



**Membership Governance Document**

**Rules, Terms and Administrative Processes 2026**

# **TASTE ARDS AND NORTH DOWN MEMBERSHIP GOVERNANCE**

## **RULES, TERMS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES**

### **DECEMBER 2025**

1. Terms of references and membership conditions
2. Types of Membership and Application Process
3. Membership Application Criteria
4. Benefits of Membership
5. Code of Conduct
6. Network Committee
7. Member Suspension and Penalties
8. Membership Fee and Schedule of Charges
9. Taste AND identity

## **SECTION 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE and MEMBERSHIP STANDARDS**

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### **Section 1A: Values**

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

1. Engender the core values of cooperation, collaboration and open communication.
2. Convey a passion for local food and drink products and their provenance.
3. Help shape and guide the future strategic direction of the local food and drink sector.
4. Deliver on sustainability across the local food and drink sector from 'field to fork/glass' and 'tide to table'.
5. Being approachable and engage with other businesses to develop ideas and work on joint areas of concern.
6. Share best practice and to be innovative, flexible and adaptable in our approach to identifying and delivering projects.
7. Raising quality of service, product, and pride of place.

### **Section 1B: 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 a leading target for food and drink buyers.
3. For Ards and North Down produce to be a visible and viable options for local consumers.
4. For Ards and North Down food and drink to have recognisable provenance and authenticity.
5. For Ards and North Down food and drink tours and experiences to be rated as showcasing excellence.

### **Section 1C: 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 1D: Main Membership Rules

**These rules are general for all members:**

1. Members must have a 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 of a national (UK or Ireland) chain or be operated as a franchise.
4. Members must have necessary insurance cover for all activities relating to any involvement in network activity, i.e., attendance at trade shows, markets, hosting events, attending ANBC events and providing services to events and experiences. This should be a minimum £1 million public liability.
5. Members who require a food hygiene rating as part of business operations, must record a Grade 4 or above. Further, members must supply their hygiene certificate, when requested, in advance of any event or experience or they may have their participation cancelled. *For new businesses, it is sufficient for an 'awaiting grading' letter to be supplied whilst awaiting EHO inspection.*
6. Members who move their business base out of ANDBC will automatically leave the Taste AND network, these businesses will forfeit all rights to business support, training, event access and any other Taste AND activity.
7. Members must not participate in any trading or financial practices that bring the Taste AND network and brand into disrepute.
8. Members must not misuse the name of Taste AND or the food and drink network in communications, inclusive of social media, when conducting their business operations.
9. Members must not misuse membership status as means to confer an automatic right to attend or take a place, as of right, at any Ards and North Down events, festivals or events as a unique set of event criterion will always take precedence. Taste AND membership is a necessary qualification for such applications.
10. Members must engage in respectful communications when engaging with other members and with any staff from Ards and North Down Borough Council.
11. Members must notify the food officer/ANDBC of any change of ownership immediately as this may affect a business's right to membership.
12. Members are expected to notify the food and drink officer/ANDBC of any significant changes in their businesses that could be deemed to impact their membership, this may include mergers, change of address or investigation by trading standards.
13. Member businesses must not be subject to liquidation proceedings, criminal investigation or be represented by those with boardroom bans imposed by a court order on behalf of the Department for the Economy NI.
14. Members may receive penalties or a specified period of suspension from the network via a simple majority vote by the network committee, where it is felt they have brought Taste AND into disrepute or are disrupting the work of the network (see section 7 for detail)

15. Members must record a minimum attendance of 50% at network meetings. Failure to meet minimum attendance may result in a members' application being rejected in the following year.
16. Members must agree to and sign off on the code of conduct (see section 5)

**Rules applied to members who are food and drink producers to be classed as 'producer members.'**

17. Producer members should provide copies of public liability insurance and food hygiene certificates ahead of any public activity with Taste Ards and North Down,
18. Producer members must receive a minimum 4-star 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.
19. Any change in hygiene standard or insurance status that has the potential to impact on members' participation in any of the activities listed above requires the member to notify the food officer/ANDBC.
20. Producer members 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 replacement by another business.

