

Ali Franks

Clonakenny Flower Farm



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The global pandemic gave Ali Franks the push she needed to set up the business she always dreamed of – a bespoke florist and flower farm.

Ali had been working as Head Chef in Cloughjordan House and was on maternity leave with her third child when the wedding venue had to temporarily close its doors due to Covid.

Ali took this as a sign and started Clonakenny Flower Farm in June 2020 at her home just outside Roscrea in Co. Tipperary. Before Covid, Ali and her husband Kenny had been buying polytunnels to grow flowers and vegetables like Ali's mother – and her mother before her – had done.

Ali's mother was a florist and still sells her flowers at a local farmer's market, so the business was in Ali's blood. The polytunnels are in the couple's field behind their house in the village of Clonakenny and they already had a good crop by the time the business started.

Ali began by selling flowers at the farm-gate, but word of mouth and social media raised her profile, and she was approached by a local Neighbourhood outlet to supply them. After doing flowers at a family wedding, Ali got bookings for seven other weddings and the business took off.

As Covid restrictions ease, she expects business to boom as weddings return and hotels open. Already bookings are increasing strongly.

Ali found the support from ACORNS was invaluable, especially during the pandemic. She learnt a lot about accounting and other issues that were new to her, and the programme gave her the confidence to pursue the business seriously.

The couple recently bought a field adjoining their existing land to expand the business. Renovation work has begun on an old stone forge on the farm to convert it into a flower studio. Wedding bookings for 2022/2023 have been exceptionally busy and investment has gone into sourcing unusual bulbs and seeds for the upcoming season. Couples will be welcomed to the farm for consultations and a garden tour from March of this year. Ali has also worked in conjunction with Thurles IT in taking on students from their Horticulture course on work experience which she thoroughly enjoys. Students get an opportunity to put their learnings into practice, and also see a business grow from its grassroots.

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
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Food and the Marine