

Buy Local South East

Key aims as set out in May 2020.

The food and drink sector has been moving up the regional government agenda, and there has been a growth in food tourism and a consumer move to buy British and more sustainably. Covid 19 has brought the role of the food and drink sector in our regional economy into sharp focus. The lockdown closures have impacted the hospitality sector and its supply chain very hard. The project aims to capitalize on the focus on buying locally and support businesses to rebuild and recover.

How did this change?

Delays to the contract meant that key milestones not only moved but by the time we were able to 'launch' the business landscaped had changed. Instead of recruiting business involvement in lockdown, it fell into the re-opening period. Business support planned to be delivered in the Autumn had to be delayed to prevent it falling within the crucial Christmas trading period (Mid Oct to Dec). The impact of the variants and subsequent lockdowns also altered the business and consumer landscapes again.

Impacts / Deliverables

The project was still able to deliver the www.buylocalfoodanddrinkwebsite.co.uk and a link to the East Sussex site. We listed 728 businesses across 3 counties. The differing levels of engagement reflect the starting positions in each county – Kent had an established food group with established networks and communications, Sussex had a similar smaller network and Essex was starting from virtually nothing. The business network has increased in all counties and the consumer audience has also grown. Final measurement survey was impacted by the impacts of reopening, rises in infection, the 'pingdemic' and an overall sense of exhaustion. Businesses stressing they are focused on revenue generation, staff and customer welfare and essential activity only.

Training and business support

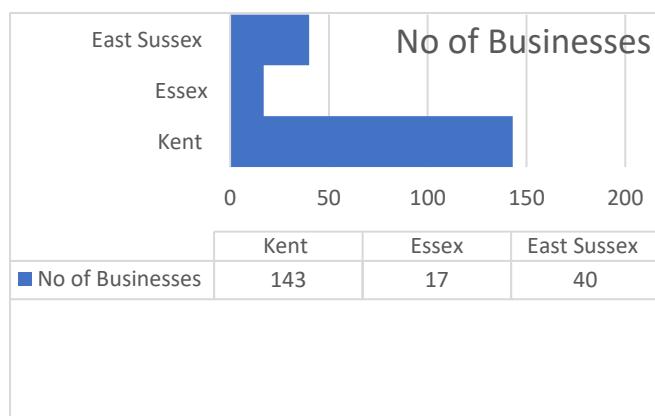
A survey was carried out to assess the needs of businesses signed up to the project – looking at ways we could support them with a focus on digital needs to reflect the move to online retail and promotion as the pandemic developed.

This led to a series of 5 online workshops which were created to work together as a series, but also stand alone. 200 businesses registered to attend. Many businesses registering for

multiple sessions.11 registering for all 5. In addition videos were uploaded to the website and viewed 113 times.

Website & Marketing.

The project created simple brands, using the existing Help Kent Buy Local as a starting point. They offered the opportunity to create 'local' identities as well as bringing the counties together under the South East banner. PR generated coverage in local publications and nationally and had an impact on 6M people, and reached an estimated readership of 2.5 Billion people.



Sussex Food and Drink @sussexfoodies - Mar 8

Sussex Food & Drink Businesses - sign up here for several FREE one hour workshops to help you with your PR, marketing and online sales:
buylocalfoodanddrink.co.uk/news/buy-local...
[#helpsussexbuylocal](#) [#sussexfoodanddrink](#) [#buylocalsoutheast](#)

Buy Local South East Fully Funded Business Support
 Help to support business recovery and return to growth

About the project

The **Buy Local South East** project has been made possible thanks to funding support from the **South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)**. It will support the local food and drink sector across Essex, Kent and Sussex through marketing campaigns and business support.

Business Support

A series of fully funded workshops and 1:1 business support opportunities will take place during February and March - You can see the [full programme here](#)

This page will also host videos from the workshops, so if you were unable to attend on the training days you can watch at a time to suit your business and personal needs.

PR Strategy Workshop 24th February 2021 by Sharp Relations

BLSE workshop PR Strategy What does... Watch later Share

The team is made up of food entrepreneurs, social media specialists, event planners, PRs, journalists and food judges.