**Rules applied to Farm Shops and Independent Artisan Food Retailers to be classed as 'retailer members.'**

21. Retailer members must be independent or local chains with a head office based in Ards and North Down.
22. Retailer member must be able to demonstrate that they support a variety of local producers from Ards and North Down and County Down generally. They must retail at least seven local producers.
23. Retailer members must have insurance cover that includes public and product liability cover, as standard, to ensure the core risks associated with your business are covered. This will enable participation in food tours.

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

24. Hospitality members should have a minimum food hygiene of 4 obtained on or before 1 May of each year to retain their annual membership.
25. Businesses deemed ineligible for this type of membership include take-away only establishments (under normal trading conditions outside), national chains, regional chains, restaurants operated under a franchise, and premises where a membership payment is applied (e.g. golf clubs).

26. Restaurant members 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.
27. Restaurant members must have necessary insurance cover, as standard, to ensure the core risks associated with all business operations are covered, public and employee liability. This will enable participation in food tours and promotions.
28. Licenced 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.

**Rules applied to Markets, Food and Drink Experiences and Food and drink related Attractions and venues. Hereafter known as 'Associate Members'**

29. Core of business activity must be based in ANDBC (all).
30. Markets must have at least 50% food/drink and run at least once a month from May to October. Markets should have a minimum of 50% ANDBC producers.
31. Experience providers must be bookable online and provide details of relevant insurance cover and food hygiene where appropriate.
32. Attractions with a primary focus away from food are accepted provided the facility includes a café/restaurant that supports use of local food (facility may be assessed).
33. Cookery Schools are accepted provided the facility is committed to supporting Taste AND promotions and hosting events.
34. Licensed members in this category must 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 and the right to use the 'Taste AND' identity withdrawn.

**Specific Rules for Associate Members**

35. Associated 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.

## SECTION 2: MEMBERSHIP TYPES and APPLICATION PROCESS

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- 2.1 There will be three types of membership status: full, new/provisional and associate/supporter.

### **Full Membership**

- 2.2 For established food and drink businesses who qualify through the application of the full set of criteria that they actively contribute, through their business operations, to the local food and drink sector as well as actively contributing to the development of the food and drink network.
- 2.3 Businesses eligible are:
- 'Field to fork/glass' and 'Tide to fork' producers.
  - Farmers who supply direct to consumers.
  - Restaurants and Bars.
  - Accommodation that incorporates a restaurant.
  - Farm shops including butchers and bakeries.
  - Independent grocery stores.
  - Independent off licenses.
- 2.4 Ineligible businesses are takeaways, caterers, food trucks, street vendors, online retailers, freelance chefs, and food box delivery services.

### **Associate Membership**

- 2.5 Any business that cannot meet the criteria for full member status but have operations that support the development of the food and drink destination in some capacity either through their expertise in food and drink or in the provision of a food and drink service that compliments the role of full members can apply as an associate member.
- 2.6 Businesses eligible for this form of membership are:
- caterers.
  - street vendors.
  - freelance chefs.
  - local food box delivery services.
  - local tour guide companies.
  - freelance tour guides.
  - food and drink academics.
  - cookery schools.
  - experience providers.
  - food markets.
  - venues and attractions.
  - B&Bs.
- 2.7 Businesses that are ineligible for this form of membership are 'Field to fork' producers, Farmers who supply direct to consumers, Restaurants and Bars,

Accommodation that incorporates a restaurant, farm shops including butchers and bakeries, independent grocery stores Independent off licenses.

### **New (Provisional) Membership**

- 2.8 Provides a route for food and drink businesses that are less than two years old or new to the area that can offer a positive contribution to the development of the network. This type of membership is most suitable for new businesses with limited operational record to have access to network support and activities.
- 2.9 New members may have their membership upgraded to full or associate membership status after a minimum period of six months. They are not expected to reapply to obtain upgrade (see membership upgrade under 2.21-2.23).
- 2.10 Established businesses of more than two years may opt for new membership status; however, this is only a temporary status option.

