KENTISH TOWN VEGBOX

Fresh organic vegetables (and fruit)…
…direct from the farm…
…to Kentish Town

www.vegbox.org.uk
9 July 2016

2015 Performance Report for the 2016 AGM

Welcome

Welcome to the Kentish Town Vegbox 2015 Performance Report. This is a draft document for discussion at the 2016 Vegbox AGM on 9 July 2016. A final report will be made available to all members in due course.

This report contains performance information from a mix of different sources:

1. Historical survey data (our latest member survey was carried out in summer 2015, so there is nothing new yet but we do revisit some insight from last year)

2. Operational data to the end June 2016, including our fantastic total membership numbers – we are now **174** members and going strong!

3. Financial data for calendar year 2015, which is unaudited at present

We welcome feedback and discussion as we present this report.

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The Vegbox Board has held three surveys of members so far, providing really valuable feedback

Vegbox member survey number	Timing	Members at time of survey	Respondents to survey	Response rate	% responding positively to the question "Is Vegbox good value for money?"	% saying "About right" when asked about the quantity of veg
1st	Winter 2012	42	17	40%	100% (33% of them emphatically)	100%
2nd	Winter 2013	88	37	43%	100% (16% of them emphatically)	100%
3rd	Summer 2015	127	46	36%	100% (16% of them emphatically)	91%
4th (planned)	**Autumn 2016**	**178**	**?**	**?**	97% (13% of them emphatically)	**?**

When surveyed, members consistently give praise for Vegbox and give a variety of reasons for their enjoyment

Thematic analysis of members' responses to "How have you found being a member?" from the 2015 survey:

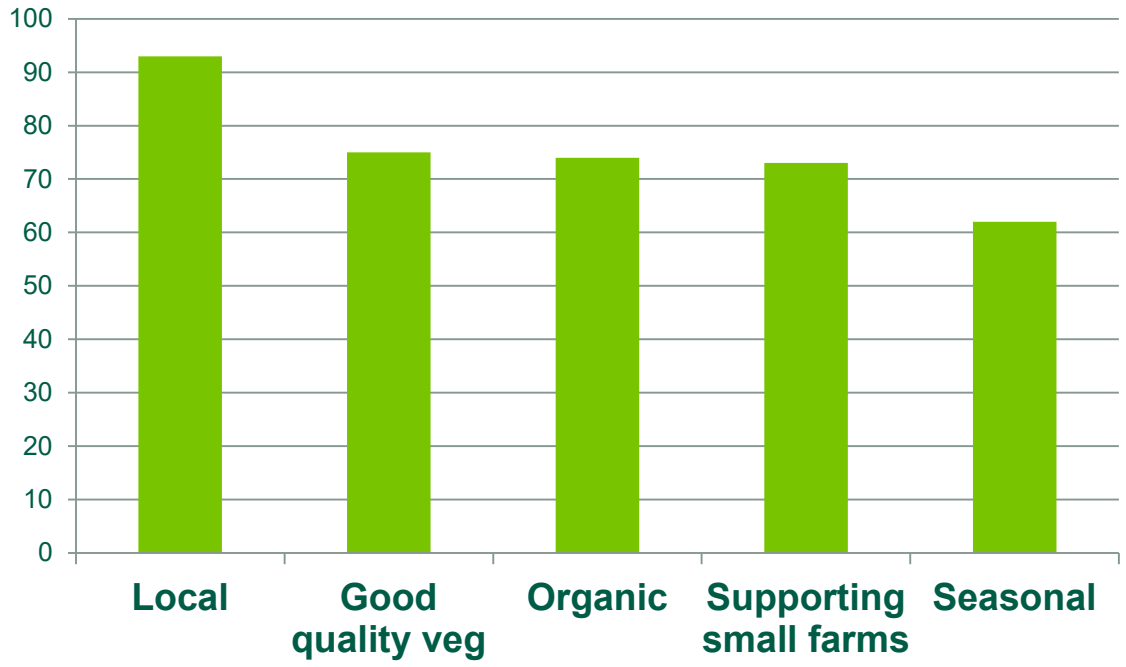
Other constructive comments:

"I'd like to meet more of the members… I'd be keen for there to be events to bring us together"

"We would like to see the recipes posted on the Vegbox website to make it easier to buy ingredients and refer back to"

Vegbox's core values are supported by its members; seasonality is less important for some