Watch on YouTube

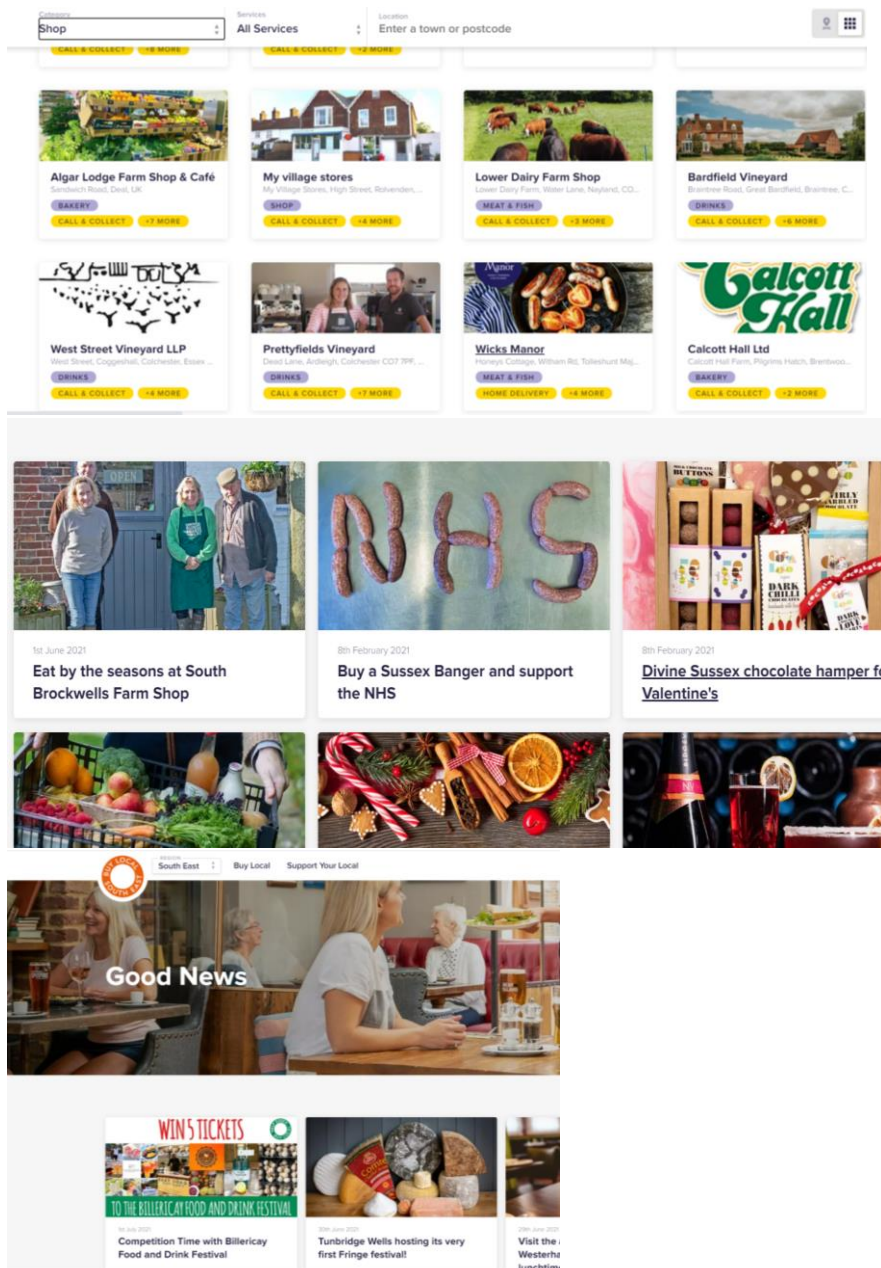
Embracing E Commerce Workshop 11th February 2021 by digitalbeans



The website has remained at the core of the project. Allowing businesses to be visible to both business and consumer customers.

A South East landing page , searchable map and individual county home pages

As well as a map view the website offered a block view plus news pages, by region and county



In addition consumers were encouraged to #buylocal across a range of e-newsletters, social media and published articles.

Southeastern Consumer Mailing

Inside Kent Magazine

Essex.gov.uk/news/love-local-support-essex-businesses

Shop local this Christmas

Dear Nikki,

We hope you enjoyed our last email showcasing some of the best Christmas gifts from independent businesses around Kent.

