

# CASE STUDY

## JACK'S ALT-STAYS - INSTALLATION OF ENERGY EFFICIENT POWER SOURCE

Funding Amount: £40,991.65

Community Led local Development - Ayrshire  
Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) – Small  
Capital Fund (2022/23)



### BACKGROUND

We are two cousins, Daniel Jack and Adam Jack, who share a love for adventure, unique experiences and the environment.

After staying the night in some weird and wonderful places around the world we've set out to bring it home to north Ayrshire.

We have decided that glamping is old news and we are on a mission to create a unique space for an unforgettable travel experience.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Jack's Alt-Stays is a next generation, eco-focussed tourist accommodation business in Millport, Isle of Cumbrae, which launched in October 2022.

Our project, which was completed in January 2023, consisted of the supply and installation of 40 x solar panels and 2 x Tesla Powerwall storage batteries to our site. 8 x solar panels were installed on the roof of each of our 5 cabins and our storage batteries were installed in a centralised location on-site.

We worked with Ayr-based supplier Solar & Wind Applications to supply and install the infrastructure, and the project was managed ourselves.

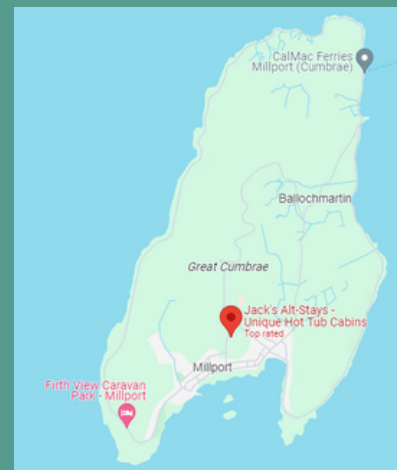
### AT A GLANCE

#### CHALLENGES

- Weather conditions
- Lead in time for materials
- Ensuring milestones within project plan met

#### BENEFITS

- NetZero / Climate action & reducing carbon emissions
- Providing employment
- Economic benefits to the wider community



### DANIEL JACK

Co-owner, Jack's Alt-stay's

'Through the longer and sunnier summer's days, we're now nearly 95% powered by the sun. It feels amazing to be able to self-generate almost all of our electricity'

## WHAT DID THE PROJECT SET OUT TO ACHIEVE?

Before completing our project, our business was consuming energy through the national grid, supplied by the green energy supplier – Octopus Energy.

We set out to power our business through our own renewable energy, self-generated on our site. The goal was to install Solar PV panels and Tesla Powerwall batteries which would allow us to generate and store energy for use in low-generation, high-usage periods, which is imperative for our use case.

Through this we hoped to power our business through renewable energy for the vast majority of the year, only relying on the mains connection as a back-up for short periods of the winter where solar energy generation potential is limited.

Our project aligned firmly with the Scottish Governments push towards net zero emissions by 2045, and in particular it's carbon neutral islands by 2040 initiative, incorporating the Isle of Cumbrae. Further, the infrastructure would facilitate the achievement of our goal of carbon neutral/negative status as a business.

Although our business already had an environmental focus, the aim was to further consolidate ourselves as an environmental leader on the island, and as a truly green business. This would allow us to promote sustainable tourism by attracting more environmentally conscious, overnight, high-value, visitors to the Isle of Cumbrae.

## HOW DID YOU FIND THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Generally, we found the application process very well organised with clear instructions on how to apply for the grant funding. The best thing about the process was having our point of contact at the ARIA fund – Angela – who was always on-hand for any questions/clarifications and was very responsive which helped us reach any deadlines.

We found that there was a lot of due diligence involved and different forms to complete outside of the main application form, which was sometimes quite time consuming, however this was expected given the amount of government funding we were applying for.

The application itself wasn't too lengthy and again came with clear instructions for the different sections. Setting out our own milestones during the application process also helped us with the project management side of things and setting expectations for the other stakeholders involved in the project.

