

**HELP SHAPE
THE FUTURE OF
VEGETARIANISM
IN THE UK**

***Join us as
a Trustee***



Join us as a Trustee

The Vegetarian Society are the pioneers of the plant-based revolution, creating great food and positive change for over 175 years. Progressive and open to all, we are a movement of determined people, connected by our shared belief in a better future for every life on earth.

Today, our mission is more vital than ever: inspiring people to eat less meat and more plants for the benefit of animals, people, and the planet.

By joining our diverse and passionate trustee board you'll play a key role in creating lasting impact through our campaigns, food standards, and advocacy work.



What you'll do

You'll be part of a committed trustee board working closely with our CEO and leadership team to provide robust governance, and contributing your insight to help shape our strategy and long-term impact as we:

- **Champion vegetarianism as part of the solution to the climate, health, and animal welfare crises.**
- **Grow the reach and impact of our policy campaigns, aimed at reducing meat consumption and championing vegetarian and plant-based foods. We also campaign for improvements to welfare in the dairy and egg industries, such as our current 'Ban Hatch and Dispatch' campaign which seeks to end male chick culling in the UK's egg industry.**
- **Strengthen our partnerships with businesses through our trademark accreditation and training programmes.**
- **Make plant-based and vegetarian cooking inclusive for communities, professionals, and the public through our Cook! cookery school.**
- **Build a more diverse, sustainable, and connected community of members and supporters.**

Who we're looking for

You'll be a vegetarian or vegan with enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment to our mission. You don't need to have been a trustee before – we provide training, support, and a full induction.

We're particularly keen to hear from people with knowledge or expertise in the following areas:

- **Food manufacture or production** – you may have a background in food innovation, sustainability, supply chains, or manufacturing. You understand the challenges and opportunities in making vegetarian and vegan food mainstream and accessible.
- **Policy, advocacy, or campaigning** – you may have experience influencing public policy, leading advocacy campaigns, grassroots campaigning, or driving systems change. You'll bring insight into how to turn our evidence and ideas into public and political action.

We're committed to building a Board that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve, and we particularly welcome applications from people of colour, disabled and neurodivergent people, LGBTQIA+ people, young people (aged 18–25), and those from across the UK's nations.

Becoming a Trustee

In this pack, we've provided more information on:

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1. Our strategic aims

Changing Behaviour	Inspiring and supporting people to reduce their meat consumption and adopt vegetarian and vegan diets and lifestyles
Building Community	Supporting a mass movement of vegetarians and vegans, providing a voice for their collective ideas and desire for change
Driving Innovation	Championing the rapid development of alternatives to meat and other animal products
Expanding Choice	Transforming our food system, making vegetarian and vegan choices mainstream across society

2. Why become a trustee?

Becoming a trustee of the Vegetarian Society is a great way to:

- support a cause you believe in, and help the many people – staff, members and volunteers – who make change happen
- widen and deepen your knowledge
- use your current skills, develop new ones and add valuable third sector experience to your CV
- meet new people and go behind the scenes at a charity.

Above all, it's a stimulating and fun way to make a difference.

There are more than 900,000 charity trustees in England and Wales. It's a vital role – trustees are at the very heart of a charity and its work.

Vegetarian Society trustees bring their own knowledge, skills and experience to the Board as it shapes the work of the charity. They:

- help set the strategy, ensuring it's in line with the charity's vision and mission
- have oversight of the charity's funds, how they're raised and spent
- sign off plans and policies
- review impact and lessons learned.

Trustees gain a special insight into the workings of a charity and have a close relationship with the executive (the paid employees) who lead and run the organisation. You are taking on an important responsibility. You can read the Charity Commission summary [here](#).

3. Who can become a trustee?

Trustees come from all walks of life. The best Boards are diverse. We encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, identities and cultures. You can read about our current trustees [here](#).

You don't need a long career behind you before you can become a trustee. Applications from young people aged 18 or over are welcome. Being a trustee is an excellent way to develop leadership skills, and to widen your knowledge about the running of an organisation. You don't need to be retired or work part-time or flexibly. Most meetings are in the early evening.

You do need a passion for vegetarianism and a belief in our vision and mission, the ability to step back from the detail and look at the bigger picture, curiosity and willingness to ask questions, an open mind and a listening ear, and a commitment to share your perspective to help solve problems and reach the right decisions. Trustees must become a member of the Vegetarian Society.

Trustees must not be disqualified from acting as a trustee or as a Director of a company. Please see Charity Commission guidance [here](#) and HMRC Guidance on the Fit and Proper Person test can be seen [here](#). It is the responsibility of each Trustee to let us know if any of these details change.

4. More about our current work

You can find out more about our work through these four links:

CAMPAIGNING



POLICY WORK



COOKERY SCHOOL



TRADEMARK SERVICES



5. What's involved and how much time does it take?

You'll be a member of our Board. The Board sets the overall direction of the charity and ensures it is well run. Our Board of trustees is legally responsible for all the activities that the organisation undertakes. The Vegetarian Society is also a company limited by guarantee, of which all trustees are directors. Trustees can serve for a maximum nine years but may step down earlier.

In practice, this is a strategic, policy-making and monitoring role, with the day-to-day running of the Society delegated to the Chief Executive and his excellent team of staff.

Some trustees sit on our Finance Committee which gives extra scrutiny to our finances and from time to time, ad hoc Working Groups may be set up. These are usually short-term groups with a specific task to do and joining them is entirely voluntary.

Expenses - The Vegetarian Society covers all out of pocket expenditure associated with the trustee role, including travel and accommodation costs.