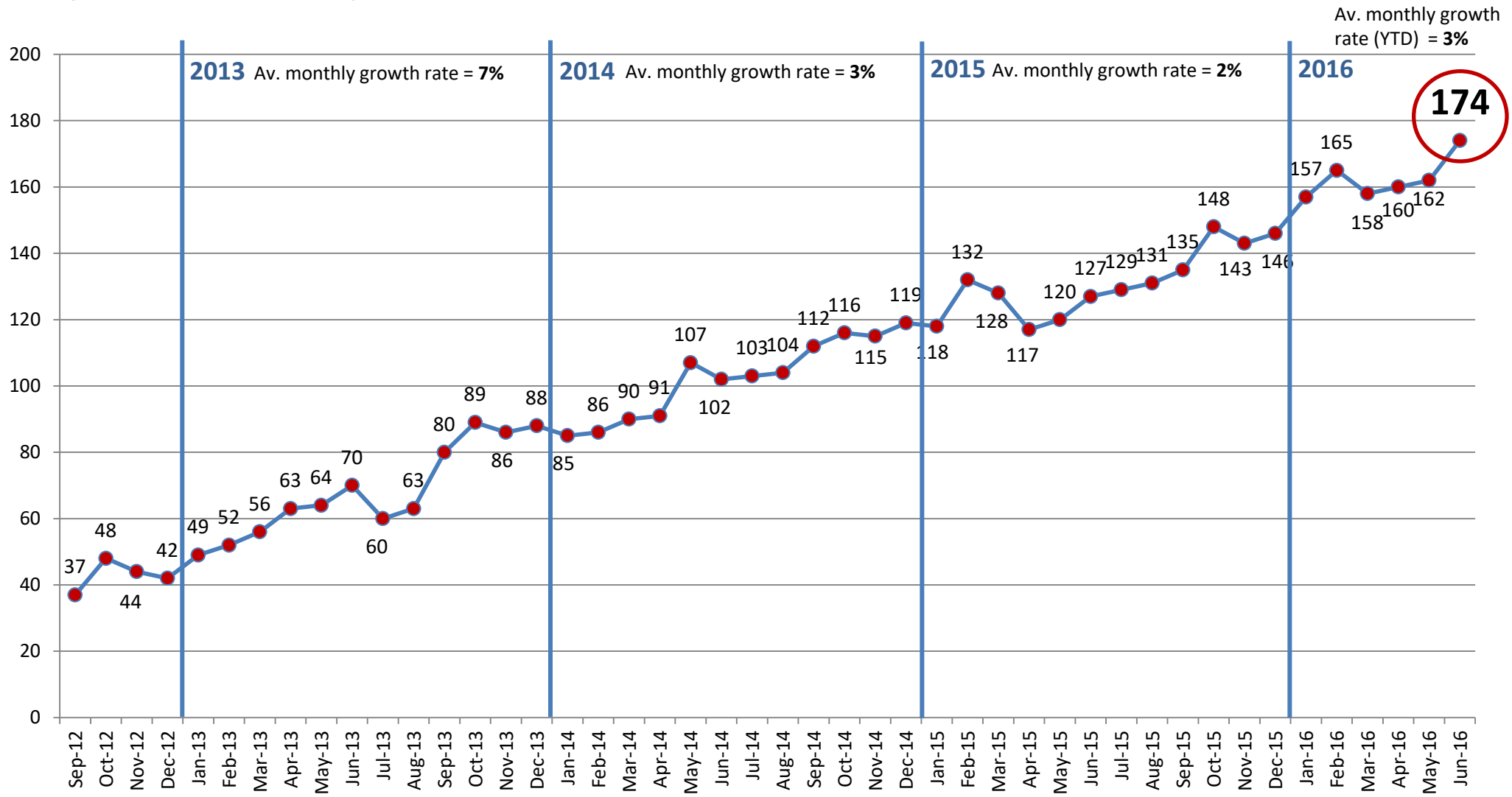
Extent to which members support Vegbox's 5 core values (the founding principles), 2015



Note: Members were asked to rank these 5 values in order of preference, 5 points were awarded for 1st place answers, 3 points for 2nd place answers and 1 point for 3rd place answers.

