

Registered charity in England and Wales (No. 1157297)

**ACTION FOR CONSERVATION
TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019**

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The trustees present their report and the attached independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019.

This report and the financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (SORP 2005).

Reference and administrative Information

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Charity name | Action for Conservation |
| Charity number | 1157297 |
| Registered office | 15 Wytham Street Oxford OX1 4SU |
| Trustees/Directors | |
| Chairperson | Professor David Macdonald |
| Treasurer | Mr Alex Mills |
| Other trustees | Dr Robert Macfarlane Ms Aoife Bennett Dr John Fanshawe Dame Helen Ghosh DCB Ms Princess-Joy Emeanuwa Ms Helen Bourne Ms Serena Murdoch |
| Chief Executive Officer | Mr Hendrikus van Hensbergen |
| Programme Manager | Ms Laura Kravac |

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Structure, Governance and Management

Action for Conservation (AFC) was registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 3 June 2014. As a CIO, AFC is governed by its constitution, adopted on 10 April 2014 and last amended on 22 June 2017. Under the constitution, the trustees are responsible for the overall governance of the CIO and its property and funds. The responsibility for the daily operation of the CIO lies with the management committee formed of the Chairperson and Treasurer and supported by the Chief Executive. The constitution provides that there must be at least three and not more than twelve trustees, elected by the existing trustees at a properly convened meeting. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the existing charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. New trustees are inducted into the workings of the charity by the Board of Trustees.

Objectives and Activities

The principal objective of the charity as set out in the constitution is to educate children and young people about nature conservation and to provide opportunities for their involvement in related projects. The trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, which is achieved through the charity's activities as follows:-

- Delivery of a series of workshops on conservation in UK secondary schools
- Recruiting and training volunteers to deliver these workshops and developing learning materials to aid in their delivery
- Running residential conservation camps for groups of young people
- Mentoring young people through our Ambassador Programme, as they lead projects for the benefit of nature in their communities and have a voice in conservation decision making at local and national level
- Building partnerships with conservation organisations to offer work experience placements and volunteering opportunities to students and create opportunities for young people to share their voice and shape conservation policy and practice
- Producing blogs and other communications materials for publication on our website, email newsletters and externally
- Building a strong and effective Board of Trustees and fundraising to deliver activities

Financial Review

Total incoming resources for the year were £200,242 of which £93,846 was subject to restriction. Expenditure for the year totaled £180,623; £133,674 was spent on restricted fund activities. Total funds at 31 March 2019 amounted to £149,234.

As a matter of policy, the trustees review the amount of free reserves held in cash and cash equivalents not committed or restricted to any particular purpose. The Board considers the charity's exposure to the risk of any significant loss of income and to the risk of unforeseen expenditure, which cannot be mitigated by executive action, and on this basis decides whether the amount of assets held as free reserves should be increased or decreased.

The charity aims to maintain free reserves equivalent to at least three months of committed expenditure. At 31 March 2019 free reserves stood at £45,000. The remaining funds carried forward, most of which were received 6 months into the financial year, are committed to core cost expenditure in the first 6 months of the coming financial year. Whilst we intend to increase our reserves over the coming year as we grow, the Board is satisfied that with careful management of working capital this level of reserves is sufficient to enable the charity to continue in operation at present. No fund is in deficit.

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Chair's Report

The annual report provides the trustees with an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of our team over the course of the year. We can look back on a year of considerable success, that has seen the charity grow once more, reach new regions of the UK and expand its focus. With this growth comes greater responsibility; there is a need for the trustees to provide guidance and leadership and maintain sound financial controls as we seek to deliver on our mission.

