

# Hunt & Darton Toolkit



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

*Hunt & Darton*  
**CAFE**

# HELLO

Great, so you have an idea and you want to find it a home on the High Street. We can do this.

The following is a brief guide on how we found a home for our pop up art installation, Hunt & Darton Cafe over the last three years, in centrally located retail units across nine towns in the UK. Stay positive throughout the search and remain flexible, the plan will change. We like to lower our expectations at all times because then they can only go up from there, its an ethos we ask everyone who visits our Cafe to adopt. Its better that way. Either that or embrace sheer stubbornness and never give up no matter who says 'no'. Both work...up to you...Good Luck!



## THE RIGHT TOWN

It is time to decide where you want to do it. We strongly advise a visit before you make your final decision even if you thought that it couldn't possibly happen anywhere else. We also strongly advise hanging out in similar businesses to that you wish to open. To us this meant hanging out in cafes and pubs so, not hard work really!

## THE HIT LIST

Once you know your town, literally walk the streets in search of 'To Let' signs on appealing properties. Take a snap and note the street name and contact number.

What do we mean by appealing? You've found a shop you like the look of but also look for the following:

- Is it located in a good spot?
- On first inspection does it look big enough?
- Is there a good footfall of people?
- What other businesses might you piss off? Work with?
- Who uses the street – do they have any reason to come to you?
- Is there an existing art community?
- How easy is it for people to get to e.g. local parking, train stations etc.
- Does it look habitable? Or at least manageable to make habitable with your budget?

Now scour the internet for advertised property – warning this is less effective as it is often out of date and always less successful when you are less familiar/sure of the property to negotiate a useful viewing resulting in a home for your project.

Also note, there are now organisations that manage pop-up businesses in certain towns, we used [wearepopup.com](#) in Brighton and [appearhere.co.uk](#) in Manchester. They already have the properties with landlords primed for temporary creative let's, so more than half the work is done. You submit your project details and state an interest in the properties you are keen to move in to. In fact, if one of these organisations has moved into a town it is highly likely they will already have the monopoly so it is best to work with them. They also help market your event via their website. We have only had positive experiences even if we have to be a little more patient to hear confirmation or answers when you are not the direct contact.

## SPEAKING TO THE ESTATE AGENTS

Once you have a clear list it is time to pick up the phone. We recommend caution in your first conversation with the Estate Agent or private landlord. Also note, any repeat contact numbers as you will agitate them if you call for individual properties rather than one call for say all five they are responsible for. They can be unflinchingly corporate. Consider approaching the call with the following suggestions:

- Speak economically and practically
- Say you are working on a project and name any local contacts e.g. with Colchester Arts Centre
- Would they consider a temporary arrangement and say (if you do!) that there is a budget available
- Avoid too much detail about the project, you might find it exciting but unless they seem genuinely interested limit the chat
- Avoid declaring exactly what budget is available at this stage
- Push for a viewing date

## THE SHOW ROUND

Right you're in! Take time to look around the property. Remember they are there to sell, so look hard before you begin to explain what you want to use it for. Ask the questions you need to know the answers to if you can't see what you are looking for. Make a wish list for what you need in your space. This is ours:

- Is it accessible for wheelchair users?
- Is it big enough?
- What facilities does it already have? Toilets, kitchen, plug sockets, electricity/gas, water, heating/aircon etc.
- If necessary can we install a temporary kitchen including a sink?
- Are there any structures in the main space or vinyl on the window that we would want to remove or have removed?
- Where does rubbish go?
- Is there any storage space?
- Can deliveries and equipment be dropped off easily? Loading bay, wide enough doors, flights of stairs etc.
- Do you like it?

## PITCHING

Charm offensive alert! Try hard not to lose your soul but if you can't be bothered to sell your project the Estate Agent definitely won't help you do so. You want them to consider you a professional, you want them to understand a project that might be far from their normal interests, you want them to answer your property concerns, and you want them to like the deal you offer if you go for it at the end. That is a lot. There's more than one of us and often we use that to our advantage.

