



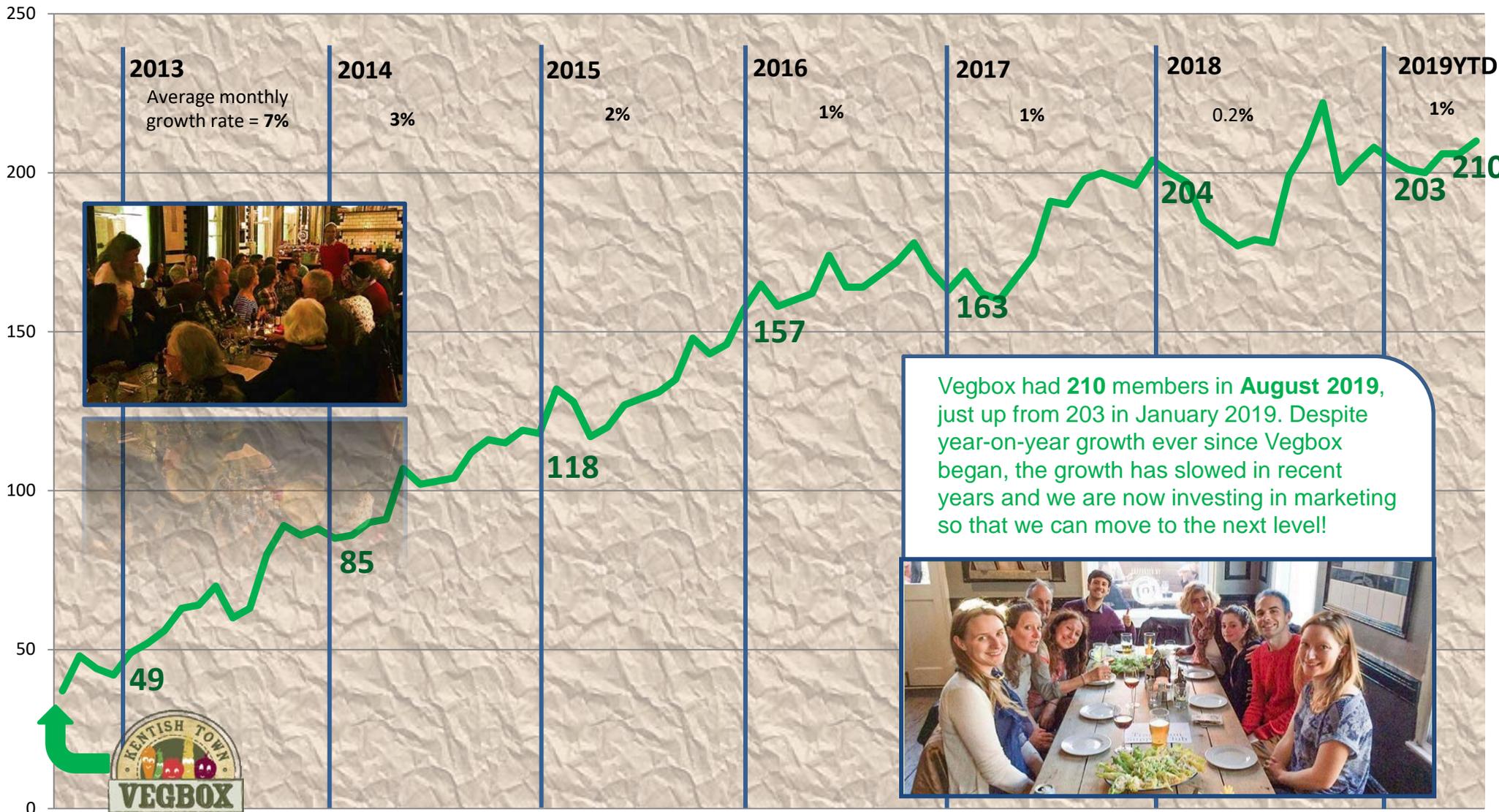
Empowering our community to connect with locally sourced organic fruit & veg...



