

## Widget for weddings: Donegal coder's business is apps fab

**We talk to women forging innovative businesses in rural Ireland. Today, we talk to [Be Our Guest](#) creator Laura Cavanagh whose hobby of computer programming ended up as her future career.**

Laura Cavanagh was studying for her psychology degree in UCD when she became interested in computer programming.

And what started out as a hobby ended up becoming her future career. She worked full-time as a computer programmer in Dublin before moving to work in Australia for five years.

Laura always had a desire to set up her own business and, in fact, had established one when she was in her 20s before her career took off. On returning home to Buncrana, Co Donegal, Laura decided to go it alone again and set up an app development company called Glitterbug, with her partner Colin Vaughan.

### Do the Glitterbug

While working on Glitterbug, Laura and Colin developed their own eco-friendly wedding app, called Be Our Guest, which they decided to work on full-time.

Be Our Guest is a one-stop shop for weddings. It is a mobile platform where couples, suppliers and guests can communicate with each other.

It allows couples to design digital invitations and build a community through a microblog, while guests can RSVP through the app – and even choose their meals.

The app was launched in a beta format in 2019 and the couple have spent 2020 – when it was quiet with weddings as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown — building the product and focusing on strategy.

Being a participant on ACORNS has been particularly useful as it helped Laura consider competitive advantage and pivot the business from B2C to B2B. She also found it helped her to push herself and set high standards for the business.

ACORNS is a Government-supported programme designed to support [early-stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland](#) through a peer learning approach.

Women in rural Ireland with new businesses or at least with well-developed ideas are being invited

to join [ACORNS 7](#). The ACORNS programme is designed to support early-stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland through a peer learning approach. Thanks to the support of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the voluntary contribution of time by Lead Entrepreneurs, there is no charge for those selected to participate.

“Being part of the ACORNS programme was a game changer for my business. This year has been challenging for us. ACORNS helped us to take a step back, strategise and really look at our revenue streams long term,” says Laura.

“The programme helped us to really see what our competitive advantages are and to focus our development, marketing and business strategy on these strengths. It also helped to set goals and targets and to work towards them. Being part of a group of female entrepreneurs was great from a personal perspective as well. Having your own business can be lonely and it is great to seek advice, share advice and meet other like-minded individuals.

“As we emerge from the pandemic restrictions, sales are increasing and Laura is in talks with a contact in the weddings industry in the UK, with an aim to launching in that market. Once the app launches in the UK, Laura is hoping to expand further and hire technical, sales and customer service staff.

The call is now open for applicants for ACORNS 7 and 50 female entrepreneurs from across the country will be selected to participate. Anyone interested in receiving an application form ahead of the September 10, 2021 deadline for ACORNS 7 should [register their interest here](#)

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