

# Resolutions and Candidate Statements

## Ordinary resolutions

Ordinary resolutions require more votes for than against. Ordinary resolution 3 is proposed by members while the other ordinary resolutions are proposed by Council.

### Ordinary resolution ① Appointment of auditors

That Locke Williams Associates LLP be appointed as the society's auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2022.  
Proposed by Council.

#### Supporting Argument:

Our current auditor has held this position for longer than usual (almost a decade spanning two different companies) and best practice would be to recommend that we make a change. Locke Williams Associates were chosen by Council based on research by staff and a competitive tendering process that considered the work involved for both TVS and the subsidiary.

#### Comments:

If members have any concerns about the appropriateness of these auditors they can vote against or abstain (and ideally get in touch so that we understand their concerns). If members have an ongoing concern that they feel Council is not addressing they could propose an alternative motion to a future AGM, e.g. to appoint different auditors.

### Ordinary resolution ②

#### Council to set auditors' fee

That the auditors' fee be fixed by Council.  
Proposed by Council.

#### Supporting Argument:

The estimated fee for 2022 is £6,000 plus VAT which we regard as good value for the services provided. The fee is a matter for negotiation but no major change is expected.

#### Comments:

If members have any concerns about Council agreeing the fee they can vote against or abstain (and ideally get in touch so that we understand their concerns). If members have an ongoing concern that they feel Council is not addressing they could propose an alternative resolution to a future AGM, e.g. to set a cap on the auditors' fee.

### Ordinary resolution ③

#### To add more in-depth features to *The Vegan*

That the society takes steps to improve *The Vegan* magazine by adding more in-depth, challenging and above all interesting features, with significantly greater coverage of the wider vegan movement.

Proposed by Malcolm Horne.  
Seconded by Jessica Wintrip.

#### Supporting Argument:

For many members the magazine is their main contact with the society, and we're concerned that it presents veganism as a trendy lifestyle choice rather than a principled and dynamic movement worth supporting. Underlining our point, the 2021

VegfestUK awards included a poll for favourite vegan magazine and *The Vegan* received only 114 of 2,487 votes cast.

We invite the society to consider these questions:

- 1) If members had to pay separately for the magazine, how many would subscribe?
- 2) How many former members decided against renewing their membership because they did not believe the magazine justified the membership subscription (even though they may still have supported the society's aims)?

At present *The Vegan* includes many articles or features that could be described as 'lightweight', often including unnecessarily large images. There's also a great deal about the society's activities which, although worthy, often tends to be bland. Reducing this content would free up space for more interesting and challenging features, and we (and some others who feel similarly) have already offered to source articles, news, etc, should that be helpful. The wider vegan movement receives relatively little coverage, and there's so much that could be included, eg veganism abroad, longer reviews of some books/films, interviews with vegan activists, the impact of Vegfest style events, veganism on the internet, different approaches to animal welfare/ rights, and so on.

We do recognise that meeting the needs of both young and old - and new and long term vegans - is no easy matter, but feel that veganism is a progressive movement which deserves a more serious and stimulating magazine.

#### Counterargument:

In a 2020 survey, *The Vegan* was given a positive average rating of 8.04/10 by our members.

Our challenge is creating a magazine which meets the needs and interests of our wide membership base, keeps members informed of our work, is diverse and engaging in

content and the individuals featured and is cost-effective to produce as well as accessible in tone.

We are always receptive to feedback and the magazine content is continually assessed and improved upon. Based on member feedback, we have embraced the suggestion to place veganism in a wider context. Suggested topics have been feature articles in issues 2 and 3 in 2021. In 2022 we are reducing the number of pages given to Vegan Society news, increasing available space for commissioned content by 3 pages. We are excited to fill these extra pages with a diverse and exciting range of features, interviews and reviews going forwards.

We have taken on board feedback we received from members to include 'deeper and more challenging' articles in the magazine. Recent issues have included reflections on veganism and faith, written by a vegan Muslim, updates on the intersection between veganism and food policy and interviews with a range of inspiring activists. We are always open to specific article suggestions.

*The Vegan* is not able to compete with newsstand titles without a substantial reallocation of our funds. We believe that members would want us to focus our member fees on our campaigning, policy and educational work rather than enhanced member benefits.

#### Response to counterargument:

That same 2020 survey found that 25% of members would like "deeper and more challenging articles", with a further 29% agreeing "to some extent" (plus 20% "unsure"). There should be room for lighter articles, but *The Vegan* is a flagship publication worthy of more serious content, as was generally the case a decade and more ago.

We submitted this proposal last year, but withdrew it when told of plans to include "some more challenging articles on wider aspects of veganism such as science,

environmentalism and philosophy". Where are they? The claim that recent issues have included challenging articles and inspiring interviews is unconvincing, they've been mostly as lightweight as ever.

There seems to be a conscious decision to avoid (or rarely mention) potentially controversial topics such as animal rights, vaccinations and lab-grown meat. Why wouldn't you want to reflect the many facets of veganism and make the magazine more thought-provoking?

#### **Ordinary resolution 4**

##### **Additions to Appeals Committee**

That Kamal Adatia and Christine Fraser be appointed to The Vegan Society's Appeals Committee.

Proposed by Council.

#### **Supporting Argument:**

The Appeals Committee was created in 2017 to consider any appeals against a Council decision to remove a trustee from Council or to remove a member from the society. Its current members are Vanessa Clarke, George Rodger and Rick Savage who were appointed by the members when the committee was created. They are all experienced former trustees. Only the society's members can remove a member of the Appeals Committee or appoint a new member.

While the committee has never been required to act – as Council has not removed any member or trustee since 2017 – it provides an important safeguard on any such action in future. The members of the Committee are unpaid volunteers and must have been society members for at least five years.

At the 2021 AGM a proposal that the voluntary committee be replaced by paid professionals did not pass, but the associated discussion highlighted the need to strengthen and diversify the committee.

Both Kamal and Christine were co-opted to Council in 2021, to assist with a governance review and have each played an important role as part of a Governance Review Working Group. They are not in a position to continue as trustees beyond this AGM but are willing to join the Appeals Committee.

Kamal is a barrister and a part-time judge. Christine is University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors at Cardiff Metropolitan University ([www.vegansociety.com/society/whos-involved/council-trustees](http://www.vegansociety.com/society/whos-involved/council-trustees) provides further information).

Both candidates have the skills, temperament and authority to test and if appropriate challenge any removal decision by Council. Neither candidate is personally connected to the other trustees. They are younger than the existing committee members and add to the demographic diversity of the committee.

