



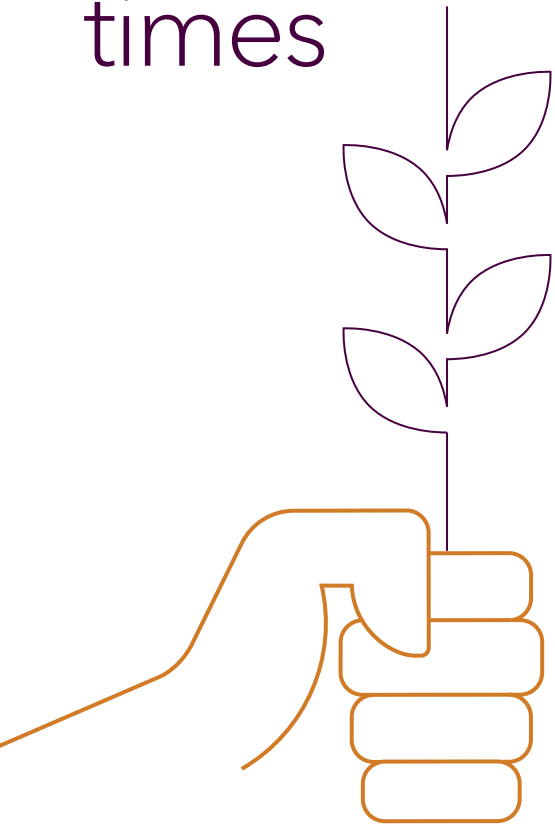
Food Ethics Council

2021

IMPACT REPORT



Building resilience in unstable times



Our vision is of a world where everyone eats well and global hunger is a distant memory; where farmers and food producers make a decent living, animals are treated humanely, and the environment is respected.

Food matters: how we produce, trade and eat it touches many issues from climate breakdown to human health and wellbeing, from poverty and injustice to the plight of animals. The food sector is both responsible for many of these issues, and deeply affected by them.

The Food Ethics Council is a leading authority on food ethics allowing us to reach 'in the round' systemic solutions to diverse food issues. We take a long-term view and believe in tackling root causes. We value our independence and are non-profit (a registered charity in the UK). Openness and honesty are important to us and we listen to, and learn from, each other. We want everyone to be involved with shaping the food systems we want and need.

Our work explores the ways ethical questions manifest in food systems. For example, we have explored the role of business in alleviating household food insecurity, supported farmers in building an ethical dairy sector and investigated how to build community food resilience. We work with businesses, NGOs, grassroots community groups, farmers, academics, policymakers and the public to unpack these questions together.

Our mission is to accelerate the shift towards fair food systems that respect people, animals and the planet. Decisions about our food system are often made without sufficient ethical consideration. This means they are likely to be short-term, single-aspect solutions and without adequate thought for the wider consequences. We want to ensure long-term decisions are made 'in the round' and with sufficient thought for wider consequences.

Our purpose is to bring ethics to the centre of the food system.

Our role is threefold - we:

- **NOURISH** - we bring expertise together and provide ethical tools and a safe space for honest, meaningful dialogue
- **CHALLENGE** - we challenge the status quo and accepted ways of thinking
- **INSPIRE** - we promote 'in the round' ethical approaches and considered solutions that tackle root causes

