



## **LOCAL HEROES (VIRTUAL MARKET) INITIATIVE**

### **Proposed timeline**

Trade announcements: Wednesday 25th March 2020  
Press announcements: Friday 27th March 2020  
Website launch: w/c Monday 30th March 2020

## **INTRODUCTION**

Last week Food and Drink North East (FADNE) consulted with over 165 food and drink producers from across our region. Asking them how the COVID-19 crisis will effect their businesses. The results were startling, to say the least, with many stating the resultant downturn in trade would mean they could go out of business within one to three months.

The current crisis has changed everything, at least in the short-term, leaving many of our local producers fighting for survival. With retailers and routes to market closing down many are sitting on stock they cannot sell.

If something is not done to stimulate trade and kick-start cashflow we are at real risk losing many of our most innovative businesses. Devastating our regional economy and food identity as well as resulting in job losses totalling anywhere between 750 and 1850+.

This initiative is a proactive and coordinated response to this. But time is of the essence if we are to help.

## **THE INITIATIVE**

Food and Drink North East is creating the Local Heroes initiative. An online food market that promotes, sells and delivers high-quality local North East food and drink to homes and people across our region.

The aim is to connect local people to local food like never before.

Customers will order online via our website selecting one of a range of 'Local Heroes' boxes. Boxes can contain local fresh produce like meat, fish and dairy, fruit and vegetables, or store cupboard essentials like condiments or treats like chocolates, sweets, beer and wine. The boxes will also include food stories, recipe cards and promoting our region's 'culinary cultural assets' to ensure the survival of the sector beyond this crisis.



Every item will be sourced, produced and processed here in the North East and the resultant short supply chain will ensure fresher produce and a positive environmental impact as well as become a positive model for future trading beyond this crisis.

Each Local Heroes order will include a 10-15% 'community premium' to ensure we can supply free boxes and meals to the most vulnerable and hardest hit in our communities such as low-income families, the socially isolated, NHS staff etc.

By buying a box, customers will not only get to discover the best food and drink our region has to offer they'll help support local businesses and communities. Securing local jobs while protecting our regional culinary assets and identity.

## **HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

This initiative is currently completely self-funded and is being built from the grassroots up with the help a number companies, organisations and individuals with experience in storage, logistics, distribution, transport and digital technology who are all eager to see it succeed.

We will start with a 12 week pilot programme that will initially deliver across the North of Tyne area. However, should this be successful, it is our intention to expand availability across the whole of the North East region and we are currently actively seeing partners to enable this to happen.

Products for the pilot scheme are to be supplied as part of a vendor managed inventory (VMI) and remain vendor's property until sold. Once we have generated enough surplus and/or support we envisage being able to place regular wholesale orders with participating vendors as soon as we can.

We are now actively seeking support from local producers from anywhere across the North East. If you'd like your products to be included in the Local Heroes virtual market place pilot please contact Steven Morrison Cairns email [steven@fadne.org](mailto:steven@fadne.org) mobile: 07710 088 794 or Chris Jewitt at [chris@fadne.org](mailto:chris@fadne.org) mobile: 07915 313 696 for more details.

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