

## Linda-Gene Byrne

### *The Holding Pond*



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When Linda-Gene Byrne learned that Irish consumers were spending €5billion a year with online retailers, of which €3billion was leaving the country to non-indigenous companies, she felt compelled to try to reverse the trend.

The former sales director with Green Isle Foods set up her company The Holding Pond, an outlet for Irish-made crafts, pottery, homewares, jewellery and more, on Valentine's Day 2020, shortly after moving her family to her husband's homeplace on the Hook peninsula in Co. Wexford.

"I've always loved buying Irish-made goods and I saw there was a gap in the market for a one-stop shop for indigenous products. Irish shoppers are spending billions online every year and a large proportion of that is leaving the country. I thought, 'Let's bring these sales home'," she says.

While the initial offering was strictly online, Linda-Gene has since set up a number of pop-up shops in the South East. This summer, she set up a pop-up shop in a corrugated tin shed near the family home on the Hook where she will be selling her Irish-made products until the end of August.

Linda-Gene meticulously researches each of the product makers, ensuring that those featured by The Holding Pond come from all across the island of Ireland.

"We work with around 40 Irish makers, which is something we're really proud of. And we want to go further in the future by establishing a greater online presence. We have great corporate customers, and we'll need more of them if we're to scale up," she says.

Linda-Gene is thankful to ACORNS for helping her forge relationships with other female entrepreneurs from an eclectic mix of industries.

"Whether they were involved in education, medical or the clothing industry, it was great to have people there as a sounding board and to build connections," she says.

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



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