

EVERGLADES
HOTEL



FOYLE SEARCH & RESCUE

FOUNDED 1993

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

"THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE IN AND AROUND THE RIVER FOYLE"

NO ONE MAKES IT THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT THE HELP OF OTHERS

LAST YEAR, OUR VOLUNTEERS ATTENDED

226 INCIDENTS

WE RESCUED

24 PEOPLE

FROM THE WATER

198 PEOPLE

WERE STOPPED FROM ENTERING THE WATER

Every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night, a band of very special men & women give up their time, to begin their work as volunteers of Foyle Search & Rescue, donning their now familiar orange jackets, to patrol the river, it's walkways, and bridges.

Since it's inception back in 1993, 30 years ago, Foyle Search & Rescue has been responsible for saving **544** people from the river and helping an additional **6082** people who may have entered the water, had we not been there for them.

CHARITY STRUCTURE

01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024

COMMITTEE

Chairman	Stephen Twells
Treasurer	Cormac O'Hare
Company Secretary	Kristina McDaid
Committee Member	Steven Durrent

PAST ROLES

Vice-Chairman	Brian Óg Mullan
Health & Wellbeing	Sandra O'Doherty
Health Safety & Risk	Martin O'Neill

STAFF

Charity Manager	Christina McKeegan
Facilities Manager	Anthony McMenamin
Volunteer Manager	Dawn Grieve
Digital Lead	Rossa Smallman

CO-ORDINATORS

Shore Co-ordinator	Mark Buckley
Boat Co-ordinator	Seamus McCloskey (Steven Durrent)
Pager Co-ordinator	Neal Cooke (Paul McLaughlin)
Swiftwater Co-ordinator	Gerard O'Kane
Drone Co-ordinator	Ryan Murphy
Sonar Co-ordinator	Danielle Francis (Seamus McCloskey)
FREC Co-ordinator	Conor Hargan



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year marks a truly special occasion as we come together to celebrate the 30th anniversary of our charity. It is an incredible milestone that speaks volumes about the dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment of everyone involved in our mission-the preservation of life in and around the River Foyle.



Since 1993, FSR volunteers have stopped **6,082** people who were in danger of, or considered taking their own life, in the river. However, sadly, the number dying by suicide in the river has remained almost constant over the last 30 years since the formation of FSR, with an average of 5 fatalities each year.

The year just ending in March 2024 was another busy year for us. 24 rescues were carried out, while 198 people were stopped from entering the river, but tragically, we had the sad task of recovering 4 people who lost their lives in the river.

The work that our volunteers carry out is never done in isolation. We could not deliver our services, nor make the difference we make, without the help of the city centre CCTV team, Community Safety Wardens, PSNI, NIAS and NIFRS, who all provide vital support to us.

We are extremely grateful to Derry City & Strabane District Council, the Public Health Agency and the Western Health & Social Care Trust for their continued funding to us again this year, yet still, over 80% of all our annual income comes from public donations. We know there are many worthy causes in our city, deserving of peoples' appreciation, and financial support. To be there, when we are needed most, is the least we can do to repay that kindness and generosity.

Most of our activities this year revolved around either commemorating our 30 years of service, or taking action to make our charity better placed to face the future, while maintaining our duty nights, 24/7 pager response, educational activity and intensive training programmes.

We celebrated our 30th year with many fundraising events, as well as being invited to the Mayors Parlour for a recognition evening with Mayor Sandra Duffy. We were honoured with another award when we, unexpectedly received the Best of Derry 999 Hero Award. We held a glamorous Gala Ball in September, and what for me was the highlight of the year, a very poignant and moving Remembrance event in October, laying lanterns on the river to remember all those who have died in the river over the years. We also supported our local hero Danny Quigley, who swam 110km to raise awareness of mental health, while remembering those who have both died by suicide and those struggling with mental health issues.

We began a journey of transformation on how we function, with a new digital programme, still in development, aimed at simplifying many of our activities. We invested heavily across our multi-disciplinary teams, with upgrades to drones, more equipment for our sonar and swift water teams, better Personal Protective Equipment for our boat crews, and 2 new duty night team vehicles. We refurbished our two largest, most used boats with new engines as well as a drydock to help with their maintenance. We began to develop a multi-disciplinary command vehicle and implement new livery branding across our fleet of vehicles.

We invested in 2 new additional staff roles, a Volunteer Manager and, a Digital Lead in conjunction with the Rank Foundation, aimed at supporting our volunteers and management committee.

Unfortunately, throughout the year we incurred damage and loss to vessels and equipment which we either repaired or are working through a plan to replace within the coming 12 months. We also undertook a cost savings exercise and sold, or are selling some of our older, or under-utilised vehicle and vessel assets. This programme will continue throughout 2024 to deliver savings where we can. 2024/2025 will again be another challenging and exciting year in the life of FSR. It will bring more improvements as we continue with our digital transformation, more recruitment of new volunteers, investment in new defibrillators, swift water equipment, training, and sourcing a suitable multi-purpose boat that will support both our normal operations as well as sonar searches.

We will be going through our 3rd re-evaluation of our coveted "Investing in Volunteers" accreditation, which recognises good practice within volunteer management, and we will re-invigorate our management committee with new members.

We will also continue to work with the Danny Quigley Foundation to develop a symbolic “Lighthouse” which will be a beacon of light and a practical place to help and information around mental health.

The biggest project that we hope to complete will be seeing phase 2 of an extension to our base, after a prolonged delay due to the recent pandemic, which will bring much needed storage and workspace.

FSR volunteers have been providing support and encouragement to thousands of people since 1993, giving hope, strength and courage to a stranger, to face another day. We are not just about searching for, and rescuing people; we are about compassion, empathy, and the unwavering belief that every life is worth saving. It's about being there in the darkest hours, offering solace and support to those who have lost their way.