We take a press pack so they can see past successes and images of the project. If you don't have that yet just take a press release style hand out for them. If they seem interested in the 'art bit', great! Keep talking! If they don't, shut up once you've said the main bit. Make a very clear email version to communicate the project and what you want, they will need this for the landlord.

Mainly, we try to consider why the landlord would benefit from our stay.



Here is what we offer:

- Rent (for a month usually £500–1000 for a town £2000-3000 for a city)
- Business Rate Relief – there is a clause in the law that a landlord is exempt from business rates for three months if they rent their property for 6 weeks or more – This is a huge bargaining tool! They can receive this discount by informing their Local Authority and presenting the contract
- DIY on property – you can improve their asset!
- Occupation to attract attention – a lively property shows potential
- Positive press from project
- Agree to leave the property as we found it

- A clear contract for agreed period of time and present any other licensing they seem concerned about

Once negotiations are in progress make sure you respond quickly with requested documents and follow meetings up with emails to reiterate what was discussed. People are busy, keep your needs near the top of their to do lists by keeping in regular contact.



## LOCAL AUTHORITIES

There are certain expectations from the Local Authorities crossing up to five departments in the local council. These are monitored and implemented to varying degrees but there has not been one occasion where we have not been on someone's agenda.

### Premise License

The most common premise licenses you will encounter are as follows:

**Class A1** Retail of goods, takeaway cold food only

**Class A2** Financial and professional services

**Class A3** Sale of food and drink

In conventional arrangements you are not allowed to use the shop for any other purpose than the license states. Most premises are A1, which is fine if you are not selling hot food. However, about two years ago the government relaxed these restraints for temporary businesses aimed to encourage entrepreneurial spirit and support the trial of small businesses. This means that as long as you are all aware of this you can, as we have on most occasions, run a café with a simple menu (limited cooking) in A1 properties.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is unlikely that the Council will audit H&S within a month, but it is important to look after all involved, so please do follow the government's guidelines. It is basically common sense, but when you work day in day out in a place its easy to stop noticing things, so its best to monitor and record. If anything did go wrong you would be responsible.

[hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm)

## FIRE SAFETY

This is often already undertaken by the landlord but can fall into your responsibility if they are not up to date (e.g. the shop has not been rented for a substantial period of time) or your activity includes cooking. We managed our own fire safety for our Edinburgh shop as we took over a derelict building however if the shop is available for rent it is highly likely all equipment will be in place. Check for evacuation and meeting point signs, fire extinguishers and clear fire routes/exits. if in doubt ask. We had our worst nightmare when we, on a rare occasion, rented a warehouse space off a venue. All the signs were there, maps marking routes, extinguishers, exit signs alarms but guess what? The fire department arrived one morning and, ready to open the Cafe in all our pineapple glory, we were informed that the building was unfit for public use and was being closed down. Not one of the alarms worked and significant back routes were blocked. Not fun. Here are the guidelines, which we strongly advise you are aware of.

[www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities](http://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities)

## INSURANCE

You will definitely need Public Liability Insurance. This can be bought but as Artists we use our AN membership and keep a copy of the insurance certificate on file at all times. Membership currently costs £36 and it's a great resource to have anyway.

[a-n.co.uk/news](http://a-n.co.uk/news)

## FOOD BUSINESS

This is an area we know well and does require another arm and a leg when it comes to permission to sell food from the Local Authorities. It is the area that is most policed and easiest to fail.

### Registering your food business

we have found that despite how temporary we are official food business departments always find time to do things properly. They are on the ball in seeking out new food businesses in there area and will spot any that have not registered as this. If you are a food business for more than one week always register.

[www.gov.uk/food-business-registration](http://www.gov.uk/food-business-registration)

### Food Hygiene

Once registered it is also highly likely you will then be visited by a Food Safety Officer. They will don their white coat and go into every area of food cooking/prep/ washing including the pot wash. They have the power to close you down if you are seen to be putting the public at risk with your food operation but usually if you have the basics in place and show an understanding they will provide and action report which will have a reasonable amount of time to implement. They will often then return to check this has been implemented.

