

# CVVUK NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to the Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK newsletter, Autumn 2021

**Website:** <http://www.christian-vegetariansvegans.org.uk/>

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. As always we would be pleased to receive any of the following from our supporters for future newsletters:

- interesting (short) articles;
- news of any local activities you have been involved in to promote the values of CVVUK;
- information about events that might interest other CVVUK supporters; and
- miscellaneous items such as book reviews, recipes and information about useful resources

If you have anything that you would like to contribute to the next newsletter please e-mail it to us at [sampsons@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:sampsons@dsl.pipex.com) by the end of February 2022.

**Miriam and Philip Sampson**

*Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter comes from a variety of sources and reasonable care has been taken to convey it accurately. Please note that opinions or statements may not reflect the views held by all members of CVAUK, and we accept no responsibility for any errors which may have occurred. Content is produced for information only and is not advice.*

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## Food at COP26

As I write, the COP26 climate change conference is drawing to a close. Delegates from governments across the world, agriculture, industry and numerous NGOs and civil society groups have gathered in Glasgow for two weeks to try to hammer out agreements that will keep global warming below 2°, with a goal of limiting it to 1.5°.

In the light of the recent IPCC report drawing attention to the contribution that methane is making to climate change and the rapid gains that could be made by drastically reducing emissions of this greenhouse gas which mainly comes from animal agriculture, we might have expected that agriculture would have been a major topic for discussion and that the food available at COP26 would have been almost entirely plant-based. Sadly, neither of these has been the case.

Details of all the food available at the COP26 venue are available here, and everything has been rated for its carbon emissions: <https://www.arecipeforchange.co.uk/menus>

The website reveals that 42% of the dishes available are plant-based, which is a step in the right direction, but 30% include meat and 11% fish. If we add those two categories together that almost equates to the plant-based dishes! 17% of meals include eggs and/or dairy, so in all nearly 60% of the dishes were not plant-based.

The website states that an average meal in the UK has a carbon footprint of 1.7 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e. According to the WWF, we need to get this number down below 0.5 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e to reach the goals defined in the Paris Agreement.

However there are dishes on the COP26 menu that have far higher carbon emissions associated with them. The highest is a beef burger with cheese which comes out at 3.4kgCO<sub>2</sub>e. This contrasts with a plant-based burger which only amounts to 0.2kgCO<sub>2</sub>e, less than 1% of the emissions associated with the beef burger!

Surely the best way to achieve the goal of reducing climate emissions associated with our food is to adopt a wholly plant-based diet. COP26 could have set an excellent example, but it has entirely failed to do so.

## The CO<sub>2</sub> crisis - time to rethink our meat consumption

In early October the UK faced a crisis with a shortfall in supplies of carbon dioxide used in animal slaughter.

Chris Sherwood, Chief Executive of the RSPCA, wrote about the consequences of this situation: *“Last week saw the UK narrowly avert a catastrophic welfare crisis as shortages of CO<sub>2</sub> could have left farmers facing horrific mass culls of their animals. We could have seen tens of thousands of pigs shot on farm, without the necessary resources to ensure welfare. As well as hundreds of thousands of chickens left to die excruciating deaths by shutting off shed ventilation - the only way to carry out the culling of these animals on such a scale without access to gases.*

*“A stark wake-up call about unsustainable farming.”*

This is an example of how easily intensive farming can descend into chaos because of the huge number of animals, the increasingly intensive methods of farming and slaughter and intense genetic selection. All this leaves no safety net for welfare.

For example chicken farming now accounts for over 50% of meat consumption, 95% of which are genetically engineered and reared in intensive indoor units, which are extremely vulnerable to emergencies such as CO<sub>2</sub> shortage. Their rapid growth means that they already suffer from poor health, so the slightest delay in going to slaughter will see the birds' welfare deteriorate rapidly.



Activists parade with a giant inflatable cow to highlight the problem of methane emissions at a Cop26 march in Glasgow on Nov 6th. Photograph: Climate Healers



In the UK alone there is 3.6 million tonnes of on-farm food waste every year. Morally wrong in every respect. Meat production is fuelling climate change and biodiversity is destroyed to grow feed. Plus the overuse of antibiotics in the farming industry poses a potentially deadly risk to animal and human health.

As we - and many others- have said before, intensive farming practices could lead to more, and potentially more dangerous, pandemics. And the CO2 crisis shows we are relying on a farming situation with no margin for error at all - the system already cannot to ensure even moderately good welfare.

