

A review of the leadership and management culture and practices in a UK Search and Rescue Charity

Andy MacAuley BA(Hons) PgCert MCPARA MinSTR MICPEM

Former Chair of Trustees; Life Member – West Mercia Search and Rescue

Email: andy.macauley@westmerciasar.org.uk

**Letter to the editor.*

Dear Editor,

Abstract

West Mercia Search and Rescue (WMSAR) is a UK registered charity which provides a team of personnel to assist the emergency services with missing-person search and water rescue.

It has no paid employees, and voluntary members must actively participate in fundraising, maintenance, logistics, training, operations, and administration.

Its leaders are not specifically trained in people-management, business, or leadership by the charity, and must rely on any formal, informal, or instinctive leadership practices that they have developed externally to the charity.

This review highlights the need for leaders to develop vision, values, and authenticity in their management of volunteers, but recognises that they are themselves volunteering. It explores motives for donating time and suggests leadership approaches which may be beneficial in terms of personal development for those leaders.

The author acknowledges that the results of the surveys used to inform this report are not wholly reflective of the membership as responses were limited. Participation may have been affected by the method of dissemination (WhatsApp message to whole team), by the willingness of members to respond to the Chairman, by trust in the anonymity of the results, and by the bias of questions.

A small number of contemporary leadership theories are presented, and the current leadership is examined against these by both anecdotal experience of the author and responses from the surveys.

Recommendations are made where it is shown that there could be direct benefit from embracing one or more of the contemporary leadership theories and posed in the context of the charity.

The aims of the recommendations are to inform WMSAR and similar voluntary bodies' leadership on improvements, and outline a structure for better communication of vision, values and ultimately the next generations of leaders where the charity has a high turnover of volunteers. This will result in a reduced burden of handover, better teamwork, and sustainability for the charity. These recommendations may be applicable to other similar voluntary bodies.

Keywords: Leadership, Volunteering, Volunteer Management, Charity, Management, Rescue, People Management

Introduction

West Mercia Search & Rescue (WMSAR) is a wholly voluntary charity of 70 members, which fundraises to provide training and equipment for its own members as a missing-person and flood-rescue search team. The charity is governed by national standards, ultimately answerable to the Department of Transport, and is audited by Police and Fire services.

Four Executive Trustees are elected on a two-year tenure. Two further non-executive Trustees are co-opted.

A management team oversees daily tasks of operational and charitable activities. These positions are appointed by Trustees from the membership based on aptitude, which is usually linked to outside employment experience.

Member ages range between 21 and 70 years old: 8 Baby-Boomers, 18 Millennials and 2 Generation Z, with the remainder Generation X. 10 percent of members are female. All identify as their birth gender and two identify as LGBTQ+. There is one non-white-British. All members fall within L2-L8 socioeconomically.

The personal cost of fuel and equipment for members is between £500-1000 a year. Average attendance at events is over 100hrs/year. Time donated to charitable admin is estimated to be around 10,000 manhours per year.

Charity communications are by WhatsApp message and email. Face-to-face meetings happen ad-hoc at other events with whoever is in attendance, with an annual AGM being the only whole-team meeting.

Current leadership and management culture and practices

WMSAR's leaders are volunteers. Understanding the motivations behind their original membership better frame progression in the organisation.

The urge to help others is predominant in voluntary rescue (Shae, 2019; Martens, 2017), and this is exhibited in Appendix 2. Perry and Wise (1990) describe the notion of "Public Service Motivation", acknowledging three motives: skill maximisation, conformity, and emotional fulfilment. These motivations have been explored by Costello, Homberg and Secchi (2020) in a volunteering context, who established that those with greater sense of self-sacrifice are more likely to volunteer. They also show a link between motivation and volunteering intensity which is explored by Einold and Yung (2018) who use the phrase "Super-Volunteers" to describe those who donate 500 hours a year and go on to describe some of the challenges of managing these personalities. WMSAR leadership team is comprised wholly of members who donate hundreds of hours per year (Appendix 1).

