

Strong for the Future
The Vegetarian Society Business Plan
2014 – 2019

Extracts

Executive Summary

The Vegetarian Society exists to influence, inspire and support people to embrace and maintain a vegetarian lifestyle. We want everyone to eat to a vegetarian diet because there is no nutritional need to eat animals, rearing meat is cruel to animals and damaging to the environment and a balanced vegetarian diet is healthier than a diet including meat.

This business plan explains our strategy, our vision and values and assesses where we are now, what the world around us looks like and where the challenges and opportunities for us lie. It addresses what we need to do to achieve our mission, discusses the risks and our mitigations against them and looks at the financial implications for us.

Our new strategy gives us the opportunity to restructure our delivery of services to focus on our objectives. We will use this opportunity to tackle our deficit, reducing and removing it over the five year period and focussing on working efficiently and effectively and delivering impact. This will mean that some roles will become redundant and we will need to create new roles and bring in additional skills and expertise. We will fund on-going work, together with support functions and overheads, from our annual income. We will fund projects from designated reserves and future donations and legacy income. This will allow us to vary the amount of project work we undertake according to the amount of donations and legacy income we receive.

We want to build on our dedicated and committed membership and engage with a wider supporter base, bringing us more opportunities to influence people and change their attitudes. Our work will focus more on campaigns and activism and engaging with the wider public and meat eaters and we will need to spend more resources on working with local groups and fundraising for our work.

It is important that our organisation is sustainable and strong for the future as we have much work to do. The world around us offers more opportunities to promote vegetarianism as key organisations and agencies have started to focus on climate change and the need to reduce meat consumption and more individuals become open to this message. The need to make a difference is more urgent than ever and the impact our organisation has can significantly change the future for our children and grandchildren.

Lynne Elliot
Chief Executive
2014

Introduction and Mission

The Vegetarian Society has recently reviewed its vision, mission, its strategic aims and its objectives for the next five years. This business plan considers the implications of this strategic work and the changes that will be required within the organisation to deliver it successfully.

Our vision is:

A world in which everyone is vegetarian

If we achieve our vision, research today shows that some of the benefits we can all look forward to are:

- A healthier population, with fewer cancers, less diabetes and improved resistance to stroke and heart disease
- A greater sense of wellbeing because people feel positive about the food they eat and the impact it has
- No animals raised for slaughter
- Animals living naturally alongside humans contributing positively to our eco systems
- Greater food stability and less food poverty as the world's resources are freed to be shared across its population
- A more sustainable food production system
- A reduction in pollution and environmental damage caused by food production

Our mission, the purpose of our organisation, is:

To influence, inspire and support people to embrace and maintain a vegetarian lifestyle

The Vegetarian Society exists to educate the public about vegetarianism, to promote the vegetarian diet because of the benefit it brings to people, animals and the environment and to provide services to support and represent vegetarians. These are our charitable objects.

In order to do this work we know that we need to influence decision makers, policy makers, businesses, third sector organisations and those who provide food for people. We need to inspire people to become and to remain vegetarian. This means recognising that on the spectrum of diet, meat eaters who reduce their meat consumption are moving towards vegetarianism and can be encouraged to take further steps in this direction until they become vegetarian.

We will support people regardless of their reasons for becoming vegetarian, helping them to embrace and positively maintain a vegetarian diet throughout their lives, whatever events, challenges or difficulties they face.

Our Approach

So that we can deliver our mission, both nationally and internationally, we will need to do things differently.

- We want to be the first and obvious choice for anyone who is vegetarian. We want them to join us to receive support and to help us deliver change
- We want more people to know about us and the work we do, so we will need to improve our networks and broaden the range of people we work with, including meat eaters
- We want to be respected so we will need to base our work on quality evidence and research
- We want to change attitudes so we will need to use cutting edge research and thinking on how to do this
- We want to make a difference so we will need to engage our supporters and partner organisations and utilise their passion and skills so that we can target bigger audiences.
- We will need to be a strong and sustainable organisation so that we can deliver our plan for the next five years.

