

FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS (PORTSMOUTH)

A WARM WELCOME AT DROPIN RECEPTION.



FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS IS CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF
SERVICE IN PORTSMOUTH

25 years!

Annual Report for the year 2018
Published April 2019

ANNUAL REPORT OF FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS (PORTSMOUTH) FOR THE YEAR 2018

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity number 1080187

Elected Trustees 2018:

Michael Woolley (Chairman)
Coleen Le (Deputy Chair)
John Bosco Nyombi (Treasurer)
Charles Leddy Owen (A to J)
Alan Fair
Sue Adeyemo
Yenga Ikuse Likanda
Rowshanara Reza

Coopted Trustees 2018:

John Gordon
Sharon Brooks
Lia Deyal

Coordinators 2018:

Michael Woolley
Coleen Le

Contact information: coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk
All Saints Church, Commercial Road, Portsmouth PO1 4BT

AIMS AND ORGANISATION

Purposes for which the charity is established:

Relief of immigrants or refugees who are suffering hardship or distress or are in need, with particular reference, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to those who are imprisoned or detained by the Immigration Services of the United Kingdom whether in Holding Centres, Detention Centres, Prisons or Police Stations. There have been no changes in the aims since the charity was registered.

Organisation: The charity is managed by an Executive Committee, consisting of the trustees, which meets every two months. Day to day management is by the coordinators

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The trustees have paid due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on Public Benefit. a) Friends Without Borders has relieved poverty through the provision of payments to meet particular needs, granting allowances to destitute clients for limited periods and assistance with travelling expenses and hostel beds. b) Friends Without Borders has also provided free legal advice, regulated by the OISC, on immigration matters. c) Public Benefit has also been served by the education of the general public through lectures, presentations and discussions.

Chairman's Report on 2018

Twenty Five Years

Wow! It's anniversary time – 25 years since our charity was first formed as Haslar Visitors Group to visit immigration detainees in Haslar prison. Now the prison's closed but we've got a new job (which the Red Cross has come to join) running a dropin for the 200 asylum seekers dispersed to Portsmouth while their cases are being sorted out.

A Good Year

Our twenty fifth year was a good one with a lot of volunteers and a lot of new initiatives. We now have a "hostel" (a caravan) for three homeless men. Stephen Morgan MP is holding monthly surgeries in the dropin for our clients and the new volunteers include a teacher so we have increased the English classes. A small group has been formed to work on a Community Allotment and a client who is a barber brings his clippers every couple of weeks to provide free haircuts. A lot of people are doing what they can to make the bad situation of refugees a bit better.

Generous Supporters

We've also had some generous support from people who can't come to the Dropin. Two legacies have come in during the year and this has enabled us to raise the amount we give destitute asylum seekers from £15 to £20 a week. We help with other expenses too - such as when people making fresh claims have to travel to Liverpool to do so. This is a particularly mean requirement of the Home Office aimed at "failed"

refugees who are not allowed to work, not housed, excluded from the Welfare State and not given any money at all. We give them a straight hundred pounds for Liverpool trips and suggest they sleep on the coach. If they book early they might even get a little change and be able to buy lunch when they get there.

It isn't just legacies which have sustained us, the church has been particularly helpful – the Anglican Bishop nominated us for his Lent Appeal and one or two parishes have made noteworthy donations. Our biggest and most dependable income comes from our monthly donors.



Mabel, a new volunteer, with a client

Let them Work

During 2018 we affiliated with more than 80 charities, think tanks, faith groups, businesses and trade unions to launch the 'Lift the Ban' campaign calling on the Government to grant the right to work to people seeking asylum. The campaign makes the case that being allowed to work would

support people's integration into new communities, allow them dignity and improve their health and wellbeing. It features new statistics which reveal:

- 94% would like to work;
- 65% were working before they came here;
- 74% had a secondary education while 37% had a degree.

The report also looks at the economic case for lifting the ban and suggests that this could substantially help the Government through increased tax revenues and savings on asylum support payments.