Although Einold and Yung (2018) assume that managers are paid employees leading volunteers, they recognise that "Super-Volunteers" require a bespoke, time-consuming management with personal attention to each member. This, perhaps, informs the results of Appendix 4, where WMSAR leaders indicate some detraction from their enjoyment of volunteering associated with the burdens of people-management.

However, the motivations for leaders' continued service in the face of this detraction may be seen in Appendix 3 (3.2) where pride is universally evident and leaders have developed a "collaborative mindset" (Septianto et al., 2018); being proud of their own involvement has reframed to become pride in the team's efforts.

Perkins (2019) suggests a qualitative approach to assessing organisational culture, which informs the survey in Appendix 3. The dominant "story" (Perkins, 2019) from members is one of teamwork and camaraderie, which is a common theme in volunteering studies (Bidee et al., 2017; do Nascimento et al., 2018). Perhaps surprisingly, the achievement of saving lives is secondary. Groysberg et al. (2018) highlight the importance of aligning culture and strategy, and this disparity could be an issue which we see in Appendix 3.6 & 3.9, where team-building and hierarchy is in demand more than individual development opportunities. Indeed, Einold and Yung (2018) identify that "Super-Volunteers" crave teamwork and structure within which to exercise their own initiative. WMSAR do not currently have teambuilding as a priority in their strategy and this is a consideration for development.

Appendix 3.3-5 suggests that there is a broad agreement of the charity's values and belief that these are reflected by the leaders, which is a fundamental part of authenticity (George, 2015) and trust between members and leaders (Dan-Shang and Chia-Chun, 2013). However, some suggest that there is an opportunity to improve communication between leaders and members, which is a key part of maintaining brand evangelism and enthusiasm (Hague, 2019). The challenge of communicating to

the membership remotely during COVID was detrimental to team cohesion (Appendix 3.3-5) and to restore motivation and identity, face-to-face communication must return (Alan-Livernois, 2020).

A lack of leadership training could be identified as a factor in some of the responses where “autonomy-supportive leadership” (Oostlander et al., 2013) is questioned. Ellis (2013) summarises well with the notion that volunteering your own time doesn’t necessarily mean you understand why others volunteer theirs. WMSAR does not offer leadership training and this is a consideration for development.

A minority of respondents to Appendix 3.6/9 plea for fairness in what they see as inequalities. Perceived “status” (Hays and Bendersky, 2015) in WMSAR is often earned by higher attendance and being a “Super Volunteer” (Einold and Yung, 2018), and rewarded with training opportunities. This could be perceived differently to “Elected Power” (Hays and Bendersky, 2015), and is likely to meet with more resentment. WMSAR strategy has been to train members who are most likely to attend an incident in as many roles as practical, maximising the chance of their skills being available. This strategy may encourage feelings of lesser support and inequality by lower-attending members (Kurtessis et al., 2015), but offers a logistical challenge for management which seeks to deploy a multi-skilled team for different environments.

Analysing contemporary management theories

Gordon (2021) identifies four contemporary leadership styles as follows.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leaders (Downton, 1973) use charismatic appeal to inspire with a sense of wonderment, establishing a cultural aspiration and vision within an organisation (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Contemporary examples are Elon Musk and Steve Jobs. It exists at one end of the Full Range Leadership Model (Avolio and Bass, 1991) as a recognition of the effectiveness of character, or “natural-born-leadership” (Haraida and Blass, 2019). The theory is dependent on the leader being a clear communicator of the organisation’s mission (Burgess, 2016) and is reliant on communication media and opportunities (Martic, 2020), but critics argue that a single leader who inspires others to work for the benefit of the organisation rather than their selves has a moral dilemma, and the opportunity to exploit that position (Mullins, 2007: 383). Critics also demonstrate that Transformational approaches alone do not work, and there is a requirement for some direct feedback in some situations, which are said to be traits of Transactional, or reward/discipline management (Burgess, 2016).

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

This theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) focusses on interpersonal relationships between a leader and a member where output depends on a mutual respect and willingness to work together (Gordon, 2021). It relies on trust and balance between the moral obligation and “ethical responsibility” (Babic, 2014) of member and leader. The benefits of a good relationship increase motivation and belonging, and reduce conflict, but a poor relationship can result in demotivation and poor output (Furnes et al., 2015), and resentment when better relationships are observable (Gordon, 2021). A fundamental problem with LMX is that it is time-consuming (Haynie et al., 2018) and therefore difficult in a voluntary capacity.

Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1970)

Choosing to facilitate the needs of the individuals in the team, rather than to work towards your own goals is an act of humility (Tarallo, 2018) which ends in sacrifice of one’s own development and is rooted in a love for developing communities and people (Matteson and Irving, 2005). Septianto et al. (2018) suggest that leaders feel vicarious enrichment from the progression of others and the organisation, and this may be evident in Appendix 4. Tait (2020) reports that this produces great productivity but must be approached with honesty and authenticity that may be at odds with the

motivations for joining a rescue charity (Shae, 2019): Appendix 2 suggests that nobody joined the charity to develop other people. Critics of Servant Leadership argue that it reduces authority (Whiteside, 2021), and in the rescue-services authority may be an important factor (West and Murphy, 2016).

Authentic Leadership

Leading with purpose and vision, rather than by imposing goals and rules, and being transparent about your motivation is the hallmark of an authentic leader and can be taught through reflection and self-awareness (Waite et al., 2014). Not adapting leadership to others' needs, holding steadfast in beliefs and vision can be a strong footing for others to draw inspiration and follow (Dascal, 2016) but critics argue that values should be open to debate and democracy rather than the standpoint of a single person (Gardiner, 2011) and that authenticity can lead to the creation of a "fake self" (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020). Authenticity, however, is a key message in charity (Tallet, 2019) and an emotionally intelligent, credible leader can inspire positivity in volunteers (Dascal, 2016).

Comparison of practice against theory

Transformational leadership, whereby the Chair or Trustee team champion values, is evident in WMSAR (Appendix 3.4), but it is vulnerable to time constraints of volunteering (Doci et al., 2020) and can stall when there is a change of elected or appointed leader (Kotter, 2012). Leaders behaving as inspiring role models is important (Warrilow, 2012), and seems to be happening (Appendix 3.8), but Warrilow (2012) recognises the burden on leaders who must challenge, interact, and drive a team, acting as a personal guide to many individuals to push the organisational vision, which can lead to burnout (Matthews, 2019) and which Appendix 4 suggests is occurring.

Transformational leaders must also be aware of over-burdening their team towards burnout (Chen et al., 2018), and should encourage team-working to avoid this (Warrilow, 2012).

LMX approaches are evident in WMSAR (Appendix 3.7/8), with personal relationships between leaders and members being key to achieving the consistent standards necessary for audit. However, LMX is highly time consuming (Haynie et al., 2018) and very difficult to sustain for those "Super Volunteers" (Einhold and Yung, 2018) who require more leadership time. Furthermore, focussing on a few personal relationships is to the detriment of the wider team (Gordon, 2021; Appendix 3.6). A multi-layered leadership could facilitate LMX across the charity, but only if it was structured enough to increase "perceived organisational support" (Martens, 2017) to all.

Servant Leadership has been shown to promote goodwill and motivation towards volunteering (Erdurmazli, 2019), and increase the effort of volunteers (Einold and Yung, 2018), but in a wholly voluntary organisation the leaders themselves may be left questioning "effort vs benefit" (West and

Murphy, 2016) of their time donation vs their personal reward. Servant leaders require a “deep understanding of the basic motives of volunteering” (Erdurmazli, 2019); something that the charity does not teach, but perhaps a characteristic that should inform direct recruitment of Trustees with separate volunteering motivations from the operational team (Shae, 2019).

Authentic leaders are essential in charity, where accountability and transparency are law and the public have a right to scrutinize (Weymouth, 2019). Facilitating a vision-driven organisation where members are inspired by leaders’ core values and integrity gives better results than focussing on finances (NonProfitTimes, 2017), but there exists a continual trust-building-balance in an organisation with short tenures of leadership and frequent turnover of leaders (Centre for Creative Leadership, 2021). The concept of authenticity is one bestowed on a leader by others, and not themselves (Goffee and Jones, 2005) and so it is through a combination of these management styles that it may be best for WMSAR’s leaders to earn that recognition from their members.

Conclusion

WMSAR’s leaders require awareness that they directly affect the decision of other volunteers to leave the charity and must lead with retention in mind (Smith, 2017).

Transformational Leaders may not always be available for election as WMSAR has a small membership and leadership does not always match with members’ motivations (Appendix 2). However, there is leadership experience in most “Super Volunteers” (Einolf and Yung, 2018) and the charity strategy could take advantage of this if a clear vision and values are published. Championing these values through stories and teamwork is key to group understanding (Groysberg et al., 2018).

Personal relationships are important in maintaining a perception of organisational support, and reducing attrition (Martens, 2017). Leaders should foster relationships in a trickle-down manner — reducing the burden on leaders of dedicating time to large numbers of individuals — as a mentoring arrangement (Volgistics, 2021). This may also help to reduce any resentment from observation of higher leaders engaging in smaller social circles (Furnes et al., 2015) and encourage teamwork, empowerment, and trust (Weymouth, 2019).

Servant Leadership is recognised as greatly beneficial to retention of volunteers as it facilitates personal development, autonomy, and satisfaction (Oostelander, 2014, Smith, 2017). But motivations of Servant Leaders are distinct from those which attract people to rescue (Shae, 2019) and the charity may struggle to maintain a volunteer who is willing to serve at the detriment of their own development (Matteson and Irving, 2005) if recruitment is based on operational interests alone.

The Trustees must recognise good next-leaders (Einolf and Yung, 2018: p14) and consider authentic, respected members who communicate well, inspire and encourage others to reach their full potential

(Mohan, 2020), but whose personal values can be met through leadership roles, and this may require candidates to be reflective and honest in their self-examination (Goffee and Jones, 2005).

The charity should encourage leadership training and reflection for existing and emerging leaders, which is a neglected but highly important aspect of voluntary charity management.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Hours and number of attendance by charity member at events, 3yrs.

Member Ref	Hours' Attendance	Attended Events
WM93	2045	371
WM96	1779	335
WM36	1701	349
WM69	1697	332
WM66	1661	379
WM32	1615	326
WM71	1234	227
WM13	1214	244
WM52	1193	236
WM88	1134	223
WM86	1109	204
WM43	1087	223
WM94	1005	172
WM17	989	174
WM03	951	163
WM18	910	167
WM11	850	193
WM16	847	182
WM30	834	154
WM20	803	217
WM12	791	159
WM61	784	142
WM57	776	170
WM74	692	104
WM83	692	135
WM23	686	140
WM24	679	130
WM84	615	106
WM73	585	130
WM28	536	113
WM95	484	95
WM22	456	97
WM98 Driver	419	84
WM31	392	103
WM02	372	70

WM06	327	56
WM97	326	69
WM91	310	76
WM35	304	49
WM34	302	64
WM27	290	51
WM92	204	43
WM70	173	37
	149	30
WM101 Driver	141	31
WM76	135	33
WM26	114	27
WM100 Driver	109	24
WM111	104	26
WM121	82	17
WM05	82	17
WM106	76	21
WM119	68	17
WM72	51	14
Paramedic - On Call	44	10
WM117	43	10
WM114	42	11
WM125 Driver	41	8
WM21	29	10
WM115	29	6
WM103 Driver	27	9
WM118	24	6

Appendix 2

The author recognises limitations of the Appendices 2-4 are the method of distribution via WhatsApp, the willingness of volunteers to respond to the author as Chairman, trust in anonymity of the responses, and the bias of questions.

Anonymous Survey to WMSAR members – Why did you join a SAR Charity?

- A way to help people and utilise skills I have gained over the years. Also helps keep me up to date too.
- I was looking for something useful to do after retirement, and wanting to use skills developed in my previous work and leisure interests, whilst helping other people
- It was an opportunity to use my many years water experience to do something helpful for the community and wanted to expand the scope of my volunteering.