Our Values

Our organisational values guide us in everything we do and they are:

A Vegetarian diet is better for people, animals and the environment

We recognise that people choose to become vegetarian for a number of reasons, and:

- We value all vegetarians equally regardless of their motivation
- We behave respectfully towards people's choices and decisions
- We want everyone to commit to a fully vegetarian diet, and we see meat reduction as a positive step towards this goal

A nutritionally balanced vegetarian diet is healthier than eating meat:

- All human nutritional needs can be met through a vegetarian diet
- There is no nutritional need to eat animals or slaughter by-products
- Vegetarianism is a positive choice and not a dietary compromise or denial

Rearing animals for meat is damaging for the environment. The vegetarian diet and the changes to agricultural practices it brings:

- Is more respectful of the natural environment
- Will lead to more sustainable use of water resources and less water pollution
- Will reduce the amount of land cleared for animal rearing

- Could, combined with other policies, result in more equitable food distribution
- Will reduce world hunger by eliminating the vast quantities of grain and other plant-based foods fed to artificially bred farm animals

For those vegetarians with deep ethical values, vegetarianism can be an equalities issue. They would also argue:

- All sentient beings should be treated with respect and compassion
- It is ethically wrong to kill animals for food
- Our consumption should be slaughter-free

As an organisation:

- We will be fair, open and transparent
- We will act with integrity
- We will not exploit people or animals in the pursuit of our aims
- We will reduce our environmental impact
- We will promote our values in a positive way

This business plan will look at how we can organise our work for the next five years and how we can deliver our mission and strategic aims. We will need to invest in generating income for the future, work in partnership with other organisations and engage a wider audience with our work. In this plan we will consider where we are now, what is going on in the world around us and what we need to do to ensure that we have a strong and sustainable organisation that can deliver our strategic aims for the next five years.

Vegetarian Society Background

The Vegetarian Society was founded in 1847 and the following year, at the Society's first annual meeting the organisation boasted 265 members, who spanned ages 14-76. The Vegetarian Messenger, a penny publication, was launched in 1849 with almost 5,000 copies circulated each month and it continued under that name for more than 100 years.

In September 2013 we had over 11,000 members across 41 countries, over 15,000 subscribers, over 44,000 twitter followers, 29 staff, 17 regular volunteers and 70 affiliated local groups. We still have a paper publication, our quarterly membership magazine now called 'The Vegetarian', but in the 21st century many of our communications are electronic; online or through social media.

The Vegetarian Society is a registered charity (no: 259358) and a Company Ltd by Guarantee (no: 959115). The organisation's registered offices and centre of operations is Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 4QG. Parkdale is a large Victorian House surrounded by gardens and contains the offices of the organisation, a Board Room and a large lounge area for meetings, the Cordon Vert Cookery School and a small lodge extension currently used for storage.

Our Charitable Objects, last revised in 2012, are:

1. The advancement of education of the public in the subject of vegetarianism, in particular by:
 - (i) Promoting the vegetarian diet for the benefit of people, animals and the environment.
 - (ii) Informing the wider community on all aspects of vegetarianism
2. The provision of exclusively charitable services to support and represent vegetarians

To deliver our charitable objects we work to promote vegetarianism to the wider public, using the television, radio, printed and electronic press and social media. We attend events across the UK and produce information leaflets and web information.

We work to support vegetarians providing information and advice. We operate the Food and Drink Guild for restaurants, cafes and food outlets. We have a Vegetarian Society Approved trademark for food products with over 11,000 products registered worldwide. We run the leading Vegetarian Cookery school in the UK, 'Cordon Vert', where we train members of the public, professional chefs and caterers and commercial food producers and our principle tutor has regular slots in Vegetarian magazines and delivers cookery demonstrations across the UK. Every year we run National Vegetarian Week, which is a celebration of vegetarianism and its diversity, engaging the public and commercial food producers and providers. We also run an annual Chef of the Future competition, encouraging future generations of chefs to excel in vegetarian cooking.

In 2013 our annual turnover was £851,000. Our total reserves at 31 March 2013 were £4,410,000 and this includes our assets, notably the Parkdale building, valued at around £1million. Our main sources of funding are membership subscriptions, donations and legacies and income from the Vegetarian Society Approved trademark.