2018 Annual Report (for the 2019 AGM)

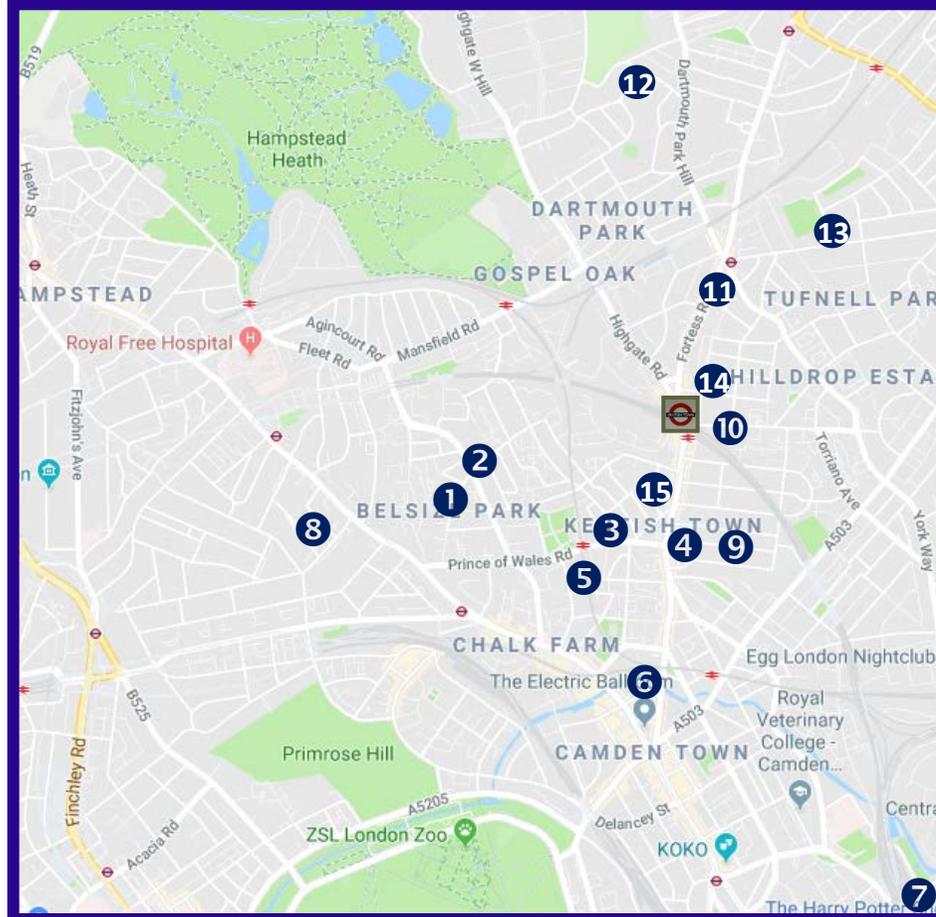


Vegbox members



September 2012: Vegbox is born !

Vegbox's collection points



- 1. Thanet
- 2. Gipsy Queen
- 3. Grafton
- 4. Abbey
- 5. Tapping the Admiral
- 6. Camden Market
- 7. Skip Garden
- 8. Primrose Gardens
- 9. KT Health Centre
- 10. Caversham Group Practice
- 11. Ruby Violet
- 12. Star
- 13. Tufnell Park Tavern
- 14. Pineapple
- 15. Lady Hamilton

Vegbox's collection points – a community partnership



- We **thank the staff** at all of our collection points for volunteering their space and time to help give out weekly bags to our members across the Kentish Town community.
- We grew the **total number of collection points to 15** in 2018/2019, with Camden Market, a Kentish Town GP practice, a Kings Cross venue and three popular pubs (The Pineapple, Tapping the Admiral and Lady Hamilton).
- When surveyed earlier in 2018, our members said they felt that the collection point arrangements were **generally good**.

