



NEWSLETTER

BEARS MATTER



Special Edition!

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Issue 25, 2024 and 2025

'Adopt an animal, become its voice, learn everything you can about it and work with people that want to better its existence, too.' Anon

Welcome to Issue 25 of Bears Matter - our Special Edition Newsletter! After a busy two years celebrating a number of milestones, we bring you a special newsletter covering both 2024 and 2025. During these years, not only did we celebrate our 15th Anniversary since the launch of the Winton Bear Foundation, but we were also lucky enough to receive a significant legacy enabling us to fund some big projects worldwide to improve the lives of bears. We are delighted to bring you all these updates in one special newsletter so you can enjoy reading about the amazing projects we are supporting. Of course, we couldn't do any of it without you and we are so grateful for your ongoing support of and commitment to the Winton Bear Foundation.

Starting in 2024 with an amazing Legacy!

We were extremely lucky and grateful to start 2024 with the receipt of a legacy from a very kind supporter. This enabled us to fund the cost of more substantial projects as follows:

April 2024

First up we were delighted to once again support the **Advancing Bear Care Conference** hosted by the Bear Care Group. In 2024 the conference was held in Oakland, California and its theme was "Advancing Bear Care: The Next Level". In addition to covering "best practice" topics for the husbandry of bears under human care, the conference explored how zoos and sanctuaries can support the welfare of wild bears through collaborations with local fish and wildlife agencies. The three day conference was dedicated to issues facing wild bears who come into human care through human-bear conflict. The Winton Bear Foundation proudly sponsored a coffee break to encourage networking amongst delegates and help raise our profile.

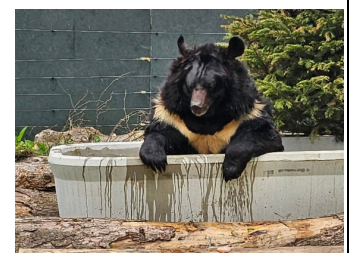


Amount donated US\$320 (£260)



May 2024

In May 2024 we donated the sum of £250 to buy treats and enrichment for the lovely Yampil, a beautiful Asiatic Black Bear at the **Five Sisters Zoo** in West Lothian, Scotland. Yampil was rescued from a devastated zoo in Ukraine during the war and brought to Scotland to recover from his horrendous ordeal.



We hoped our gift ensured his tummy stayed nice and full as he got better!

August 2024

In August 2024 we donated to the **Libearty Bear Sanctuary** in Zarnesti, Romania - the biggest Brown Bear Sanctuary in the world. Home to over 130 bears rescued from miserable living conditions and being abused in captivity. It is recognised by many specialists as the most ethical sanctuary in the world over 69 hectares of coniferous forests near Brasov and we are very proud to support them.



Our funding was used for the reparation of their trap cage which is needed whenever it comes to rescuing injured bears from the wild, mothers with cubs and animals in danger of being shot. It will also help fund reparation of the quarantine area where all bears need to go on arrival at the sanctuary as the shelters need to be improved for welcoming new bears in the future. Any left over funds will be used to buy toys for the baby bears' new swimming pool.



Photos courtesy of Libearty Bear Sanctuary
Amount donated £1,000

Also in August 2024 we supported a brand new beneficiary in a new country - The Winton Bear Foundation spreading far and wide helping bears!

The Arosa Bear Sanctuary opened in 2018 and welcomes bears that have been rescued from very bad conditions by working with UK animal welfare organization FOUR PAWS. When they arrive, the bears show disturbed behaviour as traumatised bears often do. At Arosa they offer them natural conditions in a way that the bears can satisfy their innate needs, that they can learn their natural behaviour and consequently reduce their disturbed behaviour patterns. The aim at Arosa Bear sanctuary is that the bears, in time, show no more disturbed behaviours. This process lasts 6 months to two years.



