

PRESS RELEASE: EXTRA SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS AND FOR THE EXMOOR HILL FARMING NETWORK

The Exmoor Society has announced that it is to give more help to young people through the Pinnacle Award, and also to the Exmoor Hill Farming Network, through an overall cash injection of £10,000. First, the annual 2020 Pinnacle Award has been increased to £5000 and extended to young people between 18 and 35 years old. This year, because of coronavirus, the closing date is now to be later moving from the end of June to midnight on Monday 2 November. Set up in 2011, the Award is open to an individual or group who lives, works or studies in the greater Exmoor area and have an idea for a land-based business venture. Previous applications have come from ideas as diverse as cider-making, developing a herd of pedigree cattle, country clothing, setting up an agricultural and forestry contracting businesses, bee-keeping with honey production and outdoor tourist activities.

The application process is designed to be accessible to all with a basic form to complete and an informal interview to be held in November. Rachel Thomas, chairman, The Exmoor Society said “As a landscape conservation charity we fully recognise the importance of providing opportunities for people to live in the area, undertaking jobs, showing beautiful landscapes and livelihoods can go together in National Parks.”

Second, since the early years of the 21st century, The Exmoor Society has played an important role in showing the inter-relationship between farming and national park purposes which several examples show. In 2004, it commissioned “Moorlands at a Crossroads” report which identified the key role of moorland farmers in maintaining traditional practices and in the socio-economic life of the moor. A reception in the House of Lords in 2008 raised the plight of hill farmers to ministers and MPs; 2016 it enabled the Duchy College Rural Business School to analyse the economic state of Exmoor farms providing evidence of high dependence on agri-environmental schemes. More recently its “Towards a Register of Exmoor’s Natural Capital” report has indicated the wide range of public services that farmers provide for public payments and is now being tested and trialled for a new agri- environmental scheme. “We have seen the significant role the Exmoor Hill Farming Network now plays in working closely with the Exmoor National Park Authority and we wish to support them both further with sustainable farming practices, conservation and protection of the environment all part of our charitable objectives,” Rachel Thomas concluded. The Exmoor Society is giving the Network £5,000 this year to help with financial struggles over the impact of coronavirus and continued support in the future. On receiving the news Katherine Williams, Network Officer said “The Chairman and Board members

thank The Exmoor Society very much for this overwhelming donation towards Network activities.”

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Images: Matt Sharp.jpg – Matt Sharp, 2015 Pinnacle Award winner
EHFN CIC 31012020 (002).JPG – Exmoor Hill Farming Network

Note to Editors:

The Exmoor Society is an independent charity that protects and promotes Exmoor for the benefit of all and is the only membership organisation that is dedicated to the National Park status. Exmoor is a unique, diverse landscape of moorland, coast, woodland and farmland shaped by both nature and people over thousands of years. Established in 1958, The Society acts as a champion and watchdog for its conservation and the enjoyment of its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. It searches for solutions to today’s challenges, such as loss of heather moorland, by gathering evidence to influence rural decision-makers both locally and nationally.

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