As of the end of June 2016, Vegbox had 174 members

Vegbox total members by month, Sept 2012 – June 2016



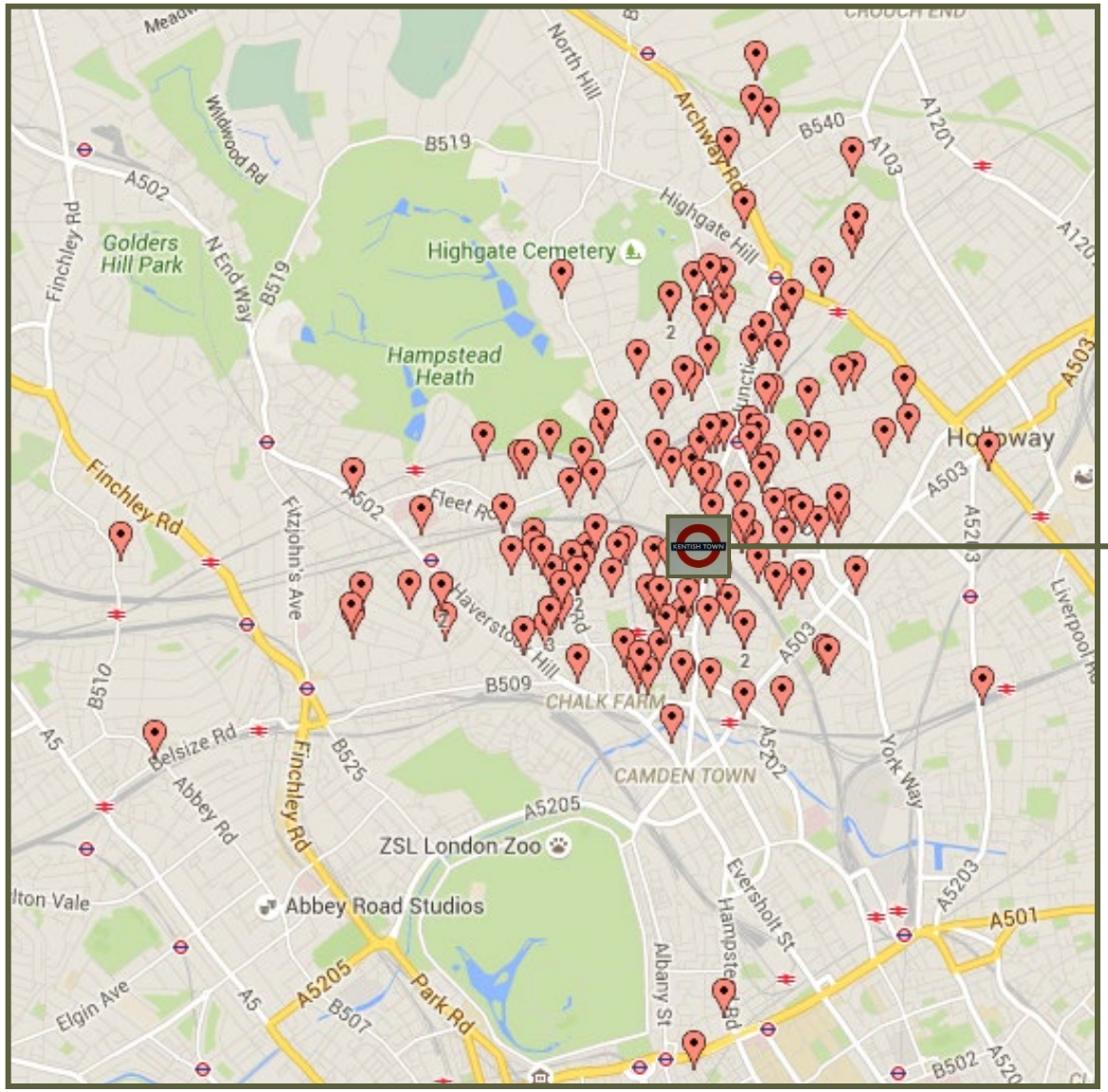
Average monthly growth rate since the birth of Vegbox = **4%** per month

Around half of all members (48%) take a Standard sized bag; take-up of the Fruit supplement across the board is 56%

Vegbox member profile, by bag type, including bag type costs, June 2016

Bag type	Current cost (weekly)*	Number	%	%	
Family	£ 11.50	10	6%		All Family
Family Fruit	£ 14.00	18	10%	16%	
Standard	£ 7.25	40	23%		All Standard
Standard Fruit	£ 9.75	43	25%	48%	
Small	£ 5.50	26	15%		All Small
Small Fruit	£ 8.00	37	21%	36%	
Total		**174**	**100%**	**100%**	
	*Fruit supplement is a flat-rate additional cost of £2.50 per week				

Vegbox members are spread across our operating area



Note (1): This map is created from member postcodes provided to us – they may not necessarily represent where people live.
Note (2): Some postcodes could not be mapped by the mapping software

Vegbox has 10 pick-up points, the most popular of them all is the ‘base camp’ at The Thanet Centre, Herbert Street, NW5, which has the benefit of 24 hour availability