### **Annual Membership Applications**

- 2.11 Applicants for those who wish to apply as full or associate members will be able to submit application between **19 November and 19 January** annually. This allows for a substantial period of 9 weeks for businesses to submit their applications.
- 2.12 New membership applications are accepted year-round.

### **Application Scoring**

- 2.13 The food and drink officer will convene an internal panel (comprising ANDBC) staff that will be tasked with scoring applications by applying four essential membership criteria detailed in section 3. 2.
- 2.14 Responses are to the four-part membership criterion are scored from 1 to 5 (5 being the best score and 1 the lowest score). The minimum score for Full and Associate membership is 12.
- 2.15 New members are only required to meet criterion A and B with a minimum score of six.

### **Verification**

- 2.17 Applications meeting the minimum scores will be brought to the Taste AND committee for verification with a recommendation for block approval by the food and drink officer.
- 2.18 Applications which are deemed borderline in scoring will be addressed by the Taste AND committee. There are two options for committee members on borderline applications, these are 'rejection' or 'new member' status.



- 2.19 In view of GDPR, applications that are considered borderline will have all contact details and personal names removed. Only business names and answers to membership criterion will remain.
- 2.20 Network committee can instruct the food and drink officer to seek further information from membership candidates.

#### **Upgrade from New (Provisional) Member to Full Member**

- 2.21 New members must have spent a minimum of six months as an active member and attended meetings before they are eligible.
- 2.22 The food and drink officer will provide a list of any new members who are eligible for full membership to the Taste AND committee.
- 2.23 Committee members can propose a provisional member be upgraded to full membership status which will be put to a vote at the network committee, a simple majority is required.

#### **Change from Full Member to Associate Member and Vice Versa**

- 2.24 This will be upon recommendation of the food and drink officer only.

## **SECTION 3: MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION CRITERIA**

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### **Application Criteria**

3.1 The criteria used to assess membership applications is framed to ensure members contribute to the objectives of the food and drink development plan and contribute to the development of the network itself.

3.2 The four-core key criteria:

1. Applicant's Food Story.
2. Provenance of produce or use/support of local produce.
3. Contribution to the food destination.
4. Contribution to the food and drink network.

New/Provisional applicants only need to address criteria 1 and 2.

Applicants with more than one business can opt to complete one overall application however they should clearly state this in the submissions.

### **Scoring**

Answers to criteria 1 to 4 will be scored from 0 to 5 by a panel of Visit AND staff members and given approval by the Taste AND Committee in February 2026.

### **Criteria Guidance**

#### **Criterion 1: Your Food Story (1-5 points)**

Give a brief overview of the background to your businesses, essentially a summary of your' food story that you yourself would use in marketing. Consider covering ANY of following:

- When was the business established?
- Why did you start the business?
- How has the business evolved?
- What is your offering to customers?
- What is your business ethos?
- Producers: what is your range?

Maximum 250 words.

#### **Criterion 2: Provenance of Product/Use of Local Produce/Support of Local Produce (1-5 points)**

##### **Producers may consider covering the following:**

- Is your product fully field to fork or glass or tide to table?
- Where do you source ingredients?
- What skills do you have?
- Are your suppliers local?
- What is so special about your recipes?

**Restaurants may consider covering the following:**

- What is the authenticity of your offer?
- Does your menu signpost use of local produce?
- What is your relationship like with local producers?
- Can you list at least five local suppliers? \*
- Does your business offer something unique?

**Retailers may consider covering the following:**

- What kind of local produce does your business offer?
- Can you list at least seven local suppliers? \*
- What is your relationship like with local producers?

**Other businesses may consider covering the following:**

- What is your connection with local produce?
- How does your business engage with local producers and/or restaurants?
- What skills does your business offer in local food and drink.
- What role does local food tourism play in your business?

**Criterion 3: Contribution to the Development of the Food and Drink Destination**

- Outline any previous role you have played in Taste AND Markets, food tours, food experiences and local food festivals to date.
- What future role can your business play in developing the area as a food destination? Think about showcases, experiences and events.
- How does your business promote the food and drink offer of Ards and Down?