Future Trends

Our Big Veggie Survey in 2010 told us that 76% of vegetarians say that animals are the main reason they are vegetarian whilst only 9% say the main reason is their health and 4% give the main reason as the environment. This shows that a large number of vegetarians are motivated by factors outside of their own wellbeing. We know that many of them wish to see us working more visibly to influence more people and that some of them would be willing to be more actively involved themselves.

Although variety and availability of food have improved considerably over the last ten years for vegetarians, people responding to the survey named eating out as their biggest problem and asked us to work to provide better understanding of a vegetarian diet and better choice. This is particularly true in areas where people find themselves without a choice of provider, for example in hospital, or whilst travelling on aeroplanes or trains.

One of our most used services is customer enquiries and through this come requests for advocacy and for help with complaining to various service providers as well as requests for information and support around nutrition, dealing with health professionals and sourcing products.

Our members and supporters provide a significant amount of income for us through membership, donations and legacies and so it is important that we involve them in our work, report back to them on the impact it has and provide them with the services they feel they need. Other organisations do this very successfully and donors, quite rightly, have come to expect this.

Future trends in the external environment offer some significant new opportunities for the Vegetarian Society in two areas. The first is around the environment and the growing concerns that climate change brings global food security issues. There is now a significant group of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and charities both in the UK and across the world, most notably in the USA, who are strongly communicating the message that we need to eat less meat. The second area is around health and what is described by both the NHS and the government, as a crisis in public health caused by very high levels of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. The trend here is upward and the strain this is putting on services that were already stretched is leading Local Authorities to consider innovative ways of working. Both areas mean that many meat eaters are, for the first time, considering meat reduction. The Vegetarian Society has not considered supporting meat reduction before and so this is a new area of work for us.

The interest amongst the general public in food and cookery, which has exploded over the past five years, is unlikely to wane over the next five years and this provides opportunities not just for the Cordon Vert cookery school, but also across the organisation in terms of engaging people through food, recipes and cooking.

Strategic Direction

Reflecting our charitable objects we will focus on promoting vegetarianism for the benefit of people, animals and the environment. We will significantly increase the numbers of vegetarians and meat reducers across the UK and worldwide by ensuring there is better provision, more choice and increased quality of food, better education about nutrition and that more decision makers understand and respect vegetarianism.

We will take advantage of the current opportunities to be part of a growing movement that recognises environmental concerns and public health issues, pointing to greater reductions in meat consumption and so we will prioritise working with partner organisations around these issues and encouraging meat reduction as part of a journey towards a vegetarian diet.

Strategic Aims

We have 15 strategic aims that will be delivered within six work programmes:

Inspiring more vegetarians - Work Programme One

Fewer animals will be slaughtered for food and there will be fewer food related illnesses and less environmental damage from food production.

For the next five years we will focus on:

Increasing the number of people who adopt a vegetarian lifestyle
Increasing the number of meat eaters who take up meat reduction
Influencing environmental and other groups to promote vegetarianism

Information and Skills – Work Programme Two

People will have the knowledge, skills and confidence to be vegetarian throughout their lives and particularly when facing challenges such as illness, pregnancy and parenthood. There will be more understanding and tolerance for vegetarianism and better support available from professionals and within education.

For the next five years we will focus on working to ensure:

All people and the healthcare professionals they are in contact with will feel confident being vegetarian throughout their lives
Vegetarianism will be covered in the school curriculum
Anybody studying cookery, food science and catering at any level will be able to qualify without handling meat or slaughter by products
Vegetarians will be advised and supported about nutrition.

Influencing Provision – Work Programme Three

A vegetarian diet will be seen as a positive choice, chefs will have the confidence and skills to provide healthy, tasty vegetarian food and vegetarians will have options in all situations.

For the next five years we will focus on ensuring that:

Captive audiences, such as those in hospitals, on aeroplanes or at events, will have a healthy vegetarian choice

All school meals will have healthy vegetarian options

Food will be properly labeled

Vegetarians will have choices in medicines.

Increasing Choice – Work Programme Four

Vegetarians will have quality choices as part of the mainstream offer to all consumers and eating vegetarian food will be attractive and easy.

