**Press Release**

**London, 26 November 2011**

**CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY FOR STALLHOLDERS …**

**SELLING ONLINE DOESN’T HAVE TO COST A PENNY !**

**Perfect timing! stallholder.net are upping their game and offering free stalls and product listings to small manufacturers, designer makers, farmers market traders and cottage industrialists. Unlike other websites offering online shops, stallholders will not be asked to part with any of their hard earned cash.**

The great news that stalls are free means participating stallholders can look forward to being a part of this internet phenomenon, which takes into consideration their needs and wants. With high street chain stores closing daily, expect to find unique and quirky crafts, fashion and interiors, as well as wholesome foods that, really and truly are not on the high street.

Every participating stallholder that signs up will get a free trade stand for a 3 year period. Each trade stand comes fully equipped with 100 shelf spaces in this online marketplace, plus a blog, calendar and the ability to join other online markets displayed on the site. Existing stallholders have already been credited with a free stand for a whopping 5 years!

Stallholder.net is one of a kind: a virtual marketplace, offering online stalls to artisans found at craft fairs, farmers markets, trade and county shows. It’s not just for crafters or small food producers though. It’s for all cottage industrialists who want to promote their wares. Social networks such as Facebook churn out daily invitations to events such as Christmas markets and charity sales. stallholder.net’s unique concept of promoting markets and events happening in the real world **and** giving the participating stallholders a complementary lasting online presence, makes it well worth a look.

According to Mary Mavrogheni at stallholder.net, the move to provide a free co-operative is a bid to ensure that vendors are able to operate their online stall’s, without being encumbered by the constraints of fiscal website rules. She said, “paying a per listing fee for a low cost item, or having to shell out as much as 20% on a larger ticket item, is simply not palatable to a small trader. Our aim is to provide a genuine and lively marketplace for vendors to attract clients and share online opportunities with fellow stallholders .. it’s a case of strength in numbers.”

In the spirit of a co-operative, stallholders are asked to use their social networking opportunities to tell friends and spread the word. They are happy to do so … not only are stalls free but, uniquely, stallholders are able to link to external online shops to process their transactions, such as, Etsy, E-Bay and Folksy.

This could be seen as a small attempt to beat the current economic downturn. There is a general feeling in the camp that, with stallholders working cooperatively on and offline, a viral campaign will make stallholder.net one of ‘those’ household internet names.

“Why charge?” asks Elly Gray, Technical Director, “the internet provides us with so many opportunities to monetise sites, there is simply no need to burden our stallholders with cumbersome sign up fees. Our goal is to provide a virtual marketplace where everyone knows somebody participating.”

Even more exciting is the promise of things to come from stallholder.net. They have already set the wheels in motion for an international trading strategy: in the future, they will be offering multilingual satellite sites, wholesale and export opportunities to their stallholders.

**Markets** have always had a key role in helping to build stronger communities and are a focal meeting point for local people. For over 1000 years, they have been the birthplace of towns and cities. Sitting at the head of a town’s local economy, they turn over in excess of £3.5 billion from 45,000 micro businesses supporting almost 100,000 jobs.

**Stallholder.net** is the virtual marketplace where designer makers, small manufacturers and sellers are joined together in a co-operative to bring an eclectic mix of cottage industry products.

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