Ref	Pick-up point	Number	%	Window for collection
1	**The Thanet**	**27**	**16%**	**Weds-Fri: 2pm onwards (24 hours/day)**
2	The Grafton	26	15%	Weds: 4pm-9pm, Thu: 12pm-9pm
3	Ruby Violet	25	14%	Weds: 4pm-10pm, Thu: 11am-10pm (a)
4	Abbey Tavern	24	14%	Weds: 4pm-9pm, Thu-Fri: 12pm-9pm
5	Tufnell Park Tavern	18	10%	Weds: 4pm-9pm, Thu: 12pm-9pm
6	The Star	15	9%	Weds: 4pm-9pm, Thu: 12pm-9pm
7	Gardens Guesthouse	12	7%	Weds: 5:30pm-9pm, Thu: 12pm-9pm
8	Boma Garden Centre	10	6%	Weds: 3.30pm-6pm, Thu: 9am-6pm (b)
9	Kentish Town Health Centre	9	5%	Weds: 4pm-8.30pm, Thu: 8.30am-6.30pm
10	The Gipsy Queen	8	5%	Weds: 4pm-9pm, Thu: 12pm-9pm
	Total	**174**	**100%**	

Breakdown by type of pick-up point	%
Pubs	52%
Other commercial businesses	27%
Community venues	21%

(a) Ruby Violet (ice cream shop) closes during the whole of January; members take a break or change to another pick up point

(b) Boma Garden Centre closes one hour earlier (5pm) between November and February

Assessing the 10 Vegbox pick-up points, most of them are running well from a member perspective

Members' views on pick-up arrangements from 2015 survey (% of members picking up in June 2016 in brackets)

The Thanet Centre (16%)

"Really good now and much better now than in the metal box"

"They're great, very easy"

1

The Grafton (15%)

"I'm wondering if the bags could be stored somewhere cooler? Sometimes the bag comes out quite warm from the cellar."

"All OK"

2

Ruby Violet (14%)

"The arrangements are good - very friendly and flexible opening times"

"The only issue is the heat from the freezers and how that affects the veg in the summer"

3

Abbey Tavern (14%)

"It's good and appropriate to pick up later in the evening"

"All great with the Abbey Tavern, flexible and nice people"

4

Tufnell Park Tavern (10%)

"Perfect"

5

The Star, Dartmouth Park (9%)

"Super-convenient"

"Very good"

6

Gardens Guesthouse (7%)

"Very good for me"

"Deepa is great"

7

Boma Garden Centre (6%)

"Absolutely fine"

"They are great"

8

Kentish Town Health Centre (5%)

"Yes, all fine"

9

The Gipsy Queen (5%)

[Became a pick-up point in second half of 2015]

10

Note: Vegbox is actively seeking additional pick-up points in South End Green and Highgate Road

Vegbox's top 2 suppliers are the reliable Hughes Organics and Ripple Farm Organics

Supplier name	Spend 2015 (£)	Spend 2015 %	Distance	Counties	Commonly ordered produce
Hughes Organics	8,256	26%	100 and 150 miles	Norfolk and Lincolnshire	Carrots, mushrooms, root veg
Ripple Farm Organics	7,989	25%	70 miles	Kent	Onions, potatoes, leeks, spinach, chard
Chegworth Valley	5,175	16%	50 miles	Kent	Fruit
Calabaza Growers	4,911	15%	15 miles	London (Borough of Sutton)	Salad leaves
Wholegood	2,891	9%	Various	England	Various
Sarah Green's Organics	1,680	5%	65 miles	Essex	Cauliflower, broad beans, kale
Langridge Organics	832	3%	Various	England	Various
Urban Growth	83	0.3%	2 miles	London (Borough of Camden)	Spring onions, kale, lettuce
Total	**31,816**	**100%**			

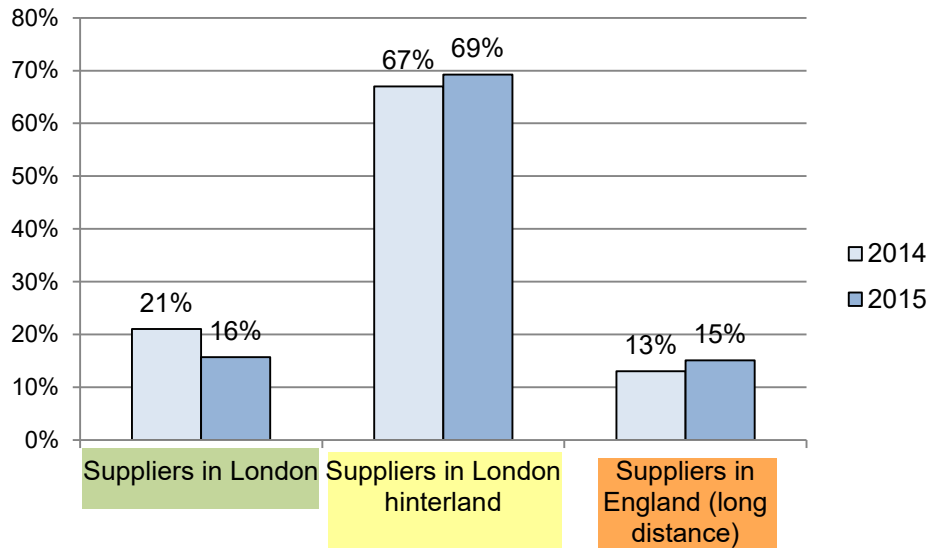
Note: Suppliers in red text are wholesalers – 2015's spend on wholesalers therefore represented 12% of the total, down from 17% in 2014. We seek to keep the spend on wholesalers low so that more money goes direct to farmers.

