



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 01 April 2019
To 31 March 2020

Period start date
Period end date

Charity name: Free the Bears UK

Charity registration number: 1135682

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	To promote humane behaviour towards animals, in particular bears, by providing appropriate care, protection, treatment and security for animals which are in need of care and attention by reason of sickness, maltreatment, poor circumstances, or ill usage and to educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare in general and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among animals.
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	<p>Free the Bears UK works with expert affiliate and partner groups on projects that will make a significant impact on animal welfare, conservation and awareness. The Charity works with national and provincial government partners to ensure the best chance of long-term success for each programme. Primary objectives for 2019/20 included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued support for efforts aimed at reducing illegal poaching of bears in Cambodia, and further development of the Cambodian Bear Sanctuary as a world-class facility for life-long care of bears and public education. Work this year continued to focus on managing the tuberculosis situation within the world's largest captive group of sun bears and implementing activities essential to achieving the goals laid out in the Sun Bear Conservation Action Plan including field research into vulnerable wild bear populations and outreach activities aimed at reducing demand for illegal wildlife products.• Further development of the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary to support efforts of the Government of Laos aimed at ending bear bile farming in Lao PDR through improved law enforcement to address the illegal wildlife trade, improved environmental awareness amongst the general public and continued care for any bears and other animals rescued from illegal captivity and exploitive situations.• Ongoing development of the Cat Tien Bear

		Sanctuary in Vietnam in order to help facilitate the end of bear bile farming in this country where numbers of bears held in bile farms are now believed to have fallen to fewer than 500 animals. Further development of education and research programmes aimed at building support for wild bear conservation and reduced consumer demand for bear-based products.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	The Trustees have regard for the Charities Commission general guidance on Public Benefit and consider our programmes and activities to be meeting the following charitable purposes for public benefit; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the prevention or relief of poverty, b) the advancement of education, c) the advancement of environmental protection or improvement, and d) the advancement of animal welfare

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	Volunteers continue to play a significant role in both the raising of funds to support field programmes and, more directly, through provision of technical skills on-the-ground at our sanctuaries. Over the past year volunteers and students from the UK and around the world have gained practical experience assisting our Bear Care Teams at sanctuaries in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Additionally, a number of skilled professionals such as vets and veterinary technicians, architects and animal husbandry specialists have helped build capacity within our locally-employed teams in areas such as animal care, sustainable design and wildlife health.
Other		

Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
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Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.

Para 1.20

The information below represents a summary of the main achievements for the charity in its three core focal areas of work during the past financial year;

Cambodian Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme

Free the Bears is a global leader in the care of sun bears, creating the world's biggest sanctuary for sun bears in Cambodia and our team collectively holding more years' experience with this diminutive bear species than any other. Our commitment to protecting the smallest of the world's bear species extends far beyond the boundaries of our sanctuaries, and so in June 2019 we were thrilled to launch the Sun Bear Global Status Review and Conservation Action Plan. This landmark intervention represents the first global action plan for any terrestrial species and, if fully implemented, will help achieve our vision of a world in which "wild sun bear populations are no longer threatened...captive sun bears are held under high welfare standards...(and) conservation of sun bears aids in the conservation of other species and ecosystems in Southeast Asia". Formulated in partnership with the IUCN Bear Specialist Group and Conservation Planning Specialist Group, the action plan outlines a number of goals and objectives that must be pursued in order to prevent sun bears from continuing their slide towards extinction. In pursuit of these goals, our research teams conducted a number of sign transects in Veun Sai Siem Pang National Park, checking for inter-observer variability as part of an ongoing PhD study into methods for monitoring bear populations in Southeast Asia, while the last of more than 2,700 surveys were conducted across Cambodia in order to inform our behavior-change campaign aimed at reducing demand for illegal bear products.

