

# Former Elmtronics entrepreneurs launch pioneering app through new venture Swarm Energy

The founders of a North East company which was snapped up in a significant deal by a European group have launched a new venture.

Dan Martin and Anthony Piggott sold Consett-based Elmtronics, a leading fleet electric vehicle (EV) charging point firm and winner of the high growth and ambition award at the Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside Business Awards in 2020, to Norwegian EV charging giant Mer at the start of 2022.

Since then, the pair have been buying up holiday let properties both here and abroad, and have been determined to make their portfolio as green and sustainable as possible. That prompted moves towards their new business, a new home energy management system (HEMS) app from a new company, Swarm Energy. With plans to grow its workforce, they have set up a base for Swarm Energy at Hoult's Yard in Byker, Newcastle.

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Mr Martin said: "The sustainability agenda was important to us, as were energy costs, so we're fitting solar panels, adding better energy storage, installing EV charging equipment and, where we can, introduce energy efficient heat pumps to heat our homes and produce hot water, as well as other home energy saving equipment.

"However, when we wanted to measure the impact of these solutions, what we were saving and how much energy we were

producing or using, we hit a problem. There were a lot of apps and smart solutions for each product or measure we'd taken but they were often hard to use and none of them communicated with each other. People had their phones full of apps, and were really confused.

"We realised there was an opportunity to aggregate this information into one app or platform, presenting important information in a concise and easy to understand way.

"Having exited Elmtronics, we had the luxury of time to plan and research what was going on elsewhere. There are HEMS solutions available in the Nordic countries and in Germany, but there are no energy management system aggregators in the UK. This isn't something that is going to go away – the market for green energy products and improvements is only going to grow and grow, as is the need for simple and straight forward information is increasing. From 2030, for instance, you won't be able to buy a gas boiler and all of the green alternatives will be controlled by apps or online platforms."

For the last few months Mr Martin, managing director, and Mr Piggott, CTO, have have been recruiting, finishing the software and building a website. Next they'll test the platform with a range of clients, and later in the year they will soft launch the product in the region before a national launch early next year.

The Swarm Energy team is currently seven strong and by the end of the year the company will employ 25.

The team is working on the platform and developing it through working with their neighbours, tech company Opencast, who they worked with at Elmtronics. The app can work with solar systems from other manufacturers, but Swarm Energy will also be fitting its own solar PV and energy storage products, to help aid the UK's adoption of green energy.

Mr Martin added: "We're recruiting across a wide range of

roles, and we have a very ambitious, but achievable growth plan. We're building the team out so we're looking for a lead developer, installation managers with renewables experience and other senior roles. We're really excited by the potential of Swarm Energy and one of our main objectives is to employ as many people as we can in the North East.

"We're proud to be from the region – I'm from Rowlands Gill and Anthony is from Consett – and we want to be a vehicle for ambitious, smart people to achieve what they want here in the region."

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