7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust

Trustees' Annual Report 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021





(Some of the animals rehomed 2020-2021)

Charity Registration in Northern Ireland: NIC101696

HMRC Registration: XR65507 (March 2003)

7TH Heaven Animal Rescue Trust

Registered address:

PO Box 198, Newtownabbey, BT36 9BP

www.7thheaven.org.uk

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust, which is also recognised as a charity by HM Revenue and Customs in Northern Ireland, is operated under the rules of its Trust Deed dated 24 March 2003.

Organisational structure

The Trust is governed by the Trustees.

A new Trustee may be appointed by resolution of a meeting of all the Trustees, passed by a majority of those present

Trustees:

Mrs Heather McMurray: Chair

Mr Stephen McMurray: Treasurer

Mrs Lorna Peppiatt: Secretary

Objectives

The Charity is established for the protection of all small domestic animals from abuse, neglect and distress by providing for their care and treatment in a safe environment with the aim to rehoming and in particular:

- A No Kill policy will operate except when an animal is suffering unnecessarily and when no further treatment is available and only following consultation with a veterinary surgeon and permission of 2 trustees
- To provide or make arrangements for the provision of animals which cannot be rehomed

Achievements and Performance 2020 / 2021

7th Heaven has continued to be inundated with requests to help the abused, neglected, distressed, unwanted or abandoned animals throughout Northern Ireland. Sadly, abuse and neglect did not halt, but escalated during the Covid 19 crisis.

We can't help them all, but we will always try to take in, care for and re-home as many as possible. We also offer help through our various schemes and provide advice where we can. We hope that in doing so, we will be promoting compassion and empathy in the public, whilst also giving a sense of companionship and well-being to those recipients of the re-homed animals and relief through the support we offer.

1. COVID 19 Lockdowns

Our charity was hit with an unprecedented crisis as the Government initiated several Lockdowns across the country from the middle of March.

How the crisis impacted our charity:

- Instructions/guidelines were either confusing or non-existent as the various schemes we offer are both unique and essential to help the public get through this crisis.
- All rescuing, rehoming & deliveries of pet food & shelters were initially halted
- There was uncertainty how this crisis would impact people with pets or feeding feral cats eg inability to get food due to illness/self-isolation and severe financial issues.
- Our 2 Trustees continued to care for all of the rescued animals and carry out all administration and communication tasks.
- All communication channels remained open with the public, offering advice. We received extraordinary amounts of requests for dogs and all types appeals for support. This at times became overwhelming due to most other charities decided to remain suspended.
- We continued to be overwhelmed by requests to trap, neuter and remove feral cats during this time, as the other main charities whose role this was, remained closed.
- There were initial concerns with the scarcity and restrictions imposed on food purchases in the stores.
- Sainsbury's Pet Food Bank donation point in Forestside was initially suspended.
- 85% of our funds were in accounts that could not be released until November 20 at the earliest.
- Fundraising in-store events ceased and our pet food donation point was suspended during lockdown.
- Ongoing concerns about the overall impact on our charity and the role it plays to rescue/rehome animals and provide assistance to the public caring for animals

How we coped:

- We sought clarification from the Executive & other Northern Ireland Ministers and on 10 April received confirmation that we were classed as essential workers and permitted to restart the Pet Food Bank & Project Wildcat schemes. We cautiously restarted rehoming much later on 28 June, whilst we monitored and assessed the impact of Covid 19 on the public.
- We were extremely grateful to all who helped us get through this difficult time. More details will be provided in next year's report, but we felt that there needed to be some acknowledgement of the amazing help and support we received to get our charity through this. Although we did not have any volunteers, there were various people /companies who shone through:
 - Sainsbury's in Forestside restarted the Pet Food Donation Point as soon as it was possible. Their customers have continued to donate pet food at astonishing levels. Their staff have been remarkable in co-ordinating this.
 - Mackle Food, who have supplied 2 pallets of cat & dog tinned food.
 - Doagh Equestrian Feeds, who have helped us ensure that we have a good, regular supply of pet food not only for those in our care, but to help the extraordinary number of requests that followed.
 - Pets at Home VIP Lifelines and Tesco's Ballygomartin for their vouchers.
 - Enkalon Foundation, Community Foundation NI, Tesco's Bag of Help Communities Fund and the Maureen Boal Charitable Trust who helped us manage this primarily through lifeline grants.
 - Friends of the charity who continued with their regular donations, aiding financial security.
 - Those who donated to our Crowdfunder fundraising, helping support our schemes during this crisis.
 - Many members of the public and our friends who donated key necessities- pet food, litter, bedding.
 - Firmount vets for providing unrivalled access and support, even during critical times.
 - Student Roost, Belfast for providing duvets/bedding.
 - NICVA for keeping us informed of charity guidelines / updates