#### **Counterargument:**

The two candidates are both recent trustees so may be reluctant to challenge their former colleagues. Even if there are no direct personal connections, the current trustees may have chosen to put forward candidates they expect to be sympathetic to their general outlook and concerns. The committee should include at least some members who have no connection at all with current trustees.

Society members should be invited to express a willingness to be involved in the Appeals Committee in the same way as they were invited to stand for co-option or election over the past year. That is by an email dedicated to this purpose sent to all potentially eligible members.

This motion pre-empts such an open process by adding members of the Appeals Committee with connections to existing trustees before all members have been given the opportunity to put themselves forward.

**Reject this motion and demand a more open and inclusive process next year.**

**Response to counterargument:**

Anyone who has been a society member for five years is welcome to stand for appointment to the Appeals Committee. We will send an invitation email to eligible members next year, but we think it is important to strengthen the Appeals Committee now (there was one resignation in 2021 and there may be another resignation this year).

Kamal and Christine provide a golden opportunity to reinforce the committee. They came forward in response to an email to all members in 2021 to help the society as trustees, with no previous connection with other trustees and with strong governance experience in other organisations. They have gained first-hand experience of how Council operates which would be valuable in dealing with appeals. The skills and independence that made them good co-optees make them good candidates for the Appeals Committee.

**Vote FOR and ensure a solid challenge to future Councils if ever needed.**

## **Special resolutions**

Special resolutions require a majority of not less than 75% (three times as many votes for as against). All these special resolutions are proposed by Council.

### **Special resolution 5**

#### **Limit the duration of service for directors/trustees.**

Add a new clause to the Articles after the current clause 42 (8):

**42 (9)** Candidates for appointment as directors must have served less than 8.5 years, at the time of appointment, as Vegan Society directors since they last had a continuous break from being a director for at least three years.

Proposed by Council.

### **Supporting Argument:**

The Charity Governance Code recommends that "if a trustee has served for more than nine years, their reappointment is subject to a particularly rigorous review and takes into account the need for progressive refreshing of the board".

We have not had a problem with progressive refreshing of the board membership as the average term served by the directors (who are also the trustees) has been just over three years. However, there is still a possibility that even a small number of long-term directors could establish a particularly strong influence on Board decisions and become a barrier to progressive refreshing of ideas.

The Charity Governance Code does not specify how to treat breaks in between trustee terms. Comments at the 2021 AGM emphasised that any bar on standing for election again should not be an indefinite one. Some organisations treat a one-year break as resetting the clock and but one year could be insufficient to interrupt the influence of a long-term trustee, whereas three years provides sufficient time for the composition of the Board to change almost completely.

The terms served by directors of The Vegan Society always finish at an AGM and the dates of AGMs vary. We have therefore set the limit at 8.5 years to accommodate slight fluctuations in AGM dates while matching the Charity governance code threshold of nine years.

This approach more than fulfils the requirements of the Charity Governance Code while allowing each director to complete their final elected term (usually three years) and avoiding any permanent bar on a person being appointed by the members.

**This proposal promotes good governance and we ask members to support it.**



### Counterargument:

As the supporting argument acknowledges there is no problem with the progressive refreshing of The Vegan Society's board. Since 1990, 95 directors have served an average of 3 years each. In all that time, only three were reappointed after a length of service that would be precluded by this rule. The perennial problem has been high turnover and lack of continuity, not the opposite. **This proposal is unnecessary as we do not have the problem it sets out to solve.**

The Charity Governance Code does not actually require any maximum term, just that a good case be made for reappointment beyond nine years. This could be achieved simply by highlighting the past service duration of any candidates standing for election and Council can already ensure this is done. That is quite different from completely barring certain candidates. **This proposal goes far beyond what is needed to meet the Charity governance code.**

Experienced trustees have shown a deep and enduring commitment to the society and there have been difficult times in our history where they have played a key role in keeping the society afloat. They also provide a key contribution to maintaining continuity and stability in the face of high turnover of trustees. Such trustees should not be discriminated against and should have the same right as anyone else to make a case to the members for their election to Council. **This rule is discriminatory and could be seriously counterproductive.**

**Please vote against this unnecessary, excessive, discriminatory and counterproductive rule.**

### Response to Counterargument:

High turnover can readily coexist with long-serving, excessively influential trustees. Indeed, if long-serving trustees act as a barrier to new trustees contributing fresh

ideas and new directions, they could promote high turnover.

The code does not impose a universal hard limit as this would not be appropriate for all charities, e.g., it might be undesirable to require a founder of a small charity to step down. This does not apply to us.

It is unrealistic to expect members to judge each situation case-by-case. The only way to find out whether a long-serving trustee is acting as a barrier to necessary change is to give them a well-deserved break and allow Council to operate without them for at least a few years. If after three years they feel they have more to contribute they can stand for election again.

**Vote FOR in order to avoid any one person having excessive influence.**

### **Special resolution 6**

**Drop the requirement for a proposer and seconder in elections.**

Delete Article 42(3) Each nomination should be signed by a proposer and seconder who are members.

Proposed by Council.

### Supporting Argument:

The support of a proposer and seconder has been a long-standing requirement for candidates for election by the members as directors. The names of the proposer and seconder if known to members may inform their choice between candidates and provide a sort of "reference" for the candidates.

However, this requirement acts as a substantial barrier to members who do not personally know many other members standing for election and could readily bias the election process to the advantage of candidates favoured by existing directors or favoured by a group of activists trying to influence the direction of the society, either openly or covertly.

Fundamentally, requiring a proposer and seconder reduces the pool of candidates for members to choose from and has a clear potential to promote “group-think” and undermine diversity.

This proposal would not preclude candidates including endorsements from others as part of their personal profile if they considered it relevant, but it would remove the *requirement* to have such endorsement in order to be considered by the society’s members.

In the interests of having a large and diverse pool of candidates, please support this proposal.

### Counterargument:

The requirement for a proposer and seconder provides a useful safeguard against possible rogue candidates with their own agendas rather than genuine concern for the society. Without this requirement, we have only the candidate’s own word for their skills, qualities and background.

In deciding which candidates to support, members often consider the proposers and seconders endorsing them, so removing this requirement will result in members having less information available to them when voting.

Diversity is not hindered by Article 42(3). The makeup of council over recent years has actually been better than average in most areas of diversity compared with other charities.

Trustees are elected by members to represent the views of the membership. If they haven’t been able to connect with other members, thereby having a pool of people to ask, how can they really represent the wider membership?

Where a potential candidate feels they really have something to offer the board but are not aware of knowing any other members, they could find some by participating in society events such as AGMs or visiting

Vegan Society stalls at other events. Additionally, they could ask a local vegan group or social media platform such as on Facebook whether there are any Vegan Society members there who would be willing to endorse them.

The Vegan Society itself is also willing to try to link candidates with potential proposers and seconders, so there is no insuperable barrier to justify removing such an important safeguard.

**Please reject this motion.**

### Response to Counterargument:

The requirement for a proposer and seconder does not prevent hidden agendas.

Voting for a candidate based on who nominates them judges them by who they know rather than who they are and works against diversity of ideas and background.

Trustees are required to act in the best interests of the society as a whole and should not represent a small subset of members they happen to know.

This year, Council tried exceptionally hard to help candidates find proposers and seconders. Without this help, we would not even have had an election, but a helping hand is not good enough.

The current system favours candidates who are already well-connected regardless of the skills and experience they can bring.

Potential candidates, particularly those who feel unrepresented and unconnected within the society, should not have to effectively seek permission to put their case to their fellow members.

**Vote FOR this motion.**

## Special resolution 7

### Two-year gap before a former trustee can be paid by the society.

Change Article 7(1) by adding the text in italics.

7(1) No person who has been a director within the past two years or connected person may:

- (a) buy any goods or services from the charity *or any company controlled by the charity* on terms preferential to those applicable to members of the public;
- (b) sell goods, services, or any interest in land to the charity *or any company controlled by the charity*;
- (c) be employed by, or receive any remuneration from, the charity *or any company controlled by the charity*;
- (d) receive any other financial benefit from the charity *or any company controlled by the charity*;

unless the payment is permitted by sub-clause (2) of this article, or authorised by the court or the Charity Commission.

Proposed by Council.

### Supporting Argument:

The directors (who are also the trustees) should act in the best interests of the society without being tempted by opportunities for personal benefit. Our articles already ensure that current directors cannot be employees of the charity or receive other financial benefits, e.g.

7(1)(c) No director or connected person may ... be employed by, or receive any remuneration from, the charity.

However, there are currently two loopholes:

- trustees can resign and promptly move into employment with the society or benefit in other ways;

- the charity now has a subsidiary company through which benefits might be obtained.

This motion aims to rule out the possibility that any trustee might use their role to influence their chances of receiving financial benefit shortly after ceasing to be a trustee or via a subsidiary of the charity.

It is of the utmost importance that directors/trustees act purely in the best interests of the society and without significant conflicts of interest. This proposal helps to ensure that no-one is tempted to do otherwise.

### Counterargument:

**This rule is well-intentioned but like all hard rules can have unintended consequences.** It could readily rule out the best option for the society under certain circumstances.

Once a trustee has resigned they no longer have any influence on Council decisions and the remaining trustees can decide whether any application for employment is appropriate. This gives sufficient protection against former trustees getting inappropriate benefits. If the former trustee had had any role in creating the post for which they subsequently applied there is already Charity Commission guidance that should be followed and Charity Commission approval would be often required for the appointment. **The existing safeguards are sufficient.**

Twenty years ago we appointed a trustee to the CEO role in very difficult circumstances. The society was in difficult financial circumstances and an open recruitment exercise had failed to find any suitable candidates. The trustee involved gained no personal benefit as they were previously in a better paid job than we could offer. Charity Commission approval was sought and given. **As in this example, appointing a recent former trustee to a staff role may be of major benefit to the society and not at all to the trustee involved.**

We should trust Council and the Charity Commission to ensure that former trustees receive financial benefits from the society only when this is in the best interests of the society.

**Please vote against this well-intentioned but unnecessarily restrictive rule.**

**Response to Counterargument:**

Despite the existing safeguards we recently had the situation where a Chair of Council absented themselves from the CEO recruitment process so as to keep open the possibility of applying for the CEO role. Their absence from the recruitment process was enough to make it likely the Charity Commission would permit their appointment but not enough to preclude undue influence.

**The existing safeguards are not sufficient.**

The society has grown immensely over the twenty years since a trustee last stepped into the CEO role. At that time we had five staff and now we have over eighty, including six senior managers who can support each other. We also had a strong pool of external candidates for the most recent CEO recruitment. **There is no need for trustees to be able to move straight to a staff role.**

**Vote FOR this motion and keep temptation out of the path of trustees.**

**Special resolution 8**

**Two-year gap before a former employee can become a trustee.**

Add the text in italics to Article 34 (Directors):

Directors

34.

- (1) A director must be a natural person aged 16 years or older.
- (2) No one may be appointed a director if disqualified from acting under the provisions of article 46.

*(3) From 2023 onwards, no person who has been employed by, or received any remuneration from, the charity or any company controlled by the charity may be appointed as a director of the charity until at least two years after their last date of employment or remuneration.*

Proposed by Council.

**Supporting Argument:**

This motion is not aimed at any specific individual but aims to reduce the possibility of future problems. This motion will not affect the 2022 trustee elections but will apply to elections next year and thereafter.

A clean separation between the role of staff/contractors and the role of the charity directors (who are also the trustees) is essential for good governance. A former employee becoming a trustee without a reasonable gap in time can readily undermine this separation.

Trustees who were recently staff members will have multiple personal links with individual members of staff which may distort decision-making. Past friendships, disagreements or grievances between employees or even between a former employee and Council may seriously compromise board decision-making.

It is not uncommon for charities to have a bar on former employees and contractors becoming trustees for a period of time after leaving their employment. The society does not have such a bar currently and this leaves the society open to compromised decision-making. This motion protects against such a possibility. Former employees or contractors would still be able to offer their skills to the society once two years have elapsed. This motion would not prevent Vegan Society volunteers from standing for election as they only receive expenses.



### Counterargument:

Former staff who become trustees bring a detailed understanding of the work of the society and the experience of staff which can help inform the decisions of the trustees (Council). People who were employed recently have particularly relevant knowledge to bring to Council, creating a more dynamic mix of expertise and experience and ensuring better performance by the trustees in managing the charity. They should not be excluded. **The experience and understanding brought by recent employees promote good governance rather than undermine it.**

If particular issues arise that relate to personal friendships or disagreements with individual staff members, these can be declared as a conflict of interest or conflict of loyalty and managed in the usual way. This would only affect a small minority of decisions so should not be a barrier to a member of staff becoming a trustee.

Members can be trusted to judge the suitability each candidate, taking into account their past involvement with the society, which Council can ensure is explained to the members. There is no need for rules that restrict the choice available to members so long as members are properly informed.

The society should be able to draw on all the talent at its disposal and should not tie its hands without compelling reasons.

