

Meet GRYD, optimising solar systems to deliver clean and affordable energy

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Scott Whiteside, Co-founder and CPO of GRYD, about clean solar energy at a better price, the Antler accelerator and the startup community.

What was the catalyst for launching GRYD?

My co-founders, Tom, Mo and I came together around the goal of having impact at scale on people and planet. We all have a strong willingness to be good stewards of the planet and take steps both personally and professionally to reduce our impact.

Tell me about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work

with, how you reach customers and so on?

GRYD's mission is to create a fair and shared clean energy ecosystem. Giving millions more people access to clean solar energy without the high upfront costs and burden of ownership.

The sun provides virtually unlimited energy to the earth every day and we have all the technology needed to capture it. However, the high upfront cost and long time before a return on the investment mean only very few people can actually access the huge benefits of having solar on their homes.

GRYD is here to change that. We fund, own and optimise solar systems, hosted on our customer's homes, and deliver them clean, cheaper energy.

It starts with deploying solar and battery systems on homes at zero cost to the homeowner. Our systems generate electricity which we then supply to the home cheaper than any traditional retailer via the grid.

We then use our intelligent optimisation platform to align the homes energy demand with the times the solar energy is generated, helping them maximise the proportion of their energy that comes directly from solar.

As the network of GRYD homes grows we will apply that optimisation at scale and create the GRYD virtual power plant, allowing peer to peer energy sharing within the GRYD network.

We are starting by partnering with housing developers to bring GRYD's smart solar systems to all of their new homes before opening up to existing homes in the near future.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

My co-founders and I met at the Antler accelerator. Antler is an early stage VC that runs a startup accelerator where they recruit a bunch of ambitious founders, chuck them in a room together for 10 weeks and see what comes out at the other end. It's an incredibly intense process with so many impressive founders building equally impressive companies. GRYD was formed during the June 2023 cohort of the program and evolved over its duration before we successfully pitched for our initial funding which we received in August. We actually went from initial idea to pitching GRYD and receiving our initial funding within 5 weeks!

Tell us about the working culture at GRYD

We have been moving at an extremely fast pace since inception so we took some time recently to set out our mission vision and values. This has really helped us align on what's important to us as we grow GRYD, especially when bringing new talent into the team.

From the very beginning we agreed that openness and honesty would be paramount, anything less would just cause us to slow down and not be moving at the pace we need.

The three key values we expect from each other and anyone involved with GRYD are;

Have Impact – this means challenging the status quo and being curious to have the biggest positive impact on people and planet we can.

Be Focused – there are lots of things we could do but we focus on a small number of things and doing those things better than anyone else.

Bring Energy – taking on the net zero challenge is daunting, it's not easy and there will be a lot of barriers to overcome, but if we approach it with energy, and embrace the challenge it can be overcome.

How are you funded?

We received our initial funding from Antler back in August after participating in their startup accelerator program. This has allowed us to continue to build GRYD, have our first customers generating clean electricity and refine our operations so we can scale effectively and efficiently.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Our biggest challenge has been creating a new model for deploying solar that works for everyone involved. The current model revolves around ownership, where the homeowner is expected to purchase, own and operate the solar system. This is the reason that even though solar has been commercially available for well over a decade, only 4% of homes in the UK have adopted some amount of solar to date.

That's why we have spent a lot of time making sure our offering works for everyone involved; the homeowners that host the GRYD solar system, the occupants that use the clean energy we supply, the developers we partner with to deploy them, the financiers that fund the hardware and the GRYD team. Everyone has their part to play and everyone shares in the benefit that clean energy generation brings.

How does GRYD answer an unmet need?

As mentioned before, solar tech had existed for some time but the ownership model means few have adopted it, despite the massive savings that can be achieved on energy bills and the huge benefits in eliminating carbon emissions.

Most people want to reduce their carbon emissions but can't if its going to cost them a fortune. We are giving people a way to make a substantial contribution to achieving net zero and reduce their energy bill without any cost.

What's in store for the future?

In a word... Scale! We have ambitious plans to scale GRYD to 50,000 homes within the next five years and eliminate over 100,000 tons of CO2 per year by 2030.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

I used to think that I had to learn everything and have the answers to everything before I could be a founder and start a business. I spent a long time trying to do just that, I learnt a little bit of everything which had definitely helped but it's impossible to do it alone. I only started to make real progress when I threw myself head first into the startup community, meeting people, going to events and sharing my thoughts, feeling and ideas with people has created so many serendipitous events. You can trace my journey all the way to founding GRYD through these

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules

you're living by at the moment?

I like variety in my day to day, but the strict part of my routine is to start the day with some form of exercise, whether that be a run, some time at the gym or a fitness class, it helps me wake up and get focused for the day ahead. I got into this habit while at university and it's just stuck.

I prefer to work from the office although we all work pretty flexibly with a hybrid setup. I'm lucky enough to be able to walk to the office which takes me across tower bridge. I really appreciate the separation between work and home this creates.

I asked my fiancé what rules I lived by and she said discipline, logic and positivity. I would agree, I approach everything believing with positivity and believe there's no challenge I can't figure out. However, it's not enough to just be positive, I like to work out the logical steps to get from where I am now to overcoming the challenge, then put the plan into action.

Scott Whiteside is the Co-founder and CPO of [GRYD](#).

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