Moving forward during these uncertain times, we continue to ensure the welfare of the animals in our care and provide unprecedented help to the public in financial distress through our Pet Food Bank, Project Wildcat & Made in Heaven Matchmaking Schemes.

2. Animals:

Rehomed by 7th Heaven: 23 Cats 6 Rabbits

7th Heaven's current long-term residents: Cats: 2 very nervous – average age 12 - 14 years old 4 long-term health issues – average age 8 – 15 years old 18 Others due to Covid 19 lockdowns/restrictions

We also paid for 1 dog to receive dog training / behaviour support

Our charity is set up to help animals in difficult situations. The animals generally coming into the charity will be anxious, distressed, or have been abused. Requests to help in these situations escalated during this year, a mix of lack of availability/ resource of other animal charities and abuse/neglect continuing, with fewer Government mechanisms in place to prevent them. The considerable time we spend with then in rehabilitating them before they will be ready for rehoming has not changed. Whilst in our care, we aim to provide them with love, attention and the best quality living environment.

Our charity remains focused on rescuing cats that are abused, neglected, older, have medical problems, in dangerous situations or are difficult to home, as there are few options available for them elsewhere. This year those taken in have come from multi-household hoarders, working with animal welfare, animals who had been abandoned and those who owners were becoming homeless, going into hospital or who had passed away. In most cases, there was no one else to care for them, and their only other option was to put them down. We rehomed fewer this year, both due to suspension until the end of June and ongoing assessment of the impact lockdown would have on prospective owners, although we did have a lot of success rehoming quite a few of the older ones. Although we still try to find them all a home, we acknowledge that some may remain in long-term care with us, so we have set aside larger spaces including an 'oldies' home' where they can live out the remainder of their life in comfort and company. Their owners can be secure in the knowledge that they will be loved, get well looked after and will not be put down, as we have a 'No Kill' policy.

All received love, attention and whatever treatment necessary whilst in our care, with the aim of rehoming them to suitable, responsible owners. This, of course, is of great benefit to the animal but also has great rewards for the new owner who gets companionship and a lot of pleasure out of caring for an animal and from the affection it shows in return.

Our main requests this year have been to help those with too many animals or 'hoarders'. In a few instances this meant people who had up to 45 unneutered cats living in their home. We worked with councils and other groups to take them in, get them neutered and treated & start to rehabilitate. Some were sociable and were reasonably easy to rehome, but others that have behavioural 'scars' are likely to remain here long-term.

As Covid 19 Lockdown progressed we received many requests from the public seeking to rehome dogs. Dogs became extremely scarce due to many other charities remaining closed and not rehoming but mainly because the public enjoyed the pleasure of dog companionship, especially if isolated or lonely and realised the benefit of outdoor exercise with them, so fewer needed rehomed. Our concern has also increased due to the number of dogs being breed and sold for extortionate fees upwards of £2000 by the public, recognising the gap and a way of making money.

Here's some of the pets we rehomed:



Other activities:

We can't help all the animals but we try to assist as many as we can. Where we can't actually bring them in, we try to help re-home them via our 'Made in Heaven Matchmaking' scheme. If the owners want to keep the animals but are struggling financially, we have our Pet Food Bank to help them. In addition to helping re-home domestic animals and supplying free pet food to pet owners we also assist feral cats in the community via our Project Wildcat Scheme

