

Impact report 2023



Wiltshire
Air Ambulance
funded by you, flying for you



Welcome

The year 2023 was another busy one for Wiltshire Air Ambulance, not just from an operational point of view with missions, but also in terms of the demands placed on our charity team, who are tasked with achieving the yearly fundraising goal to keep our helicopter flying.

While it is sad that the need for our service rose by 10.6% during 2023, we should celebrate the fact we were there for those who needed us most because of the funding provided by the hugely generous people of Wiltshire and Bath.

We also carried out more missions with critical care doctors on board than ever before.

In the local community we held numerous successful events, with the largest taking place at Middlewick House in Corsham, where over 8,000 people attended to support ourselves and the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust.

Our Emergency Awareness Training programme reached out to teach essential first aid skills to youngsters at 73 different local schools across the year.

These are just a few of the many highlights we've enjoyed at Wiltshire Air Ambulance across the 2023 calendar year and I invite you to delve deeper into the impact we have had across Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas throughout this document.

As it states on the side of our helicopter, we are funded by you, flying for you, and we can't thank you enough for your ongoing support of our lifesaving charity.

David Philpott
Chief Executive Officer



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An insight into our missions

1.167



Total missions

646



Helicopter missions

521



Critical care car missions

397

Night missions

157

Missions involving children

292

Patients conveyed to hospital

85



Royal United Hospital

69



Southmead Hospital

57



Great Western Hospital

274

Cardiac emergencies

237

Medical conditions
*including collapses and strokes

231

Road traffic collisions

181



Missions in Swindon

96



Missions in Bath

85



Missions in Chippenham

Chris' story

Chris Williams loves paragliding but on Valentine's Day 2023 a pocket of turbulent air sent him crashing to the ground – requiring the intervention and support of Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

The 58-year-old from Fairford, Gloucestershire, is a former RAF and airline pilot and has been paragliding for almost two decades.

However, on a serene day over the Alton Barnes White Horse, Pewsey Downs, a sharp change of weather caused him to drop from the skies.

He recalls: "Milk Hill is well known as being a very safe hill to fly but on this day the wind was forecast to turn around, which it did as the day went on. My accident flight was actually my fourth flight of the day.

"I flew straight into some air that was coming down the hill and it collapsed my wing. I began to fall and although the wing was trying to reinflate, I was only at 70 feet. It took three seconds from the collapse before I hit the ground. There wasn't enough time to react."



Chris landed close to the White Horse and nearby walkers rushed to his aid. One rang 999 and just ten minutes later Wiltshire Air Ambulance's helicopter was touching down nearby, flown by Simon Gough.

After suffering multiple serious trauma injuries, Chris needed to be treated and stabilised by Wiltshire Air Ambulance's aircrew of critical care doctor Rosie Furse and critical care paramedic Keith Mills. He was then flown to the major trauma centre at Southmead Hospital.

Doctor Rosie says: "We were able to provide Chris with some high strength pain relief and use his harness to slide him into a safer position. We had to be very careful when moving him to ensure we didn't allow his spine to move or jolt.

"There was no way any land vehicle would have reached Chris and the South Western Ambulance Service crew who arrived had a very long walk across the hill to join us, so the benefit of having our



helicopter there was clear for all to see. It made a huge difference for Chris."

Chris sustained numerous injuries, adding: "The pressure of the landing collapsed my lung, I bit through my tongue, but the worst part was the numerous fractures in my spine, most in my neck.

"There were two unstable fractures in my cervical vertebra #7 (C7) and thoracic vertebra #1 (T1). The good part was the two bones broke and moved apart, keeping away from the nerve and ensuring no damage was done to the spinal cord.

"Later it was discovered I had sustained breaks further down, in T4, T5, T6 and T12, but those were stable and able to recover naturally."

Three months on he required a six-hour operation, involving titanium rods and screws. "I'm like the bionic man," he jokes.

Chris is a volunteer Community First Responder with South Western Ambulance Service, so was well aware of the importance of the service even before his accident.

