



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	01	April	2018		31	March	2019

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

Free the Bears UK

Other names charity is known by

Free the Bears, Free the Bears (UK)

Registered charity number (if any)

1135682

Charity's principal address

Myrtle Cottage, 79 Church Road

Potters Bar

Hertfordshire

Postcode EN6 1EY

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			
5				
6				
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9				
10				
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13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

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

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Association
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	<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> <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>

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Organisation and Management

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 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.

Affiliates

Free the Bears UK is affiliated to several other independent groups. "Free the Bears Fund Inc." (converted to Free the Bears Ltd from Oct 2018) 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 Cambodian 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, India, Lao PDR and Vietnam.

Partners

In addition to the affiliate group, Free the Bears UK also works closely with other International partner organisations when mutual goals are shared. Free the Bears has been a major funder of Wildlife SOS (India) who are responsible for the Dancing Bear Rescue and Kalandar Rehabilitation Project in India since inception subject to a Memorandum of Understanding (expired October 2018 with discussions underway regarding renewal).

Risk Management

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.

Section C

Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

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 undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

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 2018/19 included;

- 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 conducting a thorough disease risk assessment and developing a management strategy for tuberculosis (a potentially zoonotic disease that affects up to one third of the world's human population and is one of the top ten causes of human deaths worldwide) within the Sun bear population at Phnom Tamao, the world's largest captive group of this globally threatened species. Our work to understand public attitudes towards bears and the use of their body parts within the Cambodian public at large forms the single biggest study undertaken to examine an illegal wildlife product within the Southeast Asian region and will soon be moving into the next phase aimed at developing a targeted behaviour change campaign.
- 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. Continued international pressure on Laos to meet its obligations under CITES has led to an urgent need for suitable options for the placement of rescued wildlife whilst capacity-building of government officers to address illegal wildlife trade issues remains critical.
- 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 have fallen to fewer than 1,000 animals. Expansion of our education and research programmes aimed at building support for wild bear conservation and reduced consumer demand for bear-based products.
- Continued support for the care of former "dancing bears" in India and monitoring of Kalandar communities to ensure that alternative livelihoods adopted following the cessation of bear dancing are sustainable and lead to improved welfare for the community.

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 details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

Volunteers continue to play a significant role in both the raising of funds to support field programmes and, more directly, through efforts on-the-ground at our sanctuaries. Over the past year more than 30 volunteers from the UK have gained practical experience assisting our Bear Care Teams at sanctuaries in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam while a number of skilled professionals have helped build capacity within our teams in fields as diverse as wildlife care, construction and veterinary nursing.

Section D

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

The information below represents a summary of main achievements for the Charity during the year. For a full account of recent activities please see the Free the Bears Annual review for 2018-19 which will be available to download from our website.

Cambodian Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme

After 22 years of working in Cambodia in partnership with the Forestry Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries, we continued to see a decline in the number of bears being rescued with just two new bears being bought into our care over the past year and fewer reports of bears being illegally traded across the country. The two new arrivals were both cubs (one young sun bear and one slightly older Asiatic black bear), demonstrating that previous practises such as the keeping of bears as trophy pets or tourist attractions in hotels or restaurants seems to have been firmly relegated to the history books in Cambodia and law enforcement efforts are resulting in speedier reporting and interdiction of anyone attempting to trade in bears.

Overall numbers of bears in our care at the Cambodian Bear Sanctuary within Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre declined to 118 animals (from 124 animals at the end of last year) due to eight deaths, mostly as a result of ongoing efforts to halt the spread of tuberculosis within our globally-significant population of rescued sun bears. Tuberculosis is the leading cause of death amongst sun bears at the sanctuary, with confirmed cases accounting for 48% of all sun bear deaths to May 2018 (rising to 54% of all deaths if unconfirmed cases are taken into account) and so our veterinary team, supported by external experts, have invested hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars in developing a robust Disease Risk Assessment aimed at determining the level of risk of tuberculosis infection to the bear population, and screening tools in order to mitigate the risk of the disease spreading further.

As part of our continued commitment towards building the capacity of local partners and staff, in March 2019 we hosted a training workshop for environmental educators from across Southeast Asia and China. The workshop was delivered in partnership with the Zoological Society of London, Oxford Martin Illegal Wildlife Trade Programme (University of Oxford) and San Diego Zoo Global. The five-day workshop in social science, Theory of Change and social marketing consisted of four parts: the first focused on the planning of conservation education activities, the second on behavior change strategies with a particular focus on social marketing principles and concepts, the third on social science research techniques, using as a case study the FTB/SDZG collaborative work that is ongoing in the country, and the last on the impact evaluation of behaviour change projects which included a chance for each organization to discuss current projects that are facing challenges in this subject area. A total of 22 participants joined the workshop from 10 organizations throughout the region, including Cambodia, China, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Our Early Career Conservation Scholarships programme continued to grow with our second Cambodian scholarship student, Roth Vichet, graduating his Masters degree in Biodiversity Conservation at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Vichet was subsequently offered and accepted a full-time role within Free the Bears Research programme team.

A joint research programme examining reproductive health of rescued female sun bears in partnership with Chester Zoo received welcome news in June 2018 with the first birth of a sun bear in captivity within mainland UK to the pair of bears housed at Chester Zoo. The parents, Toni and Milli, were originally rescued in Cambodia and sent to the UK to join the European breeding programme for this vulnerable species.

