

NORTH EAST

Local Heroes

Market Trader Handbook

Standards, expectations and the way we work together

Issued by We Are Local Heroes

Edition 2026 · People, place, purpose and community.

Welcome to our Local Heroes community

Local Heroes events are more than just markets.

We're a community of producers, makers and small businesses committed to the North East.

Our markets bring those people together with the customers who care about meeting the person who made what they're buying.

This handbook sets out everything you need to know to trade with us – the standards we work to, the responsibilities you carry, and the principles that shape how we curate each market.

It exists for one simple reason: our markets only work when traders, organisers and the wider community pull in the same direction.

Please read it in full before your first market, and keep it to hand thereafter. If anything here is unclear, talk to us.

Our promise to you

We will run safe, well-organised, well-promoted markets that give your business the best possible platform – and we will be honest, consistent and fair in how we work with you. We'll champion you in our marketing, support you on the day, and stand alongside you when things get tough.

What we ask of you in return: the standards, conduct and care that this handbook describes – and a willingness to look out for the traders next to you, not just the customers in front of you.



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01 Our markets – places, people and ambition

Local Heroes delivers a programme of curated markets and events across the North East, each one rooted in a community we know and trust. We've built our reputation by showing up: running markets where they're needed, getting the basics right, and creating Saturdays that traders, customers and organisers all want to come back to.

Where we trade

Local Heroes has launched and run markets across Newcastle, South Tyneside and Sunderland. Some we run today; others we established, helped to put down roots, and have since handed over to independent management. The story below is the full picture.

MARKET	SETTING	CHARACTER & CONSIDERATIONS
MARKETS WE RUN TODAY		
Jesmond	<i>Inner Newcastle suburb</i>	Food-savvy, expectant customer base. High expectations on presentation and provenance. Strong demand for premium and speciality producers.
Hebburn	<i>South Tyneside</i>	Family-focused, community-rooted audience. Approachable price points and crowd-pleasers do particularly well. A market that rewards a friendly stallholder.
PILOT MARKET – LAUNCHING JULY 2026		
South Shields Market Square	<i>South Tyneside · 6-month pilot, weekly Saturdays</i>	Town-centre footfall in South Tyneside's biggest market square, with families, locals and coastal day-trippers through the summer. A different rhythm to Hebburn – a test of how a curated Local Heroes market lands in a civic-square setting, and a real chance for traders to help shape it from week one.

MARKET	SETTING	CHARACTER & CONSIDERATIONS
MARKETS WE LAUNCHED		
Sunniside	<i>Sunderland</i>	Launched and established by Local Heroes, now under independent management. Continues as a community fixture in Sunderland – and part of our track record of putting markets where they take root.
Sheepfolds Stables	<i>Sunderland</i>	Launched and established by Local Heroes in Sunderland's regenerated Sheepfolds quarter, now under independent management. Evidence of how we open new sites, build the audience and hand over a market that lasts.
PAST FLAGSHIP EVENT		
The Gaderung	<i>Ad Gefrin, Wooler (one-off)</i>	A one-off destination event we created, designed and delivered in partnership with Ad Gefrin in Wooler, Northumberland. The Gaderung brought North East producers and makers to a flagship Anglo-Saxon setting at significantly greater scale than our regular markets – proof of what we can deliver at the level of major regional events.

Our regular markets are Jesmond and Hebburn, with South Shields Market Square launching as a 6-month pilot from July 2026. Each site has its own personality, audience and practical considerations on the day – trading well at Local Heroes means understanding the place you're trading in. If you're new to a particular site, ask. We're happy to share what works there, what to expect on footfall, and how previous traders in your category have set up.



Our track record

This body of work – the markets we run today, the ones we've launched, the ones we've since handed to independent management – is the evidence base for how we work: we go where the need is, we put the work in to make a market take root, and we deliver to a standard that lasts.

Looking ahead

The expertise we've built is the foundation for what comes next.

How we work

- We promote our traders, not just our markets – your story is part of ours.
- We take a geographical North East approach to curation – from Teesside to Northumberland, Tyne and Wear to County Durham.
- We will always give preference to a regional producer, as long as you fit our criteria.