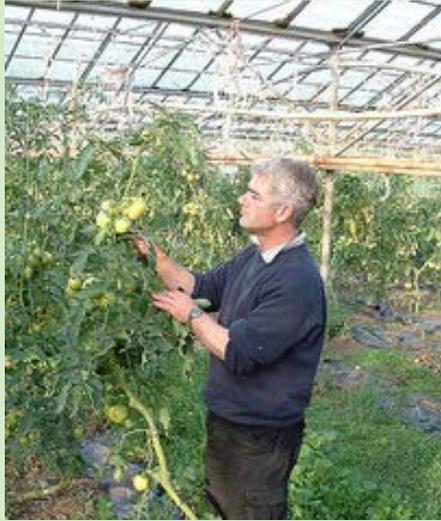


- We also know that **59% of Vegbox members using commercial businesses as their collection point say that they use the collection point's services more often as a direct result of being a member of Vegbox**. We now have evidence of what we had thought was true; being a Vegbox collection point is good for business – not only to promote a sense of community but also commercially for those taking part. As one member said:

"We buy ice-cream at Ruby Violet every month, and it's completely because we go there to pick up our veg - they're great!"

Vegbox's top 4 suppliers

1. Hughes Organics



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.

2. Ripple Farm Organics



Martin Mackay runs a small Soil Association certified organic farm in the Stour Valley, Kent. Their light, chalky soils produce vegetables of great taste and quality. Martin is a thoughtful farmer who is personally very committed to sustainability.

3. Chegworth Valley



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 naturally grown fruit!

4. Sarah Green's Organics



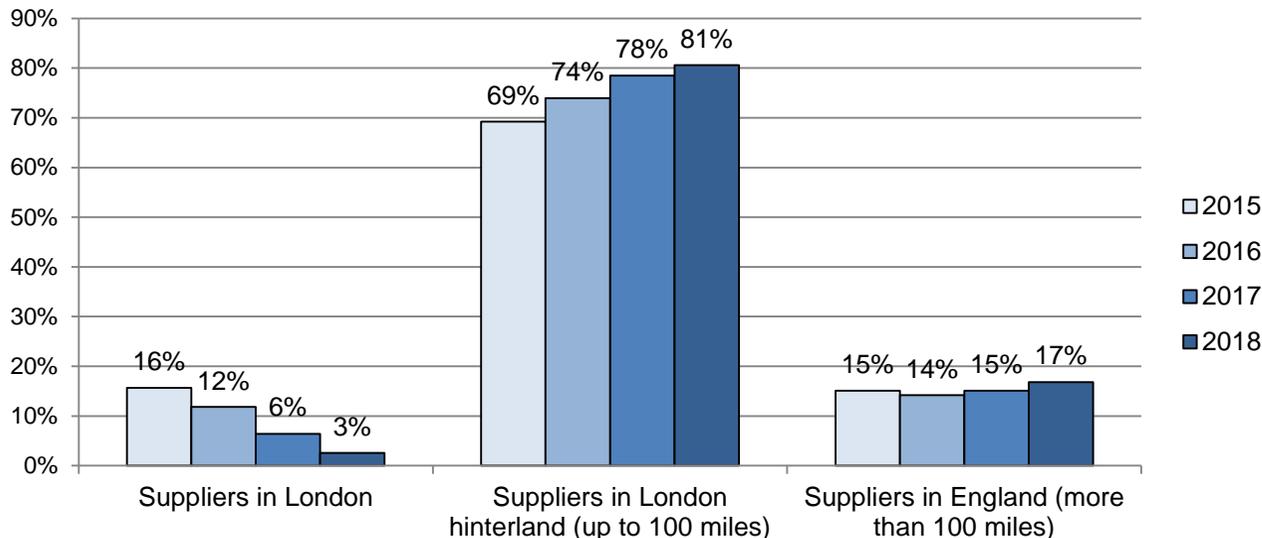
Sarah Green's family farm is located among the fertile flat marshes of the Essex coast.