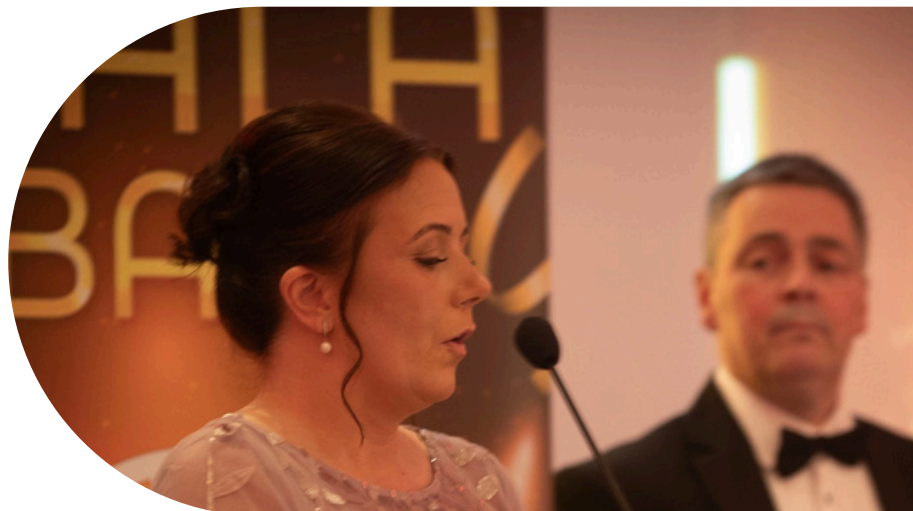
During the last 30 years, the River Foyle has flowed, and the tides have turned, but our resolve to save lives has remained constant throughout any obstacles and challenges we faced.

So many people have been involved in FSR over the years, and at this special milestone, I want to express my deepest gratitude to our volunteers, staff, supporters, partners, funders, past and present as well as the entire community. Together, we have made Foyle Search and Rescue what it is today - a beacon of hope, a symbol of compassion, and a lifeline for those in need. Together we have saved lives. Together we have made a difference.

We are only the custodians for the next generation. As we look ahead to the future, let us continue to work together, to innovate and to grow, so that we may save even more lives in the years to come. Our charity and all of our supporters are a shining example of everything that is wonderful about this great city of ours, and is something we can all be very proud of.

Thank you for being a part of our journey so far. Here's to the next 30 years of making a difference in the lives of those we serve, and may the light of hope continue to shine bright in our hearts, and along the Foyle River

STEPHEN TWELLS
CHAIRMAN
2014 - 2024



VOLUNTEER MANAGER UPDATE

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for warmly welcoming me back to the charity. This has made my transition from previously being a volunteer to now being staff, very easy. In my first 9 months (to the end of the financial year) I have overseen duty night attendance, managed time out, assisting volunteers to make decisions which suits their needs in that moment, monitored training commitment and assisted coordinators as and when required. I also introduced my first survey which allowed me to get a feel of the thoughts and feelings of our volunteers and began putting plans in place, where practical, to react to suggestions expressed.

In my role as Volunteer Manager I have been reviewing all policies and procedures and making amendments where needed, all of which have been communicated. This is in preparation for our Investing in Volunteers Certification renewal through Volunteer Now which will take place in the new financial year. Renewing this certification allows us to ensure that, as a charity, we are doing everything according to the guidelines to provide the best volunteer experience we possibly can.

I have recently completed the process of renewing volunteer uniforms which should be rolled out late summer. This by no means has been an easy process as I wanted to ensure that the best garments were sourced to suit the whole charities needs.

With regards to volunteer numbers, we currently have 97 volunteers on our books, 66 of these are operational, 23 of these are part of the fundraising team, 2 are non-operational volunteers who help with education talks or maintenance around the base and 2 are Professional Expertise Volunteers (PEV) both currently active in our UAV team. I want to thank all our volunteers for their commitment and dedication to the charity over the last year. It is becoming increasingly hard for all volunteer organisations to find people committed to giving up their time in the longer term, we so are lucky to have a great bunch of volunteers who are all here for the same reason 'The preservation of life in and around the River Foyle.'

Together with the committee, I am currently working on remoulding the entire recruitment and selection process. We anticipate that we will be in a position to open recruitment in July with an intake of new volunteers by the end of August.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Volunteer wellbeing will always be of the highest importance for me as Volunteer Manager. So as part of the health and wellbeing programme I have run a variety of different events through the year. From evenings out, to relaxing facials and food at the base. I would encourage everyone to get involved. This is your base, to come & use it as you please.

August saw the amazing fun day to end Danny Quigleys Lifford to Kinnego Bay swim. I think I speak for all volunteers when I say that being part of this event was a highlight. The fun day was a great day for not only the public but our volunteers and their families.

In September we held our 30th Anniversary Gala Ball. This was an amazing evening with lots of laughs thanks to Tim McGarry. It was lovely to get glammed up and celebrate Foyle Search and Rescue. The room was set up beautifully thanks to our Charity Manager's vision and 3 people won great prizes in the form of holiday vouchers!

October saw the roll out of an 8 week fitness programme held at ProBox Gym. It was great to see volunteers have a laugh together and it allowed everyone to let off steam when they let loose on the pads. Another fitness programme will be rolled out later in the year.

A health and wellbeing event, which included a variety of beauty treatments and a hot meal, was held in November. This event was open to everyone and everyone left feeling fantastic! This event will definitely return in the near future for both male and females!

Of course December couldn't pass by without the big man in the red suit calling by! And what a visit it was, Santa did a great job, so much so that all the children were saying that he was the best Santa they have seen and that he was very funny! The kids enjoyed a hot meal and lots of sweets were consumed!

Our highly anticipated volunteer Christmas party was held in January in the Thirsty Goat. Its fair to say that this was a great night, the food was amazing, the music great, and the dancing was... well.

