



GETTING ORGANISED 1

THE MARKET PLAN

This guidance covers the issues and practicalities you need to think about in running a farmers' markets. It forms the basis for the documents you need to develop, like the constitution and the market's business and operating plans. These should be 'living documents', which you review regularly, referring back to these documents, and so they contain information about what you want to achieve, and how the market is run and funded. They will also help with fund-raising, for example when applying for local authority grants.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

What are the key objectives of the Market?

For example, is it to provide an outlet for local food producers; to bring the local community together; to create an opportunity for the community to buy good quality fresh food at reasonable prices; to provide income for other local projects (for example, a Village Hall); to supplement the local tourist strategy; is it meant to be run as a not-for-profit operation?

How will the market be constituted?

It could be set up as a Registered Charity, a Limited Company, a Co-operative or a Community Interest Company for example. There is considerable variety in Kent as to how markets are constituted but we would suggest that you agree on what works best for you and start off simply, which could be as straightforward as a subcommittee of the Parish Council, village hall committee or just an independent group with its own constitution. We can provide additional advice on this if required.

What are the likely running costs?

How much will you spend on advertising, signage, space rental, power, heating and insurance? Who provides tables, gazebos or tents? If you leave this to individual stallholders, it will bring a lack of uniformity and presentational quality though, on the other hand, it may add character. Providing stalls yourself adds significantly to start up costs and you will need to arrange to have them put up and taken down for each market.

Funding and grants

In order to get the market off the ground, you will probably need some working capital to cover initial expenditure (for example, stall equipment, advertising boards and advertising in local papers, brochures, hire of venue, telephone, printing and so on). Stall fee income



Also see:

[Draft Constitution](#) ►



will eventually come in but you will need to anticipate spending money up front. It may be possible to approach your local council for a grant to help cover some of these fees, otherwise we suggest you discuss grants with KFMA who may be able to help find some other means of finance.

How will the market operate?

You need to decide on the opening times, location and frequency of the market. What will be the number, type and variety of stallholders? What standards will you expect from your stallholders/producers? We recommend that you set up a separate Bank Account for the market. You will require application forms and guidance for stallholders.

Volunteers are going to be needed to help to put out the signs, setting up and taking down the market, cleaning up, collecting the fees, acting as treasurer, assisting with stallholder arbitration and liaison and other tasks. It is imperative to have enough people to help throughout the year as the frequency and timing of the market could be defined by the number of volunteers you have and the time they are willing to offer unless you employ a market manager.

How will the market be managed?

A formal Management Committee should be set up and should meet regularly to oversee market operations and promotional activities. A Market Manager should be identified to have responsibility to ensure the market runs successfully. You should consider whether this should be a voluntary or a part-time paid role. This will need to be factored into your income/expenditure calculations. Others may be responsible for liaison with official bodies such as Hygiene and Highways, and a Treasurer will be needed look after the financial operation of the market.



Also see:

[A guide to setting up a Farmers' Market ►](#)

How to develop your customer base

Why should customers change their present shopping habits and come to your market? Will they come from the immediate vicinity or within say, five miles? This is dependent to a certain extent on having the right mix of stallholders (for example, quality meat, bread, vegetables and fish plus other interesting products). Other aspects to consider include whether you anticipate any major difference between the number of customers attracted in **summer** and **winter**.

How many stallholders will you have and what products will they sell?

Both quality and variety is all important. Fortnightly and especially monthly markets and/or those in towns tend to be bigger (25 stalls



Also see:

[Managing Stallholders ►](#)



upwards) because they attract more shoppers to every market; weekly markets and/or those in villages have a loyal but smaller following, so naturally cannot sustain as many stalls, around 10-20.

All markets should have a core of basic suppliers: meat, bread, fish and vegetables but these need to be augmented by diverse stalls such as preserves, cakes, chocolates, pies, dairy, eggs and so on. Depending on size and demand, you may decide to have two of some stalls. For example, you might have two meat stalls where one might specialise in beef and another in game or pork and lamb. Supplementary and seasonal stallholders can also be added on a regular basis, For instance, flowers, ice-cream, hot soups, herbs, plants, and ready meals could be considered.