However, he added: "As a former Emergency Care Assistant with South Central Ambulance Service, I've worked with air ambulances before but what I hadn't really thought about before was the funding.

"We want to know if we call 999 that an air ambulance can be there for us, but it's not free, it doesn't come out of our taxes and they need our support, just like they helped me."

Chris has since raised over £7,000 for the charity and continues to bang the drum about the service to his fellow paragliders.

“ For Wiltshire Air Ambulance alone, it costs £4.5 million a year to keep the helicopter flying and I feel it's part of my role now to spread that message.

Chris Williams - former patient

Aircrew impact

Wiltshire Air Ambulance undertook 1,167 missions across Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas in 2023, which represents a 10.6% increase on the previous year.

The charity's helicopter was used for 646 (55%) of the missions, with the remaining 521 incidents attended by critical care cars.

These latest statistics show the need for our lifesaving service has sadly increased year on year and we could not do it without the amazing donors and local businesses who help raise the funds required to keep our air ambulance flying and saving lives.

As it says on the side of the helicopter, we are funded by you, flying for you, and we are extremely grateful for all the support we receive from the people of Wiltshire and Bath.



328 missions with doctors

The difference a doctor makes

Doctors are able to deliver a range of enhanced procedures and medical interventions, such as a general anaesthetic to control someone's breathing, or to stabilise someone who has had a significant head injury, or to aid recovery after a heart attack.

They can also perform surgical procedures at the scene of an incident. For example, if a patient has been stabbed in the chest and into the heart, a doctor is able to perform a version of an open-heart surgery.

They can also perform an emergency caesarean section for a critically unwell person during pregnancy.

Doctors assist the team in making advanced decisions and can administer alternative medications that critical care paramedics are unable to deliver.

In addition, they support the whole team by running simulations and delivering training for staff.

They work together with the project teams to enhance the service we provide, for example a development in blood products carried on board our helicopter and cars.



The difference we make on scene



During 2023, our critical care crew were called upon to undertake more surgical procedures, blood transfusions and pre-hospital emergency anaesthesia than ever before.

Below you can find a snapshot of the type of procedures being carried out, whether it be at the roadside, on a field in the countryside or someone's home or place of work.

Bell 429 2023 stats

We carry out our Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) in a Bell 429 helicopter.

Our helicopter registration number is G-WLTS, with the call sign Helimed 22.

It can reach a top speed of 178 mph and is branded in yellow and green.



Laser attacks

In December, our Bell 429 helicopter was subjected to a laser attack near to our airbase in Semington.

The incident happened as the crew were returning to the airbase after the conclusion of a training mission. A very bright green laser was shone at our helicopter from the Trowbridge direction.

Thankfully the pilot and the critical care paramedics on board were unharmed and landed safely. Following checks they were able to continue their night shift.

Chief pilot Matt Wilcock said: "This incident happened while we were undertaking a training flight, but had we been responding to a medical emergency then we would not have been able to land and give critical care."

"Shining a laser at an aircraft is dangerous and irresponsible. It can seriously damage the eyes of those on board, which in turn could place the entire aircraft at risk with potentially catastrophic consequences."

Shining a laser at an aircraft is a criminal offence. It carries an unlimited fine and up to five years in prison.



procedural sedations

49 A variety of therapeutic interventions to reduce pain and suffering following trauma. This was a 58% increase on 2022.

blood transfusions

36 We carry two units of O Negative red blood cells, two units of O Positive red blood cells and four units of plasma.

pre-hospital emergency anaesthesia

45 A vital, yet high-risk, intervention performed to gain rapid control of a patient's physiology.

advanced airway management

108

surgical interventions

12

uses of the LUCAS machine

90

regional nerve blocks

9



A sneak peek inside our new critical care car

The BMW G5X X5 xDrive30d (call sign CC23) arrived at the Semington airbase in November 2023. The car was fully funded by a grant from the HELP appeal.