This year has seen us increase our income once more, thanks to the generosity of our existing supporters and a host of new trusts and foundations and individual donors who have seen fit to support us. The majority of trusts and foundations that made grants in the previous financial year have done so again, indicating that they are confident that we are achieving impact. We continue to be supported by the following trusts and foundations, who made contributions at the same level in FY17/18; James Gibson Charitable Trust (£10,000), Swire Charitable Trust (£15,000), Matthew Heathcoat Amory Trust (£2,500), Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust (£8,000) and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (£30,000). We have seen an increase in contribution from the Postcode Local Trust, who awarded the charity £25,000 as part of their Rising Star Award, awarded to our Chief Executive for his inspirational leadership. In addition, we are excited to report that a number of new funders have decided to support our work, including grants from the Reta Lila Howard Foundation (£50,000), Paul Simon, as part of his European farewell tour (£18,810), and members of The Funding Network (£17,966), bringing our individual donations up to a total of £39,347. Our trustee, Robert Macfarlane, has also generously chosen to donate a proportion of the royalties from his bestselling book *The Lost Words* to the charity on an ongoing basis. All AFC trustees, with the exception of young trustees, are making an annual contribution to the charity's funds. This increase in income allowed us to grow our staff capacity towards the end of the financial year, by hiring an additional Programme Coordinator and a part-time Finance & Grants Officer, as well as expand our core delivery into the North West region.

Over the course of the year we have scaled up the WildED secondary school workshop programme, delivering 75 two-hour workshops across 25 schools, in which an average of 46% of students are eligible for pupil premium funding. 110 student-led environmental change projects were successfully delivered as part of this programme. 26 young people, 42% of them from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, attended two residential camps and went on to join our one-year Ambassador Programme and lead action in their communities. The expansion of our programmes into the North West has been successful and there is high demand from schools and so we will be increasing the number of schools we work with in each area and extending the programme to new areas in the coming year. This more regional, 'place-based' approach connects our three programmes more coherently, removing geographical barriers which can prevent our target demographic from progressing through all three steps of our programme. We have built numerous relationships with partner organisations to support the delivery of our core programmes, ensuring that our work is embedded within the sector and doesn't duplicate existing work. As well as undertaking their own conservation projects in their local communities, our Ambassadors have worked with us to drive systemic change in Government and the wider sector to shape youth involvement in environmental decision making. Having successfully pushed, among other organisations, for the inclusion of young people within the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, we joined the steering group for the #iwill campaign, led by the youth social action charity, Step Up To Serve, which is focussing on the environment to tie in with the Government's 2019 Year of Green Action (YOGA). Three of our Youth Ambassadors became #iwill Ambassadors and one of them co-chaired the launch of the campaign at the Zoological Society of London, attended by the Secretary of State. As part of our commitment to the campaign we organised a youth event for young people across the South West, alongside the Natural History Consortium, to enable young people to feed ideas into how key issues identified for the YOGA would be communicated. Our Ambassadors led the event and recommendations were communicated to the Secretary of State via civil servants who attended. We have also discussed and made the case for youth trusteeship with senior staff at five large environmental NGOs, all of which are considering or have now set up youth advisory boards or admitted young people to their trustee boards.

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Our programmes continue to deliver fantastic results. In addition to running WildED workshops in London, Bristol, Cardiff and Newport we now reach young people living in Liverpool and Manchester too. 87 % of students who participated in the WildED programme said they have a better understanding of what conservation is and why it is important as a result of their participation, 84% said they have more knowledge of environmental issues and solutions for tackling them, 66% said they are more aware of careers in conservation and 73% said they now consider their behaviour and how it has an impact on the environment. Altogether, 107 WildED student group projects showed evidence of key skills attainment and environmental knowledge and 66 showed measurable change for people or wildlife. All student projects were assessed in the final workshop in each school using criteria that tested key skills attainment, environmental knowledge acquisition and impact. In addition, expert judges from over 15 different organisations assessed the winning student teams from all schools against the same set of criteria at our three final city-wide 'Dragons' Den' events.

We saw similar success with our Residential Camps. Measured on a 5-point scale, 94% of our camp participants showed increases in their awareness of both global and local environmental issues, 92% reported being more aware of the different career opportunities within the environmental sector, 96% felt more knowledgeable about environmental issues and solutions for tackling them and 96% reported now having the skills needed to lead an environmental change project in their community.

Through our Youth Ambassador Programme, 52 young people delivered 300 actions for the environment in their local communities and beyond. Of these actions, 223 demonstrated key skills attainment and 255 demonstrated evidence that they learnt about an environmental issue, solution, species, system or process. Ambassadors have created lesson plans on climate change and flooding, organised and delivered litter picks, started school bee clubs and installed bee hives, written and performed a nature rap at the Timber Festival, started youth ranger groups, contributed to Government research on environmental volunteering, scripted and co-created a film on plastic pollution, targeted at experts on the issue, that opened the 2018 Klosters Forum on ocean pollution in Switzerland, among many more actions.

