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November 2021

# East Cambridgeshire Host Sites

## Feedback and comments

Food vans bring huge value to communities in East Cambridgeshire and the wider area. Food traders and current host sites work cohesively with host sites benefiting from additional footfall, mobile caterers working to earn a living from a wider customer base, and customers experiencing high quality and carefully monitored street food.

Mobile catering contributes to the economic, cultural and social life in multiple communities. We are aware of at least 28 food vans and pop-ups, employing multiple members of staff, who are active food traders working out of at least ten host sites in East Cambridgeshire. Furthermore, food vans visiting rural locations contributes to the green initiative by reducing traffic as people do not have to travel so far for food options.

Sites such as pubs cannot afford to pay chefs and therefore cannot open their kitchens throughout the week. Food vans drive footfall to these locations which increases trade. Charities, religious organisations and community-run sites cannot afford to pay any additional fees as charitable enterprises.

The overwhelming feed back from the host sites is that they simply cannot afford to pay any additional fees on top of their current rents and rates. Furthermore, there is the collective view that as they host vans on their private property, the Council does not have jurisdiction on their land.

The threat of making it mandatory for host sites to pay a fee will result in zero host sites and therefore no vans operating in East Cambridgeshire. All parties will lose out including the host sites, food trades, customers and the council who will not be able to collect any fees from

food traders. We suggest working together with foodPark, and NCASS to help identify alternative cost recovery schemes and takeaway the cost to host sites.

In conclusion, although we are happy that East Cambridgeshire District Council has chosen to adopt a new Street Trading Policy in line with modern street food practices, we feel that the introduction of host site fees will be damaging to multiple hospitality businesses and charitable enterprises in the area and we would welcome further discussions to find a solution that suits all parties involved.

Listed below is information, feedback and comments from host sites that we are aware of who currently invite food vans in East Cambridgeshire.

### **Host Site 1: Pub**

- “We have a successful partnership between our pub and food traders”
- This village pub invites vans to trade at their site on a regular basis because it drives footfall to the pub and partly because they cannot afford to open their kitchen or pay chefs
- If they cannot continue to host vans, it may not be viable for them to stay open on some evening which is detrimental to business
- They believe this is their private property and as they pay council tax, rents and rates, they have the right to use their land how they see fit
- May consider paying a lower rate in line with street traders or stop having vans altogether

### **Host Site 2: Charity**

- Hosts one van per month
- Benefits the community and residents of the village
- Does not believe the Charity Commission would allow any payment to be made as fee to be a host site owed to the Council would not be considered a charitable donation
- This site has looked at the legislation and they do not accept visits count as street trading
- The food vans operate on private property and there is no public access without consent
- “Visits by the food vans are greatly valued and it would be a great pity if they had to cease because of an unjustified and uneconomic cost being imposed”
- Wishes to challenge the council directly

- Will not pay

### **Host Site 3: PUB**

- Values having food vans on site so much that they do not charge for them to be on site because they are grateful for the footfall
- Will not pay

### **Host Site 4: CHARITY**

- “We host vans once per week , very successfully”
- This charity is totally self funded so any fees paid to the site by the traders goes straight back to the charity
- “Food vans are a high priority for us and have been described as a ‘god send’ and ‘a stroke of genius’ by people who visit them here”
- “If we were forced to pay an imposed as well as the electricity bill for the vans to use our power, we would not be able to afford to have any vans so this is totally unviable”
- Will not pay

### **Host Site 5: Industrial Estate**

- It is not worthwhile
- Will not pay”

### **Host Site 6: PUB**

- "The food vans that visit bring trade to my pub which may not be able to stay open. If this goes ahead then is going to really make my business suffer as a lot of my trade now comes in because of the food vans...I wont be able to afford the fee so if the food vans don't come, I don't have the customers therefore the village wont have a pub.”
- Will not pay

### **Host Site 7: PUB**

- Vans visit one or two times per month
- “I do not have food vans for the pub so much as for the community...this is going to severely impact my business which is already struggling...I find this threatening by the Council”

- Will not pay

**Host site 8: Community Centre**

- “This is a Community centre run by the community. We have a free vans here every so often...We have already had to make redundancies here... we don't even charge the vans because they bring such a huge benefit to the area.”
- Will not pay

**Host Site 9: Parish Council**

- This will need to be discussed further at the at Parish Council meeting but it's unlikely they will move forward with this