You can still support local independent businesses across Kent & East Sussex this Christmas. We've gathered more amazing companies that offer online purchases and unique gifts delivered straight to your door. Everything from gift hampers, foodie items and experiences, there's something for everyone. **Plus, we've got two discounts you'll find below exclusive to Southeastern passengers!**

You can read about more independent businesses that deliver across Kent & East Sussex online [here](#).



SHOP KENT
SHOP LOCAL
SHOP ONLINE



Maidstone Distillery George



Eat and drink local

Your favourite coffee shops, bistros, pubs and restaurants are open, and you can choose whether to sit indoors with five friends or two households, or outdoors in a group of up to 10 people at a table and enjoy great food, drink and company at a local venue.

Get behind local restaurants, pubs, cafes and suppliers by:

- finding a local restaurant or cafe on [Visit Essex](#)
- ordering local produce from [Help Essex Buy Local](#)
- booking a table at a local restaurant on [Open Table](#)
- finding everything from cheap eats to local fine-dining restaurants on [Treatwell](#)
- discovering local eateries on Instagram using [#EssexFood](#), [#EssexEats](#)
- searching for [local food delivery services online](#) and ordering directly from the apps. The apps charge restaurants up to 30 per cent of the cost of your order.

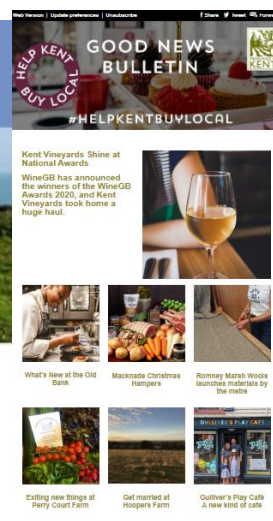
“Being included in the newsletter resulted in 'bricks and mortar' retail becoming a reality”

“Grateful for the support available & appreciate we need to use it”

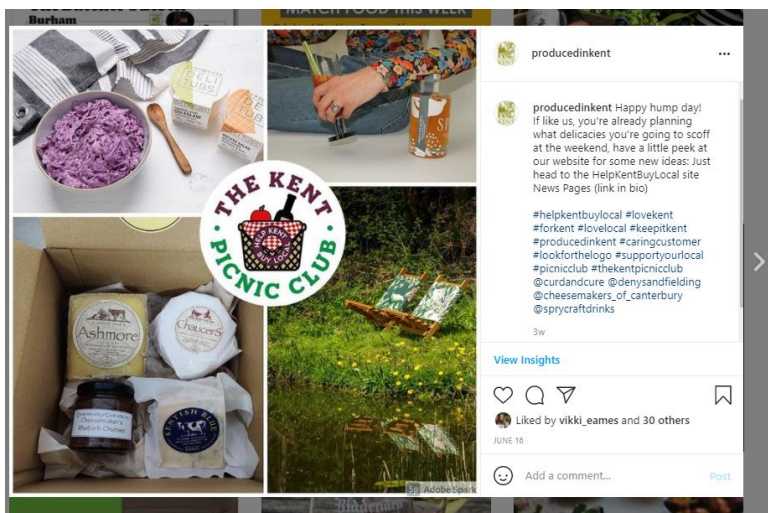


Sussex Foodie News Harvest 2020

Happy Harvest Sussex Foodies, we are so excited to be launching a campaign to Help Sussex Buy Local food and drink and we know that you are just the people to get involved.



Social Media



producedinkent

producedinkent Happy hump day! if like us, you're already planning what delicacies you're going to scoff at the weekend, have a little peek at our website for some new ideas: Just head to the HelpKentBuyLocal site News Pages (link in bio)

#helpkentbuylocal #lovekent #forkent #lovelocal #keepitkent #producedinkent #caringcustomer #lookforthehelo #supportyourlocal #picnicclub #thekentpicnicclub @curdandcure @denysandfielding @cheesemakers_of_canterbury @sprycraftdrinks

View Insights

Liked by vikki_eames and 30 others

JUNE 18

Add a comment...