We were delighted to donate £1800 to fund environmental enrichment for the bears for a full year. This will cover:

- Four food cubes allowing the bears hours of fun foraging for food.
- Construction of a hammock for the indoor facility to improve the bears' co-ordination

Photos courtesy of Arosa Bear
Amount donated £1,800



- Replacement of a fir tree in the outdoor area. The fir tree is used to offer the bears various behavioural enrichments at height so that they can also climb.

The next distribution of funds during our incredible year, went to yet another new beneficiary! This time we forged a lovely relationship with **Wildheart Animal Sanctuary** based on the Isle of Wight. The Sanctuary focuses on rescued and threatened wildlife and the protection of endangered species.



Wildheart rescued two European Brown Bears, Balu and Benji, who had only ever known a life of misery on the side of a restaurant in Azerbaijan. Alone, hungry and suffering serious injuries, these "restaurant bears" were considered nothing more than a roadside novelty for customers. Living off scraps in a tiny cage, they were malnourished, starving, and underweight. Working with Bears in Mind, an international rescue organisation, they were brought to their forever home in the UK and we were asked to help.



We were delighted to donate £800 for two floating cylinders for water based enrichment and a set of heavy duty weighing scales critical for regularly monitoring the bears' weight. We are over the moon to help give Benji and Balu the second chance at life that they so deserve.

*Photo courtesy of Wildheart Animal Sanctuary
Amount donated £800*

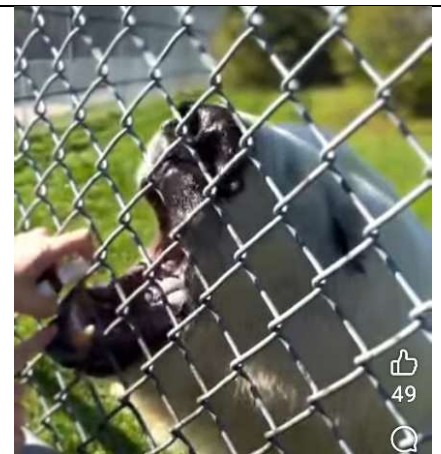
September 2024

Our spreading of the Winton bear love continued in September! As part of our determination to help all 8 species of bear, this time we turned our attention to Polar Bears and the work of The Cochrane Polar Bear Habitat in Ontario, Canada. There they care for a number of rescued polar bears and are the world's only non-profit that provides sanctuary to polar bears in need of human care.

Their lovely bear Ganuk has some health issues which mean he is allergic to some plants and allergens. He needs a special serum which will help his body to build an immunity. The serum costs around \$500 a year, and we were delighted to be able to fund that cost for 12 months.

Also as an extra special treat for the bears, we got them some new enrichment - their favourite Rubbermaid tubs!

The team fill it with water and the bears squeeze themselves in like a bath tub. Even though they have pools and a whole lake, they really seem to enjoy these smaller water sources to play in!



Wonderful photo of Ganuk 'opening wide' to have his medicine!

*Photos courtesy of Cochrane Polar Bear Habitat
Amount donated CA\$1240*

So in total we donated CA\$1240 to buy both these items for Ganuk and his pals.

December 2024

The last of our distributions for our special Legacy year went to an incredible bear and an amazing team of humans who cared for him when a life threatening condition became critical. The gorgeous Boki, was adopted by The Wildwood Trust in Kent after being rejected by his mother at just ten weeks old. But that was just the beginning of Boki's story. Boki would have to undergo major brain surgery to save his life.



Boki was only the second bear in the world to undergo and survive brain surgery. After discussions with Boki's keepers (and after Boki broke the last one!) we decided that the Winton Bear Foundation would pay for the installation of a special new zip wire to provide hours of entertainment and enrichment for Boki and assist with his recovery.

Boki's amazing team including great friend of the Winton Bear Foundation, Jon Forde, Head of Bears and Hoofstock worked incredibly hard to install the zip wire - made doubly hard after a storm blew one of the posts down and it had to be re-cemented in. The team have done a great job and Boki has been enjoying hours of fun after his incredible surgery.

