

ACORNS

Accelerating the Creation Of
Rural Nascent Start-ups



Aisling Kelly

*WB's Coffee House
Sligo Oyster Experience*



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Sligo
Oyster
Experience

Having spent every holiday traveling around the world, Aisling Kelly has seen many interesting places, but there's nowhere quite like home.

After her father passed away in March 2014, Aisling instantly knew she wanted to return home to Sligo. She left her job as a sales executive in Dublin and decided to take over the premises her father had owned. Having stood empty since 2012, Aisling decided to renovate the building and turn it into a café. She spent her spare time looking at cafes in Dublin - researching and asking for advice - to figure out how to run her business.

By August 2014, Aisling was back in Sligo and WB's Coffee House was officially opened in November. Having always worked for someone else, Aisling struggled with staying on top of the business side of things, but ACORNS helped her stay accountable and reach each goal.

Located across from the Ulster Bank on Stephen's Street in Sligo town, WB's Coffee House is thriving, and Aisling now has three full-time and three part-time employees. With the growing interest in her business, Aisling has made some big changes. She has recently added a gift shop section to WB's Coffee House and stocks some of the items made by the other ACORNS participants, along with WB Yeats books, and other unique Irish-made products.

In 2018 Aisling launched The Sligo Oyster Experience, which takes the visitor on a short walking tour of Sligo town and then back for freshly shucked oysters at the purpose-built oyster bar back in the café.

Due to the success of the Sligo Oyster town tour, Aisling is launching Sligo Oyster Farm tours in August 2020. Aisling said, "I came up with the idea to run tours after my husband, Glenn, who is an oyster farmer, introduced me to oysters, their history and harvesting in Sligo Bay. My background is in business and tourism and I saw a niche in the market for a unique experience showcasing this wonderful tradition. The tour really gives people an opportunity to appreciate Sligo."

The Sligo Oyster Farm Tour adds an exciting 'hands-on' element. People really get to see how the oysters are grown, the impact the weather has on the farm and the hard work involved from the beginning of the process to the final product. I feel like the appreciation of the tasting experience that follows is heightened greatly by this element."

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