For the next five years we will work to ensure that:

There will be an increase in the quantity and quality of vegetarian choice in pubs and restaurants

There will be an increase in the range and quality of vegetarian food and drinks in supermarkets and shops

There will be a choice of at least two vegetarian options each day at canteens in higher education institutions.

Engaging People – Work Programme Five

More people will work with us to make a difference. We will be able to represent more vegetarians and provide better services for them.

For the next five years we will focus on:

Increasing our members and supporters

Increasing our volunteers

Increasing our local groups

Organisational Excellence – Work Programme Six

We will be forward thinking, sustainable and effective; grounded in good governance and quality standards.

For the next five years we will focus on:

Balancing our budget

Getting the resources we need to deliver the strategy

Improving our governance

Achieving Quality Standards

Making our workplace more environmentally sustainable

Strategic Objectives

We have chosen the following objectives to deliver our aims over the next five years:

Work Programme One – Inspiring Vegetarians

1. More people to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle

- 1.1 Promote the benefits of a vegetarian lifestyle to the general public through media outlets, increasing coverage annually 2014/19
- 1.2 Identify and work with 10 celebrities, including chefs and athletes, over the next five years, up to 2019
- 1.3 Re develop the speaker service, to involve 50 volunteer speakers by 2019
- 1.4 Volunteer speakers will deliver 250 talks by 2019
- 1.5 Develop resources for new vegetarians, including an online tool kit, guides and information sheets, booklets and recipes 2014/19

2. More people will reduce meat eating.

- 2.1 Identify and engage with other projects and campaigns such as Meat Free Mondays, Eating Better, Centre for Alternative Technology and Friends of the Earth to influence their message and to maximise the number of people reached 2014/19
- 2.2 Hold a sponsored UK wide Vegetarian Month, in partnership with an existing large event – e.g. Comic Relief, Children in Need, where large numbers of people will not eat meat for a month in 2015
- 2.3 Develop a ‘Pepsi challenge’ blind taste test with a celebrity chef to test which dish people like best, the vegetarian version or the meat version 2016/17
- 2.4 Guerrilla Baubling Christmas campaign with pledge to reduce meat eating over Christmas 2014 & 2015

3. We aim to influence (environmental) groups to promote vegetarianism.

- 3.1 Develop evidenced based information for other groups to use about the environmental benefits of a vegetarian diet 2014/15
- 3.2 Re develop the speaker service, recruiting through other organisations local groups to involve 50 volunteer speakers by 2019 (as in Objective 1)
- 3.3 Volunteer speakers will deliver 250 talks by 2019
- 3.4 Provide information and resources for vegetarians who belong to other groups to raise the issue of vegetarianism within those organisations 2014/15

Work Programme Two – Information and Skills

4. People feel confident being vegetarian throughout their lives and healthcare professionals feel confident supporting them

a) Healthcare professionals:

- 4.1 Develop an Eatwell plate for vegetarians that can be used widely by health professionals and the people they work with 2014/15
- 4.2 Develop an evidence based healthy eating resource that can be used by health professionals and the people they are working with 2014/16
- 4.3 Develop an online training module for health professionals by 2016/17

4.4 Attend 2 hospital staff training events around equality and diversity/staff awareness per year in partnership with Vegetarian for Life 2014/19

4.5 Develop resources for health professionals and the people they work with about specific medical conditions/illness, one per year 2015/6 onwards

b) People feel confident about life challenges and transitions:

4.6 Develop a project to deliver appropriate support or information during identified life stages and challenges 2014/5

4.7 Deliver the project 2015 onwards

5. Vegetarianism is covered in the school curriculum (and free schools, academies, etc)

5.1 Recruit a further 50 school speakers by 2019

5.2 Develop a range of school resources that cover related curriculum topics by 2016

5.3 Offer a themed week for primary schools that includes a range of activities at a time that suits the school, can be linked to National Vegetarian Week 2016 onwards.

6. People studying cookery and food science at any level are able to qualify without handling meat or slaughterhouse by products.

