

# CASE STUDY

## LITTLE PERU GREEN START

Funding Amount: £19,366.79

Community Led local Development - Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) Main Fund Grant (2022/23)

### BACKGROUND

Little Peru Ltd is a socially conscious business whose ambition with the project is to offer an eco-friendly alpaca trekking site by diversifying their field.

By taking group visits of around 4-10 visitors at a time on a tour around the local forest routes with alpaca in hand, they aimed to sit this business alongside their eco-glamping pods on the same site.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project allowed us to install a solar panel array and accompanying storage battery on an outbuilding on the alpaca field site. This enables us to use this renewable energy to power the EV charge point, the automatic external defibrillator (AED) (both also ARIA funded), safety and pathfinder lighting and ultimately the eco-glamping pods further down the line.

The AED is intended for community use, is clearly signposted and sited outdoors in a heated, secure cabinet. The EV charge point is located next to hardstanding customer parking and can support two vehicles. Landscaping ensured the project was delivered in a presentable and professional manner.

The remainder of the budget was allocated for the alpacas themselves and a field shelter to provide them with year round turnout.

### HOW DID YOU FIND THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

This was the first funding application process we had any experience with, and it was a positive process from start to finish.



### AT A GLANCE

#### CHALLENGES

- Timing of work
- Planning permission process
- Electrical upgrades

#### BENEFITS

- Increased revenue
- Benefits to wider local economy
- Environmental improvement



### ROBIN KELLY

CEO, [Little Peru Ltd](#)

"This project has fast-tracked our business development, provided one full time permanent position and the aim is to eventually support a second full time permanent position"

Our contact, Angela Lamont who is the project co-ordinator was supportive of the project, provided practical guidance and was very helpful in providing us the direction we needed in navigating our first application process. Communication was always clear, deadlines were fair and we had no issues at all.

## **WHO WILL THE PROJECT BENEFIT AND HOW?**

The project should eventually benefit the wider community as our visitor numbers increase and the glamping pods increase. We already make referrals and recommendations to customers for other nearby attractions and eateries.

We have been surprised by the pull of the alpaca trekking, with a considerable number of our customers coming from out with Ayrshire and making a day trip of their time with us, therefore boosting the regional economy.

Our alpaca events have benefited the local community as well, we have had plenty of visits to local community gala days, primary and secondary schools, and care homes, engaging with a wide demographic of customers, all enjoying the universal appeal of these amazing animals.

## **WHAT STAGE IS THE PROJECT AT NOW?**

Our project was completed in February 2023 in line with the project timeline and we opened the alpaca trekking and crafting experiences in March 2023. Since then we have hosted almost 40 events, (approximately 2 per week), and each event has been sold out. We have had customers visit from everywhere; from Johannesburg to Chicago, from Iran to Edmonton in Canada.

We have diversified our offering by purchasing a trailer enabling us to take the alpacas on the road to events at other venues. We have had a very busy summer and attended a further 15 events with the alpacas on the road, from care homes to birthday parties, from gala days to high schools, we have met thousands of people and shared our passion for our alpaca herd.

All of this has been possible because of the Little Peru Green ARIA grant, this allowed us to proceed with this arm of our business while the eco-glamping pod side of the business went through the protracted planning process with the local council.

The alpaca events has provided us with a source of income during this interlude and has enabled the business to become established locally. The Little Peru Green Start Grant has provided us with the core amenities of the solar PV, EV charger and AED defib which will serve our development for years to come.

## **WHAT BENEFITS HAVE YOU SEEN AS A RESULT OF THE PROJECT?**

As a result of the project numerous benefits are apparent. We have been able to take the alpacas out and undertake some free of charge visits to care homes and those with accessibility issues. This has not only brought those we have visited great joy and excitement, but us too. This would not have been possible without the funding for the alpacas to allow us to move our business forward.

This project has fast-tracked our business development, provided one full time permanent position and the aim is to eventually support a second full time permanent position. This allows us both to be very present and engaged in absolutely every aspect of the business as opposed to running it as a side line whilst otherwise we would both have had to work much longer hours in other employment to fund everything.

Our project has given us the pleasure of meeting so many new people both visitors to Little Peru and event organisers and those in professional roles within the local area. This has allowed us to network with so many wonderful people and spread the word on our ethos, business and future plans.





## WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED DURING THIS PROJECT AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

The main challenge our project faced was actually the weather! The Scottish winter we endured in December 2022 was really bitter and this was regrettably the time we had a number of our contractors booked for to deliver this project. The temperatures dropped to -10oC and we were concerned that we might face cancellations.

Our electricians also uncovered a few issues with the existing wiring so installed new fuseboards and wiring rather than trying to work around the existing set up, which was an unexpected further cost. To keep our contractors onside we kept a big fire going, and a constant supply of cakes and hot drinks through this cold snap.

Otherwise, everything else we had planned for this project ran smoothly.



## ON REFLECTION, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

With the benefit of hindsight we would have sought to have had planning permission in place for the eco glamping pods approved in advance of this funding application as it may have provided us with more opportunities to secure funding against.

Instead though, we were able to use this funding application towards the alpaca side of the business, proving that it was a sage decision to have a multi-faceted business plan.

This was however only a timeline issue which was only evident as said with hindsight.

In terms of anything we had the power over to control, we were truly fortunate to have had an incredibly positive and affirming experience that there is very little we would have done differently.

## FINALLY, WHAT ADVICE COULD YOU OFFER FOR ANYONE LOOKING TO TAKE ON A SIMILAR PROJECT?

We would encourage anyone thinking about looking at a similar project to do your research, ensure there is a gap in the market, plan out every aspect of your business, canvass local businesses and your target audience and then go for it!

We have learned so many valuable lessons throughout this journey and we will continue to do so as our project grows and develops over the coming years.

However, we have been so lucky to have the support and encouragement from those around us and from each other and we are so glad that we have jumped in with both feet and are already seeing the rewards of this project!



## FUNDING INFORMATION

'Community Led Local Development' or 'CLLD' gives local communities the power to tackle their own, local challenges.

By building knowledge and skills, supporting new ideas and encouraging cooperation, CLLD helps to create viable and resilient communities.

CLLD activity can support Community Wealth Building initiatives and opportunities to help enable Just Transition priorities.

£8.6 million has been allocated to Local Action Groups (LAG) to support CLLD within their areas through the Rural Community Led Fund (RCLF) in 2022-23.

Ayrshire LAG used their funding to establish the Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) Fund

You can find further information about current funding availability at the Scottish Rural Network Website including a free online [funding search tool](#) for your charity, community group or social enterprise.

From small grants to funding for big capital projects, we can help you track down the funding you need to make a difference in your community. The Scottish Rural Network is a one-stop-shop for news and information about rural development.

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