The volunteers who have attended these events have all provided great feedback. I would encourage more of you to get involved, it is great team building and also great craic. Lots more to come in 2024/2025

Lastly, due to the nature of the tasks carried out by our volunteers I will always promote the counselling service provided by Lorraine Rogan at 'Peace by Piece'. Although many feel it is enough to discuss incidents with other volunteers to help process what you have witnessed and assisted in, sometimes it helps to speak to someone you don't know. This service is not limited to Foyle Search related situations, if a volunteer has something going on in their life that they need support with, please contact Lorraine.

LORRAINE
07594875016

CCIS - EXTERN
028 7126 2300

DAWN GRIEVE
VOLUNTEER MANAGER



FINANCIAL REPORT

The 2023-24 Financial year plans, were to make the largest ever annual investment in the Charity. This would be across all aspects of the charity. Investment in full time staff, in new volunteer recruits, in PPE for our Boat, Sonar, Swift Water and Drone teams, in our support vehicles, in our watercraft and investment in our base infrastructure. We also planned to support a number of events to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the charity.

EXPENDITURE/INVESTMENT

Our initial spending budget was just over £600k, with actual spend in the period 3% above budget.

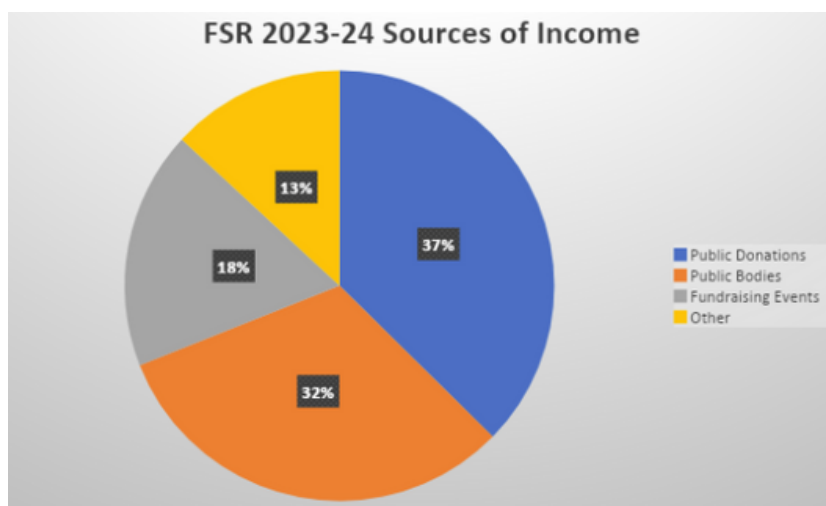
The majority of the investments, were as planned, with the major additional expenditures being on accidental damages to our watercraft and the replacement of two additional engines on one of our fast response boats. Fuel and Insurance costs were also higher than expected.

These higher investments were balanced by delaying training of additional recruits, as volunteer levels were assessed as sufficient at the time and delaying the planned extension of our base infrastructure, which is now planned for financial year 2024-25.

Credit again must be given to all those involved in the charity, to relentlessly challenge all expenditures for justification and assurance that they are aligned with driving the charity forward.

INCOME 2023-24

Income from April 2023 to March 2024 exceeded last year and the last full year before the COVID Pandemic.



Public support through personal and company donations, collection boxes, support of our Bucket Appeal, Flag Day, Sponsored Walk, Zipline and Danny Quigley's marathon swim of the complete length of the river Foyle, remained our greatest source of income.

Funding was received from The Rank Foundation, Derry & Strabane District Council, the Public Health Agency, Department of Justice, Developing Healthy Communities, SBS South Bank Square, and CAF which helps us continue to support our staff and volunteer development as well as some of larger capital investments.

FINANCIAL STATUS 2023-24

Our year end reserve account is now just under £1,000,000. This represents an anticipated 10% decrease based on the period ending 31st March 2023, due to our highest ever annual investment.

Allocation of Funds

Reserve Fund- £400,000,

Restricted Funds-£70,000

Unrestricted funds- £644,287.

2024 -25 OUTLOOK

The anticipated trend for 2024-25 will be an increase in operating costs and a decrease in the availability of Statutory Agency funding.

In 2023-24 we successfully recruited a Volunteer Manager as the charity grows in complexity. In 2024-25, we plan to further enhance our Staff, by recruiting a Fundraising Coordinator and to reinvigorate the charity by inducting and training new volunteer recruits.

We plan to find capital support to design and build a watercraft vessel, capable of supporting fast response and our Sonar Team, after the retirement of two of our boats which proved to be uneconomic to remain operational.

We plan to complete ground works at the base, to provide a multi-purpose extension, provide additional vehicle and equipment storage and provide swifter access to our pontoon.

CORMAC O'HARE

TREASURER





INCIDENT OVERVIEW

In 2023/24 financial period, Foyle Search and Rescue attended 226 incidents, 131 of which were attended by our Duty Night Teams and 95 of which were Emergency Response Pager Team incidents.

24 individuals were rescued directly from the water alive, 81 distressed individuals were removed safely from the railings and bridges surrounding the river, we had 115 causes for concern and we sadly recovered 4 bodies in this financial reporting period. Emergency response team also dealt with 2 miscellaneous incidents.

A special thank you must go to all our operational volunteers on duty nights and pager for your dedication and persistence in the number of lives you have saved. These statistics are the main tool that we have in gauging how successful our service is and how many people we help. Although we helped 226 people directly in our life preservation crisis response capacity, the actual number of people we helped throughout the year is much greater than that. It is there to be seen by all, especially those who serve alongside you.



SHORE TEAM

LEADERSHIP

2023 saw the introduction of a new Shore Coordinator. This transition began in April and the role was fully taken over at the beginning of May. The New Shore Coordinator worked very closely with the Office staff and other Coordinators to identify the needs of Foyle Search and Rescue regarding operational and training needs. Additionally, two Deputy Shore Coordinators (Rohan Chada and Adrian McMenamin) were added to the leadership team to assist in all aspects of training and operations.

SHORE TRAINING

The training during this year covered many areas, both practical and theoretical. The diverse range of training provided received excellent feedback.

