

eBites

Autumn 2026

Published by Vegetarian for Life, the advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegans and vegetarians

Chunky 'clam' chowder

A succulent and
aromatic autumn
recipe

vfl in the press

Care home standards
under scrutiny

Meat-free 101

Online training for busy chefs

WIN
Plant-based
honey from
the Vegan
Women's
Club



PLUS Friends for Life
Campaigners' inspiring stories

Welcome

In this issue we celebrate our volunteers' hard work to improve the lives of older vegans and vegetarians through our Friends' Challenge. We welcome three V for Life Friends onto our Wall of Champions (see [page 3](#)) – we hope their stories will inspire you to join them.

We also report on our work with UK care home regulators to ensure their standards recognise the philosophical and ethical choices of older veg*ns ([page 5](#)). The issue also covers the case of a care home resident in Scotland whose ethical commitment to a meat-free diet was ignored by those responsible for her wellbeing ([page 4](#)). This is not an isolated case, and we welcome your support in our ongoing work.

Care home chefs can build their confidence with our online Meat-free 101 training course, tailored to fit around their busy working lives (see [page 6](#)). And our own busy chefs share a recipe they have been raving about – chunky clam chowder ([page 7](#)). Just the thing as we ease into autumn. We also share a recipe for a warming sausage and gnocchi bake; both recipes feature in our One-pot meals recipe collection – it's free to download, and contains plenty of ideas for tasty vegan meals.

I hope you enjoy this issue.
Amanda Woodvine, Chief Executive

Amanda

Vegetarian for Life is an advocacy and educational charity working on behalf of older vegans and vegetarians throughout the UK.

**Vegetarian
for Life** 

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Gift ideas that support our work

Thank you to all our featured supplier members. Full contact details can be found under the suppliers directory at vegetarianforlife.org.uk



Reader exclusive

The Vegan Women's Club has kindly donated three Bee Kind prizes, worth £20 each. Bee Kind is a plant-based alternative for anyone who misses the familiar sweetness and mouthfeel of honey.

Add it to tea, toast, porridge or baking for a bee-free treat that supports a kinder choice. To enter, send us the correct answer to this question:

What is Bee Kind vegan honey made from?

- a) Pine needles
- b) Rose petals
- c) Oats

Email your answer to info@vegetarianforlife.uk by midday on 31/10/26.

Hint – the answer can be found here: veganwomensclub.com/shop

WIN!



Terms & conditions: The winners will be drawn at random from all entries received. One entry per household. UK addresses only. There is no cash alternative.

Join our Friends Challenge and make a difference

Three people recently completed VfL's Friends Challenge. Our Volunteer Liaison Lisa Buckley explains how you can improve the lives of older people who are ethically committed to protecting animals and the environment.

We launched the Friends Challenge last year to offer our volunteers – whom we affectionately call 'Friends' – an opportunity to deepen their involvement in our work. It is an optional initiative for those who want to take advocacy further in their local communities. Each person who completes the five key actions earns recognition as a V for Life Champion, receives a certificate and a thank-you gift, and is added to the Wall of Champions on our website.

Meet the Friends on the Wall of Champions

Gaynor Joseph from Wales was the first person to complete the challenge. She quickly embraced the opportunity and is already making waves, recently promoting us in her local library. We are super proud of her and love her enthusiasm. Thank you, Gaynor!



Long-time vegan **Alan Cooper** from Dorset is a published poet and passionate advocate for older vegans. His tireless efforts have included sharing our literature in community spaces, speaking to his local councillor about our work, and adding new care homes to our UK List. Alan tells us his poetry is inspired by his vegan values, reminding us that advocacy can be creative, personal, and deeply rewarding.

Caroline McManus from Dumfries is a passionate advocate for a meat-free diet and a childhood cancer survivor who strongly believes her choices have helped her stay healthy. "I strongly believe being vegetarian for over 50 of my 67 years has been an immensely protective factor in keeping me well for all this time," she says. "The media listens to the meat lobbyists, but I would like to encourage others to see the health benefits of reducing or eliminating meat and dairy from your diet."

If you are inspired by our amazing Friends and want to help us by completing the Friends Challenge in your own area, please email us at info@vegetarianforlife.uk for a pack of literature, call 0161 257 0887 or visit vforlife.org.uk/friends for more information. We're truly grateful to everyone who takes part.

