



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EAST LOTHIAN FOOD & DRINK SECURES GROUND-BREAKING SECOND TERM

East Lothian Food & Drink, the leadership organisation for the county's food and drink businesses, has secured a second five-year term as a Business Improvement District (BID) following a resoundingly positive vote by members. This ground-breaking second term for the only food and drink BID in Scotland underlines the important role it will play at a critical time in the post-COVID recovery of the sector.

First created following a positive vote in 2016, East Lothian Food & Drink Business Improvement District in partnership with East Lothian Council and Queen Margaret University, has worked to promote East Lothian food and drink businesses. This successful renewal vote will allow East Lothian Food & Drink to continue to build on the solid foundation and promote the high quality and sustainable food and drink of the county.

Business Improvement Districts must hold a ballot after five years to ask members if they agree to its continuation and to contribute to it through a compulsory levy. The renewal ballot for East Lothian Food & Drink closed on 1st July with almost 90% of members who voted agreeing to its continuation.

Chris Luca, Chair of East Lothian Food & Drink said:

"I am delighted that members have voted emphatically for the continuation of the Scotland's only food and drink Business Improvement District and that they clearly see the value of working together.

As a local food and drink producer, the East Lothian Food & Drink BID has provided us with a great opportunity to work together. Following the turbulence we have experienced since March 2020, I am excited by the vital role East Lothian Food & Drink will play in the rebuilding of the sector and putting East Lothian Food & Drink on the map."

East Lothian Provost, Councillor John McMillan, said:

"I am thrilled that our businesses have voted to continue the collaborative and vital work of the East Lothian Food & Drink Business Improvement District. As we move into the second half of 2021 and the easing of restrictions, the emphasis on working together and promoting our fantastic food and drink to a wider marketplace has never been more important.

+Now my challenge is which East Lothian tippie to choose to put in my glass and what to eat with it to celebrate another five years of Scotland's Food and Drink County!

East Lothian Council and partner Queen Margaret University have committed to support the BID over the next five years.

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Notes to Editors:

1. East Lothian offers some of the finest food in Scotland from award-winning organic fruit and vegetables, to choice cuts of beef and game. Home to one of Scotland's finest malt whisky distilleries, the region also produces first class gin, beer and cider. As well as rich farmland, the county's forty miles of coastline provides a plentiful supply of freshly landed fish and seafood and has seen success with less traditional produce including spices, oils, ice-cream and chocolate. In addition, East Lothian has a great array of visitor experiences in food and drink, building and enhancing the reputation East Lothian as Scotland's Food & Drink County.
2. There are over 40 food and drink producers in East Lothian who are members of East Lothian Food & Drink.
3. East Lothian Food and Drink is the UK's first sector-based Business Improvement District that commenced its first term on 1 August 2016
4. The BID framework is based on businesses with a shared interest and a common ambition coming together to generate funds and decide how it should be spent locally. It has been used elsewhere to enhance town centres, tourism and business parks with successful examples bringing a range of improvements such as better promotion and marketing, community events, projects and loyalty schemes, all of which can drive sales and attract more investment. More information on Business Improvement Districts is available online at <https://www.scotlandstowns.org>.
5. Chris Luca, Chair of East Lothian Food & Drink BID and Councillor John McMillian, East Lothian are available for interview.

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