02 Markets as incubators

For most of our traders, a market stall is the beginning, not the destination. Our markets are the proving ground for new recipes, the testing ground for branding, and the launchpad for retail, wholesale and bricks-and-mortar growth. Producers who started with us have gone on to join Beyond The Kitchen Table, win retail listings including Fenwick, and open their own high street premises – taking with them the customers, brand and confidence built over Saturdays with us.

If you're already growing

If you're working with Beyond The Kitchen Table, in conversation with a retailer, or actively planning a permanent premises, tell us. We'll back the journey with the visibility your market days deserve, introductions where they're useful, and a platform that helps your story land.

How we support the incubation journey

- **Visibility** – putting the right traders in front of the right customers, week after week.
- **Feedback** – through customer interaction at the stall and our Post-Market Trader Survey, you learn what works and what doesn't, fast.
- **Connection** – our regulars trade alongside producers further along the same path; the trader community itself is part of the value.
- **Reputation** – being curated into Local Heroes is a credential that other partners, retailers and accelerators recognise.



03 Mandatory trading requirements

Every trader must hold the following before their first market and keep them current thereafter. Please send copies to the organisers in advance and let us know promptly if anything changes.

Documentation

- Food Hygiene Rating of 4 or above (let us know if a rating is pending).
- Public Liability Insurance to a minimum of £5 million.
- Gas Safety Certificate, where LPG is used.
- Written risk assessments covering food safety and health & safety, including:
 - food preparation and storage
 - manual handling
 - safe use of equipment.



04 Stall safety and securing

This is non-negotiable. Unsecured gazebos and stands can – and do – injure people. They also invalidate insurance and put the entire market at risk.

All gazebos, stands and awnings must be:

- Secured at all four corners.
- Weighted with appropriate commercial weights (not domestic substitutes).
- Reinforced with bungees and/or ratchet straps.

If your stall is not properly secured

You will be asked to make it safe before trading. Repeated or serious failures will affect your eligibility for future markets, regardless of how long you have traded with us.

05 Setup, trading and pack-down

You're responsible for everything you need to trade – stalls must be entirely self-sufficient, including gazebo, tables, lighting if needed, and all equipment required to trade safely and well. Early pack-down is not permitted unless agreed in advance with the organisers.

Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00am	Setup begins (unless otherwise agreed)
10:00am	Trading opens – stalls must be fully ready
3:00pm	Trading closes; pack-down may begin

Vehicles and unloading

- No vehicle access onto the trading area at any point – unload only at the designated points.
- Move your vehicle off site as soon as you have unloaded; please don't leave it blocking access for others.
- Trolleys are strongly recommended for transporting equipment to your pitch.
- No vehicle access onto site before the market has fully closed.

On-site facilities

- Power and water are not provided. Please plan accordingly.
- Generators are permitted only if they are silent.
- Volunteer cover may be available for short comfort breaks – ask a member of the team on the day.



06 Waste management

Waste is one of the most consistent points of friction at outdoor markets and one of the easiest to get right.

Core rule

Traders are responsible for removing all waste and rubbish generated by their stall. The on-site bins are for public use only and are strictly not for commercial waste.

Each bin collection costs the market approximately £22, and overflowing bins damage the event for every trader on site. Take all commercial waste away with you,

leave your pitch clean and clear, and return the space in the same condition you found it – or better. Repeated breaches will affect your eligibility for future events.



07 Presentation and professional standards

You were selected because of the quality of your product and your business. Market day is where that quality has to show up.

We expect every stall to be

- Clean, organised and visually appealing from the moment trading opens.
- Clearly branded and signed, with prices visible to customers.
- Presented with care – front-of-stall as well as the sides and back the public can see.

We expect every trader to be

- Friendly, welcoming and professional with customers.
- Respectful and supportive towards fellow traders, organisers and volunteers.
- A positive ambassador for both your own business and the Local Heroes community.
- Observe good personal hygiene in and around your stall and others.