Overall we were happy with the application process and, of course, very appreciative and proud to be successful.

## WHO WILL THE PROJECT BENEFIT AND HOW?

According to a 2023 booking.com study, 76% of travellers say they want to travel more sustainably over the coming 12 months. With Jack's Alt-Stays enhanced eco-credentials as a result of the solar panel project, this accommodation option is a more sought after option to environmentally conscious travellers, compared to competing offers with a lesser focus on the environment.

More bookings mean more housekeeping work for local staff. Now fully booked for the summer season, we've been able to create five new part time housekeeping roles, fulfilled by Millport locals, and Ukrainian refugees living in Millport.

Not only are our 200+ high value visitors a month spending in Millport's tourism-dependant food, drink, gift, and experience offerings during their 2-3 day visit, our team members are also spending their wages locally.

## WHAT STAGE IS THE PROJECT AT NOW?

Our project kicked off in October 2022, with the aim of concluding all works by the 10th of February 2023.

From the beginning of the project we were strict with our deadlines and managed the project well, ultimately concluding at the end of January, ahead of schedule.

In October 2022 we had a feasibility meeting with our Solar PV supplier, with the aim of finalising installation plans including cable lengths, solar panel positioning, and required materials.

Through November 2022 we started to order in our materials, taking in to account lead times, to ensure we had everything required in time for the planned installation date. At this stage we also lined up our local groundworks contractor to carry out trenching and cabling work for the solar panels, which was out with the remit of the Solar Panel supplier.

With all materials and stakeholders lined up at the end of 2022, we pressed ahead with the installation throughout early 2023, and completed the works on the 27th of January.



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

Thanks to the project, the cabins are now primarily powered by solar energy self-generated by 40x solar PV panels, with 2x Tesla Powerwall batteries which store energy during high gain, low use periods, for use in low gain, high use periods. Through this infrastructure, we're forecasted to achieve annual CO2e savings of 2.7 tonnes. This takes us closer to our ambition of achieving carbon neutral status as a business on one of Scotland's carbon neutral island's project locations.

As a result, our monthly electricity bills are now minimal, and the cost savings have enabled us to create further employment opportunities for Millport's tourism-dependant community. Further, these savings enable us to pay our staff above the national real living wage. To our knowledge, we are the best paying hospitality employer on the island.

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

Managing lead times of materials was crucial for the completion of our project. For example, our Tesla Powerwall batteries, which are a hot commodity in the UK at the moment, have long lead times and are sometimes totally unavailable to purchase. In order to ensure we had secured these in time for the installation date, we had to monitor lead times and work closely with the Solar PV supplier.

Weather was a huge challenge which we had to overcome in this project. The nature of our installation included digger work, and since we had a strict completion date in mid-February, we had no option but to get the diggers on-site. As a result, we made more of an impact on the on-site landscaping that we would have liked to, which risked potential negative guest experiences, but we were able to combat this through communicating with guests about our exciting solar project.



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

In terms of suppliers, and after receiving multiple quotes, we believe we ended up working with the best and most competitively priced installer, who was again able to work within our time constraints.

As for the groundworks aspect of our project, it may have been more useful to speak to multiple suppliers and get quotations, as we could have included this cost in our overall grant request, and given us more flexibility in the event that one of our contractors fell through.

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

For anyone looking to take on a similar project to ours, I'd suggest making a comprehensive project plan and keeping on top of key milestones far in advance.

Think about the critical path of the project - what are the key things which need to happen, and when do they need to be completed by, in order for the project to be completed on time?

From our experience, it's things like lead times of materials or delays from external stakeholders which effect the timeliness of a project, so it's important to make sure you choose trustworthy and reliable suppliers to work with, and set expectations from the outset.

If you're responsible for managing the project, it's very important to be realistic in the timelines you plan out, and make sure to manage all aspects of the project to ensure everything happens on time.

## 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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