The new car replaces an older Volvo model, which had previously been funded by the ambulance service. Once that agreement ended it would have cost the charity substantial sums to take it on themselves – until the HELP Appeal stepped in.

The charity has two fully branded cars, both fitted with state-of-the-art technology and equipment.

The cars are used to respond to emergencies when the helicopter is unavailable, when an incident is particularly close by or if we need to send a second crew by road.

The car has the latest BMW safety technology and an enhanced emergency navigational system to allow our clinicians to reach

the scene of the incident quickly and safely.

The boot compartment is big enough to carry an exact match of the medical equipment used on-board the helicopter, allowing us to deliver all of the critical care skills we would as if on the helicopter.

During 2023, 521 of our missions were responded to by critical care car.

Robert Bertram of The Help Appeal handing over the critical care car



Meet our new recruits

We have recently added to our aircrew, with Matt Metcalf joining us as a trainee critical care paramedic, plus the arrival of critical care doctors David Connor and Mike Harrison.

Matt left the Royal Air Force to join the Ambulance Service and has spent eight years working as part of the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) in Bristol before arriving in Semington.

David brings previous air ambulance experience from the Emergency Medical Retrieval Service (EMRS) in Scotland, which is also where he attended University. He is originally from Northern Ireland.

Mike is an Emergency Medicine and Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine Consultant working in Wales and the South West of England.



Matt Metcalf and David Connor

Dr David joined the charity in August 2023.

"I've always had an interest in pre-hospital medicine and enjoy the variety of working inside hospitals and away from the emergency department."

Dr David Connor - critical care doctor



New roles

Ben Abbott has been appointed to the role of Advanced Care Practitioner in Critical Care and Clinical Lead.

He is the first Advanced Clinical Practitioner in Critical Care appointed at the charity and one of only four in the south west of England.

Lou Cox takes on the position of Air Operations Officer at Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

She is responsible for managing and supporting the clinical staff, allowing them to carry out their day-to-day function of providing critical care to seriously ill and injured patients.



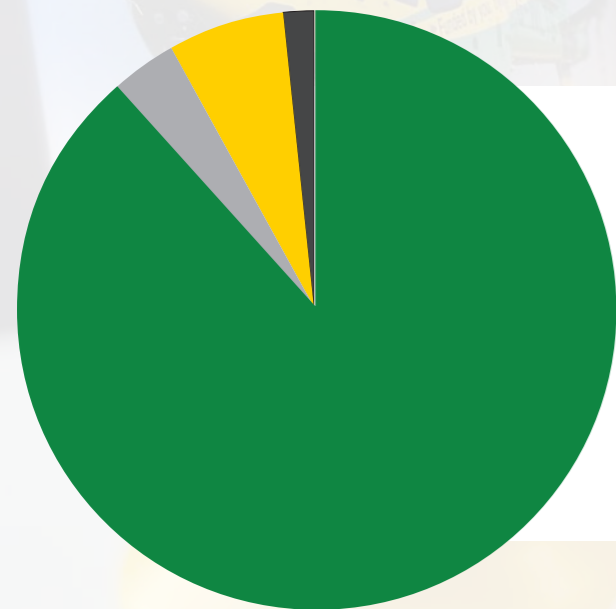
A closer look at our finances

Wiltshire Air Ambulance needs to raise £4.5 million to continue its lifesaving service.

To put that in context, our charity team needs to generate over £12,000 every single day of the year to ensure the aircrew can continue to be there for the people that need them most.

The charity receives no regular direct Government funding or National Lottery grants, so is reliant on the generosity of local people and businesses to keep the helicopter flying.

Below you can find a breakdown of where our funds came from, by income stream during the 2023 financial year, and how those funds were spent.

