

Ciara O'Brien

Barnahown



CONTACT DETAILS

T: +353 86 8930 620
E: ciara@barnahown.com
W: www.barnahown.com
Instagram @barnahown



Ciara O'Brien didn't let a lack of experience in hospitality hold her back when she decided in 2023 to transform a vacant property in her native Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, into luxury bed and breakfast accommodation.

After a 20-year career as a chartered accountant with a range of large multinationals in various countries around the world, coming home during the Covid-19 pandemic became something of a focusing moment for the Cork native.

"We officially opened Barnahown in July 2024. Mitchelstown isn't a traditional tourist hotspot, but we get a lot of European guests who are attracted to the authentic, off-the-beaten-track experience. That means we're not dependent on seasonal influxes of people. We're consistent all year round," she says.

Ciara began renovating the site in 2023, investing around €600,000 into turning the vacant property into a four-bed B&B. "That was phase one. I've since got an additional €300,000 funding for phase two, which involves adding another three bedrooms and a commercial laundry. That's under construction now, so things are moving quite quickly."

Ciara insists that a need to test the robustness of her rapid expansion plans motivated her to join the ACORNS programme. "The help of my peers and the mentorship of my Lead Entrepreneur gave me the courage to do it. They helped me to create a vision for what I wanted the place to be and how I was going to get there," she says.

Ciara is currently running the B&B with help from her friends and family, but she hopes to hire permanent staff following the opening of her expanded accommodation and laundry. However, she insists her ambitions do not end there.

She continues: "I have an acre altogether, so the site has a lot of potential to grow and become a small wedding venue. I would like to add a community space for events that showcase local businesses which have done so much to help me."

