



Funded by
UK Government

Accelerator Case Study

Hoe Grange Holidays



Sector: Tourism **Size:** Micro **Location:** Derbyshire Dales **Turnover:** £220,000

About the business

Hoe Grange Holidays was set up in 2005 by David and Felicity Brown as a diversification development to provide additional income to support their dairy farm. It is situated on the edge of the Derbyshire Peak District, near Brassington and offers sustainable tourism accommodation with four lodges, two glamping pods and a traditional Gypsy caravan.

Hoe Grange Holidays also specialise in accessible holidays with four accessible lodges - three of which have full wet-rooms - hoists and a range of equipment to help those less mobile enjoy their holidays.

Sustainability is hugely important to both David and Felicity. The site uses renewable energy fed back through ground and air source heating systems to maximise the benefit. Rather wonderfully, Hoe Grange Holidays also offer the opportunity to 'bring your horse on holiday' hosting over 80 horses per year! The business has three full-time employees and takes on three to five part-time seasonal staff.



Funded by
UK Government

Accelerator Case Study

Challenges faced

A key challenge the business has faced, particularly since the pandemic, is increased competition from new, part-time holiday let owners. This has seen the number of cottages or glamping units, and similar, dramatically increase so essentially you have more properties fighting for the same business.

For Hoe Grange Holidays it's imperative to be a little different in what they do and make the enterprise as efficient as possible. The rise in energy costs, higher wages and difficulty in recruiting suitable staff, in such a rural area, has also made the last few years even more challenging.

Solution and impact

Their key objective is to reduce the business's carbon footprint as far as possible and with that reduce energy bills. Existing efforts have them well on the way to meeting their target of a negative carbon footprint (not just net-zero!)

To support this further, they have taken advantage of business support from the Accelerator Project. Accelerator is funded through Derbyshire Dales District Council's share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and delivered by East Midlands Chamber.

They have received one-to-one support from Business Adviser Andy Bunn who provided access to a full premises energy audit. This was needed as Hoe Grange Holidays operates on the same site and energy supply as the farm. So, they needed to fully understand where and when the energy was being used and how best to reduce reliance on the National Grid supply.

Andy also supported them in preparing their application for a decarbonisation grant from the Council, which was approved in the summer, and has led to the installation of extra solar panels and a battery storage system.

The new installations have had a huge impact on the business. The business has already managed to reduce reliance on imported electricity by around 60%, and of that around 80% tends to be a cheap rate, night-time tariff. This is leading to savings of £800-£1000 per month!

The savings have allowed them to start thinking about succession planning, consolidating the position of general manager, which their daughter, Caroline started



Funded by
UK Government

Accelerator Case Study

last year. This in turn has brought new marketing skills into the business and a newer, efficient way of working in the office using her industry skills gained over 15 years.

Caroline, David and Felicity have also taken advantage of some of the workshops and webinars including What's New in Email Marketing, How to do your own PR: Putting your Tourism Business on the Map, Practical Guide to Paid Digital Advertising and Making the Most of Google Analytics.

David comments: "Although we had been planning this project for a few years, it had always been just out of reach financially. The expected results were just an estimate too, based on past experience and market research."

A word from the business

"The energy audit helped confirm our expectations and the advice from Andy ensured the process of applying was made as simple as possible.

Without the aid of grant funding, we would have been unlikely to have proceeded with this project for some considerable time, if at all."

Accelerator has provided:

- One-to-one adviser support
- Energy Audit
- Decarbonisation Grant
- Workshops

Impact to business:

- Reduced energy costs
- Improved energy efficiency and sustainability
- Upskilling workforce
- Succession planning