

**Funding 4 Innovation** offers grants of £3000 - £5000 to SME businesses based in rural Warwickshire who are working with another local SME on a new product, process or service. Here we feature the first 4 businesses to receive funding.

## Stratford Archery Centre



[www.stratfordarcherycentre.com](http://www.stratfordarcherycentre.com)

**F**or thousands of years, archery targets have been made from straw, compressed and formed into a circular shape and held in place with steel wire. These are heavy, can be smelly, are awkward to move and deteriorate rapidly as arrows are shot into one concentrated area. These traditional targets cannot be left outdoors, thus requiring the provision of dry storage facilities.

Stratford Archery Centre has many years involvement with the sport. Based at Stratford Manor Hotel outside Stratford on Avon, they provide facilities to learn, enjoy and compete in the sport at all levels. Based on consultations with customers the company started to manufacture targets using new and innovative technologies. Their intention was always to use recycled materials wherever possible.

This new product provides an environmentally friendly solution, with the materials being taken from waste foam materials from the automotive accessory manufacturing process.

These would normally be scrapped and sent to landfill. The prototypes and initial product run proved successful being lighter, easier to move and weather resistant as well as offering more resilience to being shot at.

When the company moved from their rural cottage outdoor location to small indoor premises, converted from a cattle milking parlour on a working farm, they wanted to increase their production levels significantly and approached Funding 4 Innovation for grant funding to help with this. They wanted to be able to deliver a better quality product, more efficiently, to a higher specification and consistent standard.

This involved upgrading their hobby/domestic tools to more robust, industrial and professional equipment in order to make better use of their time and part-automate the manufacturing process. Part of this upgrade was the installation of a bespoke press-compressor to 'squash' the foam layers under pressure, before these layers are strapped and banded together prior to wrapping and shipping.

## Mousley House Farm Campsite



[www.mousleyhousefarmcampsite.co.uk](http://www.mousleyhousefarmcampsite.co.uk)

**T**he number of people booking caravan and camping holidays is widely acknowledged to be on the rise as holidaymakers favour 'staycation' breaks over travelling abroad. This growth is partially attributed to the rise in popularity of posh or luxury camping, nicknamed 'glamping'.

Mousley House Farm Campsite lies within an area of outstanding natural beauty within the heart of South Warwickshire's most picturesque countryside. Simon and Gabbi Hughes opened the campsite in 2013 and were amazed by the success of their simple offering from the outset. The family - friendly, spacious site offers an idyllic four acres for touring caravans, motor-homes and tents and be booked for sole use – a popular option for groups of friends.

For 2014 they wanted to expand their eclectic offer which now includes bell tents. They had recognized the demand for 'glamping' accommodation but felt the cost of purchasing the Pods not to be financially viable. They therefore sought a cost effective option and identified "Retro Caravans" as a way forward.

In the 1970's and 1980's caravan producers made small lightweight caravans which accommodated 2 - 4 people, contained a basic gas hob and fridge but with no toilet or shower. These caravans have stood the test of time well because they are constructed of aluminum rather than lightweight plastics. The lack of toilet facilities means they demand a very low re sale price although have generally been well maintained.

Funding 4 Innovation was used to help purchase and refurbish three caravans to a high standard thus offering innovative accommodation in the Heart of England.

# Funding Innov4tion

## Dandelime



[www.dandelime.com](http://www.dandelime.com)

**D**andelime, based in Long Compton, was set up in 2009 by designer Tom Walton, to put his inspirational design ideas into production. They offer a range of furniture, designed by Tom, which is hand-built by local craftsmen and, where possible, use sustainable materials to create the products.

Their vision was to produce and sell a totally new range of eco friendly customizable canvas printed tables. These tables to be capable of becoming a piece of art for the floor, in the same way that frame-less canvas prints are art for the wall. They can be designed to compliment the art on the home walls, through to a companies brand identity, or stand out on its own accord.

The customer will choose from the standard range of prints or provide their own specification.

They will then make the choice of table size and leg design. The cover is swappable should the customer want to change it. The methodology for folding and applying the cover is under application for a patent. The table bases and legs are all made from a range of eco-friendly materials.

Being a totally new concept meant that potential distributors and retailers needed to be convinced of the opportunities offered by the idea. Tom worked with local retail consultancy, Retail Spa, to identify and approach suitable routes to market as well as offering the products on line. The Funding 4 Innovation grant was used to support investment in a pool of prototype tables for demonstration purposes and on the development of the marketing materials needed in support of this.

## The Alternative Payrise Company



[www.alternativepayrise.com](http://www.alternativepayrise.com)

**S**ince the financial crisis of 2008 many small companies have been unable to afford pay rises of any significance. As a result, pay for many employees has declined in real terms by as much as 20% and employees are struggling to make ends meet causing financial difficulties and stress, which in turn affects morale, productivity and business performance. This is a real concern for businesses owners and many are unsure about how they can reward and motivate their employees.

The Alternative Payrise Company already offers a range of solutions to this problem to medium sized companies. For a modest per capita fee, this allows employees to access a range of benefits worth over £2,000 p.a. including retail discounts, special offers, advice and guidance. This product is sold using a direct sales business model.

There are over a million micro (fewer than 10 employee) businesses in the UK offering a huge development opportunity for the established product. However, in order to open up a similar solution to such companies, the company needed to create a simpler offering which could be sold on a "self service" basis rather than through a costly sales force.

This involved building an automated delivery website where the cost of sales is nominal and can be sustained by such small unit sales i.e. a website which will enable micro companies to buy, download and deploy the solutions in an intuitive, cost effective manner. It was for this work that the Funding 4 Innovation grant was used.

The brand will be launched as "Life just got Easier" and marketed via social media and on line routes as well as being positioned as a "value add" by business professionals such as accountants and other advisers who work with SMEs.

To find out more about the **Funding 4 Innovation** scheme please visit our website [www.funding4innovation.co.uk](http://www.funding4innovation.co.uk) or email [funding4innovation@cad.coventry.ac.uk](mailto:funding4innovation@cad.coventry.ac.uk)