An unstable external environment

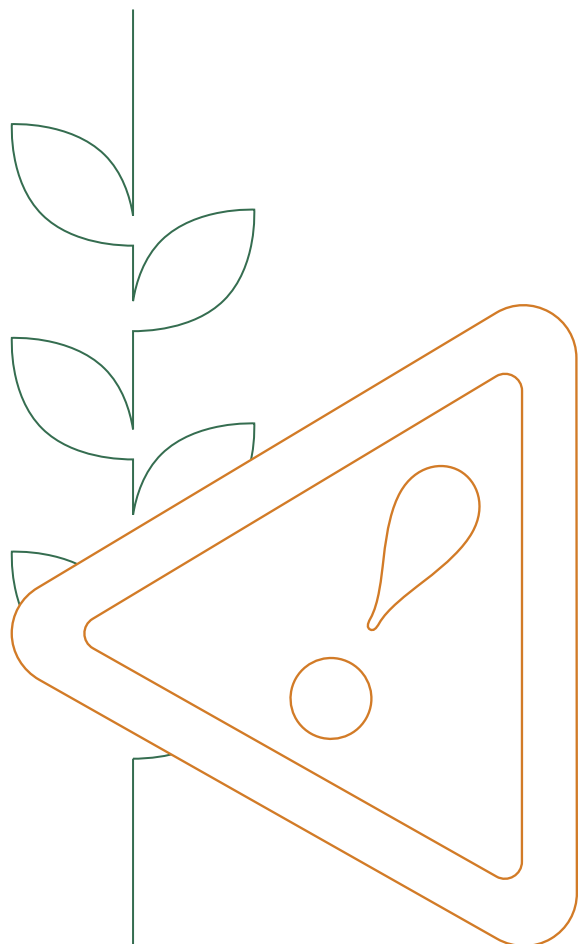
2021 was another challenging year, as the pandemic lingered, with deep and lasting impacts for so many, including those working in food and farming. With parts of the world being re-opened, and then sometimes shut down again, it was a year when short-term patience and building longer-term resilience were vital.

Major global gatherings promised a lot and delivered only modest progress. At COP26, we saw how one word can make a big difference (a last-minute change to the collective agreement to 'phase down' rather than 'phase out' fossil fuel use left many disappointed). Given the food system's impact on global heating and how the climate emergency is already impacting food and farming in so many countries, the fact that food barely featured on the COP26 agenda was a huge missed opportunity.

The 'decade of action' in the 2020s should now be well and truly underway, but it needs an urgent reboot - and national governments must seize opportunities to put food and food ethics at the centre of the agenda in 2022, for example at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) and UN Climate Change Conference 2022 (COP27).

However, working with community food initiatives and networks, dairy farmers, civil society organisations, food businesses and social changemakers, what we've seen consistently in the past year are efforts to identify, bolster and build more resilient food systems. We're heartened to see initiatives build capacity and expand - particularly those in which food citizens are empowered to shape the food systems they want and need, namely to ensure everyone is fed well and able to look after one another.

The Food Ethics Council's work in 2021 has been wide-ranging, but has continued to focus on bringing ethics to the centre of food systems, particularly in two key areas: building community (food) resilience and helping dairy farmers transition to fairer, more ethical dairy.



Recognition of funders

We are very grateful for the support of all those who funded our work this year, without whom none of this would be possible. Our biggest source of income in 2021 was from charitable trusts and foundations, namely:

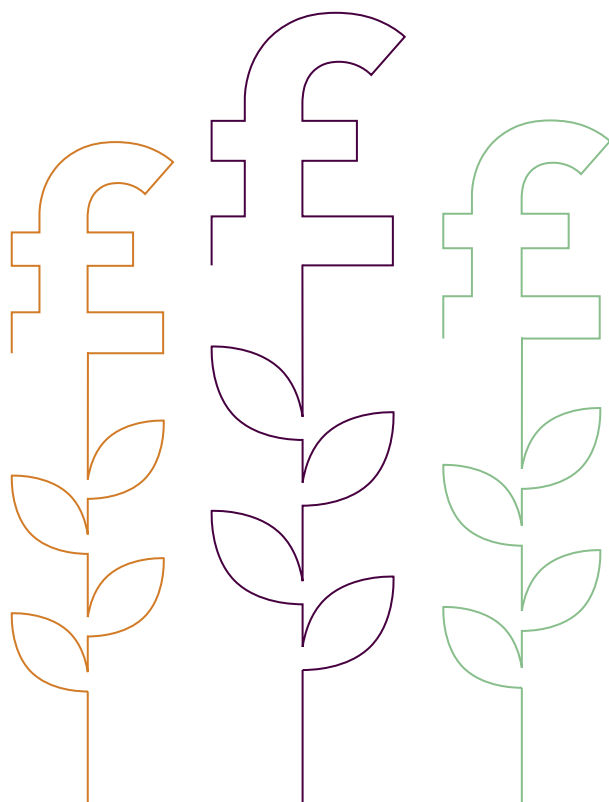
- **A Team Foundation**
- **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**
- **Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust**
- **Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation**
- **sankalpa**

We receive funding from a variety of different sources – including from individual donors, from businesses participating in our Business Forum and from other organisations we work with – but we only accept funds that will not compromise our independence.