A full room at a recent dropin

Signing On:

A perfectly reasonable Home Office requirement for asylum seekers is that they sign on at regular intervals. Asylum Seekers in Portsmouth used to have to sign on at the police station in Portsmouth but that has now been changed to Fareham, 11 miles away. They are occasionally arrested when they sign which makes the day very stressful. Hearing about this one of our supporters, the Vicar of Holy Trinity Fareham, takes herself down to the police station on signing days and hangs about outside, introducing herself and inviting signers to have a coffee nearby. All the signers and all the immigration officers are based in Portsmouth so signing in Fareham is

inconvenient for everyone. It is also expensive – we pay bus fares for a number of clients, costing us around £100 a month.

Portsmouth Police Station is being rebuilt but apparently it hasn't yet been decided if the new station will be suitable for signing. One would have thought it could have been included in the architect's brief.

Ongoing projects

- Access to Justice continues.
- Journeys Festival (not an FWB project though we worked closely in 2017) continues the refugee-themed Arts Festival
- The Vigil for Refugees will be in Portsmouth this year, at St Thomas's Cathedral.

Retirements

During 2018 we have said "goodbye" to Philip Hudson who was a splendid book-keeper for many years and Helen Burchett who started the "Children's Corner" and made it a tremendous success. Many thanks to both of them.

Helen is stepping back but maintaining her links with the charity which is what I want to do myself - having reached 75 I hope to retire as Chairman but carry on doing some of the hands-on work. It is a good moment, Friends Without Borders is thriving, we have a lot of good new volunteers and some very faithful and generous supporters. It has been a great privilege to be Chairman of such a dynamic group for the last five years. And a great privilege to work with our amazing clients.

*Michael Woolley
Chairman*

An Inside Look at FWB

Catherine Edenborough spent six weeks on placement at Friends Without Borders as part of her training to become a priest in the Church of England.

It's 9.55am on a cold Monday morning in January - my first morning on placement. I'm sitting next to Peter behind the Reception desk wondering what to expect. Sign-in sheets are ready and waiting. Case workers are starting up their computers. The kitchen is beginning to hum into life - tea and coffee is ready, the first cheese rolls soon to be prepared. At 10am the doors open and a wave of humanity rushes in on a blast of cold air. They sign in, some smiling, some serious. They enter their country of origin on the sheet along with their name... Afghanistan, Eritrea, Sudan, Cameroon, North Korea, China, Mongolia, Nigeria... the list goes on. One woman gives me her identity card and points at the sheet. I realise she can't speak English or write, so I write her name on the list for her and smile. Her husband gives me a thumbs-up. So begins my time at Friends Without Borders.

The past six weeks have introduced me to a hidden world in Portsmouth - a world that most people never see. A world of people navigating the complexities of the UK asylum system and showing remarkable resilience and good cheer in spite of the challenges they face. I am struck by how difficult and inconvenient the immigration process is. Locally, for example, asylum seekers in Portsmouth have to report to Fareham police station regularly, meaning that people with little or no

money have to get the bus to Fareham and queue up outside the police station without shelter as if they are criminals. And nationally they have to travel to Liverpool to lodge a fresh asylum claim. It feels as if the system is deliberately hostile, intended to make people give up.



Catherine Edenborough

As soon as one hurdle is overcome, another looms. The words of one woman ring in my ears. After eight years she had been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain, an event that you might imagine would be cause for celebration. 'Oh,' she said, 'after all this time and effort, the excitement has gone. Now I have a new set of problems, like having to find new accommodation within 28 days...'

In the midst of a complex and often inhumane immigration system, the Friends Without Borders drop-in is somewhere that seeks to redress the balance. Alongside practical help with destitution money and travel costs, a personal welcome, warm smile and listening ear are always on offer. Some clients speak of coming to the drop-in to meet their friends and calling it their family. It's not always possible to provide help but it feels to me that Friends Without Borders is saying 'We are here for you and we

