

Helena Golden

Helena Golden Willow Woman



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Helena Golden had been working in management roles in the food industry and in community and rural development before she decided to branch out on her own with her basket making business.

That came about gradually as Helena, a native of Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim, whose business is based in Leitrim Village, was keen to pursue her interest in a more sustainable lifestyle and achieve a greater work life/family life balance.

By reducing her work responsibilities, Helena had the opportunity to do the first of many basket making courses, which ultimately led to her weaving a range of baskets and commencing trading at a craft market in Sligo, where she found that many customers were keen to be taught basket making.

So, she took a career break and founded her company, Helena Golden Willow Woman, in February 2020. Helena now travels around the country delivering classes on the ancient and traditional craft of basket making with a modern twist. She also has a range of basketry items available for sale, including make-at-home willow craft kits, and she delivers classes to community groups, day care centres, schools and women's groups as well as doing live online training.

Helena says that the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown was paramount to the success of the business because within a few weeks of the initial lockdown, she was delivering live basket making classes over Zoom. The publicity and feedback generated by that led to the business going from strength to strength.

She says the really supportive nature of ACORNS and the opportunity to take time out from the business and share ideas and network with likeminded people was very helpful.

Helena currently employs an administrative assistant, and she is planning to employ basket makers to help expand the business while also expanding her product range.

Helena launched a new "online school of traditional craft" in 2023 and she also works in the education sector, bringing the tactile heritage craft of willow weaving to primary, secondary and third level students. Helena Golden Willow Woman has engaged in multiple high profile collaborative projects throughout Ireland.

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