Chris Sherwood ends: *“It’s time to stand up for animal welfare and the planet. Agricultural impacts on climate change do not even appear on the UK’s COP26 presidency agenda. Meat has become cheap and disposable and the welfare of the sentient animals at the heart of the ‘machine’ is increasingly absent. Taking action on this would be a real leadership opportunity for the UK, allowing us to focus on fewer animals raised to world-leading welfare standards.”*

And now we hear that the main meat-producing countries like Argentina and Brazil are lobbying behind the scenes to water down the already inadequate suggestions of other countries. Find out more about the presence of the meat lobby in Brazil’s national delegation at COP26 here:

<https://www.desmog.com/2021/11/03/brazil-climate-delegation-meat-giants-linked-to-deforestation/>

## Scrap Factory Farming Campaign

Do you know if there are factory farms already operating or being proposed near where you live? A new campaign group, **Scrap Factory Farming** has set up a website which will tell you and will support you in making objections to new planning proposals for factory farming facilities.

Their website states: *‘The timing could never be better – we have left the EU and the laws are now in the hands of the UK. The agriculture bill has been passed and now we have the opportunity to address the omissions and failings of the new laws to create a safer world whilst increasing animal welfare conditions (or non-existent ones). We cannot afford to miss this opportunity – it is time to act!*

The group aims to:

- Prevent disease in people
- Protect the planet for our children
- End the suffering of intelligent, feeling animals

They have an impressive legal team, headed by Michael Mansfield QC, who is also a patron of *Viva!*.

Find out more on their website: <http://www.scrapfactoryfarming.org/planning-objections/>

## Awards for animal advocates



Catholic Concern for Animals has established two awards to honour exceptional individuals who have made outstanding contributions towards advancing animals' welfare and status in human society. This year the award ceremony took place on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

The **St Francis Award** went to Juliet Gellatley, founder and director of the UK's leading vegan campaigning charity *Viva!*. Juliet went vegan in her twenties (having been vegetarian since her early teens). After spending eight years campaigning for, and then directing, the Vegetarian Society, she left to form her own charity, *Viva!*, determined to show the world the brutal reality of factory farming.

Since then, Juliet has conducted countless undercover investigations into factory farms, gaining extensive media coverage and numerous accolades. Her passion for campaigning still burns strong and she has recently worked on the award-winning documentary *Hogwood: A Modern Horror Story*, which is available to watch on Amazon Prime and is launching on Netflix next spring.

The **St Hubert Award** recognises individuals who have given up activities that exploit animals to become examples of compassionate living. This year the award went to Randal Plunkett, an award-winning Irish film director and producer from Ireland. He has founded the Dunsany Nature Reserve, Ireland's first rewilding project which takes a vegan approach to rewilding.

## Your favourite animal- friendly saint

In our last newsletter we asked readers to tell us about their favourite animal- friendly saint. Marian Hussenbux sent us this:

*My favourite animal-friendly saint is **Melangell**. During the late 6th. century, Melangell, the daughter of an Irish king, came to Pennant in the Berwyn mountains to live as a hermit.*

*During a hunt led by the prince of Powys, a hare took refuge under Melangell's cloak and the hunt was mysteriously brought to a halt. Struck by Melangell's compassion, the prince gave her land for a sanctuary where no animal would be hunted again and where she founded a community of women. Pennant Melangell became a place of pilgrimage.*

*Melangell is still considered patron saint of hares, small animals and the natural environment, and the expression 'Duw a Melangell a'th gadwo' - 'God and Melangell keepeth thee' - is offered to hunted animals. Her feast day is celebrated on May 27.*



Do other readers have a favourite animal-friendly saint? Please let us know about them.

## When vegetarians and vegans need residential care

The UK has only two exclusively vegetarian care homes, both serving the Gujrati community. This means that when requiring care, many of those who are vegan or vegetarian for religious or philosophical reasons move to establishments serving meat. We need to make sure their beliefs are protected and that their diets are catered for.

That's why **Vegetarian for Life (VfL)**, a charity that supports older vegans and vegetarians, has launched their self-advocacy pack to mark National Older Vegetarians and Vegans Day in October and National Vegan Month in November.



The pack helps to explain the laws protecting those with special dietary needs; sources of support if your rights aren't being recognised; and some simple yet critical actions you can take today to protect your future dignity and rights. These include making a statement of your wishes and care preferences, which future carers should honour.

The importance of maintaining dietary beliefs cannot be overstated. Members of the Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Seventh Day Adventist communities all follow meat-restricted, vegetarian, or completely plant-based diets. Food is intimately linked to spiritual and cultural practices, a central aspect of religious identities that people have observed throughout their lives.