Our people are our main asset and our main cost is therefore staff costs, which typically represent around two-thirds of our total expenditure. Other spending is for activity, premises and governance costs. We have a lean, flexible organisational model with minimal fixed overheads. Our Council members, who are amongst the leaders in their fields (e.g. ethics, farming, business and policy), operate in a voluntary capacity and provide an invaluable source of in-kind support.

2021 Summary statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted £'000	Restricted £'000	Total £'000
Total incoming resource	85	65	150
Total resources expended	(102)	(29)	(131)
Net movement in funds	-17	36	19
Fund balances brought forward	39	14	52
Fund balances carried forward	21	50	71



50+

speakers (& chairs)
at our events

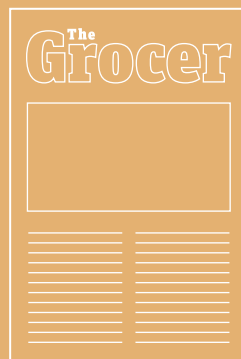
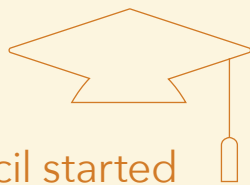


40% of speakers & chairs female*

22% of speakers & chairs non-white*

1,000+

mentions in Google Scholar since the Food Ethics Council started



11 opinion pieces in the Grocer magazine, leading food sector trade press

6 Business Forums

3 #FoodTalks

2 'Food, charity & the Boardroom' Business Forum workshops

2 Dairy farmer workshops

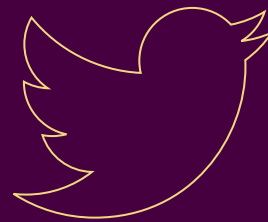
2 Farming workshops

2 Food Policy on Trials



630,000+

Twitter impressions



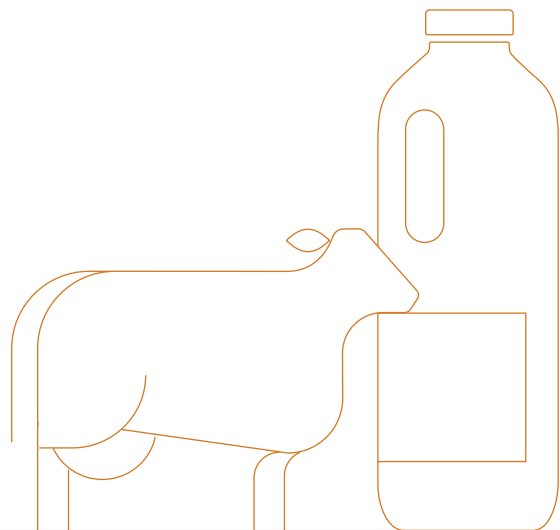
30,000+

impressions earned by our top tweet of the year

*We are disclosing these in the spirit of being open and recognising we have still got further work to do to improve both the gender and ethnicity balance of our speakers and chairs

1

Supporting dairy farmers on the transition to fairer, more ethical dairy



Price pressures on farmers and the climate and nature emergencies have increased the urgency of striving for fairer, more ethical dairy systems. But what would those systems look like?

All sorts of groups have ideas about what 'fairer, more ethical' means and what farming should be like. But this project is focusing on farmers themselves. We want to understand from them what, if it were possible, they would like to do differently. What are the changes they'd like to see in the dairy sector, and what do they think they could do to help make those changes happen?

The **Dairy Project** launched in spring of 2021 and involves working closely with dairy farmers to identify the barriers to fairer and more ethical dairy systems - and helping to overcome them.

So far, the response from dairy farmers has been overwhelmingly positive, with farmers wanting and willing to engage with the project.

