



**Friends of
the Earth**

Shop Local First this Christmas

Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems, which make life better for people.

Friends of the Earth is:

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation**
- the most extensive environmental network in the world, with almost one million supporters across five continents and over 60 national organisations worldwide**
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland**
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of its income.**

To join or make a donation call us on 0800 581 051

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Introduction

Even if they use supermarkets during the year, many consumers do a bit of their shopping at local stores over the festive season. Queues form outside butchers shops, people pop to their local greengrocers to buy walnuts and satsumas, and garden centres do a brisk trade in Christmas trees and holly. But people need to realise that **local shops aren't just for Christmas** – and if they don't continue to use them over the coming twelve months they might not be there at all this time next year.

Christmas is an excellent time to increase local support and media interest in Shop Local First campaigns. Encouraging people to shop locally at this time of year, may begin a trend which will stretch into the New Year and beyond. There are many others who are planning to or who have already run campaigns to support their local shops at Christmas. Therefore there are already many ideas out there to inspire your own campaigns.

This guide is intended to be used alongside our existing Shop Local First pack this Christmas – for a copy contact richh@foe.co.uk, 0113 242 8153 or download it at: http://community.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/supermarkets/index.html

The case studies and campaign ideas in this guide provide some ideas to get you started. Regardless of the ones you decide to use remember the goals of each Christmas campaign will be the same:

- raise awareness of the benefits of shopping locally vs shopping in big supermarkets.
- get consumers to switch at least some of their shopping from big chain supermarkets to local shops, and to continue to do so throughout the year.

What's included in this guide?

- 1) What can local groups do this Christmas? – new ideas to help promote or launch your Shop Local First campaign this Christmas.
- 2) Case studies – Christmas campaigns that have already been run to promote local shopping at Christmas.
- 3) Sample press release – Christmas is a good time to get interest in your Campaign from the media, as they are often keen to run stories about shopping. This press release can be modified for your campaign then sent off to your local media to drum up interest in your campaign.



1. What can local groups do this Christmas?

Christmas is the time when consumer purchasing will be at its highest, so is therefore an ideal time to increase awareness and further reinforce existing shop local campaigns for the following year. Friends of the Earth's annual green Christmas tips encourage people to avoid over-consumption at Christmas, but diverting spending towards local shops that people can walk to and supporting local sourcing is an important part of a greener Christmas. The ideas presented in this section are designed to help local groups get creative about how to promote their shop local campaigns at Christmas. They supplement the ideas presented in the local first campaign ideas briefing available at: www.foe.co.uk/resource/action_guides/localfirst_campaign_ideas.pdf

Get the media involved

Whether you're launching a new campaign or promoting an existing one, it is vital to let your local media know what you are doing. Media interest in shopping is high at Christmas and this presents a great opportunity to create awareness. There is a **draft press release** for you to adapt available at the end of this pack which you can send to your local media to inform them why you will be urging consumers to shop local this Christmas. Remember to let them know what you have planned well in advance as they may even want to get involved themselves.

Set up a Christmas stall

As well as asking your local shops to display our materials, why not run a stall in your town centre or local library to help promote the campaign. As it is Christmas this is also an ideal opportunity to decorate your stall – and yourselves – with green decorations which will help attract both public and media attention.

You could ask local shops to provide a list of the seasonal products they have on sale. You will then be able to point people in the direction of the shops selling them. You can then set people the challenge of buying the ingredients for their Christmas dinner from their local shops wherever possible.

Ask local shops themselves to give out recipe ideas based on the products they've got. They might also be able to give out tips on how to cook some of their produce, all of which will help build the important relationship between customer and shopkeeper which will keep the customers coming back through 2007 and beyond.

Encourage networking

Letting your local shops know that you're doing this will also encourage **networking** between them which would boost your campaign in the future. You could help them to produce a directory of local shops to hand out at your stall, highlighting what they contribute to the area. This may prove useful in creating public awareness of their local stores not only during Christmas but for the whole year. Though it may not be possible in time for this Christmas to create a particularly flashy directory such as that produced by Leeds or Manchester Friends of the Earth (<http://www.leedsfoe.demon.co.uk>, <http://www.realfoodguide.org.uk>), a list of local shops, possibly with examples of their Christmas products, might help encourage people to use them.

They could then work together to set up a Shop Local First Christmas challenge. For example, people could get shopkeepers to sign their shop directories at the till, and if they bought something at every one they would win a free mince pie.

Talk to your local Post Office

Post Offices are already keen to join in with the Shop Local First campaign. Following the publication of an article in the SubPostmaster magazine, around 50 Post Offices have joined the campaign. The SubPostmaster is running a story about our Christmas campaign so many others should also be aware of what we are doing and may have been thinking about doing some promotion of Shop Local First.

Christmas would be an excellent time to get them on board. People will be visiting their Post Offices to post presents to friends and relatives, so large amounts of people will see our posters and leaflets if they display them. Many Post Offices are also attached to shops, so by promoting the campaign might also encourage people to do some of their shopping for food, cards and wrapping paper whilst they are there.

