

Going electric at The Cowshed

How a family-run accommodation
business utilised LoCASE funding
to future-proof their business



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Introduction

Anthony and Alice Bosley, after leaving the bustling life of London 15 years ago for the Kent coast, aimed to embrace a more sustainable and rural lifestyle.

They acquired an old farm with a disused cowshed, which sparked the vision to transform it into The Cowshed, a charming, family-run accommodation.

Their commitment to conservation and sustainable living shaped the ethos of their business, aiming to provide a unique, eco-friendly experience for visitors.

Anthony said:

“We’ve always really enjoyed our safari holidays to places like Tanzania and Costa Rica. We have a passion ourselves for wildlife, the environment and conservation, and the mentality of leaving things in a better state than you found them.”

Background

The Cowshed is not just a place to stay; it’s a testament to the Bosleys’ dedication to wildlife, the environment, and conservation.

With chickens and pigs on-site, and a business model that includes using renewable energy sources, The Cowshed ranks highly among sustainable accommodations on platforms like AirBnb.

This appeal is especially pronounced among environmentally conscious travellers coming from metropolitan areas such as London.





Objectives and why LoCASE

The idea to apply for LoCASE funding was catalysed by the financial strains imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw The Cowshed refunding bookings worth over £40,000.

Anthony first learned of the funding through a Kent County Council email about grant opportunities for local businesses.

Their main goal was to integrate sustainable technology into their operations to reduce overheads and appeal to the growing market of eco-aware tourists.

Despite the financial hardships faced during the pandemic, applying for and receiving LoCASE funding was a seamless process.

Anthony noted that the simplicity of the funding process allowed them to focus on running their business without getting bogged down by bureaucratic red tape.

Strategy and implementation

With the LoCASE funding they received, The Cowshed installed solar panels and battery storage systems, alongside an electric vehicle (EV) charging station.

These enhancements not only reduced their energy costs but also bolstered their green credentials—an increasingly important factor for guests choosing accommodations.

Anthony said:

“The grant has allowed us to accelerate and be ahead of the curve! It’s going to be increasingly more visible for people as more people start to say, ‘I don’t want to go in the middle of nowhere because there is nowhere to charge my car.’”

Results & future implications

Since the installation, The Cowshed has seen a noticeable improvement in their operational costs and guest interactions.

Anthony reports:

By virtue of where we'd located it, it's not visible to guests, and the batteries are out of reach of little kids getting hurt, but the most visible thing that people are pleasantly surprised by is the EV charger."

This feature has made The Cowshed a preferred destination for the increasing number of EV owners, particularly those visiting from abroad and hiring cars for events like weddings in the area.

Conclusion

The environmental 'badge' isn't just a mark of pride for the Bosleys personally, but a critical component of their business model.

As Anthony concluded:

“The LoCASE funding has allowed us to accelerate and be ahead of the curve as a business.”

This ensures that The Cowshed remains a beacon of sustainability and an example for others in the hospitality industry.

The Cowshed

Location: Port Lympne, Kent, UK

Founded: October 2019

Founders: Anthony & Alice Bosley

Purpose: Self-catering accommodation for groups of up to 8 people for long and short break holidays