

## Investing in Rural Diversification

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### Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), Rural Business Grant

Created a new income stream for the farm through diversification into non-agricultural activity with the building of a new sports facility for the fast-growing sport of padel tennis



The Norfolk Padel project, completed in December 2024, was a rural diversification project developed by Jimmy Goodley and the team at MJ Goodley Farms. During a period of political and economic challenges for the farming industry it has become necessary for farmers to look at ways of diversifying their business to create new and different income streams. These farms form part of the rich landscape of our local rural economy, employing local people and supporting rural supply chains.

For this project, Jimmy utilised only local businesses to support the delivery of the new padel centre. The building was built by a local firm, experienced in delivering agricultural buildings but this was their first leisure sporting venue. The innovative lighting rig was supported by a theatre company designer who took a different approach to ensuring the correct lighting was delivered, allowing local, national and international standards to be met. Other local firms delivered electrics, plumbing CCTV. No business supplier came from more than 50 minutes away.

This has led to a fantastic new Padel facility at East Barsham, near Fakenham, providing a valuable opportunity for members of the community to join and take up the sport, improving health and wellbeing.

Padel tennis is the fastest growing sport in the UK, yet there are limited opportunities to play it. The new racquet sport (using solid racquets) uses the same scoring conventions as lawn tennis and is played on enclosed courts around one-third smaller in size. Like squash, players can bounce the ball off the walls and padel balls are smaller than those used in tennis. Players serve underarm making it easier for beginners.

**“I think there is huge scope for businesses to grow, develop and be introduced to north Norfolk. As well as residents, there are more people visiting north Norfolk, more of the year and that money can be spent in local businesses helping them to grow and develop.”**

**“The REPF Rural Business Grant was the ground source funding, which enabled this project to be built. The project would have been cost prohibitive without it; we would have not been able to build this without the support.”**

Jimmy Goodley, Norfolk Padel

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[norfolkpadel.co.uk](http://norfolkpadel.co.uk)



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