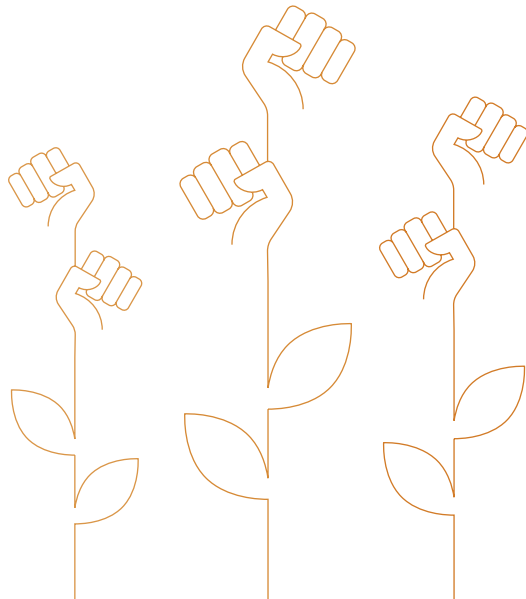
We worked with over 40 farmers this year, organising a first workshop of eight producers at the Groundswell Show in June and a further workshop with 12 producers at the UK Dairy Day show in September. Then we ran a wider supply chain discussion in London with representatives from across industry and society, bringing in dairy producer-representatives from the workshops to test out their ideas for accelerating positive change.

We've developed good relationships with industry media during the first year, with ongoing coverage of the project from [Farmers Guardian](#), [Agriland](#), [the Grocer](#) and [Dairy Farmer](#). We've also been pleased to see our dairy producers speaking out at events and on social media about the project and their participation in it so far.

As one workshop participant said: "As a dairy farmer I feel challenged from many angles about what is and isn't ethical, be that animal welfare, climate change or biodiversity, I always want to know how I can do things better. For me, taking small steps that work within my context helps to see progress happen on a continuous basis".

2

Building community food resilience



One of the most urgent and pressing problems in our food systems is growing hunger and the entrenchment of emergency food aid in response. Yet giving food without considering the structural reasons 'why' food is needed is a never-ending battle. We believe that building community resilience using food is a critical part of the puzzle to end hunger and eradicate poverty.

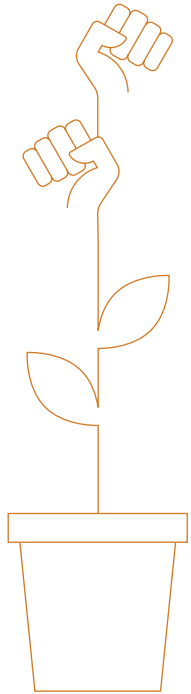
Two years ago, when the Food Ethics Council began this work using food citizenship to explore long-term strategies to address household food insecurity, none of us could have foreseen the catastrophic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people, communities and food systems. Community food organisations were and remain a crucial, core pillar of the response to the pandemic. Their role in feeding, connecting and caring for people was quite simply lifesaving.

Over the last two years, we have worked with community food organisations in Sheffield and national networks to develop [a guide to building community food resilience](#) (published in March 2022). This guide considers how we can broaden our understanding of poverty beyond the economic dimension alone, to encompass the disempowerment and disconnection experienced by communities across the UK. We can then reframe poverty and broaden the search for solutions to include connecting people, empowering communities and building resilience.

Organisations of all shapes and sizes can be platforms for people to influence and create the change they want to see in their local communities. Communities know what they need best. This guide supports community food organisations to:

- 1. Change the language** - reframing the current emergency food aid/ redistribution model towards building community resilience
- 2. Rethink** how to refer to those they work with to remove stigma, and build more engaged and empowered community members
- 3. Integrate** better in the local community
- 4. Focus** on what to build (rather than fight against)

We hope this guide is a pragmatic tool that contributes to the resilience of community food organisations, and their ability to continue to support the communities they serve, beyond being a vehicle for emergency food aid. It aims to assess what can be done now despite the conditions still not being ideal to support community food organisations.



3

Growing the food citizenship movement

When it comes to food, our role as individuals is generally limited to that of the consumer, choosing between products and using our wallets to vote on where and how our food is produced and processed. However, this story about ourselves and our agency in shaping these food systems is, at best, incomplete. Since 2016, we have been exploring what an alternative to consumerism looks like. We call this food citizenship.

Enabling, energising and amplifying the movement has been a key focus of 2021. We appointed a [Food Citizenship Coordinator, Beth Bell](#), in September 2021 - to develop knowledge, confidence and ownership of and in food citizenship in diverse organisations and networks across the UK, and to empower the food citizenship movement.