In November 2023 we conducted practical Shore duty-based training. This training incorporated key skills such as Client approach, throwline deployment and electronic communications. This was hugely beneficial and challenged the volunteers on their approach to people in distress using a wide range of techniques to deescalate highly challenging situations. This training encompassed both verbal and non-verbal communication along with strategies to approach people in distress. We also conducted electronic communication training and throwline deployment. This training was based on the "Crawl/Walk/Run" approach, where we build towards upcoming training to provide opportunities for our volunteers to be able to use the real application of these skills.

The online training provided to our volunteers in the first quarter of 2024 allowed all volunteers to learn about other aspects of Foyle Search and Rescue at their own pace. The online training covered various topics such as Foyle Search and Rescue SOPs, Jessip training and Manual handling, these were key training areas that all volunteers benefitted from. The training included refresher training on the organisations SOP's and also provided the volunteers with better situational awareness of our role in emergency multi-agency situations (Jessip).

In June 2023 We were very privileged to welcome ARC. We received training on dealing with distressed individuals who have addictions or who are recovering from addictions. This training received very positive feedback from volunteers who said that it gave them a greater understanding of these issues.

TEAM LEADERS

In 2024, our new Team Leadership training was successfully rolled out. This training was designed to give a volunteer the correct skills to lead teams on duty and have the knowledge and confidence to deal with highly challenging situations. This was implemented by classroom-based lectures covering all aspects of Team Leader responsibilities. We then covered all the practical aspects of duty from arriving at base/going out on duty/dealing with the public and signing off after duty. This training continued with a mentoring program where existing Team Leaders would assist the new Team Leader on duty nights until they reached a stage where they were confident to lead independently.

Throughout the year Foyle Search and Rescue held multiple Team Leader meetings which provided our Team Leaders with opportunities to assist with shore training, gain new skills and facilitate a knowledge/idea skill share environment.

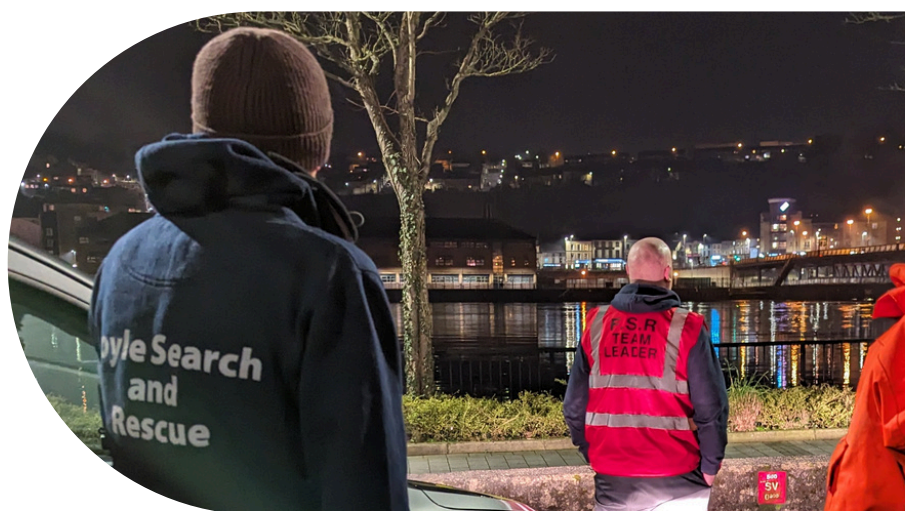
UPCOMING TRAINING

We are planning Shore training in July 2024. This training will see the "Walk" phase of our training plan. Shore volunteers can expect to be tested on Client approach/Medical/Communications/Throwline deployment/S1-Code 1 protocols and teamwork. This will allow the volunteers to experience a dynamic training scenario which requires decision making and situational awareness.

In September, we hope to roll out external leadership training with the opportunity for Team Leaders to gain leadership qualifications.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the Volunteers in Foyle Search and Rescue who have displayed the highest levels of professionalism and commitment during duty, training and Searches over the past twelve months. Your time given to the charity is very appreciated, extremely valued and makes an extraordinary difference to people lives. I would also like to thank the other Coordinators and Staff who have shown me a huge amount of support during the past year settling into the new role as Shore Coordinator.

MARK BUCKLEY SHORE COORDINATOR



BOAT TEAM

In September 2023, I was appointed as Boat Coordinator. Whilst I don't necessarily come from a boating background externally, I have been on boat for approximately 6 years within the charity. I also have 3 years previous experience of being a coordinator and have been involved with boat training for several years.

Upon taking the role, I moved to identify key areas where adjustments could be made to help bolster the general operations of boat. It will not come as a surprise that I have always been a firm believer in the importance of training. It improves safety, but it also improves morale and teamwork.

Early 2023 brought the introduction of a new boat training plan. It became mandatory for all crew joining boat to be trained to RYA Level 2, crew would then work towards getting sessions on the boat so they could progress onto Personal Water Craft and once this was achieved, they could continue adding sessions until they were eligible to go through the new Foyle Search and Rescue coxswain assessment. A lot of work went into designing this, with research being carried out with other search & rescue groups to see what they provide their crews.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, 11 new crew members joined boat. 2 volunteers joined boat crew with external certificates whilst 2 coxswains returned to the charity. Myself and Gareth also became RYA PWC instructors which allowed us to certify 11 more volunteers in PWC. 16 volunteers who did not have their RYA powerboat level 2 certificate were also certified and there was a VHF course delivered externally to 15 volunteers on boat. A further 2 volunteers became coxswains and in 2024 mandatory training was introduced again so that time could then be diverted into upskilling all our boat volunteers. This period of time saw the most training and progression we have ever had within the charity. There are over 40 volunteers now on Boat with over 20 qualified as coxswains and 30 of which are also PWC trained.



