ZERO CARBON CUMBRIA

CASE STUDY:

Cumbria Tourism

MEET Gemma, Sustainable Tourism Officer for Cumbria Tourism.

ABOUT

Cumbria Tourism are the official local visitor economic partnership for Cumbria and The Lake District, meaning they are recognised as the official tourist board for Cumbria and the Lake District. They are a membership organisation, from bed and breakfasts and campsites to catering and larger businesses, with the majority of funding coming from food and hospitality businesses. Amongst other things, they provide support for businesses in the sector to become more sustainable.

Their offices are in the village of Staveley, just outside of Kendal. Cumbria Tourism have been making some changes to become more sustainable themselves and Gemma their Sustainable Tourism Officer told us about what they have been doing.

WHAT DID THEY DO?

Cumbria Tourism used the Carbon Trust to calculate their carbon footprint in 2019 which was 76,375 kg CO_2e (carbon dioxide equivalence) per year. Recognising that their staff live over a wide geographical area e.g. up to Carlisle and out to Lancashire, a flexible working policy was introduced post-Covid and staff were consulted on what actions could be taken to increase sustainability and reduce carbon emissions.

Things Cumbria Tourism introduced with a travel and transport element included:

- Flexible working practices of 7am-7pm with core hours allows greater use of public transport. There is a bus stop outside the Staveley office but the running times were not conducive to a 9am-5pm working day, so by allowing flexible hours, staff can utilise the bus.
- Hybrid working practices where staff spend 60% of the time office based and 40% working from home, which reduces the travel required to and from the office.
- Installation of an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point. This was installed at the front of the building so it could be accessed 24 hours a day for charging the pool car, staff EVs and to allow residents, visitors and businesses of Staveley to use it at other times.
- EV pool car in partnership with Lloyds Motor Group so staff can use an EV for work business instead of a combustion engine vehicle.
- Car sharing and the use of public transport is encouraged for attending meetings and events and also venue accessibility by public transport is a consideration when Cumbria Tourism host meetings and events.
- Bike to work scheme is in place and also give staff a free My-Cumbria Card which offers discounts on public transport and encourages spending in the local economy.

Above: Cumbria Tourisms' electric pool car

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Other things Cumbria Tourism have done:

- The lighting in the building has been swapped to LED lighting and some lighting is on sensors so they switch off automatically to reduce energy consumption.
- Light switches have been labelled with reminders to switch lights off.
- There is a compost bin on site to take food waste from the staff kitchen and recycling is in place.
- Reviewed procurement policies and introduced sustainable procurement principles to them.

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS IT MADE TO THEM?

The actions taken have had a positive impact on staff and by involving them in workshops and inviting suggestions for what actions to take, awareness has been raised about different ways of becoming more sustainable.

By looking internally at what Cumbria Tourism could do themselves, they are more aware of the barriers the businesses that they are supporting to take action are facing as they have faced them too and are better able to support them.
There has been a reduction of around 66% in the staff travel and expenses budget between 2019-2024.

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS IT MADE TO CARBON EMISSIONS?

Although Cumbria Tourism hasn't calculated its full carbon footprint since 2019, they have calculated they have reduced it by at least 12,000 kg CO_2e per year from the actions included above and others.

By introducing hybrid working, with staff being office based for 60% of time, reducing travel to and from the office, based on a generic comparison, it estimated to save 2,118 kg CO_2e per year, but the real figure is likely to be more given actual distances travelled by staff in a rural area.

Having the EV pool can saves on average 370 kg of CO_2e per month or 4,440 kg CO_2e per year.

Introducing LED lighting to the office building saves 25.5 kWhrs of energy or 5,290 kg CO_2e per year.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Cumbria Tourism are looking into having solar panels installed on their office building so they can provide some of their own clean electricity, which will reduce the amount of electricity they use from the grid and cut their carbon emissions.

They are also looking into upgrading their electrical server room equipment so it generates less heat and to install more energy efficient air conditioning in the equipment room. These actions will reduce the amount of energy needed to run the equipment and reduce carbon emissions.

FEEDBACK/LEARNING FROM THE PROCESS

It was really important to involve the whole organisation for what they could do to become more sustainable. They ran staff workshops to talk about sustainability and reducing carbon and asked staff for suggestions.

It has been valuable having a staff member take ownership of the action plan for making sure things move forward and for other staff to be allocated to different elements to be progressed.

It has also been useful having a tick list of actions so if funding or support becomes available then you don't miss the opportunity to potentially address those actions.

Writing a list of things that could be done can be overwhelming, so it is good to look for quick wins to do first, take things one at a time and tick things off the list and remember it can't all be done at once.