

McKinley Neal

Whole Foods PAX & Eco Goods



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When McKinley Neal moved to Ireland from Germany in 2016, she was shocked at the amount of unnecessary plastic packaging on supermarket shelves.

To reduce the reliance on single-use resources and encourage the reuse of materials, she and business partner Kirstin McDonagh opened PAX Whole Foods & Eco Goods, a sustainable store in December 2018.

Based on Market Lane, Westport, Co Mayo, PAX sells a range of over 200 organic wholefoods, more than 50 refillable household and personal care items, and eco-friendly products. Customers are encouraged to bring their own reusable containers to refill to keep materials in circulation as long as possible before they get recycled or thrown in landfill.

Originally from Kentucky, McKinley had lived and worked in Mexico and Germany, in corporate HR, for 10 years, before moving to her Irish husband's native home in 2016.

PAX enjoyed a successful first year in business as locals and customers from Galway, Sligo, Clare and Roscommon travelled to Westport to shop in the store. The Covid-19 pandemic provided the opportunity to expand their offering nationwide. In April 2020, McKinley set about building a website and online shop, allowing them to deliver all over Ireland. Launching the online shop has increased their business, and their team to five members, as to keep up with demand, McKinley and Kirstin hired two additional staff members in 2020.

Networking with other business women through ACORNS helped McKinley with her long-term strategies for the business, and getting feedback from her lead entrepreneur and fellow participants was invaluable.

Sustainability is at the heart of their mission and McKinley plans to continue growing the business and promoting their values. She hopes to keep helping the local community drastically reduce plastic use and eventually expand on this at a national level.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine