

EV 'range anxiety' could stall staycation growth, holiday parks owner tells BBC

Claim that regional tourism economies could suffer if a lack of charging points keeps families close to home

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, March 15, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fears that 'range anxiety' amongst electric vehicle owners could put the brakes on domestic tourism growth have been voiced by a major holiday parks operator.

Martin Cox, whose family business owns five holiday parks in Dorset, is now calling on government to address the lack of charging points in many rural areas.

Their absence, he said, could dissuade visitors from venturing too far into the countryside because of uncertainty about being able to top up their electric cars.

“

We have never supplied petrol or diesel to our customers, but many now expect us to charge their cars”

Martin Cox, Highlands End Holiday Park

reporter Frankie Peck.



Many electric car owners are reluctant to travel far from home, says Martin Cox

Martin's concerns were featured in a recent BBC television report in which he warned that rural economies could suffer substantial losses of tourism revenue as a result.

Martin was filmed at his company's flagship holiday park of Highlands End in Bridport which has six EV chargers – the maximum that the local power supply can sustain.

"We have up to 500 cars a night in summer, and it simply isn't enough to meet demand," he told BBC Politics South

"Many will have driven upwards of two hundred miles to get here, and their vehicles will need re-charging before they go out the next day, but we simply haven't the capacity.

"There are only around 275 charging points throughout the whole of Dorset, so the available options are very limited.

"Nobody wants to spend their holiday in a state of anxiety about their car coming to a halt, and just one bad experience could deter a family from making a repeat visit.



BBC cameras zoom in on Martin Cox at his Dorset holiday park, Highlands End

"In our five decades of operating holiday parks, we have never supplied petrol or diesel to our customers, but there is now an expectation that we will be able to charge their cars.

"It changes the dynamics of our relationship with guests who, of course, we want to keep happy - but who we know are sometimes frustrated at not being able to plug in," he said.

As vice president of the British Holiday and Home Parks Association, Martin says that many of the body's 2,500-plus holiday park members report similar problems.

They would like to help EV owners, he says, but the limited electrical supply capacity in their regions is a major hurdle to them installing additional, or even any, EV charging points.

"I am fully sympathetic with the government's aim to drive up EV usage, and have done all we can at present to provide charging facilities," said Martin, himself an electric car owner.

"However, until the electrical supply infrastructure is improved in many rural areas, some EV owners may think twice about taking a holiday too far from home.

"This will produce serious consequences for the visitor economy, and the victims will be the many small businesses who rely on tourism spending to survive and sustain jobs," said Martin

Martin's family has owned parks in Dorset for over 50 years, and in 2022 Highlands End Holiday Park won the top gold accolade in the holiday park category of the South West Tourism Awards.

For more information about Highlands End and other parks in the group, visit www.wdlh.co.uk

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