- I felt something was missing from my life, needed a hobby and this seemed worthy, exciting and potentially fulfilling.
- Believe it is a vital service to several communities across our patch
- I was part of West Mercia Police years ago, and since leaving to follow a career in engineering I missed doing something worthwhile with my time. I wanted to do something for the community, be a good role model for my children and be part of a team again. I also really enjoy the challenge, being outside, navigation, comms, and an excuse to spend money on outdoor gear!
- Make use of my outdoor skills for doing more than just walking the dog or up hills. If I can help others with either sharing my skills or directly helping others then so much the better.
- Two reasons. Firstly, I was missing helping less fortunate people and combining my love of the outdoors. Secondly, my mental state was poor and I needed something to throw myself into. For that opportunity I will be forever grateful.
- I was looking to volunteer and do something that I was also interested in and thought I could be good at.
- At the time I low feeling pretty low, and it's been great to be part of the team, and feel like I'm doing something worthwhile.
- To utilise my experiences and qualifications and give back to the community. To be part of the SAR Brotherhood. To belong to something that made a difference
- To help people and to bond with new colleagues
- I joined after meeting some team members when my local town flooded. I found the willingness to help others and their friendship regardless of how rubbish the situation was, was amazing. I wanted to be part of a team like that and to give back to my community.
- From being involved in scouting for a very long time after giving that a break unwanted to join and continue giving something back

Appendix 3

Anonymous survey to WMSAR members – Culture and Direction

3.1 Do you have a favourite event from your time with WMSAR? If so, what was it, and why does it stick in your memory? It can be a callout, training, event or social...

- I enjoyed the large public search for [redacted], where the team really galvanised and worked well together under intense public scrutiny. We knuckled down and got on with the job, feeling like everyone lifted their game and was working with a sense of pride in the uniform.
- Water trg outside Shrewsbury. Trg in the day then a pub meal and social evening, camped out then on the water the next day
- As weird as it might sound, the water safety patrols in Shrewsbury over the festive period.
- Search around Malvern area. Young boy with learning difficulties been missing all day after playing hide and seek. Big crew turn out and quite a long search. Eventually after a few

sightings we adopted a corralling technique to try and flush him out which worked. He was fine and had enjoyed hiding from all the people in uniforms (fire).

- Good teams, great result.
- It's the combination of all the activities and feeling of being a member of a useful team
- Callout and live find
- I really enjoyed X's trainings at at his place last month. It was a good mix of core competencies, but with some fun team building stuff built in, which was great fun. It's important that we enjoy what we do to keep people engaged and it was very well thought out.
- Any of the live finds and being able to reunite a family.
- Water training
- I really enjoyed the most recent whole team event at Minsterley. A change from the norm and great to hear my team mates laughing and joking whilst problem solving.
- My first find - reminded me why we do it. The team support I was shown afterwards was incredible. It'll haunt me for life but it's meant I can stay above some of the politics which happens in any team and remind myself why the charity is there.
- Having a good outcome to a search
- The Shrewsbury river festival days were always good great way to get the team out there showing what we do on the river and great to chat to the public as well .
- doing the recovery at Tenbury during the floods
- The first Mercian Challenger training stood out. Great fun, good team spirit, competitive and it wasn't raining
- Working together well as a team, with other teams with just the common goal of finding a missing person!
- Nav training. It's a great team building activity and good to talk to team members.
- Tenbury Floods.... it brought everything together that we had trained for in the water team and tested our abilities. Reinforced the level we operated at the time. Team work/ support, professionalism was top notch
- It would have to be my first search. Finding the person alive and being able to help and get them home was one of the best feeling I think I have ever had.

3.2 Are you proud to be a team member? If so, why in particular?

- Yes, we provide a vital service to a strained emergency service
- Yes. See above
- I'm still very new to WMSAR, so I feel I haven't contributed enough to be proud yet. I've been on half a dozen callouts, which have been good. I'm proud to give my time to the charity and the activities we do, I feel I have more to do to earn my place yet.
- Yes. We all have a common goal when somebody is in crisis
- Yes...because we provide a service to the vulnerable
- Yes - the hard work pays off

- We're a good group and I class a lot as friends
- Yes I'm very proud to be part of this team knowing that when your struggling no matter what someone in the team will always have time for you.
- yes . when i look back to when i started we have come such a long way. we are up there with the best.
- Yes, although perhaps feeling less motivated than when I joined.
- INCREDIBLY proud. I love doing this! We find people, we save lives and bring closure at the worst time in many people's lives. When at a CALLOUT everyone works together and we get it done and that is brilliant!
- Yes- it's a great way to give back to the community. I'm proud to be a member of the team because I am proud of the team and what WMSAR stands for. It's great to be part of the team.
- Yes. Sense of belonging to something that matters to the community
- Yes. Getting someone back to the loved ones or just bring closure to a family.