Its fair to say it has been a very busy year for our boat training team. The boat training team is made up of a group of highly experienced boat volunteers who bring a wide range of skills. Myself, Gareth, Paul Mullan, Colm, Liam and Avril are the volunteers within the boat training team. In December this team was expanded as we welcomed 4 new members, Amy, Danielle, Ryan Murphy, and Conor all successfully joined the team to assist with training, its great to have their experience and skills to add to the team. They ensure that out volunteers are well trained and provide invaluable experience so that when any of the crews are out on the water, they will be able to face any challenges they may encounter. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the boat training team as a whole contributed a total of 505 Hours of training. Thankyou to the entire team for dedicating so much time to this.

During this time, we also unfortunately retired 2 vessels, the Spirit of Adrian and Spirit of James. These vessels were involved in multiple shouts, duties and searches for many years within the charity and served the charity well during their lifespan. Plans are ongoing to replace these 2 boats with one multipurpose vessel.

The 2 main response boats, Spirit of John and AOD13 also got new twin 150HP engines fitted to improve response times and reliability. All of our maintenance is now outsourced to contractors who do a fantastic job ensuring our vessels are fit for purpose and operational. Thanks to Stevie, Stormtec and Jet products for the work they do.

On PPE and equipment, our volunteers moved to using crew saver lifejackets in August 2023. Again, research went into what other rescue groups used. In September we introduced new drydocks to help protect our vessels with funding secured for the project. These have proven to be very useful in preventing damage to boats during storms but also in reducing barnacle build up during warmer temperatures.

During the summer we were involved with a huge fundraising event organised by Danny Quigley where he swam from Lifford to Kinnego Bay. The boat team was involved in providing safety cover during this event as Danny swam day and night to achieve his goal. Thanks to all our boat volunteers who helped out during this, it was a great experience for all.

Boat team also participated in 3 searches during this time frame, 2 on the Foyle, and 1 upriver in Strabane. Some of the conditions were challenging but boat teams managed to attend these searches and help the families impacted by them.

Another change I brought was the creation of a boat general maintenance team. This team is made up of Myself, Gavin, Don, Katherine, Mark Doherty, Cormac, Anthony Brady, Paddy Mullan and Paddy Bowen. Every month members of this team come in and give the vessels a good deep clean and also check all the inventory on board to make sure our boats are in good working order. A massive thanks to them also for all the time and effort they put in.



Going forward I intend on continuing to provide a high level of training so that our volunteers are highly skilled and able to deal with anything they may encounter. Training events will be planned with other groups and agencies also. There will be further investment into equipment and maintenance ensuring our boats are available and kitted with the correct equipment to assist us in our tasks. Its also important to acknowledge the work and support the staff do for boat operations, thankyou for that.

In closing I would like to express special thanks to all the men and women who crew our boats. Thank you for what you do. You have welcomed me as your boat coordinator, participated in training and adapted to changes that were brought in. Not every change maybe suited or was welcomed by everyone but they were always made with best intentions for the safety of you and the wider team. Sometimes the tasks we do are not pleasant, however many people have been rescued and are alive today because of the work that you do and the hours you sacrifice for training, searches, duties and other boat events throughout the year. Over the years many families received closure by getting their loved one's home because of the work and tasks you do, and this year was no exception so again thank you. None of that would be possible without you.

SEAMUS MCCLOSKEY

BOAT CO-ORDINATOR

SONAR TEAM

Our Sonar team carry out searches of the river using specialist equipment when someone goes under the surface and does not resurface.

The Sonar team consists of 10 volunteers, who put in a lot of time and effort particularly when a search happens, but also throughout the year.

2023 was a significant year for the team for many reasons.

In May 2023, we conducted a training session in collaboration with the Inishowen Sub-Aqua Club, who provided divers so that we could simulate a sonar search for a body. Many thanks to Aodhán McDaid and the Inishowen SAC crew for their support.

This was followed in June by a weekend's training with the Norbit support team.

In July, the team were tasked to perform a multi-day sonar search for a missing person in the Foyle. The individual was eventually found safe and well elsewhere.

In August, the team were again tasked to search for a missing person who was believed to have entered the river. This was again a multi-day search, and the team were able to eliminate several search areas before the individual was eventually located downriver.

In Oct 2023 we welcomed 3 new Team members, to further strengthen the team. They were soon called into action when in late October we performed a multi-week search of Westlake for a missing person. A SARDA dog had indicated the person had possibly entered the lake. This was a challenging search – access to the lake was difficult and the lake itself was not conducive to multi-beam scanning due to high levels of vegetation getting tangled in the sonar head. This gave us the opportunity to trial our new Garmin LiveScope side-scan unit, which is a small transducer suitable for use in difficult-to-access areas and in shallow waters. The Sonar team was able to completely scan the small lake and rule it out of the search, and ultimately the missing person was found elsewhere.

The team had a further training weekend in November, with the Norbit support team. We trialled a LiDAR unit from Norbit (which scans above the water line to add shoreline reference details to any sonar scan). This was conducted in Creggan Country Park.

In November we also welcomed our new Sonar Coordinator Danielle Francis, who took over the reins from Seamus McCloskey.

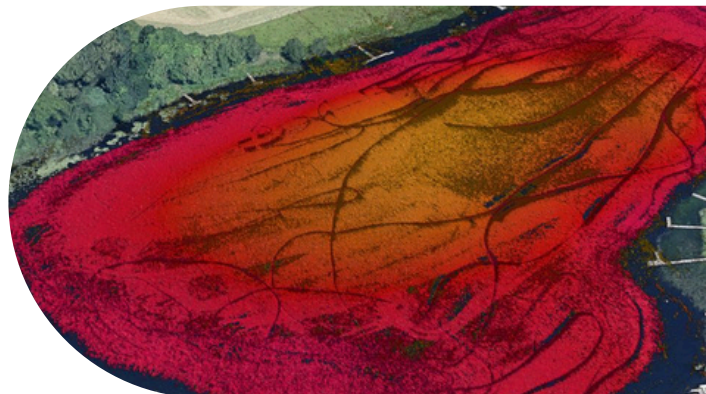
Feb 2024 saw the resumption of regular Sonar training – we conducted sessions for all members at base and in Creggan Country Park. We unfortunately lost our regular Sonar boat (Spirit of James), as it had to be retired from the fleet. For now, we are capable of operating Sonar from the Steady, and we are exploring further options for a replacement boat suitable for Sonar.

