

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 01 April 2020 Period start date To 31 March 2021 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	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 2020/21 included; • Continued support for efforts aimed at reducing illegal poaching of bears in Cambodia and preventing bear bile farming from becoming established through development of the Cambodian Bear Sanctuary as a world-class facility for lifelong care of bears and public education. Work this year continued to focus on managing 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, enhanced environmental awareness among 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 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 350 animals. Further development of education and research programmes aimed at building support for wild bear conservation, understanding current status of wild bear populations and reducing 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; 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:

Tournay choose to melade fur	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 the raising of funds to support field programmes, particularly through Peer-2-Peer fundraising events. Sadly, with the ongoing pandemic preventing international travel we have been unable to welcome volunteers on-site at our field programmes throughout the past year but look forward to welcoming them once borders re-open while we continue to receive support from overseas specialists (especially in the field of veterinary care) via remote communications.
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;

<u>Cambodian Bear Rescue and Conservation</u> <u>Programme</u>

Free the Bears is a global leader in the care of sun bears, having built the world's largest sanctuary for this diminutive species over the past 24 years in close partnership with the Cambodian Forestry Administration, and Free the Bears staff holding key roles within the IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group. Our Regional Director Brian Crudge was invited to become Co-chair of the Sun bear Expert Team within the Bear Specialist Group for the 2021-24 quadrennium, while our CEO Matt Hunt is serving another term as Co-chair of the Asiatic black bear Expert Team. Following on from the workshop held at Ouwehands Zoo in the Netherlands during 2019 the "Research prospectus: Priority topics for ex situ sun bear conservation research" was published in May 2020 in partnership with IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group and shared with zoo and sanctuary partners worldwide in order to promote greater collaboration and focus research efforts on captive bears in ways that enable improved conservation of their cousins in the wild.

Our efforts across Cambodia over the past 20+ years have ensured that bear bile farming has never been permitted to become established in this country, however threats to wild bears remain, particularly in the form of illegal snaring which can be found in protected forests across the country and kills wildlife indiscriminately. We are continuing to see a reduced number of live bears being rescued from the illegal wildlife trade with just one new bear coming into our Cambodia Bear Sanctuary over the past year, a 4month old sun bear cub, CR211, that was confiscated along with a number of other animals from an illegal zoo by the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) in September 2020. With just one death amongst our resident bear population over the course of this year (CR105 Cairo who passed away in November 2020 after more than 13 years in our care) the total number of bears at the sanctuary remained stable at 120 bears. The reduced number of rescues can be at least partially attributed to the prolonged period of lockdown due to the ongoing COVID pandemic which prevented the WRRT from travelling around the country for a significant part of the year. These COVID restrictions further impacted our work with international visitors unable to enter the country to join our volunteer and education programmes, and our Veterinary Advisor only able to make one visit throughout this period. Even in-country education programmes were affected with social gatherings banned and therefore very few school visits were able to take place although our team were able to welcome some groups from Phnom Penh's international schools in February 2021. Our teams

remained busy nonetheless, taking advantage of any easing in restrictions to carry out essential maintenance work, replacing the roof of one of our older bear houses and subdividing existing enclosures to accommodate growing nursery groups of sub-adult bears. The education team also conducted online learning sessions wherever possible and created a traditional herbal medicine garden within our Bear Discovery Centre to increase awareness of herbal alternatives to bear bile. One unexpected consequence of the global pandemic and resulting "work from home" orders was an impressive increase in output from our Research team who, working with international partners and associates around the world, published almost 10 new scientific papers in respected journals examining a wide range of topics from the use of bear bile in maternal health within Cambodia to innovative techniques for assessing illegal wildlife consumption.

Laos Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme

Following the easing of the initial pandemic lockdown restrictions in June 2020, Laos' international borders remained closed to all but essential travel, meaning we were unable to replace the Australian Volunteer Program skilled volunteers who had been evacuated at the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 and our Technical Advisor for Animal Husbandry remained in the UK unable to return to Laos. A total of five new Asiatic black bears were rescued and brought to our sanctuaries for care over the course of this year, three of which were cubs;

- LR087 Peanut and LR088 Pumpkin, kept as pets 15 years, rescued June 2020, Vientiane province
- LR089 Pickles, a 5-month old female Asiatic black bear cub confiscated from Chinese trader in Luang Prabang province in July 2020
- LR090 Barney, a 5-month old male Asiatic black bear cub confiscated from trader in Bokeo province, August 2020
- LR091 Rupert, a 5-month old male Asiatic black bear cub confiscated from a trader in Phongsaly province, March 2021

In addition, a further 42 animals of other species were also received, including a number of critically endangered species such as Sunda and Chinese pangolins and a White-cheeked gibbon. Following a period of rehabilitation and veterinary care, we were able to re-release leopard cats, Impressed tortoises and a pangolin back into the wild in protected forest in September 2020.

