

# John Muir Alpacas

## APPLICANT

Alex Dale Ltd

[www.johnmuiralpacas.co.uk](http://www.johnmuiralpacas.co.uk)

## TOTAL PROJECT COST

£97,161

£58,253

(59.9%)

£38,908

Tyne Esk LEADER

Match Funding

## PROJECT AIMS

- To diversify an East Lothian farm in a creative way, by providing the first alpaca trekking experience to East Lothian.
- To increase visitor numbers to East Lothian, in particular the Dunbar coast.
- To augment existing tourist experiences and increase footfall to them.
- To improve health and wellbeing of visitors, giving them a brush with nature.
- To provide unique experiences, hiring the alpacas and tee-pees out for Events.

## PROJECT DETAIL

John Muir Alpacas is located at Hedderwick Hill Farm, outside Dunbar. The applicant contacted Tyne Esk LEADER to discuss farm diversification, bringing a unique experience to East Lothian with Alpaca trekking. The business plan looked promising and the Local Action Group (LAG) were in full agreement, so the project was born. It aimed to dovetail with existing experiences, increasing footfall to them/catering outfits etc, but add something extra special.

## RESULTS

John Muir Alpacas focusses on providing Alpaca trekking and picnics and greatly improves health and well-being of participants. The funding has paid for a modern tee-pee on the farm grounds, which is used for the picnics and is also intended to be hired out as a wedding/event venue in the future. The Alpacas can also guest star at external weddings/events. Importantly, their reputation as 'therapets', has meant they have been used for visits to care homes and are particularly good for autistic children and adults. A final string to the bow – the applicant plans to sell the alpaca wool. As when spun and woven, it creates a sumptuous, luxury fabric.

John Muir Alpacas, has given Hedderwick Hill Farm, the ability to diversify and increase its sustainability, providing that new, unique, tourist experience to the area. This brings more tourists and visitors to Dunbar and into this picturesque part of East Lothian, benefitting the whole community. Alpaca trekking is one activity which is allowed with slight easing of Covid restrictions and it gives much needed amenity at this time, including to care homes. It has also provided a much needed second income for the farm during Covid.

