

# Our year: 2021/2

April 2021 to March 2022 saw the UK Government begin to dismantle the regulatory safety net that protects our food, our farms and the natural environment. That process has gathered pace since and we look forward to discussing both the last financial year and the challenges ahead at our online [Annual General Meeting on 3 November](#). Here, we share a brief summary of what happened, how we responded and what it all meant for our finances.

The political challenge we faced throughout the year was daunting but – thanks to new funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the support of our donors, members and all who value our work – GM Freeze continued to make a real difference by working flexibly and collaboratively across our agreed strategic priorities:

- To **oppose** the cultivation, import, production and sale of GM crops, seed, animal feed and food in the UK, by influencing policy and regulation of all forms of genetic engineering in food and farming.
- To campaign for greater **transparency** and support people's right to make informed choices

- about what they buy, use and eat.
- To change the **narrative** and win public support by effectively presenting the evidence-based case against GM across a range of channels and audiences.
- To provide an **umbrella** to support and build the network of organisations, campaigners and individuals that share our vision of a GM-free food and farming system.
- To **improve** our own effectiveness as an organisation.

In September 2021, then Secretary of State for the Environment George Eustice announced plans to give free rein for open field trials of genetically engineered plants if they “could have been produced through traditional breeding”, despite his department’s own consultation having revealed that both businesses and the public were strongly opposed to this approach. We worked intensively to brief politicians and ensure that key issues were aired in a parliamentary committee debate, on the floor of the House of Lords, and in a highly critical report by the House of Lords Secondary Legislation Committee.

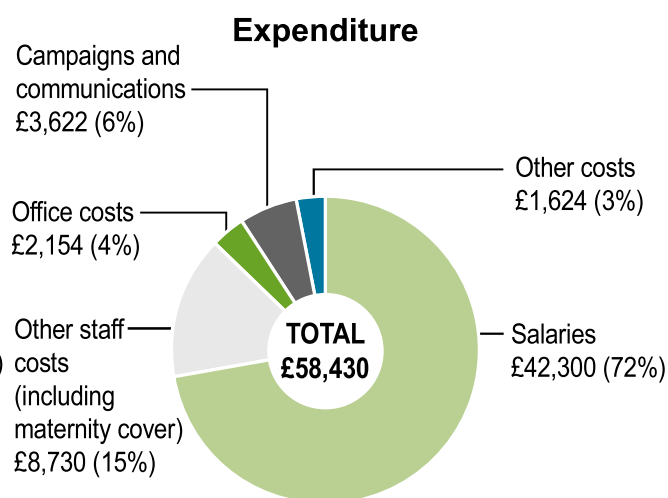
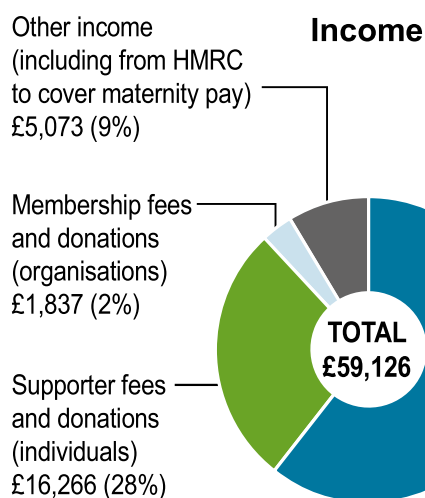
Even as the protections on these open field trials were being removed,

2021/22 saw four completely different applications to grow experimental GM crops under the existing rules. As in the past, GM Freeze led critical responses on behalf of civil society and the many members of the public who think these open air experiments are simply not worth the risk.

Similar detailed work came when England, Scotland and Wales had their first opportunity to make independent decisions about which GMOs to allow into the food chain. The Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland held a joint consultation and we submitted detailed reasons why none of the nine GM ingredients under consideration should be allowed into food or animal feed anywhere the UK.

We also worked hard throughout the year – both publicly and behind the scenes – to grow and support the range of groups, organisations and individuals willing to stand up for a responsible, fair and sustainable food system. Two specially funded projects focusing on this area of work came to an end during 2021/2 but supportive collaboration remains one of our core priorities, now and for the future.

## Our finances 2021/2



£3,764 of grant income received in previous years was brought forward to spend in 2021/2  
 £394 of grant income has been carried forward into 2022/3 for ongoing work.

Detailed accounts can be found on our website and will be presented at our [Annual General Meeting](#) which takes place online at 2pm on Thursday 3 November. The formal business will be followed by an update on the Genetic Technology Bill and an open discussion about what we can do to limit its damaging impact. Get in touch on [info@gmfreeze.org](mailto:info@gmfreeze.org) or 0845 217 8992 for details of how to join the meeting, including by telephone if you aren't online.