

## The Vegan Society Sustainability Policy

### Sustainability mission statement

Veganism is a thoughtful, considerate and caring way of life. The Vegan Society cares deeply about the future of our planet, and all those we share it with. We are committed to operating as a responsible, sustainable organisation.

We follow the Brundtland report's definition of sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This means we are conscious of the social, economic and environmental impact in all that we do.

We seek to reduce the negative effect of what we do as much as possible, but over and above this, we seek to find ways in which to make a positive difference through our own actions and influencing the actions of others.

This policy explains our approach to sustainability and demonstrates how we live our values. It provides a reminder and guidance to staff in their day to day work, and clearly communicates our approach to sustainability in terms of the suppliers we buy from and the community we serve.

### Scope

This policy covers The Vegan Society's values and operations as an organisation in our core activities which are: membership, education, campaigns, Trademark registration and retail.

We want to embody our values and ensure that our own practice as an organisation supports our aims. We want to develop a strong sense of the 'The Vegan Society way' of doing business, and everything from our staff engagement to our relationships with suppliers plays a part in this.

While we endeavour for sustainability to be at the heart of all decision making, and to attain a consistent approach across the organisation, we acknowledge the varied roles and tasks of an ever-growing organisation. For this reason we do not set out here a rigid set of requirements, as a "one size fits all" approach to such diverse circumstances would be too restrictive to be practical. Instead we provide clear guiding principles that aid our planning and decisions.

### Our Standards

#### 1. Energy demands

Our energy supply comes from Ecotricity who build new renewable supply with their profits.

Whilst we aim to choose low energy alternatives throughout our office we acknowledge that our light fittings and boiler specifically are not as efficient as they could be. We commit to seeking low energy solutions when they are replaced.

Energy efficiency is a key consideration when acquiring new electrical equipment.

We turn off all lighting and electronic equipment when not in use, and switch off overnight.

We monitor and record our energy consumption.

## **2. Transport demands**

Our office location is accessible by public transport.

The predominant mode of transport is train.

Air travel is a necessary evil in order for us to be able to develop internationally, but we will investigate any other options on an ongoing basis . Any flights are approved by senior management.

To this end we encourage telephone or virtual meetings where possible. We have subscriptions with various online meeting tools and commit to improving our knowledge and usage in this area.

We monitor and record our transport usage through our centralised purchasing process.

To ensure travel meets our sustainability requirements it is important for staff to follow the below process when considering travel on behalf of the organisation.

1. Decide which type of travel works best for your journey i.e. car, train, plane etc. Note plane travel should only be used where absolutely necessary.
2. Complete a travel booking form (This should be completed no matter what type of travel you have chosen)
3. Get the form signed off by your line manager/ budget holder. Please note that flights must also be approved by a member of the senior management team.
4. Send the form to the Office Manager.
5. If you have chosen a type of travel that doesn't need to be booked i.e. your own car and accommodation isn't needed, the Office Manager will use the form to record the details of the journey for sustainability tracking purposes.
6. If your travel does need to be booked, the Office Manager will investigate the best prices and get back to you with the details.
7. Upon receiving the details, let the Office Manager know whether you are happy to go ahead.
8. Your travel and/or accommodation will then be booked, and you will be sent all the details for your journey.

The travel booking form can be found in the company documents section of Breathe HR.

## **3. Air emissions**

The green energy and transport policies outlined above are also important in minimising damaging air emissions.

The office is a non-smoking environment.

## **4. Water use**

We continually monitor our water usage in the office and staff are encouraged to use tap water where possible.

## **5. Land use**

Our activities have a minimal effect on land use.

## **6. Cultural impact**

We have an equal opportunities policy.

Through our work we aim to present different cultures in a positive light and encourage greater understanding between different countries and faiths.

## **7. Waste and recycling**

We look for recycled options in our procurement.

We recycle 100% of office waste which is turned into sustainable energy.

Sanitary waste is recycled and turned into garden furniture.

We reuse paper where possible, with used paper in the printer for internal and draft printing.

## **8. Ethical supply chain**

We apply a sustainable approach to all our procurement, asking:

- Do we actually need it?
- What is it made of, who made it, where was it transported from and how is it packaged?
- How long will it last?
- Can it be reused or recycled at the end of its life?
- Have we investigated and evaluated possible alternatives and sought the most sustainable option?
- Is it good value?

We only purchase products which we believe meet our standards around sourcing as outlined in this policy. Staff are asked to confirm they have considered these standards at the point of purchase, via our purchase order system.

We have a procurement sustainability questionnaire which we endeavour to use with all suppliers, particularly those where we have ongoing relationships ensuring they commit to our standards. The supplier questionnaire can be found in the company documents section of Breathe HR, and completed forms should be stored in the Admin/Sustainability folder or emailed to the Office Manager.

We use eco friendly cleaning products, consumables and stationery.

## **9. Transparent relationships**

We are open and fair in the contracts and terms we issue to producers and suppliers. We commit to standard payment terms.

We use our website as a portal to communicate with service users, as well as our blog and social media platforms. Feedback is sought via these channels.

## **10. Local sourcing**

We prioritise sourcing from local businesses and the community where our office is located.

We use UK suppliers where possible.

## **11. Security and safety**

We provide a safe and secure working environment for our staff.

We have £5 million public liability insurance, and £10 million employer's liability insurance.

## **12. Equality and diversity**

We have a positive organisational culture that recognises the contributions made by all staff.

We have an equality and diversity policy.

## **13. Community impact**

We support events, activities and our neighbours in the town where we work. We are part of the Jewellery Quarter BID and actively participate with activities and aim to play a full, active role in our community.

We give to the local food bank monthly and participate in other local charitable initiatives through the year, such as Wrap Up Birmingham.

We will ensure that our activities do not inconvenience our neighbours through noise, litter or unnecessary disruption.

We offer staff one day per year to volunteer on specific community projects which we have identified, or to select their own volunteering project.

## **14. Financial impact**

We are committed to offering fair pay and conditions for all our staff, both permanent and temporary. We use the NJC salary scale to ensure salaries are in line with similar organisations.

We aim to ensure best value for money for all our customers for our retail products.

We offer low income membership fees.

Our bank accounts and investments are held with ethical providers. We offer an ethical pension option to staff.

The grants we offer to small projects require a sustainability commitment and evaluation.

## **15. Stakeholder communication**

Our internal sustainability commitment is the responsibility of our sustainability team: one member of the senior management team, the office manager, and one Trustee.

Each department has a sustainability champion who devises departmental action plans and meets with the sustainability staff team on a quarterly basis.

## **16. Monitoring and feedback**

We produce a sustainability report alongside our annual report detailing what we have achieved, our sustainability measurements, and how we plan to improve in the year ahead.

We gather feedback from staff and members, and use their feedback to improve the way we operate.

We measure:

- Building energy

- Transport usage
- Digital infrastructure
- Printing
- Waste
- Water usage

Using Defra carbon conversion factors we assess our CO2 output and offset this with a reputable organisation.

## 17. External Communication

We aim to communicate openly and transparently and our sustainability policy is available to download on our website.

Our Sustainability Report is available to all members online alongside our Annual Report.

We encourage sustainable behaviour in our external communications. Outside of commercial partnerships we encourage our community to make ethical purchasing decisions.