3.3 Do you think that the charity currently has strong values? And if so, what do you think they are? (e.g. openness, trust...)

- Yes. Integrity and trust between the misper, police and the team. We hold secrets and work to protect the vulnerable. We are proud to be team members.
- Yes, misper respect and privacy
- Externally, yes – i.e. what we do/stand for, but less so amongst the team internally. If i had to select one, it would be team cohesion, everyone is willing to assist, advise and support.
- A strong duty of care, however this needs to be balanced with common sense when needed.
- Yes in terms of offering a service to the public but could be clearer direction and openness internally
- It is mixed and there are a chosen few
- I think so. The team is very highly thought of by the public, which proves the ethos of the team. Trust is important, and it's clear on callouts that there is a great deal of trust between team members.
- Yes the core value of helping somebody or their family is still the same -but some people within the team need to remember why they signed up in the fist place. Trust within the team has weakened recently.
- Yes...tha value of the service provided
- I believe that we do. Covid has tested the charities resolve.
- We could be more open and believe we are moving in that direction.
- Trust, supporting, commitment, honesty, concern for others, integrity
- Not sure, which probably means no
- The values are set out for us strong comradeship
- Yes. we are a proper charity. not a business in disguise .

- Being caring and committed to finding the misper
- No but I don't think we need them! Don't over complicated this charity. Stick to basics.
- Yes. Empathy, trust, professionalism, transparency. I am newish and from day 1 felt a part of the team. You put such trust into people who are sometimes strangers on the day of call out, because you know what the team stands for and that everyone who is part of the team values those core values of the charity.
- At our core its a community and team based value of supporting each other. We like many are struggling with consistency coming out of lockdown etc
- Yes I do. Everyone is welcoming and more than welcome to give advice and answer questions. As a new member I feel this is a great way to progress.

3.4 Do you think that the leaders of the charity/team show these values?

- Yes, the leaders of the charity are all volunteering so they show these values in the worth that they bring to the team. They are all trustworthy. They are all open and tend to listen to concerns.
- 100%
- Yes.
- Yes but could be more regularly communicated to wider team.
- On the whole yes, and I am encouraged by the recent changes in personnel and the new keenness to get organised for the future
- There are some good leaders but it isn't balanced and people are leaving or considering leaving
- Yes, I have a lot of time for the leaders and senior members, and they command a great deal of respect which speaks for itself.
- Mostly
- Externally yes...internally no so much
- I believe they do
- Leading by example is so important, and I think the management team generally do. I'm a bit out of the loop currently though.
- Yes they sometimes do more often than not
- Some do however I think many do not anymore.
- yes
- Not really sure what's going on, but I'm out of touch.
- More recently I think changes have been made which appear to show the OMT as more open which is a good thing.
- Yes- certainly, the leaders are so approachable and are always there to advise and support. Everyone in the team is.
- Yes from the inside... I'm not sure it's seen like that from the wider team
- Yes. No matter who I ask a question to they have the time to help.

3.5 What do you think the vision of the charity is? (Looking for your personal interpretation, not what's written on the website)