**We should trust our existing democratic process for elections.**

**Vote AGAINST this unnecessary barrier.**

### Response to Counterargument:

We would not restrict the talent pool for Council significantly by asking willing former employees or contractors to wait just two years and gain a reasonable distance from their past role. Only a few past trustee appointments would have been affected by the proposed rule.

We don't need former staff to provide a staff perspective for trustees: all senior managers attend Council meetings and contribute to discussions.

We cannot share everything we know about past relationships with recent former employees or contractors should they stand for election and any antagonisms or resentments cannot readily be countered by rules on conflicts of interest.

This proposal is a simple and gentle way to avoid importing potentially tangled webs of fresh past history on to Council. Once former staff have had time to gain some distance from their past role, they are entirely welcome to stand for election as trustees.

Please vote FOR.

### **Special resolution 9**

#### **75% majority to delegate Council powers to a subcommittee.**

Change Article 54(1) by adding the text in italics.

**54 (1)** The directors may delegate any of their powers or functions to a committee of two or more directors but the terms of any delegation must be recorded in the minute book *and any delegation must be supported by at least 75% of all directors.*

Proposed by Council.

*Continued on the next page*

### Supporting Argument:

The Vegan Society's Articles already require the support of 75% of all directors to remove a director or to co-opt an additional director. This special majority ensures a high degree of consensus behind such decisions, which could be used to distort the democratic control of the society by its members.

The power to delegate Council powers to a subcommittee could be used to exclude a democratically elected director from decision-making without actually removing them completely as a director. This could currently be done by a simple majority (one more vote for than against) at any Council meeting. It should instead require a 75% majority of all directors so as to prevent this power being abused in order to consolidate the position of a narrow majority at a Council meeting.

To protect future democratic control of the society, support this motion.

### Counterargument:

**Sometimes democratically appointed directors *should* be excluded from a decision and this rule could prevent Council from doing so.**

Our Articles state:

Directors must absent themselves from any discussions of the charity directors in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between their duty to act solely in the interests of the charity and any personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest).

This reflects the fundamental general principle that directors must act in the best interests of the society and not in their personal interests.

Normally a director will acknowledge a conflict of interest and voluntarily withdraw from any discussions where their personal interest might be seen as conflicting with

the interests of the society. However, a director may not recognise that a conflict of interest applies. If a majority of directors believe a conflict does apply then they should have the power to ensure that a particular director complies with the Articles.

Multiple directors may share the same or related conflicts of interest and under this rule if just three directors had unacknowledged conflicts of interest the rest of Council could not exclude them from inappropriate involvement in decisions.

**Please vote against this rule which may cause more harm than good and lead to decisions being distorted by conflicts of interest.**

### Response to Counterargument:

If there is a clear objective conflict of interest or loyalty, the director affected will almost always voluntarily withdraw and failing this there would reliably be a 75% majority to address this.

If instead there is an unclear subjective allegation of conflict of interest or loyalty that fails to convince a 75% majority of directors, then all directors should be permitted to collectively make decisions in the best interests of the society, unless they choose to voluntarily withdraw. Such allegations can themselves be motivated by conflict and without a convincing majority we should not exclude any director.

The existing powers to delegate to a subcommittee can be used to exclude some directors from decisions without any suggestion of a conflict of interest and mean that the 75% majority required by the Articles to remove a director can be effectively bypassed.

**Protect democratic control of the society.  
Vote FOR this motion.**

## Special resolution 10

### 75% majority to spend charity funds on complaints against members.

Add the text in italics to Article 73 (Disputes):

#### Disputes

73. If a dispute arises between members of the charity about the validity or propriety of anything done by the members of the charity under these articles, and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation before resorting to litigation.

*Charity funds may only be used for legal advice or external investigations relating to complaints or allegations against members of the society with the approval of at least 75% of all directors and after mediation has been attempted.*

Proposed by Council.

#### Supporting Argument:

A recent dispute between members, including complaints against two directors, led to over £40k being spent by the society on lawyers. This did not resolve the underlying conflicts and five directors subsequently resigned.

The initial legal advice on these complaints encouraged further legal costs, including an external investigation by a barrister.

Alternatives to relying on lawyers were suggested by some directors, including putting a disputed point of principle to the members at an AGM for guidance and carrying out simple internal evaluation of the evidence for key claims in the complaints. In hindsight, these lower cost alternatives could potentially have dealt with the complaints more effectively and decisively.

Had the proposed additional rule been in place, even a minority of directors could have insisted on other options, including mediation, being explored first.

The current directors have already approved a new complaints procedure which should make future responses to complaints much more effective

(<https://www.vegansociety.com/complaints-procedure>) and they are committed to avoiding external costs as far as practicable. However, only the members have the power to constrain *future* directors.

**Please support this proposal to ensure that charity funds are not used for complaints against members except when there is a clear consensus among directors that this is the right way forward and after mediation has been attempted.**

#### Counterargument:

Sometimes timely legal advice at a modest cost, a few thousand pounds rather than tens of thousands, could be the stitch in time that saves nine in dealing with complaints against members. This rule could prevent such advice being taken and could make a dispute worse rather than better.

Similarly, an external investigation could be the best approach if many trustees' judgments are clouded by being too close to the matters complained about. External investigations, if closely targeted on the critical issues, need not be horrendously expensive. This rule could work against the best interests of the society.

Most Council decisions, however large their consequences, are made by simple majority – more votes for than against – including setting budgets for spending millions of pounds and setting the strategy guiding such spending. The only current exceptions to decision by simple majority are those decisions that directly impact democratic control of the society: removal of members, removal of directors and co-option of new trustees by Council. This does not apply in this case so this motion is therefore a step too far.

*Continued on the next page*

**We should allow trustees to exercise their discretion on how best to deal with disputes in the normal way as they do on other important matters.**

**Vote AGAINST this motion.**

Response to Counterargument:

This proposal does not prevent us from seeking timely legal advice or initiating a closely targeted external investigation provided there is a good level of agreement among trustees that this is appropriate. Without such consensus there is a high risk that such spending would be unproductive or even counterproductive.

Controversial complaints can readily promote conflict and conflict can cloud judgment. In this situation a high degree of consensus becomes especially important for making reliable decisions.

Paying charity money to an external, usually non-vegan, person to help deal with complaints is not the same as deciding which of a number of worthy vegan projects we should pursue having listened to advice from staff.

There should be a higher threshold for spending money on complaints instead of using it to pursue our charitable objects. This motion would ensure that an appropriate threshold will apply in future.

Please vote FOR.