Vegbox's 'top 4' farms

1. Hughes Organics	2. Ripple Farm Organics	3. Chegworth Valley	4. Calabaza Growers
Grahame Hughes has been growing organically since 1982, and coordinates organic farming across a wide area. He has his own farm at Bunwell, Norfolk. He sources other veg from partner farms in Norfolk and Lincolnshire.	Martin Mackay from Ripple Farm runs a small Soil Association certified organic farm in the Stour Valley, Kent. Their light, chalky soils produce vegetables of great taste and quality.	Chegworth Valley is a family owned and run fruit farm situated in the heart of the Kent countryside, near the village of Harrietsham. It was established by the Deme family in 1983 and provides Vegbox with delicious organic fruit!	Joel Brook runs Calabaza Growers from a small farm near Sutton in south London. He focusses on high-value intensive crops such as organic salad leaves and squash.

Vegbox tracks the food miles it accumulates; most of the supplies (69% by value in 2015) travel in the 25-100 miles bracket

		Suppliers in London		Suppliers in London hinterland				Suppliers in England (long distance)			
		< 2 miles	**15 miles**	**25 - 50 miles**	**65 miles**	**70 miles**	**100 miles**	**150 miles**	**200 miles**	**250 miles**	**400 miles**
2014 Total value = £24,960	Value (£)	78	5,086	4,508	1,803	6,086	4,158	2,220	84	860	-
	%	21%		67%				13%			
2015 Total value = £31,816	Value (£)	83	4,911	6,605	1,770	8,128	5,528	3,646	-	1,145	-
	%	16%		69%				15%			