- To be a sustainable resource, available when the public/police need us. Trying to achieve that through fundraising, and retention of members.
- To be more efficient and effective on call outs
- To continue to provide the SAR capability across the region; look to innovate and use new technology and equipment to remain relevant and adaptable. Be the 'one stop shop' for the police for their SAR needs by building stronger relations with them, FRS etc through continued demonstrating our capability and skills.
- To help find vulnerable people in times of need.
- To offer a professional standard service with a team of well trained volunteers that can grow and develop with the necessary funding
- No unified answer - my view it's save life and find the lost
- To have a highly trained and dedicated core team, who are reliable and can be called on to bring people home in a timely and respectful manner.
- To be the best SAR team in the UK. To be able to be looked up at by other teams in SAR with the best kit and equipment. To reunite families with loved ones.
- Not necessarily sure I see a vision further than running the service
- We provide a valuable service to the vulnerable, by fundraising to train and deploy a search team.
- We also provide educational support for our community
- To provide well trained and extremely competent support to emergency services in times of need.
- To continue doing what we do best helping people
- I think the vision is to always do as best of job as we can in the circumstances given and that we will always help others .
- to continue to grow and improve
- Not sure
- Work with emergency services to find and help people in danger. Be that Missing Person, Flood or other emergency.
- To keep being there to support the public services in supporting the community and raising awareness.
- To support the community the best way we can
- Generally helping the local community. Wether that's bringing a missing person home or bringing closure to a family or getting people to a place of safety in the event of flooding.

3.6 Would you recommend any changes to the leadership/management to reach that vision?

- I'd like to see better integration and understanding between the operations and fundraising sides of the charity, and more dialogue on needs/wants for both.
- Install a hierarchy. And an organogram
- Continue to forge strong/better links with emergency services to demonstrate our capability. Invite them to training sessions/joint training? Look to have a stronger presence in Worcestershire / Herefordshire?
- People management is always hard but don't hold grudges. Engage in dialogue rather than snipe away behind the scenes. It's a shame we have lost people recently and they clearly felt they could not comfortably raise these issues.
- Better integration of fundraising with the needs of the charity through closer engagement with the OMT and contributing to the business plan
- Stop giving certain individuals all the training eg why are SRTs on Quads when some searches need both. More effort on training water team on medical when the live finds are on land - it is sad when you see kit sat there because a few individuals are the chosen ones
- More team building would be good, to help at those times when we need each other.
- Ignore LR.
- Be more inclusive to all members...I see a lot of members falling off the radar and getting forgotten about. This drives the constant need for recruitment
- I think we are in a good place to grow from. Recent changes will invigorate that journey.
- No
- It's a new management team we need to give them a chance
- As far as the vision goes I think everyone is like minded
- Not sure what the vision is. Wondering whether it might be good to merge with SARA.
- For it to be made clear who does what. Who is the CMT? Who is the OMT? What are their roles.
- None.
- Consistency- but an appreciation of the extra time and work commitments holding a leadership position has on individuals
- I think the current management do an amazing job keeping us all trained and motivated.

3.7 Have you ever raised an issue with a leader or manager? If yes, were you listened to? And was it acted upon?

- Yes
- N/A
- Yes, many. Yes, listened to and acted on.
- n/a
- Yes and partially acted upon.
- Yes and no -
- I haven't had to, no.

- Yes. Yes.
- No
- Yes and yes
- Yes - I was being pressured into taking more responsibility than I felt I could manage in the long term despite politely declining. Raised with chair/land search lead. Quiet word had in background, pressure gone.
- No I haven't
- I have sometimes thought about but often kept my thoughts to myself on different subjects
- yes. i was listened to. but i don't think it was acted upon. i complained to matt w over the way marc passmore spoke to and treated me and john goode.
- Never raised a formal complaint. I've raised other requests which haven't been dealt with, but I guess everyone's busy.
- Not sure if it would be worth having a formal system for requests and give them a ticket number.
- Yes and yes... never had an issue approaching leadership and being listened to
- No.

3.8 Do you have faith in the current leaders of the charity as a group (Trustees, OMT, CMT)? If NOT, what would you change and why? (Please don't single-out any individuals for criticism here, it's more a study of culture and behaviour).