# Candidate Statements

## **Simon Frederick Barkham**

Proposed by Nicola Mills

Seconded by Graham Neale

Vegan (firstly), economist, environmentalist, politician, egalitarian and rights activist for all earthlings.

I'm a Liberal Democrat Councillor in Peterborough City. I have lots of committee experience (health committee presently) and have been governor to a local school, Discovery Primary School. I have been a trustee on a local charity called Nene Park Trust between 2016-2020.

I therefore understand the role of a trustee and the importance of being strategic as opposed to getting caught up with the daily running of the organisation. I have worked very well previously contributing to the achievement of objectives set at Nene Park Trust. Namely, the Nene Park Trust masterplan. It was a team effort by the whole board. However, I paid particular attention to issues such as litter, vegan catering and ethical investments issues. Many of my contributions were included in the masterplan. I believe if an organisation wants to be ethical and of environmental spirit, it must also follow through with its decisions and actions.

I have successfully led teams and been part of teams. I have experience of managing people in my employment. Although, I do not have any formal skills in conflict management, I believe that through my experiences in employment, working as a councillor and engaging in activism I am able to identify and manage conflict sensibly, fairly and efficiently. Similarly, I am familiar with the governance review processes but I have not been involved with carrying them out.

I am vegan for non-human animals.

I believed I was an ethical person. I recycled, used the 'ethical consumer' website for hints on ethical purchases, promoted green policies etc. However, food, did not enter my thoughts, until I saw a campaign video by Animal Aid. After watching soundbites of abattoir clips I went vegan instantly! At that point I did not know about the health implications of eating animals and the environmental impacts of animal agriculture. I therefore, pursued environmental economics and the contribution of animal agriculture to climate change as my dissertation as I was keen to know more.

I engage in many different forms of activism from street activism through to corporate activism. For example, I have supported and spoke on a number of motions to council from vegan options at council events, a ban on fur being sold on council land and a letter requesting a local organisation did not hold a festival of hunting in the city.

The vegan society provides a standard, an icon that members of society can find comfort in. I believe my experience and communication skills can contribute to the important work of the society and upholding this standard.

## **Andrew Barnes**

Proposed by Rich Hardy

Seconded by Evie Sier

Who is Andy?

Parent to two teenagers, a keen runner, cyclist and occasional swimmer, Andy is motivated by setting personal goals and helping the family achieve their potential.

This year he is trying Judo. Degree in Journalism with A-levels in Politics, Philosophy and Economics means Andy is never without an opinion on the current state of government policy.

Andy has over twenty years business experience. Including the creation of a SaaS startup, consultancy work in the risk and regulatory banking sector, provision of technical teams and project management. Andy has led teams both locally and internationally and managed turnover of £12m with deal sizes between £100k-£6m. Naturally he integrates well with teams and has an extensive business network. Volunteer with Digital Boost. Life member of Animal Aid, Viva and (of course) The Vegan Society.

In 2021 I was fortunate enough to work for The Vegan Society on PlateUpforthePlanet.org and also at COP26. It was fantastic to work with the campaigns team and also have a number of conversations with the trademark, memberships staff as well as the Senior Management Team. I believe such 'on the ground' experience, albeit just for a few months' gives me an additional perspective.

### **Reason(s) for being vegan**

I have always been vegan and haven't seen reason to deviate from it. Increasingly through my 41 years I have learnt more things about how animals are abused, re-enforcing my beliefs.

Health and environmental concerns are important elements though veganism is, for me, ultimately a direct justice movement that it's morally wrong to take from anything simply because we are able to. For the same reason I also do not abuse people who are different to me (colour, gender, ability and so on)

### **Skills, qualifications and experience**

I have worked commercially managing change management projects for many years. In doing these I must obtain buy-in and set expectations from everyone 'in the room'. I have to think both on a short term profit basis and on a longer term

relationship basis to achieve 'win-win' scenarios.

### **Managing people**

I have managed teams directly up to 10 and managed dotted lines of business up to 100 including suppliers. I have experience of managing to target and to budget and within this managing unplanned conflict and taking quarterly and annual staff reviews.

### **Summary**

I could not be more committed to Veganism based on 'years of service'. In this time, I have attended multiple marches, demos and campaigns as well as bringing up my family vegan. There is a clear movement towards veganism and I would like TVS to be positioned as the 'go to' organisation for support and education of vegans and non vegans.

There are many vegan charities and all have a place though TVS is, as the guardian of the vegan definition, one that needs to be looked after. My core aims would be to strategically support an increased membership of TVS and to uphold pragmatic veganism as something that is accessible for all.

## **Alexander de Gaye**

**Proposed by Kamal Adatia**

**Seconded by Graham Neale**

I became vegetarian almost 20 years ago when I started my university dissertation on animal rights and was utterly convinced by all the arguments to stop consuming meat. Seven years ago I made the natural progression to full vegan. I have spent much of the time since encouraging others to come to the same conclusion.

The primary motivation was ethical, but increasingly I have been moved by the environmental arguments. The health

benefits are a bonus. Although changing one mind at a time helps, I now feel I need to promote the movement more actively

As a data protection/privacy lawyer in a top tier firm I have a variety of skills that will be useful to the Vegan Society: planning and implementing compliance programmes in large organisations, advising on governance issues, in-depth GDPR knowledge and a keen eye for detail. I delegate work to and train the junior lawyers in the team and have experience of directly managing trainees. Several of my clients are charities or non-profit organisations so I have good awareness of the issues they face.

Prior to qualifying at Fieldfisher I worked in a variety of environments: Ofsted, the Parole Board, Lloyds bank and four top law firms. In all I have been part of collaborative teams, making decisions together, agreeing a team position on new developments.

I have prepared board papers, attended board meetings and taken the minutes and I am highly competent in all administrative tasks.

I work four day week to improve my work/life balance and focus on volunteering. As a trustee of the Vegan Society this would enable me to offer my skills to an organisation that completely aligns with my values.

I have been a member of the Society for several years and keep up to date with the current campaigns. I always read the magazine and even had a letter of mine printed in a recent edition! I would seek to be an active member of the council and promote the aims of the Society. In particular I would like to be involved with the parliamentary group and any initiatives that would lead to a change in legal status of animals or improving vegans rights.

I am a practicing buddhist and regular at the London Buddhist Centre. The core teachings of avoiding harm and cultivating

compassion for all beings fit well with those of the Society.

I am a member of the Vegan Runners amateur running club and can be seen regularly sporting the club colours around east London. It has been interesting to observe over the years that jokes about bacon sandwiches have gradually got less common as shouts of "Go vegan!" have increased. Veganism is increasingly becoming mainstream so there has never been a better time to get more involved in promoting the aims of the Society.