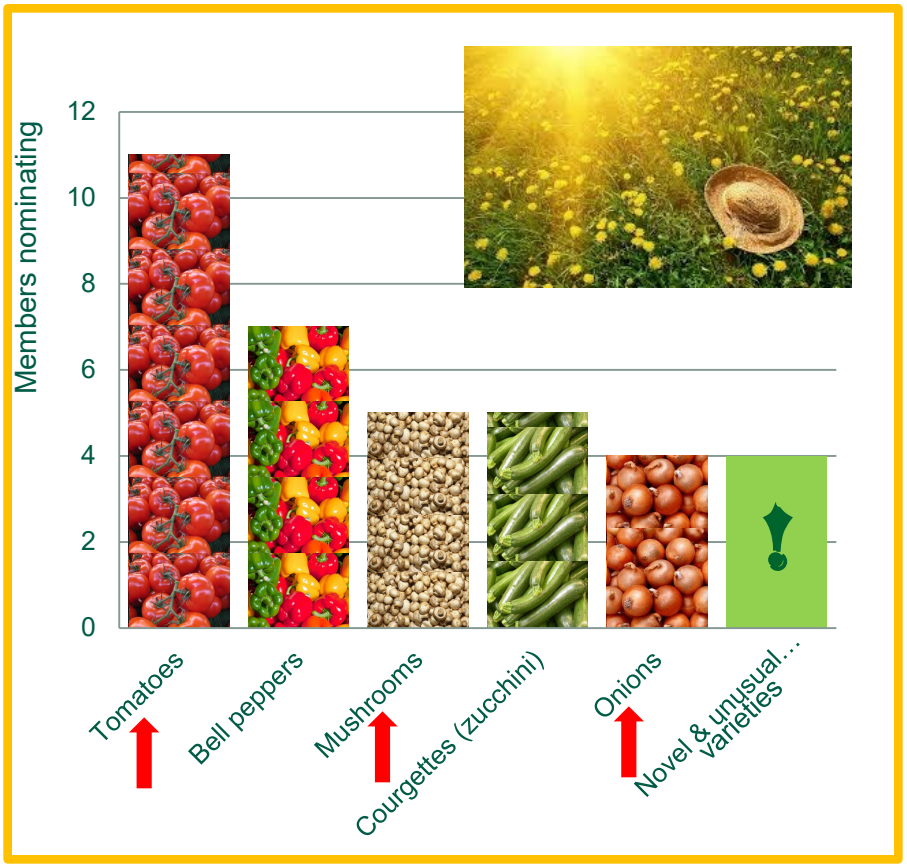


Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

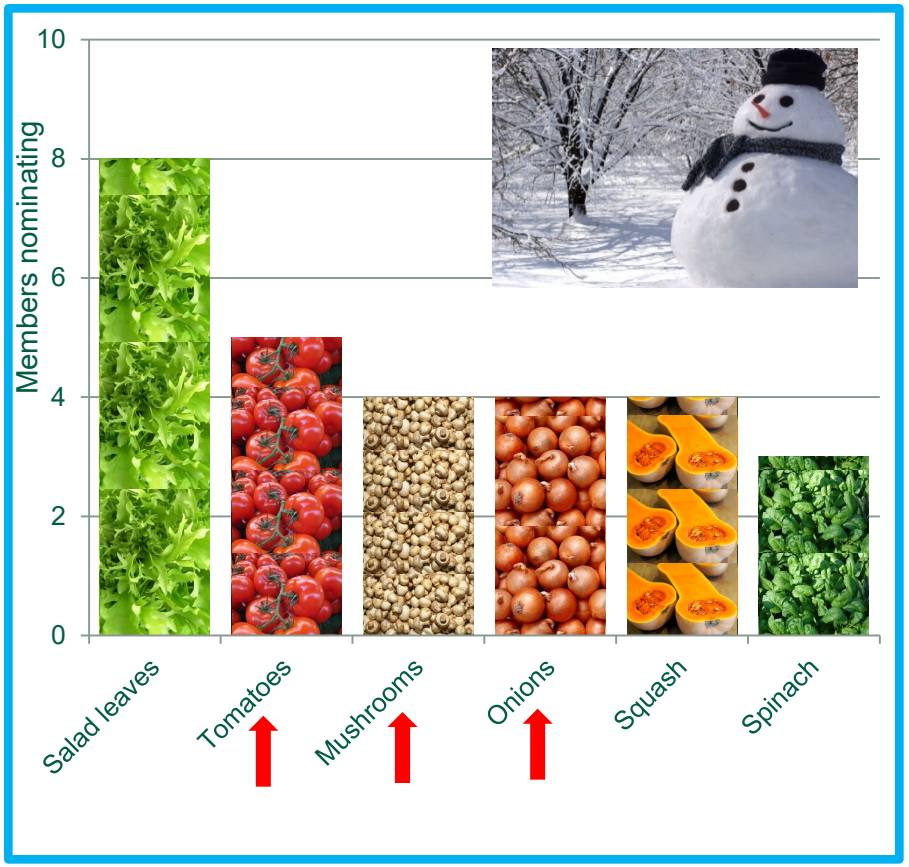
Members of Vegbox express preferences for certain vegetables

Vegbox members' top 6 vegetables they would like to see more of in their bags (summer 2015 compared to winter 2013):

Summer 2015:



Winter 2013:



Note: Tomatoes, mushrooms and onions seem to be popular across the seasons, but it is worth noting that they may not be in season, even when highly desired.

Operational policies guide how Vegbox functions on its packing days (Wednesdays)

Packaging

- Minimise packaging
- Reuse packaging as much as possible
- Plastic bags are unfortunately needed for loose, leafy greens for freshness
- Bags are sometimes used to avoid dirtying other items in the bag

Staff and volunteers

- We enjoy engaging our members with volunteering for Vegbox
- Approximately half the packing workers are volunteers
- Regular packing volunteers receive a 20% discount on their Vegbox bag
- All paid staff receive £12 per hour, regardless of position