Post



Help Essex Buy Local @HelpEssexLocal · Aug 2

Do you want to make more of an effort to support local businesses but don't know where to start? Visit our online directory to discover [#Essex](#) food and drink businesses for everything from alcohol and produce to bakery and snacks: buylocalfoodanddrink.co.uk/essex

#helpessexbuylocal



producedinkent

producedinkent How's about this for the ultimate picnic trip, head to the HelpKentBuyLocal site News Pages (link in bio) for loads more picnic ideas

#helpkentbuylocal #lovekent #forkent #lovelocal #keepitkent #producedinkent #caringcustomer #lookforthehelo #supportyourlocal #picnicclub #thekentpicnicclub @owletfruitjuice @fudgekitchen_uk @kentcrisps #picnicweek @picnicweek #nationalpicnicweek

3w

View Insights

Liked by _charringtons and 57 others

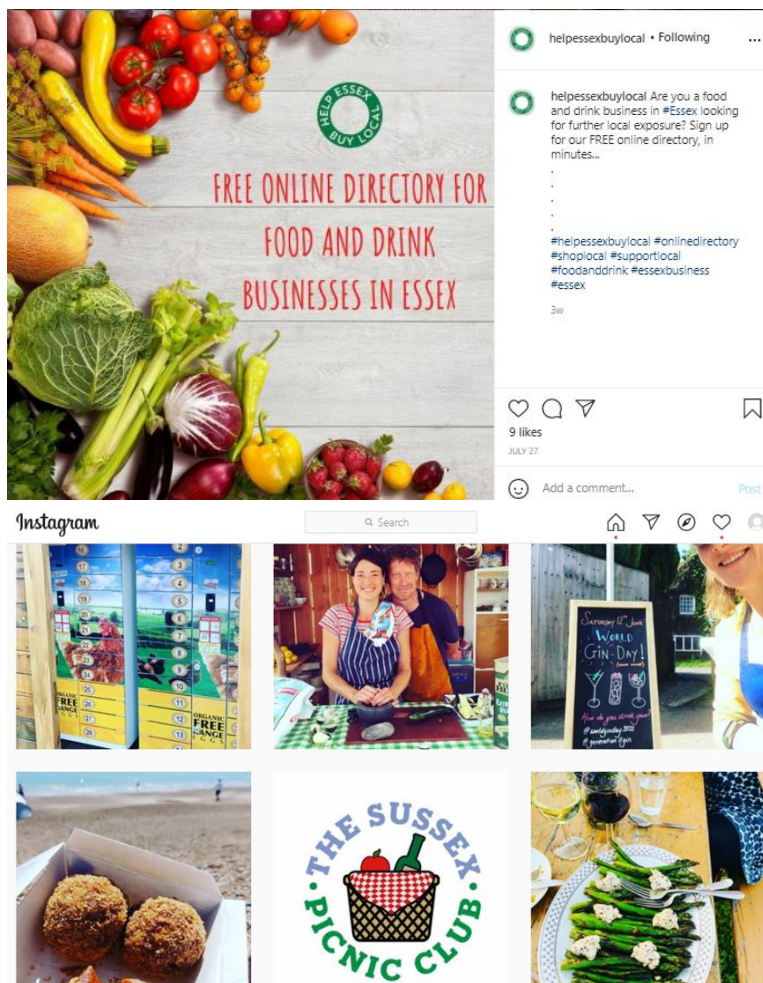
JUNE 22

Add a comment...

Post







Survey

While there was a disappointing number of respondents the replies do echo anecdotal reporting over recent months. Equally one respondent said they didn't know about the project, despite having completed a listing on the website and having been published on several occasions in newsletters and campaigns ! See full survey [here](#)

In Summary B2C business has grown , turnover and employee have stayed the same or risen but the impact on profits is more variable.

