



## FROM THE CEO



As we all know, 2020 was a strange year for all and a difficult year for most. The beginning of the pandemic was an enormous period of adjustment for everyone at The Vegan Society. However, I am pleased and proud to say that we have achieved much to be celebrated.

We launched our biggest and most ambitious campaign to date – Future Normal, which encourages non-vegans who identify as animal lovers to reflect on their values and commit to making more compassionate choices. We also created a new campaign, Live Vegan for Less, with the aim of supporting vegans experiencing financial hardship. Our Vegan Trademark is now visible on over 47,000 products – this is amazing outreach.

We also developed a comprehensive sustainability policy which will ensure that The Vegan Society are conscious of the social, economic and environmental impact in all that we do. We will be reporting on the measures taken in future Annual Reviews to show our commitment to our planet, and all those who we share it with.

Thank you to all of our members who have continued to support our work this year.

**George Gill**

## FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL



At the risk of repeating what others have already said, it seems impossible to talk about the past year without recognising its specific challenges – such as Covid-19, international civil rights protests and Britain's changing relationship with

the EU. While such issues may sometimes seem unrelated to veganism, each has a vegan dimension – either how it impacts vegans, or how it impacts other animals.

Therefore, it's inevitable that each would affect The Vegan Society. For example, in the case of Covid-19, we have had to adopt remote working, take advantage of furlough schemes, and strive to make veganism more accessible (for example, with our Live Vegan for Less campaign). Furthermore, the widely accepted source of this pandemic in humankind's exploitation of other animals has made our Future Normal campaign especially timely.

Nevertheless, the year has also highlighted where we need to do more. So I'm delighted by the launch of initiatives such as our Teen Hub to better engage with younger vegans, and our sustainability policy that underpins activities across the organisation. I'm grateful for the support of all our staff, volunteers and members. I look forward to further opportunities to increase engagement and improve equity over the year ahead.

**Robb Masters**

## THE BIGGER PICTURE

Research studies conducted by The Vegan Society, Mintel and others showed that interest in veganism continues to rise in the UK. According to Mintel, one in 10 Brits agreed the Covid-19 pandemic made them more inclined towards a plant-based diet, while 25% of millennials said they found going vegan more appealing. As well as a desire to improve physical health, compassion was an often-cited reason for making the switch.

Another factor which cannot be ignored is the fact that Covid-19 is a zoonotic disease – one which is transmitted from a non-human animal to humans. Given this, the general public are now in many cases more aware of the far-reaching and catastrophic effects of the animal product industry on humans and other species alike.

Consumers are continuing to shift away from animal products and embrace more plant-based options. Major supermarkets released new inventive, well-labelled vegan lines and spoke of plans to further invest in the plant-based market.

New high-profile individuals and organisations, including Sir David Attenborough and Greenpeace, began to share more about the positive effects of veganism for individuals and the planet, raising the profile of veganism amongst their huge audiences.



## CREATING THE FUTURE NORMAL

Future Normal, our biggest and most ambitious campaign to date, appeals to non-vegans who consider themselves animal lovers. Future Normal encourages these people to reflect on their values and behaviours and to consider positive lifestyle changes.

Through powerful videos, interviews, thought pieces, podcast episodes and much more, the 64,000 visitors to [futurenormal.org.uk](http://futurenormal.org.uk) explored a kinder way of thinking and living. Many more got a glimpse of a more compassionate future through our adverts on TV and social media, with the main campaign film exceeding one million views.

After engaging with the website, many committed to changing their attitudes towards other animals and making more compassionate decisions. For many more, this will be the first step in their journey towards thinking positively about veganism.

Although our usual outdoor events and activities were not possible, we were excited to partner with How the Light Gets In for their first online festival of ideas. Our sponsored debate "Can we eat animals if we care about them?" prompted audience members to consider the hypocrisy in many of our attitudes towards other species.

Future Normal was created in collaboration with creative agency Up ([helloup.co.uk](http://helloup.co.uk)). Director Kate Bowen says, "As a vegan creative agency whose co-founders have each been vegan for 35 years, we were over the moon to be asked to work with The Vegan Society. This November, the campaign went a step further with a 60 second ad on UK TV. That's a first for The Vegan Society!"