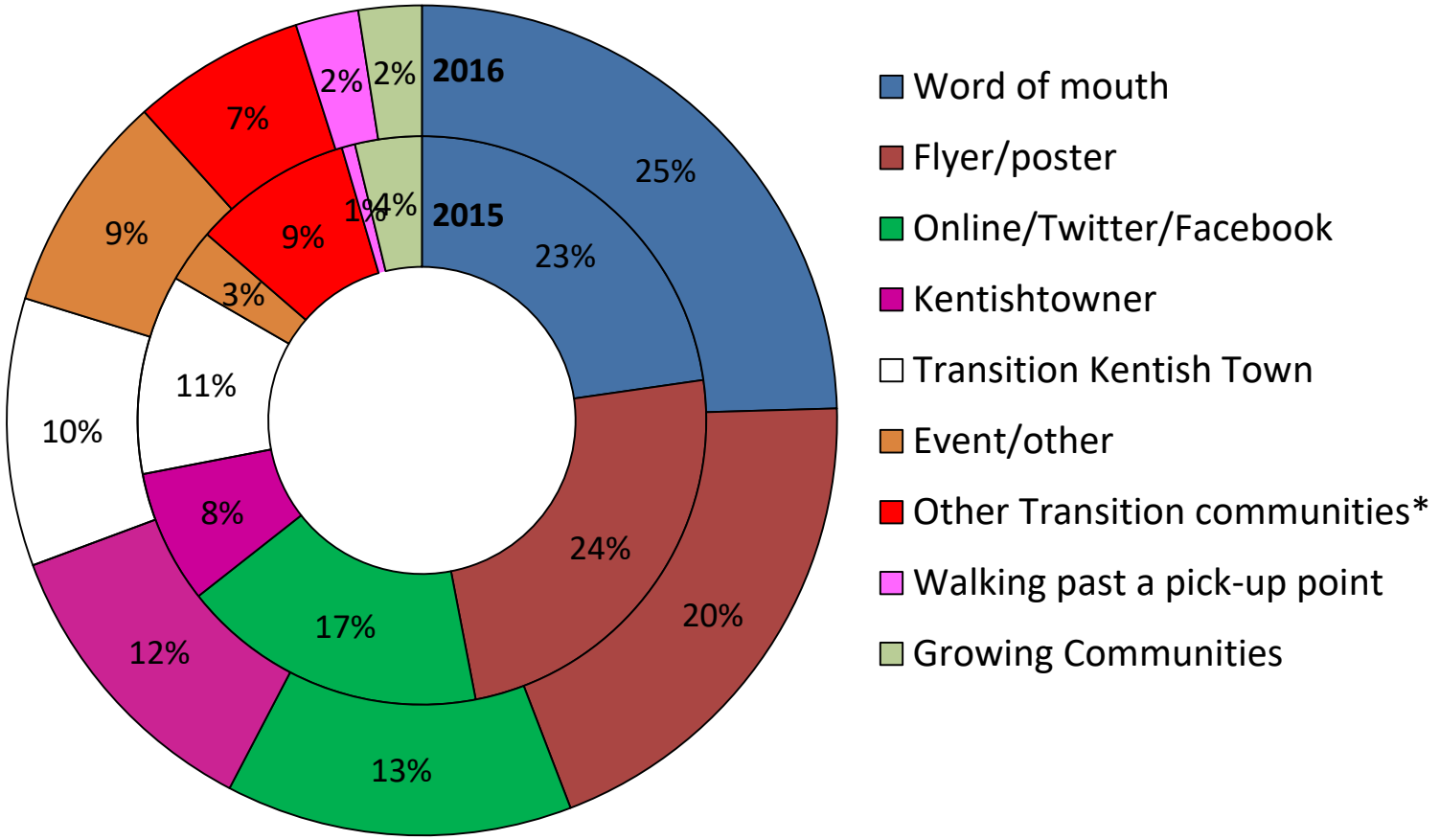
Transport

- We monitor food miles of all incoming supplies and seek to keep them low
- We transport the veg bags to the 10 pick up points firstly using bike power
- We supplement bike power with hiring a van from a carpool scheme, which keeps fewer vehicles on London's roads, thus minimising the environmental impact attributable to us

So, what is a packing day like? A comic strip guide…

Word of mouth is a powerful marketing channel for Vegbox

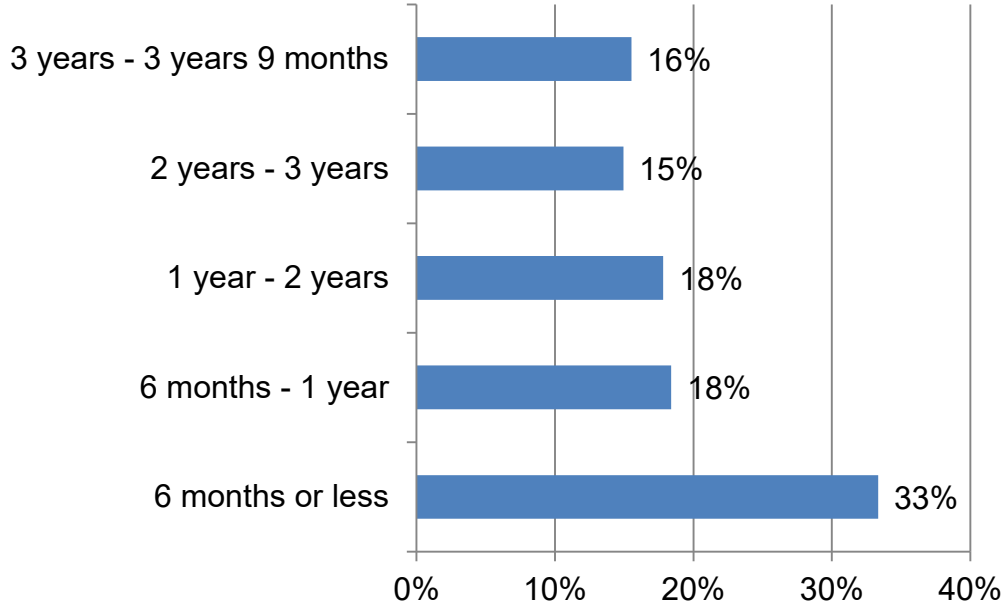
Members responses to 'How did you hear about us?' – 2015 and 2016:



*Note: 'Other Transition Communities' include Transition Belsize Park, Transition Dartmouth Park and Transition Tufnell Park

16% of Vegbox members have been with the scheme for over 3 years; however a third have only been with the scheme for 6 months or less

Members length of membership, for all members at the end of June 2016:



Note: We do see some members leave Vegbox for a period and return to being a member, often due to personal circumstances

Moving away from the area is the dominant reason for people leaving Vegbox

Leavers' reasons for leaving, 2016 compared to 2015:

	2016 data	2015 data		2016 vs 2015
Moving away from area	**43%**	37%		▲ 6%
Chaotic / unpredictable lifestyle	**15%**	13%		▲ 2%
Not getting through the veg	**11%**	13%		▼ -2%
Tightening personal budget	**9%**	6%		▲ 3%
Pick up arrangements too restrictive or distant	**8%**	10%		▼ -2%
Work commitments getting in way	**8%**	5%		▲ 3%
Chose another veg supplier	**4%**	3%		▬ 1%
Unhappy with quantity / quality / VfM	**2%**	6%		▼ -4%
Dietary considerations	**0%**	4%		▼ -4%
Access to allotment or garden	**0%**	3%		▼ -3%
All reasons for leaving (excluding reasons unknown)	**100%**	**100%**		

Notes:
(1) 'Unknown' was recorded for around half of all leavers, as many leavers do not state a reason for leaving
(2) '2016 data' equates to reasons for leaving captured between the 2015 AGM and the 2016 AGM, and '2015 data' equates to reasons for leaving captured in advance of the 2015 AGM and is a larger data set
(3) The London Borough of Camden has a relatively high population churn, with around a quarter of residents entering or moving away from the area per year, partly linked to the large student population.

Reluctant leavers of Vegbox often provide overwhelmingly positive comments about the scheme

Recent (2016) feedback from leavers of Vegbox

"We'll definitely be missing our weekly veg bag :-(Many thanks for all these nice vegetables we've eaten for the last 2 years, and many more years to come for Kentish Town Vegbox!"

"We've absolutely loved getting our veg bags and wish you the very best of luck with the scheme going forward, it's great!"

"We have really enjoyed your veg and it was fantastic value and very convenient."

"We've really enjoyed the fantastic selection of locally and humanely sourced produce paired with your informative and helpful recipe cards."

"The quality of the fruit and vegetables we have received was great. I was so excited when I first got potatoes that smelled like earth! Don't think I have ever had that before!"

"We have very much enjoyed having lovely fresh veg every week and think it is a wonderful organisation!"

"It's been great, and hope it continues to go well for you."

Financial statement 2015

Kentish Town Vegbox Ltd
An industrial and provident society (IPS), registered in the UK
Registration number 31764 R, regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

[Unaudited] income and expenditure statement
Comparing calendar year 2015 to calendar year 2014

	Unaudited 2015		Audited 2014		
Income	**£**	**%**	**£**	**%**	
Vegbox member income	43,180	100%	35,997	100%	
Expenditure	**£**	**%**	**£**	**%**	
Vegetables and fruit	31,816	67%	23,829	66%	
Staff & volunteer costs	8,509	18%	7,338	20%	
Growing Communities contribution**	766	2%	625	2%	
Rent	1,800	4%	1,575	4%	
Marketing	547	1%	261	1%	
Insurance	384	1%	379	1%	
Accountancy	396	1%	300	1%	
Weekly logistics	1,500	3%	930	3%	
Misc (mostly equipment)***	1,370	3%	360	1%	
Start-up loan repayment*	400	1%	400	1%	
Total expenditure	47,488	100%	35,997	100%	
Surplus (deficit)	**- 4,308**		**-**		
Liabilities					
Start-up loan*	400		800	(Initial liability of £1,600)	
Surplus (deficit) after liabilities	**- 4,708**		**-800**		

*0% interest, payable in 4 annual payments of £400, from August 2013 - August 2016
**Vegbox has committed to invest 2% of its previous year's (Sept-Aug) turnover for a period of 3 years in order to support the creation of community-led vegetable box schemes in other parts of the UK
***Equipment spend in 2015 included significant items including new bike trailer and containers for transporting veg

The deficit in 2015 (representing a little over 1 month's worth of current income) is partly due to:

- Inflation-linked increases to the cost of vegetables and fruit
- Sustained running costs being incurred whilst there was a delay in introducing the necessary membership price rise (enacted in autumn 2015)
- Exceptional investment in new equipment for packing days
- Pricing of Fruit supplement which is limiting income potential