

Moor Wild Experiences:

A Rural Enterprise Exmoor business case study



Moor Wild experiences was founded by Liz Cwilewicz in 2018 bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience of foraging, ecology and outdoor pursuits.

Having wild foraged for 6 years and studied botany, Liz ensures you get the very best experience and those taste buds going.

Moor Wild experiences provides outdoor nature, foraging and dining experiences for all ages across Exmoor National Park and offers tailored or scheduled guided walks teaching wild foraging, flora & fauna identification, history, culture, and navigation skills.

The experiences are part of The English National Park collection and span different accessible honey pot sites across such as Watersmeet, Lynmouth, Heddon Valley and Doone Valley.

Working with the National Trust, The Bath Hotel and Barton Farm, Kentisbury, Liz delivers experiences to captive audiences who wish to make the most of their holiday and to locals who'd like to connect a little more to the natural world.

Inspired by her experiences, study of animal behaviours and the expansive beauty and colours of Exmoor she began a secondary business venture, Elizabeth Victoria Art. She focuses on map illustrations bringing wildlife, history, architecture and culture together for future generations to enjoy.

Most recently she has installed watercolour pieces across the Moor illustrating the fantastic conservation management of the North Devon National Trust, West Exmoor team.

Benefits and challenges of working on Exmoor

Benefits

“I get to live and work in a stunning part of Devon, where my day-to-day practises can be done in places I would normally walk / run / spend time with friends. So its a win-win situation. Foraging involves being observant, so I can do this on a daily basis.

The second benefit is, the local people are my friends and are also great at connecting me with other people / businesses who are keen on my area of work. This has lead me to some great collaborations and developing some successful ideas at various well-known venues.

Art work - the inspiration comes from my walks and the villages surrounding us. Clients for murals have been local, such as hospitality venues, Estates and the National Trust.

Word of mouth is powerful in North Devon and that is how my business has thrived. There is lower competition as I am a very niche service provider.”

Challenges

“Seasonality - so this means I have to diversify and tailor my business experiences with the seasons and the busy tourism times. One has to earn 12 months worth of salary in 7 months. So because this can be hard, I have two businesses. One is ecologically synchronised and daylight-hour dependant (spring - autumn) and the other is producing and selling art work and murals (winter).

Business Exposure - I do not have bricks and mortar, I am simply a 'hidden trader'. So exposure and visibility is key - I have a magnetic advert on my car which has helped and I speak with local accommodation owners about my services.”

Aspirations and advice

Aspirations

a portfolio of experiences/services deliverable on a daily basis and all year round for locals and tourists - Wild Foraging courses, fermenting & preserving courses, navigation skills and adventurous skills weeks. I am doing the latter at Pinkery Centre in May 2022 in collaboration with a 'health & wellbeing practitioner'.

“I would like to develop a solid business collaborations offering dining/social venues so experiences are enjoyable for longer in a relaxed indoor setting. Let's face it, our British weather can be unreliable!”

“Furthermore, I would like to create and sell some wild produce to inspire the younger generation that 'going back to our ancestral roots' is cool and soon, possibly essential. Beyond this, I am working towards herbalism and natural healing. Our future will need it.”

Advice

“Talk to the locals and the local businesses - show a face! Whilst bringing along your business leaflet, people have seen your face, seen your passion and shared a Q&A session with you. Locals can then give testament to your service and put you at the top of their list of recommendations. Business cards and A5 flyers - Vistaprint and other similar services offer £30 - £40 for 1500. Get them out to the right market and honeypot sites. Target your market - putting 1000 leaflets through the wrong doors is a huge loss. Go to locations where you know your market will need you. You don't always need a paid website - you can use free social media pages (Facebook & Instagram).”