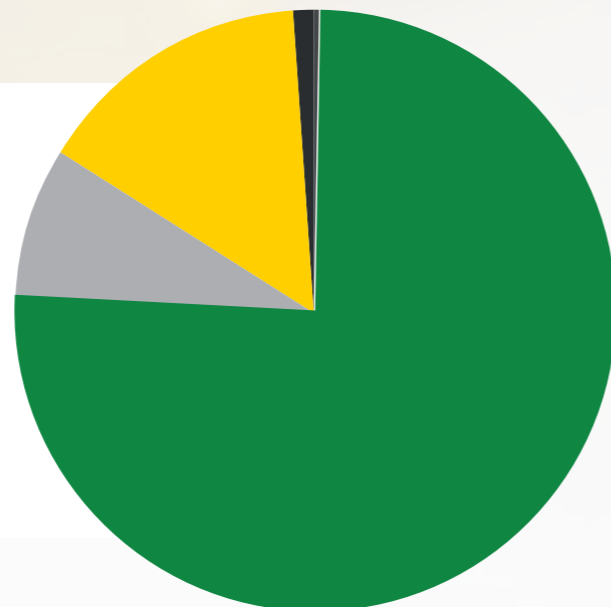


Income

Donations and legacies	79.33%
Other trading activities	18.29%
Investments	1.37%
Facilities (charity shop, the business club and recycling)	0.71%
Other income	0.29%

Expenditure

Operation costs	64.29%
Fundraising	14.65%
Charity operations	12.67%
Facilities (shared costs of building)	7.02%
Governance	0.93%
Investment management	0.44%



*all amounts are provisional and subject to audit

Lifesaving lottery and raffles

2023 raffles

Each year we operate Summer and Christmas raffles, offering our supporters the chance to win a top prize of £3,000.

During 2023, we had 2,215 people play our Summer Raffle, generating over £56,000 for our charity.

The Christmas Raffle proved even more popular, with 2,973 playing, raising over £76,500 to support the crucial work our aircrew undertake.

We would like to say a special thank you to the individual who donated £10,000 through our Christmas Raffle during 2023.



Thank you to the kind people who sent in messages to our aircrew at Christmas through the raffle. They loved reading your thoughtful words contained within the 200-plus baubles received (above).

For our 2023 Christmas Draw, one-third of the raffle income came from donations made by players. We also had 466 play online through the website.

2023 lottery



Around one in four missions is paid for by funds raised from our Lottery and Superdraw.

Our Lottery gives players the chance of winning £1,000 every week and up to £25,000 in our Superdraw.

27,644

Lottery players

9,506

Superdraw players

*player numbers accurate as of end of 2023

£1,274,519
raised in 2023

Did you know?

11.6% of all households in Pewsey play the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Lottery.

Over 9% of homes in Melksham, Calne, Royal Wootton Bassett and Marlborough are also regular Lottery players.

16

33

25

9

Within the community

We welcomed supporters to our headquarters when we hosted two Brew with the Crew events in 2023.

Each date saw over 100 guests attend to enjoy tea and cake with staff at the airbase.

Middlewick House Open Garden, raising funds for The Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust and Wiltshire Air Ambulance, was visited by over 8,000 people and raised an incredible £88,000.

For the first time, we held behind-the-scenes tours of our airbase during National Air Ambulance Week. The tour slots sold out extremely quickly, and we received lots of positive feedback from attendees.

Another first for the charity were our market days, which were held in the airbase in September and November. Local traders and artisans set up their stalls to sell gifts, festive treats, crafts and much more to over 120 attendees.



Keeping memories flying



We know that doing something in memory of someone you love can help with the bereavement process and ensure that while your special someone may no longer be here, we can help keep their memory alive.

Our third annual 'In Celebration of Life' service proved to be a beautiful and emotional event when it was held in November at The Barn, Lowden Garden Centre.

Over 50 people took the opportunity to come together and remember loved ones. The names and images of loved ones were shared on screen, and everybody had the opportunity to leave a message on the Christmas tree.