*Children are drawn to the wonder and beauty of all animals. In adulthood, too many make the incongruous distinction between animals they eat and those they want to share their lives with. Future Normal is beautiful in its simplicity, and reminds us that we can choose a kinder path – one where kindness is at the heart of our relationships with all animals.*

Brenda and Philip Shore, Future Normal donors

# FUTURE NORMAL





Live  
**VEGAN**  
for less

“ Really good to see *The Vegan Society* doing work to highlight affordable vegan living during these times! Vegan Society member

At *Veganuary* we love the *Live Vegan for Less* campaign! This is such an important message which is often missing from the *vegan advocacy*. Sofia Balderson, Project Manager Internationalisation at *Veganuary*

## LIVE VEGAN FOR LESS

Sadly, the number of people experiencing financial hardship only rose during 2020. In response we created Live Vegan for Less, a campaign to address misconceptions that vegan living is only for the affluent, and to support vegans living on a budget or experiencing food poverty.

New resources were made available at [vegansociety.com/liveveganforless](https://vegansociety.com/liveveganforless), where visitors can find tips on budget cooking, cost-comparison research and affordable recipe ideas. We called on our followers to share their own tips and recipes, compiling these into handy infographics.

We were delighted to work with Chef Day Radley, who hosted a series of cook-along videos on Instagram Live. We also worked with Sustainable Kitchen Consultants, a team of chefs who specialise in healthy plant-based recipe development, on a series of delicious budget-friendly recipe videos. These recipes made use of healthy and affordable staples such as oats, lentils and chickpeas, also focusing on using seasonable produce and showing how to avoid food waste.

Improving accessibility to affordable, nutritious vegan food is a cornerstone of the campaign. We are in conversations with convenience store chains such as Nisa to encourage them to increase stock of vegan food and drink, as well as everyday living essentials such as soaps and shower gels.

We are also engaging with policy and decision makers to impress upon them the importance of increasing accessibility to healthy plant-based food at a systemic level.

## 30 YEARS OF THE VEGAN TRADEMARK

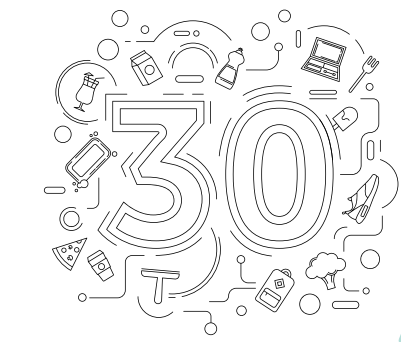
2020 marked 30 years of the Vegan Trademark, making it the longest-running vegan product labelling scheme of its kind. There is no legal definition of 'vegan' in terms of product labelling, meaning that the work of the Trademark Team is vital in helping consumers select vegan products with confidence.

Our anniversary campaign ran throughout the year, highlighting all the work we do around vegan labelling, and giving an insight into the complexity of the trademarking process. After all, the standards we set are the highest you can find!

Focusing on a different sector each month, we created blogs and posts to highlight some of the lesser-known ways in which animal products can be used, and how to avoid accidentally buying non-vegan items.

There were several exciting new product registrations over the course of the year, with a highlight being Galaxy registering a vegan range featuring five delicious flavours of chocolate, and Superdry being the first premium high street brand to launch a range of vegan trainers. We ended the year with over 47,000 products registered (up 22% since 2019) across categories including food and drink, fashion and textiles, cosmetics, household and toiletries.

Our Trademark social media presence has grown, with an extra 9000 people following us on Instagram, bringing us up to over 25,000 people who are kept up to date with blogs, new releases, competitions and more. We now have 3000 people following our new Trademark LinkedIn account, and 55,000 people viewing our content each month on our new Pinterest channel.



@berryscotbeauty: I'm so grateful for all of the fantastic work the organisation does 🙏❤️

@sparklypattie: Congratulations on being a voice for animals and setting high standards with the products you register! 🐾❤️🌱🌿

@beanandwick: Makes me so happy when I see the trademark on packaging 🌱⚡🙏



Thanks to everyone who has engaged with our Trademark social media accounts! You can follow @vegantrademark on Instagram and Twitter





## FURTHERING VEGAN RIGHTS

In January 2020, The Vegan Society contributed evidence and expertise in a landmark employment tribunal which confirmed that ethical veganism is a protected characteristic under equality law. The ruling highlights the legal duty of the private and public sectors to consider the needs of vegans, for example in educational institutions, hospitals and wider health services, the workplace and as consumers of goods and services.