Meetings - There are usually between four and six Board meetings a year. Routine meetings are held online at 6pm, finishing by 8pm. Two meetings a year are held face to face on a Saturday at our Manchester HQ from 9am to 3pm; these give us chance to discuss things in more detail. We sometimes have a joint meeting with the staff team the Friday before the meeting.

We circulate papers the week before a meeting and trustees are expected to have read them and come to the meeting prepared to discuss them.



6. From application to induction

We need to know a little more about you, what you can bring and why you care about our cause, so we'd like you to send us your CV, together with a covering letter which outlines why you want to join the board and what you will bring, with particular reference to the skill sets we are looking for – although feel free to outline additional skills or experience you feel will be useful.

These should be emailed to Antony Byatt antony@vegsoc.org by **21 November 2025**.

We'll interview shortlisted candidates in December over Microsoft Teams. You'll meet a small group of trustees and have the chance to ask us questions. We'll let you have some of the questions in advance and arrange a convenient time for a conversation by video. Some of the candidates will join a second Teams meeting, this time with our Chair Conn O'Neill and our Chief Executive Richard McIlwain.

We anticipate inviting new trustees to our 28th January board meeting as observers, ahead of their formal appointment at our in-person meeting in Manchester on 21st March.

We give new trustees a warm welcome and a comprehensive induction to both our work and the role of a trustee, at a date and time to fit around your work or other commitments. Questions are welcome at any time, and part of the fun of being a trustee is the continual learning.

7. Trustee role description

Trustee Role Description

The collective duties of the board of trustees are to:

- **Ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction, and is focused on achieving these.**
- **Agree the method for measuring objectively the progress of the charity in relation to its vision, mission, strategic objectives, business plans, operational plans and impact, and to receive regular reports on the performance of the charity.**
- **Ensure that the fundamental values and guiding principles of the charity are articulated and reflected throughout the charity.**
- **Ensure that the charity complies with its governing document (Articles of Association), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.**
- **Ensure that the charity pursues its objects as defined by its governing document.**
- **Ensure that the charity applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.**
- **Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the charity.**
- **Ensure that the charity's risks are managed effectively.**
- **Ensure the financial stability of the charity.**

- **Protect and manage the property of the charity and ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds.**
- **Appoint the Chief Executive, set their terms and conditions and ensure that the charity invests in the Chief Executive's ongoing professional development.**
- **Ensure that the Chief Executive receives regular, constructive feedback on their performance in managing the charity and in meeting their annual and longer-term targets and objectives.**

The duties of an individual trustee are to:

- **Attend all appropriate meetings and other appointments or give apologies.**
- **Prepare fully for meetings and work for the charity, including reading papers, querying matters with the Chair, requesting further information if required, thinking through issues before meetings and completing any assigned tasks in an agreed timescale.**
- **Actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings, contributing in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.**
- **Participate in collective decision making, accepting a majority decision of the board and not acting individually unless specifically authorised to do so.**
- **Be a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion champion and ally.**
- **Participate in occasional training and conferences provided by the charity as needed.**
- **Support or mentor new trustees as needed.**

In addition, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees to reach sound decisions. This involves scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Trustee Role Description:

- **A commitment to the charity.**
- **A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort. Note, trustee work takes on average 6-12 hours/month, with some months being busier than others.**
- **Strategic vision.**
- **Good independent judgement.**
- **An ability to think creatively.**
- **A willingness to speak their mind.**
- **An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.**
- **An ability to work effectively as a member of a team.**
- **To follow Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.**

8. Useful background information

“I have been proud to serve as a Trustee for the Vegetarian Society for almost three years. During this time, I’ve been able to draw on my experience in charity fundraising and social research to help the organisation grow and develop strategically.



The past few years have been a period of significant progress and positive change, including our relocation to a fantastic new headquarters in the heart of Manchester, a complete rebrand of the charity, and the relaunch of our renowned cookery school, **COOK!**

We have also strengthened our international presence through the development of our existing Vegetarian and Vegan Approved trademarks and the introduction of our new Plant-Based Certification Mark. Alongside this, we’ve launched impactful campaigns such as the Slaughter-Free Dairy Appeal and Ban Hatch and Dispatch, which have helped us stand out and inspire real change.

These achievements are the result of a passionate and committed team—people who share a deep dedication to our cause and who value openness, inclusivity, and collaboration.

This is a truly exciting and unique time to join us as a Trustee and help shape the future of the Vegetarian Society. Together, we can make a lasting difference in our communities and inspire future generations to eat more healthily and choose more ethical, sustainable foods.”

Sima Ramkalowon
current Trustee

Upcoming Board meeting dates

Wednesday 28 January 2026	Evening – Videoconferencing
Saturday 21 March 2026	All day – In person
Tuesday 26 May 2026	Evening – Videoconferencing
Tuesday 21 July 2026	Evening – Videoconferencing

General Information

This document is issued by The Vegetarian Society of the United Kingdom Limited Registered Charity No. 259358, Registered Company No. 00959115.

One third (or the nearest to one third) of directors retire by rotation at each annual general meeting, though they can be re-elected. However, there is a maximum term time meaning that trustees must stand down nine years after the AGM when they were first appointed.

Should you at any time wish to resign from the Board you should do so by writing to the Chair of Council. Reasons should be given if they relate to the Charity and its activities.

You would have the right as a trustee to:

- Have equal status and voting rights with all the other trustees
- Receive training which relates to any area of the Board’s work

Trustees are required to declare any interests which may result in conflict while they are serving on the Board.

The Vegetarian Society
15 Jersey Street
Ancoats
Manchester
M4 6EZ

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Find out more at www.vegsoc.org/join Together we can be a voice for a better future, for people, animals and the planet.



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