



PRESS RELEASE

Penshurst Farmers' Market celebrates a 'high five' in Kent

It's a 'high five' for Penshurst Farmers' Market in June – as one of the county's most popular farmers' markets celebrates its fifth anniversary on **Saturday 5th June** with around 30 stallholders gathering in the shadow of Penshurst Place for its 60th event (which will run from 9.30am-noon). Food columnist Mary Gywnn will be helping the farmers' market celebrate its five year success story with a 'This is Your Life' style morning of interviews. Mary will interview key players in the market live on stage, with some fascinating and witty stories set to be recounted; whilst the experienced recipe writer will offer some useful tips on how to make the most of stallholder's ingredients and produce.

In the five years since the monthly market first opened its gates in the historic grounds of Penshurst Place, the voluntary committee headed by Benjamin Dent, has staged 60 markets in all weathers and has grown the market from 12 stallholders to a bustling 30 stalls in the peak summer season. Just a few of the regular stallholders to have been at the market since its inception include Rusbridge Bakery, Farmer Palmer Quality Meats, Penshurst Beef, Mole End Apple Juice, Farm Folk Fruits, Chilli and Herb Farm, Traditional Cheese, Low Wood Farm Nurseries, Lodge Farm - the chicken producers, and Nut Knowle Farm specialising in goats' cheese.

Benjamin Dent, manager of Penshurst Farmers' Market and chairman of Kent Farmers' Market Association, said: "It's been incredibly exciting to watch the rapid growth of Penshurst Farmers' Market as it has increasingly met the community's need and demand for high quality, fresh, handmade and in season produce. Kent's consumers have not only voted with their feet, but with their purses as month-by-month a growing visitor audience seeks out the many original and local food and drink producers. With our vibrant market set in the beautiful grounds of Penshurst Place – I guess you really could say we provide the proverbial icing on the cake – but only if they're fresh, homemade cakes!"

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Penshurst Farmers' Market was first set up to provide Kent's food and drink producers and growers with a local outlet for their produce, giving smaller businesses the opportunity to sell direct to the public, providing fairer prices and creating a way for local residents and visitors to re-invest in the rural community. Over the past five years, Penshurst Farmers' Market has done just that with around 45,000 shoppers visiting the market over the past five years and spending approximately £360,000. Added to this, the monthly market continues to provide a vibrant focal point for the community and supports local charitable organisations, with the popular refreshment stall helping to raise over £12,000 for charity.

The market has also successfully dispelled the myth that farmers' markets are only filled with fresh fruit and veg, with hundreds of visitors each month attracted to the 30 stallholders supplying everything from free-range meat, game, fresh fish and deli; through cheese, pies, cakes, fudge, puddings and bread; to honey and jams, chutney and preserves, fruit juice and beer; as well as salads and herbs, soups and sauces and flowers and plants.

Themed events are an integral part of the market experience at Penshurst, with July marking Cherry Day and the stunning Christmas market packed with carol singers, Father Christmas and themed stalls.

Penshurst runs on the **first Saturday of every month from 9.30am to noon** – for full details visit

www.kentfarmersmarkets.org.uk

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Note to the editor:

The Kent Farmers' Market Association was established in 2008 by the managers of Kent's farmers' markets. It is an umbrella organisation which now represents 40+ farmers' markets across Kent. Each farmers' market is committed to providing shoppers with higher quality, more nutritious, easily traceable, fresher local food and drink. They are designed to give Kent's farmers and small food enterprises the opportunity to sell direct to the public, ensuring consumers get a fair price for their products. The farmers' markets offer an increasingly rare chance for communities to get together and provide outlets for products which respect both the environment and animal welfare, whilst helping to reduce the distance that food travels.

The association provides leadership and advice to existing farmers' markets and stallholders, and works with individuals and companies looking to set up a farmers' market or to start selling at a farmers' market. It offers guidance on regulatory requirements and practical ideas about operating and promoting markets and products and all the association's knowledge comes from hands-on experience.

Kent Farmers' Market Association works with shops who champion local food helping them to source product from the database of over 300 stallholders. It also contributes to initiatives which support local food and is always keen to work alongside other organisations which share its ethos and enthusiasm.