Our construction teams were busy throughout the year with a dedicated Cub Nursery facility completed at the Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary in July 2020, Bear House 5 completed in March 2021 and Bear House 6 nearing completion by the end of the year. The addition of these much-needed areas for rescued

bears allowed us to reduce the number of animals being kept at our original Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre to more optimal numbers for the first time since 2015, and ensured that all of the recently rescued bears from 2019 and 2020 could be housed in appropriate conditions befitting a world-class wildlife sanctuary. In order to address ongoing issues with water supply, a number of new rainwater storage tanks were created and initial attempts were made to develop boreholes to access underground water supplies. With three bears passing away over the course of the year, the number of bears in our care across both sanctuaries in Laos increased from 77 bears in April 2020 to 79 bears in March 2021. Our team were also called upon to assist the government and other partners with inspections and auditing of a tiger farm (which is also the largest bear bile farm in the country) in Bokeo province during December 2020 as part of an international effort led by CITES to curb the negative impact of these farms on wildlife throughout the region, and a special screening of the BBC documentary series "Bears About The House" was held at the British embassy in Vientiane with more than 100 VIP guests (including the UK, USA and Singapore Ambassadors) and government partners in attendance.

Vietnam Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme

Our team in Vietnam continue to work towards ending the practise of bear bile farming in Vietnam with more provinces being declared free of bile bears over the past year. In October 2020 VR053 Mumslee and VR054 Isabelle were rescued from a bile farmer who had been caught trying to illegally sell body parts from their deceased cage-mate. Once freed from the cage they had spent more than 18 years in, these two female Asiatic black bears were sent to our sanctuary at Cat Tien National Park for care, making Lam Dong province free of bile bears at last. This success was followed by the rescue of the last captive bear in Vinh Long province during March 2021, sadly this animal was in very poor condition for some time prior to his rescue and passed away just days after reaching the sanctuary. With the addition of these two survivors and no other deaths over the course of the year, the total number of bears in our care in Vietnam stood at 41 animals by the end of the year.

The need for additional facilities to house the estimated <350 bears remaining in Vietnam's bear bile farms remains critical and so in January 2021 our construction team commenced construction of Bear House 4 in order to increase capacity for housing rescued bears at Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary. Once completed, this 10-den bear house with six spacious forest enclosures will be able to provide suitable housing for up to 20 more former bile farm bears. Sanctuary infrastructure was further boosted through the connection of mains electricity to our Operations Area which also had a new road network installed to improve conditions in this harsh forest environment

that is often subjected to seasonal floods. In collaboration with our government partners, our team surveyed conditions for captive bears in four target provinces, speaking with the owners and encouraging them to relinquish the bears into our care. Our field team also had cause to celebrate when remote-sensing camera trap surveys of Cat Tien National Park successfully photographed a wild sun bear within the park, the first documented evidence of this species continued survival in this area in 20 years! Plans to commence construction of the Bear Discovery Centre were temporarily stalled when initial quotes came in well above our budget, however the designs are being revised and the site has been agreed with Park management allowing work to hopefully get underway on this landmark facility later in 2021.

<u>Building global awareness of the threats facing</u> Southeast Asia's bears

The BBC documentary series "Bears About The House", filmed on-site at our sanctuary in Laos throughout 2019, was broadcast in the UK during July 2020, with more than 1.2million viewers for each episode and scoring the highest audience appreciation score of any BBC programme during July. The series generated more than 70 printed media, radio and television articles including live appearances on Good Morning Britain and BBC Breakfast, and was subsequently broadcast around the world in more than 20 different countries and territories. The accompanying online campaign videos were shown on the BBC Earth platform, reaching millions of viewers and helping to increase awareness of the threats facing bears in Southeast Asia.

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 Following a disappointing year for income in FY2019-20 our income rose considerably during this financial year by more than 500% thanks largely to the broadcast of the BBC documentary series "Bears About The House" in July 2020. With the ongoing effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic preventing international travel during much of the past year we were extremely encouraged to see considerable growth in online giving and a vastly increased supporter-base in the UK. Our UK operations continue to form a significant portion of the overall contribution made to Free the Bears field programmes in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam with more than 80% of funds expended being directed towards overseas programmes this past year, as well as further expenditure on essential equipment within the UK for use in our overseas
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past year, as well as further expenditure on essential
equipment within the ok for use in our overseas
work.
Continued growth and expansion of our supporter
base is prioritised for next year, focusing on social
media and online giving to ensure that administrative
costs are kept to a minimum.
Statement explaining the
policy for holding reserves Charities Commission guidance the Trustees feel that
stating why they are held 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
7 thount of reserves field
Reasons for holding zero 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. Given the impact of the global pandemic a
full review of emergency reserves is underway across
all of our programmes to ensure we maintain
sufficient reserves in each territory and protect
against sudden currency fluctuations.
Details of fund materially in Para 1.24 There are no funds materially in deficit
deficit
Explanation of any Para 1.23 The Trustees have no uncertainties about the charity
uncertainties about the continuing as a going concern
charity continuing as a going
concern

Additional information (optional)
You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

| Private individual donors,

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	Private individual donors, Peer-2-Peer fundraising, Philanthropic trusts, zoological institutions, corporate sponsors and bequests all make up significant income streams for Free the Bears UK.
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	

A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	The trustees review the major risks to which the 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	In accordance with the Articles of Association, the number of trustees shall be no less than three but are not subject to any maximum. 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. 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. Two new Trustees were appointed during this reporting period, taking the total number of Trustees to six.

