

West Country Blacksmiths:

A Rural Enterprise Exmoor business case study



West Country Blacksmiths is a family run business between brothers Kyle and Kieren Roberts. The company employs 10 full time, award-winning bespoke metal work specialists and is supported by other skilled Exmoor based tradesman.

Kyle first traded from the National Trust owned Allerford Forge 10 years ago, however, the limited company known today as West Country Blacksmiths is trading in its sixth year.

The historic forge continues to serve the community of Exmoor as it has for centuries with bespoke and repair items for the local community.

West Country Blacksmiths' expert craftsman, design and make all forms of metalwork for the home or outdoors inclusive of but not limited to – gates, railings, balustrades, estate railings, handrails, staircases, balconies, chandeliers and lighting, artistic and sculptural metalwork. The extent of their skill knows no bounds.

Having forged a reputation for producing the finest quality metalwork, the blacksmith's work can be found both locally and nationally, with some pieces even sent overseas.

Benefits and challenges of working on Exmoor

Benefits

Kyle believes his business benefits from being based on Exmoor for several reasons

- The picturesque location and national trust forge certainly helps the Exmoor brand tie in with our business branding
- The heritage nature of the forge boosts our social media following to a wider audience.
- Exmoor has a large number of multiskilled people who we collaborate with on specific projects.

Challenges

Some of the challenges they face running their business on Exmoor are such things like

- The distance from the motorway is an issue for business. It does make some of our journeys to view and undertake work a lot harder.
- We find we have issues with some companies not wanting to stray too "rurally" to visit us.
- House prices and cost of living in Exmoor is a challenge and can drive good people out of the area.

Aspirations and advice

Aspirations

“Our aspiration over the next 3-5 years is simple, To continue to serve the local community and deliver the very best metalwork for the area.

We intend to continue to build a reputation for being the very best metalworker, producing metalwork on Exmoor and delivering it's unique character around country.”

Advice

“Our advice for other Exmoor businesses would be to share what you do, your skills and your passion with the local community and be proud to be from Exmoor”