- Yes
- Yes. We've had lots of changes recently, but everyone seems skilled and keen to make a difference and keep the charity going strongly.
- Yes - no concerns.
- Yes. They are all volunteers.
- I am optimistic about the new management team.
- However it is not clear who is part of the CMT.
- Balance out the skills and think about retention. Put more effort into retention and also nobody should get any courses in their first year.
- I do, I think the image presented is that of a single vision with a good team of people to realise it.
- Yes -but better trust will take time to develop further. Small group training session more frequently may help
- As a member of all of the above I cannot comment I feel. I'm happy.
- I do worry that the number of experienced members is thinning out, relying heavily on a few. I feel a little powerless to help more although I'd like to.
- Keep us better informed more quickly
- There needs to be less cliquey groups there are always the favourites in any organisation like this however everyone should be more included there should be more social events

throughout the year as well to get to know people better and also the training program should be reverted back to more how it used to be with training every other week or so and that the intake of new people should go back to how it was before as there are now loads of people in the team I have not meant how can you work with people that you do not know.

- yes .
- Previously I would have said 100% yes and felt lucky to have the leaders. Currently not sure. Just haven't seen people for a while.
- Yes, they work well. People will always moan, ignore them
- Yes (I have faith in the leaders)
- Yes 100% top guys all of them cmt and omt
- Absolutely. Any I have chatted to always have the time to talk and answer any questions I have.

3.9 Is there anything you'd like to change about the Charity's culture or direction, and if so, what and how?

- More social get togethers and team bonding needed as Covid has created a lot of barriers to group working. A lot of people have pulled away and hunkered down. We need to get back that spirit of team working.
- Just more engagement with the green group for ideas, we have a vast mix of experience in different disciplines that can take the charity forward. The young blood will be the future.
- It's good that we are starting to open up opportunities through EOIs - whilst the final decision will take into account attendance, skills, experience and time in the team, the fact that everyone feels they have a route to specialisation will help make people feel involved and part of the team. (Team cohesion)
- More sharing of what the management does please.
- Continue the openness and take more time to deal with any issues face to face rather than using media like text and email.
- Consider all the team not just a few who get to have all the shiny toys. Look after the Land Search teams better as that is a core activity
- No, I've loved my short time with the team. More team building exercises would be great for the reasons mentioned above.
- Better communication between the leaders and the crew to keep crew more up to date with what is happening within the charity.
- Difficult as the operational work and bases seem to be more north faced, but need more south of the region inclusivity
- I think bringing in more external training will give the troops more drive and enthusiasm.
- Very literally - it all seems to be moving northwards in direction.
- To forward information immediately from any meetings that go on

- Stop with all the favouritism and work more to gel better as a team going forward this year. I will have been doing this for six years and I can say in the last two and half I have seen a down turn which needs to be turned around as to how that is to be done I'm not sure .
- no
- See above
- None
- Nothing at all.
- Still very Bridgnorth/ Shropshire based
- Being new, I don't know enough to have an opinion on this.

Appendix 4

Anonymous survey to WMSAR Management Team - Do you feel your leadership role has enhanced or detracted from your volunteering experience?

- On the plus side having a greater understanding of how the team functions has been great. But it's time consuming.
- Occasionally it can be negative due to some members misguided views on what the extra responsibility entails.
- I think it has enhanced my experience overall.
- Originally enhanced and still does... but the additional time and work commitments of the role are a lot more than the wider team can appreciate. Personal circumstances change, work/life and there has to be a personal balance to remain and sustain being a volunteer operationally and for the charity. Being able to standdown/ back/ sabbatical from these positions will enable leaders to remain in team and share the wealth of knowledge and experience.
- Detracted from my original urge to feel I've added value and fulfilled something, since I made a choice to take on more managerial tasks at the detriment of operational tasks. I've had to seek validation and satisfaction vicariously on many occasions, as a member of the team rather than being involved in an operation or event. This secondary validation isn't as fulfilling but does come with some sense of reward and pride. Conversely, the experience of volunteering as a leader has given me a great deal of experience in that field and a better understanding of how to communicate with others where the motivation for them to continue working is purely emotional.
- Detracted to some extent. Constantly having to try to motivate was difficult as was seeing people who failed to carry out their role be allowed to continue without getting challenged.
- Overall Enhanced it. A leadership role gives an insight into how the charity should on paper run, versus how it runs on the ground.
- Enhanced - I feel that not only can I now just find and save people in danger, but I can now shape the way that the charity does this and try and get this done in a more efficient manner. What does detract from this is the politics, grudges and that people (particularly in the management team) lose sight of why they joined and why we actually go searching, to help people.