

PRESS RELEASE: Early Christmas Present for a Young Exmoor Entrepreneur

The Exmoor Society has just announced the winner of its 2021 Pinnacle Award as Oliver Hill from Wheddon Cross, Exmoor. His creatively named business, Hillbilly Haircuts, provides a shearing service across Exmoor for some 15,000 sheep, and has a clear capacity for future growth. Exmoor Society Trustee, John Wibberley said, "Already Oliver Hill has taken on apprentices and has scope and intention to develop his business to cover this vital role. His award will enable him to renew his trailer and equipment and strengthen his opportunities to champion the key role of sheep in managing Exmoor's landscapes for biodiversity net gain (BNG) and in carbon-sequestering grass-fed meat production. Oliver demonstrated to the judges an evident understanding of these issues and suitable skills in communicating their importance. He is also keenly aware of the importance of farm-to-farm services such as his in assisting the mental health and well-being of people in isolated workplaces."

On receiving the news Oliver said "I am thrilled to be able to invest the Pinnacle Award into my business to make it grow and keep this important and ancient skill alive whilst supplying a service to the farmers of Exmoor and wider area. Exmoor and sheep go hand-in-hand, where there's sheep they will always need shearing. Wool is also the obvious and best choice to ease and stop plastic pollution and help with climate change whilst keeping traditional skills alive."

The Pinnacle Award, now in its second decade, seeks to recognise and encourage young entrepreneurs whose businesses across Exmoor National Park, including Greater Exmoor, would benefit from seed corn funding. Candidates must be 35 years of age or under and provide a business plan for a start-up idea, or for a business already sufficiently viable to benefit from a further uplift both financially and through the receipt of this prestigious award, worth £5K.

Past winners have covered a whole range of rurally compatible enterprises, particularly where they offer the capacity to train and incorporate further local jobs. Since the Exmoor Society is basically a conservation organisation, all applicants should understand that their submissions for consideration to gain the Pinnacle Award must demonstrate caring management sensitive to Exmoor's environmental and community needs.

Rachel Thomas, Chairman commented "In this year's competition for the Pinnacle Award, Oliver Hill faced a short-list of keen contestants, and it is the hope of the Exmoor Society that we can in various ways show-case the impressive offerings of the

young people with most inspiring local businesses from that list. Rural enterprise on Exmoor is in good hands”.

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