The way that farmers' markets in Kent recruit stallholders is quite varied: it may be via local knowledge, talking to other market managers or simply by spending time visiting other markets to talk to stallholders. We can help with this in a number of ways; for example, see the section on **potential stallholders** (i.e. stallholders who have informed us they want to trade at other markets).

Occasionally you may find that you have disagreements with stallholders. To help avoid this situation before it arises we would recommend that you initiate a 'contract' with your stallholders. This ensures they understands the rules of your market and both you and the your stallholders sign it and keep copies The following draft is based on the Agreements used by Wye and Shipbourne FM. which you may find useful when drawing up your own stallholder agreemnet.

In all cases, the market is responsible for maintaining a file of information for each stallholder comprising a signed agreement of the market rules, copies of relevant Insurance policies and food hygiene certificates for those preparing and selling food. This file should be updated annually. The file will be checked by your local Environmental Health Inspector as part of your compliance to retailing of food.

Times and length of market

Weekday markets are in mornings and afternoons, and both can be successful. Weekend markets are usually only in the morning. As for length of market, we recommend keeping it short: 2 to 2.5 hours. Remember that setting up and taking down takes time, and stallholders have travel time and packing and unpacking their vehicles to add on, so even a 2 hour market can be a 4-5 hour commitment. We also find that shopper numbers are not increased by being open longer – the only exceptions being if you want to be open around the local school run, or in a town centre and want to catch the lunchtime shoppers



or commuters on their way home.

Frequency and Day of the Week

Markets are usually weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Weekly markets tend to be on weekdays; monthly markets on weekends. The decision will depend on a number of factors. Firstly, the availability of organisers. Weekly markets can become vital community services, for example where there is no longer a village shop, but they require a lot of dedication, both on market days and in putting up and taking down roadside banners and distributing promotional material. Options may be limited by stallholders' availability, especially for products where there is a shortage of local producers, like fresh produce. It is well worth visiting a variety of established markets to see the differences, and chat to other managers to learn from their experiences. Finally, it is easier to become more frequent if the market proves a success than to reduce frequency if a weekly market cannot be sustained.

How many craft type stalls should you have?

We would recommend that, to begin with, you try and focus upon food and produce stalls. A useful guide is to consider up to ten-percent of overall capacity being made available for craft type stalls. If you have much more than 10%, shoppers who come expecting a farmers' market consisting mostly of food and drink will be disappointed, and you would be better calling it a community market. This will help maintain the overall character of the market. However, you may actively plan additional 'guest stalls' to match events such as Mothers' Day, Christmas, Easter and so on. You need to be guided by your local circumstances and your ambitions for the market which may change over time.

Guest Stalls

Add, "You also need to consider whether to allow 'guest stalls'. These are ones which do not comply with the Stallholder Standards. Sometimes, they may be necessary to create diversity for shoppers, or in cases where it is impossible to find a local producer for a key product. However, it must be made transparent to shoppers that the stall/produce is distinctive from the spirit of the market, eg that the produce is not local. In general, no more than 10% of the market's annual stall population should be guest stalls, otherwise the market no longer meets shoppers' expectations of a farmers' market.

Setting standards

You will need to set the standards you expect stallholders to comply with together and put in place your checking process.

All this will need to be communicated to stallholders. Standards

should include definitions of 'locally produced', 'fresh', 'direct from the producer' and so on. The essence is about how best to build upon the ethos of a sustainable local economy.



Also see:

[Stallholder Standards](#) ►



You may have to accept a pragmatic degree of 'hybrid' stallholders to meet local demand. (Finding fresh lemons in Kent is still not possible, but walnuts and olives are becoming more likely!)

How much should you charge?

The fee rates for stallholders vary throughout Kent, ranging from £5 to £30 and are dependent upon the size of the stall, the facilities provided, the location and capacity of the market, its likely shopper population, its running costs, future prospects and what the stallholder believes is economically viable.