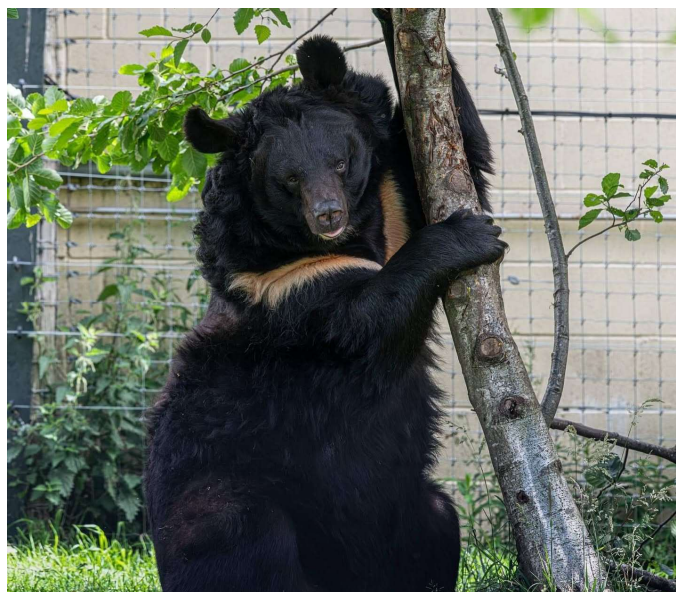


Amount donated £215

A little sad news in 2024

We were so sad to learn that Yampil, the beloved Asiatic Black Bear rescued by the Five Sisters Zoo from the Ukraine war, passed away in July. Yampil was rescued from a war-torn zoo in Ukraine in 2022 and found a home at the Five Sisters Zoo, where a wonderful new habitat had just been completed for him.

Prior to the move to his new enclosure, Yampil was anaesthetised for further treatment for his health problems which were worrying the team. Sadly, anaesthetising animals always carries risks, and Yampil did not recover from the procedure and despite the best efforts from the veterinary team, they were unable to resuscitate him, leaving the entire team devastated. The one saving grace is that in his final months, Yampil knew love, adoration, the greatest of care and long awaited peace and release from his trauma.



Remembering Yampil

(photo courtesy of Five Sisters Zoo)

And our spectacular two years continue!

On to 2025.....

June 2025

In 2025, the very generous legacy allowed us to help even more bears and yet another new beneficiary!

Our first payment of 2025, went to new beneficiary, **Gold Country Wildlife Rescue (GCWR)** a nonprofit in Auburn, California, dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing injured, orphaned, and sick wildlife. GCWR earned the distinction in 2022 of becoming one of only three facilities in California authorized to rehabilitate American Black Bear cubs. We donated \$3000 to help them construct two elevated sunning platforms for the cubs.



The platforms, built of redwood will withstand the elements and offer the cubs a secure and comfortable place to nap in the sun, encouraging natural behaviours and improving their overall well-being.

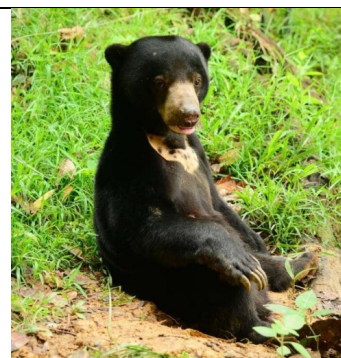
Photos courtesy of GCWR
Amount donated US\$3000



They will further support the cubs' physical and emotional development as they prepare for life back in the wild. While they already have off-ground areas in their den for sleeping, nothing quite compares to a sunny nap spot!

Our next donation in June 2025 went to the **Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC)**. BSBCC is a sun bear rescue and rehabilitation facility being developed in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. Sun bears are the smallest bears in the world and are only found in Southeast Asia. They are threatened by forest degradation, illegal hunting for bear parts and poaching to obtain young cubs for pet trade