In March 2024 we participated in a multi-week, multi-agency search for a male who entered the river at Strabane. This was challenging as the search area was huge, and the river is uncharted and hazardously shallow in places. We therefore focused on using the Garmin LiveScope to conduct a side-scan sonar search, and used the Norbit Multibeam only on specific deeper areas of the river. The search times were very dependent on tides and limited daylight, nevertheless we managed to get teams out for a good number of searches.

A special thanks to all members of the sonar team; Danielle (Sonar Coordinator), Paul (Deputy Coordinator) Anthony, Aodhán, Don, Frances, Gareth, Marc, Paddy, Séamus. The team put in a great deal of time and effort into Sonar operations and we could not make the advances we are making without their level of commitment.

PAUL LYNCH

DEPUTY SONAR CO-ORDINATOR



SWIFTWATER TEAM

Over the past 12 months the Swiftwater team has made great strides in investing and further developing our operational capabilities by investing in new and upgraded PPE and through our new CPD training programme which serves to continually maintain and upskill our volunteers abilities to respond to difficult and technical rescues in and around the river Foyle and further afield.

We currently have 7 Swiftwater Rescue Technicians and 8 Flood First Responders on the team.

Over the past 12 months the team has responded to requests of assistance from the PSNI to localised flooding in Co. Tyrone and also conducted some water safety cover in both Co. Derry and Co. Donegal with the highlight of those being

the annual Hard As Oak event. The team will also be providing water safety cover at this year's event and are eagerly looking forward to assisting all those participating at the event.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers in the team who selflessly give up their time to help develop, grow and maintain our team and to all the staff, Co-ordinator's and Committee members who continue to assist, help and support our team at every opportunity, none of it would be possible without all of your efforts, thank you!

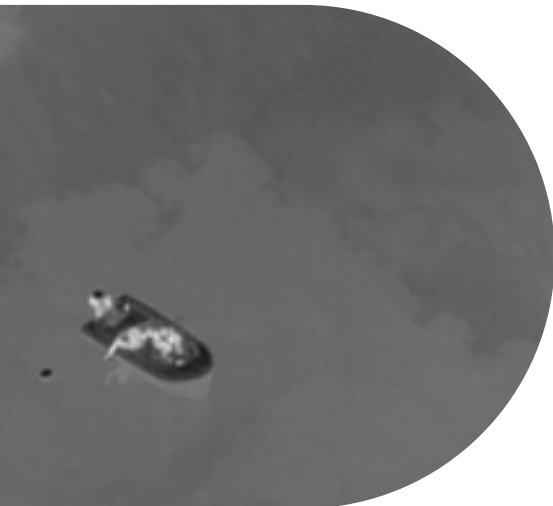
GERARD O'KANE SWIFTWATER COORDINATOR



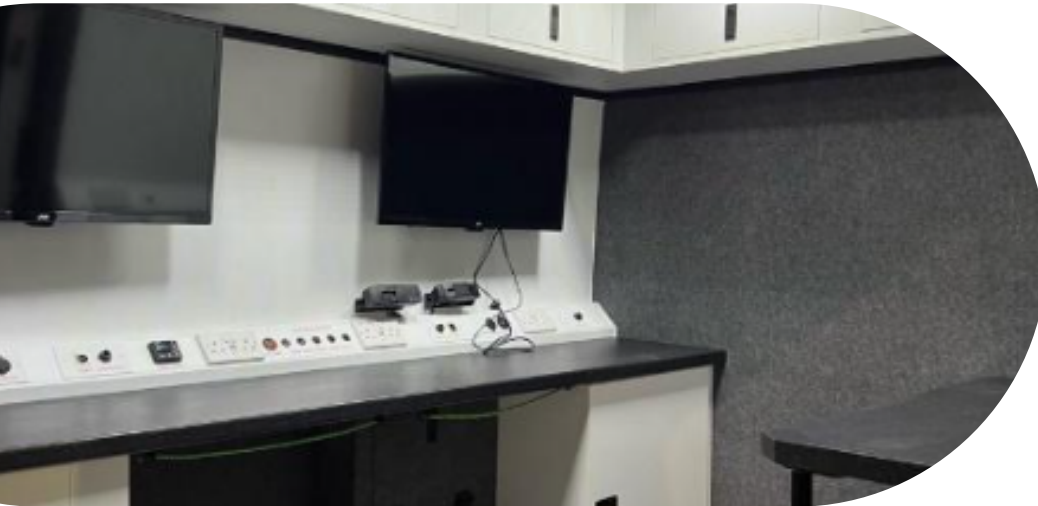
UAV TEAM

Throughout the past twelve months, the UAV team have continued to demonstrate how they can play a significant supporting role during search and rescue taskings on the river Foyle and surrounding areas. The team have been involved in a wide variety of taskings ranging from live S1 aerial support to searches for high-risk missing persons, supporting both duty nights and emergency response team callouts on a regular basis. Furthermore, the team provided substantial support in the search for Jordan Gallagher, searching extensive areas of the river and riverbanks using a range of UAV technologies as part of the combined FSAR team and multi-agency effort to bring Jordan home as quickly as possible.

This year, the UAV team introduced a new UAV to the fleet; the DJI Matrice (M)30T, which has been integrated into the team supporting emergency response operations given its ability to be deployed rapidly, coupled with its advanced thermal and optical features similar to its big brother in the fleet, the DJI Matrice (M)300rtk.