VfL wants to support people to protect their religious and philosophical beliefs in care settings. Their Chief Executive, Amanda Woodvine said, *“Needing care can be a worrying experience. Among the challenges may be a sense of losing control over our diet. With less independence, we may be unable to shop, cook and ensure that our values and beliefs are being met. If we are experiencing capacity issues, or cognitive losses, we may be unable to explain our dietary beliefs or have periods where we cannot remember our values. In these circumstances, we need to know our rights and how to get our voices heard.”*

Ms Woodvine added, *“We wanted to create something that could provide peace of mind for people receiving care, and really help them, their loved ones, and care providers. We hope that the Self-Advocacy Pack can bring everyone together to ensure that you get the food that you are legally, and ethically, entitled to.”*

Email [info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk](mailto:info@vegetarianforlife.org.uk) or contact VfL on 0161 257 0887 to pre-order a self-advocacy pack. Hard copies will cost just £2.75 including postage.

## Top tips to protect wildlife from litter

One of our readers, A. Wills, has drawn our attention to the hazards that litter poses for wildlife. Over the past year we have seen more litter, with disposable facemasks in particular adding to the litter problem. There is a risk that animals will get tangled up in such items.

The RSPCA recommends:

- *Recycle & reuse as much as possible - & put everything else in the bin;*
- **Cut the loop handles of plastic carrier bags** before recycling to prevent animals being tangled;
- **Cut plastic can holders & elastic bands** so animals can't get caught up;
- *Cut up balloons before putting them in the bin;*
- **Cut up disposable gloves & snip the straps on face masks** to prevent animals getting tangled;
- *Clean & empty containers after use & pinch cans shut or cut containers in half before recycling.*



For more info visit [our litter advice page](#).

## Vegetarians and vegans can help reduce food waste

Our current food system is very wasteful and food waste makes an enormous contribution to carbon emissions. In the UK alone, over 3 million tonnes of fruit & veg are wasted before they even leave the farm. If it doesn't meet the appearance required by supermarkets, or is surplus to what they require it is liable to go to waste.

When we waste food, we also waste all the energy and water it takes to grow, harvest, transport, and package it. And if food goes to the landfill and rots, it produces **methane**—a greenhouse gas even more potent than carbon dioxide. It is also soul destroying for the growers to feel that all their work to grow nutritious fruit and veg is going to waste.



This is where **Oddbox** comes in:

<https://www.oddbox.co.uk/how-it-works>

This is a veg box scheme with a difference. They deliver boxes of veg, or fruit and veg, all of which would otherwise have gone to waste. Some of it may be oddly shaped or a bit smaller or larger than normal. Other produce would just have been surplus to requirements and therefore destined for landfill.

Your editors have just signed up and we took delivery of our first veg box today. We have received potatoes, red onions, chestnut mushrooms, tomatoes, beetroot and salad leaves, and we have already enjoyed some of the tasty produce.

Enter your postcode on their website and you will find out if they deliver to your area. There are different size boxes available, from small veg boxes to suit single people or couples to large fruit and veg boxes ideal for large families. Deliveries can be weekly or fortnightly and if there are

certain types of produce you can't eat or don't like you can opt out of those and receive substitutes.

Oddbox calculate that currently their subscribers are rescuing over 200,000 kg of fruit and veg a week, saving over 23 million litres of water and avoiding over 250,000 kg of CO2e emissions!

## Products

### Vegan alternatives to butter

Over the past year a number of new dairy-free spreads have appeared on supermarket shelves and they have a much more "buttery" texture and taste than others we have tried.

**Violife** has produced a light and creamy vegan spread and also *Vioblock* a dairy-free slightly salted alternative to butter. These are made from coconut oil, rapeseed oil and sunflower oil.

**Naturli's** organic vegan spread contains rapeseed and coconut oil and tastes very buttery. It melts beautifully on toast. However it also melts easily in warm weather so don't leave it out of the fridge very long!

**Flora** has produced a range of vegan alternatives to butter, including a slightly salted spreadable option, and two 'butter' blocks - one slightly salted and one unsalted. This is the first unsalted vegan butter alternative we have come across, and it should prove popular with bakers. Unfortunately the two blocks both contain some palm oil.

We have found all these products in our local supermarket. They can also be ordered from various suppliers online.

### 'Pimp my Salad

John Ryder asks: *Have you tried the "Pimp My Salad" range?*

*With natural healthy ingredients, their Hemp "Parmesan" is delicious, and high on Omega 3 & 6, plus contains over 26% protein. And their "bacon" bits are delicious, soya-free and the only type I have ever tried that don't repeat on you!* <https://pimpmysaladonline.com/>

## Recipe - Root vegetable casserole with herb dumplings

As the nights draw in our thoughts turn to comfort food and there is nothing more warming and sustaining than a casserole with dumplings.