Laos Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme

The number of bears in our care continued to grow in Laos with ten new bears being confiscated over the past year, taking our population up to 62 animals, the highest number ever. Additionally the number of other species in our care at

Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary continued to grow, numbering 42 animals of 13 species by the end of the year, with notable new rescues including an Asian golden cat and Pygmy loris coming into our care as a result of government-led wildlife law enforcement actions. This record-breaking number of new arrivals ensured that construction at the new sanctuary was non-stop throughout the year, with groups of bears moving into Bear enclosure 2 and Bear House 3, whilst work is almost complete on Bear House 4. Beyond accommodation for bears our team also completed a purpose-built facility for the red pandas rescued in January 2018 within our dedicated Small Carnivore Conservation Centre, and external contractors were engaged to build Laos' first fully-equipped wildlife hospital to improve veterinary care for all animals at the sanctuary.

Following a request from our partners at the Department of Forestry Inspection we organised a 3-day training workshop on "Primary Care for Rescued Wildlife" for 25 DIFI officers from eight northern provinces. This workshop was delivered by Free the Bears staff from Laos, Vietnam and our regional team, with additional specialist support given by Dr Romain Pizzi of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and the Scottish SPCA. The workshop was a resounding success, with 70% of participants completing the workshop indicating that their knowledge and skills improved in the areas of increasing the chances of survival for wildlife following confiscation and that their knowledge of effective triage of large confiscations (the first visual health assessment) had increased. Participants also indicated that their knowledge of primary care for wildlife temporarily kept in temporary housing (e.g. at provincial DOFI offices) after confiscation had increased and that they felt better prepared to care for a variety of species rescued from the illegal wildlife trade. Perhaps the best indicator of success was the fact that immediately following completion of the workshop the government requested that we organise a second workshop for DOFI officers from the rest of Laos, and so this was completed in March 2019 with more than 50 additional officers being trained in practical skills required for handling of live animals during wildlife law enforcement actions.

Our work in Laos continues to receive much attention and support from the international community, with notable visitors over the past year including HRH Princess Beatrice of York, UK Minister of State for Asia Mark Field and representatives from five UK embassies in the region (including Ambassador to Lao PDR Hugh Evans). The BBC also commissioned a short series (2x 60minute programmes) to be filmed following our team in Laos and development of the new sanctuary in early 2019, with filming expected to take place throughout 2019 and broadcast anticipated in Spring 2020.

Vietnam Bear Rescue and Conservation Programme

Three further rescues over the past year, plus one death of an existing bear in our care at Cat Tien National Park, saw the number of bears in our care in Vietnam climb from 37 to 39 bears by March 2019. Again, all of these bears had spent many years enduring wholly inadequate conditions prior to their rescue and so require intensive management and veterinary care – fortunately the new veterinary hospital was completed and work commenced on Bear House 3 in order that we may continue to bring new bears into the new sanctuary and offer them a second chance at life. The rescue of VR048 from Can Tho province in May 2018 means that 22 provinces across Vietnam are now free of captive bears, although it is still believed that up to 800 bears remain in need of rescue across the rest of the country.

A new diet for the bears at Cat Tien was implemented following successful trialling at our Cambodian sanctuary, and expansion of our outreach programmes saw several groups of volunteers lending a hand at the sanctuary while more than 5,500 visitors (>70% Vietnamese) had the opportunity to learn about the issues facing bears in this country through guided tours.

Following the publication of the results of the Vietnam bear farm surveys in Oryx – The International Journal of Conservation in June 2018, which highlighted the negative consequences of bear bile farming on the status of wild populations and the welfare of bears, the paper received widespread international attention,

featuring in two high profile outlets (Mongabay and National Geographic) and Research Programme Manager Brian Crudge being interviewed on BBC World News during August 2018.

Indian Dancing Bear Rescue and Kalandar Rehabilitation Programme

The number of bears being cared for in the four sanctuaries supported by Free the Bears and run by Wildlife SOS in India continues to decline, falling from 301 animals at the beginning of the year to 283 by September 2018. Our existing MOU with Wildlife SOS expired in October 2018 and so a new draft was submitted for consideration, however given the improved capacity of Wildlife SOS to fundraise and operate independently of our support and our own growing commitments to core programmes in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam it is likely that our involvement in this project will be phased out in the near future.

Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

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.

Details of any funds materially in deficit

None

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

Overall income grew over the past year by more than 40%, totalling just under £1000,000, thanks to positive growth in our core income streams of philanthropic trusts, private individuals and zoos. Additionally, we have seen positive growth in online giving platforms driven by our active social media presence. Our UK operations continue to form a significant portion of the overall contribution made to Free the Bears field programmes. Administrative costs remain minimal with the overwhelming majority of funds (99%) being utilised directly in support our programmes overseas.

Growth and expansion of our supporter base is prioritised for next year, focusing on mass media and social media to ensure that administrative costs are kept to a minimum. The planned televising of a short series (2x 60minutes) focused on our work to protect bears within Laos on BBC in Spring 2020 should assist greatly in growing our supporter base within the UK.

Section F Other optional information

Section G Declaration

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

30th January 2020



Free the Bears UK

1135682

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
4/1/18

To

Period end date
3/31/19

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	57,374	39,647	-	97,021	68,447
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	57,374	39,647	-	97,021	68,447
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	57,374	39,647	-	97,021	68,447
A3 Payments					
Cost of Fundraising Events	521	-	-	521	602
Grants & Donations	41,505	57,803	-	99,308	85,984
Bank interest and charges	427	-	-	427	318
		-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	42,453	57,803	-	100,256	86,904
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	42,453	57,803	-	100,256	86,904
Net of receipts/(payments)	14,921	- 18,156	-	- 3,235	- 18,457
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	- 14,735	18,155	-	3,420	21,877
Cash funds this year end	186	- 1	-	185	3,420

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	186	- 1	-
	Cash on hand	-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	186	- 1	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments 1 account(s))		OK	OK	OK


		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds 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	Details			
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Matt Hunt	24.01.2020



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 2019

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:

29th January 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
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Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

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