In November 2023, Foyle Search & Rescue took delivery of its new Mobile Incident Command Unit which will serve as a command post and surveillance unit during emergency taskings. The project, lasting some 18 months from conception to completion, was managed by the UAV team and supported by the office team. Mechanical and electrical build was completed by Primo Coachworks in Co. Offaly and information and communication systems were installed and commissioned by Telent Technologies. The ICU provides new capabilities to the UAV team and wider organisation, providing vital field support to all disciplines in both search and rescue operations and enabling the latest in SAR technology to be deployed in support of our operations.



For the year ahead, the UAV Team will continue to enhance and develop the skills and competence of the full flight crew and seek opportunities to maintain a strong and resilient flight crew through recruitment and upskilling.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the flight crew for their continued efforts and commitment throughout the year. Furthermore, on behalf of the team, thank you to the staff and management committee of Foyle Search & Rescue for their continued support, hard work and efforts in the background throughout the year.

RYAN MURPHY
DRONE CO-ORDINATOR



FIRST AID

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for their time and commitment towards first aid as it can be a very tough experience at times. Year 23/24 saw a number of incidents where first aid was required, both on land and from water related incidents. Everyone involved in these incidents have excelled themselves and have shown professionalism, courage and have given hope to the persons involved. Lives have been saved by you.

Within the last year most of the charity was trained and/or recertified in RYA first aid, with additional skills in the use of medical gases to 28 volunteers bringing this to the largest amount of people in the history of the charity trained up to provide this service throughout all disciplines. We have delivered external training courses in partnership with City Centre Initiative to local businesses and organisations within the city, this has allowed us to generate a small income for the charity.

There were also opportunities for mental health first aid training which in the coming year I hope to expand and roll out to more volunteers.

This last year saw the standardisation of new medical kit bags, containing essential, life-saving equipment for both shore and boat to ensure easy access in time critical situations. We continually review our supplies to ensure that we can continue to deliver effective pre-hospital care.

As part of our 'show and tell' experiences delivered to PSNI, University of Ulster student paramedics and nurses they observed how we operate, were encouraged to ask questions and made aware of the charities first aid capabilities. Quality time is invested to build on our strong working relationships with the ambulance service so we can work effectively together.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who has helped in any way to support me in my role. I would encourage everyone to keep up the good work, which will build more confidence in your abilities, as well as reflecting positively on our charity as a whole.

CONOR HARGAN FIRST AID CO-ORDINATOR



FUNDRAISING & EDUCATION

What a year we had! It was a year of our 30 year celebrations and what an action packed year it was.

We would like to begin by saying a massive thank you to all the local businesses who choose us as their Charity Partner of the Year 2023.



These partnerships not only bring in amazing funds through all their hard work and dedication but the awareness around our services and other local services that are available.

The biggest shout out goes to all our volunteers for their dedication to our annual and monthly internal events. Like clockwork, the Box Run Volunteers were out each month in rain, hail, snow and with very little sunshine, to collect around all the local shops. Their dedication to the monthly box run is reflected in the amount that was brought in to the charity, £33k. Our annual bucket appeal brought in £11k. Both our winter and summer flag day were carried out within the city centre and we would like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers and staff who came out in force to help which raised £6,500. These events are well supported by the amazing people of our city, and each and every penny goes toward training, equipment and PPE for our volunteers.

We could not go without saying a massive thank you to the team of volunteers who come in each month to help count all the coins collected through the monthly box runs, flag days and bucket appeals. Your dedication to this role works hand in hand with the collection team and is key to the charity continuing to carry out these internal fundraisers.

As this was our 30th Year we held a number of additional events to celebrate the occasion, kicking off the year with a sponsored walk, which saw over 100 people take to the pavements and was such a success we have decided to make this an annual event. The big event for the year was our Gala Ball where volunteers, family members, and supporters of the charity got glammed up, and had big belly laughs from the comedy legend Tim McGarry who hosted the evening and also gave a comedy performance. Everyone then danced the night away to the astounding Lee Roy Brown Band.

We had great giggles in making the promotional video for the biggest raffle we have ever held in which the prizes were holiday vouchers and winners were announced live at the Gala Ball.

This year saw the return of the Zipline Across the Foyle, where we partnered with 3 other charities to bring a fun-filled weekend to the city, all supporting worthwhile causes.

As a self-funded charity, we wouldn't be able to carry out our role of 'The Preservation of Life' without the continued support from members of the public and their donations, local business choosing us as their charity partner or holding fundraising events, community groups and schools putting their all into raising funds. We would like to thank each and every one of you for donating, supporting and raising awareness for our charity. You are the reason that we continue to operate and we are forever grateful for this. It is hard to mention every donation, but we would like to highlight some of the events that happened throughout the year.

As with every other year, the support that we received from the schools and higher education institutes in 2023 was above and beyond. We are extremely grateful for your continued support over the years. In 2022/2023 we facilitated 15 talks to schools, community groups and workplaces. The majority of visits this year were more substantial than last year, with our education teams even carrying out talks addressing over 700+ students within a single session, conducted multiple times over a number of days. We found great benefit in attending the Yes project twice this year, which involved a range of schools from across all sections of the community and of various age groups.

An estimated figure of 3,500+ people benefitted from our educational service. The success of our education visits is measured by the number of talks we carry out, the number of attendees at these talks. We feel that this prevention area of our work is invaluable in making both younger and older people aware of the issues of suicide within our city, as well as how to safely use the different types of waterways.

We also carried out partnership work with PSNI, where new police recruits who joined the force from 2020 have been visiting our base every 2nd week, in groups of 12/20 to tour the base, see the equipment we have, meet the team members and have a boat tour of the bridge & quay for "you see what we see" giving the officers a better understanding on what our teams see and hear when on the boat, which will help with future incidents. A total of approx. 250+ officers availed of this opportunity, which was also offered to NIAS.

We would like to mention as many local businesses who have supported us in the last year, it is truly amazing the many businesses within our city and some further afield that support our charity. Thank you to Hugh Keirney from Cooley Jewellers who dawned the Santa Suit again this year and donated £1,000.