It's heartening to observe the narrative changing, to see organisations explicitly pointing out the problems of a consumerist food system and increasingly harnessing the opportunities that food citizenship affords. Examples include:

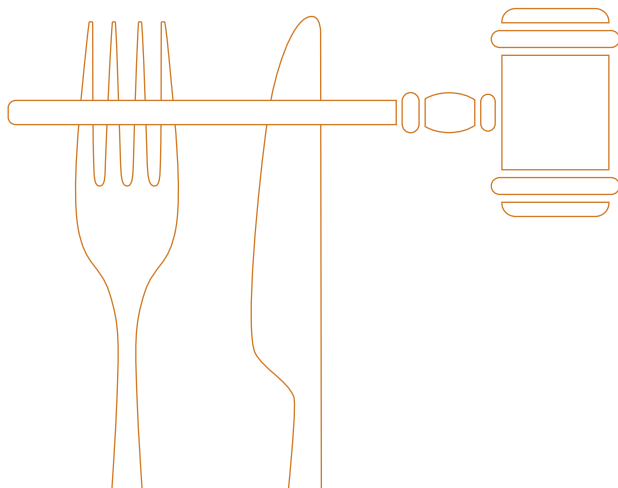
- **Civil society embedding food citizenship in strategies and plans** like leading food NGO [Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming's 2021-2025 Strategy](#), this [SOS-UK sustainable food guide](#) and [Liverpool's Good Food Plan](#).
- **Buy-in to the [Food Citizenship Manifesto](#)** we launched in spring 2021. This outlines the principles and action we need to create a world where the food sector is vibrant, flourishing and kind to people, animals and the planet. "It is aspirational and achievable. It requires like-minded people all moving in the same direction. Maybe the time is right with many individuals and families evaluating what really matters. Great leadership from... the Food Ethics Council." (Feedback about the food citizenship manifesto on LinkedIn)
- **Growing recognition in discussions around policy and trade.** Our food citizenship work was

cited in the [Trade and Agriculture Commission Final Report](#) in March 2021, which noted that: "The working group acknowledged that, as people, we think and act differently as citizens than we do as shoppers. Citizens consider issues of broader public interest whereas, as shoppers, we make purchasing decisions based on a narrower range of factors."

- **More published material** on food citizenship, with 2021 examples including the chapter [Citizen-Driven Food System Approaches in Cities](#) by Sue Booth et al; [Performing Farmscapes](#) by Susan C. Haedicke and [this article](#) in Prospect Magazine.
- **Taking food citizenship to all corners of the UK.** Our Week of Celebration on social media promoted organisations creatively embedding food citizenship approaches across the UK. Highlighting the movement in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland was a key focus this year, continuing into 2022. For example, moderating the Food Democracy session at the Wales Real Food and Farming Conference was a great opportunity to meet the local network. The session covered how to ensure that everyone's voice is heard, and that government policy fits with public aspirations for a better food system.
- **Activists calling for food citizenship:** "Be a citizen who takes action to change unfair systems. Take your [food citizenship](#) seriously. Advocate in [citizen food assemblies](#). Join groups that bring individual voices together in a collective chorus to demand change." Dr Alex Lockwood writing in [Plant based news](#).

4

Encouraging a bold and enabling policy environment



We continue to run our innovative [Food Policy on Trial](#) series, where we critically **explore bold policy ideas** with the help of expert witnesses, a ‘jury’ of members of the Food Ethics Council and a wider audience. In 2021, we put carbon border adjustment taxes in the dock, with the jury finding that the idea of applying such a tax to imported agricultural inputs with large climate and environmental footprints – like fertilisers and animal feed – was promising but applying it to individual food products was flawed. This was picked up in the trade press, for example in [Footprint](#).

In a second ‘trial’, we explored whether food and agricultural companies should pay for past harms, including but not limited to racial injustice (e.g. slavery) and historic climate impacts. This is an important topic we will dive into again in 2022.

Speakers at our Trials this year included **Professor Dieter Helm** (Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Oxford), **Angela Francis** (Chief Advisor, Economics and Economic Development, WWF-UK), **Esther Stanford-Xosei** (Reparationist, Jurisconsult and Community advocate) and **Charles O’Malley** (Senior Systems Change Advisor, Food and Agricultural Commodity Systems, UN Development Programme)

We have continued to do **advocacy** work, including joining with others to urge the UK government to issue a bold response to the National Food Strategy, to enshrine animal sentience in legislation and more. We have responded to consultations and policy announcements, and have worked with a number of alliances and partnerships e.g. Sustain’s farming working group, Voluntary & Community Sector Emergencies Partnership’s food strand and beyond. In addition, in the early part of 2021, we provided expert input into the design of the public dialogue part of the National Food Strategy.