## **Paula Eileen Feehan**

**Proposed by Christine Fraser**

**Seconded by George Rodger**

**Skills, qualifications, and experience that will benefit the Society:**

### ***Policy Development***

In the past eleven years I have held leadership positions within international development agencies: Oxfam and ActionAid. I was the Advocacy and Campaigns director at Oxfam and the Head of Strategy and Planning for ActionAid International, In these roles I focused on policy, campaigning and strategy, in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia and have successfully influenced policy outcomes.

### ***Academic qualifications: focus on dietary change***

I have just completed an MSc in Food Policy at City University London, building my knowledge of power relations in in the food system to better understand how to develop effective policy solutions that will drive transformative change. My dissertation focused on dietary change and the lack of inclusion in climate policies due to the power of the agricultural sector and lack of political will. I was awarded the

'Cooks Prize' for best overall dissertation and was chosen to represent City University at the 'Food Thinkers' seminar during COP26 on diet and climate change.

The skills I have learnt at these organisations and in academia could benefit the Vegan Society as they look to grow and continue to have a positive impact on the lives of human and non-human animals

### Reasons for being vegan

I have been a vegetarian for over 35 years and a vegan for the last 8 years. I became vegan for three reasons: (1) to distance myself from the cruelty of the dairy and meat industry (cow/calf separation/killing of bobby calves/continual pregnancy of female cows/battery cages etc) (2) ethical reasons of not using animals for human gain (3) environmental reasons.

### Experience of managing people and working on committees

I have previously managed teams of up to five people (ActionAid and Oxfam) and have extensive experience of working and successfully managing teams virtually.

### Previous experience as a Trustee (achievements)

I have previously been a Trustee on three 'not for profit' Boards:

- (1) **Republic UK** (an organisation campaigning for a democratic alternative to the monarchy) where I had the portfolio of strategy and planning for the campaign,
- (2) **People In Aid** (NGO working to improve organisational effectiveness within the humanitarian and development sector) where I had the portfolio of project manager for a merger with three other organisations,
- (3) **TradeAid** (organisation working with people to improve their lives through

trade) where I was responsible for the HR portfolio liaising between employees and the Board.

Each of these Board roles taught me how to focus on the most critical responsibilities of any Board member: the three M's: mission, money and monitoring.

Republic UK allowed me to lead a successful strategy development process and supporter review leading to increased membership and media coverage. People In Aid provided me with an opportunity to fully understand and communicate the benefits of the organisation to the two newly merged entities and TradeAid taught me skills how to be the liaison between staff and Board during a particularly difficult time leading to successful retention of key staff.

## Holly Joanna Fuller

Proposed by Stephen Wilkinson

Seconded by Christine Fraser

I have been vegan for almost five years. Veganism aligns with my wish to live a life that respects the rights of all animals, and to leave a lighter footprint on our fascinating planet. My partner and I chose Veganism at the same time. Our positive example has led four previously omnivorous friends to choose Veganism. I believe the normalising of a vegan lifestyle helps people make the change more easily.

My background is in fashion and retail management. I now run my own fledgling business, supporting independent jewellery makers to run their businesses smoothly, whilst retaining their creative flair. Small, independent makers represent the future of fashion. I am vehemently against the greenwashing and objectionable standards across fast fashion industries; In the same way that animal agriculture effectively forces over-consumption of animal products



leading to increasingly deplorable practices, the fashion cycle drives levels of production that are untenable. I would like to see 'Suitable for Vegans' and 'Cruelty Free' labelling extended to fashion products and work to encourage and enable fashion brands to remove animal products and derivatives from their supply chains. As a trustee this is something I would like to work on. I am also interested in broadening the use of animal free materials in other consumer goods and clear labelling of those products. I believe this is important not only to make it easier for Vegans to choose suitable products, but also to highlight that animal suffering and exploitation is embedded in so many things we buy.

The link between animal agriculture and escalating global temperatures is clear. I consider political change to be one of the most important factors on the road to addressing the climate crisis. I was a founding member of South Staffordshire Green Party, and have been membership officer since we formed in 2016. I am an integral member of our small team and have lots of experience of the nuts and bolts of local politics, from running campaigns to engaging with voters on the doorstep. I work closely with the coordinator and elections officer to produce election literature and manage and communicate with our members. I include at least one vegan or animal rights related story in our monthly members' newsletter. I recently (June 2021) became a parish councillor in the village where I live and have been instrumental in launching a Climate Change Action group which has already got tree planting and wildflower projects in motion. I ensure that parish events where refreshments are served always include vegan options. As a parish councillor, I hope to introduce more progressive projects in the future.

I am passionate and charismatic and seek to inspire others through my own actions and behaviour to lead kinder, more balanced lives.

I would be delighted to be part of an organisation that is crucial in the journey to end the exploitation of animals. I feel my commitment and dedication, alongside my experience of managing people and driving change would benefit The Vegan Society.

## **Paul Higgins**

**Proposed by Mellissa Morgan**

**Seconded by Louise Davies**

I'm an actor and writer for a living - a runner, singer, guitarist and yoga-attempter for leisure. I've just completed the maximum six years as a trustee of the Actors' Children's Trust, the last two as Chair. Early on at ACT I initiated the successful switch to ethical investment that helped fund our record-breaking spending during the pandemic. I asked ACT's Executive Director what else he thought I'd contributed:

"You championed the inclusion of stakeholders, with past beneficiaries becoming trustees, and you established ACT's successful work on diversity and inclusion - e.g. when you left the board was 50% people of colour. Because you're not a financial person you ensured all the trustees were helped to understand the main stuff. You set up systems so that all grant-making was fair and open, and made sure members had access to the board. You weren't ashamed to say you didn't know, and were eager to learn and improve. You insisted on strategy being in plain English (Scottish). On your watch the charity doubled its activities and successfully developed social media feeds. You dared to ask questions. You initiated members' questions at the AGM. You ran a marathon."

I'd been vegetarian since 1990 after happening on casual brutality at a cattle market. I became vegan in 2011 on reading Jonathan Safran Foer's *Eating Animals* and finally accepting that the dairy industry was both terribly cruel and damaging to the environment. I'm vegan because I'm an animal who aspires to keep the golden rule. I believe The Vegan Society can help achieve great advances for all us animals, without encroaching on the excellent work of human rights organisations.

