

Paws at Highlaws

Grant Amount: £12,434.50

Project Cost: £31,086.24

Dog hotel and grooming services

Solway, Border & Eden

Local Action Group

Support for investments on creation and development of non- agricultural activities

LEADER Priority 2 – Support for a microbusiness / Local Strategic Priority — Growing Rural Prosperity

The Applicant

Michele Pownall is a British Army veteran who served 15 years as a Combat Medical Technician in the Royal Army Medical Corps. After settling in rural Cumbria, at Highlaws, near Silloth, Michele went about setting up her dream job of working with animals. In 2017 she opened a dog grooming salon and quickly established strong client base.

The Project – Construction of 6 luxury kennels.

Clients from the grooming salon repeatedly asked Michele for a boarding kennel service. She carried out some local market research which confirmed that there was indeed a keen demand, so she got busy planning the 6 luxury kennels that would become Paws at Highlaws.

Solway, Border & Eden Local Action Group supported Michele's project, enabling her to expand her dog grooming business to include the dog hotel. The grant of £12,434.50 contributed to the cost of building the 6 luxury kennels, and purchasing the infra-red heating.

Process

Michele was supported through the application process by the Economic Programmes Team at Cumbria County Council.

Without the LEADER grant it would have taken me several years to save enough to fund the building of the kennels myself. Thanks to the grant, the dog hotel is now open for business.



Outcomes

The LEADER grant has supported a rural microbusiness. It will create an additional 0.6 FTE which means Michele can become employed full time in her dream job. An increase in turnover and profit is forecast, so business growth has also been created by the project.

Michele has incorporated environmental considerations in the design of the kennels. They are well insulated, with an environmentally friendly infra-red heating system. The waste disposal system is also eco-friendly.

And of course, the project will enable the local community to access a dog hotel and grooming service from a local supplier who they have come to know and trust.