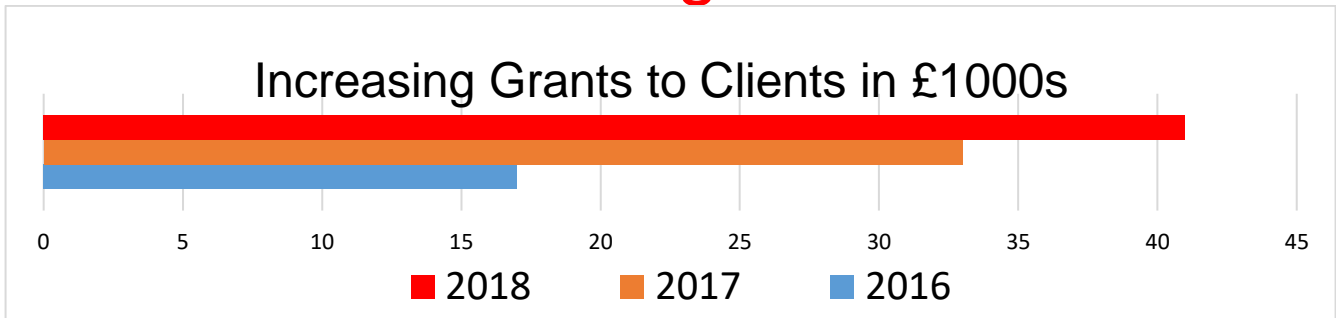
will always help you if we can'. It operates in the midst of the current asylum system saying 'It doesn't have to be like this'.

I am very grateful for my time with Friends Without Borders. Meeting the clients and volunteers has been a real eye-opener and a window onto an aspect of life in Britain that I wish was different. It's been really inspiring to see the great work being done to support those who want to make a new life here. Thank you!

Financial Report 2018

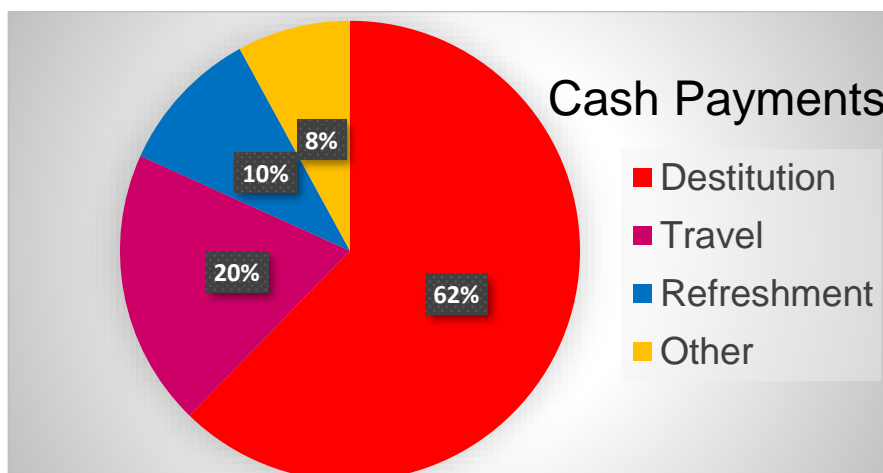
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Regular (under £500)	33,181	36,621	36,976
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Gift Aid	4,630	12,619	0
<u>TOTAL INCOMING</u>	60,485	65,480	42,976
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DROPIN COST			
Grants made to clients	37,605	24,559	16,817
Legal fees paid for clients	3,477	8,723	0
Rent and refreshment	6,375	3,486	3,500
Volunteer travel	2,316	2,325	1,999
Total	49,772	39,093	22,316
ACCESS TO JUSTICE COST			
Office rent, phone etc (including some salary in 2016)	2,705	10,094	14,002
JOURNEYS FESTIVAL COST	0	9,097	0
RESERVES	8,008	7,196	6,658
<u>TOTAL OUTGOING</u>	60,485	65,480	42,976

What The Figures Mean



- Our income from Regular Donors is very dependable.
- Our income from Legacies and other big gifts has increased but fluctuates.
- Gift Aid was irregular in 2016 and 2017 but has now settled down.
- **WE ARE PROUD THAT THE GRANTS AND LEGAL FEES WE PAY FOR DESTITUTE ASYLUM SEEKERS HAVE GONE UP EACH YEAR – FROM £17,000 IN 2016 TO £41,000 IN 2018.**
- Legal Fees were high in 2017 because of a single very large grant.
- Our refreshment costs have increased as the Red Cross no longer pays for refreshments at the dropin.
- Access for Justice costs have crashed, as the service has been cut 80% with the retirement of John Bingham who volunteered two full days a week. Costs were inflated in 2016 by the inclusion of a grant we had to repay when the paid staff left us. We are working to increase the Access for Justice service again.
- Journeys Festival was a one-off financial event. We received £10,000 on its behalf in 2017 and paid out nearly £10,000 in expenses the same year.
- Our reserves have built up and this has allowed us to provide a hostel (a caravan) for three destitute asylum seekers in 2019. We are currently looking for a three bedroom house to rent in place of the caravan.