Late Night Openings

By linking up with other shops and interested groups in your local area it may be possible to arrange a time in the run up to Christmas where local shops can participate in late night openings. This could last for a single day or perhaps even several days.

Late Night Christmas openings as part of Shop Local campaigns have proven successful in towns such as Dunster (see <http://www.dunsterbycandlelight.co.uk/>) and Twyford (see <http://www.twyford-berkshire.co.uk/site-admin/events/2004/10/late-night-christmas-shopping.htm>), and are well established in many cities. They provide a simple and cost-effective means of raising the profile of the Shop Local campaign. At a minimum all it requires is a commitment by local shop owners to keep their stores open later than usual, even if it's just for an hour or two. This creates an opportunity for local retailers to increase trade during this already busy period and divert consumers away from larger multiple stores that may also be operating late opening hours, and provides a chance to talk to people about the value and importance of their local shops.

To go beyond opening later, shops could consider late night openings as part of an event. You could get someone to dress as Santa, or your local Women's Institute could offer free home made mince pies and Christmas puddings. Such attractions would all no doubt encourage families and shoppers to attend whilst at the same time demonstrating the importance of supporting the local area. This type of event would have its profile raised greatly by you or your shops contacting the local media.

Source local Christmas related produce

Local groups who have got to know traders through existing campaigns may have started trying to persuade local retailers to stock more local food. Christmas provides the ideal opportunity not only to encourage retailers to stock more local and sustainably produced food, but other local products too.

Greengrocers and butchers may already be stocking local food, but encouraging them to source and stock produce specifically related to Christmas may provide them with an



additional advantage in the competition against larger retailers. Persuading them to stock local or home made food products such as cranberry sauce, Christmas puddings and other locally made products which could take the form of crafts such as Christmas cards, crackers and decorations for example, would provide an additional incentive for shoppers to avoid high street retailers.

Local traders might be persuaded to ask their customers what local produce they would ideally like to see stocked at their stores next Christmas and for the following year. This is likely to get them thinking about local produce as an opportunity and could help to identify the local products which are most likely to prove profitable for them.

This is something which can be implemented by all local traders and not just those supplying food, and encouraging them to source a few local products during the Christmas period may even act as an incentive to source more products throughout the year.

2. Case studies

These case studies all help demonstrate what can be done to help create a sense of community at Christmas. There are further Christmas case studies, as well as those from the rest of the year, in our existing Case Studies section at:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/action_guides/localfirst_case_studies.pdf

There may not be time to run some of the more elaborate schemes in time for Christmas, but hopefully they should provide some inspiration for your own campaign.

Shop Local Competition – Scottish Borders

The Shop Local competition organised by Scottish Borders Council has brought together many community members, including the local radio station and local people in helping to increase awareness of the benefits of shopping locally. The competition asked local primary and secondary school children to help design characters and slogans which were used to promote local Christmas shopping within the region.

The competition provided a great way to get young people and their parents thinking about the benefits of helping their community and using local resources in the run up to Christmas.

The winning character in 2004 was named “MerryGold the Elf” and the winning slogan “This Christmas why travel all over the place? Shop in the Borders at a leisurely pace”. The children’s’ participation in the competition meant that these were already recognisable to thousands of school children and parents within the area, so the character and slogan were used to promote local shopping within the region. Car stickers were also made available and those who displayed them had a chance to win prizes on a daily basis.

This clever mix which involved various community members and a cheap but effective marketing strategy has helped boost business in the area. The campaign is now successfully entering its thirteenth year since it launched!

For more information on the Scottish Borders Shop Local campaign, please contact the Economic Development team on 01835 825066.

Crafty Christmas, Yorkshire Dales

The campaign to persuade both residents of and visitors to the Yorkshire Dales to shop locally at Christmas has been growing over the past few years. In 2003 the Dales Countryside museum became a partner in the campaign.

To promote a shop local campaign a "Crafty Christmas" family weekend was organised in the run up to Christmas within the walls of the Dales Museum and free entertainment was provided by musicians and carol singers with mince pies, treasure hunts and craft workshops for children. This free entertainment helped to attract residents and visitors to the fair, and benefited both the Dales museum by attracting new visitors who may not have attended the museum before, and the local shop owners by raising awareness of shopping locally and enabling them to sell their products and crafts at the fair.

