *J P Sheehy*

Date: 2nd February 2026

Name: Mr John Sheehy

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

ACMA

Address:

36 Manor Crescent

Epsom

KT19 7EF

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

N/A