3. Made In Heaven Matchmaking Scheme



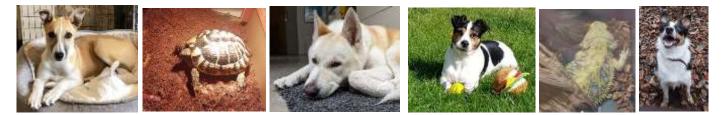
Animals rehomed: 7 Dogs 1 Bearded Dragon 1 Tortoise 2 Rabbits We also paid for any animals needing neutered and arranged for all microchips details to be transferred to the new owners. In addition, we advised / supported 5 people / families. 3 decided to keep their pet following our support. 3 dogs were neutered and 1 helped with health / behaviour issues – cost £369.58

Our free 'Made in Heaven' Matchmaking Service offers owners who are concerned where their dog will end up the chance to become more involved in the re-homing process. Ultimately, they have the choice of where their pets are going to be homed whilst holding on to them in their own home environment until that is achieved. This not only helps the animal by preventing them becoming stressed in kennels but also helps the owner get peace of mind. We have helped a substantial amount of owners work through their issues and helped changed their mind and decide to keep their pet after discussing their options or problems with us and taking the advice or support we offer including the help of a dog trainer and paying for the cost of neutering. We continue to receive extremely positive feedback from those who used this service that this service alleviates stress from them being able to choose the new owner, the new owner can find out the history of the animal and everyone is happy with the level of support we have provided to them throughout.

This service continues to help towards promoting responsible animal ownership. It is has also proved a very effective alternative in helping the public rehome during the crisis, especially when taking in animals was restricted & prevented overcrowding.

We did receive fewer requests to rehome dogs this last year, mainly because people were keeping them and realised their benefits. The few dogs we were asked to rehome however were ones who had serious behaviour/attack issues, we believe caused due to the lockdown restrictions, owners' escalated stress, lack of training & socialisation. In a few occasions where the behaviour was severe, we were not able to offer help as we were not able to have our professional behaviourist's support in place during the crisis. Our worry is the effect on pets when lockdown restrictions are lifted. We already see emergence of aggressive behaviour as boundaries blur during lockdown. How will animals fair as people start to go back out to work and restart living life outside of their bubble? Will we see an increase in animals with separation anxiety, with socialisation issues? Will the public no longer want to spend all that precious time with them, but now consider them as a burden? We hope not.

Here's some of the animals that we helped find a new home:



4. Pet Food Bank



We delivered 504 pet food provisions to people in crisis during 2020/21: 293 dogs 147 cats 1 rabbit 6 budgies 8 hamsters 49 pet hens All received a substantial amount of free pet food.

We also had a significant increase in requests for repeat supplies of food: 41 people with 57 animals requiring additional help up to 3 times.

136 people / families with pets received at least a month's supply of pet food

The pet food supplies were provided through donations to our pet food banks and groups (below) and from compassionate individuals

7th Heaven paid an extra £3,640.95 for extra pet food, or special food in exceptional circumstances.

Our Pet Food Bank is designed to support people in financial hardship and distress by providing free pet food to enable them to hold onto their pets. This means they don't have to endure the stress of seeing their animal suffer distress by being put into kennels or pounds. Whilst we aim to provide temporary help to those in need, we acknowledge that there may be a few who may require a longer period of help, mainly due to benefits stopping suddenly, losing their job or prolonged / sudden illness. We always assess each person's requirements individually.

Last year we supported an unprecedented number of the public needing urgent help during the Covid 19 crisis - people who were ill, vulnerable who had to self-isolate, those who were unable to get deliveries; people whose income immediately stopped; delays in benefit / scheme claims and during pet food shortages. We contacted all organisations supporting the public during the crisis and 49 organisations now advise or refer people in need to us for pet food support,

We have a Pet Food Bank donation point in Sainsbury's Forestside, Belfast. Initially this was suspended at the outset of the Covid 19 crisis, however Sainsbury's staff quickly reinstated this and customers were amazing with generous regular donations. This continues to be a huge success, providing pet food & treats to all in need through our Pet Food Bank and Project Wildcat schemes.

We are grateful to all the other companies, their customers and staff and public who also helped by various donations, especially during these difficult times.

