

# ETHICAL READING IMPACT REPORT 2021-2022





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# WELCOME TO ETHICAL READING'S 2021-2022 IMPACT REPORT

The impacts of Covid have forced businesses to focus on survival, so their capacity for engaging with the non-profit sector has declined significantly over the last two years. Despite this we have continued to grow and develop and have increased our impact, working in collaboration with our wonderful community of volunteers, Partners, Supporters and followers.

This has been our best year to date financially. That's due largely to the training and consultancy services we have provided to Reading Borough Council's Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services, as part of their broader culture change programme. The feedback on this work has been excellent.

Our Trees for Reading initiative had a big boost to its coffers when, together with Reading Borough Council and Reading Tree Wardens, we succeeded in winning £20,000 from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf). The council agreed to match this, making £40,000 to plant and care for trees near schools and medical facilities in areas with high levels of deprivation and low canopy cover.

We've planted 52 trees this year, bringing the total planted so far to 80.

We're also very excited about our new Ethics in Education programme, which aims to raise awareness of business ethics among young people. It comprises two initiatives: Business Ethics in Schools, building on the pilot work we have done with Leighton Park School, and an annual Business Ethics Essay Competition at the University of Reading.

In addition to our programme-related work, we have run six business briefings and meetups to engage the broader business community and local people in the work we do.

The Ethical Reading community now comprises 50 Partners and Supporters and over 7,000 members and followers across our social media channels. All of this is made possible through the



generous support of our Partners and the hard work of our amazing volunteers.

It was superb to meet many of our volunteers and Partners in person at our very first Community Forum in November last year at Thames Lido. This was our first face-to-face event since the pandemic hit, and the positive energy in the room was tangible. We look forward to seeing many of you again next time.

Lastly, we hope you like our new logo and refreshed branding – watch out for a new website coming soon. Our strapline is now 'Enabling ethical action', which we believe better captures our core capability. As always, we would love to get your feedback on this and anything else you read in this report.

Thank you for your wonderful support and encouragement.

## **The Ethical Reading directors**

Gurprit, Brad, Graham and Nick

# WHAT IS ETHICAL READING ABOUT?

## WHO?

We're a not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to making Reading a better place to live, work and do business. Ethical Reading is run on a voluntary basis by our directors and two part-time staff with the support of a talented Advisory Council and a passionate team of volunteers.

## HOW?

We encourage organisations and their teams to do the right thing by each other and the environment. We also work to raise awareness of ethical issues among the wider local community. Most of our activities are focused around our programmes: Business Ethics and Culture, Workplace Wellbeing, Sustainability and Ethics in Education.

**It's all about enabling ethical action.**

## WHY?

We believe that putting more emphasis on core values like respect, responsibility and compassion could help organisations and individuals make better decisions, from the boardroom to everyday interactions. There is compelling evidence that more ethical, caring businesses attract and retain talented staff and enthusiastic customers, making them more successful.

We're passionate about creating great workplace cultures, where it's the norm to make responsible decisions focused on people, the planet and making an ethical profit.

Working together with our Partners, volunteers and the local community, we can make a difference. We call this **Enabling Ethical Action**.





# OUR VISION, AIMS AND VALUES

## VISION

Our vision is of a Reading where organisations have a deeply rooted sense of ethics and are strongly engaged with the local community.

We're calling all organisations with a presence in Reading to:

- Foster respect, responsibility and compassion at all levels
- Empower staff to instil ethical values into the organisation's DNA
- Prioritise employees' wellbeing and happiness
- Never ask employees to do anything illegal or unethical
- Encourage staff to speak up if they become aware of unethical practices
- Embrace a code of ethics
- Engage with the local community
- Collaborate with each other for the common good
- Measure and report on their local social and environmental impact

## AIMS

### Inspire

- To inspire members, Partners and Supporters to take ethics into account in the decisions they make
- To inspire employers to make their workplaces more compassionate, creative and happier places to be
- To inspire organisations to increase their focus on making a positive difference to society and the environment

### Educate

- To help individuals and organisations get to grips with challenging ethical issues
- To equip organisations to measure and report on their ethical performance
- To provide updates on relevant legislation and government guidance

### Collaborate

- To become a hub for progressive, creative solutions to address ethical challenges
- To encourage collaboration between organisations in Reading to drive the ethical agenda forward
- To provide opportunities for local people concerned by ethical issues to meet and share ideas

## VALUES





# HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past year, we have:

- Held 14 events covering the following topics:

**Are your investments in wellbeing initiatives working?**

**Active travel to a net zero Reading**

**Circular route to a net zero Reading**

**The practicality of ethics in business**

**COP26 debrief – code red for humanity?**

**Introduction to business ethics**

**The ethics of mandatory vaccination**

**What is your organisation doing about equality, diversity and inclusion?**

**The benefits of social purpose: giving meaning to your life and work**

**The future of work: what hybrid working means for you and your organisation**

**Workplace relationships – the good, the bad and the ugly**

**The Generation Z workforce: understanding their 'needs' and 'wants'**

**Ethics in Education launch**

**Ethics in Business Essay Prize Competition**

- Launched our Ethics in Education programme
- Increased signatories to the Ethical Reading Recruitment Charter to 27
- Held our very first Community Forum
- Delivered 22 workplace wellbeing sessions for the council's Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services
- Planted 52 trees through our Trees for Reading initiative
- Increased our total membership and social media following to over 7,000



**1st**  
Community  
Forum



**14**  
events



Launched  
Ethics in  
Education

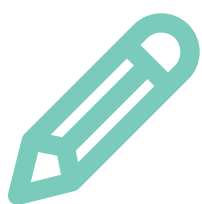


**22**  
workplace  
wellbeing  
sessions





Eventually we hope to spark a network of Ethical Cities, with other places around the world taking inspiration from what we're doing here.



27

organisations  
now signed  
up to our  
Recruitment  
Charter



52

trees  
planted



+7,000

membership & social  
media following



# OUR PROGRAMMES

## BUSINESS ETHICS AND CULTURE

We established our Business Ethics and Culture programme in 2019, working in collaboration with our Supporter, the University of Reading. Through this programme we work to help local organisations that are willing to go beyond compliance to fulfil their social purpose.

## BUSINESS ETHICS AND CULTURE INITIATIVES

### Code of Ethics

We worked closely with the University of Reading, to develop our Code of Ethics (CoE). The university provided a grant to support the project, and Professor Brad Hooker (now one of our directors) and Professor Emma Borg led its development.

While we initially developed the CoE to guide our own behaviour, we welcome other organisations to use it as a basis for creating their own.

We provide free onsite ethics briefings for local SMEs. Each session is tailored to the organisation and encourages staff to reflect on relevant ethical issues in a meaningful way.

### ► Read our Code of Ethics:

[ethicalreading.org.uk/programmes/business-ethics-and-culture/our-code-of-ethics/](https://ethicalreading.org.uk/programmes/business-ethics-and-culture/our-code-of-ethics/)



“It was a really interesting discussion and gave us an opportunity to explore our values in a hypothetical situation, which made it a safe way to debate different ideas. It was great that you had tailored the scenario to our business so we felt it was very relevant.”

**On-site briefing attendee, Holy Brook Associates**





## Reading Ethical Recruitment Charter

An Ethical Reading initiative

Supported by Reading Borough Council

### Reading Ethical Recruitment Charter

The Reading Ethical Recruitment Charter, launched in 2020 in conjunction with Reading Borough Council, is based on three pillars: Respect, Fairness and Transparency.

Signing up to the Charter gives organisations the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to ethical recruitment practices. We also share helpful guidance on how to take an ethical approach to recruitment through the Ethical Recruitment section of our website.

Anyone who feels they have not been treated fairly during the recruitment process by an organisation that has signed up to the Charter can report a breach, holding the signatories to account.