08 Pitch fees and payment

2026 Pitch fees

PITCH TYPE	FEE
Hot Food	£55

PITCH TYPE	FEE
Producer	£45
Non-Food / CIC	£36

Invoicing and payment terms

- Invoices are issued three days before each event by the organisers.
- Payment is required immediately on receipt and must clear before the event.
- If payment has not been received by market day, we reserve the right to refuse entry on the day and reallocate the pitch.



09 Market overheads – where your fees go

We believe in transparency. Running a safe, professional market involves a number of fixed costs that are incurred whether twenty traders turn up or two. The figures below are typical per-market overheads.

COST ITEM	TYPICAL COST
Market licence	£250
TEN licence	£21
Staffing	£200
Waste management	£175
Portable toilets	£156
Insurance	£25

Despite ongoing increases in operating costs, we have made a deliberate decision to hold pitch fees at their current level to keep our markets accessible to small and emerging businesses.

Why prompt payment matters

Timely payment is not an administrative nicety. It is what allows us to:

- Pay licences, insurance and infrastructure costs up front.
- Commission the marketing and promotion that brings customers through the door.
- Keep delivering markets reliably, market after market.

Late or missed payments place direct pressure on the viability of the event and the wider programme.

Paying on time is a shared responsibility – and the simplest, biggest contribution any trader can make to keeping the market strong.



10 Cancellation policy

Weather

Local Heroes have an all-weather approach to our markets. We trade in rain, cold and grey skies. The exception is conditions that put public safety at risk – most often high winds.

How we make weather decisions

- We monitor multiple forecasts, including Met Office data, from the Monday before each market.
- We re-assess throughout the week as forecasts develop.
- Where possible, a final decision will be made at least 48 hours before the event so traders have time to prepare.
- We assess gust speeds as the primary factor, not just average wind speed – sudden gusts pose the greatest risk to gazebos and the public.

Beaufort Scale guidance

BEAUFORT	WIND SPEED	TRADING STATUS
4 – Moderate breeze	13–18 mph	Generally suitable with proper securing
5 – Fresh breeze	19–24 mph	Increased caution; enhanced securing essential
6 – Strong breeze	25–31 mph	Trading may become unsafe; viability under review
7+ – Near gale and above	32+ mph	Unsafe; high likelihood of cancellation

Final decisions also factor in site exposure, infrastructure and overall public risk.

Where we deem conditions unsafe, the market will be cancelled or adjusted and your pitch fee will be carried forward to a future date.

Please wait for official communication from the organisers. Don't make a call based on your own forecast app alone – we make the decision once, for the whole market.

Trader cancellation

- **More than 14 days' notice** – no charge.
- **Within 7–14 days** – 50% pitch fee.
- **Within 7 days** – 100% pitch fee.

No-shows

- No refunds or transfers will be issued for a no-show.
- Three no-shows or late cancellations within a calendar year will result in a 12-month suspension from all Local Heroes markets.

11 Curation and selection

Trader selection sits at the heart of everything we do. Our markets are curated to keep quality high, the offer balanced, and the experience consistently strong for customers and traders alike. **Selection is at the sole discretion of the organisers.**

What we look for

- Product quality, authenticity and originality.
- Local focus and provenance – priority for North East-based traders and producers using local supply chains.
- A particular focus on micro and small independent businesses.
- Low-waste, responsible and sustainable practices.
- Customer engagement, presentation and professionalism.
- Positive, collaborative behaviour towards fellow traders, organisers and the wider market.
- Inclusion, accessibility and alignment with our values.
- Reliability and a track record of regular, well-run attendance.

How we curate

- **Category caps.** As a general rule, we cap each category at two traders – and only where there is a clear point of difference between them.
- **Guest pitches.** Used to trial new businesses and add variety; guests must meet the same mandatory requirements as everyone else.
- **Balanced offer.** We curate against the wider mix of each market and the long-term direction of the programme.

A note on selection

Meeting the minimum requirements does not, on its own, guarantee acceptance. We curate against the wider mix of the market, the calibre of the offer, and the long-term direction of the programme.