We believe in a fair policymaking process – including meaningful engagement of people as food citizens in the process where appropriate. We publicly challenged Defra in an [open letter about the consultation process and framing for its consultation on regulation of genetic technologies](#), which we felt was presented in a one-sided and partial way. This was picked up by other NGOs, who supported our position. We will continue to promote **fair and inclusive policymaking**, and to explore bold policy solutions in 2022.

5

Fostering better business practice

Our **Business Forum** continues to encourage individuals from food and farming businesses to come together and learn from others. In 2021, we held two in-person Business Forum dinner meetings: one on fairer dairy and one exchanging lessons about food and farming sustainability with the Netherlands. Remaining meetings and workshops were held online. Topics included 'Doing net zero well', 'Engaging others in your food philosophy', 'A fair pay food sector' and 'Reflecting on the National Food Strategy'. We also held a mini-series on 'food, charity and the Boardroom' in partnership with the University of Sheffield. We continue to grow our Business Forum community and to **publish non-attributed write-ups from discussions**, so others can benefit from these insights. We have an **exciting programme for 2022**, with our Business Forum members helping set the agenda.

Giving confidence to act

By bringing together peers from across the sector in a safe space, we encourage frank sharing of insights, which gives executives the confidence to take positive action. For example, one major food company said our first "food, charity and the Boardroom" workshop had prompted them to "push ahead with Living Wage accreditation". In 2021, the Food Ethics Council also became a living wage accredited organisation because we believe everyone in the sector should be paid a real living wage - and be treated fairly.

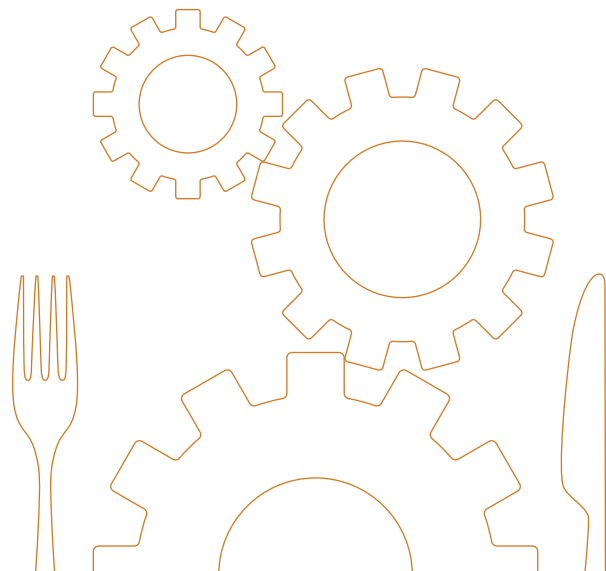
Connecting and inspiring

We connect food business leaders with inspirational speakers. In 2021 expert speakers included Professor Mike Berners-Lee (leading expert in carbon footprinting), Ian O'Reilly (award-winning farmer), Kene Umeasiegbu (Campaigns Director at Tesco) and Pam Warhurst (Co-founder of Incredible Edible). An initial connection at one of our online Business Forums led to **Compass Group UK & Ireland developing a partnership with Incredible Edible**, to accelerate the growth of its (incredible) grass roots movement.

"After 13 years at [food retailer], I'm ready for a change. I have to say I have really really enjoyed the sessions put on by the Food Ethics Council and some of the contacts made have helped inspire a big programme we have coming up."

Challenging business leaders to step up

In 2021, our Executive Director, Dan Crossley, was invited to write a regular monthly column for The Grocer, a leading food sector magazine, which has proven a good platform to engage a wider range of business leaders. The articles, providing challenge and ideas on different ethical food issues - ranging from unsustainable advertising to fair treatment of dairy farmers, from modern slavery to the climate emergency - have been very well received to date, and Dan has been asked to continue the series in 2022.



The power of our council

We are fortunate to have an active and engaged Council who guide our work, ensuring that we are asking the right questions and reaching the right people. This year, we want to put on record our sincerest thanks to two longstanding members of the Food Ethics Council who stepped down in late 2021. We would like to acknowledge their immense contribution to our organisation and to the area of food ethics, sustainable food and farming, and food policy.