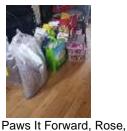
Estimated value of pet food donated 2020 / 2021:

Sainsbury's Forestside	£3,846.15
Mackle Pet Foods	£2,500.00
Tescos, Ballygomartin, Belfast (vouchers)	£80.00
Total	£6,426.15

Pets at Home donated £1028 VIP Lifeline vouchers (see below) which we used to purchase pet food & equipment.

We also received large supplies of pet food from individuals including Paw It Forward, Rose, Bear & Bonnie £135; Andy; Victoria; Holly & Clarkes Canines; Ruth; Fay & John; Margaret; David & Play For Strays, Elaine, Kerry & Sylvester; Lily; Louise, Yvonne, Judith, Erica, Kathryn and Marion.

Here's some of the donations received:



Bear & Bonnie







Holly & Clarkes Canines

Marion

Andy



Sainsbury's Forestside

We have shared out all this pet food, delivering it to pets whose owners are in need, and those helping feed the feral and community cats throughout Northern Ireland.

We provide regular updates on our website and Face book pages - 7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust and Seventh Heaven, both on the pets helped and the donations gratefully received.

We would like to thank everyone who donated pet food to help feed them throughout the year. You are helping keep pets in their owner's homes and prevented all these animals needing to be re-homed. We would also like to especially thank Community Advice, Antrim & Newtownabbey and other organisations for their numerous, necessary referrals to us.

Here's some of the pets we helped:



5. Project Wildcat Scheme and Feral Cat Month



Shelter:

29 Plastic, waterproof Snugs and 1 large cabin with bedding were given out at a cost of £1509.98 Approximately 69 feral / community cats were provided with a safe home 4 shelters were donated by the public and 1 was returned to be reused.

Neutering: We paid for 24 feral cats to be neutered/treated. Total cost: £750.77

Feeding:

We delivered 1475 pet food provisions for feral/community cats through our Project Wildcat during 20/21. All received a substantial amount of free pet food.

65 feral cats received repeat supplies of food up to 5 times

58 individuals, families or community groups were supplied with pet food to help the feral cats for which they were caring

The pet food supplies were provided through donations to our pet food bank, and from groups and compassionate individuals.

7th Heaven paid an extra £3,299.27 to support this scheme.

Project Wildcat was set up to help feral cats and those who care for them by providing free shelter, neutering and food. We had identified quite some time ago that there were a large number of feral cat colonies throughout Northern Ireland and, although many were being fed by volunteers or local people, the cost to them was substantial. Many more cats are neutered by other Trap, Neuter and Return individuals who contact us to provide shelter and food after this has been done.

Due to the unprecedented requests for support throughout Northern Ireland, we availed of ASDA, Tesco & Sainsbury click & collects/deliveries to reach the public further away or who may need supplies urgently.

Although we feed the ferals all year round we also highlight their plight by designating October as 'Feral Cat Month'. We did not cancel this event despite the crisis, although were not able to go in-stores to promote it. We delivered good supplies of pet food to 20 individuals/groups feeding 202 feral/community cats and provided them with 6 shelters & 1 large cabin during this time.

The public continue to be very supportive of our Project Wildcat project. We have a sponsorship support 'Feed a Feral' which for the £10 donation, we provide dry and wet food to this value to a feral or community cat. In addition, there is the opportunity for the public to sponsor the purchase of a snug or donate a shelter, which we will provide to a feral. 4 shelters were generously donated last year providing feral cats with a dry, safe home. Our thanks to Cosy Cages who provide the snugs at a discount.

From the positive feedback and support we have received about Project Wildcat scheme and Feral Cat Month, they are a major success. We are the only people in Northern Ireland who provide this service and the obvious need for it means we will continue to help feral/community cats as part of our core services.

Here's some of the cats supported and shelters and pet food provided:



We delivered 1971 pet food provisions for animals in both schemes during 2020/21, up from 597 2019/20.

6. Pet Friendly Landlord Scheme



7th Heaven continues to see a huge increase in people having to give up their pets when they move to new accommodation. Landlords continue to be reluctant to let pets stay in their accommodation and many who do, charge extra insurance, which many tenants cannot afford. This forces people to give up their beloved pets when their circumstances are beyond their control.