To get involved, simply complete these steps:

- **Join our Friends Facebook Group** – Stay connected with like-minded advocates and share your progress.
- **Introduce yourself to your local library** – Help spread awareness by ensuring they display resources to support older veg*ns.
- **Place posters or leaflets in key locations** – Spread the word in your community.
- **Reach out to a local veg*n group, MP, and care home** – Start conversations and advocate for inclusive food options.
- **Celebrate and share** – Let us know once you've completed your steps, and we'll recognise you as an official **V for Life Champion!**

Find out more at:
vforlife.org.uk/friends

Help us to
change the lives
of older vegans
& vegetarians



Join us for as little as £3 per month



Press life

VfL helps family challenge poor care highlighted in Scottish press

VfL was featured in Scottish newspapers following our support for a family whose 94-year-old mother, a lifelong vegetarian living with dementia, was repeatedly served meat and fish in her care home.

The case, covered by the *Scottish Sun* and *Daily Record*, highlighted the distress that can arise when a resident's long-held dietary beliefs are not properly understood, recorded or respected. The resident was also reportedly given meals of dry cheese sandwiches over a prolonged period, and her family became increasingly concerned about her health and wellbeing.

Her daughter, Dr Ann Moulds, contacted VfL after struggling to get her concerns addressed. We provided guidance on the relevant care standards, legislation and human rights protections, as well as Care Inspectorate guidance on supporting vegan and vegetarian residents.



We also helped Ann understand the complaints process and identify appropriate routes for advocacy. The family was ultimately able to secure a move to a care home where her mother's dietary beliefs are respected.

Ann told the *Scottish Sun* that VfL had been "extremely helpful", adding that she would encourage anyone in a similar situation to contact the charity for advice.

The coverage demonstrates why our work supporting older vegans and vegetarians matters. Dietary beliefs are often deeply held and form an important part of a person's identity, dignity and wellbeing – particularly when someone is living with dementia and may need others to advocate on their behalf.

While this case received significant press attention, the underlying issue is not unique. VfL continues to provide information and practical support to families and care providers, helping ensure that vegan and vegetarian residents receive appropriate, respectful and person-centred care.

Do you have a similar experience?

If you or a loved one has struggled to have vegan or vegetarian beliefs respected in a care setting, you are not alone. Support and guidance are available.

You can contact us in confidence to share your experience, seek advice, or find out what steps you can take. Hearing from families also helps us continue to campaign for better protections for older vegans and vegetarians receiving care.

Care settings can find useful resources [here](#).

VfL helps care regulators strengthen vegan and vegetarian care

VfL is working with care regulators around the UK to help care providers better recognise and meet the needs of vegans and vegetarians. Building on its work with the Scottish Care Inspectorate, VfL is now sharing practical guidance with care providers in England and Wales and supporting regulators to embed good practice.

VfL recently shared practical guidance with care providers in England who are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). [The guidance](#) helps services understand how to meet regulatory expectations while providing safe, respectful and person-centred care for vegans and vegetarians.

It sets out what inspectors look for, highlights the key regulations involved and gives providers clear steps they can take to demonstrate responsive care. It also references a Staffordshire care home placed in special measures by the CQC after it gave meat to a vegetarian resident, underlining why dietary beliefs must be properly understood and respected. Providers can also use [Good care for vegetarians and vegans](#), jointly produced by VfL and the Scottish Care Inspectorate, to benchmark and strengthen their practice. The resource is being reviewed this autumn.

The CQC has invited VfL to share further guidance with adult social care workers through its internal

newsletter, In Practice, and to support inspector training this autumn. This will give VfL another opportunity to help inspectors and care staff identify good vegan and vegetarian care in practice.

In Wales, the Care Inspectorate has invited VfL to contribute to the review of its assessment framework. VfL is ready to share its existing resources and help shape clearer expectations for vegan and vegetarian care.

Alongside its work with regulators and providers, VfL also highlighted its new [digital carers' guide](#) for anyone supporting a vegan or vegetarian at home. The guide gives carers and families practical confidence with vegan and vegetarian diets, including:

- An introduction to vegan and vegetarian diets
- Lists of suitable foods and ingredients
- Tips for checking labels
- Simple meal ideas and ready-made options
- Communication tips for carers and families

Care providers, inspectors and families can use VfL's guidance and digital carers' guide to strengthen everyday support for vegans and vegetarians.





Meat-free 101 offers bite-sized learning for care chefs

VfL has developed online training for busy care home chefs to improve their service for vegan and vegetarian residents in their care.

Developed by VfL's own team of chefs, Meat-free 101 training is available free of charge to VfL Accredited Care Home Members to help chefs attain excellence in vegan and vegetarian care catering. The course usually retails at **£25 per person**, but VfL's Accredited Members receive unlimited access to Meat-free 101, making it ideal for bulk training for care establishments.