Helen Browning OBE was Chair and Trustee of the Food Ethics Council for many years and played a critical role in the organisation's work over more than two decades, bringing strategic insights as a farmer and from leadership roles in major civil society organisations. As our Chair for well over a decade, Helen embodied what the Food Ethics Council represents – a calm, considered voice of reason in an ever-changing world.

"I've stayed involved for so long because the Food Ethics Council has provided me with a space which really challenges my thinking and really helps me expand my view of the world. It's so easy to become a prisoner of your background, I come from a farming community and I think of things as farmers do. It's such a privilege to work with people who have enabled me to see things in a different way.

What I value most about the Food Ethics Council is the process we go through to come to conclusions. Process is undervalued today, at a time when everyone is wanting to get to the answer right here right now. There is that urgency, but if we don't think deeply, from all angles, we don't think of all the communities that will be affected by whatever is under discussion, then we'll take perverse outcomes. So for me, the Food Ethics Council has been really important in taking forward debates in a considered way."

Geoff Tansey was a Trustee for many years and involved as a member of the Food Ethics Council for 21 years, bringing expertise in food systems thinking and food policy. Geoff brought healthy, critical challenge, together with an incredible commitment to the organisation.

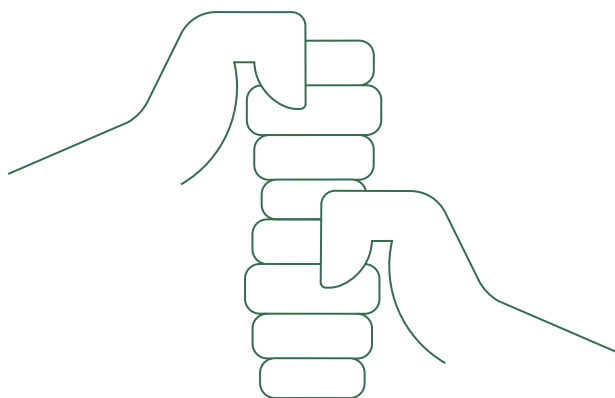
"I think the important thing about the approach of the Food Ethics Council is that we try to look at food within a global context and we try to recognise that food and the food system is part of a bigger system, our economic system. We try to help make people connect these dots and make lives in which food plays an important part better and living and working in a more ethical way.

I think one of the other things is helping people connect across the boundaries and to bring people working in the business area with academics and those working in policy. So it's about connections as well, and enabling people to grapple in quite a deliberative way with some of the challenges we face and not just make a snap response."

You can watch Helen and Geoff's parting responses in full [here](#).

The power of collaboration

We are firm believers in the power of working with others – whether directly partnering, being part of an informal alliance or exchanging advice and insights. Here are just some of the groups, panels and alliances we were involved with in 2021 – to amplify our reach and impact.



Informing and influencing policy

- National Food Strategy public dialogues (we worked with Hopkins Van Mil, public dialogue specialists, bringing food systems expertise)
- FSA Horizon Scanning Panel
- FSA COVID-19 Expert Panel

Supporting grass-roots action and movements

- Together for Sheffield – Bringing networks of community food organisations together
- Food citizenship movement

Advocating for change with others

- Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership
- Eating Better Alliance
- Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming (e.g. its farming working group)
- Groceries Code Action Network
- Trade Unwrapped (led by Food, Farming and Countryside Commission)

Nourishing a space for people wanting positive change

- #FoodTalks partnership with Impact Hub Kings Cross, Organico and London Food Link (part of Sustain) – with a particular focus on COP26 and how we should address the climate emergency
- Business Forum – with individuals from a range of food and farming businesses
- Feeding the City – start-up & accelerate programmes for food businesses led by Impact Hub Kings Cross

Learning with others

- Food Learning Forum – coordinated by Sustain
- Anti-racism and anti-oppression peer to peer learning – coordinated by Feedback with external expert facilitators, supported by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Weston Communicating Climate Programme – we successfully applied and were part of this collaboration between Garfield Weston and Media trust which offered a 6-month programme of free training to build the strategic communications skills, confidence and capacity of 30 UK environmental and climate charities
- Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust ‘Sustainable Futures’ group

Working with academics and students

- N8 AgriFood Food Systems Policy Hub Advisory Group
- Guest lecturer – Centre for Food Policy, City University
- IFSTAL

Through speaking platforms, in the media, in blogs, on social media and in meetings and workshops, we continue to push for a food system that is fair and resilient for people, planet and animals – with ethics at its centre.