Their farm has a particularly diverse collection of wildlife. Of all the veg we buy for the box scheme, Sarah Green's veg most often has little bugs or caterpillars on it – a sure sign that the farm isn't using pesticides and is working with nature rather than against it!

Vegbox's food miles

Vegbox is one of the very few vegetable box schemes that **sources produce only from the UK**, in order to reduce unnecessary food miles and enjoy living with what is seasonally available. Vegbox tracks the food miles it accumulates; most of the produce (81% by value in 2018) travels in the 15-100 miles bracket.

In 2018, our total spend on vegetables and fruit amounted to just under £46,000. It is a sad fact that there are very few truly London-based growers, and this is shown in the trend in our value of spend by distance travelled. We are pleased that most of our veg (by value) does not travel more than 100 miles to reach us – and all of it comes from England.



The challenge with British fruit

While we can grow a wide range of veg all-year-round in the UK, fruit is much more difficult because of our climate. As a nation we import 90% of our fruit. Climate change is making fruit growing ever more difficult.

From March to May 2018, Vegbox's suppliers ran out of UK organic fruit for the first time and we had to stop our fruit supplement for several months.

If another shortage should occur in the future, Vegbox's policy is to replace the fruit for the affected weeks with a high-value item of veg.

Why should people choose Vegbox?

Why is a community-led organic box scheme like ours worth supporting?

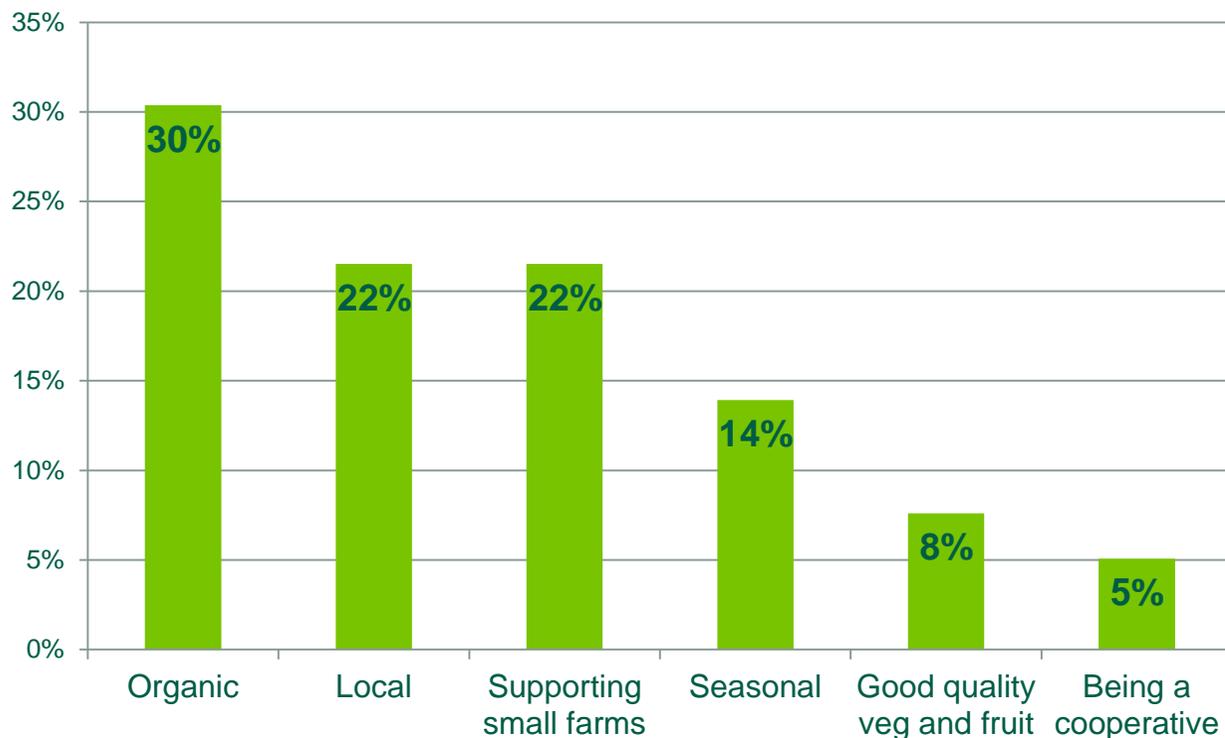
1. We pay fair trade prices for organic produce from human-scale farms that could not afford to supply to supermarkets. Most of our farms employ local workers all year round on fair wages, not minimum wage imported seasonal labour.
2. We reduce food waste: our farms harvest only what we need each week, and any produce left over after packing is given to local partners.
3. We support decent jobs in Kentish Town: all paid staff earn £12 an hour.
4. Organic production conserves the soil, supports biodiversity and uses far less pesticides.
5. Buying through a box scheme is a great way of following a healthy, local, seasonal diet.
6. We are trying to change the world! We are building a better food system in which we support sustainable farms, create decent jobs, and consume our food more mindfully.