The training features five dedicated modules, offering guidance on catering for people receiving care who follow vegan, vegetarian or reduced-meat diets. Meat-free 101's diverse topics include: What vegans eat and don't eat; plant-based protein sources; cooking with meat- and dairy-alternatives; vegan baking; dietary diversity; and vegan fortification. Each module includes easy-to-follow recipe videos with fantastic, tasty recipes to enhance care home menus. VfL chefs talk you through recipes including: scrambled tofu; mushroom Wellington; lentil bolognese; Victoria sponge; and eggless, creamless crème brûlée.

Our chefs developed the online training to accommodate care homes that have difficulty finding cover in their kitchens – chefs can complete the training at a time that suits them. The full course takes approximately 2.5 hours to complete, and can be taken in stages to suit the learner's timetable. It provides 2.5 hours of VfL endorsed Continuing Professional Development, and learners receive a certificate on completion.

“The development training alone is well worth the price of [Accredited Care Home] Membership.”

Richard Pearshouse
Head of Hospitality, Colten Care

Accredited Membership also offers up to 14 free places per year on an in-person training course of your choosing, and independent accreditation of your menus and dishes.

Our annual membership provides a gateway to business improvement, sustainability, and a reduced carbon footprint through delicious, plant-based meals, to ensure your care establishment is ready to attract more vegan and vegetarian residents and their families. And it is an excellent way to promote the exceptional services you offer to vegans and vegetarians. More broadly, Accredited Membership highlights your professional approach to catering and your focus on good customer service.

[Click here](#) to find out more.



Chunky 'clam' chowder

Inspired by the classic American chowder, this indulgent chunky soup features a thick and creamy non-dairy milk base, tender potatoes, fragrant aromatics, and oyster mushrooms as the perfect substitute for clams.

Serves 4 as a main, 6 as a starter

Mushrooms

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 250g/8¾oz king oyster mushrooms, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tsp soy sauce

Soup base

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 120ml/4fl oz dry white wine
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 1 litre/1¾ pints vegetable stock
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 2 tsp kelp granules or dulse flakes
- Salt and cracked black pepper to taste
- 100ml/3 ¾fl oz vegan cream

CHEF'S TIP If you prefer not to have the taste of the sea, replace the kelp/dulse with 1–2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley or dill. If you can't get oyster mushrooms, substitute with small button mushrooms, halved.



1 Heat the oil on a medium heat in a large heavy based pan. Fry the mushrooms until soft, then add one clove of garlic. Fry for 1 more minute.

2 Add in the soy sauce and mix well to coat the mushrooms. Place the mushrooms in a bowl and set to one side.

3 Heat the remaining oil and fry the onions until soft. Then add the celery, carrots and the rest of the garlic and fry until tender.

4 Add the wine and turn up the heat to boil. Once boiling reduce the heat and stir in the flour, stirring for a minute to remove any lumps.

5 Gradually stir in the stock then add the potatoes and herbs. Simmer for 20 minutes or until the potatoes are soft. Return the mushroom mixture to the pan.

6 Add the kelp/dulse and season to taste.

7 Stir through cream and serve with crusty bread.



You can purchase a paper copy of VfL's One-pot meals guide by calling 0161 257 0887 or visiting vforlife.org.uk/shop. Hard copies cost £2 plus P&P. Also available on our website: vforlife.org.uk/resources/publications

Shop for life

Treat yourself or a friend this autumn with a gift from the [V for Life shop](http://vforlife.org.uk/shop) – from warm clothes to hearty recipes.

V for Life Mug

Make yourself a cuppa, or a warming hot chocolate in this chunky ceramic mug. Emblazoned with the V for Life logo to remind you life begins at 50, and compassion lasts for ever.



V for Life Beanie

Now that autumn is approaching, keep warm with this attractive beanie hat. Double layer knit in soft touch acrylic.



Unisex Sweatshirts

These chunky sweatshirts are available in five designs and a whole rainbow of different colours to suit your tastes. Designs include 'The Vegan One', 'V for Life' and 'Vegan Definition'.



The Seed Card Company Birthday Cards

Send your loved ones wishes that last. These beautiful birthday cards contain wildflower seeds – plant them beneath a thin layer of soil to add a splash of colour to their garden. Made from seed card, a post-consumer paper waste and 100% biodegradable seed-embedded card and printed with vegan-friendly inks. Available in five designs, including 'Birthday Cheer', 'Beer!', and 'Cake'.



Vegan Baking

This 36 page guide is packed with ideas to treat yourself or a loved one to hearty autumn fare. Our chefs share their favourite baked recipes – from light, airy sponges, to traditional puddings, and eggless meringue.

V for Life Banner Pen

A special V for Life ball-point pen with a handy double-sided pull-out. The pull-out details some essential information on what vegans and vegetarians choose not to eat, and the food groups that should be included in a weekly food plan.



vforlife.org.uk/shop