

FOOD ETHICS COUNCIL



IMPACT REPORT 2022





Photograph by Will Hearle

Food matters.

How we produce, trade and eat it is linked to many of the biggest challenges we face, from climate and ecological breakdown to human health, poverty, and animal welfare.

2022 was a year of significant challenges yet we have more reasons for hope than ever before. And although it was a turbulent and difficult year, we were deeply motivated by the creativity, energy and expertise of our partners, our team, our council and our allies.

We saw the country emerge from perpetual lockdowns, only to be thrown into a cost-of-living crisis. We experienced numerous shifts in the policy landscape with significant milestones for food and farming, including the long-awaited publication of the Government Food Strategy and the introduction of the Sustainable Farming Incentive and Landscape Recovery schemes. Food and farming was thrown into the global spotlight at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh and was woven through conversations at COP15, the UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal.

Our work in 2022 was energising and diverse. We continued to weave the

threads of our ongoing projects, as well as respond with agility and nuance to some of the pressing and unexpected challenges that arose.

We made a splash in the media and raised significant awareness around the unethical milk contracts that lock dairy farmers into unsustainable practices, and continued to nurture relationships with both farmers and buyers to support a transition toward more ethical dairy. We published our guide to Community Food Resilience, the result of two years of co-designing a strategy out of household food insecurity, which culminated in a widely-attended, thought-provoking event which sent ripples across individuals and organisations working on food and hunger. We also saw numerous shifts across civil society, academia and business from ‘consumer’ to ‘citizen’ approaches through our work in cultivating the food citizenship movement.

It is an honour to be part of such a dynamic sector and we continue to make new connections with change-makers in food and farming, from those working the soil to those writing policies.



Introduction

Who we are

The Food Ethics Council is a think-tank and charity that provides independent advice on the ethics of food and farming. We consider things ‘in the round’ by looking at the food system as a whole. This means considering the impact of our food and farming systems on people, animals and the planet. We take the long-term view and believe in tackling root causes rather than treating symptoms. Openness and collaboration are central to our work, and we bring people together from across farming, business, NGOs, grassroots community groups, academia, policy and the public, to hold honest, productive conversations and collectively come up with solutions to the multiple crises we face.

Our vision

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

Our mission

is to facilitate a shift towards fair food systems that respect people, animals and the planet.

Our role

To **nurture** a safe space for stakeholders in the food system to come together and engage in honest, meaningful dialogue.

To **challenge** business as usual by asking the hard questions and illuminating ethical tensions.

To **encourage** ‘in the round’ decision-making and long-term solutions that tackle root causes.



Thank you

To our 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 2022 was from charitable trusts, foundations and funds, namely:

- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation
- Sankalpa
- JAM Today
- Arnold Clark Community Fund

Our total income for 2022 was £121,000.

We also receive funding from individual donors, from businesses participating in our Business Forum and from other organisations we work with – but we only accept funds that do not compromise our independence.

We have now set up a donate page on our website, for those who wish to support our work - [click here to see.](#)

Our people

are our main asset and our main cost is therefore staff costs, which typically represent over 80% of our total expenditure. Other spending is for activity, office 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 (from ethics and policy to farming and business), operate in a voluntary capacity and provide an invaluable source of in-kind support.

