

Julie Callaghan

The Old Rectory Country House



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Julie Callaghan is not fazed by a change of career or country. Born in Chicago and reared in Trim, Co Meath, Julie worked in the United States, Switzerland and Australia, in roles as diverse as running an equestrian programme to working as a PA, to the Chief Financial Officer of an international transport leasing company. In 1994, she returned to Ireland where she now runs The Old Rectory Country House in Fenagh, Co Leitrim.

The Old Rectory, a beautifully restored listed building, operates as a small events venue for weddings and activity weekends offering boutique accommodation.

The house was originally a second property on the farm where Julie's husband Patrick grew up. Over the past 28 years, the couple fully restored The Old Rectory and converted the stables and the courtyard into four self-catering apartments.

Julie then set about growing the business, which was dependent on angling tourism, by focusing on ecotourism and group-orientated activities such as Murder Mystery weekends, Quilting Retreats, Yoga Retreats and Corporate team building. However, space became a factor as the events grew in popularity and they could only accommodate a maximum of 20 people. For larger events, they also used the heritage centre in Fenagh.

In 2019, Julie purchased a semi-permanent marquee with the help of Leader, so they could accommodate all events onsite. The Lakeview Pavilion, which can accommodate up to 100 people, is now in place overlooking Fenagh Lake and Fenagh Abbey. This has opened up the opportunity to host weddings for couples who enjoy nature and would like a simple day that reflects them as a couple.

ACORNS provided the opportunity to refine the business offering and, with her fellow participants operating as a business team, the monthly meetings helped her focus and drive the business forward.

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,
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