Our Awareness, Communications and Education (ACE) Team delivered engaging education programmes to more than 1,800 students and teachers, plus almost 400 visitors took part in our one-day Bear Care Tour, learning about the threats facing Southeast Asia's bears. Our Bear Discovery Centre, the first of its kind when built in 2007, has undergone a welcome refurbishment, allowing it to continue to shape positive attitudes among more than 250,000 annual visitors to the sanctuary, while 10 British volunteers assisted our locally-employed Bear Care Team throughout the year. With four new bears rescued and just two deaths in the population over the past year, the number of bears in our care at the Cambodia Bear Sanctuary climbed slightly to 120 animals. Both of the deaths, Molly and Willow, were of unknown causes and occurred in relatively young females in their prime and so our veterinary team are trying to determine what caused these losses. Fortunately the possibility of tuberculosis was already ruled out in both these cases, giving us hope that after many years of losing animals to tuberculosis we may finally have begun to win the fight against this

	<p>insidious disease. The new arrivals, three sun bear cubs (one with terrible wounds to her paw caused by a wire snare) and an adult male moon bear, have all settled into their new lives after completing quarantine at our state-of-the-art Quarantine and Cub Nursery Facility. In October 2019, a visit from University of Bristol veterinary ophthalmology specialists led by Dr. Claudia Hartley allowed for further transfer of skills from internationally renowned experts to our Cambodian vet team. Finally, ACE Team Officer Sourphea Phorn completed her veterinary degree and is now able to assist our vet team whenever she is not otherwise engaged with our busy education programme schedule.</p> <p><u>Laos Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme</u></p> <p>The past year has seen record-breaking numbers of rescues in Laos, with a total of 18 bears rescued over the past 12 months, placing increasing pressure on our existing facilities and driving the need to expand the new Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary with an ever-greater sense of urgency. Bear House 4, comprising four spacious indoor dens and two large outdoor enclosures, was completed by May 2019, allowing us to move a group of five sub-adult moon bears along with our two resident sun bear girls in the adjacent area. Besides this new Bear House, our capacity to handle new rescues was also increased with the completion of the Bear Quarantine House, a dedicated Cub Nursery and Stage 2 Nursery facility, and a Pangolarium/Small Animal Quarantine. Construction and fit-out of Laos' first well-equipped Wildlife Hospital, complete with diagnostic tools including computerized radiology and ultrasound, was completed over the past year, offering vastly improved capacity for handling a growing caseload of newly rescued wildlife as well as complex surgeries for long-term residents of the sanctuaries. In October 2019 a specialist team of veterinary ophthalmologists from the University of Bristol were able to put the new facility to the test, helping train our Lao veterinarian and improving welfare for several animals in our care.</p> <p>With the assistance of our friends at Buildings Trust International, we were also able to construct a large new Discovery Centre, built almost entirely of locally-sourced bamboo and grass thatch, in which we're able to expand upon our education programmes for groups visiting the new sanctuary. The Discovery Centre has already been put to good use with local communities joining a series of workshops under the banner of "Discover, love and protect Lao wildlife" including innovative sustainable livelihood workshops teaching skills such as bamboo straw production and crafting of jewellery made using upcycled wire snares collected from the forest.</p> <p>Development of the new Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary was followed throughout the year by a team from BBC Studios, filming a short series that will</p>
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	<p>be aired in the UK in July 2020. There was no shortage of drama with record-breaking numbers of rescues taking the total number of animals in our care to 77 bears by the end of the year, along with 50+ other rescued animals of thirteen different species. Several new species were received for the first time, including rarities such as Chinese pangolin, Bengal slow loris and Mainland serow, while a number of animals were re-released back into the wild following successful rehabilitation (Impressed tortoises, reticulated python, civets and leopard cats).</p> <p><u>Vietnam Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme</u></p> <p>Two more bears were rescued from the bear bile trade over the past year, having spent around two decades trapped in woefully tiny cages and routinely mutilated for bile extraction. Unfortunately for the female, the damage inflicted on her through years of abuse was too much and she passed away shortly after being taken in to our care. Bear House 3 was completed at the new Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary, providing more than 10,000m² of additional enclosure space and dens to allow for the transfer of several groups from the old bear rescue centre and into this new facility where they can enjoy a near-natural lifestyle in authentic bear habitat. Two of the four enclosures at Bear House 3 have been specially adapted to provide for visually-impaired bears, with elevated e-fence lines and specially-designed climbing structures ensuring that all of the bears in our care are able to enjoy a vastly improved quality of life in the new sanctuary. Fitting-out of the new veterinary hospital has continued to improve capacity for delivering gold-standard healthcare to wildlife within Cat Tien, and the creation of a dedicated Animal Kitchen and Enrichment Facility plus a Keeper Changing Facility have both boosted biosecurity within the new sanctuary whilst forming a much-needed hub for our growing team in Vietnam to coordinate the daily management of the 39 bears already in our care whilst planning for further rescues.</p> <p>Outreach work has included presentations being given to students at local universities on the impacts of illegal wildlife trade, plus lectures delivered in Vietnam's first Captive Animal Welfare Course at Vinh University. A new education guide for the sanctuary was completed for sharing with visitors to Cat Tien National Park, and a scientific paper published in the journal Biological Conservation on "Consumer demand and traditional medicine prescription of bear products in Vietnam" in partnership with colleagues at San Diego Zoo Global, TRAFFIC, WildAct and Animals Asia Foundation. Almost 4,000 visitors took part in guided tours in order to learn more about the threats facing bears in Vietnam, with almost 75% of these guests being Vietnamese nationals.</p>
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Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	
Investment performance against objectives	Para 1.41	
Other		