13

events hosted in-person
or online

30

expert speakers at
our events

452

total participants at
our events



THE YEAR *in numbers*



6

Business Forum
meetings held

2

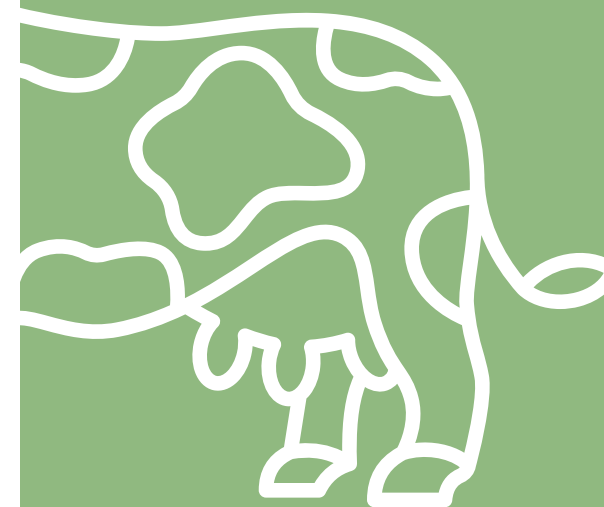
new Business Forum
members joined

40

farmers engaged
in the Dairy
Project

2

workshops
held with
farmers



10

Food Citizenship
workshops and talks
delivered



Quoted in

27

articles in sector
and national press

12

opinion pieces
published in the Grocer

6

joint letters
signed

7

major consultations
responded to



Sharpening

Our communications



Photograph by Will Hearle

Our website

foodethicscouncil.org

In Autumn 2022 we re-launched our website, having reorganised content with user-experience and accessibility in mind. All resources are now housed in one place and can be filtered by content type and theme; a drop-down menu has been added to allow users to easily see the breadth of our work and quickly navigate to specific areas. Imagery across the website was updated to better reflect the human face of the Food Ethics Council - imagery of our staff team, our Council, event participants, farm workers, community food organisers and food businesses. We also developed a more prominent, eye-catching 'Donate' button and streamlined our donation process to make it quicker and simpler for people to donate to the Food Ethics Council.

47,000 users
from 10 countries



Our socials

@FoodEthicsNews

13,900
total followers

218,000
impressions

35,429
profile visits

1,312
likes

Outreach

13
newsletters

sent to 1,710
subscribers

Supporting

Dairy farmers to transition to more ethical dairy

The Dairy Project launched in 2021 to work with dairy farmers and other stakeholders across the sector to identify opportunities for enabling fairer and more ethical dairy systems. The year 2022 saw significant changes at both a global and national level, impacting both the dairy sector and wider society. Increasing uncertainty about the future of the UK's food landscape has reaffirmed our need to consistently touch base and sense check the priorities of the Dairy Project with the farming community. Despite more imminent concerns and ethical tensions around the rising cost of living, we have identified that persistent problems, particularly the physical and mental health of farmers, unfair working conditions (including relationships and contracts with milk buyers), and the need to attract new entrants to the sector remain vital areas of focus for the project going forward.

In 2021, the project held open discussions with farmers to hear their general thoughts and concerns with the dairy sector and wider food and farming. 2022 has seen us continue this dialogue with farmers but the conversation has been more targeted. We have focused on building relationships across the dairy value chain, consolidating and sense checking farmer priorities, and sharpening our project focus to ensure optimum impact in 2023. Moving forward, our focus will be on finding practical solutions and overcoming barriers for fairer and more ethical dairy, with a particular focus on people at the heart of dairy.

We believe that to ensure a fair dairy system for the environment and for animals, we also need to ensure that farmers themselves have a fair deal.

Events

Throughout 2022, we ran various workshops and events to both gather and share farmers' concerns, aspirations, and barriers to change:

- A **Food Policy on Trial event** at the Oxford Real Farming Conference in January, where we put dairy regulations and milk contracts 'in the dock' to discuss the fairness of the rules governing the dairy sector – and whether they are a block to shifting to better dairy systems.
- In March we held a **Business Forum** titled '*How can we enable dairy farmers and the wider sector to transition to more ethical dairy?*', where we shared dairy farmers' insights with our Forum members.
- In April we ran a farmer-led workshop at **Dairy-Tech** where one of the biggest concerns shared by farmers was exclusivity in milk contracts.
- We published our **Farmer Insights report** at the end of the year, which captures insights that were shared with us by farmers in 2021 and 2022.

We attended farmer events over the summer including The Royal Highland Show, Groundswell, and UK Dairy Day where we spoke with dairy organisations and agricultural colleges to raise awareness of the project and sense-check farmers' concerns and priorities. Conversations with key organisations included issues around exclusivity and fairness in dairy contracts, the role of technology in animal welfare, and improving access to finance for 'non-conventional' dairy systems - particularly agroecological dairy.

We have now made connections with anchor organisations for dairy in Scotland, England and Wales. These include RABDF, NFU, NFUS, Scottish Dairy HUB & AHDB. In 2023 we will also look to engage with the sector in Northern Ireland.

