

Taste AND Network 2023

Terms of Reference & Membership Standards

Section A: Values

The collective **Values** of the Ards and North Down Food Drink Network are a commitment to:

1. Convey a passion for our local food and drink products and their provenance.
2. Help shape and guide the future strategic direction of the local food and drink sector.
3. Deliver on and promote sustainability across the local food and drink sector from 'field to fork'.
4. Be approachable and engage with other businesses to develop ideas and work on joint areas of mutual benefit,
5. Engender a collaborative working spirit.
6. Share best practice and to be innovative, flexible and adaptable in our approach to identifying and delivering projects.
7. Raise quality of service, product, and pride of place.
8. As a collective promote on a universal level all that is good about the AND food and drink sector.

Section B: Vision

The **Vision** of Ards and North Down Food Network is:

1. For Ards and North Down to be recognised as a leading food tourism destination in NI/RoI.
2. For Ards and North Down food and drink companies to be in the forefront of the mind of a leading target for food and drink buyers.
3. For Ards and North Down produce and products to be the food and drink 'of choice' by local consumers.
4. For Ards and North Down food and drink to be perceived as authentic, premium quality and with great provenance.
5. For Ards and North Down food and drink tours and experiences to be rated as showcasing excellence.

Section C: Mission

Ards and North Down Food and Drink Network's Mission is to:

1. Provide positive economic impact for all members.
2. Communicate a shared voice for food, drink and hospitality companies.
3. Inspire all to develop a cohesive and inclusive food and drink sector that is collaborative at its core.

Section D: Main Membership Rules

These rules are 'general' for all 2023 members:

1. Members must have their primary registered business address within Ards and North Down
2. Members must not be a subsidiary of a multinational company.
3. Members must not operate as part a national (UK or Ireland) chain or be operated as a franchise.
4. Members whose business leaves the ANDBC area will as a result leave the network.
5. Members must have appropriate insurance (employee and public liability as necessary) for all activities relating to any involvement in network activity, i.e. attendance at trade shows, markets, hosting events, attending ANDBC events and providing services to events and experiences.
6. Those members who are required to have food hygiene assessment must have gained a food hygiene rating or applied for assessment from Ards and North Down Environmental Health by 1 April 2022. The minimum standard is 3.
7. Members must not indulge in any practices or activities that Council and/or Network committee (when reconvened) feels could bring the Council/food network/Taste AND into disrepute, such activity will result in immediate withdrawal of membership.
8. Members must not misuse the name of the food and drink network or the 'Taste AND' identity in communications inclusive of social media.
9. Membership of the network will enable participation of the Facebook Group as an extra mode of communication. Strict rules on standard of communication are to be applied.
10. Members must engage in respectful communications when in engaging with other members across all channels.
11. Members must notify the food and drink officer of any change of ownership or key personnel in the interest of good communications. Membership does not automatically transfer to a new owner.
12. Dignity and respect. The food and drink network will be an inclusive community where people treat each other with respect; where instances of bullying, harassment, discrimination and / or victimisation are not tolerated.

Sector specific rules

Rules applied to members who are food and drink producers to be classed as 'producer members', they should:

13. Provide copies of public liability insurance and food hygiene certificates before 1 March 2023 in order to retain annual membership.
14. Receive a minimum grading of 4 in their food hygiene rating (unless deemed non-applicable) before they can participate in trade shows, expos, Taste AND markets, food festivals or provide any services to experiences and activities that are run by ANDBC or any events publicised under the Taste AND identity.

15. Inform the food and drink officer of any change in hygiene standard or insurance status that has the potential to impact on a members' participation in any of the activities listed above.
16. Must accept the terms and conditions applied by external partners on trade events, where a subsidised place has been offered at any external event by ANDBC those producers will be expected to adhere to the highest standards of conduct, hygiene, and public safety. Failure to comply will mean that attendance will be revoked.

Rules applied to Farm Shops and Independent Artisan Food Retailers to be classed as 'retailer members', they must:

17. Be independent or local chains based in Ards and North Down.
18. Be able to demonstrate that they support a variety of local producers from Ards and North Down and County Down generally within their application.
19. Have insurance cover that includes public and/or product liability cover, as standard, to ensure the core risks associated with your business are covered. This will enable participation in food tours and guides.

Rules applied to Restaurants, Cafés, Licensed Premises and Other Hospitality Members to be classed as 'hospitality members', they:

20. Must have a **minimum food hygiene** of 4 obtained on or before 1 March 2023 in order to retain annual membership.
21. **Will be deemed ineligible** for membership if they are a business that is: a take-away only establishments (under normal trading conditions), national chains, regional chains (restaurants operated under franchise and premises where a membership payment is applied. Local chains based in Ards and North Down are accepted.
22. Must be able to **demonstrate that they support a variety of local producers** from Ards and North Down and County Down generally in their application form.
23. Must have **necessary insurance cover**, as standard, to ensure the core risks associated with all business operations are covered. This will enable participation in food tours, guides and promotions.
24. **In the case of Licenced premises**, are found to be in breach of laws will have their network membership withdrawn and the right to use the 'Taste AND' identity withdrawn.

Rules applied to Markets, Food and Drink Experiences and Food and drink related Attractions to be classed as 'Activity Members', must have:

25. **The core of business** activity must be based in ANDBC.
26. At least 50% food and run at least once a month May to October.

27. **For experience providers**, a **bookable online** facility and provide details of relevant insurance cover, food hygiene where appropriate and any additional statutory regulations as applicable e.g. child protection policy.
28. **For Attractions** with a primary focus away from food, provided the facility includes a café/restaurant, support the use of local food so as to be accepted. NB: facility may be assessed for membership.
29. **For Cookery Schools** to be accepted they provide detail that the facility is committed to supporting Taste AND promotions, hosting events and utilising local AND produce.
30. **For Licensed members** in this category, be in full compliance with the laws relating to alcohol licensing. Those premises who are found to be in breach of laws will have their network membership withdrawn and the right to use the 'Taste AND' identity withdrawn.

Specific Rules for Associate Members (Freelance Chefs, Food Bloggers, Food Tour Guides and others providing a food and drink sector service.

31. Associate Members should be able to demonstrate in their membership forms how they can assist the development of the food network or provide a service that supports the development of the food and drink destination.
32. Associate members will NOT be eligible as committee members of the network.

Taste Ards & North Down Identity

33. Businesses signing up and accepted as members will be entitled to use the 'Taste AND Identity' for that that calendar year. Membership does not roll forward and will be via annual application.
34. Members will have accepted the vision, values, mission and quality standards of the food network. Failure to adhere to the standards will mean the member loses right to use the 'Taste AND' identity and membership withdrawn.
35. Members will lose the right to use the Taste AND identity if the ownership of the business changes and the new owner fails to resubmit.
36. Members are permitted to use the identity on websites and printed material within the premises.
37. Members are not permitted to use the Taste AND identity on printed material for external circulation or on social media promotion without first notifying the food and drink officer.
38. Any business found in breach of law on health and safety, covid safety or licensing regulations will have the right to use the 'Taste AND' identity withdrawn.
39. Any business falling below the standard of '4' in their grading will not be able to use the 'Taste AND' identity.