During the last 12 months have your B2B BUSINESS customer numbers:

Increased by less than 50 per ...	3
Increased by more than 50 pe...	3
Reduced by up to 50 per cent	3
Reduced by more than 50 per ...	1
Stayed the same	6



During the last 12 months have your B2C CONSUMERS customer numbers

Increased by less than 50 per ...	3
Increased by more than 50 pe...	6
Reduced by up to 50 per cent	3
Reduced by more than 50 per ...	1
Stayed the same	3



Has your turnover:

Increased	8
Reduced	6
Stayed the same	2



Has your profitability

Increased	7
Reduced	4
Stayed the same	5



Has your number of employees

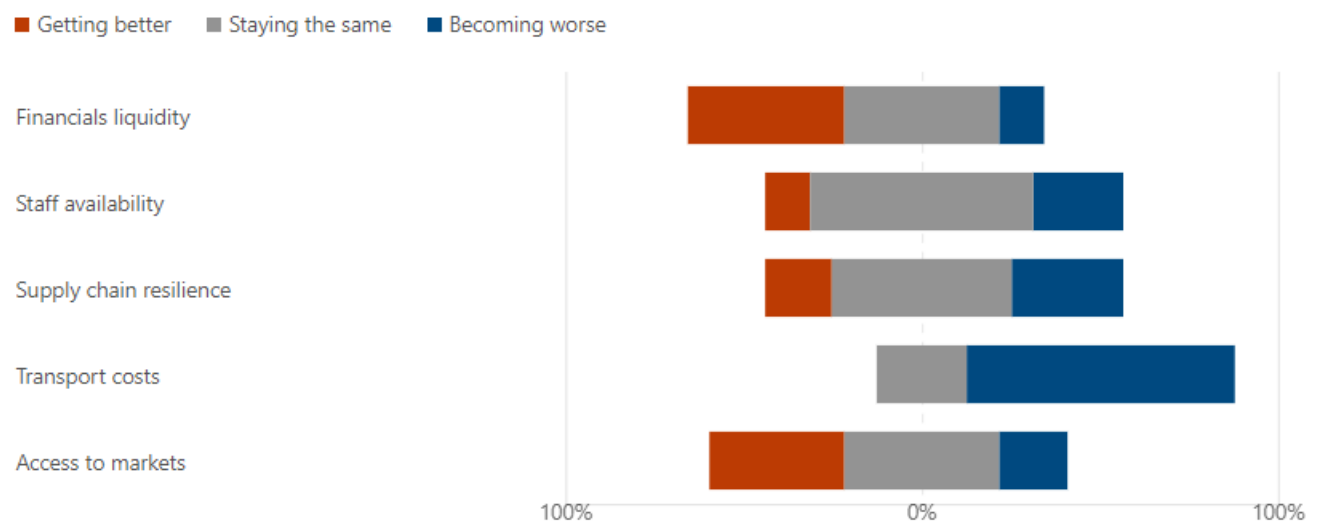
Increased	6
Reduced	2
Stayed the same	8



Unsurprisingly Social Media Marketing and the development of Online retail have been the most important digital activities.

Looking forward

Thinking about the next 12 months, how would you rate the impact of any changes related to:



. In terms of skills, which type are of the greatest concern to your business today? (please select all that apply)

● Strategic planning

2

● Financial planning

6

● Sales

11

● Marketing

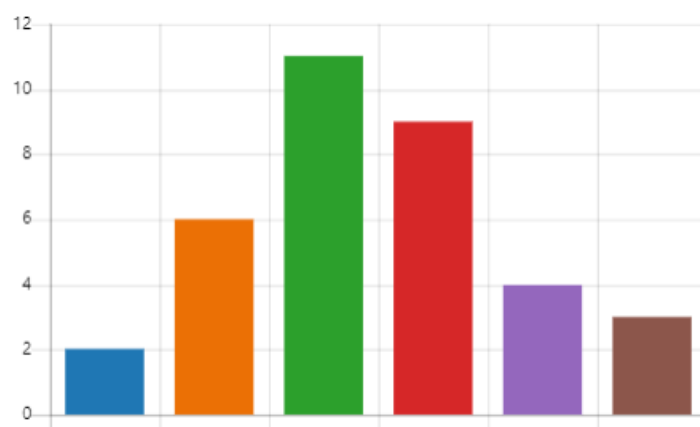
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● Digital

4

● Operational

3



Legacy

The website remains as a focal point for consumers and businesses wishing to Buy Local. The food groups in Kent and East Sussex remain strong and there is an opportunity for the Essex segment to form the basis for a county food group, with the existing network of businesses, if someone can be found to lead the project .