In March 2019, we held our inaugural visit to the Penpont Estate, in the Brecon Beacons National Park, with staff and Ambassadors, to explore the site, meet with landowners and tenant farmers, and begin planning for our newest project, The Penpont Project. The Penpont Project aims to restore habitats and ecosystems and explore innovative farming and forestry approaches to provide a healthy and sustainable support system for people, biodiversity and agriculture, whilst providing natural solutions to climate and ecological concerns. The project, led by a group of Action for Conservation Youth Ambassadors in partnership with farmers and landowners, will create a gold-standard for youth-led nature restoration that will act as a blueprint and exemplar for Government and NGOs in the UK and further afield, supporting our efforts to create systemic change in the wider sector. Over the next 12 months will focus on planning and researching, conducting baseline surveys and meeting with stakeholders to determine the scope of the project.

The board was extremely pleased to welcome our second youth trustee this year, who brings with her direct experience of our programmes that will help inform our approaches over the coming year. We will continue to provide dedicated and flexible support to the Chief Executive as we enter an important year for the charity's growth. The board has every confidence in the capabilities of our growing staff team and we look forward to another year of impactful programmes that inspire and empower young people to take action for nature and that exemplify our core values of Diversity, Wonder, Hope, Action and Change.

Professor David Macdonald CBE, FRSE (Chair)

Approved by the trustees on 29th January 2020

**ACTION FOR CONSERVATION
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of 'Action for Conservation.'

I report on the Receipts & Payments accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2019.

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(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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 next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (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 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 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

Name: Eliza Levien

Relevant professional qualification or body: ICAEW

Address: Anchor Cottage, The Street, Nacton, Suffolk, IP10 0EU

Date: 21 January 2020

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

Period Start Date: 1 April 2018


Period End Date: 31 March 2019

Section A Receipts and payments

| | Unrestricted funds to the nearest £ | Restricted funds to the nearest £ | Total funds to the nearest £ | Last year to the nearest £ |
|---|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Receipts | | | | |
| Income from schools | 325 | - | 325 | 400 |
| Small donations | 20,537 | - | 20,537 | 5,048 |
| Bank interest | 68 | - | 68 | 20 |
| Trusts & Foundations | 85,466 | 75,036 | 160,502 | 161,154 |
| Other NGOs | - | - | - | - |
| Large donations | - | 18,810 | 18,810 | - |
| Total Receipts | 106,395 | 93,846 | 200,242 | 166,622 |
| Payments | | | | |
| Salaries & pension | 17,001 | 104,864 | 121,865 | 57,742 |
| Travel & subsistence | 8,104 | 14,810 | 22,914 | 7,122 |
| Trustee expenses | 369 | - | 369 | 331 |
| Fundraising | 653 | - | 653 | 416 |
| Event costs | 1,227 | 10,000 | 11,227 | 6,557 |
| Professional fees, safeguarding & training | 3,034 | - | 3,034 | 3,479 |
| Office overheads | 16,560 | 4,000 | 20,560 | 4,527 |
| Marketing | - | - | - | 2,108 |
| Total Payments | 46,949 | 133,674 | 180,623 | 82,282 |
| Net of receipts/payments | 59,446 | -39,828 | 19,619 | 84,340 |
| Cash funds last year end | 83,787 | 45,828 | 129,615 | 45,275 |
| Cash funds this year end | 143,233 | 6,000 | 149,234 | 129,615 |

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

| | Unrestricted funds to the nearest £ | Restricted funds to the nearest £ |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Cash Funds | | |
| Grants & Donations | 143,233 | 6,000 |
| Funds held in PayPal | - | - |
| Total cash funds | 143,233 | 6,000 |
| Other Monetary Assets | | |
| Outstanding school workshop fee | 400 | - |
| Liabilities | | |
| PAYE & Pension Contributions | 3,833 | - |
| Account Payable – Staff expenses | 1,040 | - |

Trustee Signature: 

Print Name: ALEX MILLS Date of Approval: 24.01.2020