#### ➤ Find out more about the Charter:

[ethicalreading.org.uk/programmes/business-ethics-and-culture/ethical-recruitment/three-pillars-of-ethical-recruiting/](https://ethicalreading.org.uk/programmes/business-ethics-and-culture/ethical-recruitment/three-pillars-of-ethical-recruiting/)

### BUSINESS ETHICS AND CULTURE EVENTS – 215 TOTAL REGISTRATIONS

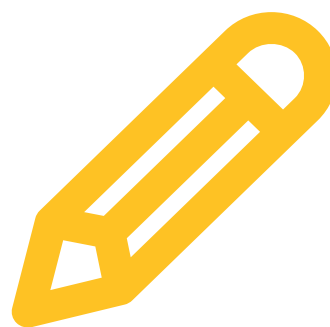
The practicality of ethics in business (Partner forum) – October 2021 – 37 registrations

The ethics of mandatory vaccination (meetup) – January 2022 – 40 registrations

What is your organisation doing about equality, diversity and inclusion? (webinar) – February 2022 – 51 registrations

The benefits of social purpose: giving meaning to your life and work (Partner forum) – March 2022 – 45 registrations

The future of work: what hybrid working means for you and your organisation (business briefing) – May 2022 – 42 registrations



# 27

organisations now signed up to our Recruitment Charter



# OUR PROGRAMMES

## ETHICS IN EDUCATION

Our new Ethics in Education programme is designed to encourage local secondary school and university students to develop their awareness and understanding of business ethics. We hope that getting involved will help participants hone their critical thinking skills and their ability to balance conflicting ethical considerations. This should lead to a wave of young people entering the local workforce with a solid understanding of the importance of taking an ethical approach at work.

We officially launched the initiative at an event at Leighton Park School in June 2022. It was attended by NatWest's Michael Waddelove, Deputy Mayor Deborah Edwards and representatives from other local schools including Reading Boys, Reading Girls, Bulmershe and The Abbey.

## ETHICS IN EDUCATION INITIATIVES

### Business Ethics in Schools

In 2021, one of our directors, Margaret Gardner, suggested that Ethical Reading's Partner organisations might like to encourage ethics education at the secondary school level. That led to a pilot programme run in association with Leighton Park School in the 2021-22 academic year. We arranged for A-Level Business students to interview people at our Partners NatWest and Grant Thornton then write up ethical appraisals of some of their company policies and procedures.

In March 2023 we're planning to co-host our first annual Business Ethics Fair with Leighton Park School. The aim is to involve students from both state and independent secondary schools, especially those studying for A-Levels in Business, Economics, Philosophy or Religious Studies, as well as interested BTEC, IB and GCSE students.

Our collective vision is to establish links between local schools and businesses, fostering understanding of the role of ethics in business among young people and nurturing an ethically-engaged future workforce.



### Business Ethics Essay Prize Competition

In 2021-22, we created a new competition for the best business ethics essay written by an undergraduate at the University of Reading, to encourage and celebrate undergraduates' interest in ethical issues that affect businesses.

The chair of the judging panel was Professor of Philosophy Philip Stratton-Lake. The winner was Daisy Theophilus, a third-year student on Reading's Ethics, Values and Philosophy BA programme. NatWest generously donated a prize of £250, which was presented by the university's Vice-Chancellor Robert Van de Noort and NatWest's Michael Waddelove. Both gave speeches, as did Reading's Mayor, Rachel Eden and Grant Thornton's Katherine Nicoll. The prize-giving was followed by a lunch for 20 people in the winner's honour, funded by Grant Thornton.

This will also be an annual event.

## ETHICS IN EDUCATION EVENTS

**Introductory session on business ethics for Leighton Park School's AS and A-Level Business students – November 2021**

**Business Ethics in Schools launch event at Leighton Park School – June 2022**

**Prizegiving ceremony for the Business Ethics Essay Prize Competition – June 2022**

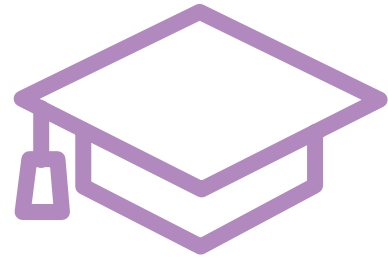


"NatWest Group is delighted to support business ethics at the University of Reading. Ethics in business is a discussion that should continue to evolve and mature as the world of business does. We are delighted to award Daisy with the prize for her exceptionally thought provoking and incredibly well researched paper."

**Mike Waddelove, Director of Working Capital Solutions Group and Invoice Finance, NatWest**

"It's fantastic that Ethical Reading has established an award which will further motivate students to explore and engage with ethical problems in business. I'm honoured to receive this prize. Thank you very much to Ethical Reading, the prize funder NatWest, and Grant Thornton who have funded today's celebratory lunch."