Photos courtesy of BSBCC
Amount donated £3,500

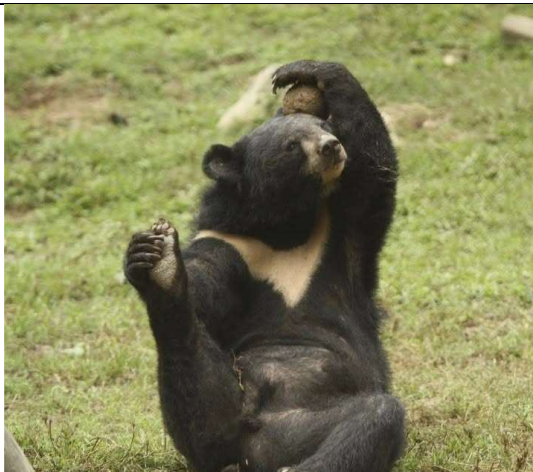


There are currently 43 rescued ex-captive sun bears residing at the BSBCC. The facility includes large forest enclosures to provide a natural environment suited to the needs and welfare of the sun bears and facilitate their rehabilitation back into the wild.



We donated £3,500 (approx RM 20160) to cover the cost of their work to upgrade the sun bear soft-release forest camp at Tabin Wildlife Reserve

Next came our donation to **Animals Asia** - doing incredible work to bring an end to the brutal bear farming industry. We have been so proud to provide small amounts of funding in the past to help buy enrichment for their bears including hammocks, toys, medicine and food. Thousands of Bears throughout Asia are imprisoned in bear farms where they can be trapped in cold, metal, rusting cages for decades. The cages are so small they can't stand up or turn around. They are subjected to regular, excruciatingly painful and invasive bile extractions - often being starved to boost bile production. It is a brutal, torturous practice.



We are delighted to share with you that we have donated £1,005 to their bears and this will help towards their care including physical checks and dental checks and also the provision of enrichment in the form of such things as play hammocks and nourishing fresh fruit, veg and vitamin packed biscuits and of course one of their favourites - coconuts!

*Photos courtesy of Animals Asia
Amount donated £1,005*

Next....more support for Eco-Halych Bear Rehab Project



The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears has been supporting the **Eco-Halych Bear Rehab Project** in Ukraine since December 2016 helping with the cost of materials to create places for the bears to play and relax, including tree houses and platforms and the cost of a camera for live streaming of the bears.

Bears in Ukraine are often held in horrendous conditions, with lack of care or food, living in barren concrete pits, rusty cages or even in garages. Eco-Halych built a safe sanctuary to rehome mistreated bears. Since the Russian invasion, in 2022 we have continued to support them in any way we can. Unfortunately, as the war continues, we have reconnected with them again to see what else we can do to help make life a little easier for them and their bears.

*Photos courtesy of Eco-Halych
Amount donated £3,000*

We are delighted to report that we sent a donation of £3,000 to Eco-Halych.

After discussion with the team there, there is a great need for renovations and repairs in the bear enclosures in Halych Wildlife Rehab. Our funding will help with the building of a new bear house from firm woods as the old one was destroyed, as well as renovations to dens in the playground enclosure - repairs, drainage and rebuilding. It will also help with hammock repairs, building of a wooden house, tree house or wooden platform and behavioural enrichments.



We are absolutely delighted to be able to provide substantial support to help them rebuild and continue to care for their bears during this prolonged difficult time.

And of course the renewal of our annual bear adoptions continued throughout 2024 and 2025 including:

Fluff and Scruff, Wildwood Kent



Romolina, BSBCC



Baloo, Liberty Bear Sanctuary



And other news and a huge celebration!

2025 saw the Winton Bear Foundation celebrate its 15th anniversary launching on the memorable date of 10.10.10. As well as our larger donations to beneficiaries we marked this special occasion with the production and launch of an extra special anniversary film. This wonderful film, is the creation of extremely talented young film student Anna McGhie while studying BA (hons) Film and the daughter of our Trustee Deirdre McGhie. Anna painstakingly created this lovely little movie for us, completely free of charge putting in a huge amount of work including over 2000 photos for the animation alone! You can watch the film in full here <https://www.facebook.com/reel/726254720486006>



A happy get together!