Media

2022 saw increased recognition and mentions of the Dairy Project in the media, and publication of our own press releases, such as:

- [Farmers Guardian | Abusive and 'bullying' processor practices must end](#)
- [Dairy Global | UK: calls for better regulations around milk contracts](#)
- [Dairy Global | UK: calls for action on dairy contracts](#)



Cultivating The Food Citizenship Movement

@ukfoodcitizens

At the beginning of the year, we created a unique food citizenship twitter account to amplify and engage with food citizen organisations and initiatives on social media, which now has over 500 followers.

Currently, our industrial food systems are fundamentally flawed. While many farmers and producers are not treated and valued fairly, growing numbers of people can't access enough nutritious, delicious and culturally appropriate food to live well. Many can't access or afford enough food full stop. We know that animal welfare standards and practice are unacceptably low for millions of farmed animals around the world. We also know that food and farming globally and nationally are major contributors to the climate and biodiversity emergencies. This world, where people are treated as consumers, animals are treated as commodities and the earth is treated as an infinite resource, is unsustainable and deeply unjust.

Food citizenship explores the idea that we are not just consumers at the end of the food chain, but participants in the food system as a whole.

Since 2016 we have been working to nourish the food citizen world. Throughout 2022, our work to strengthen the food citizenship movement gained significant momentum, providing the foundation to our work on building Community Food Resilience, strengthening the work of key

partners such as Food for Life, Sustainable Food Places and Sustain, and reaching out to develop new links and networks including work with Social Farms and Gardens NI, Stir to Action and Ulster University.

Convening spaces

Across 2022, we delivered a series of workshops, keynote talks and presentations to explore, amplify and operationalise food citizenship. This was planned with particular interest in places and spaces that may not have encountered the food citizen mindset, whilst also bolstering and supporting organisations already on the road to a food citizen world. We also convened informal spaces for people to pause and reflect on how the principles of food citizenship can help unlock challenges in their own work. In October, we brought together a group of chefs, businesses, charities, writers and innovators, to reimagine the National Food Strategy as the 'Nation's Food Strategy', putting citizens and communities at the heart of what happens next. We felt a tangible energy that things can change, and indeed are changing - in 2023 we want to provide more visibility of the latter, and greater belief in the former.



Photograph by Will Hearle

Shifting the narrative

We noticed increasing shifts in language from ‘consumer’ to ‘food citizen’ across academia, civil society organisations and businesses in 2022. A number of key publications and articles also explicitly mentioned our work on food citizenship.

A few examples...

- Food Learning Forum | Community wealth building through food and farming discussion document
- The Students Union | Fourteen ways you can help create change on sustainable food
- The Community Garden | The Garden at the end of March
- Food Matters | Shaking-up Food – A Food Matters Approach to Building Democracy
- Chatham House Environment & Society Programme | Sustainable agriculture and food systems

Food Ethics Council Impact Report 2022



“Our chats organised as part of the Food Citizenship project are valuable to me. They are a rare opportunity to step back from more practical tasks and reflect. The conversations are interesting. Sometimes I change my mind. Sometimes I hear what is going on, my ideas develop and my practice improves.”

~ Jade, Real Farming Trust

“The Food Citizenship work at the Food Ethics Council has really helped us as an organisation in our process of moving away from a food bank model towards a Food Justice and sustainability model, and to consider the issues at stake concerning access to good food and its impact on the environment.”