We set up the Pet Friendly Landlord Scheme in 2015/16 to help pet owners in this difficult situation and had contacted the majority of those involved with landlords, including councils, associations and central bodies to ask if there was anything, they would be willing to do to help. Although we received only minimal response, we continue to offer free advertising to any landlord willing to offer a home to a pet owner. We continue to support the public to prevent them having to give up their pets in these unfortunate circumstances and encourage landlords to see the benefits.

Despite the Covid 19 Lockdown, unfortunately criminality still continues in Northern Ireland. We supported a family with pets threatened and put out of their home who had no source of income. The family was provided with emergency housing which did not allow pets. As a one off emergency, we paid for their dogs to be looked after in a kennel and took in their cats temporarily until they successful found a good, safe home.

There's nothing more special than being able to help keep pets with their owners in their homes!

7. Daisy Day



7th Heaven designated the 24th December as Daisy Day – a time to remember all the animals killed and injured in war. We have chosen the daisy as it symbolises innocence and, like the animal victims of war, they are numerous and always overlooked. We want everyone to say a prayer or spare a thought for the innocent animal victims of human war at this traditional time of peace.

On the 24th December each year now and on the days leading up to it, we ask everyone if they could like and share our Daisy Day face book page and encourage others to do so. We are hoping, maybe, that we could create a better awareness of their plight and by everyone on this day thinking of those animals taken from us by man's conflicts, we could create a 'daisy-chain' of compassion, our thoughts, the links of love, joining us all together, across borders, race and religion. Maybe we could create a world where man no longer solves disputes by force or resolves differences by weapons. Maybe then the animals will stop suffering and dying at our hands. We ask that you please spare a moment to remember them.

Finance

Income raised	£15,970.34
Payments	£15,214.49
Balance	£755.85
Cash Funds brought forward:	£66,379.42
Funds at 31/3/2021	£67,135.27

Income raised:

Grants/ fundraising

Most of our funds were locked in until Nov 2020 and Progressive Building Society would not release the funds until the account matured. Due to the exceptional circumstances during the Covid 19 crisis, we were forced to seek extra emergency financial support so that we could help the substantial increase in requests for pet food help. We were unable to go into stores, or anywhere else to raise funds & our pet food bank donation point ceased for a significant period.

We received very generous donations from the following sources:

Date:	Source:	Funds to be used for:	Amount:
16/4/20	Enkalon Foundation	Pet Food Bank	£1000
4/5/20	Community Foundation	Pet Food Bank	£2500
19/6/20	Crowdfunder Fundraising	Pet Food Bank & Project	£495
		Wildcat schemes	
16/7/20	Tesco Bags of Help Covid 19	Pet Food Bank & Project	£500
	Communities Fund	Wildcat schemes	
		Total	£4495

Sainsbury's

We received an amazing £3483.50 from Sainsburys' Forestside's 150th birthday fundraising events during 2019. Unfortunately due to the Covid 19 crisis, we were not able to go in-store to promote animals needing a home, our schemes to help the public or receive donations during 2020/21. Although it was necessary to close the donation point at the start, we are extremely grateful to the staff for all their help to get this quickly up and running again. We now continue to receive pet food donations from kind customers through our donation point set up in-store in Forestside, which is helping both the Food Bank and Project Wildcat schemes. We would like to thank Sainsbury's customers for their generosity throughout the year and to Sainsburys and their staff for making this possible.

Tesco, Ballygomartin

Tesco, Ballygomartin continue to support us throughout the year with vouchers (£80) and the Bags of Help grant during the crisis.

Pets at Home

Pets at Home, Support Adoption for Pets and VIP Club and their customers have supported our charity throughout the year. We received £1028 VIP Lifeline vouchers which we used to buy pet food supplies to support our Pet Food Bank/ Project Wildcat schemes and new equipment for the animals in our care.

E-Bay / PayPal Giving

The funds of £1,763.84 from E-Bay sales and Humble Bundle donations from PayPal Giving Fund have provided significant contribution towards income raised, with several individuals regularly donating each month. This was particularly important as all our other fundraising activities had to cease during this time. We would like to thank everyone who donated funds from their sales, items for selling through our E-Bay charity site and for on-going regular support through PayPal Giving.

