



**From Hill to High Water™**

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## David Cameron joins Oxfordshire Lowland Search and Rescue for training exercise

MP for Witney and Prime Minister, David Cameron joined Oxfordshire Lowland Search and Rescue (OxSAR) team for a training session on 3 June 2016, during Volunteer Week.

Together with the other guests, Anthony Stansfeld (Thames Valley PCC), Dave Etheridge (Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue) and Paul Lewis MBE (Chairman of the Association of Lowland Search and Rescue), he was invited to watch a short video summarising the activities of the team and the joint work with other emergency services and regional search teams, including water-based, bikes and dogs teams.

One of OxSAR's search managers then explained how searches are based on statistical analysis of the behaviour of missing persons, and the various methodologies that searchers use when deployed.

These were put into practice with a simulated search for a vulnerable person. The team was briefed in a very similar way to an actual search: the vulnerable missing person was shortly located in the vicinity, and the guests were informed on the usual course of action while the search team carried the missing person by stretcher to a place of safety.

The OxSAR water-trained team, wearing full swiftwater rescue kit, then showed guests the flood response and water-based search equipment, including two inflatable boats, deployed during the unprecedented floods in the Oxfordshire area. The team had also assisted neighbouring Surrey and Berkshire SAR during further extensive flooding in those areas: OxSAR has one of the most extensive range of equipment for water emergencies in the south east.

David Cameron took the time to speak to various team members and said "I was very interested to see first-hand the kind of work OxSAR do. The team of volunteers showed great professionalism in today's training exercise. I would like to thank them for all they do to assist the emergency services whenever they may be needed."

Pat Conafray, OxSAR Chairman, said "I'm thrilled that David Cameron could join us and see first hand the extraordinary job that our volunteers do. He seemed to really enjoy

the exercise and was very keen to be shown the water rescue equipment. 'Professional in all but pay' is widely used and very relevant."

Paul Lewis MBE, ALSAR's chairman, said "OxSAR has seen a steady increase in searches in the last few years, with a total of over 300 searches since they were founded. During this volunteer week it is great to recognise the work of this dedicated team of unpaid professionals. This is a shining example for Lowland Rescue."

For further information please contact Ilaria Meliconi, 07914 268787 or [Ilaria\\_meliconi@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Ilaria_meliconi@yahoo.co.uk).

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Oxfordshire Lowland Search and Rescue (OxSAR) is a volunteer unit (charity 1144058), working with the Police to find vulnerable missing people in Oxfordshire. OxSAR is a member of ALSAR, the Association of Lowland Search and Rescue.

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