The success of the first fair led to the event being repeated the following year and the acting museum manager Debbie Allan commented: "This is the second Crafty Christmas event we have held - last year it was really popular and we had a full house on both days." For more information visit:

http://www.daelnet.co.uk/countrynews/archive/2004/country_news_01122004.cfm

Buchan and Langholm, Shop Local Campaigns

Buchan and Langholm implemented two very simple but highly effective ideas. The Langholm Initiative, a group of 70 shops that act to promote local trade, has run a successful Shop Local voucher campaign in the run up to Christmas for the last two years. Their next step was to promote the group of local independent retailers with a shop local carrier bag. The bags bore the community website logo and were distributed by the Langholm Initiative. Shoppers were encouraged to reuse these bags, which acted as a simple but effective marketing tool for making consumers aware that Langholm is a town that encourages shopping locally. For further information go to:

<http://www.langholm-online.co.uk/pages/content.asp?PageID=406>

Buchan's Shop Local campaign has proved hugely successful, generating more than £367,000 for local traders. One of its campaigns during the Christmas period has been to encourage local retailers to open late for several nights during the Christmas period, providing competition to the larger retailers' longer opening hours as well as increasing trade for local retailers. For more information go to:

http://www.buchanie.co.uk/archived/2003/Week_052/postbag/editorial.asp

My Shop is your Shop, Football in the Community

Similar Shop Local Christmas campaigns have recognised the importance of forging closer links between independent retailers and members of their community.

A pilot scheme organised by the "My Shop is your Shop" campaign forged links between local shops and local football clubs. A group of independent retailers met with Luton Football Club, to develop closer ties and to explore a range of activities which would promote both the local stores and the football club. These included five-a-side fun days run by independents with Luton FC backing and the distribution of brochures and flyers. Group visits for young people to watch club players training that were organised through the local store is an idea that the retailers thought would prove attractive to all concerned.



Press Release

Advance: [date of launch]

Shop Local this Christmas

“SHOP LOCAL FIRST” CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

A campaign urging people to support their local shops is launched/boosted today [delete as appropriate] [date] amid growing concerns that unless consumers change their shopping habits, beginning this Christmas, independent shops might disappear by next December. [your group's name] Friends of the Earth wants shoppers in [your town] to “Shop Local First this Christmas” [1] and says that by switching our shopping habits, we can also help boost local economies and help the fight against climate change. [Friends of the Earth has joined up with...list your campaign allies ...for this campaign]

The campaign will use [insert details of your campaign e.g. Christmas themed stall, late-night opening, shop discounts and vouchers, loyalty schemes, posters, directories, local food guides and promotional schemes] to help tempt shoppers back to the High Street.

[name of spokesperson] for [your groups name] Friends of the Earth said *“Christmas should be a time of community spirit and local shops make up a large part of this community. But the power of the big supermarkets will continue to squeeze small suppliers and shops, so next Christmas we could be left with little choice of where to do our shopping. Supporting your local shops you can really help to keep your [town/neighbourhood] thriving. And if you walk to the shops and choose locally sourced food you'll be making a much better environmental choice too”.*

Friends of the Earth say that there are great benefits from shopping locally not only at Christmas but for the whole year:

- Local shops are more likely to provide local food that hasn't been flown halfway across the world
- Local shops offer a much more personal service than big supermarkets
- Local shops keep money circulating in the local area so they support other local businesses
- Local shops and street markets often offer better value than big supermarkets for fresh fruit and vegetables [2]
- Local shops are more energy efficient than huge superstores – it would take more than 60 greengrocers to match the carbon dioxide emissions from just one average superstore [3]
- A diverse range of local shops provides more choice than one big supermarket

[you could also add a quote from a shopkeeper or one of your campaign partners]

Small shops are struggling to survive due to the dominance of the big supermarkets:

- The four biggest supermarkets already control over three quarters of the grocery market
- Tesco alone dominates over 30 per cent of the grocery market

- In 2004 alone 2,157 independent shops went out of business or became part of a larger company (compared to an annual average of 300) [4]

Earlier this year an all party group of MPs gave a stark warning that many independent shops would go out of business by 2015 unless action is taken now to curb the power of the biggest supermarkets [5]. A new investigation into the dominance of the big supermarkets is now underway by the Competition Commission [6].

Friends of the Earth wants the Competition Commission to implement measures which will redress the balance between the big supermarkets and local shops. For example they have the power to force supermarkets to sell land and stores in areas where they are particularly dominant. More robust planning policies could help local communities fighting against new supermarket stores.

But Friends of the Earth has warned that it could take up to two years for the Competition Commission to complete its research and make recommendations and this could be too late for many small shops. That is why the group is urging shoppers to change their shopping habits indefinitely at Christmas to keep supporting their local shops all year long.

[1] 'Shop Local First' is a new initiative from Friends of the Earth – campaigns encouraging people to support their local shops will taking place all over the UK this year.

[2] A Friends of the Earth survey in 2003 found that apples were cheaper in greengrocers than supermarkets and in 2005 a study for the New Economics Foundation found that street markets in London were “substantially cheaper” than supermarkets for fruit and vegetables.

[3] Based on a study by Sheffield Hallam University in 2002: Energy use in the United Kingdom non-domestic building stock

[4] Institute of Grocery Distribution “Convenience Retailing 2005”

[5] All Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group (2006) 'High Street Britain: 2015' House of Commons

[6] In March 2006 the Office of Fair Trading proposed a new investigation into the grocery market by the Competition Commission due to concerns that the dominance of the biggest supermarkets may be harming smaller businesses and consumer choice.