The continued support that our charity receives each year from the same business and people is immense. We are always proud to be chosen as a charity partner as the hard work and awareness that is raised through this is always outstanding, well done to everyone involved. Thank you to Hard as Oak, Fairytale Wedding Cars, Ryan Dillon, The O'Donnell Family, Foyle Food Group, The Inner City Trust, and BSG Civil Engineering who continue to, each year, raise funds for our charity and raise great awareness around mental health and the services within our city. We are always overwhelmed with the continued support and extremely grateful, and we look forward to continuing to build on our future relationships.

Fundraising for 2023 was a great success, but I couldn't finish this report without highlighting and congratulating the machine that is Danny Quigley. What a week this was "The Celebration of Life". Danny swam 110KM from Lifford to Kinnego Bay to raising vital and valuable awareness and helping shatter the stigma of suicide. Each kilometre was in memory of a loved one.

He celebrated all those wonderful people who lost their lives to suicide. He remembered them for who they were, a person not a statistic. He remembered their music, their hobbies, favourite foods, their families, and he celebrated their lives. To end the event the legends of the city came out for a final celebration in which we held a funday with the support of local musicians, vendors, community groups for which we are truly humbled and thankful. This is only the beginning of of a wonderful partnership with Phase II of the event coming in 2024 titled the 'Lighthouse Project'.

Therefore, we would like to say a final big 'thank you' to everyone who got involved in raising funds, raising awareness and supporting Foyle Search and Rescue, and a final 'thank you' to all our volunteers, staff and their family and friends. Without you all, our charity would not be able to carry out the life saving work that we do. Giving up your time allows us to meet our aims and objectives of 'The Preservation of Life in and around the Rover Foyle'.

Thank You

CHRISTINA MCKEEGAN

CHARITY MANAGER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2024

Volunteers & Staff

General Public - North & South of the Border

The Mayor & Staff

Public Health Agency

Derry City & Strabane District Council

Department of Justice

Gilliland Family

Emergency Services

NISAR Rescue Organisations

City Centre Initiative

Inner City Trust

Western Health and Social Care Trust

Storm-Tec Marine

Four Star Pizza

Dominos

Paolos Pizza

Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum

Diamond Corrugated

The Rank Foundation

Print Chameleon

CCTV

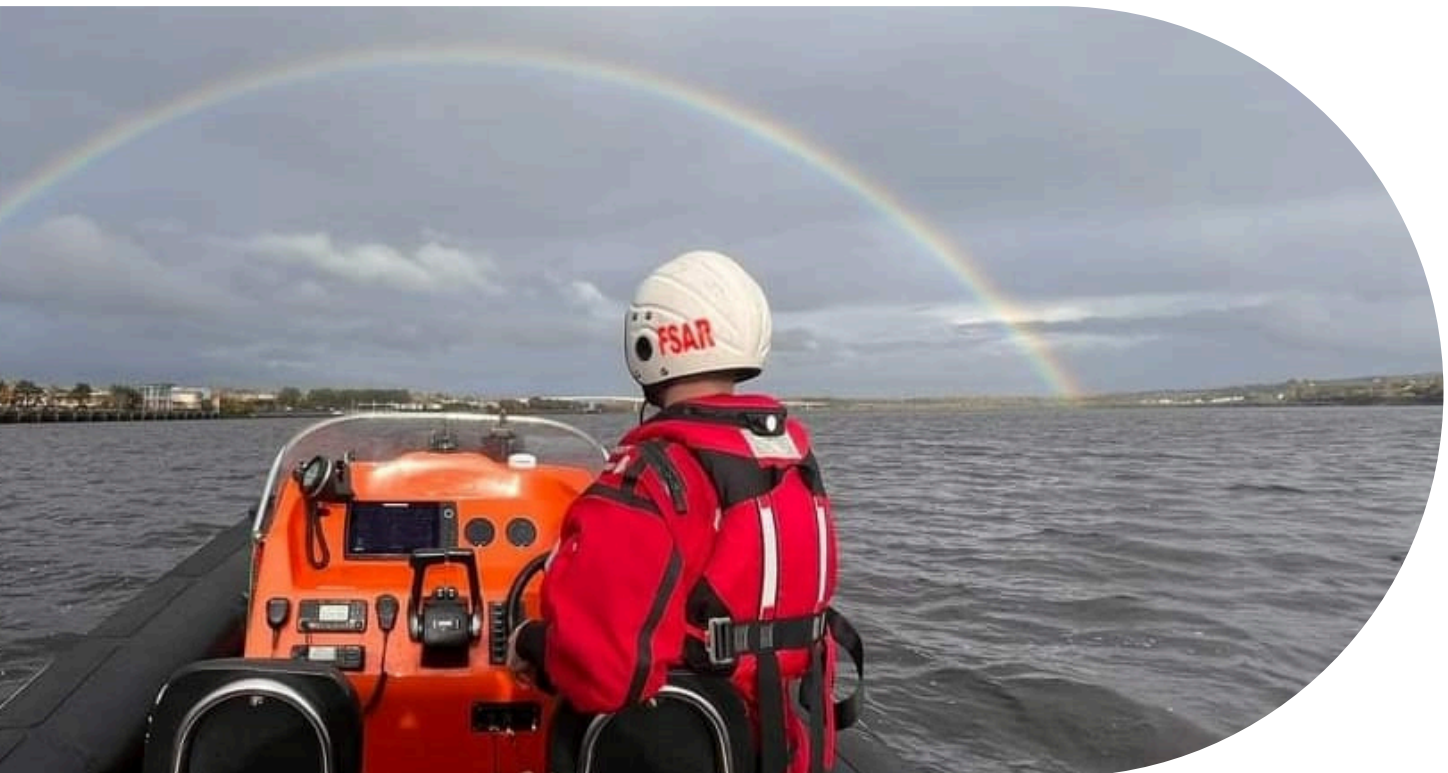
CAF UK SAR Fund

SBS South Bank Square

RYA

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CHILDLINE	0800 11 11
ME4MENTAL	02871 413 050

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