Vegbox's core values

Vegbox was set up in 2012 with 6 core values, shown below. When surveyed in 2018, members said that their most popular core value was **being committed to organic production**, with 30% of member respondents choosing this as the core value most important to them. Some members support all the core values equally; *"Tough choice - all principles are crucial for me, you're the only one combining all of them!"*.

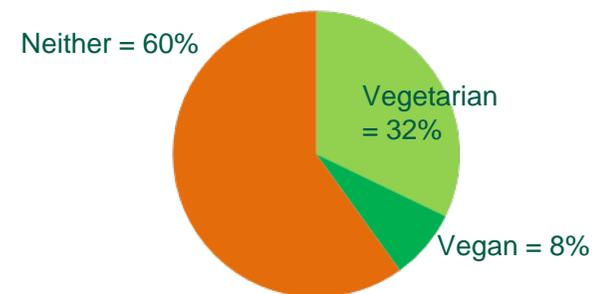
Extent to which members support Vegbox's 5 core values



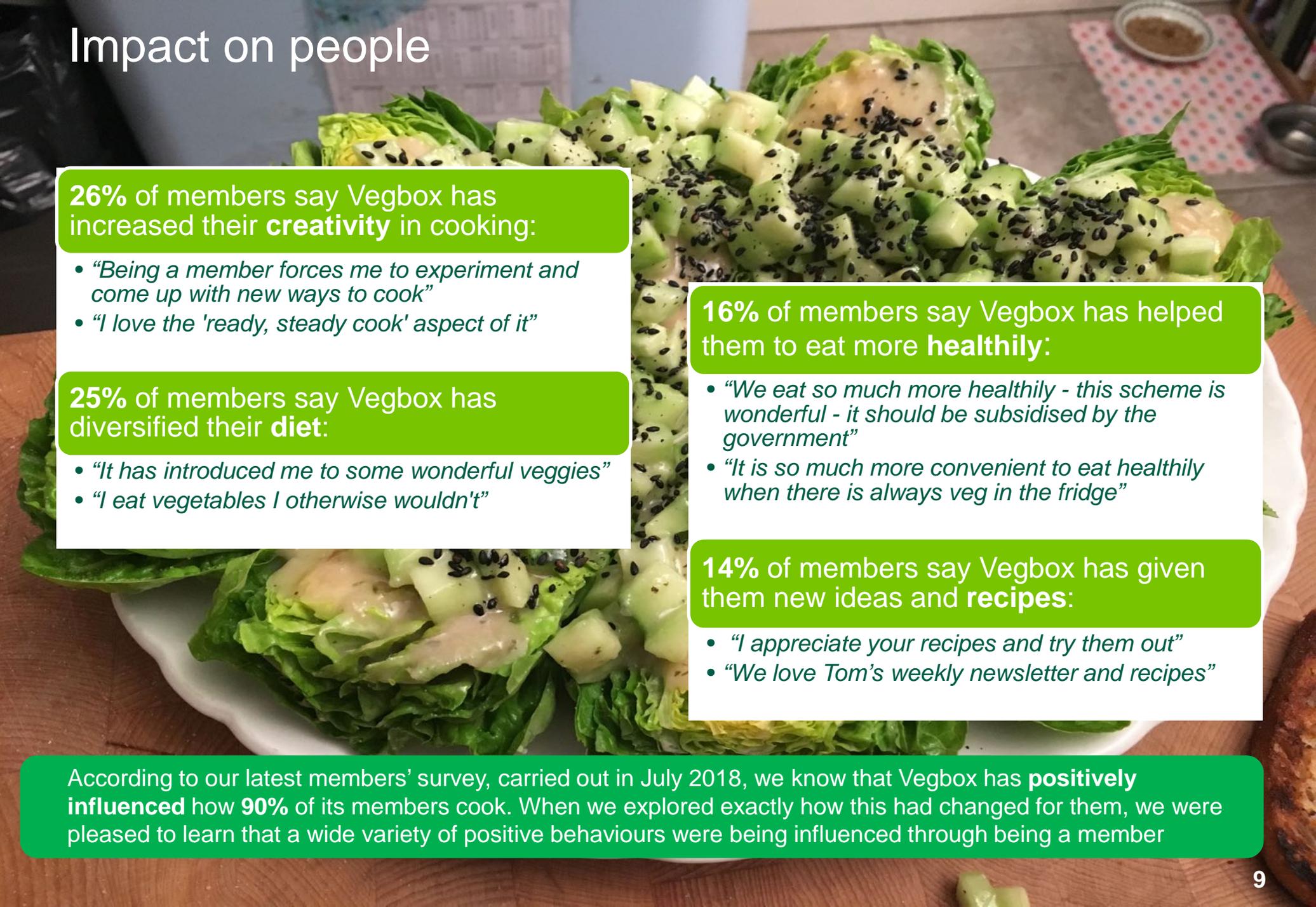
(Proportion of respondents ranking each principle as the most important to them: 2018)

Vegbox also aims to get the balance of recipes in the weekly newsletters right for its members. A total of **40%** of Vegbox's household members surveyed in 2018 were either **vegan or vegetarian**:

Proportion of Vegbox members who are vegan or vegetarian



Impact on people



26% of members say Vegbox has increased their **creativity** in cooking:

- *“Being a member forces me to experiment and come up with new ways to cook”*
- *“I love the 'ready, steady cook' aspect of it”*

25% of members say Vegbox has diversified their **diet**:

- *“It has introduced me to some wonderful veggies”*
- *“I eat vegetables I otherwise wouldn't”*

16% of members say Vegbox has helped them to eat more **healthily**:

- *“We eat so much more healthily - this scheme is wonderful - it should be subsidised by the government”*
- *“It is so much more convenient to eat healthily when there is always veg in the fridge”*

14% of members say Vegbox has given them new ideas and **recipes**:

- *“I appreciate your recipes and try them out”*
- *“We love Tom's weekly newsletter and recipes”*

According to our latest members' survey, carried out in July 2018, we know that Vegbox has **positively influenced** how **90%** of its members cook. When we explored exactly how this had changed for them, we were pleased to learn that a wide variety of positive behaviours were being influenced through being a member

Vegbox's use of plastic

Plastic and packaging are high on the agenda at the moment and it is certainly something many of our members regularly get in touch about! For example, some responses to our recent survey:

“Too much plastic packaging! Can there be more paper bags?”
“We would rather not have veggies wrapped in plastic bags”

As an organisation we mostly think about packaging from the perspective of its overall carbon footprint and lifecycle, though there are other angles to consider.

Plastic type 1: Nylon:

Our veg comes in a re-usable nylon bag that you bring back every week. When we bought the nylon bags, we assessed lots of different options. We went with nylon because it is quite cheap to make, it's light and compact, it has a relatively low carbon footprint (certainly compared to cotton or jute options), and is one of the most robust and re-usable options.