This root vegetable casserole is flavoured with red pesto - various dairy-free pestos are now widely available - and contains dumplings made with vegetable suet. It has become a winter favourite in our house! The recipe is taken from the Waitrose website: [Waitrose recipes](#)



Preparation time:15 minutes . Cooking time:40 - 45 minutes. Serves: 4

## Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil  
2 leeks, thickly sliced  
2 cloves garlic, finely sliced  
2 Parsnips, cut into chunks  
4 Carrots, cut into chunks  
2 sprigs fresh rosemary (or 1 tsp dried)  
75g Waitrose Love Life Quick Cook Italian 5 Grains (or just use pearl barley and/or quinoa)  
400g can Chopped Tomatoes  
400ml vegetable stock, hot  
2 tbsp red pesto

### For the dumplings:

100g self-raising flour, plus extra for rolling  
50g vegetable suet  
2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. Heat the oil in a large flameproof, ovenproof casserole dish. Cook the leeks and garlic for 2 minutes then add the parsnips, carrots and rosemary and cook for a further 3 minutes.
2. Stir in the grains, tomatoes, stock and pesto, then bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, stir together the flour, suet, parsley, a pinch of salt and 4–5 tbsp cold water to form a soft dough. With floured hands, roll into 8 balls and place on top of the casserole. Cover then transfer to the oven and bake for 20–25 minutes until the dumplings are puffed and the vegetables are tender.

## And finally.....

### A Holy Kind Of Proximity - By Jordan Humphrey

*When I was a child, growing up in the suburbs of North Carolina, my mother got the wild idea that she would surprise my uncle with a Christmas gift of two potbellied pigs. My uncle was the type of man you might call eclectic. He lived at the end of a long gravel road, in a cabin he'd built with his own two hands; he had a menagerie of animals that roamed about his property: a flock of guinea hens, a litter of cats, and a small pack of mutts.*

*In the weeks leading up to Christmas, my siblings and I looked after the young pigs, chasing them around our basement and taking them on leashed walks around our neighborhood. They were about the size of cats, all cute and cuddly, and we could not believe they would one day grow to weigh as much as 200 lbs (or 90 kgs).*

*As Christmas drew closer, my siblings and I had a difficult time preparing to say goodbye to our new friends. We had grown to love how their little hooves slid across the floor and how their drooping tummies jiggled back and forth. We held our breath when, on Christmas morning, my uncle sat on a bar stool, blindfolded, while my mother brought in the pigs, one in each arm, eyes wide and tails wagging.*

*To my mother's surprise, my uncle declined the pigs and we happily brought them back home. Soon after, during a thunderstorm, a neighborhood dog attacked and killed both of them. As an eight-year-old kid, I was devastated. At church when I asked the pastor if animals went to heaven, I wasn't taken seriously. At home when I stopped eating meat, my parents didn't know what to do. I was in the second grade and knew nothing of vegetarianism. I knew only that I could not eat something as loving, as curious, and as cute as Moonlight and Shadow.*

*Any animal lover will tell you this—there is something about getting to know another living being that inextricably links us to their well-being. And this link allows us to see the animal not as a nameless thing but as a unique being, created by God, capable of both joy and suffering.*

*Before welcoming pigs into our home, I did not know this truth. I knew the taste of bacon. I knew pigs lived on farms, but I knew them only from a distance. Then, sharing a home with Moonlight and Shadow changed me, and I could no longer see pigs as mere things.*

*If this is true, then perhaps it is distance that allows the atrocities of industrial agriculture and factory farming. Perhaps it is only through concealed slaughterhouses and plastic-wrapped meats, through the renaming and repackaging of animal bodies, that industries can farm other species with little to no concern for their quality of life. And perhaps these injustices result less from a lack of concern for animal welfare and more from the emotional protection offered by distance.*

*The opposite of distance is proximity. While distance distorts reality, proximity confronts it. While distance pretends suffering does not exist, proximity accepts the truth of the sufferer. Moreover, as Christians, we might find comfort in a God, who is not distant but is intimately connected to Creation. A God who has counted the hairs on our heads, who cares for every sparrow that falls. A God who showed up, right smack-dab in the middle of a manger, who put on creaturely flesh and came to live among us creatures. Not a God out there, but a God who is here — a God who's with us.*



*To live a flourishing life, to be transformed by our proximate God, we must become proximate to Creation. All of it — the pain and the pleasure, the suffering and the joy. Jeanette Armstrong, an Environmental Ethics scholar and a keeper of traditional knowledge of the Okanagan Nation, said recently that “society changes when transformative experiences are made available.”<sup>1</sup> Not through guilt-tripping, not through arguing, not through scientific data – but through transformative experiences, which can only happen in proximity.*

This is the first part of a blog on the Creaturekind website, posted on October 12, 2021. You can find the rest of that blogpost here: <https://www.becreaturekind.org/blog-posts/2021/10/12/a-holy-kind-of-proximity>

(The illustration above is a detail from **Adoration of the Magi**, 1423, by Gentile da Fabriano (Uffizi Gallery) )