We recommend flat fees rather than anything related to turnover or percentages. Openness and transparency is important and it is not unusual to consider negotiating putting up fees after a reasonable period of time but this should not come as a surprise to stallholders!

Promoting the market

It is a good idea to set your priorities for the first year. These should relate to three distinct interlocking dimensions: what's being sold, who to and how are you going to get customers to come to the market?



Also see:

Customers – How to attract them ►

- 🍌 **What are you selling?** This is focused on the number and type of stalls you have, the product range available and any local comparisons that can be made.
- 🍌 **The numbers and types of shoppers.** How many shoppers do you think the market can cope with? What is your catchment areas and, ideally, do you have an estimate of the average disposable income levels in your area?
- 🍌 **What media outlets are available and what is the message?** This will need to reflect local circumstances and can change over time. Relentless promotion of your market is an ongoing task and one of your most important areas for attention. Remember that advertisers are targeting your shoppers on a day-to-day basis and, inevitably, you are competing with this.

Our experience tells us that what seems to work as a form of **primary** promotion is a combination of well-placed and clear road signs, advertisements and/or press releases in the local newspapers and free broadsheets, notices in public areas and in local businesses plus brochures, leaflets and business cards. For **secondary** promotion, amongst other things, a website is useful but the impact of this can be variable.

- 🍌 **A launch event.** This is an excellent way to create initial interest in a new market. Invite the press (but don't be surprised if they don't turn up!). Take photographs and write a press release to make their life easier. (You will find more information on event is in the Events section of the guide).



Venue

Research potential sites carefully as this is critical to successful markets. Is an indoor or an outdoor venue more appropriate or, perhaps, both types can be found? Factors that need to be taken into consideration include weather restrictions, time of year, site access, public transport, number of traders, parking facilities and traffic congestion. Proximity to cash machines is also a factor. Does the local Post Office counter service offer cash for example? You will also need to think about how the market should be laid out to give shoppers good visibility of the produce and stallholders, and vice-versa!

Parking

This is vital. Not only must there be adequate parking but ease of parking, together with continuous in/out movement and possible entrance/exit congestion, must be taken into account. You may need a full-time parking attendant to keep the traffic moving.

Planning Permission

You will need to contact your local Council for advice on whether any additional planning permission will be needed to run the event. Initially, write in with details giving as much information as possible with regard to your market. If planning permission is required, an application form will be sent out which then needs to be filled in and submitted for review. You need to allow plenty of time for this before your first market. You may even need planning permission for temporary signage, and it is essential that your Local Authority realise that the signage is of a temporary nature otherwise you may well have to pay a fine to retrieve signs 'taken into custody'.

Licensing

If you are planning to have any street trading or road closures you will need to apply for a license. Additionally, if alcohol is being sold to the public, a separate license will be needed.

Health and safety

Your local council's Environment and Health Services will give advice to potential stallholders on health and safety issues. This should be discussed at an early stage. In addition, the market should produce a simple health and safety policy and complete a risk assessment which will ensure the main concerns are covered.

Food and safety

The council's Food and Safety Division will give advice as to stallholder legal requirements. They will visit the market occasionally to check compliance (for example, labelling of produce, cleanliness and so on).



Also see:

[Health and Safety](#) ►

[Market Risk Assessment](#) ►



Insurance

You need to ensure that each trader has adequate Public Liability insurance (£10 million) and that the grounds or building you hold the market in are adequately covered. The Association has negotiated a comprehensive market Insurance policy with NFU Mutual.

Electricity

This will be required for refrigeration. All external connections must be approved. Stallholders may bring their own generators so the noise factor is important.



Disclaimer

The information and advice and guidance on this site is provided in good faith, and is for general purposes only, and any reliance you place on such information is therefore at your own risk. Weather conditions and seasonality may impact availability of produce and stall holder attendance at markets, and so we cannot guarantee the accuracy of all information.

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