

# Case Study

## Dalriada Kingdom Tours

### Business growth and development through collaboration for Dalriada Kingdom Tours

Dalriada Kingdom tours is a family run business, based in Portrush, County Antrim. In 2016 Mark Rodgers became a participant in both the Causeway Coast and Glens experiential tourism clusters, an opportunity that has seen the business grow and expand over the last year.

The business has developed beyond the traditional walking tour guide it set out as and is involved in delivering a number of visitor experience offers along with offering casual employment opportunities to a number of local tour guides.

As a result of the involvement in the clusters the Dalriada Kingdom Tours has established valuable partnerships and collaboration opportunities with local businesses. This joint working has increased business confidence, offered support and aided development.

Commenting on his involvement with the cluster Mark said, "We had confidence in what we were providing and needed to link up with other service providers to achieve our goals. Within the cluster we identified other providers who were working at the same standard as us, who had the same work ethic and who wanted to attract the same type of customer and more importantly willing to combine our strengths to move forward."

"We now work regularly with the Rathlin Island Ferry, local executive level coach companies, hotels, country houses, restaurants and coffee houses and local shops. This has allowed us to offer new and exciting guided tour options."

Since engaging with the cluster, new experiences and offers have been created by working with Tourism NI and these are now profiled on Tourism Ireland's website Ireland.com, enabling the business to compete in the international market place.

There have been opportunities and events such as the annual Meet the Buyer workshop that gives the NI industry has the platform to present its products first-hand to tour operators from North America, Europe, Britain, Ireland and Australia and to build new and existing relationships.

The cluster groups can see up to 20 local tourism businesses such as local accommodation, food and activity providers coming together regularly to

discuss how to best position and activate the local tourism assets.

Their key focus is attracting on international visitors planning to come and explore the Causeway Coastal Route. The local businesses work in partnership to offer visitor experiences that will attract visitors for overnight stays which will increase dwell time and visitor spend in the area.



"This is 'our home,'" says Mark, "we are the people who know it best and when we work together we now know we can advance in a very competitive marketplace."

"As a small business there is only so much that you can do on your own. If you are ambitious and want to move forward, you have to find a way that allows you to do this within your financial limitations. Joining the clusters and developing working relationships has allowed us to achieve our target for this season and allows us to make exciting plans for next season."

Dalriada Kingdom Tours is not only selling their own business but also the Causeway Coastal Route experience by having the relationships established to understand and know what other providers are offering in the area developed and enhanced through the cluster group involvement.

With many new exciting plans for Dalriada Kingdom Tours in the coming year, more great things look set to come.

For more information on Dalriada Kingdom Tours visit <http://dalriadakingdom.com/> or for information about cluster groups please contact Brian Connolly, Tourism NI Experience Development Officer on 02890441556 or email: [b.connolly@tourismni.com](mailto:b.connolly@tourismni.com).