6.1 Audit examining boards requirements at GCSE and A level 2014/5

6.2 Develop information for schools, students and parents about requirements 2014/5

6.3 Develop a range of resources to support schools to deliver requirements 2015/6

6.4 Develop an add on training module for City and Guilds/NVQ trained students to deliver at Cordon Vert 2014/5

6.5 Get training module accredited 2015/6

6.6 Train trainers to deliver accredited module widely 2016 onwards

7. Vegetarians are advised and supported

a) 7.1 Develop a project to deliver appropriate support or information during identified life stages and challenges 2014/5

7.2 Deliver the project 2015 onwards

7.3 Maintain up to date information sheets and FAQs on website 2014/19

7.4 Run an Enquiry service for members of the public 2014/19

7.5 Provide an advocacy service for vegetarians who need support around issues and complaints 2014/15 onwards

7.6 Develop training for advice givers such as CAB and a fact sheet for individuals on vegetarianism and the Equalities Act.

b) About nutrition:

7.7 Employ a part time nutritionist – to run weekly phone /Twitter/facebook ‘ask the expert’ helpline 2014/5

7.8 Develop a list of advice givers/ practitioners to signpost to and an information sheet on how to choose one 2014/5

7.9 Produce/commission a definitive book (paperback and eBook) to sell by 2018

Work Programme Three – Influencing Provision

8. Captive audiences have a healthy veggie choice.

8.1 Increase the membership of the Food and Drink Guild to 50 organisations by 2019 from care homes, airlines, trains, and other providers in situations where customers have no alternative food provider.

8.2 Increase the training provided for chefs and caterers by Cordon Vert by 100% by 2019

8.3 Develop an online basic information training module for chefs and caterers

8.4 Provide educational information to decision makers in commissioning and provider organisations about the necessity and benefits of including vegetarian options.

8.5 Increase the number of inspiration days and recipe development services to enable providers to develop better quality and greater range of vegetarian food by 100% by 2019

9. All school dinners have healthy veggie options.

9.1 Maintain involvement with School Food Plan to influence adequate inclusion of vegetarian meals and develop opportunities for the Vegetarian Society to support provision 2014/19

9.2 Develop an Eatwell plate for vegetarian children that can be used by school meal planners

9.3 Increase the number of inspiration days and recipe development services to enable providers to develop better quality and greater range of vegetarian food by 100% by 2019

9.4 Develop an online basic information training module for chefs and caterers

9.5 Develop an online training module for customer facing staff (dinner ladies and Teaching Assistants)

10. Food is properly labelled.

10.1 Increase VSA trademark by 25% by 2019 in income, membership and number of products approved.

10.2 Increase membership of the Food and Drink Guild for commercial outlets by 100% by 2019

10.3 Campaign for beer and wine to be labelled suitable for vegetarians, resulting in an increase in the number of products labelled in 2014/16

10.4 Campaign for better labelling of fruit juice suitable for vegetarians resulting in an increase in the number of products labelled in 2016/19

10.5 Follow and influence EU labelling developments, providing information to vegetarians and food providers on requirements 2014/19

10.6 Provide educational information to food manufacturers on ingredients that are/not suitable for vegetarians 2014/19

10.7 Research the production of Shellac and review Vegetarian Society position 2014/15

11. Vegetarians have choices in medicines

11.1 Develop a format, with criteria, for stating that medicines are vegetarian in 2014/15

11.2 Compile a list of over the counter medicines that comply with that format and publicise the list to consumers by 2015

11.3 Update the list annually 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

11.4 Produce an information leaflet for medical professionals and pharmacists about common prescription medicine ingredients that are/are not vegetarian by 2016

11.5 Distribute the information to prescribing medical professionals, pharmacies and pharmacists and consumers by 2016

11.6 Update the information and distribute annually 2017, 2018, 2019.

11.7 Campaign to encourage vegetarians to ask their GP to record that they prefer vegetarian medicines and treatments where possible, resulting in 10,000 people contacting their GP's in 2016/17

11.8 Campaign to target producers of non-vegetarian over the counter products 2016/17, involving 20,000 people.

Work Programme Four – Increasing Choices

12. Increase in quantity and quality of veggie choice in pubs and restaurants.

12.1 Increase membership of the Food and Drink Guild for commercial outlets by 100% by 2019

12.2 Increase the training provided for chefs and caterers by Cordon Vert by 100% by 2019

12.3 Increase the number of inspiration days and recipe development services to enable providers to develop better quality and greater range of vegetarian food by 100% by 2019