In August 2024 we had a very exciting and special day at the Five Sisters Zoo in Scotland. Three of our four Trustees met up in person for the first time! One of the Foundation's Trustees is based in Denmark so it is rare that we meet in person.

All of our Trustees are volunteers and have full time jobs and juggle busy lives but are devoted to bears and helping improve their lives.

Such a special day for this little team, dedicated to making life better for bears!

From left: Deirdre McGhie, Lisbeth Rieshoj Amos and Lesley Winton

New Grant Application Process

We have now implemented a new Grant Application process which we hope will be used by grassroots organisations working with bears. We have two categories of Grant you can apply for - those under £1000 and those £1000 and above. We would love to hear from any organisation or individual who is working for the welfare of bears and welcome applications from new and current Beneficiaries! We love funding specific projects but will happily consider all applications. We will soon be adding the Grant forms to our website but if you would like an application form sent to you please email: lesley@wintonbearfoundation.org

Our Global Reach

Since The Winton Bear Foundation launched on the memorable date of 10.10.10 we have raised funds for bears all around the world and helped highlight the threats they face. We help fund many projects to make life better for bears and work to help ALL 8 species of bear.

To date we have distributed just under £50,000 to more than 40 projects in 20 countries worldwide - a massive achievement for a tiny charity run entirely by volunteers. The wonderful map below shows a pin representing each of the projects we support and we think you'll agree - we have quite an impressive reach!





TOPPING UP 'THE HONEY POT'



Each year the Foundation makes two distributions of funds to a selection of beneficiaries - one in Summer and one in Winter from what we affectionately call our 'Honey Pot'. We have donated thousands of pounds to date to over 40 organisations in 20 countries around the world. To read more about previous donations visit the 'Honey Pot' page of our website

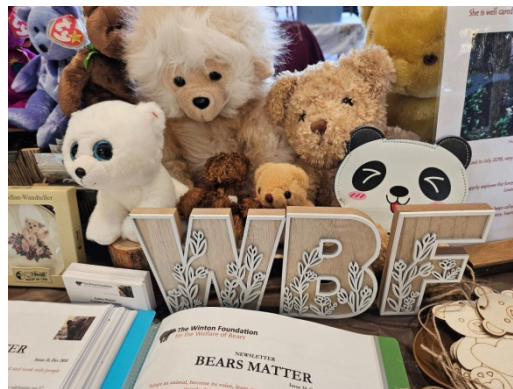
https://www.wintonbearfoundation.org/foundation/honey-pot?fbclid=IwAR0A9ta_slA3FjIhg3eVwfXrU1pI72-BKfWDFyPipGYRXC9yIC3eu-ZWE6I

There's been a lot of fundraising and wonderful donations during the last two years - thank you to everyone!

The Scottish Bear Fair - 2024 and 2025

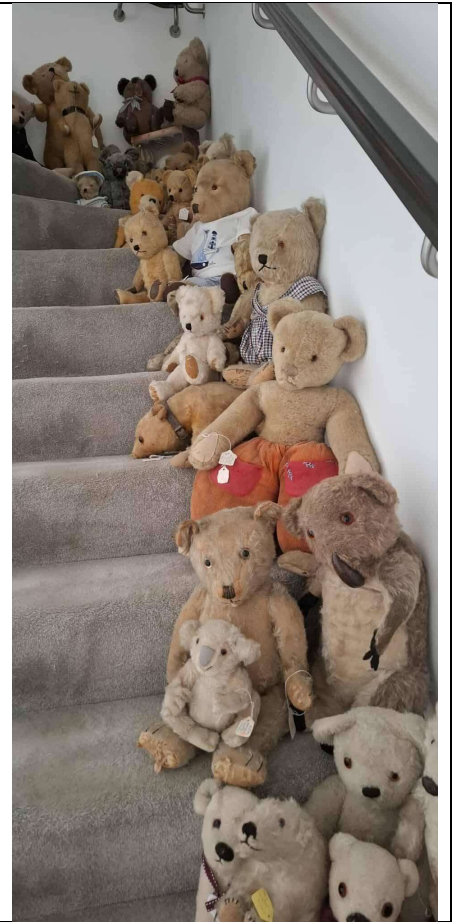


For a number of years now we have been the Scottish Bear Fairs chosen charity and we are incredibly grateful for this. The event has become one of the biggest fundraising events in our annual calendar. In 2024 we raised £284.05 and in 2025 we raised £407.31