“ A big thank you for putting on such a lovely service for our loved ones. You all put such a lot of thought into it. ”

It's so important for us all to have a safe space we can be vulnerable in, thank you for providing this for us. ”

68

tribute funds via in-memory platform MuchLoved

£15,000

raised in memory of supporters loved ones

Corporate volunteer days

During the year, we offered a variety of opportunities for businesses to get involved in volunteering.

Whether it was marshalling at an event, helping in our charity shop, holding a bucket collection or even helping with projects such as gardening and painting at our airbase, volunteering is always a great way to bring employees together.

Volunteering encourages teams to work together, utilise their skills and solve problems in aid of a worthy cause.



Weeding of the memorial garden in readiness for the charity's Annual General Meeting in September.

Fexco Property Services Salisbury



The team donated their time to wash down the fuel installation area and repaint the fire storage area.

AFL Telecommunications Swindon



Staff members from Herman Miller volunteered to paint the charity locker rooms at the airbase.

Herman Miller Melksham

Our GroundCrew



Without the help of volunteers, it would be extremely difficult to do everything that we do.

One of the most valuable things you can give is your time, and we could not manage without our amazing volunteers.

93

Active volunteers

209

Community events attended

1,710 hours in 2023



“ For anyone who is considering volunteering, don't just think about it, get on and do it! ”

What else could you do that will give you so much fun, take you places you may not go to otherwise and do your bit to keep the critical service flying, all at the same time?

Ian Best, volunteer since 2013

In the business of saving lives

The Business Club enables companies to promote their business, grow their skills, build and explore potential collaboration opportunities with like-minded people.

Members can also access a host of benefits exclusive to The Business Club, whilst supporting Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

The Business Club makes a difference to the companies, as well as the charity with membership fees directly contributing to our lifesaving service.

The launch event in June welcomed businesses from the local community to the airbase.

It was an opportunity for attendees to begin networking and for the charity to showcase what a membership supports and show appreciation to members.

August and December events saw both members and non-members networking over brunch and a beverage at the airbase.

Dave Plunkett, the strategic partnership expert shared his Five Steps to Awesome Strategic Referral Partnerships in a special workshop, and the charity's Emergency Awareness Trainer, Andrew, delivered a CPR and defibrillator refresher alongside Christmas-themed games.

12 business club members

108 networking attendees

31 corporate supporters

Thanks to the public's generosity we completed the 2023 Big Give Christmas Challenge with a whole day to spare.

It means we secured the £35,000 needed to fund a flying doctor - namely critical care doctor Jonathan Holme - for an entire year.

This year we secured matched funding from our Champion, Wiltshire Match Fund, along with Castle Combe Circuit, the Andrew Smiley Trust, Ridge Coffee Club and Melksham Rugby Relics Golf Society.