**Daisy Theophilus, prize winner**



**35**

Leighton Park students attended the introductory session in November 2021

**30**

people attended the launch of the Business Ethics for Secondary Schools initiative



**25**

people accepted invitations to attend the inaugural Business Ethics Essay Prize ceremony



# OUR PROGRAMMES

## WORKPLACE WELLBEING

We believe looking after its people is one of the most important aspects of an ethical organisation.

Through our Workplace Wellbeing programme we raise awareness of issues surrounding mental and physical health, especially in relation to work, and help to equip organisations to support their staff.

## WORKPLACE WELLBEING INITIATIVES

### Healthy and Ethical Workplaces

A strong ethical culture, built around core values like respect, compassion, fairness and integrity, provides a solid foundation for workforce wellbeing.

If people feel respected and valued at work they will be happier, more engaged, more productive and less likely to leave. Extensive research shows that companies that get this right also perform better.

Together with specialists from The Therapy House, Reach Remarkable and WTBG, we developed a one-day Thriving at work – by design! workshop. This helps organisations develop awareness of mental health and its importance and lay the groundwork for a sustainable improvements in wellbeing and productivity.



# 4.4/5

The average delegate ratings for the training we provided consistently exceeded 4.4 out of 5

We run the workshop two or three times a year, for delegates from various organisations, and also run bespoke sessions, customised to meet specific needs. This year our main activity has been rolling out training to over 300 staff in Reading Borough Council's Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services.

### Ethical Wellbeing Index

We've teamed up with one of our Partners, KAYA, to launch the Ethical Wellbeing Index, to help organisations more accurately measure the effectiveness of their investments in wellbeing.

This makes it possible to gauge the success of an initiative by measuring the wellbeing of individuals and teams before and after. It also enables organisations to benchmark how well they, or certain teams or departments, are doing compared to peers in their sector.

The core functionality is available free of charge to all Partners, for an initial one-off trial. The resulting report will provide a simple yet effective insight into an organisation's wellbeing and cultural environment and offer suggestions for improvements.

### Our workplace wellbeing vision

For Reading and the surrounding area to be a place where employees:

- Consider the ethical implications of all their decisions and actions
- Treat each other with respect
- Understand and accept their responsibilities towards themselves, their organisations, customers, society and the environment
- Feel their work contributes to a greater social purpose
- Feel valued, are fairly paid and are happy in their jobs
- Are encouraged to have a good work-life balance

### ➤ Find out more about Healthy and Ethical Workplaces:

[ethicalreading.org.uk/programmes/workplace-wellbeing/healthy-and-ethical-workplaces/](https://ethicalreading.org.uk/programmes/workplace-wellbeing/healthy-and-ethical-workplaces/)

### Healthy and Ethical Workplaces case study

Reading Borough Council's Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services (DACHS) has over 300 staff, who work in a variety of central, remote, and home locations.

Soon after joining DACHS as Executive Director, Seona Douglas attended one of our Thriving at work – by design! workshops. She was so impressed that she invited us to work with the DACHS management team to refine and implement a culture change programme, DACHS Energise – It Starts With Me.

We partnered with the council's Organisational Development & Learning team to:

- Tailor our standard workshop to their needs
- Provide training for managers and staff through our network of experts
- Provide specialist mental health training for the managers

We then ran a strategic planning workshop with DACHS senior management to create an embedding plan, to recognise and reinforce the desired behaviours.

Seona and her team are confident that, over the next two years, DACHS will establish itself as a truly healthy and ethical workplace, supporting the delivery of the highest quality services possible.

### WORKPLACE WELLBEING EVENTS – 98 REGISTRATIONS

**Are your investments in wellbeing initiatives working? (online discussion)**  
– July 2021 – 40 registrations

**Workplace relationships - the good, the bad and the ugly (meetup)** – May 2022  
– 32 registrations

**The Generation Z workforce: understanding their 'needs' and 'wants' (meetup)** – June 2022 – 26 registrations



"I am delighted with the way Ethical Reading have engaged with us to help design and implement the DACHS Energise programme. Results so far are very positive and we are now working to build on this by reinforcing and embedding positive behaviours throughout the department."