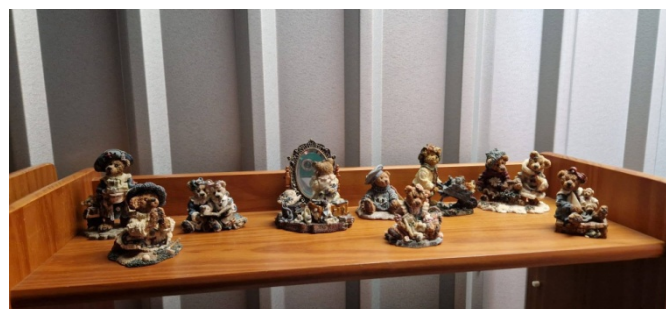
We are extremely grateful to our amazing supporter and bear collector Kirsty Johnstone who donated £500! Kirsty said "I recently did a photoshoot for an upcoming advert featuring collectors and their collections. For me, of course, it was teddy bears. When I heard I was to receive a fee, I thought the best option would be to donate it to a charity who supported bears. I learnt of the Winton Foundation, and as they support various bear charities who are the most in need, I thought, they would be the ideal recipient. The photos show some of my collection and me with my favourite bear character."

We think you'd agree her collection is quite spectacular! Thank you Kirsty!



Our thanks also go to two amazing sisters Moira and Christine from Edinburgh and East Lothian and their family. Following the passing of their beloved mum, Margaret who was an avid collector of artists bears and figurines, Moira and Christine became aware of the Bear Foundation and very kindly donated their mum's bear collection to us to help raise funds - the perfect way to honour her memory.

This beautiful collection includes Merrythought, Boyds Bears and Charlie Bears along with Colourbox bears and will enable us to raise even more funds at the 2026 Scottish Bear Fair in October. Thank you so much for your kindness Moira and Christine - we will do your mum proud and help many more bears worldwide!



Thanks also go to Jacqui du Rocher who in March 2025 braved the Bear Bridge over the bear enclosure at Wildwood, Kent - home to rescued brown bears Fluff, Scruff and Boki and raised over £500. Well done Jacqui!



Thank you also to 'Childish Things' a unique shop in Dunoon, who are donating 10% of their sales to the Winton Bear Foundation.



Bears Matter Month



And of course, our annual 'Bears Matter Month' took place in both 2024 and 2025 - a month running from Valentines Day to Mothers Day dedicated to raising funds and awareness for bears in need around the world. This is a month that encompasses some very special dates including International Save Bears Day (Feb 21st), International Polar Bear Day (Feb 27), and World Bear Day (Mar 23)

 **The Winton Foundation**
for the Welfare of Bears



Bears Matter Month
'Life through their eyes'



Vision Statement

A world where no bear will ever again be hurt, exploited or tortured for human gain, profit or entertainment. Where bears can live free from fear and peril inflicted by humankind and can be their majestic selves, living full and natural lives.

Mission Statement

To be instrumental in creating a world where no bear suffers at the hands of people.

To work through fundraising, campaigning and education to raise awareness of the plight of bears worldwide and the threats they face.

To assist with the funding and maintenance of new and existing projects to help bears.

The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears is one of a very small group of organisations worldwide that work to help ALL eight species of bear. There are many wonderful organisations working for bears, but often focusing on one or two species or particular areas of exploitation. Organisations that focus on all eight bear species are relatively rare.

This draws our Special Edition Newsletter to a close. We hope you have enjoyed reading about the work of the Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears 2024 and 2025. We are already half way through 2026 and will bring you all our news from this year, early in 2027. Thank you all for your incredible support!



