
GAFIRS End of Year Report, 31st December 2021

Summary

GAFIRS remains a financially sound charity and operationally effective independent lifeboat service.

Search and Rescue performance

Monthly activity and incidents of note

2021 has been another busy year for GAFIRS with us responding to a higher than average number of incidents, making this our busiest year for 11 years and our 7th busiest in the last 28 years.

We had a quiet start to the year with just 9 incidents through to the end of March, with one of these incidents being a kayaker in difficulty and life-at-risk.

April was an unusually busy month, with 15 incidents, which included assisting 4 life-at-risk persons and, most sadly, a fatality. May and June were also busy with 30 incidents, one of them for a vessel taking on water and sinking, which was saved by the damage control and salvage pump intervention of our crew, another for a critical medical incident and one for 2 life-at-risk persons on paddleboards.

Although quieter than 2020, July and August were both busy months, with 34 incidents, including 6 in one day. Of these 34 incidents, one was for a vessel with 9 persons on board and in danger of running aground through engine failure, one for 2 people life-at-risk on an inflatable in difficulties and one for 4 people life-at-risk on a sinking boat.

Following 12 incidents in September, our year quietened down with 6 incidents in October and 5 in November, with our Declared Facility Agreement reviewed and re-endorsed by HM Coastguard on 23rd November. We finished the year with 6 incidents in December, including, sadly, assisting the Police with the recovery of a deceased person.

Key performance indicators

- Incidents: **117**
 - Of which **104** were CG taskings.
 - Of the CG tasking, **54** were pager call-out (28 daytime, 14 evening and 12 overnight callouts).
 - CG incidents average time to in attendance (or stand down) was **17m 02s** (Includes taskings on duty days and via pager callouts).
 - For pager callouts the average time from alert to launch was **20m 01s**
 - Persons assisted were **155**, of whom **13** were life-at-risk.
- Incidents types:
 - Persons in water or missing persons thought to have entered the water: **44**
 - Mechanical failures: **30** (Including engine failure, electrical faults, steering failure and dismasting).
 - Vessels aground: **10**
 - Medical afloat and ashore: **16**
 - Others: **17** (Including checking for carriers on ch16 and investigating drifting or unresponsive vessels).
- Service availability: **95.01%** - an average daily availability of 22h, 48m (with a minimum of one boat on service) against our 24/7 commitment.

GAFIRS in the community

Our community activity was again severely impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, but we have now restarted our public engagement and aim to return to normal levels as soon as we can.

- Sea-safety talks given: **2** to **71** children and **12** teachers/leaders.
(Talks given at GAFIRS station, together with guided tours, or at visits to local schools.)
- Community talks given: **5** to **131** adults.
(Talks include coverage of the work of GAFIRS, the SSRO and HM Coastguard in sea safety.)
- Major fund raising and community events attended:
 - Gosport Marine Festival
 - GAFIRS Lifeboat and Emergency Services Day

Risks: our strategic risks are a long term decline in funding or membership, a major operational failure or a major fire at our boathouse, causes the loss of our Declared Facility status. We continue to monitor and mitigate these risks and consider them to be under control as far as is reasonable possible.

People: our membership is stable with our 64 active members giving over 10,908 hours of service this year. Of these members, 48 are operational with 19 being qualified cox's and boat crew.

Platforms: both our boats are operating well. Gosport Lifeboat has been tasked to 101 incidents and Gosport Inshore Lifeboat to 11. We aim to increase our operational use of GILB and as a step towards this we have introduced a programme to train additional ILB Helms.

Property: our station remains in good condition with no major maintenance required.

Pounds: our finances are satisfactory with us holding a two-year emergency operating reserve, building and equipment improvement funds and a lifeboat replacement fund. The Lifeboat Lotto continues to be our key source of income.

Procedures: we continue to work on reviewing and improving our Policies and SOPs.

GAFIRS continuous improvement

In our Annual Report to the Charity Commission last year, we aimed to:

1. Continue to train, qualify and appoint additional boat crew.
2. Maintain our availability.
3. Restart our fundraising activity and sea-safety education programme.
4. Expand our Cadet membership.
5. Review and develop our operating procedures.

Against the above objectives we have:

1. Trained and qualified 3 additional boat crew members (set against the retirement of 2 others), taking our qualified strength from 18 to 19.
2. Increased our availability from 90.96% to 95.01% (equal to an additional 58 minutes every day of the year).
3. Restarted our fundraising activity and sea-safety education programme.
4. Recruited 7 additional cadet members (more than replacing those lost due to normal annual turnover and COVID-19 training restrictions).
5. Continued to review our procedures, with new boat crew and ILB Helm training processes introduced.