**Criterion 4: Contribution to Taste Ards and North Down as a Network**

- How actively involved have you been in the development of our network?
- How would you see your business helping the development of our network?
- Will you actively engage in network meetings, training, workshops and events?
- Would you wish to participate in working groups or the network committee?
- What are you giving back to the Taste AND network through your attendance and development?
- Are you actively supporting the development of ANDBC as a food destination e.g. via active participation in network activities etc?

**Additional Evaluation****Criteria 5: Awards/accolades in past year (Bonus +2)**

Please list any awards your business has won during 2025.

## SECTION 4. BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

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### **General Benefits**

**Identity:** use of the Taste AND logo which represents our 'local standard' or 'AND provenance', this can only be used by full members - a use policy will be applied.

**Online Listing:** your profile on our Taste AND business page on Visit AND.

**Taste AND Facebook Group:** Access to the very latest local food and drink news in the private members group.

**Business Updates:** You will be added to the Tourism Ezine Updates in addition you will receive any relevant sector updates from the Food and Drink Officer in the form of a monthly bulletin.

**Food Industry Fortnight:** Opportunity to participate in business-to-business engagement in the local food industry trade week.

**Social media:** enhanced opportunity to feature in Visit AND online promotion.

**Tourism Trade Events:** Enhanced business profiling and promotion at tourism trade events such as World Travel Market, BIM, GEM, ITOA.

**Partnership Expertise:** Our membership of *Food NI*, *Good Food Ireland* and *NIFDA*, as well as our partnering arrangements with *Hospitality Ulster* and the *Ulster University Business School*, means annual updates and access to their support and advice.

**Networking:** up to six opportunities per annum to meet and collaborate with others at our network meetings.

**Workshops and Training Events:** access to scheduled sessions covering a range of topics throughout the year, members receive free or heavily discounted places. Access to all the latest training opportunities across Northern Ireland.

**Awards:** The annual Taste AND Local Food Hero Awards which is our celebration of businesses who have achieved regional, national, and international accolades. These awards are now extended to include food retailers and restaurant who are ANY status if member.

### **Restaurant Opportunities**

**Fam Trips:** Opportunities to host fam trips for trade and take part in learning journeys.

**Food and Drink Trails / Tours:** Inclusion in trails and tours where applicable.

**Local Food Showcases:** Host showcase dinners that spotlight local producer and include meet the maker.

**Restaurants Working Group:** New working group to explore opportunities to develop enhanced membership benefits and incentivise staff.

### **Producer Opportunities**

**Trade Shows:** Subsidised places at local shows e.g. Love Your Food Show.

**Local Festival Priority:** Prioritised entry for trading space allocation at Comber Earlies, Tide and Turf Portavogie, Taste @ and Chilli Festival, where appropriate.

**Workshops and Training:** Access to training opportunities run by ANDBC plus external member organisations.

**Local Food Showcases:** Featured producer places at local restaurants.

**Awards Lab:** Opportunity to test produce and gain feedback ahead of the main awards season helping businesses submit their best produce.

**Learning Journeys:** opportunity to participate in planned learning journeys focused on production, product development etc.

**Experience Programme:** Enhanced opportunity for additional income via the AND experience programme and/or assistance to trial a new experience with support from tourism development, subject to successful application to the programme.

## **SECTION 5. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT (approved October 2023 by committee).**

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### **Application of Code**

To whom this code of conduct extends:

- 5..1 Ards and North Down Borough Council recognises that most members join the Taste AND network solely to avail themselves of networking activities and the agreed benefits made available to them as business owners/staff.
- 5.2 Taste AND is fortunate to have a community of members who have become actively involved in developmental activity at a local and regional level as key operational and delivery partners. It is incumbent upon all members to play an active part in the development of membership.
- 5.3 In building Taste AND into a locally recognisable identity/brand with borough residents, businesses, partner bodies and politicians alike, it is imperative that Taste AND protects its brand from individual member misuse and misconduct. To achieve this end, Taste AND requires that ALL members strictly adhere to this code of conduct. Members will sign against these is in their member application.
- 5.4 This code is intended to direct the conduct of members in relation to their interaction with other Taste AND members, employees of ANDBC and any third party where the member is perceived to be acting in the name of Taste AND or where they or their business purports to be in some way associated with Taste AND in addition to being a member.
- 5.5 The code does not extend to the interaction between Taste AND members and their customers/clients or any other third party where the Taste AND member is not acting in the name of or as a representative of Taste AND, nor does it pertain to any business transactions with external organisations.

