

☒ **Indie York (York Independent Business Association) is a not-for-profit association which was set up in 2016 following the Boxing Day floods of 2015; when so many independent businesses were adversely affected. Indie York have been sponsored and supported, from their inception, by The York BID, the City of York Council and Bootham School. The Association presently has just over 200 members from a range of sectors including Food & Drink, Retail, Culture, Health & Well Being, Accommodation and Services. Indie York's aim is to encourage residents, visitors and local students to use the wonderful array of independent businesses in York. They produce a widely distributed map that is available at the Visit York tourist office and all Indie York member businesses. Indie York also has a website helping you to find your favourite independent businesses.**

"York is a city of independents with around 65% of businesses being independently owned. We have such a rich mix of independents covering all sectors which gives our city a very distinctive offer of eclectic, unique businesses. Indie York has always been about working together." Said Johnny Hayes MBE, the Chairman of Indie York.

The independent sector has always played a crucial part in sustaining York's local high street; many businesses having been established for decades or many generations of family ownership. ? *Indie York provides a platform for independent businesses to have a bigger voice as a collective than they would on their own. It feels like there is a genuine desire to bring real value to each and every member business. In these current difficult times, Indie York have been brilliant at highlighting the businesses who have remained open, but also supporting those who have temporarily closed by sending regular information and guidance. For us, as a hotel and restaurant, we have obviously been severely affected and our normally lively business has been eerily quiet, so we really appreciate Indie York reminding consumers that supporting an independent business doesn't only mean financially - a like or share online means the world to us.* ? Said Rebecca Hill, Galtres Lodge Hotel.

Once again York is facing a huge challenge during the Corona Virus pandemic which has affected all sectors of society. During these uncertain times Indie York has teamed up with Coaching York to offer free business coaching to their members. They have also worked with local companies to make masks which have been distributed to local businesses. The independents have been quick to diversify during this time by offering deliveries, collections and online offerings. Indie York also supports them by promoting their member news via social media.

?There are some real success stories and collaborations that have come out of this crisis. The independents have really stepped up to the mark to provide what they can to support their customers and many businesses have been donating their services to support the vulnerable in their communities and also providing free meals to NHS staff at York Hospital; it is very heartening to see these small businesses making a big difference. The local community have backed these projects and in turn are supporting the independents now, more than ever. This support needs to continue if these businesses are to survive as they face uncertain futures. A future without York?s independents takes the heart and soul out of our city? said Sara Amil-Smith, Indie York Administrator.

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