~ Louise, The Larder Belfast

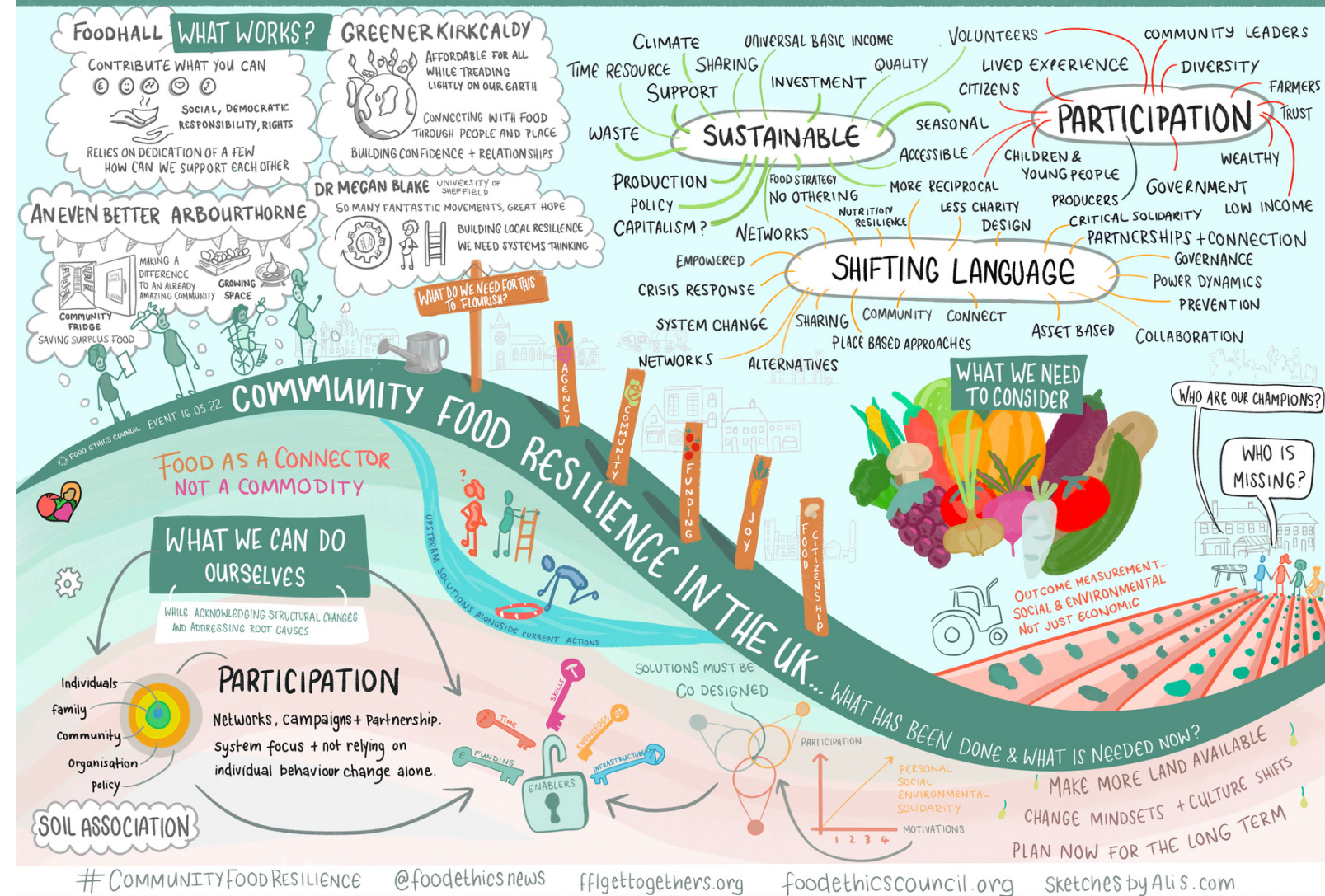


Building Community Food Resilience

Following a two-year programme hosted by the Food Ethics Council to co-develop long-term strategies out of household food insecurity in the UK, we launched our [guide to Community Food Resilience](#) in 2022. This work was all about exploring how we can shift away from current emergency food aid models, and instead orient community food organisations towards approaches that build long term community food resilience. The guide includes insights, tools and case studies which aim to stimulate alternative ways of thinking about food and poverty. The food citizenship framework is foundational to this work, in providing the tools we need to imagine and create a fairer food system for all.

In March, we hosted an online event with 150 participants from across the UK to explore how we can build community food resilience, and empower communities to tackle hunger, hardship and injustice with dignity. We heard insights from those who have been doing it on-the-ground and explored what work is still to be done to make things better now and in the future. We commissioned artist Ali Spaul to do a visual capture of the event (see right). The capture was widely retweeted on social media.

We believe in the power of people and communities – and of building resilience from the ground up.