Following the ruling we released a new publication, *Supporting Vegans in the Workplace*, to help employers to understand more about veganism and their duty to vegan employees. We received global press attention after this release, gaining front page coverage on The Times, being featured in most national news outlets and giving 15 radio interviews the day the story broke.

The Vegan Society's second annual International Rights Conference took place online, with attendees and speakers from all over the world. Topics covered included vegan catering in public institutions, the use of words such as 'burger' and 'milk' to describe plant-based products and the protection of vegans in education.

During the year we received over 250 requests for legal information and support from people encountering a number of different issues.

Frequent problems included access to vegan food in school, hospital or prison, attitudes towards vegans in schools or workplaces and food labelling.



“Angela in Bristol (not her real information) contacted us about a serious case of workplace discrimination. We were able to support Angela and help her to reach a resolution. Angela says, “My situation caused me severe anxiety and resulted in me being off work. From the moment I got in touch with Jeanette at The Vegan Society I instantly knew that I had got through to the right person! Every time I called she was available, kind, understanding and so positive every step of the way.”

## GROW GREEN

The UK's agricultural system is currently lagging behind the obvious appetite for more plant-based options. Grow Green is our pioneering campaign to encourage a shift from animal agriculture towards plant-based growing in the UK. Through this, we work with farmers who wish to transition towards crop growing, and speak to policymakers about how and why the government can support and accelerate this positive change.

In 2020 we worked with organic growing expert Jenny Hall to publish a report, *Alternatives to Commercial Grazing*. The report is written primarily for those in farming and conservation communities, and focuses on 'marginal' land – that which isn't suitable for conventional crops. *Alternatives to Commercial Grazing* outlines many different land management practices that farmers and landowners could adopt, instead of using land as grazing pasture for farmed animals. It also provides practical advice on alternative sources of funding and income.

The profile of the campaign was boosted by media appearances throughout the year. Campaigns and Policy Officer Tim Thorpe outlined our aims in several radio interviews, including one on the high-profile Costing the Earth on BBC Radio 4.

We also took part in two debates hosted by the Country Land and Business Association. These well-attended panel discussions posed an excellent opportunity to promote the benefits and opportunities of a transition away from farming animals, and to show that The Vegan Society seeks to work in collaboration with farmers rather than against them.

“The Alternatives to Commercial Grazing report comes at a turning point in farming. At the moment there are still lots of unknowns, but The Vegan Society has been at the forefront of bringing all the information together. Jenny Hall



Our Pathways to Veganism research highlighted that some people with certain pre-existing health conditions are interested in going vegan, but are unsure whether a plant-based diet can work for them. We built on our health and nutrition campaign, Vegan and Thriving, to create bespoke resources for people living with osteoporosis and high cholesterol.