The Charity Is In Good Heart And Good Financial Health



*John Bosco Nyombi
Treasurer*

For two months in 2018 we did a detailed survey of our cash payments. While this was a limited survey we believe it typical.

Access to Justice

Our trustee Charles Leddy Owen reports on the Friends Without Borders Access to Justice project which is regulated by the quasi-legal Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner

As recently reported by the media in relation to the 'Windrush scandal', the government's self-styled 'hostile environment' demands stringent evidence for immigration applications. Our clients therefore need to produce documents to prove long-term residence in the UK or the quality of their private or family lives here. This can make the process of applying for citizenship or renewing leave to remain very challenging. Such applications have been at the forefront of the work undertaken by Access to Justice this year.

The project has continued to struggle in terms of man/womanpower as it is

currently largely reliant on me (Charles) and I work full-time elsewhere. I am unable to attend for more than a few hours a week and there is no capacity for training further volunteers up. It is therefore very encouraging news that a local Citizens Advice Bureau are currently in the process of training up a team of advisers in immigration law.

Despite the limitations of the service there have been some significant successes, with several clients obtaining further or indefinite leave to remain, and more still becoming British citizens through registration or naturalisation. As with every year,





Some of our 2018 clients with their "Leave to Remain" cards.

there have also been some disappointing outcomes, usually due to the aforementioned harshness of the evidence threshold and the inconsistency of Home Office decision-making. Furthermore, Home Office delays with regard to decisions remain appalling, sometimes stretching to over a year with few if any updates. We thank both of our local MPs and their office staff for their assistance in chasing up such decisions.

Many experts are predicting further 'Windrush' style scandals in relation to changes in immigration rules following Brexit, so there seems little doubt that Access to Justice and other immigration advisers in Portsmouth will be kept busy in the future.



Working in the Community

Part of our work is the “education of the general public through lectures, presentations and discussions”. Coleen, Geoff, Michael, Sue and other volunteers have all helped with these events. We got off to a slow start in 2018 because of health problems and holidays, but the end of the year was much busier.



We also made it into the local press!

New Milton Quakers	11 th April 2018	Illustrated talk
Church of the Resurrection	17 th June 2018	Talk in the sermon slot
St Andrew's	17 th June 2018	Talk in the sermon slot
Chichester Cathedral	18 th June 2018	Vigil for Refugees
All Saints Portsmouth	5 th July 2018	Portsmouth Grammar School
Al Mahdi Centre	14 th July 2018	Thank children for collection
All Saints Denmead	15 th Sept 2018	Exhibition and appeal
St Thomas's Cathedral	18 th Nov 2018	Receive Lent Appeal cheque
All Saints Portsmouth	27 th Nov 2018	Talk to Red Cross volunteers
Cosham Community Choir	10 th Dec 2018	Talk: appeal/ thank you
St Mary's Portsmouth	21 st Dec 2018	Receive vouchers for clients
St Thomas's Cathedral	23 rd Dec 2018	Carol Service reading



If you know of an organisation which would be interested in having a speaker or hosting an exhibition, or know of a public figure who would like to visit the drop-in please let us know. We like to help – there is no charge though we would appreciate the chance to make an appeal

Our volunteer Helen on the Community Allotment. Sadly we don't have any photos of her with our half dozen clients!



The Immigration and Social Security Bill

This Bill, part of the Brexit legislation, is currently is wending its way through Parliament. It aims to end rights to free movement of persons under retained EU law. It repeals other retained EU law relating to immigration. It modifies retained EU law relating to social security.

Happily the Bill commits the Government to exploring alternatives to Immigration Detention, which we have long wanted. Britain is the only country in Europe which doesn't have a limit and it means that people spend far too much time under lock and key. A time limit would force immigration officials to act faster – either sending detainees back or releasing them.

Another happy aspiration is to explore with the European Union how unaccompanied children can continue to be brought together with their families if they are in the UK or the member states.