Inside that nylon bag, we use as little packaging as possible. But some packaging is usually necessary. Stuff like onions, potatoes, carrots, root veg we put loose into the bag. Things like mushrooms or tomatoes we need to bag separately in a paper bag.

Plastic type 2: Polyethylene “polybags”:

We use polyethylene “polybags” for our leafy veg to stop it from drying out and to prolong its life. In general we find that if we pack the leafy veg loose, it wilts too quickly and we worry that our members will then throw it away. There is far more energy embodied in our food than in the packaging. We think that avoiding food being thrown away should be the number one priority from a carbon footprint perspective.

Plastic type 3: Hard-plastic PET (polyethylene terephthalate):

When we buy soft fruit in the summer, this often comes in hard plastic punnets, made from PET.



Sustainable alternatives to plastic:
For both polyethylene and PET, it feels like there are sustainable alternatives on their way, such as an emerging ‘new breed’ of compostable bags and punnets.

Through our network of community box schemes (Better Food Traders) we are actively researching compostable alternatives.

There are big question marks over the compostable route however.

The work of the Vegbox Board

Our Board of Directors is elected every year by our members to oversee the co-operative.

Being on the Board is a hands-on role! We meet monthly on a weekday evening for a few hours in one of our houses, usually over dinner.

One thing we've been doing recently is reviewing our mission and strategy:

- We've refreshed our core mission and messaging.
- We wanted to highlight that we are not just about buying veg from small-scale organic farms; we are also about building community in and around Kentish Town. We want to invest more in member events, link more with other community organisations, and reflect our co-operative corporate structure more faithfully.

Previous mission statement:

Welcome to Kentish Town's local and affordable veg box scheme.

Enjoy a weekly selection of affordable great tasting seasonal veg, sourced from small-scale, organic farms near London, and available at collection points near you.



Refreshed mission statement:

Empowering our community to connect with great-tasting organic fruit and veg sourced from small-scale farms near London.

We are proud to be a cooperative, committed to making our food system more sustainable, offering affordable prices and paying our farmers and staff fairly.

Resolutions for the 2019 AGM

Presenting the 2018 results

Price rise proposal

New holiday policy

Climate Emergency Camden proposal

Voting for the new Board of Directors

Vegbox financial statement (2018 against 2017)



Kentish Town Vegbox Ltd

An industrial and provident society (IPS), registered in the UK

Registration number 31764 R, regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

Income and expenditure statement

Comparing calendar year 2018 to calendar year 2017

	2018		2017	
	£	%	£	%
Income				
Vegbox member income	77,242	100%	65,987	97%
Income from sales to other org's	111	0%	1,830	3%
Total Vegbox income	77,353	100%	67,817	100%
Expenditure				
Cost of sales				
Vegetables and fruit	46,834	61%	47,291	69%
Cost of sales				
Staff & volunteer costs	20,484	27%	11,950	17%
Administrative expenses				
Transport	3,035	4%	2,342	3%
Administrative expenses				
Rent	1,800	2%	1,800	3%
Administrative expenses				
Marketing	1,165	2%	717	1%
Administrative expenses				
Printing	990	1%	403	1%
Administrative expenses				
Accountancy	557	1%	750	1%
Administrative expenses				
Equipment (and bags)	493	1%	2,462	4%
Administrative expenses				
Insurance	368	0.5%	362	0.5%
Administrative expenses				
Phone and text messages	342	0.4%	242	0.4%
Administrative expenses				
Depreciation	260	0.3%	260	0.4%
Administrative expenses				
FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) fee	201	0.3%	65	0.1%
Administrative expenses				
Member events	197	0.3%	-	0.0%
Administrative expenses				
Surcharge	-	0.0%	202	0.3%
Total Vegbox expenditure	76,726	100%	68,846	100%
Total Vegbox Surplus (deficit)	627	- 1,029		

Notes

a) There was a notable increase in total income in 2018 (up 14% to over £77,000).

b) Staff and volunteer costs have gone up in 2018 as our balance of volunteers to paid staff had shifted.

c) Cost of transport has gone up in 2018 due to more collection points and subsequent increased drive times.

d) Exceptional costs on equipment largely fell in 2017 when we invested in reusable nylon bags for members.