12.4 Develop an online basic information training module for chefs and caterers

12.5 Develop an online training module for customer facing staff

12.6 Campaign for beer and wine to be labelled suitable for vegetarians, resulting in an increase in the number of products labelled in 2014/16

12.7 Campaign for better labelling of fruit juice suitable for vegetarians resulting in an increase in the number of products labelled in 2016/19

12.8 Develop a guide on how to ask for better service/complain 2014/5

12.9 Encourage vegetarians to use trip advisor etc to give feedback 2014/5

13. Increase in range and quality of veggie food and drinks in supermarkets and shops.

13.1 Increase VSA trademark by 25% by 2019 in income, membership and number of products approved.

13.2 Develop an online training module for customer facing retail staff

13.3 Provide vegetarian panels for food tasting and product development at Parkdale 2014/19

13.4 Organise an event bringing manufacturers and retailers together, pilot in 2014/15

14. Canteens in higher education institutions offer at least two vegetarian options each day.

14.1 Increase membership of the Food and Drink Guild for commercial outlets by 100% by 2019

14.2 Increase the training provided for chefs and caterers by Cordon Vert by 100% by 2019

14.3 Increase the number of inspiration days and recipe development services to enable providers to develop better quality and greater range of vegetarian food by 100% by 2019

14.4 Develop an online basic information training module for chefs and caterers

14.5 Develop an online training module for customer facing staff

14.6 Develop contact with 5 university or college sustainability groups to influence them to include vegetarianism and meat free days as part of their plans by 2019

Work Programme Five – Engaging People

15. More people will join the Vegetarian Society and be actively involved in our work

- 15.1 Review the membership structure and package, including reviewing the magazine 2014/5 (in line with Fundraising Strategy Recommendations R3, R19, R34)
- 15.2 Increase the number of members/supporters to 15,000 by 2019
- 15.3 Increase the number of local groups to 120 by 2019
- 15.4 Increase the number of volunteers to 120 by 2019 (volunteers are currently general speakers and school speakers, event volunteers and Parkdale volunteers)
- 15.5 Increase the number of people receiving e-newsletters by 50% by 2019

Work Programme Six – Organisational Excellence

16. Organisational excellence and sustainability

- 16.1 Achieve PQASSO Level 1 externally accredited by 2017
- 16.2 Increase merchandising sales by 50% by 2019
- 16.3 Increase voluntary income (excluding legacies) by 50% by 2019
- 16.4 Increase VSA trademark by 25% by 2019 in income, membership and number of products approved.
- 16.5 Increase membership of the Food and Drink Guild for commercial outlets by 100% by 2019
- 16.6 Increase the membership of the Food and Drink Guild to 50 organisations by 2019 from care homes, airlines, trains, and other providers in situations where customers have no alternative food provider.
- 16.7 Cordon Vert will break even and start to go into profit by 2017
- 16.8 Maintain the fabric of the building at Parkdale to protect the charities asset throughout the five years to 2019
- 16.9 Make the building more sustainable by carrying out work to reduce energy usage 2014/5
- 16.10 Research, with support from GMCVO (a Greater Manchester infrastructure support organisation) the economic viability of installing solar panels/photovoltaic panels/bio mass boiler to power the building more sustainably and generate income 2014/5
- 16.11 Increase Affinity Income by 100% by 2019

Enabling Activities

Enabling activities will contribute to making sure that one or several objectives can be achieved successfully, but are not objectives in themselves.

E1 National Vegetarian Week

National Vegetarian Week, an annual awareness week, will enable Objectives 1,2,3,4,5,8, 10,12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 because it will:

- Promote the benefits of a vegetarian diet
- Raise the profile of existing vegetarians
- Engage vegetarians in inspiring other vegetarians
- Engage more people in trying vegetarian food
- Promote existing vegetarian services
- Help to encourage choice for vegetarians in shops and supermarkets and pubs and restaurants
- Fundraise to continue to fund work to inspire more vegetarians and meat reducers

Enabling Goal 1:

Run National Vegetarian Week annually

E2 Research

Researching accurate data will enable us to achieve Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 15 and 16. There is very little research into the trends in the number of vegetarians in the country and their motivations and a particular gap in information about attitudes to meat and whether meat reduction leads to vegetarianism. This basic information is required for good strategic planning and to enable us to communicate authoritatively about the benefits of vegetarianism.