Since being co-opted to the board of TVS late last year, I've advocated for the creation of an EDI Champion role, been elected to it, and done some more training. As a white man (albeit from a deprived and otherwise troubled background), I know there are many prejudices I have not been subjected to (including some I have been guilty of from a young age). I believe that TVS can, and should, only flourish if it fully embraces diversity. To that end I successfully advocated for a lawful adjustment to the scoring process for shortlisting CEO candidates, in an attempt to counter systemic racism and sexism. I want us to be an all-embracing, outward-looking force in the mainstream of this country's life, and to support people with similar aims abroad.

(If for nothing else, I deserve some consideration for irking John Humphrys by comfortably winning an episode of 'Celebrity' Mastermind in aid of The Vegan Society - my fish-deficient synapses continuing to fire adequately under pressure.)

I usually have several different bosses and several complete changes of colleagues every year so I'm used to cooperating creatively with all kinds of people of all varieties of strength and weakness. I believe I can help make a positive contribution to achieving the aims of The Vegan Society.

## Stephen Hill

Proposed by Kamal Adatia

Seconded by Graham Neale

After completing my education with an M.A. in Marketing, I embarked on a corporate career, predominantly in the healthcare sector, lasting 30 years. During this time I held a number of senior positions including Managing Director. During this part of my career, I gained experience in managing people, developing strategy, boosting income, containing costs and fostering best practice. In the final 15 years of my career, I worked as a business consultant, coaching and mentoring owners of small and medium-sized businesses.

As a trustee, I would want to do whatever I can to help achieve the Society's mission to promote veganism for the benefit of people, animals and the environment. The potential to reduce animal and human suffering and environmental damage is enormous.

I became a vegan five years ago to improve my personal health. Since that time, my eyes have been opened to the other powerful benefits of veganism noted above. I have stopped killing insects, have re-wilded my garden and buy my power from Ecotricity among the many changes I have made. My entire family is vegan and I do my best to inspire those within my social network to make changes – with varying degrees of success.

I have managed teams ranging in size from 2 to 100. This has given me lots of experience of hiring, developing individuals, change management, promoting team work and letting people go. I learned early on that achieving results through others is an essential skill and not one that is easily acquired. I have worked on that skill for many years.

Apart from working as the chair or a member of a board of directors, I have served on a variety of committees: as Chairman of our Area Young Enterprise Board, as Chairman of the Marlow Tennis Club and Treasurer of the Marlow Sports Club. I am currently a member of the Steering Committee of Wild Marlow, a very active group dedicated to sustaining and enhancing biodiversity in and around our town.

I was also a Trustee of Sight Concern Bedfordshire from 2000 to 2003 at a time when I was Managing Director of a contact lens company. During that time, I helped raise the profile of the charity, conducted a strategic review, raised funds and facilitated a change of CEO.

I am currently working on a part-time basis as Finance Director for my three children (unpaid, naturally) as they run their own plant-based café in East London.

None of the current trustees of The Vegan Society are known to me.

It would be an honour to be able to bring my skills and values to bear on the development of veganism as a trustee of the Vegan Society.

## **Donald Lee**

**Proposed by Salim Akbar**  
**Seconded by Mellissa Morgan**

I joined The Vegan Society in 2019, and I am now a life member.

I became a vegan in 2014 and this is one of the best decisions I have ever made. Veganism has given greater clarity and meaning to my personal relationship with animals and the natural world. It has indelibly reinforced my work as an environmental activist to counter the negative impact of non-vegan diets and

lifestyles on the survival of plant and animal species, loss of biodiversity and climate change.

I am an economist by training. I earned a PhD in labour economics at University College London, and I went on to teach and research at universities in Malaysia and Australia. I later joined the United Nations where I served for 20 years with postings in Bangkok and New York. As a senior economist at the United Nations, I worked in the areas of social and economic development, with a special focus on poverty, employment, and sustainable development issues. The teams I worked with, over the years, were often very diverse and I believe this experience is helpful when the Council addresses issues like equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), for example.

In 2020, I was appointed to my current position as President of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, a global human rights based anti-poverty NGO based in France. ATD Fourth World brings together people from all cultures and social classes and is active in 34 countries supported by dedicated teams of volunteers in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

In November 2021, I was co-opted as a Trustee of the Society, and I am currently serving as Assistant Treasurer and Sustainability Champion. However, given my limited tenure on the Council, I consider my contribution in these roles largely a work in progress, but I am committed to becoming an effective and productive Trustee through further training and experience on the job. Nevertheless, I believe I made a concrete and meaningful contribution as a member of the Governance Review Working Group which has achieved good progress in addressing urgent governance issues, particularly those that became evident last year. I believe I have

provided skills and insights that have often usefully complemented the strengths and expertise of other Trustees on the Council.

I am seeking election as a Trustee so I can continue the work I have begun since I was co-opted as a member of the Council.

I believe there is a strong case for the Vegan Society to further expand its activities at the international level, not merely commercially, but also through active engagement with individuals and groups to promote veganism.

If elected I shall be committed to ensuring that the Society is managed democratically and effectively, with good relations between staff and managers in a fair, safe and supportive work environment.

## **Christine Zuleka Audrey McLaren**

Proposed by Vanessa Lackford  
Seconded by Christine Fraser

It was the howling distress call of a cow pining for her calf that sent me vegan seven years ago. Initially I was the angry, militant character that can frighten folks off! Having been a lifelong supporter of World Wide Fund for Nature, then Compassion in World Farming and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals using personal finances, fundraising as a volunteer and gathering signatures for petitions. Joining the Cornish Vegans (mainly participating in educational outreach) helped shift and deepen my understanding, by finding likeminded people, unpicking ideas as well as researching to discover; how and why people can 'know' about the practices of animal agricultural businesses and remain consumers of their products.

I currently speak for Animal Rebellion and am an online follower of both World Animal Protection and Animal Equality and, of course am a Vegan Society member (having

an article in the magazine once about the pigs that I rescued; Flora, Fauna and Fabulous) as well as recently supporting the global Plant Based Treaty's work. It is a rare day that I don't attempt to plant more seeds of understanding in other people's minds; I am now a far gentler advocate!

My trade is Psychology and Counselling, working with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged demographics. Previously being Area Youth Work Lead for a London Borough where I managed teams to help create projects, planning numerous activities as well as recruiting and developing policies. Conflict management between gang members and police means that other disagreements often seem quite easy! Concurrently I was Vice Chair for the Mortlake Community Association, so I was working for local government as well as the third sector; I feel this contrast gave truly informative lessons in business policy, practice and procedure.

Recently I instigated the creation of Climate Action St Austell; a CIC for which I am told my primary attributes are enthusiasm and commitment, again working in collaborative partnerships with other groups on several medias.