Looking ahead

2022 will be another critical year for food and farming, where we must all demand transformative change. Here are some of the critical questions we are exploring.



➤ How can we accelerate the transition to ethical dairy?

➤ How can we help food movements in the UK be more effective and coordinated?

➤ To what extent should we focus on immediate needs versus seeding systemic change that may not bear fruit now, but looks to the future?

➤ How can we bring racial justice more centrally to our work and our sector?

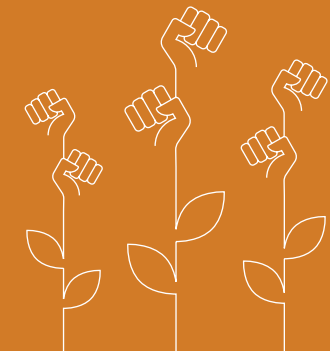
➤ How can we help others jointly nourish the food citizenship movement?

➤ How can we further build our profile ahead of our 25th anniversary in 2023, so as to drive even greater impact?

➤ How can we leverage our expertise and reputation to explore with others what is needed for community food resilience? What can we do to ensure that dignity, decency and fairness for all are built into food justice solutions from the ground up?

We cannot address these questions alone and we seek partnership, participation and support from others working in this space.

Whether you are using and sharing our toolkits, engaging in events, joining our networks or supporting us financially, our ability to build more just, resilient and joyful food futures relies on collaboration. We are in this together and hope you will join us.



Who we are

OUR STAFF

Dan Crossley is executive director and leads the team. He has worked on food sustainability issues for over 15 years, previously leading Forum for the Future's work on sustainable food and working for a food manufacturing company.

Anna Cura previously led our work on food citizenship and on community food resilience.*

Tom Levitt leads the Dairy Project.

Beth Bell is our newest member of the team and since September has been our Food Citizenship coordinator as well as working on the Community Food Resilience project.

Helene Schulze is communications officer, leading our internal and external communications and ensuring our work reaches the right people in an engaging and accessible manner.

Clare Stone is project and office coordinator, overseeing our office operations as well as supporting staff with projects and events.

OUR COUNCIL Our Council is currently made up of experts in food and farming, appointed as individuals. They bring a broad range of expertise to our work, including academia, farming, business, policy and philosophy. Our Board members, elected from the wider Council, oversee the running of the organisation. Board and Council members are not paid for their time.

COUNCIL MEMBERS IN 2021

Dr Nigel Dower (Outgoing Chair; Trustee)
Honorary Senior Lecturer in Philosophy,
Aberdeen University

Chloe Donovan (Trustee)
Founder, Hundred River Farm

Ralph Early (Incoming Chair and Trustee)
Independent Food Scientist and Food Ethicist

Ruth Layton (Trustee)
Founder, sankalpa

Joanna Lewis (Trustee)
Strategy and Policy Director, Soil Association

Patti Whaley (Treasurer and Trustee)
Retired, Non-executive Director

Jon Alexander, Co-founder, New Citizenship Project

Dr Julian Baggini (Trustee)
Freelance writer and philosopher

Helen Browning OBE, Organic farmer,
Chief Executive, Soil Association*

David Croft, Global Director, Sustainability,
Environment and Human Rights at RB

Professor Elizabeth Dowler, Emeritus Professor
of Food and Social Policy, Department of Sociology
at the University of Warwick

Cathryn Higgs, Head of Food Policy,
Co-operative Food

Patrick Mulvany, Agriculturalist

Pete Ritchie, Director, Nourish Scotland, organic farmer

Geoff Tansey, Curator, Food Systems Academy*

Albert Tucker, Independent consultant, advisor and
social entrepreneur

Dee Woods, Co-founder Granville Community
Kitchen, member GLA London Food Board

Dr Alexandra Sexton, Leverhulme Early Career
Research Fellow, Department of Geography,
University of Sheffield

Professor Moya Kneafsey, Centre for Agroecology,
Water and Resilience

**Stepped down from the Council during 2021*



Food Ethics Council

www.foodethicscouncil.org