Friendship Scheme and Shelter Sponsorship

We have 24 Special Friends who continue to support our charity each month; 10 others who continue to donate both large and small amounts each year including 5 who specifically sponsor our kennels and long-term residents, 2 who donated to our 'Feed a Feral for a £10' scheme.

Restricted funds

£60,341.11 of our charity funds had been locked into 2 fixed rate bonds until November 2020 & January 2021 to provide additional interest each year to help cover repairs etc. Due to unforeseen additional emergency repair work needed during the year, we had to request release of £10,000 in December 2019. Progressive Building Society did so on the proviso that we could not release any additional funds until the full term of the bonds. When the Covid crisis hit, we have had to seek additional funds from grants in 2020/21 to help us through these difficult times, both to help with the significant increase in requests for pet food support & inability to raise funds through our normal sources in-stores. In November 2020 we closed one of the bonds to release fund resources.

Events

There were no events during this year dur to the crisis.

Others support:

We have other ways to raise funds and help our charity including (details are on our website):

- Amazon Wish List
- Give as You Live
- Payroll Giving in Action
- Charities Aid Foundation
- Pets at Home VIP Club Lifelines

Since joining these organisations for free, we have started to receive donations from the public, interested in supporting our charity. We are grateful as this has helped to provide us with a further supply of funds to help those in need

Payments out:

We will make no personal profit from an animal's misery, which is why nobody involved in our charity gets paid. This is why there are no expenses for staff wages.

Project Wildcat costs of £3,299.27 was used for the purchase of 35 snugs/1 cabin and pet food. The cost for this scheme was significantly higher due to the increase in requests for help and reduction in pet food donations during the crisis. We could not stop providing this essential crisis as animals' lives depended upon this and many of the public caring for them were in significant financial difficulty.

With pet food collections stopped for a significant period and a substantial increase in urgent requests for help, our costs rose to £3,640.95 for purchasing pet food for our Pet Food Bank scheme. However we were extremely proud that we were able to continue to help the public during this exceptional time and even extend it to those directly affected by the impact of the Covid 19 crisis.

We had already set up click & collect arrangements with Asda, Tescos and Sainsburys to order pet food for people in our schemes in times of emergency. This has become critical during the Covid crisis to have this contingency in place, especially during lockdown periods.

We do all the promotion of 7th Heaven's animals and the schemes ourselves. Administration costs are for the internet / website access and necessary IT upgrades (NB. there is no charge for the design or upkeep as this is provided by the trustees) and leaflets and business cards for the schemes and for events. We continue to keep printing costs low by preparing the newsletter for publishing and designing our own leaflets ourselves and using the excellent printing service of Print NI to produce high quality colour newsletters, posters and leaflets.

8. Thanks

We do not charge to take in or re-home any animal. As our motto states, "Animals are not commodities to be bought or sold. They are beautiful creatures with beautiful souls". We are not their 'owners' merely their 'guardians' and, therefore, have no moral right to put a price tag on their head. This is why we do not and never will charge for our animals. Nor do we do not charge for any of our schemes or support we provide. We do not receive any government support. So we would particularly like to thank everyone who donated funds to 7th Heaven. This is important to our charity to help us provide everything necessary to help animals both in our care and people and animals supported through our schemes.

We would like to acknowledge all the people who have helped us in other ways. We really appreciate the donations of pet food direct from individuals to feed our long term and elderly residents. We also once again started to receive supplies of bedding which the animals are especially appreciative of. This all helps keep our costs low. Thanks to all the good Samaritans out there who did not look the other way, but contacted us when they found a lost, ill or abandoned animal and many who provided a shelter for them until we could find room to take them in or a new home, especially when the weather was very bad, We would especially like to thank everyone who has offered each of our rescue animals a new chance and a loving home.

These were exceptional circumstances this year. We had limited means to raise funds, no volunteer resource, just the Trustees who kept everything going from caring from the animals to delivering pet food and shelters. But amazingly we were able to provide almost 2,000 supplies of pet food during the year, helping people in real and significant need.

9. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

• select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;

• make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

• state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and

• prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees: Stephen McMurray Trustee/ Treasurer 21 November 2021