I feel strongly that climate justice must be social justice but non-human animal justice would be my greatest dream. My vision and deepest wish is to live to see our species recognising 'speciesism'; stopping the exploitation of the most vulnerable so they are not abused for our satiation.

Having the privilege to be a (nearly) full time activist I have the time and passion to support and encourage the work of the Vegan Society with their aims and goals; adhering to and fully agreeing with its principles and values.

We have never had a better time to truly expand the uptake of the trending vegan



diet especially with the climate emergency and the availability of alternatives to animal products. Compassion for non-human species and the recognition of sentience means we must push harder to create a better world for all living beings; I'd would find it a privilege to work alongside and help this current creative and transformative society.

## **Jim Pycraft**

**Proposed by Kamal Adatia  
Seconded by Graham Neale**

I have extensive experience in running my own businesses from start-up, a franchise business and have been a part of a franchisor organisation that successfully launched 45 stores in 6 different countries. I am currently Managing Director of a UK based Choir company – teaching the world to Sing! Pre pandemic we taught over 1000 people per week across the Midlands. I'm very proud to say that despite the challenges we have survived the past 2 years and have great plans for 2022! Since the pandemic moved us all online, we have created a new arm to our business and now run online only choirs – this has enabled us to now reach people all over the world and I am pleased to say that our online choir is now helping hundreds of people each week.

I have had lots of experience building high quality teams to execute expansion plans, from senior management to store level employees. I am great at managing and developing teams. I have an abundance of passion and enthusiasm with the ability to deliver high quality presentations to boards and teams. I have previously held Operations Director roles within business which covers a wide range of the above-mentioned skills that are sought.

I feel very privileged that I am in a position in my life where I can also dedicate some

time and energy to a cause that matters so much to me, which is why I am very excited about applying for the role of a Trustee with the Vegan Society. I have been a proud Vegan for 4 years, Vegetarian for much longer! I believe I have a very wide range of skills that would assist the VS, especially when it comes to expansion and people management. I have never held a role of Trustee before but have, for the last 12 months, devoted some time to being a Mentor for new business start-ups. This is something I really enjoy and it has enabled me to grow as an individual and support causes that I am passionate about.

First and foremost, I am Vegan for the animals but do believe that there is also a significant impact on the planet when it comes to raising animals for food so I also have the interests of the planet for my kids and their kids. Having recently become a Dad for the first time I am excited to teach her about being compassionate to all beings and looking after the planet for generations to come.

## **Peter Robert de Verneuil Smith**

**Proposed by Kamal Adatia  
Seconded by Graham Neale**

I have a strong moral commitment to animal rights. I became a vegetarian at the age of 10 years old and have now been vegan for 16 years. I suppose, like many vegans, I've spent a long time doing my best to inform omnivores about the choices they make. I believe the time has come to make what is hopefully a more significant contribution to the Vegan cause and I am very keen to become a trustee. I have been a barrister practising commercial law for 23 years. I am now a senior barrister and I became a Q.C. three years ago. I am sure I may assist the trustees in respect of any

legal issues that arise. In recent years there has been a rise in lawsuits driven by ethical campaigners (such as Client Earth). Insofar as the Trustees may need to form a view on such litigation issues I am well placed to offer my advice and experience.

In my practice I have gained a wealth of experience in communication, dispute resolution and advising governing bodies (whether commercial or charitable) as to how to exercise their powers and make decisions. Within my Chambers of Barristers I have sat on the management board for over ten years and have been co-head of business development for five years and head of social responsibility for two years. This managerial experience I believe will allow me to add value to the decision-making process of the trustees. Projects that I have supervised include: website renewal, negotiation of terms with key suppliers, creation of best practice business development protocol, drafting the Chambers business plan, and drafting the Chambers ESG (environmental, social and governance) policy. I receive annual equality & diversity & unconscious bias training. I have completed mentoring training and provide mentoring within Chambers.

In terms of particular matters which I'd like to drive forward: greater profile for the Society in news reports on TV/the radio when issues arise which have vegan considerations (my sense is that there is headroom to gain greater exposure), the use of 'ambassadors' to be vegan role models for young people, increasing the size of the Instagram following of the society, and supporting vegans who suffer discrimination (I know the Society already does this).

I am inspired by the incredible growth in veganism in the UK in the last five years in particular and I believe as Bill Gates says

"the future is vegan". My goal is to contribute in any way to assist the society in its mission to accelerate the change to veganism in the UK.

## **Amber Vincent-Prior**

**Proposed by Vanessa Clarke**

**Seconded by Martin Lake**

I became vegan for the animals 15 years ago, having already avoided eating or wearing animals for a long time before, and subsequently discovered all the other benefits for the environment, sustainability and human health. I have a BA degree from Winchester University, including modules on ethics and animal issues and also keep up to date with training courses on subjects I have studied as part of my professional life.

The Vegan Society's council of management needs to focus on the central aim of promoting veganism and the Trademark while continuing to safeguard democracy and diversity. How we do things is as important as what is done, and we must be seen to have an evidence-based approach in everything we do. I am impressed with the progress made on the Trademark, making it straightforward for consumers and businesses to ensure that the products they buy and use are independently verified as not tested on animals as well as animal free.

In my earlier career with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, I gained experience in accounts, management, recruitment, training, and health and safety. Since then I have gained further experience in governance and risk assessment reviews as well as setting policy and strategy, having been a director and for several years vice-chair of the Southern Co-op, which employs more than 4,000 people in a wide range of roles across 200 food stores, dozens of funeral homes and the head office in Portsmouth. We even have a

natural burial site. My role has not only involved working well with others and considering issues thoughtfully and thoroughly, but also being a director of a dozen subsidiary companies.

Voluntary work since my teenage years has included mentoring children and young people to help them get a better start in life. I have also been a voluntary Trade Union representative for many years and take staff job satisfaction and welfare as well as pay and conditions very seriously. I also volunteer with the Fairtrade movement to ensure workers get fair pay for their work.

I have engaged with the broader vegan community both locally and internationally, giving cookery demonstrations, organising and cooking for vegan pot luck suppers in Portsmouth as well as booking venues and advertising events. I belong to the Youth Hostels Association and the Ramblers Association to help preserve our environment while walking and staying in a variety of places. I also enjoy sailing and rowing.

My home in Hampshire is on a third of an acre of steeply sloping ancient chalk meadow, with a wide variety of orchids and other wild flowers as well as insects, birds and some mammals, all of whom I do my best to protect and preserve.

I seek your trust and support to use my knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to help The Vegan Society positively to promote veganism and the Trademark and to challenge government, businesses and citizens to support veganism and the sustainability of our planet.

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