Following the launch of the work, we continued to engage with and support organisations at the sharp end of the inequality crisis. We spoke at the Cambridge City Council Food Poverty Beyond the Pandemic conference in May. We are a member of the Hunger and Hardship Steering Group which exists to share thinking, knowledge and experience from academics and the UK not-for-profit sector, linking with government and the food industry in order to deliver the actions and recommendations needed to end hunger, hardship and injustice in the UK.

We have also worked with the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission's Beyond the Food Bank collaboration as well as wider advocacy and pragmatic work in relation to community food resilience.

Encouraging

Fairer business practice

Our Business Forum is a trusted, go-to space for changemakers from food and farming businesses to come together and learn from each-other.

By bringing together peers from across the sector and expert speakers in a safe and friendly space, we encourage frank sharing of insights and opinions, which gives executives the confidence to take positive action towards fairer, more ethical food businesses. In 2022, we held four in-person Business Forum dinner meetings and two online meetings, on the following topics:

- **Food charity** and the Boardroom
- Enabling dairy farmers to transition to more **ethical dairy**
- Navigating the **cost-of-living** crunch in ways that are fair for people, animals and planet
- Reacting to the UK Government's White Paper response to **National Food Strategy**
- Reimagine **future food supply chains** to be more resilient
- Examining the **role of carbon farming**

Our Business Forums provide an incredible opportunity to engage businesses with some of the most pressing issues in food and farming, and we use our unique position as convenors and facilitators to share insights gained from our project work with business executives, to enable system-wide change. For example, in March 2022 we shared early farmers' insights from our Dairy Project with Business Forum members and in 2023 we will be running a Business Forum meeting on Food Citizenship.

In 2023 we will work to bring new members into our Business Forum. We will also be hosting our 100th Business Forum in May and will use this opportunity to raise the profile of our Business Forum community.

In the media

Throughout 2022 our Executive Director Dan Crossley continued to write a regular monthly column for **The Grocer**, a leading food sector magazine. This platform provides an excellent opportunity to engage a wider range of business leaders. Dan writes articles that aim to both challenge and inspire food businesses.

Our Business Forum members in 2022:

- AIC Services
- CGW Foodtech Ltd
- Coca-Cola Europacific Partners
- Compass
- Compleat Food Group
- COOK
- Co-operative Food
- Danish Crown UK
- Eastbrook Farm
- Eden Project
- Farming Forum
- FDF (Food and Drink Federation)
- Greencore
- Greggs plc
- Marks and Spencer
- McDonalds UK & Ireland
- Perfectly Fresh
- Prestige Purchasing
- Quorn
- Sainsbury's
- Simon Allison
- Tesco
- UK Flour Millers
- Yeo Valley

Enormously helpful and invigorating discussion last night – loads of food for thought and particularly helpful to hear other perspectives on familiar challenges and opportunities that we spend lots of time discussing here, but rarely with such a breadth of views or time to properly explore the issues and the most appropriate response from industry, NGOs and Government. Venue, format and food was spot on.



Challenging

Policy to be fairer for all

Photograph by Will Hearle

We believe in a fair policy making process – including meaningful engagement of people as food citizens where appropriate. Our work in 2022 continued to promote a fair, inclusive and bold policy making environment.

The Food Ethics Council takes pride in our connections and knowledge of the UK policy landscape and continues to publish practical, timely and well-evidenced responses to key policy announcements.

Both our Executive Director and our Council responded to the Government Food Strategy in June 2022, stating that the strategy is not only piecemeal and weak, but also unethical. This response gained over 5,000 impressions when shared on Twitter.

Groups & forums

In 2022, our Executive Director Dan Crossley was part of Defra's Consumer Stakeholder Group; the FSA Consumer Stakeholder Forum; and the Hunger and Hardship Steering Group. The Food Ethics Council is a member of Eating Better, an observer of Sustain, part of CLEAR alliance and a part of Sustain's Food Learning Forum.