The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears

How to contact us or for further information:

By Post - The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears (SCIO), 54 West Windygoul Gardens, Tranent, East Lothian, EH33 2LA, U.K. **By e-mail:** info@wintonbearfoundation.org **Website:** www.wintonbearfoundation.org

We also have an active Facebook Page

Telephone: +44-(0) 1875 614 899 or +44-(0)7904 733 137. **Please make any cheques payable to 'The Winton Foundation'**



The Winton Foundation
for the Welfare of Bears

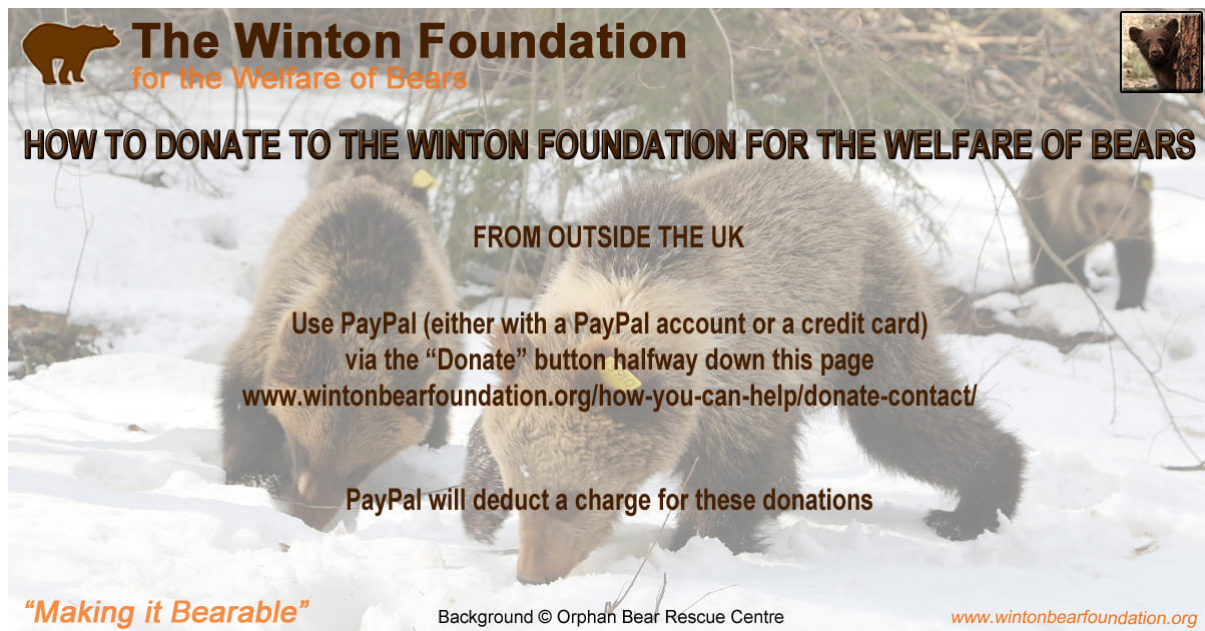
HOW TO DONATE TO THE WINTON FOUNDATION FOR THE WELFARE OF BEARS

FROM THE UK - Please preserve the full value of your donation, by using one of these two methods:

Pay directly into our UK bank account:
Account Name: The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears
Account Number: 65526639 Sort Code: 08-92-99

Or login to your PayPal account www.paypal.com/signin/
and send to lesley@wintonbearfoundation.org
Be sure to select "Send Money to Friends and Family"

"Making it Bearable" Background © Orphan Bear Rescue Centre www.wintonbearfoundation.org



The Winton Foundation
for the Welfare of Bears

HOW TO DONATE TO THE WINTON FOUNDATION FOR THE WELFARE OF BEARS

FROM OUTSIDE THE UK

Use PayPal (either with a PayPal account or a credit card)
via the "Donate" button halfway down this page
www.wintonbearfoundation.org/how-you-can-help/donate-contact/

PayPal will deduct a charge for these donations

"Making it Bearable" Background © Orphan Bear Rescue Centre www.wintonbearfoundation.org

Together, we will make the world a better place for bears