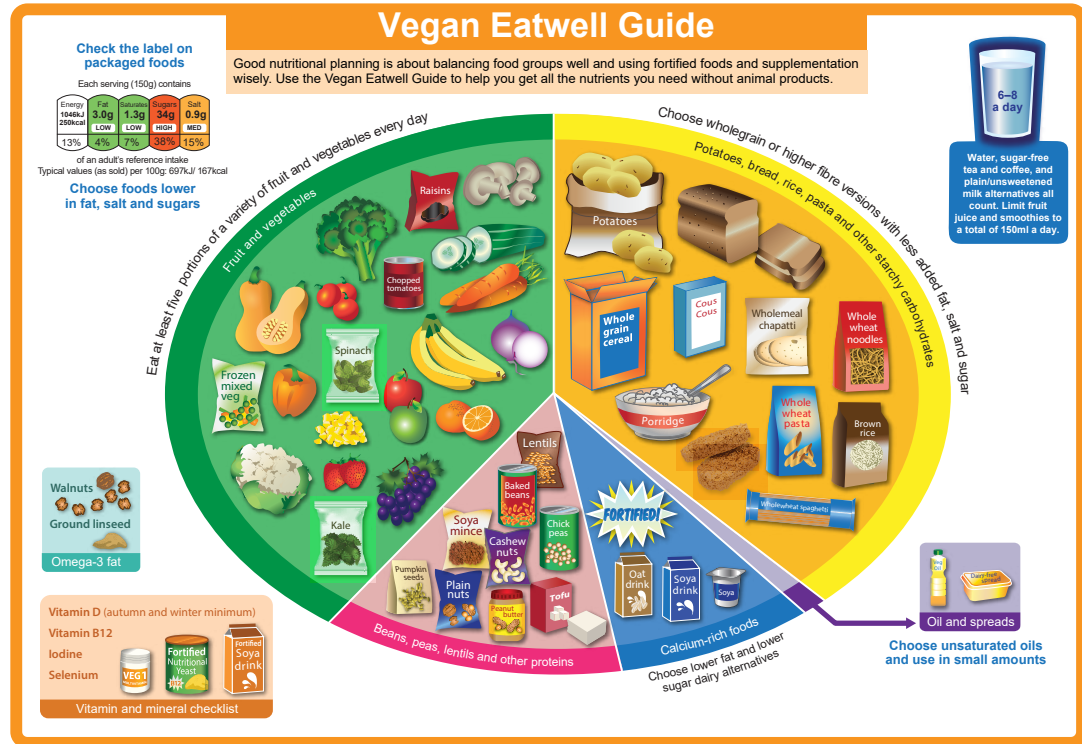
The Eatwell Guide is designed to help people understand recommendations around healthy eating. During 2020 we produced a vegan version of the guide. Vegan Society Dietitian Heather Russell says, “We tried to include affordable and widely available items and draw attention to some of the extra considerations around vegan nutrition. I was keen for the Vegan Eatwell Guide to encourage people to make the most of what plant-based nutrition has to offer.”

We conducted several successful online outreach sessions, educating over 2000 health and professionals on totally plant-based nutrition through two webinars hosted by MyNutriWeb and Oatly.

A large part of the nutrition service involves answering queries from the public about vegan nutrition. Over the year, we answered over 800 emails, letters and phone calls in response to individual queries from health and nutrition professionals, caterers and those looking to get the most out of a plant-based diet.



**“ I contacted The Vegan Society for support on behalf of my daughter Rosa, who is 15. Parenting a teen vegan can be a worry when it comes to the micro-nutrition in their diets, but the expert advice from Heather the Dietitian helped me to understand how VEG 1 supplements fitted in with food. She gave me clear, easy-to-follow guidance which has put my mind at rest to ensure that my daughter has the optimum diet. Flora**



The Vegan Eatwell Guide was adapted from the Eatwell Guide under the terms of the Open Government Licence: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/1/>. The Eatwell Guide is a Crown Copyright publication of Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland.

© The Vegan Society, 2020. Registered Charity No. 279228 (England and Wales) and SC049495 (Scotland)



In the autumn we launched our Teen Hub, a new section of our website created to give vegan and vegan-curious teens everything they need to go and stay vegan. Inspired by the huge interest in ethical, sustainable living from the younger generations, we created some fantastic new resources to address some of the specific questions this group may have.

On our Teen Hub you can find fun, affordable recipes and nutritional information specific to teens. There are stories and tips from a fantastic group of young vegans who wanted to share their vegan journeys and provide advice for their peers. You can also find tips on how to live in a non-vegan household, navigating social situations and the rights of young vegans in education and the workplace.

We worked with illustration and animation studio Dinosaurs and Teacups to create a stunning video, voiced by Evanna Lynch and Jay Brave, to help people to find the Hub.

We also launched our first ever Youth Membership. For a limited time, those aged 25 or under were able to sign up to support The Vegan Society for just £5 for their first year. Improving access to the society and allowing more young people to have a say in our work is important to us, and we are delighted to say that lots of people took advantage of the offer.