The Government promises to listen carefully to arguments for reinstating the right of asylum seekers to work. Friends Without Borders is affiliated to the “Lift the Ban” campaign (<http://lifttheban.co.uk/>) which aims to end the ban on working. Technically asylum seekers can work after 12 months if they are in a “shortage” occupation but in practice we have never heard of an asylum seeker

being allowed to do so. They should be given the right to work after six months and without restriction – it would be good for them and good for Britain, it would save us money and give them dignity.

Unlike some previous legislation this Bill seems to offer what we would regard as improvements in the immigration system. The offers are cautious and may not make it through Parliament, but it is good that a new Home Secretary is open to new ideas. It is good that he is not rigorously pursuing some of the “hostile environment” policies of his predecessors.

How the Bill will proceed in these tumultuous Parliamentary times is difficult to know but we encourage our supporters to watch its progress and write to their MPs as appropriate. If you write ask your MP to bring your opinions to the attention of the Home Secretary.

Michael Woolley

Helping the Homeless

We now have a hostel for homeless asylum seekers preparing fresh claims. Our “hostel” at present is a mobile home but we soon hope to rent a house near to All Saints.

AA from Syria is twenty, a bit lost and has been homeless for months, sleeping on friends' floors. RR from Iran was on the streets before coming to us. AF recently arrived in Portsmouth and was homeless.

There are a tangle of laws to negotiate. Mrs May's Right to Rent Act (part of the Hostile Environment for refugees) means that landlords cannot rent out rooms without seeing the tenants' papers. Our three homeless clients don't have papers. A dramatic court judgement as we go to press may end that rule, we shall have to see if it's appealed.

Our trustees have been thinking about how to help people like AA, RR and AF for months. The answer seems to be a house for three (three unrelated people are allowed to share a “house in multiple occupation” without any special rules). We would rent it as a “hostel” as hostels are

specifically exempted from the Right to Rent laws.

The final element has been the period of rent. Our first thought was to rent for a few winter weeks - but people renting out houses normally only do so for six months. Thus we arrived at the mobile home we only rented at first for four weeks. However we have extended things as our finances have strengthened with a recent generous donation.

The mobile home, though better than the streets, is very expensive and very small. So now we are looking for a furnished house to rent near All Saints, this won't cost us more than the caravan and will be in a much more convenient location for us and our three musketeers. It's been quite a journey but we're finally sorting things out and may even have found somewhere by the time of our Annual Meeting.



English Lessons at All Saints

Rob Johnston as a long serving professional art teacher, joined FWB hoping to offer some help from his teaching background – which he certainly has!

Our client's enthusiasm and determination to move forward and grasp some basic but useful English is very rewarding. I feel this aspect of what we do has a very definite benefit to the refugees that come to the All Saints drop-in.

Our approach has been to focus on simple day to day themes that suit people trying to get things done for example shopping, travelling and communicating essential data (name, address, money, time, dates etc.).

Anita David from the Red Cross has brought her more specialist training in English as a Foreign Language to the centre and this has really helped to support a focus and structure to the teaching sessions.

Our strategy is now to organise around 5 week courses that give a better continuity focus for clients. They can work as a more cohesive group and also support each other in learning about specific topics like food, money, clothes and time.

Levels of ability vary considerably so having basic and advanced groups helps them to work at the right pace. Oral work is equally balanced with good written practice as this will be really important with communicating.



Rob and students in the church

It has been rewarding to see confidence grow in many people as they get to grips with a difficult and often alien language and it is socially enhancing for the group to work together.

Language is now a clear and consistent part of the drop-in centre and I hope we can continue to help those in need.

Currently hosting in South Wales and it's wonderful. If you are hesitating, don't. Jump in. I think we are getting more out of it than our guests! We don't want them to leave!

Refugees at Home

The speaker at our Annual Meeting this year is the Placement Coordinator of the wonderful charity Refugees at Home:
Siobhan De Jonghe.

She can be contacted during working hours on 07395 794183

Refugees At Home is a small charity that arranges altruistic hosting, over a limited period, for destitute asylum-seekers and refugees. Since we started, some three years ago, we have made about 1,540 placements, hosted for more than 112,000 individual person nights and currently host around 160 guests across the UK.