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	<p>Following a significant rise in income last year, overall income fell during the past year by more than 40%, totalling £58,232 due to reduced income from Philanthropic Trusts and zoo partners which make up our biggest income streams. This was partly due to early impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic delaying or reducing gifts from some regular supporters, and was slightly offset by positive growth in online giving and Peer-2-Peer fundraising, with further growth expected in these areas moving forwards.</p> <p>Our UK operations continue to form a significant portion of the overall contribution made to Free the Bears field programmes with 85% of funds being directed towards overseas programmes this past year.</p> <p>Growth and expansion of our supporter base is prioritised for next year, focusing on mass media and online to ensure that administrative costs are kept to a minimum and impacts of the global pandemic are minimised. The planned broadcast of a short series (2x 60minutes) focused on our work to protect bears within Laos on BBC in July 2020 is expected to assist greatly in growing our supporter base within the UK.</p>
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	Having considered our position in line with the Charities Commission guidance the Trustees feel that the maintenance of 6-months overhead costs is prudent, without being excessive. With minimal overhead costs in the UK the Charity is successfully meeting this target in line with our policy.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	None
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	With minimal overhead costs incurred in the UK no reserves are considered to be necessary as sufficient reserve funds are held in our project country accounts.
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	There are no funds materially in deficit
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	The Trustees have no uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	Philanthropic trusts, zoological institutions, private individual donors, bequests and online fundraising all make up significant income streams for Free the Bears UK.
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	
		The trustees review the major risks to which the

A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	Charity is exposed on a regular basis and systems are implemented whenever possible to mitigate these risks. The trustees believe that there is a satisfactory system of internal controls which are also reviewed on a regular basis.
Other		

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	Unincorporated association
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	<p>In accordance with the Articles of Association, the number of trustees shall be no less than three but are not subject to any maximum.</p> <p>New trustees may be appointed by ordinary resolution. Every new trustee shall sign in the minute book a declaration of acceptance and of willingness to act as a trustee of the Charity.</p> <p>Trustees are recruited as required or when a particular skill gap is identified. Trustees are selected based on what they can contribute to the Charity. Trustees need to be prepared to take an active part in the running of the Charity and therefore need to be able - and willing - to give time to the efficient administration of the Charity and the fulfillment of its objectives.</p>

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	<p>Prospective trustees are required to consider whether there would be any possible conflicts of interest if they were to be appointed as a trustee. It is particularly important that the individual is free to make a full contribution to the trustees' discussions and decisions.</p> <p>When recruiting new Charity trustees, the existing trustees ensure they understand the purposes and aims of the Charity, as well as their broader duties and responsibilities as trustees so that they are able to explain to prospective trustees what is required of them.</p> <p>All new Trustees are given a copy of the Charities Commission publication "The Essential Trustee: What You Need to Know" prior to accepting a position as trustee.</p>
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	<p>In terms of organisational structure the trustees are responsible for the strategic direction of the Charity, governance and charting performance against annually prepared budgets. Decisions regarding investment of Charity funds and expansion into new territories are made by the trustees.</p> <p>The Chief Executive is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the Charity, reporting on progress to the trustees at the scheduled trustees' meetings. If there are extraordinary issues that need to be brought to the attention of the trustees, extra meetings are scheduled as required. The Chief Executive is responsible for maintaining relationships with partner charities, staff management, recommending projects to the trustees and annual</p>