**Seona Douglas, Executive Director, DACHS**

"It's been very refreshing working with Ethical Reading on this programme. Feedback has been extremely positive, the facilitation of the sessions has been excellent and well received. The programme has certainly made a difference to support us on our journey to become a Healthy Ethical Workplace."

**Jo Lappin, Assistant Director – Safeguarding, Quality, Performance & Practice**



# OUR PROGRAMMES

## SUSTAINABILITY

We're committed to helping Reading-based organisations embed sustainability into what they do and contribute to improving the local and wider environment.

## SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES



**Trees for Reading**

An Ethical Reading initiative

### Trees for Reading

Our Trees for Reading initiative gives local organisations the opportunity to make a tangible positive difference to our town by funding the planting and care of trees.

We developed and run the initiative in conjunction with Reading Borough Council and Reading Tree Wardens, helping to make our town greener, healthier and happier. To maximise the impact of the initiative, we're focusing on planting substantial young trees in carefully chosen locations.

### Business-funded trees

We're grateful to BDB Pitmans LLP, Lincoln MGT and Thames Lido for funding the planting of 16 trees in the 2021-22 planting season.

A group of smaller businesses together contributed to our first tree funded jointly by the local business community. Thanks to Craft Box Club, Organico Realfoods, The Foraging Bee, TDP Photography, Kat Creative and The Castle Tap.

### Community-funded trees

We were able to plant four community-funded trees this planting season, in memory of people who have lost their lives to Covid-19 and other respiratory conditions. Thank you to all those who donated!

Adrian Lawson and Geoff Sawers also generously donated the royalties from their books *The Shady Side of Town* and *Rural Reading*, to fund a beautiful English walnut tree.



"Station Hill will positively transform Reading and our support for Trees for Reading demonstrates our commitment to making the town a greener, healthier, and happier place to live for both existing and future residents."

**Evan Reynolds, Senior Development Manager at Lincoln Property**

### Urban Tree Challenge Fund

We collaborated with our project partners Reading Borough Council and Reading Tree Wardens to apply for £20,000 from the Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge Fund, which the council committed to match. It was a lot of hard work, so we were delighted when we heard that we had been successful.

That resulted in an additional 30 trees being planted this year, in carefully chosen locations near schools and medical facilities in areas with low levels of tree cover and high levels of deprivation. A further 18 will be planted next year.

### Community collaboration

Council contractors water our trees for the first two years after planting, to give them the best possible start. Unfortunately, the hot, dry summer of 2022 was very tough on our newly-planted trees, and some of them really struggled.

We put a call out to the community for help with extra watering, and were relieved that individuals and organisations rallied around. Special thanks to the staff at Premier Inn, Reading Station and The Allied Arms for their help, as well as members of the Victoria Park Community Group.

### ➤ Find out how your business could get involved:

[ethicalreading.org.uk/donation-form/](https://ethicalreading.org.uk/donation-form/)



16

trees sponsored by  
three businesses



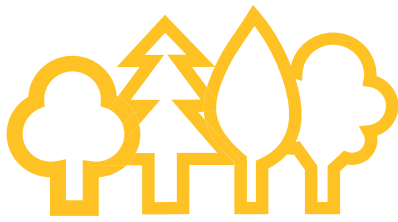
1

tree funded  
collectively by six  
small local businesses



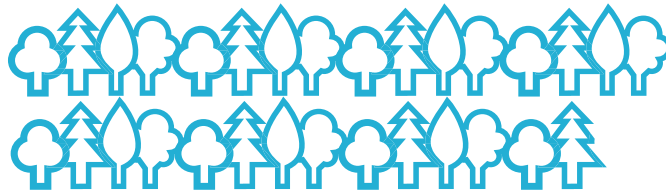
1

tree funded by the  
royalties from two  
local nature books



4

trees funded by the  
local community



30

trees funded by the Urban Tree  
Challenge Fund (UTCf)

80

The total number of trees planted since the  
initiative launched in November 2019



"We are delighted to have the  
opportunity to give back to the  
local community as part of the  
Trees for Reading initiative,  
continuing our mission to  
'build better' by enhancing the  
environment and taking steps  
to support the wellbeing of  
Reading's residents."

