

# Sustainability Case Study

## Erne Water Taxi

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Erne Water Taxi is based in Enniskillen Co. Fermanagh and offers luxury guided boat trips of Lough Erne, Enniskillen and Devenish Island. In 2015, owner Barry Flanagan decided to invest in a fully-electric boat, partly powered by solar panels attached to the roof.

## What prompted you to take the bold step of going electric?

“It was quite simple really. We wanted to reduce our emissions and also reduce our fuel costs. Both things were very important to us. The reason I set up the business was that I wanted to bring people to more remote parts of the lake islands miles away from Enniskillen. My own love of the lough grew from spending time on the water myself and then later teaching others on sailboats, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, windsurfing boards. I always found that slow way of travelling to be the nicest way to travel making your own power, with just the sound of the wind and the water around you. It made a lot of sense to me to find a more sustainable way because that’s how people travelled for hundreds of years, long before petrol-driven engines came about at all.”

*Barry Flanagan,  
Erne Water Taxis*



# What has the impact been?

## Emissions

One petrol-powered boat was fully replaced by the electric boat which means emissions were reduced by 50%.

## Fuel Savings

The initial investment required was 50-60% higher than buying a petrol-fuelled boat. Taking just fuel savings into account, the business estimated a saving of £5000/year which would have given a pay-back time of 10 years. However, adding solar panels to the roof (now providing 30-40% of the energy) and the increased capacity that the electric boat offered (more visitors per trip) reduced the payback time to just 5 years.

## Accessibility

Barry had worked in The Share Centre for a number of years and he wanted to have a fully accessible boat that could facilitate multiple wheelchairs. The electric boat has fulfilled that dream, able to accommodate 6 wheelchairs at once with an ease of boarding and disembarking without the need for a ramp. As the boat is silent, it also favours visitors with auditory sensitivities

## Emissions Disconnection and Closeness to Nature

The silent boat gives a peaceful opportunity to disconnect from the noise and busyness of everyday life. Many visitors remark on the sense of tranquillity they experience and how it allows them really hear and experience the lake wildlife up-close.

*"I didn't realise how much people would value the electric boat until it was built and it was a reality. People really value the fact that they can travel without causing more emissions."*

## Do you know?

Tourism NI offers a range of practical toolkits and templates to help reduce the carbon emissions from your business:

[Saving Energy & Reducing Waste | Tourism NI](#)



# What are your sustainability ambitions for the future?

“We are delighted that our electric-boat tours are not contributing harmful emissions or noise pollution on the lake. Now we want to go back through our supply chain to ensure that all the electricity we source from suppliers and the electricity our partner businesses and organisations source are all derived from renewable and sustainable sources.”

*Barry Flanagan, Erne Water Taxis*