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	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. 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. 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.	
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	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. The Chief Executive is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the Charity, reporting on progress to the trustees via email, in person (when possible) and 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 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	628 High Road
	South Benfleet
	Essex SS7 5SU
	England
	(as of 1 st July 2020)

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			
5	Dr Claudia Hartley		Since 8 th July 2020	
6	Giles Jason Clark		Since 5 th March 2021	
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

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 h	eld as custodi	ian trustees on behalf of others
Descriptior held in this	of the assets capacity	n/a
charity on vassets are	objects of the whose behalf the held and how this the custodian ojects	n/a
safe custoo segregatio	arrangements for dy and n of such assets narity's own assets	n/a
	l information (option addresses of advi	onal) sers (Optional information)
Type of adviser	Name	Address
Patron	Steve Leonard BVSc MRCVS	
nternational Wildlife Surgery Advisor	Romain Pizzi BVSc MSc DZooMed DipECZM MACVS (Surg) FRES FR FRGS MRCVS	
Name of ch	nief executive or na	ames of senior staff members (Optional information)
Sengaloun Vo	ngsay – Laos Programm	rudge – Regional Director, Vuthy Chuon – Cambodia Programme Manager, ne Manager, Nguyen Van Dung - Vietnam Programme Manager, Dr Kirsty Din – Regional Communications Manager
-	ions from disc	losure key personnel details
Other o	ptional informa	ation
1		

Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)	m	
Full name(s) Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Matthew Peter Hunt Treasurer	
Date	25 th January 2022	



Free the Bears UK	1135682

Receipts and payments accounts

 For the period from
 Period start date
 To
 Period end date

 31/03/2021
 31/03/2021

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	Unrestricted	Restricted funds	Endowment	Total funds	Last year
	funds	Restricted funds	funds	rotai tunus	Last year
	to the nearest £				
A1 Receipts					
Donations, legacies and grants	301,151	68,154	-	369,305	58,23
		-	-	-	
		-	-	-	•
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	•
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	301,151	68,154	-	369,305	58,23
A2 Asset and investment sales,					
see table).	_				
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	_
Sub total	-	-	-	-	
Total receipts	301,151	68,154	-	369,305	58,23
'					
A3 Payments					
Cost of Fundraising Events Grants & Donations	4,979	74 500	-	4,979	57
Bank interest and charges	40,166 438	71,533	-	111,699 438	30,01 25
Sank interest and charges	430	-	-	430	20
	_	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	,
	-	-	-	-	,
Sub total	45,583	71,533	-	117,116	30,85
A4 Asset and investment					
purchases, (see table)	_				
	-	-		-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	
Total payments	45,583	71,533	-	117,116	58,15
Not of vocal to //					
Net of receipts/(payments)	255,568	- 3,379	-	252,189	3,2
A5 Transfers between funds	-		-	-	
A6 Cash funds last year end	267	-	-	267	3,5
Cash funds this year end	255,835	- 3,379		252,457	20

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period				
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Free the Bears UK HSBC account	255,835	- 3,379	-
	Cash on hand	-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	255,835	- 3,379	-
	(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 N	lame	Date of approval
	W	Matt H	Hunt	28.01.2022

to nearest £

to nearest £

to nearest £



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Ir	ndependent Examiner's Report				
Report to the trustees/ members of	Free The Bears UK				
On accounts for the year ended	31 st March 2021	Charity no (if any)	1135682		
Set out on pages	1-3				
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	The charity's trustees consider the under section 144 of the Charitie independent examination is need it is my responsibility to: • examine the accounts under • to follow the procedures laid to Charity Commission (under section 2).	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			
Basis of independent examiner's statement	My examination was carried out by the Charity Commission. An accounting records kept by the corresented with those records. It items or disclosures in the accountrustees concerning any such may provide all the evidence that wou consequently no opinion is given and fair' view and the report is ling statement below.	harity and a comparison includes harity and a comparison also includes considerate, and seeking expetters. The procedure ald be required in an all as to whether the acceptance of the comparison in the comparison in the comparison and the comparison in the comparis	a review of the son of the accounts eration of any unusual lanations from the es undertaken do not audit, and accounts present a 'true		
Independent examiner's statement	In connection with my examination (other than that disclosed below 1. which gives me reasonable of the requirements: • to keep accounting record Charities Act; and • to prepare accounts which comply with the accounting have not been met; or	ause to believe that in a s in accordance with a accord with the acc	section 130 of the		
	to which, in my opinion, atten- proper understanding of the a	tion should be drawn	in order to enable a ed.		
	Please delete the words in the		ot apply.		
Signed:	80/23	Date	e: 28th January 2022		
Name:	Sue Robertson				

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body

(if any):

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.	n/a