**Andrew Smith, Managing  
Partner, BDB Pitmans**





# OUR PROGRAMMES

## Cycle Security

In April 2020, at the start of the first lockdown, we held an online meeting for sustainability champions. One of the topics that came up was the need for secure cycle storage places to encourage people to use their bikes for transport.

This inspired some of our sustainability team volunteers to start investigating how we might collaborate with other local organisations to develop a centrally located bike hub.

A small working party started to look at a range of existing solutions elsewhere. Two that stood out were the Bike Hub in Stockton on Tees and the Crownsgate Shopping Centre Secure Bike Parking in Worcester. We used these as our inspiration and a starting point for investigating costs and possible funding options.

That September we held an event on the topic as part of the first Reading Climate Festival, in which we outlined our ideas for a secure bike cloakroom type set-up offering a range of complementary services. Feedback from this session indicated that concern about bike theft is indeed one of the key factors that discourages people from cycling into town.

Shortly after, we had a meeting with Tony Page, Deputy Leader of Reading Borough Council (RBC), who was very enthusiastic about the idea.

In August 2021, RBC announced that it had been awarded £249,000 from the Department for Transport Capability Fund to support active travel in the town, including setting up a secure bike parking hub.

During the next 12 months we met with council officers and people from Avanti Cycling, Reading Cycle Campaign and the Reading Bicycle Kitchen to help develop the plans. After a few false starts, RBC signed the lease for part of the former Primark store in West Street for the Secure Bike Parking Hub, scheduled to open in October 2022. We're delighted that an idea that came out of an Ethical Reading event has led to such an exciting addition to Reading town centre.

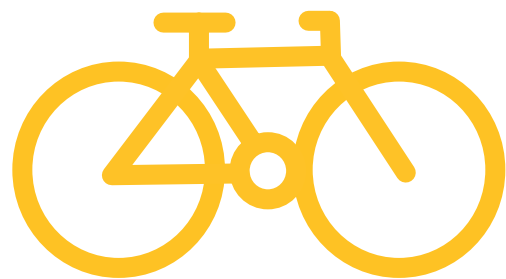
Dr Emma Street, from the Real Estate and Planning department of the Henley Business School, has a special interest in the local economic benefits of such facilities and has been extremely helpful throughout.

With our team's support, she gained funding for a student researcher to work over the summer, looking at data on bike use in Reading and identifying the key success criteria for the Secure Bike Parking Hub. Using these criteria to monitor and report on how the hub goes should help to support bids for future funding.

We also hope Emma may be able to help us build a compelling business case for creating further bike hubs around town.

### ► Find out more:

[media.reading.gov.uk/news/council-to-support-new-cycle-hub-in-town-centre](https://media.reading.gov.uk/news/council-to-support-new-cycle-hub-in-town-centre)



# 1

bike hub due to open  
in Autumn 2022



"We hope that the hub will encourage many more people to cycle, particularly those who have concerns with theft and/or vandalism. As we enter the recovery period, following the pandemic, supporting people's return to work via active travel is a priority for the Council. In addition, we need to incentivise travel by bike for leisure purposes, as well as encourage those who may not normally choose to travel this way to consider it as an option."

**Tony Page, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Reading Borough Council**

## SUSTAINABILITY EVENTS – 166 REGISTRATIONS

**Active travel to a net zero Reading  
(Reading Sustainability Festival) –  
September 2021 – 29 registrations**

**Circular route to a net zero Reading  
(Reading Sustainability Festival) –  
September 2021 – 41 registrations**





# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Joining us as a Partner is a great way for an organisation to demonstrate its commitment to ethical behaviour and making a positive contribution to society.

We're grateful to all our Partners and Supporters...

➤ **Discover the benefits of becoming a Partner:**  
[ethicalreading.org.uk/join-us/](https://ethicalreading.org.uk/join-us/)







# OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- Join one of our events to hear compelling speakers discussing a range of relevant ethical topics and get involved in the conversation
- Keep up with our news and upcoming events by following us on social media at **@ethicalreading** or joining our mailing list by following the link at the bottom of any page of our website
- Volunteer with us. We advertise specific vacancies on our website, but we're always glad to welcome new people to join our friendly team. Email us at: [support@ethicalreading.org.uk](mailto:support@ethicalreading.org.uk)

# LET'S CONNECT



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**Ethical Reading**  
Enabling ethical action