Price rise

Our last price rise was exactly two years ago.

Food costs have gradually risen since then and we are struggling to put together a veg bag that has everything we'd like it to have. Certain items like cauliflowers, mushrooms, tomatoes and broccoli are gradually becoming too expensive for us to buy regularly.

We have modelled a price rise where all the extra money from the price rise is put towards the cost of the veg and fruit, reducing our margin percentage a little.

Here are the proposed new prices, to take effect from the beginning of October 2019:

	Current price	New price
Small bag	£7.00	£7.50
Standard bag	£9.00	£9.75
Family bag	£14.00	£15.00
Small fruit	£2.50	£2.65
Standard/Family fruit	£3.50	£3.75

New holiday policy

We now buy most of our produce via a coordinated hub for London organic box schemes called the Better Food Shed.

Other box schemes within the hub include Growing Communities, Local Greens, Organic Lea, Lea Greens and Crop Drop.

The rationale for the Better Food Shed is to:

- Minimise transport duplication into and around London.
- Secure access to suppliers like Hughes Organics and Sarah Green's who were struggling with supplying to London or to individual box schemes.
- Have more buying power collectively to buy direct from some bigger scale farmers.
- Support smaller box schemes that are starting out to get access to good quality produce at good prices.
- In the long term, to plan and manage the big picture supply and demand of organic produce in collaboration with the farms.

What this means for us is that we've had to shift our ordering day back from Sunday to Thursday. In order to place our orders on Thursday morning, we need to know who is taking holidays the following week or we end up losing quite a bit of money to last minute member refunds.

So we propose a tightening of our current holiday policy. Currently, we ask when you join up that you let us know you are going on holiday by Thursday of the week before. But people often leave it till Tuesday!

Now, we propose that if you do not let us know **by the end of the day on Wednesday of the week before**, then you will not be eligible for a refund. Your veg bag will be donated or redistributed. So booking holiday needs to be something people think of doing when they collect their bags on Wednesday. It might make sense to build a reminder into the weekly text message every Wednesday.

Hodmedod's discussion

Hodmedod's work with British farms to source Soil Association certified grains and pulses.

An important part of their mission is to expand and support the production of grains and pulses within Britain. They have been promoting less well-known foods, such as dried fava beans (broad beans) and black badger (carlin) peas, and new crops for British soils such as quinoa.

We have the opportunity to buy Hodmedod products through the Better Food Shed. We would like to discuss with members whether this would be welcome.

Three potential rationales for including Hodmedod products within our fresh veg and fruit offering:

1. A rare addition to be deployed during the Hungry Gap

During April to June, UK produce is at its lowest ebb and we sometimes struggle to keep our bags filled with varied, high quality produce. During the Hungry Gap, we could occasionally add dried beans and peas to the bags to increase the variety of veg at this time of year.

2. An occasional staple for the bags in place of potatoes

In general, Western diets are a little high on starchy tubers, particularly potatoes. We calculated that the amount of potatoes we include in our Small, Standard and Family bags every other week are in line with the recommended amounts in the 'planetary health diet', if one person eats the Small bag, two people eat the Standard bag, and three people eat the Family bag. There is a case for reducing tubers in favour of more nutritious whole grains and pulses. The proposal here would be to have potatoes once per month, and dried beans, peas or lentils once per month.

3. A regular part of a new veg + grains/pulses bag

This would be a whole new bag to add to our collection, where members receive an item of pulses and grains every week. This would probably only work as a Family bag option, as the bags of Hodmedod produce are reasonably large (500g).