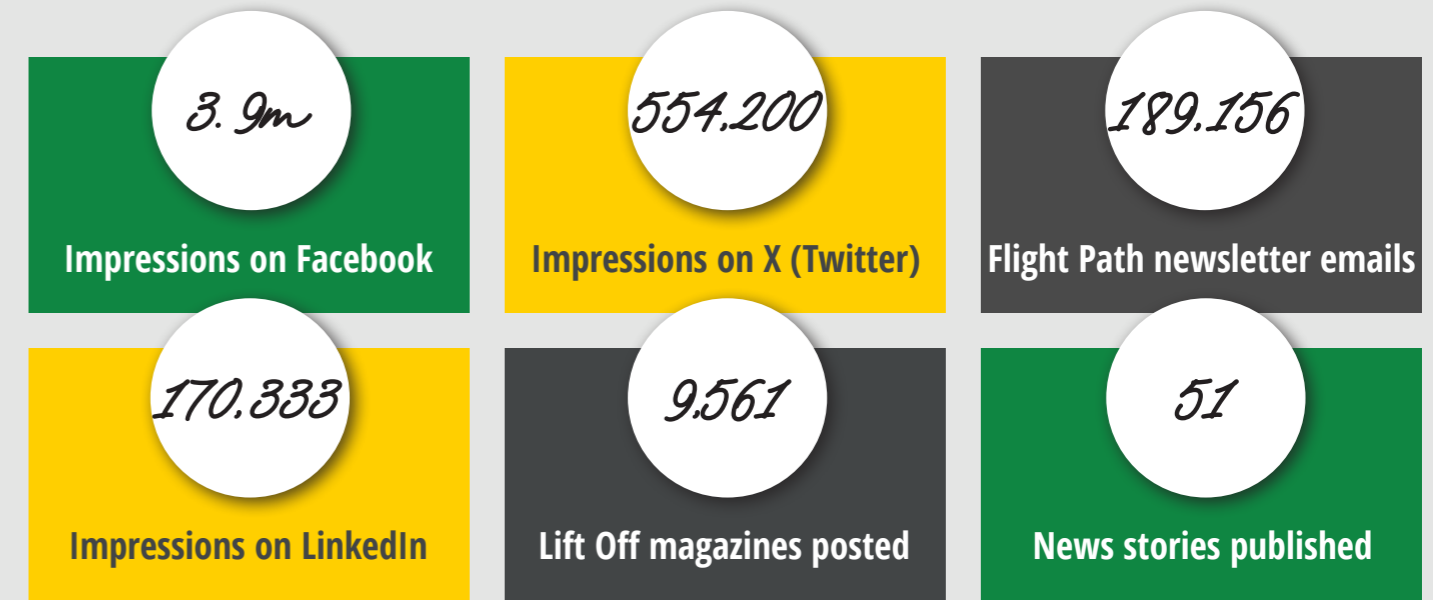
Communicating with our supporters

Wiltshire Air Ambulance uses as many channels as possible to communicate with its supporters.

From radio advertisements to features on local TV, monthly e-newsletters delivered direct to your inbox to printed Lift Off magazines sent through the post, there are so many ways to stay up to date about all things relating to your local air ambulance.

You can also follow the charity's news and updates across a wide array of social media channels, depending on your preference, including Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and TikTok.

Take a deeper look at how we kept in touch with our supporters in 2023...



New website

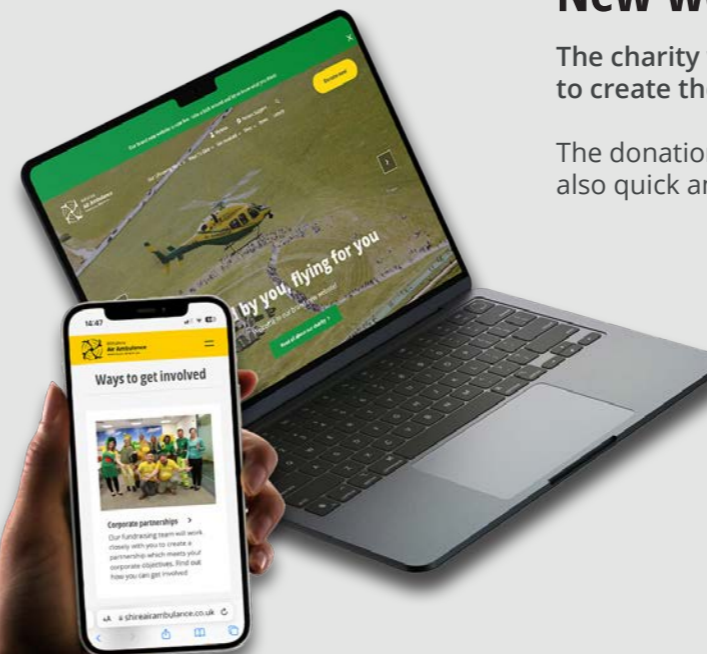
The charity worked with Bradford-on-Avon based Digital Wonderlab, to create the much-improved website, which launched in July 2023.

The donation process is more streamlined than ever before, and it's also quick and easy to sign up to one of our fundraising events.

The website also offers donors better responsiveness for mobile use and is Level AA WGAC accessibility compliant.

