

THE DORSET AND SOMERSET AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Report by the Chairman of Trustees

Rather than repeat unchanged facts on the governance of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance Charity (DSAA), which can be read elsewhere, I have decided to make our report on 2009 more reader friendly and concise. You can find last year's Report on our website and our Report and Accounts to March 2009 on the Charity Commission's website (Charity Number 1078685).

2009 was a year of mixed fortunes for the Charity. Our long standing Director Nicola Howkins stepped down in the autumn and a temporary team are standing in while we undertake the recruitment of a new Chief Executive.

The Charity will consolidate its strong financial position in 2010 while exploring and developing the opportunities for increasing the scope of our services within the two counties. This will require the continuing support of you, the general public, and that of all our valued staff and volunteers, not forgetting the wonderful crew of the air ambulance who make it all happen for those in need. In collaboration with The South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust (SWAST) and Bond Air Services Limited my fellow trustees and I remain committed to providing you with the best possible air ambulance service.

Operations

We flew a total of 982 missions in 2009, of which some 318 were aborted. We treated 529 patients and carried 430 of them to hospital. The majority of the missions, some 365, were medically related and the remainder pretty evenly divided between sports, leisure and trauma (mainly) road traffic accidents. We are called out more often at weekends and during the early summer when we average over 90 "shouts" a month. The mission coverage is evenly split between the two counties.

There is little doubt that the professionalism of those manning the "Dispatch Desk" in Exeter, which serves all the air ambulances in the South West, will mean that the timely tasking of the helicopter to the type of call for which it is best suited will continue to improve.

Throughout the year Mr Farhad Islam, a consultant in emergency medicine, conducted training with our paramedics and an assessment of the employment of a "doctor on board" our air ambulance. This work is ongoing and will help inform the Charity as to where it might place future resources in funding improvements to capability.

We now have lighting around the helipad to assist in night landing and have agreed the installation of a "moving map" system, rather like an airborne Tom Tom, without that voice! The provision of a helipad at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton should herald an even better service to those in need in 2010.

Lottery Review 2009

The lottery had a tough year in terms of net growth in 2008 and it looked, initially, as though 2009 would be very similar. However, the first 22 weeks showed an average net growth of 30 new members a week which, in the financial climate, and with a small number of canvassers, was a fairly good result.

As reasonable as this first half-year was, we knew that we had to increase our gross sign ups as weekly cancellations were rising. It was very difficult to recruit new canvassers and we therefore agreed a contract with LFS, a professional lottery firm, to canvass on our behalf, whilst retaining our own team.

It was soon evident that this had been a good decision and the additional canvassers gave our figures a huge boost. The second half of the year showed a very healthy 194 average net growth per week. This success has continued into 2010 and we have projected a 40,000 member lottery by April 2011. We will, however, be trying to reach this figure before the year end.

Fundraising

During 2009 our team of fundraisers and volunteers have arranged another fantastic series of events which have helped to generate significant income.

Our Bag-a- Bra campaign proved another great success, with over 8,100 unwanted bras being collected to raise money for the Charity. The bras collected were again hung on an enormous washing line around Castlepoint Shopping Park in Bournemouth.



In September we held two Charity events, one in Dorset and one in Somerset.

We were delighted to welcome former Blue Peter presenter Valerie Singleton as our guest at the Sherborne Garden Party held at the Sherborne Hotel on September 12th. The all-day event, included entertainment from the Dorchester based dance troupe Stampede Appalachian, the 25- piece Gillingham Imperial Silver Band and the Wessex Highlanders.



On September 20th, more than 200 runners and walkers took part in the first ever Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance - Trickey Warren Trek. The event, which was held at a former airfield on the Blackdown Hills, featured four different runs. People travelled from all over the South West to support the Charity and we raised nearly £10,000.



Our thanks go to many of those organisations, groups, schools and societies that supported us during 2009 by running their own fundraising events.

Marketing and Communications

During 2009, we aimed to increase the Charity's public profile, and thus enhance our fundraising.

Our close liaison with the helicopter crew means that we can inform the public of the air ambulance's amazing work immediately after an incident has occurred. A good relationship with the media is key to building on our previous success and during the last quarter of 2009 we focussed on issuing regular press releases and news alerts. We also updated our marketing material, shown below, and filmed our latest DVD featuring the moving stories of nine patients who we had airlifted.



If you would further information about the work of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, or would like to attend our 10th birthday celebrations in June 2010 please contact the office on 01823 669604 If you would like to support us as a volunteer we would be delighted to hear from you.

Thank you for all of your support in 2009.

Terri Gill

Chairman of Trustees