Joint advocacy & consultations

Throughout 2022 we continued to do joint advocacy work as well as respond to numerous open consultations. For example:

- Read our Joint Statement published in June 2022, urging MPs to understand the implications of deregulation and revise the Genetic Technologies (Precision Breeding) Bill to ensure the interests of farmers, businesses and citizens are protected.
- As signatories to the Better Deal for Animals, we celebrated the passing of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022.
- We firmly believe in the importance of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and its independence - read our response to the GCA statutory review consultation 2019-2022.
- We responded in July to the call for evidence from the APPG on Ending the Need for Food Banks inquiry into *Cash or Food? Exploring effective responses to destitution*.

Food Ethics Council Impact Report 2022



Patrick
Mulvany



Patti
Whaley



Joanna
Lewis



Ruth
Layton



Nigel
Dower



Elizabeth
Dowler



Moya
Kneafsey



Chloe
Donovan



Alexandra
Sexton



Dee
Woods



Julian
Baggini



Albert
Tucker



Pete
Ritchie



Jon
Alexander



Ralph
Early

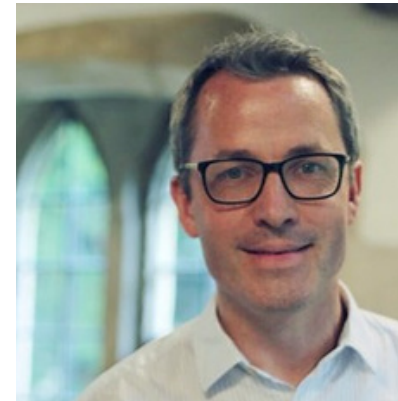
Embedded

In expertise

Our Council Members are all leaders in their relevant fields and appointed as individuals. They bring a broad range of expertise to our work, from academic research and philosophical insight through to practical knowledge of farming, business and policy. Our Board members, elected from the wider Council, oversee the running of the organisation.

In May 2022, Council members and the staff team enjoyed a rare opportunity to gather together in person for an overnight stay in Oxfordshire. This allowed for knowledge sharing, reflection and in-depth discussion to explore and develop strategic objectives for the year ahead. It was a valuable chance to take a deep dive into a number of themes – including lab grown meat, dairy, power dynamics in the food and farming research agenda, building community food resilience and strengthening our work and reach in the devolved nations.

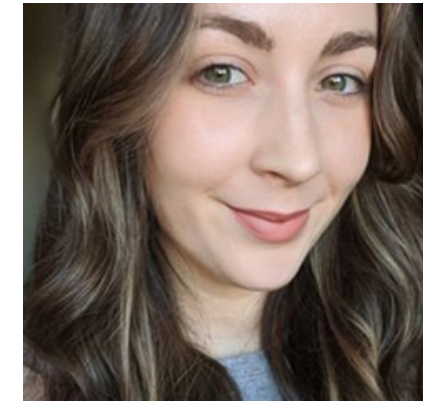
Our staff team



Dan Crossley
Executive Director



Beth Bell
Food Citizenship Lead



Abi Williams
Dairy Project Lead



Tesni Clare
Communications Officer



Clare Stone
Project & Office Coordinator

We would also like to thank the wonderful team members who left the organisations during 2022 - Helene Schulze, Tom Levitt and Maria Barr.

Looking Ahead to 2023

2023 will be another critical year for food and farming, and we continue to work to facilitate transformative change for people, animals and the planet.

Adjacent are just a few of the critical questions and focus areas we will be exploring in 2023. 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 resources, 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.



How can we keep the pressure on and ensure that progress towards a more ethical, sustainable food system is not lost or degraded in the midst of the crises?



Working with organisations delivering emergency food aid, we will seek to answer the question ‘how can food citizenship support the transition to more progressive models of support for people experiencing hunger?’ while continuing to nourish a future where food banks are no longer needed.



How can businesses and brands respond to the growing movement of people and organisations who want to shape food systems for the better, rather than passively accepting that we are simply consumers at the end of a supply chain?



How can we enable dairy farmers to collaborate and co-design ways to 'get off the dairy treadmill' and transition to more ethical dairy? How can we build relationships and dialogue between farmers and milk buyers to support this transition?



How can we elevate under-represented voices and experiences in the food and farming sector, to ensure we are tackling a wide range of diverse issues?