### **The Code**

Taste Ards and North Down requires that members:

- 5.6 Act and always present themselves in a professional and courteous manner to all other all members, the employees of Ards and North Down Borough Council and our external partner organisations.
- 5.7 Only use the Taste AND identity as permitted via qualified membership status as part of our 'local standard' proposition, it does not in any way to suggest or imply that trading rights or food quality marks are conferred, the Taste AND identity and logo is not a professional qualification but denotes an acceptance of a 'local Ards and North Down provenance'.

- 5.8 Where it is not true, do not represent themselves as:
- a. being approved or endorsed by Taste AND or ANDBC in connection with their business activity or operations.
  - b. having a trading relationship with or being an approved supplier sanctioned by Taste AND or ANDBC.
- 5.9 Must not claim to represent Taste AND/ANDBC in any capacity without having first obtained explicit written consent from Council.
- 5.10 Must not misrepresent or bring the name of Taste AND or ANDBC into disrepute at any trade events, visitor experiences or external festivals.
- 5.11 Will comply with all statutory requirements, policy and legal procedures. In the event of a member business being subject to legal proceedings this will also mean notification by members to the network committee.
- 5.12 Will maintain confidentiality when required to do so and comply with the provisions of the prevailing data policies.
- 5.13 Your business and business representatives, will conduct respectful online communications and not misuse and misrepresent their membership of Taste AND in the process.
- 5.14 Will not discriminate against any person because of a protected characteristic e.g. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 5.15 Will not use threatening or abusive behaviour or language to other members or personnel working on behalf of Taste Ards and North Down.
- 5.16 Will not make verbal or written statements which are contrary to the aims and objectives of Taste AND or the Food and Drink Development Plan.
- 5.17 Will not misuse any ANDBC property, resources, equipment or records for any purpose other than the purpose for which they are intended.

Do anything or omit to do anything which is prejudicial to the interests of Taste AND or bring the name of the network into disrepute adhering to the membership rules stated in section 1.

## **6. NETWORK COMMITTEE**

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### **6.1 Structure and Key Terms**

- The Network Committee will consist of 11 members.
- Network Committee will be composed of 10 full members and one associated member.
- Committee members are considered 'representatives' of the wider network.
- Network Committee will be reflective of the wider membership composition, i.e. If 50% of members are restaurants, then five members of the committee should be restaurant representatives.
- Committee Members will be able to serve up to two full terms or eight years.
- Committee Members may resign at any time but must do so in writing and with a months' notice.
- Committee Members are permitted to deputise their position with a workplace colleague for them at meetings with notice. Notice should be given by 8am on date of meeting.

### **6.2 Nomination**

After each membership refresh period, those committee members who wish to roll their tenure forward are proposed by the food and drink officer as a single group to the wider network. The wider network then has yes/no vote.

If the vote is 'no' a fresh round of nominations for all network reps needs to open at the same meeting. If the vote is 'yes', the group is reinstalled for another year. Following this, only committee vacancies are then filled with fresh nominations. Nominations can be either self-nominated, or member nominated. A private vote follows where there are more candidates than positions.

### **6.3 Committee Votes**

Committee Votes are completed by simple majority; individual names will not be recorded against ANY vote. Where there is an even vote in the absence of one or more of the committee members, the chair's vote will be worth two votes.

### **6.4 Chairpersons**

There will be one chair and two vice chairs. All three are interchangeable between meetings and a vice chair is permitted to take on chairing responsibilities of a meeting. Chairs are voted into position by the whole network committee.

### **6.5 Committee Responsibilities**

All network committee members can:

- Test and challenge information presented by the food and drink officer or other ANDBC staff at meetings.
- Speak in the interest of their membership group as a representative.
- Bring motions and papers to committee with advance notice.