Enabling Goal 2:

Collect accurate, up to date data over the five year period on:

- The number of vegetarians in the UK and their motivations and attitudes
- The amount of meat people are eating and their motivations and attitudes
- The number and profile of Vegetarian Society members and supporters
- The reasons why people do and do not join the Vegetarian Society
- The needs of vegetarians in the UK (Fundraising Strategy Recommendation R8)

Maintain an up to date information bank on:

- The health benefits of being vegetarian
- The environmental benefits of being vegetarian
- The benefits for animals of being vegetarian

E3 Information Standard

Achieving and maintaining the information standard enables Objectives 3, 4, 7 and 11 as it allows our information to be used by health professionals and other accredited health information giving organisations, including charities.

Enabling Goal 3:

Maintain the Information Standard accreditation over the five years until 2019.

E4 Website

Having an excellent website enables all the objectives but is particularly significant for Objectives 1, 2, 3, 7 and 15.

Enabling Goal 4:

Review our websites and work with users to identify problems and weaknesses (Fundraising Strategy Recommendation R27) and depending on the outcome of the review either

a) Dedicate resource to further updating and revamping our websites

OR

b) Dedicate resource to developing new websites

Additional objectives may arise out of partnership work with Vegetarian for Life, Meat Free Monday and the Vegan Society.

E5 Archive

Developing the archive will enable Objectives 1, 4, 7 and 15 as it will allow vegetarians to connect with those that have gone before, helping to give confidence, support and engage people with a community.

Enabling Goal 5:

We will seek funding to catalogue, digitise and appropriately house our archive by 2019

The Vegetarian Society Track Record

The Vegetarian Society will celebrate its 170th birthday during the lifetime of this business plan as we have been working to promote, educate and support vegetarians and the vegetarian movement since 1847. We have been at the heart of a world of change for vegetarians since those early years.

Acceptance

Our numbers have increased dramatically, both in the UK and all around the world, especially over the last 50 years and vegetarianism has become more mainstream almost everywhere. The Vegetarian Society regularly gets asked by the media to comment on food issues. According to our members there is less stereotyping and more public awareness, less hostility and more tolerance, but there is still a long way to go.

Understanding

There is now a much better understanding of what vegetarians do and don't eat and more understanding about animal by-products such as gelatine and cochineal, fewer offers of fish and more people are aware of the health benefits of being vegetarian.

National Curriculum

Pupils in schools across the UK have been able to study aspects of vegetarianism within lessons since 1993, so children and young people know more about it.

Better Food

Vegetarian food has improved beyond recognition. Many pubs, cafes and restaurants offer exciting and tasty vegetarian food, and most recognise that they should have vegetarian options. The range and quality of vegetarian goods and services has increased dramatically since we started our Vegetarian Society Approved labelling scheme and we've worked with big companies to get them to drop slaughter by products from their non-meat ranges eg in 2005 McDonalds stopped putting Cochineal in their UK strawberry milkshake. Almost all UK cheeses are now vegetarian. Free-range eggs are prominent and widely accepted.

Better Health

Research has now shown that a healthy balanced vegetarian diet can mean less risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

Recipes, chefs and celebrities

There are now vast numbers of vegetarian recipes available, in mainstream magazines, online and within a wide range of cookery books, both vegetarian and those including meat and fish. Most celebrity chefs have embraced the need to include vegetarian food. Our patron, Rose Elliot, who has supported many vegetarians along their journey, has been recognised with an MBE and Sir Paul McCartney, also a patron, is famous worldwide for his vegetarianism. Other high profile people around the world, such as Bill Clinton, former US president speak widely about their vegetarianism.

Labelling

Our Vegetarian Society Approved trademark has promoted the need and inspired food producers to understand why vegetarians want clear vegetarian labelling on products. We now approve over 11,000 products worldwide and other companies, such as the supermarkets, use their own labelling formats.