12 Safety and safeguarding

Our commitment and our duty of care

Local Heroes operates community-led markets where every trader, customer and member of the public has the right to feel safe and secure. As the market operator, we owe a duty of care to our staff, our traders and our customers, and we take that responsibility seriously. This policy sets out how we discharge that duty: how to raise a concern, how we respond, and what traders can expect from us and what we expect from traders in return.

Scope and limitations

Local Heroes is the market operator. Our role is to manage the market environment, to respond reasonably and proportionately to concerns raised with us, and to involve the police or other authorities where a situation calls for it. We are not a security or

emergency service, and our markets are public spaces, so while we do everything reasonable to keep the market safe and welcoming, we cannot guarantee the conduct of every individual who attends. Nothing in this policy creates a guarantee of a specific staffing level, response time, or outcome.

On the day: who is responsible

A named member of the Local Heroes team acts as market manager and responsible person on site for the duration of each market. Their name and contact number are made available to traders in advance and on the day. Traders should be able to identify and reach the market manager at any point during trading hours. Where the manager is dealing with another matter, they will respond as soon as they are reasonably able.

Raising an alarm or concern

If you have a safety or safeguarding concern – about your own safety, another trader, a customer, or a member of the public – raise it directly and privately with the market manager as soon as possible. The earlier we know, the more we can do.

Concerns should be raised discreetly and in private, not aired across the market. This is deliberate: it allows us to respond calmly and proportionately, protects the privacy of those involved, and avoids causing unnecessary alarm among other traders and customers. Discretion is part of handling a concern well, not a way of minimising it.

If someone is in immediate danger, seriously injured, or a crime is happening now, call **999**. For a medical situation that isn't life-threatening, call **111** (NHS non-emergency). To report a non-urgent matter to the police, call **101**. In every case, tell the market manager as soon as you can.

When raising a concern, please give as much detail as you reasonably can – what has happened, who is involved, and whether there is any ongoing risk.

How we respond

Once a concern has been raised, the operator takes responsibility for the response. This includes assessing the situation, deciding what action is reasonable and proportionate, managing communication about the matter, and carrying out any

additional due diligence or monitoring that the circumstances call for. Traders are not expected to investigate or manage a concern themselves once they have reported it – that responsibility sits with us.

Depending on the circumstances, our response may include speaking with those involved, increasing our attention to a particular area or individual, relocating a trader, asking an individual to leave the market, contacting the police, or recording the matter for follow-up. Where a concern involves a child or vulnerable adult, or where a criminal offence may have occurred, we will escalate to the police and any relevant authority without delay. We keep a written record of significant incidents.

Confidentiality

We handle concerns sensitively and share information only with those who need to know in order to respond, or where we are required to do so by law or to protect someone from harm. We cannot promise absolute confidentiality where there is a risk to safety.

Trader responsibilities

As a condition of trading with us, traders are expected to:

- Behave respectfully and lawfully towards other traders, customers, staff and the public at all times.
- Take reasonable care of their own safety and that of anyone assisting them on their stall.
- Raise safety and safeguarding concerns promptly, directly and privately with the market manager, as set out above.
- Co-operate with reasonable instructions from the market manager, including in relation to safety.
- Not place themselves, their staff or the public at risk through the conduct of their stall.

Traders remain responsible for their own staff, equipment and stall, and for holding their own appropriate insurance.

Breaches

We may suspend or remove a trader from the market, with or without notice, where their conduct presents a risk to safety, breaches this policy, or is otherwise

incompatible with a community-led, welcoming market. Decisions of this kind are at the reasonable discretion of Local Heroes.

Review

This policy is reviewed periodically and may be updated. The current version forms part of the Local Heroes Trader Handbook and the trader terms and conditions.

13 Code of conduct

Our markets are built on respect – for our customers, for each other, and for the communities that make space for us. This code sets out the behaviour we expect from everyone who trades with us. It applies on site, in the trader community, and in any dealings connected to Local Heroes. We ask every trader to share these standards and to help us hold them.

Respect and dignity

Treat customers, fellow traders, staff, volunteers and the public with courtesy and professionalism at all times. A welcoming, good-humoured market is something we create together, and the way you treat the people around you is part of the offer.