We always need hosts in cities and particularly in places like Portsmouth where there are active, engaged referrers and many potential guests. With more hosts and also Home Visitors to support them (HVs are professionals like district nurses, social workers and doctors, working as volunteers to assess hosts) we could do so much more and help so many people when they really need it. There is nothing to beat having somewhere, safe, warm and dry to sleep!

GUEST
I have learnt very important positive lessons from my British host that I never realised before. Humanity and kindness have no borders and not limited to certain groups. Giving makes us happy.
Thanks Refugees at Home for your amazing humane work.
M, Guest
November 28th, 2018

The Testimonials on the website
<https://www.refugeesathome.org/>
speak for themselves

It's also very interesting to see the media clips, from BBC2 Newsnight for example

J THERAPIST
A big thank you for your support of F. I can't get over how she has changed since she has been staying with the couple from RaH!
She is much calmer. F notices the change herself. I think, since she has come to this country, 9 years ago, this is the first time she feels more settled; she even stopped putting all that makeup.
J, therapist, London
October 16th, 2018

Friends Without Borders

Registered Charity no 1080187

This is a multi-purpose form. Please fill in such parts as are relevant.

Count me as a Supporter

Please add me to your supporters.

Name: _____

Email for news: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone number: _____

Gift Aid Certificate

- Donations from taxpayers are supplemented by a grant from the Treasury
- Our Treasurer will make the claim, the only thing needed of the donor is their **address** and **signature** below that they are paying income tax

I am a taxpayer paying tax at least equivalent to this claim and claim Gift Aid on this and all future donations. I have given my address above.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Standing Order

To the Manager: Please pay **Friends Without Borders** the sum below by standing order until further notice. Friends Without Borders account is with Lloyds, Waterloooville.

Sort code: 30-99-20. Account number: 00985875

Monthly amount in figures: £_____ in words: _____

Date of first payment: _____ My bank: _____

My sort code: _____ My account number: _____

My account name: _____

Signed: _____

Please return this form to:

**Friends Without Borders, All Saints Church, Commercial Road,
Portsmouth PO1 4BT**

FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS

a completely independent, all-volunteer charity which has served asylum seekers and refugees in Portsmouth for the last 25 years. We have NO Government contracts (which means we can challenge Government) and rely almost entirely for support on the contributions of local people.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Become a Supporter

Email: coordinator@friendswithoutborders.org.uk and we'll send you an occasional newsletter.

Give Money for Grants

Asylum seekers still only get £37.75 a week – enough to live but any small emergency such as a hole in a shoe or a bus to a hospital becomes a crisis. We pay over £700 a week in small grants to needy asylum seekers.

Make out a Standing Order

One of our strengths is a network of local supporters who pay small (whatever you like but £5 to £20 is typical) amounts each month - giving us staying power.

Remember to add Gift Aid

Gift Aid adds 25p to every £1 you give so anybody who pays income tax and donates should sign the form overleaf. We got £5,000 in Gift Aid in 2018

Leave a Legacy

Two of our supporters left us legacies in 2018. These are the second and third we have received and hopefully not the last. It has helped us establish a hostel for homeless asylum seekers.

Volunteer Yourself

We need volunteer case workers. We also need volunteers to do various other jobs. The asylum-seekers themselves do much of the hum-drum work but it's good to have a team of steady volunteers. Email:

chairman@friendswithoutborders.org.uk

And finally to all those of you supporting the work already be assured that we will spend your money wisely and

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

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****THE CHARITY IS IN GOOD HEART AND GOOD FINANCIAL HEALTH****

**Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Friends Without Borders
(Registered charity number 1080187) on the accounts for the year ended
31 December 2018**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Friends Without Borders for the year ended 31st December 2018 set out on the attached pages.

This report is made solely to the trustees of Friends Without Borders, as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act"). My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees of Friends Without Borders those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the trustees as a body, for any work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of Friends Without Borders you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Act. You consider that the audit requirements of the Act do not apply.

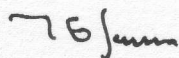
I report in respect of my examination of Friends Without Border's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination, I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Trevor James FCA DchA
Dormer Cottage
West Broyle
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 3PR
2 March 2019