Everything you need to know, including up-to-date legislation, which can be introduced very quickly in response to an incident or an outbreak in the food industry is online. There is a very coherent manual to follow and fill in which is here on the Food Standards Agency website.

[food.gov.uk/business-industry/sfbb](http://food.gov.uk/business-industry/sfbb)



## BOOZE

**Legal** (this is of course the one we recommend!)

**Personal License Holde** – We advise one of your team becomes a Personal License Holder, as it is often the reassurance the Licensing Team needs to permit the sale of alcohol. Please note, activity in Scotland requires its own certification. So if you are a UK license holder you wwill need to sit a further exam. There are many courses available, which are 1-3 days and end in a multiple-choice test. The certificate from successful completion of the course is needed for your application.

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/alcohol-licensing-personal-licences](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/alcohol-licensing-personal-licences)

**TENS** – Give over 10 working days prior to the period of time you are applying for to gain permission. There is a last minute application that carries a fee but this still has a five day turnaround not including the day you apply! You can apply without a personal license holder but as we said above, if applying regularly it is advised to have at least one trained person. Applications for a TEN's at a temporary space or non permanent venue carry a higher risk. It should also be noted, especially if planning regular events TEN's applications can be capped to around 10 per year in some locations/areas.

[www.gov.uk/temporary-events-notice](http://www.gov.uk/temporary-events-notice)

For Scotland you need an Occasional License, the good news with this is it can last up to 14 days.

[www.gov.uk/occasional-licence-scotland](http://www.gov.uk/occasional-licence-scotland)

### You have the correct Premise License

– the shop you have rented holds a license including permitting the sale of Alcohol. With this you can do what you like within the times and days outlined in the document. If you wish to sell alcohol outside of the restrictions a TENS is still required. You require a Personal License Holder to manage this especially if you attract new attention to an area.

### Not so legal

*Donation bar* – for launches and one off events

*Free drink* – This is fine for private parties such as launches and events.

## ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE

If you are not putting on a very obvious live show this is not required. If you are, a TENS or Occasional License is required. We do not ask for this type of license for our Cafe.

## GETTING PEOPLE THROUGH THE DOOR

### Local Press

This is the most valuable tool of all to talk to a town. They often like a high impact image and then they come for the story. If you have the budget its good to get a Marketing Manager familiar with the area or your project on the case.

### Posters, flyers and adverts

Put these wherever you can afford too or are accepted. For flyer drops do this with animated spokes people for the project and/or leave in creative spaces and cafes where you are likely to find your audience or the new audience you wish to attract.

### Word of mouth

People talk. Give every single person that steps over the threshold the experience they deserve and you imagined. They will become your personal advocates. The parents talk the loudest!

### Attention seeking

We love attracting attention in the old fashioned way. If people aren't coming to you, go and get the people. Elaborate, colourful costume is one of the quickest ways to make people notice you and distract them from their day-to-day. Email invites via local organisations, We work with the towns art centres, the council arts department and theatres to cross-promote their work and ours.

### Launch party

Have a great opening party and invite all the right people through the right means. People like:

- Council member and the Mayor!
- Art centre and theatre directors
- Local artists and like minded practitioners
- All involved in the project
- Local creative groups

### Offers

Hunt & Darton's 'Unhappy hour' offer where you get one drink for the price of two may not work for you, but other offers that have worked well for us include 'free

cuppa when you buy a Tunnocks tea cake' or 'tell us a joke and you get a free coke' and 'bring a baby and get a free brew'. We also label everything with 'free' if it's free and 'family friendly' if it's family friendly!

### ONCE OPEN

Keep your idea smart. Adjust to your experience now that you know how things really are. Is it all working well? Be realistic but don't get pessimistic if things aren't immediately buzzing. Although you may want to adjust don't bend so much you no longer recognise your original idea. It's important you have a very clear identity.

These things are simple but work:

- Keep it clean
- Advertise clear opening/closing times and have an A-board outside when you are open
- Listen, within reason, to customer /staff feedback
- Enjoy it!

Well that's it from us, over to you.



