

Sustainable Food Cities COVID-19 Digest

Food markets

30th March 2020

SFC endeavours to support official government and public health advice on the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic. We will keep on checking the latest advice or rules, but we must all recognise that this is rapidly changing and that we may not always be fully up to date. Please keep on checking, sharing your ideas and good practice, and let's all help each other keep safe and well fed. When sharing information via the riseup list, it is really helpful if you **state the topic** in the email title (e.g food supply, food insecurity, markets etc.)

Overview

On Monday 23rd March 2020, the Government clarified that food markets can stay open during the crisis throughout the UK. See [here](#), (section 2, first bullet point), and [here](#) (page 4). Despite this, markets are shutting down in many local areas, either because of a lack of capacity to effectively follow Government guidance, or because of reduced customer numbers.

Food Markets should remain open as they:

- Are a source of fresh, healthy, and in many cases organically produced food for the local community, including more affordable and culturally appropriate food.
- Are a crucial route to market for small local food businesses, many of them operating to exemplary environmental and animal welfare standards.
- Are able to implement effective social distancing policies with the right support.

The decisions to shut markets will put significant strain on the already much reduced supply chain capacity – largely through supermarkets – that are now having to supply the country's needs, where previously 40% of food was provided by restaurants and caterers. Supermarkets cannot be expected to do this and, as documented by recent shortages and limited capacity for new home deliveries, they are unable to do this.

National guidance:

- [Govt advice for businesses](#)
- [Latest advice for food businesses; Latest guidance for businesses Scotland](#)
- [Guidance for businesses as part of further social distancing measures.](#)
- [Guidance for self employed traders](#)

- [PHE offers the most recent updates on COVID-19 guidance](#)
- [NHS information on how to protect yourself from COVID-19 and how to prevent the spread.](#)
- [How your business might be able to help the govt with corona virus response](#)

Industry guidelines

Guidance for traders has been produced by several industry bodies including:

- NMTF (the national body for market street traders) have produced [guidance](#) for all market operators and traders
- NAMBA (National Association of British Markets) have launched an [information page](#) for traders updates on the latest guidance and announcements and have published their position [here](#)
- FARMA (The National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association) have published [guidance written by Growing Communities on running a market safely](#)
- Farm Retail Association can support markets who may be considering online orders/delivery services. Please contact jenny@farmretailassociation.co.uk for a helpful support pack or connect with them on [Facebook](#)

Farmers' Markets and Coronavirus were the focus of [Farming Today](#) on the 26th March

Local overview and guidelines

We recognise the importance of sharing how places have overcome barriers and created the guidance and support to keep markets open but please note we can't verify the guidance produced locally in terms of its safety and you should always refer to the official national guidance.

Examples of how markets have adapted to stay open safely:

OXFORD

- East Oxford Farmers Market successfully implemented a crowd control system, more info [here](#)
- Oxford Council sent a [practical infection control guidance](#) pack to markets
- Wolvercote market has moved to a pre-order and pick up system, accepting contactless payments only and considering setting up delivery
- Good Food Oxford have written a [blog](#) to keep the community up to date with what is going on locally

LONDON

- Growing communities are continuing to trade and have introduced [Health and Safety measures](#), including 2 metre distancing. They have also asked all non-food traders to withdraw
- London Farmers Markets are continuing to trade but have called for an increase in volunteer stewards at all markets to police social distancing. They have published the [following guidelines](#)

- Tower Hamlets are focussing on keeping markets open (traders accept Rose vouchers for fruit and veg, so especially important). They have found a problem with fluctuating wholesale market prices with lemons increasing from £8 to £30!

HULL

- Trinity market is remaining open for 3 days per week with a few traders taking online/text orders and doing deliveries

BATH

- Bath Farmers market remains open and have imposed 6ft distancing, but many traders also offering an [online service](#)

Regrettably, many markets have already closed through fears of unsafe social distancing and lack of resource, or they have been asked to close by the landowner or local authority.

What you can do

Write a letter to your local authority asking them to support markets with staying open. Please get in touch if you would like sample text.

Read the blog '[Five ways to support our farmers in the time of COVID-19](#)' and support your local farmers and markets.

For those who are able to, please contact your local market to see if they need help with stewarding, or other assistance to help ensure they can implement government guidance such as social distancing, and keep the market open.

Sustainable Food Cities is supported by:

