

PRESS RELEASE: Applicants are invited now for the 2019 Pinnacle Award

The 2019 Pinnacle Award, organised by The Exmoor Society, is now open to young people aged between 18 and 27 years who live, work or study in the Greater Exmoor area. It offers up to £3,000 to an individual or group who have an idea for a business venture based on Exmoor, for example in agriculture, forestry, food and drink, conservation, horticulture, craft, tourism, or any outdoor land-based activity. The Award, now in its eighth year, was set up by The Exmoor Society to help young entrepreneurs live and work on Exmoor. As a conservation body, the Society fully recognises the importance of providing opportunities for young people to continue to live in the area by encouraging entrepreneurial activity. The award also helps to promote the idea that beautiful landscapes and livelihoods in a National Park do go together.

Previous applications have come from people with ideas as diverse as making cider and developing a herd of pedigree cattle. The award so far has helped fund young people either to set up or take forward businesses such as agricultural contracting, country clothing and woodland management. There were three successful applicants in 2018: Polly Goodman, Philip Stephens and Camilla Waterer, who were developing respectively, goat meat from local herds, vehicle canopies from lightweight material and horse-drawn carriage rides over the moor for celebrations and special picnics. All three applicants impressed the judges so much that Trustees decided to offer the full award to each one.

The application process is designed to be accessible to all with a basic form to complete and a reference provided by a mentor or sponsor. Applicants will be invited to an informal interview where judges will be looking for business ventures related to Exmoor's rural character and likely to provide a sustainable living, with perhaps the potential in the future to offer further employment.

Chairman of the Society, Rachel Thomas, said: 'There is a great deal of concern that young people have to leave Exmoor because of the lack of employment. By providing seed core money through the Pinnacle Award, the Society hopes to enable them to stay in the area and keep the moor alive and thriving.'

The Society hopes to attract even more entries for the award this year which is now open for applications with the closing date being 30th June 2019. Forms are available on the Society's website at www.exmoorsociety.com or by contacting its Dulverton office on 01398 323335, info@exmoorsociety.com.

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Image: Carriage Rides.jpg (courtesy of Camilla Waterer)

Polly & Flock.jpg (courtesy of Polly Goodman)

Matt Sharp.jpg (courtesy of Matt Sharp)

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