- Seek committee votes to establish agreed committee positions.
- Sponsor a new/provisional member to be elevated to full membership, however they must present their reasons in full.
- Bring a case for member suspension to committee.
- Approve the annual member refresh list.
- Propose a block on a business applicant becoming a member.

## **6.6 Committee Member Removal**

A committee member is removed automatically where:

- They represent a business that has entered insolvency proceedings.
- They have been given a boardroom ban by a NI court from the Department of the economy.
- The business they represent has been brought or merged by another business.

A committee member can be removed by other committee members where they have contravened network terms and conditions and/or the code of conduct.

## **6.7 Other Roles**

The food and drink officer acts as secretary to the committee.

Alex Irvine (ANDBC), Wendy Smiith (ANDBC), Joy Lyness (ANDBC) and an educational representative from e.g. SERC or UU are permitted to sit in meetings in the role of network advisors.

Last Review Date: December 2025.

## **7. MEMBER SUSPENSION / PENALTIES**

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*Membership Suspension/Removal Process involves the following*

- 7.1 Where a member business, or someone representing a member business pertaining to any Taste AND activity, is considered to have broken rules or infringed upon the code of conduct, the business may be subject to a time-limited suspension or an activity restriction penalty limited by time, or an indefinite suspension.

### *Role of Committee Representatives*

- 7.2 Network Committee representatives can bring a case for the application of penalties or suspension to the Taste AND committee. The committee representative should provide evidence of the case clearly showing how the member has contravened a specific rule or infringed upon the code of conduct with at least 48hours notice. In the most serious cases, Taste AND members may request an urgent meeting in writing to the food and drink officer.

### *Committee Votes*

- 7.3 The network committee will consider the case and come to a resolution on the type of penalty or suspension to be applied via with a vote. Any vote will be determined by simple majority and names will not be recorded against votes in the minutes. Similarly, the committee member bringing the case to committee will not have their name recorded against the case in meeting minutes.

### *Member Warnings*

- 7.4 Committee can opt to issue a warning communication via email or letter to the member via the committee secretary. Such communication will detail the case, including rules deemed to have been broken and why the committee considered membership penalties or suspension. There will be a 'two strikes and out' policy across a full calendar year. The warning/sanction letter should also provide a reminder of the code of conduct.

### *Suspension*

- 7.5 There are two types of suspension: temporary and permanent. Temporary suspension will be run from a period of three months up to one calendar year. During the period of suspension, all access to Taste AND activity or ANDBC activity is frozen. Permanent suspension means indefinite suspension. Membership suspension is effectively removed where a business changes ownership.

### *Member Penalties*

7.6 Penalties will take the form of activity-based exclusion for a time-limited period that are linked to the infringement. The penalty imposed will generally relate to the type of infringement of rules or code of conduct. Penalties may include:

- Exclusion from training sessions facilitated by Taste AND.
- Exclusion from Taste AND meetings.
- Exclusion from Taste AND Facebook page.
- Exclusion from use of Taste AND resources.
- Exclusion from EOIs and opportunities afforded to members.
- Exclusion from trade shows, Taste AND events, and ANDBC festivals.

### *Specific circumstances Resulting in Penalties*

7.7 The following specific circumstances will result in member penalties:

- Withdrawal from a subsidised place as a trade show with less than 21 days of notice, and without providing clear extenuating personal circumstances.
- Withdrawal from an ANDBC, food festival or Taste AND event with less than 21 days of notice, and without providing clear extenuating personal circumstances.
- Non-attendance or late notice withdrawal of less than 7 days of any training session provided by Taste AND.
- Failure to display the Taste AND identity at any trade show or Taste AND event/activity.
- Misuse, loss or damage of any ANDBC supplied resources.
- Failure to fully comply with site rules and management instructions at any food events, trade shows or ANDBC festivals.
- Contravention of any item under Section 5

7.8 Suspended members will not have their annual membership fee refunded.

## 8. MEMBERSHIP FEE AND SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

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### ***Membership Fee***

- 8.1 The 2026 Membership fee is a flat rate of £36 per business, the fee is payable only by associate and full members.

