# Small Business Saturday launches 3,000-mile electric Tour to spotlight 5.45m UK small firms



Small Business Saturday’s touring campaign is set to hit the road again this autumn and into November, with organisers promising a month-long celebration of the country’s independent firms. The refreshed “Tour” will visit more than 20 towns and cities, launching in Scotland with stops in Lossiemouth and Edinburgh before moving across the UK, and is being carried out with backing from BT. According to the organisers, the roadshow is designed to put local business stories centre stage and to showcase how small firms underpin jobs and community life across the nation.

The itinerary reaches a wide geographic spread, with planned dates in places from Belfast and Manchester to Plymouth, Cambridge and multiple London locations, reflecting an effort to touch both urban centres and smaller market towns. The campaign says the Tour will cover roughly 3,000 miles and will travel in an electric vehicle to limit emissions — a practical nod to many small firms’ increasing interest in sustainable operating choices. In the run‑up to Small Business Saturday itself, the organisers will pair the on‑the‑ground visits with a programme of free online events intended to reach firms that cannot attend in person.

The timing is deliberate: Small Business Saturday will take place this year on 6 December, and the roadshow is intended to amplify the campaign’s long‑running message to “shop local”. The organisers point to the scale of the sector as context for the initiative: government business population estimates published in October 2024 record roughly 5.5 million private sector businesses in the UK at the start of 2024, of which around 5.45 million were small businesses (firms with 0–49 employees). The campaign team says the month of activity — a mix of local showcases and daily online workshops, mentoring and insight sessions — is designed to bolster those firms’ resilience and visibility ahead of the December shopping period.

Small Business Saturday’s materials quote business owners and campaign leaders to underline the grassroots tone. Speaking to The Scotsman, Carol Jackson, owner of ELJ Drinks Ltd., described the Tour as “a fabulous celebration of entrepreneurial spirit” and encouraged other small firms to get involved. Michelle Ovens CBE, director of Small Business Saturday UK, is quoted in the campaign’s media information as saying the roadshow allows organisers to “engage directly with the nation’s favourite small businesses” and highlight the creativity and resilience at the heart of local economies. BT’s commercial leadership also features in publicity for the Tour: Chris Sims, Chief Commercial Officer, UK Business at BT, said the initiative offers a platform to deliver tailored advice and resources to firms — language that mirrors BT’s broader Skills for Tomorrow programme.

That programme, BT says, is already a major pillar of its community-facing activity: the company has publicly framed Skills for Tomorrow as a long‑running effort to expand digital skills and support for individuals and small businesses, and has set ambitious outreach targets for the coming years. The campaign’s supporters page and press materials emphasise that Small Business Saturday is run by Small Is Big CIC as a not‑for‑profit community interest company, with American Express named as the principal supporter; national corporate partnerships are presented as helping underwrite the Tour and the month of free online support. Small firms interested in taking part are being invited to request visits or register for webinars through the campaign’s booking channels.