Behaviour we will not accept

To keep our markets safe and welcoming for everyone, the following have no place at a Local Heroes market:

- Abusive, threatening or aggressive language or behaviour.
- Harassment, bullying or intimidation of any kind.
- Discriminatory, racist, homophobic, transphobic or otherwise hateful or intolerant language or conduct – towards anyone, at any time.

We take this seriously. Conduct of this kind may lead to a trader being asked to leave the market, and to a review of their place in the Local Heroes community.

Personal conduct and presentation

Arrive fit and ready to trade, and conduct yourself in a way that reflects well on you, your business and the wider market. Keep things professional with customers and neighbouring traders, even when the day is busy or tough.

Hygiene

Maintain a high standard of personal and food hygiene throughout the day. Ours is a food-led environment, and clean, careful practice protects customers, your reputation and everyone trading around you.

Smoking and vaping

Please do not smoke or vape at or around stalls, food or the trading area. Use designated areas well away from the public and from any produce.

Working with the steward

A Local Heroes Market and Event Steward is on site to keep the day running safely and well. Please co-operate with their reasonable instructions. The steward acts for Local Heroes and may ask a trader to put something right, pause, or step away where conduct falls short of this code.

If standards slip

We would always rather have a quiet word than take a hard line, and most things are resolved that way. Where they are not, breaches of this code are handled at the reasonable discretion of Local Heroes – from a friendly reminder through to suspension or removal – in line with the trader terms and conditions. High standards are how we keep our markets somewhere people are glad to be.

14 Feedback, growth and performance

Local Heroes exists to incubate and grow local businesses, not just host them. We treat every market as something to learn from – and the single most important source of that learning is you.

The Post-Market Trader Survey

After every market, we send out a short Post-Market Trader Survey. Completing it is one of the most valuable things any trader can do for the programme – and, candidly, for their own business.

Why the survey matters

The survey is how we measure how each market actually performed – not just how it felt on the day. The data shapes real decisions: which sites we keep, how we lay them out, when we open and close, how we promote, and which categories need more or fewer traders.

If you don't fill it in, that intelligence is missing – and the next market is poorer for it.

How it works

- Complete the survey for every market you trade at – ideally within 48 hours, while the day is still fresh.
- Be honest and specific. Numbers, observations and examples are far more useful than general impressions, and positive feedback is just as valuable as the critical kind.
- Flag anything time-sensitive directly to the organisers; the survey is for patterns, not emergencies.
- We use the data to track performance, rebalance categories, refine site layout and marketing, and build the case for traders to step up to larger events.

Performance review

- We monitor performance on an ongoing basis, using survey data alongside our own observations.
- Underperformance – commercial, operational or behavioural – may lead to a review of your continued participation. Where possible, we'll talk to you first.
- Strong performance and engagement, equally, are how traders earn first refusal on our biggest events.



15 Trader stories

Every trader within the Local Heroes community has a story – how they started, what they make, why it matters to them.

We celebrate those stories because they're what makes our markets feel like a community rather than a row of stalls. As our trader community grows we'll feature them in future editions of this handbook.

If you'd like to be featured, talk to the organisers.

16 Market charter

Our charter is a public statement of what Local Heroes stands for – and a shared commitment between us, our traders and the communities we serve.

We expect traders to share these commitments and to embody them on market day.

Together, we commit to

- ◆ Celebrating North East food culture.
- ◆ Strengthening local supply chains.
- ◆ Promoting collaboration and community – supporting the trader next to us as well as the customer in front of us.
- ◆ Advocating for provenance, authenticity and quality.
- ◆ Supporting the regional economy and making local food accessible.
- ◆ Reducing the environmental impact of what we do.
- ◆ Educating future generations about food, farming and craft.
- ◆ Championing innovation and entrepreneurship.
- ◆ Respecting people and place.

Let's grow together.

17 Contact and acknowledgement

Trader acknowledgement

By trading with Local Heroes, you confirm that you have read, understood and agree to abide by the standards, requirements and policies set out in this handbook.

TRADER NAME

DATE

SIGNATURE