### ***Training Sessions***

- 8.2 Charges applied to training are as follows

Where a training session or workshop is provided as part of a Taste AND meeting or by ANDBC staff.	Free
Where a training session or workshop is provided by external facilitators with a value <b>less than £100.</b>	£30
Where a training session or workshop is provided by external facilitators with a value of over <b>£100</b> and less than <b>£199.</b>	£60
Where a training session or workshop is provided by external facilitators with a value of over £200	£90

### **Training Sessions Regulations**

- 8.3 Masterclasses and workshops represent a substantial expenditure on member businesses, and they have, to date, been free. Repeated no-shows and late cancellations by those booked onto training sessions had previously become a problem, therefore subsidised fee has had to be applied.
- 8.4 Members must note that no shows and late-stage cancellations have a significant reputational impact on Taste Ards and North Down as most training offered is in partnership with and/or sponsored by external partners. Booking a place at a training event and the act of not using it means that one business will have effectively blocked another from availing of an opportunity to learn and grow.
- 8.5 Repeated no-shows by a member business for a scheduled training sessions such as skill-based workshops and masterclasses may result in the imposition of a penalty and possible suspension,

### ***‘Taste AND at...’ Showcase Event***

- 8.6 A flat rate fee of £50 per business for one day and £90 for a two day event will be levied. A one-off electric connection fee of £30 (applicable to one or two day) will be charged for applicable businesses. A charge has become necessary for such events due to increased running costs. Note these costs are heavily subsidised.

### ***Ards and North Down Events and Festivals***

- 8.7 The following events are managed under an external contract with individual fees and specific event criteria applied. These are:

- Comber Earlies
- Tide and Turf Portavogie
- Sea Bangor
- Shore Life
- Christmas Switch-Ons

Non-payment of fees, late-stage cancellations and no-show policy will be applied to these events for Taste Ards and North Down members.

### ***External Events***

- 8.8 The following fee structure applies:

One-day event	£50
Two-day event	£90
Three-day event	£125

All external or out of borough events are to be booked by via an expression of interest online form.

- 8.9 The following activities and events are those that may be attended by Taste Ards and North Down and the offer of places is conditional on full compliance with the terms and conditions set in place by the external event organiser and the payment of the booking fee:

- Garden Show Ireland.
- Love Your Food Belfast or Dublin.
- Irish Ploughing Festival.
- Honey Fair.
- Irish Artisan Food Show.
- Gifted, Dublin.
- Bloom, Dublin.
- Samhain Festival.
- Blas na hÉireann.

### ***Late-Stage Cancellations/Withdrawals***

- 8.11 Late-stage cancellations are classed as those being less than 21 days without extenuating circumstances.
- 8.12 Whilst unforeseen circumstances occur, members must ensure they provide sufficient notice of withdrawal. Members withdrawing from an event should provide the earliest possible notice and provide a valid reason for cancellation.

The offer of a place at another event is not a valid reason. Booking a place at an event and the act of not using the space means that another business will effectively be blocked from availing of that space. Late-stage withdrawals will result in a penalty in ALL cases without exception.

## SECTION 9. TASTE ARDS and NORTH DOWN IDENTITY

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### ***General***

- 9.1 Only full members of Taste Ards and North Down will be permitted to use the full brand/identity package within the terms of the brand guidance.
- 9.2 Associate and New (Provisional Members) will not be permitted to use the full brand/identity, however, they may use the brand in specific circumstances with written permission.



### ***Associate Members***

- 9.3 Where an Associate Member provides a food experience or food tour, use of the brand/identity permission may be granted for use only by written consent, this will be restricted to promotion of the specific activity only.
- 9.4 Use of the Taste Ards and North Down brand/identity by any business is linked to annual membership and is limited by calendar year in all cases without exception.
- 9.5 Suspended members automatically lose the right to use the brand/identity.
- 9.6 Members under penalty may have their use extinguished for the duration of their penalty period.
- 9.7 The Taste AND Identity will not be permitted on any vehicle.