Living as we do in a digital age, it is vitally important our website showcases everything about our charity, fully complementing our social media channels across the digital landscape.

The new website is packed with key information about our service, lots of patient stories and also features an interactive Mission Map.



The success of our shop

Following the completion of a refurbishment of our much-loved charity shop in Devizes during the latter stages of 2022, the premises reopened at the start of a new year with a fresh look.

With new shop manager Jackie Ball in place, supported by her assistant, Mandy Hayward, the shop has flourished.

Customer footfall has risen considerably and income from shop sales has doubled in the past 12 months.

The team at the Devizes shop also set up a new collection service during 2023, which is operated by volunteers.

Supporters are able to book slots for the collection of items they wish to donate such as good quality clothing, books and children's toys.

The shop is now open six days a week, from Monday to Saturday, 9.30am-4.30pm, with the help of our dedicated group of volunteers.



3,700

Shop volunteer hours

Working with Recycling Solutions, we have charity clothing banks located across the area we serve, offering our supporters the opportunity to recycle clothing and shoes they no longer want.

Textile recycling helps save the environment by reducing waste at landfill sites, and provides an affordable clothing supply to communities worldwide.

During 2023, the partnership achieved a record amount of income for the charity - all thanks to your donations.

95 banks across Wiltshire

313 tonnes donated

£71,900 raised for our charity



The impact of education



The importance of our Emergency Awareness Training programme was demonstrated in 2023 after 11-year-old Maxi Bastable came to the rescue of his choking grandfather.

The youngster had been taught lifesaving skills by the charity at his school, Westonbirt Prep in Tetbury, in 2022.

The training became a real-life scenario for Maxi when his grandfather Francis was eating a murray mint at home and started choking while his wife Patricia was outside in the garden.

The youngster calmly took control of the situation and delivered an abdominal thrust on his grandfather to try and dislodge the sweet, which he did successfully.

Maxi visited the airbase to meet the aircrew along with his mum Joanna, dad James and his older brother Ted.



We're very proud of Maxi for coming to his grandfather's rescue and we will be forever grateful.

Joanna, Maxi's mum



Emergency Awareness Training

73

Schools visited in 2023

10,959

Pupils taught

TRAINING INCLUDES:

- Making a 999 call
- Managing an unconscious patient
- How to perform CPR
- Correct operation of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)
- Assisting a person who is choking
- Bleeding control and wound management
- Management of minor/major head injury
- Treatment of burns

Sustainability

"Addressing climate change at Wiltshire Air Ambulance is hugely important.

We recognise our responsibility to reduce our environmental impact. Although we have taken some steps to mitigate greenhouse gases, we aim to become a Net Zero organisation by 2050. Achieving this not only benefits the environment but also offers financial advantages."

Captain Rob Collingwood

We are proud of our progress to date and our ambitious decarbonisation targets as we aim to become Net Zero by 2050.

Making a positive impact is part of our charity culture and our roadmap provides feasible steps to help us protect our planet.



Remembering Pilot Rob

Rob Collingwood, our much-admired pilot, sadly passed away at the age of 42 in April 2023 after a short battle with cancer.

He joined Wiltshire Air Ambulance in 2016 after serving over 10 years in the British Army.

Rob loved working for the charity and the staff loved him. He was so passionate about our cause and understood the importance of being a team player.

He had a real passion for environmental sustainability, a strong faith and was always positive.

Rob posthumously received a Special Recognition award at the Air Ambulances UK Annual Awards of Excellence.

Rob's widow Hattie was in attendance at the Annual Awards of Excellence to collect the award, alongside chief pilot Matt Wilcock.

There was a standing ovation from the packed auditorium when the award was announcing, as attendees heard how Rob had continued to dedicate himself to his work and colleagues, despite receiving news of his diagnosis, which halted his flying.



Find out more about our lifesaving work by scanning the QR code or visiting our website:

wiltshireairambulance.co.uk

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registered charity number 1144097

SCAN HERE

