

CONNECT LOCAL

East Lothian Food and Drink

Connect Local chats to East Lothian Food and Drink

Could you tell us what East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd is all about?

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd is a business improvement district that supports food and drink producers based in East Lothian. We currently have over 40 members, who produce everything from chocolate to smoked fish!



We celebrate the provenance and quality of East Lothian produce, and aim to reveal East Lothian as a quality destination for food and drink products. We want to support the future growth and sustainability of the food and drink industry both within and beyond East Lothian.

You were awarded Connect Local regional food funding in 2019. What have you used this funding for and how has it helped the development of the platform?

In 2019, we received funding from the Connect Local Regional Food Fund. The funding allowed us to add new features to our website, namely:

1. Information about food & drink jobs

The purpose of this section of the website is to make people more aware of the employment opportunities within the food and drink industry. Our members can now advertise job vacancies on the website and can also use this section of the site to promote any apprenticeship or work experience opportunities. As well as the job listings, we have also included a helpful FAQ section, which signposts visitors to useful employability resources. We are also visiting local schools to chat about the different opportunities that are available as we really want to showcase the food and drink industry as an exciting and varied career option.

2. Information about events & tours

We felt it was important that our members were not only recognised for their amazing products but also their fantastic visitor attractions. The new section of the website lists information about our members foodie attractions and is a useful resource



to both locals and visitors who are looking to have a foodie experience in East Lothian.

This section of the website also lists events that our members are attending. From Christmas fairs to gin tastings, we can now let people to know where they can meet producers and buy their amazing produce.

3. A member's forum

Our members are spread across the county and they don't always have the time to meet with each other face to face. We wanted to facilitate collaboration and created a member's forum. The forum will allow our members to communicate with one another online and to share best practice.

4. East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd supporters

The changes to our website have allowed us to launch a supporters membership for non-food and drink producers (e.g farm shops, delis, restaurants and hotels). We hope that this will allow us to create more of a community between producers and businesses that use and promote local food and drink. The updated website includes information about our supporters.

Why is it so important to promote local food and drink and food tourism?

1. There are lots of reasons why it is important to promote local food and drink, and food tourism:
2. Local food and drink is great quality.
3. Buying local food and drink supports the local economy.
4. Buying local food and drink reduces food miles.
5. Local food and drink creates a community.

Do you have any exciting goals for 2020?

East Lothian Food and Drink Ltd want to encourage more young people to think about a career in



food and drink. We plan to visit local schools to speak about the industry; to promote the job opportunities available and to share stories from our members about their career experiences. We hope that by engaging with young people that we can support the growth of the food and drink industry.

Throughout 2020, we will continue to promote East Lothian as a quality destination for food and drink by showcasing our members, their businesses and their amazing products!

Connect Local is delivered by a team of experts from SAC, SAOS, Scotland Food & Drink and Seafood Scotland and funded by Scottish Government and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

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