Magazines

There are now two Vegetarian lifestyle magazines, 'Cook Vegetarian' and 'Vegetarian Living', available widely in supermarkets and newsagents across the UK.

Events

There are now specialist Vegetarian events such as Vegfests across the UK and people attend in their thousands.

Standard Definition

We worked with the UK Food Standards Agency and in 2006 they agreed a definition of 'vegetarian' for foods products.

Equalities Act

In 2013 the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) of the UK interpreted a judgement of the European Court of Human Rights, saying that if vegetarianism is a deeply held belief then employers would have to behave accordingly and make provision where appropriate under the Equalities Act. This opens up the possibility of using case law to establish that vegetarianism can be a belief and establish rights in law.

Who we are and where our experience lies

Our Board of Trustees consists of ten experienced and skilled Trustees with a range of skills and professional experience and diverse personal backgrounds enabling them to form a strong Council, with vision and an appetite for change:

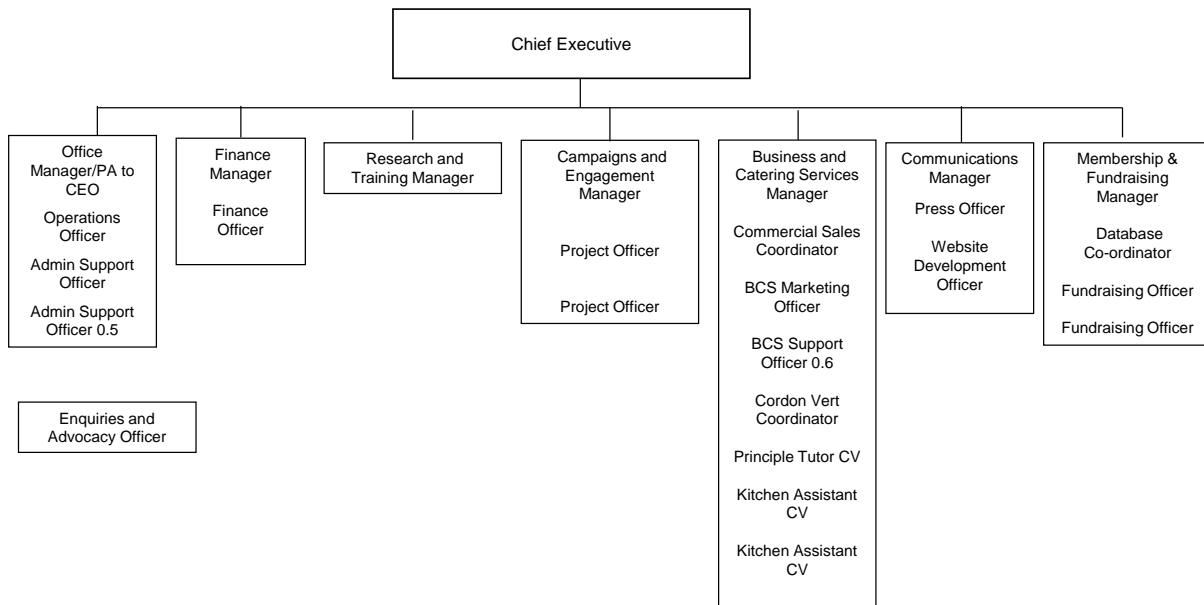
David Bennett – Chair
Nina Davies – Deputy Chair
Sean O Donnell – Treasurer
Clare Crowther – Chair of Strategic Planning Committee
Deborah Jones
John Davis
Peter Morrall
Matt Willis
Shobhna Dave
David Pye

Our Chief Executive, Lynne Elliot, has worked in the third sector for twenty years and has been in senior management for fifteen years and a CEO for nine of those years.

Our Senior Management Team has a mixture of experience from the Third Sector in community and local organisations and key national organisations that are our partners, such as Friends of the Earth and the National Trust. They have private sector, business and media experience and a range of educational and professional qualifications that related to our work.

Our Cordon Vert Cookery School Principle Tutor Alex Connell is well known in the world of vegetarian cooking, appearing regularly in a range of publications with a regular column in Cook Vegetarian. We also employ a number of reputable Guest Tutors.

Staff Structure at April 2014



Proposed Organisational Structure from April 2014