

## Listershire



In the Cumbria countryside of Oughterside lies Oughterside Mill, a family run farm who are looking at ways to diversify and provide an insight to the world of what farming is really like.

We met with Emma Lister who as well as working in the local primary school helps run the farm alongside her husband Rob and their two children Sophie and James as they embark on the grand and eagerly awaited opening of their Listershire pumpkin patch to talk about how important their fibre to the premise (FTTP) broadband service is to them.

Emma said “I have always been involved with farming, coming from a farming family in nearby Cockermouth and now raising my own family on our farm in Oughterside. I think it is so important that we teach the next generation about farming. We should all know more about where our food comes from, how the countryside is run and the work our farming community do to support the nation”.

“With this in mind, we are looking to open up our farm and welcome people to come and see what we are all about. And what better way to do this than with the opening of our pumpkin patch which is appealing to both children and adults. So book your tickets, wrap up warm and come and enjoy the autumn vibes and all we have to offer”.

Emma told us “We had been struggling for some time with poor broadband speeds before the arrival of FTTP in our area. I will be honest, it took me some time to sign up, I didn’t appreciate you had to request the upgrade rather than it being automatic. Once we did this, the process was relatively straightforward and managed by our service provider, and once installed wow, what a difference it made. We certainly wouldn’t now want to be without it.”



“To get the message of the opening of our pumpkin patch out there, I took to social media to drum up some publicity and used the ‘Eventbrite’ system to manage the bookings. We wanted to limit numbers in order to maximise the visitor experience and to be honest, from a logistic perspective the number of vehicles to the farm. This has worked really well and via our page visitors can access the online booking system, pick a date which is good for them and see how many tickets are still available for each session. Take up has been good and we are really pleased with how this has worked. This is a much more efficient way of operating a booking system as opposed to taking bookings via phone/enquiry etc”.



Social media like all things has its good and bad points but I think if we focus on the good it can be positive, all-inclusive, non-isolating, informative and educational. How else do you reach such a large number of people at the touch of a button? Alongside word of mouth and the fact that those driving past our farm have been watching the pumpkins grow, it has been our main form of publicity for our pumpkin patch. I love the fact I can keep our page up to date and respond to any comments or enquires wherever I am, be that at home or out and about using the 4G service in our area via my handheld device. Being able to respond to people in ‘real time’ is really important”.

“As we develop our ‘open farm’ idea further I am sure we will further progress our online presence and are already looking at the development of a website to support what we do. This is a really exciting time for us and we look forward to where this will take us – definitely look out for more exciting stuff from us in the future”.

“From a farming business perspective, being ‘online’ has become increasingly important over the last few years, whether that be for reporting cattle movements via the British Cattle Movement System, completing online tax returns, completing your online stock inventory submission or using Bacs to pay invoices and manage finances. With our FTTP service we can do all of this with ease and confidence we won’t be subject to a ‘drop-out’ at a key moment.”



Emma and Rob’s children use their broadband service for both educational and entertainment reasons. Emma said “kids need to have access to online services. A lot of their homework requires online research, the use of apps, submitting their work online and we all know how important it is for them to be catching up with their friends over a game of online FIFA or downloading a new book on their kindle. That is one thing we really did struggle with prior to our upgrade, they would get really frustrated at what they couldn’t access. I think there is an expectation that you can now and actually, working in a village school, you find there are a lot of cases where you can’t. To me there should be a real emphasis on there being services available right across the board”.

Emma would encourage others to look into the possibility of upgrading their broadband service “one phone call was all it took and our service provider did the rest, the difference it has made is immense”.

To find out more about Listershire and book your place at their Pumpkin patch visit [Listershire | Facebook](#)