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## Nick's guide celebrates excellence in customer service

AN indispensable guide to local businesses which offer outstanding customer service has been landing on the door mats of homes throughout East Devon over the past couple of weeks.

Our Local Expert lists more than 200 businesses, from chimney sweeps to farm shops, with one thing in common - they have all been recommended for inclusion by members of the community they serve.

The groundbreaking guide, which is being distributed free to more than 35,000 homes, is the handiwork of Sidmouth father-of-four Nick Hall. Since it was first produced in 2007, the publication's popularity with both businesses striving to earn a mention and those turning to its pages for recommendations has rocketed.

"I've been overwhelmed by the response," said Nick, who is justifiably proud of his role in supporting local independent traders and, at the same time, the local economy. "Businesses are jumping at the chance to feature and I'm always hearing from people how useful they find it when they're looking for, say, trustworthy tradespeople or quality local produce.

"Our Local Expert only promotes businesses which have been recommended to us by the public. We act on their feedback and exclude any businesses we don't have complete confidence in."

Among those to feature this year is the award-winning Kenniford Farm Shop, in Clyst St Mary, near Exeter.

Owner Andrew Freemantle said: "Our ethos is to sell great tasting local produce and, that being the case, we're thrilled that our customers have taken it upon themselves to nominate us for inclusion in Nick's guide. This kind of recognition means an awful lot to us."

The guide has also proved a hit with those who might otherwise hesitate to invite a relative stranger into their home.

"People who feel vulnerable are more at ease inviting a tradesperson endorsed by the local community into their house," said Nick. "Only this week, I was contacted by Sidmouth hospital's community rehabilitation service with a request for copies. They tell me it's a godsend for patients returning home after an operation and looking for someone they can trust to help them out."

Besides a mention in the guide and on the [www.ourlocalexpert.co.uk](http://www.ourlocalexpert.co.uk) website which runs in tandem with it, featured businesses also stand to benefit from Nick's utilization of cutting-edge social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, and a much-coveted window sticker alerting the public to their inclusion.

If you know of a business which offers outstanding customer service and you think is worthy of inclusion in Our Local Expert, Nick would love to hear from you. He can be contacted on 01395 513869 or via [nick@ourlocalexpert.co.uk](mailto:nick@ourlocalexpert.co.uk).

- The latest edition of Our Local Expert was being delivered to homes across East Devon April 4 - April 15. If you didn't receive a copy but would like one then call 01395 513869.

- Ends -

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