**“ I’m incredibly excited about the new Youth Membership that The Vegan Society is offering. Young people have a huge drive for creating change, especially for the planet and animal rights. I think the youth membership is a great way for people to get involved, have their ideas heard, and progress the vegan movement - Bethany Garland (21), President of the Vegetarian and Vegan Society at the University of West England**





## THE VEGAN POD

In 2020 we launched our brand new podcast – The Vegan Pod. The podcast was originally intended as a forum to explore some of the fascinating and divisive topics within the vegan community. Issues up for discussion included whether veganism is for the privileged, and whether vegans should support non-vegan fast food outlets when they bring out plant-based options.

In light of Covid-19, the first podcasts instead focused on providing support and feel-good stories for our followers. Most of us found ourselves physically isolated from friends and family, and encountering new struggles in everyday life. Listening to The Vegan Pod became a small way to feel closer to other vegans and to feel plugged in to the wider community.

Episode 1 featured small vegan businesses, and explored how they had coped with the pandemic and what they were doing to give back to the vegan community. The next episode shone a light on the amazing work of animal sanctuaries. Joan, a listener, responded to this episode by saying, "Very touching and informative podcast. Really inspired to hear of the great work of these organisations and individuals involved. Thank you!"

In 2021 we plan to relaunch with a whole new range of guests including speakers from the vegan community and also everyday people who would like to share their stories. Make sure you're following along by subscribing to the podcast on any of the usual platforms, including iTunes and Spotify.



***Our first two podcasts have been downloaded and listened to 968 times***

## VEGANISM IN POLITICS

Alongside our public-facing campaigns, a vital part of our work involves engaging with policy and decision makers to get vegan solutions on the government's agenda.

As part of the online political party conference season, we sponsored an event with SERA – the Labour Party's environmental society. The event, Growing the Right Food Policy, resulted in a meeting with Daniel Zeichner, the Shadow Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries. At this meeting we spoke with industry experts and put forward ideas for transitioning UK agriculture towards producing more plant proteins.

We fed into the discussion around the proposed EU ban on 'meaty' language. We highlighted the fact that banning food producers from using traditional words such as 'sausage' and 'burger' on their products would place unnecessary restrictions on the growing plant-based food market, and inconvenience consumers looking to make more sustainable choices. After reviewing the evidence, the EU strongly rejected the proposed ban, although conversations are ongoing about wording which compares plant-based items to dairy products such as yoghurt and cheese.

Throughout the year we fed into a record number of government consultations on proposals to policy changes. One such consultation was on the procurement of public sector food. Our response asked for vegetables, pulses, wholegrains and other plant-based foods to be prioritised in the public sector food procurement guidelines, as this would promote public health and ensure that vegan options are readily available on public sector menus.

***During 2020 our vegAPPG (the All-Party Parliamentary Group for vegan issues) ran meetings to get the following issues on the government's agenda:***

- ***Vegan rights in the workplace***
- ***Respect for vegan beliefs while eating in care***
- ***Food security***





## COMING IN 2021

In 2021 we will take part in the postponed COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, where we will spread the word about the need for animal agriculture to be recognised as a major contributor to climate breakdown.

We will widely share our environmental campaign, Plate Up for the Planet, to promote the positive impact of switching to a vegan diet. We will share our message through advertising, new audio content and, hopefully, public activities and events.

We will improve the online search function of the Vegan Trademark, making it easier for you to find vegan products you can trust. Our vegan multivitamin VEG 1 will be relaunched, and we will move to a new supplier to keep up with growing demand.

Building on the success of the Future Normal campaign, we will bring our message of reflection and compassion to a wider audience, inspiring more people to make the connection and take the next steps towards veganism.

We will develop new resources for Vegan and Thriving, our health and nutrition campaign, and help more people than ever to fall in love with plant-based food. Alongside this we will revamp our online nutrition information to make it even more accessible and practical.

Rest assured that this is just a snapshot of our plans for 2021. To keep updated with our latest plans, see our quarterly magazine *The Vegan*, sign up to our newsletter and follow our social media accounts.



**The Vegan Society,  
Donald Watson House,  
34–35 Ludgate Hill,  
Birmingham B3 1EH**

**t:** +44 (0)121 523 1730

**e:** [info@vegansociety.com](mailto:info@vegansociety.com)

**w:** [vegansociety.com](http://vegansociety.com)

**Registered Charity No.**  
279228 (England and Wales)  
and SC049495 (Scotland)

Printed on 100% recycled paper