Organisers say the Tour is as much about celebration as it is about practical support: by combining in-person showcases with training, mentoring and promotional activity, they aim to strengthen local trading networks and help firms make the most of digital tools, sustainability measures and seasonal trading opportunities. The campaign urges local communities to back their small businesses and to use the programme’s events — online and on the road — as a chance to discover and support the enterprises that sustain high streets and neighbourhood economies.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.scotsman.com/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341), [[2]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/bus-tour), [[4]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/media-information)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.scotsman.com/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341), [[2]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/bus-tour), [[7]](https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341), [[4]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/media-information)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.scotsman.com/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341), [[2]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/bus-tour), [[4]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/media-information), [[5]](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2024/business-population-estimates-for-the-uk-and-regions-2024-statistical-release)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.scotsman.com/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341), [[4]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/media-information), [[6]](https://newsroom.bt.com/bt-to-help-25-million-people-make-the-most-of-life-in-the-digital-world-by-2026)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/our-supporters), [[6]](https://newsroom.bt.com/bt-to-help-25-million-people-make-the-most-of-life-in-the-digital-world-by-2026), [[2]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/bus-tour)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.scotsman.com/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341), [[4]](https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/media-information), [[6]](https://newsroom.bt.com/bt-to-help-25-million-people-make-the-most-of-life-in-the-digital-world-by-2026)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.scotsman.com/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/bus-tour> - The Small Business Saturday UK ‘The Tour’ page outlines the national roadshow returning in November to celebrate and support local small businesses across the country. It explains the Tour will visit twenty‑three towns and cities, begin in Lossiemouth, travel over three thousand miles in an electric van to minimise emissions, and offer a daily programme of free online workshops, mentoring and insight events open to all small firms. The page confirms BT’s continued support via its Skills for Tomorrow initiative, provides information on how businesses can request a visit or join webinars, and links to booking and media contact details.
3. <https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/our-supporters> - The Small Business Saturday UK supporters page details the campaign’s funding and partners, stating American Express as the principal supporter and noting the organisation founded the US initiative in 2010. It highlights BT as a key supporter, describing BT Skills for Tomorrow as the programme providing free digital skills training and backing the Tour roadshow. The page explains the campaign is run by Small Is Big CIC as a not‑for‑profit community interest company, lists ways supporters contribute to promotion and running costs, and gives contact details for enquiries, emphasising collaborative partnerships between national companies and grassroots small businesses and communities.
4. <https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/media-information> - The Small Business Saturday media information page offers press material on The Tour and the wider campaign, quoting Michelle Ovens CBE, the director, praising the role of entrepreneurs and urging public support. It confirms the campaign is grassroots and non‑commercial, backed by principal supporter American Express, and details The Tour’s use of electric vehicles to limit emissions as it travels over three thousand miles. The page outlines the free month of online support — webinars and mentoring — and provides booking information, suggested press copy, social channels, and contact addresses for journalists seeking further information or profile opportunities and resources.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2024/business-population-estimates-for-the-uk-and-regions-2024-statistical-release> - The Department for Business and Trade’s Business Population Estimates 2024 statistical release provides the official annual estimate of private sector businesses in the UK. Published in October 2024, the release records approximately 5.499 million private sector businesses at the start of 2024, and breaks down counts by size band. The detailed tables show that there were around 5.45 million small businesses (0–49 employees), representing over 99% of the business population, alongside figures for medium and large firms. The publication includes methodology notes, regional breakdowns, and downloadable data tables for researchers and policymakers. It is the official source for business counts.
6. <https://newsroom.bt.com/bt-to-help-25-million-people-make-the-most-of-life-in-the-digital-world-by-2026> - The BT Newsroom announcement outlines BT’s Skills for Tomorrow ambitions, celebrating reaching ten million people and setting a new target to help 25 million by March 2026. It describes free digital courses, webinars and mentoring aimed at individuals and small businesses, notes BT has supported hundreds of thousands of small firms with training, and highlights products and services to help SMEs with connectivity, cybersecurity and digital marketing. The release emphasises BT’s commitment to supporting the UK’s small business ecosystem, cites programme milestones and quotes BT leaders on the importance of digital skills for economic recovery and business resilience and growth.
7. <https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/your-world/uk-roadshow-to-champion-impact-of-local-small-businesses-5270341> - The Peterborough Today article reproduces the Small Business Saturday announcement and lists The Tour’s scheduled stops, providing specific dates and towns including Lossiemouth, Aberdeenshire, Edinburgh, Belfast, Preston, Carlisle, Durham, Manchester, Grimsby, Derby, Wrexham, Hereford, Newport, Crediton, Plymouth, Salisbury, Brighton, Maidstone, Leighton Buzzard, Cambridge and multiple London dates. It explains the roadshow will showcase a range of local enterprises, promote free online workshops and mentoring in the run‑up to Small Business Saturday, and encourages business owners to take part. The piece acts as regional publicity for the national campaign and links to the Small Business Saturday website for details and registration.