		financial performance. The Chief Executive is supported by a small management team who are responsible for functional areas within the Charity. These functional heads provide periodic reports for the trustees.
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	Free the Bears UK is affiliated to several other independent groups. "Free the Bears Ltd serves the Australian territory with education and information relating to the projects that Free the Bears UK supports. "Free the Bears Fund", registered in Cambodia, oversees the day-to-day management of the Cambodia Bear Sanctuary and several field programmes aimed at reducing the incidence of illegal poaching and trading of bears in Cambodia. "Free the Bears Fund", registered in Lao PDR, oversees management of the Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre and Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary together with other initiatives aimed at ending bear bile farming in Lao PDR. "To Chuc Free the Bears", registered in Vietnam, provides support to Cat Tien National Park for development of wildlife rescue centres and Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary, as well as field programmes aimed at better understanding wild bear population status and trends in the bear bile industry. As a group, the independent Free the Bears Charities share common goals and objectives. The UK Charity currently provides funding and support for the projects in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam.
Other		In addition to the affiliate group, Free the Bears UK also works closely with other International partner organisations when mutual goals are shared and sufficient resources are available. Free the Bears has historically been a major funder of Wildlife SOS (India) who are responsible for the Dancing Bear Rescue and Kalandar Rehabilitation Project in India from 2002 until early 2020.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Free the Bears UK
Other name the charity uses	Free the Bears, Free the Bears (UK)
Registered charity number	1135682
Charity's principal address	Myrtle Cottage, 79 Church Road Potters Bar Herefordshire EN6 1EY England NOTE: The principle address was changed on 1 st July 2020 to; 628 High Road South Benfleet Essex SS7 5SU England

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Dr Jonathan Cracknell BVMS CertVA CertZooMed MRCVS	Chair		
2	Mary Julia Hutton	Secretary		
3	Matthew Peter Hunt	Treasurer		
4	Sarah Jane Moran			
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19				
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Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

Director name		
None		

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

Trustee name	Dates acted if not for whole year	
None		

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	n/a
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	n/a
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	n/a

Additional information (optional)

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Patron	Steve Leonard BVSc MRCVS	
International Wildlife Surgery Advisor	Romain Pizzi BVSc MSc DZooMed DipECZM MACVS (Surg) FRES FRSB FRGS MRCVS	

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Matt Hunt – Chief Executive, Nev Broadis – Regional Director, Vuthy Chuon – Cambodia Programme Manager, Sengaloun Vongsay – Laos Programme Manager, Nguyen Van Dung - Vietnam Programme Manager, Brian Crudge - Research Programme Manager, Dr Kirsty Officer - Veterinary Advisor, Rod Mabin – Regional Communications Manager

Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

n/a


Other optional information

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Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Matthew Peter Hunt	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Treasurer	
Date	2 nd July 2020	



Free the Bears UK		1135682		CC16a
Receipts and payments accounts				
For the period from	Period start date 1/4/19	To	Period end date 31/03/2020	

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations, legacies and grants	33,684	24,549	-	58,233	97,021
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	33,684	24,549	-	58,233	97,021
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	33,684	24,549	-	58,233	97,021
A3 Payments					
Cost of Fundraising Events	578		-	578	521
Grants & Donations	30,014	27,300	-	57,314	99,308
Bank interest and charges	258	-	-	258	427
		-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	30,850	27,300	-	58,150	100,256
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	30,850	27,300	-	58,150	100,256
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,834	- 2,751	-	83	3,235
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	186	- 1	-	185	3,502
Cash funds this year end	3,020	- 2,752	-	267	267

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Free the Bears UK HSBC account	3,020	- 2,752	-
	Cash on hand	-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	3,020	- 2,752	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

Unrestricted funds Restricted funds Endowment funds


	Details	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Matt Hunt	07.04.2020



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Free The Bears

On accounts for the year
ended

31st March 2020

Charity no
(if any)

1135682

Set out on pages

Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent
examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent
examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *)

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

7th May 2020

Name:

Sue Robertson

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

AAT

Address:	5 Woodham Park Drive
	Benfleet
	Essex SS7 5EH

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.