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Office



Nobody knows your business like you do. However the key to success is to ask questions and listen to others. Distil that information down into what you need and use it to drive your business forward.



Bronagh Conlon,  
**Listoke Distillery**

...Let's talk business



Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council



## The Listoke Distillery Story



Agility and innovation is at the heart of our business. We continually innovate to stay at the forefront of our sector.

Serial entrepreneur Bronagh Conlon approached Local Enterprise Office Louth back in 2016 with her latest business idea. Listoke Distillery and Gin School would produce a super-premium gin, in the heart of county Louth and export it to every corner of the globe. From the village of Tinure, bottles of Listoke Gin, Vodka and Whiskey are now enjoyed by discerning customers all over the world.

**Managing Director of Listoke Distillery  
Bronagh Conlon tells the story:**

Listoke Distillery and Gin School is Ireland's only purpose-built white spirit distillery. Our signature gin, Listoke 1777, is a super-premium gin, created for both the Irish and export market. We use our unique blend of botanicals and our small batch distilling method to produce a distinctive smooth gin. We distil under the Listoke brand and for a selection of own brand and private label clients.

The Listoke Gin School has been a major part of the business, helping us to connect one-to-one with customers and clients. It's a really striking experience to walk into our warehouse, see the beautiful copper stills, and create your own personalised bottle of gin in our Gin School. In a crowded marketplace, this experience really sets Listoke apart.

The Listoke Owl, has been the symbol of our business since we first started. In recent years, the Owl family has expanded and we now produce Blue Owl Vodka and we mature and bottle Wise Owl whiskey.

For Listoke, export markets are crucially important. Our multi-award winning product line is already available in the US, Europe, China and Australia. Future plans involve increasing market share and brand visibility in each of these markets.

Agility and innovation is at the heart of our business. When COVID hit Ireland in March 2020, we were first to produce large scale hand sanitiser products for both personal and commercial use. We very deliberately maintained a high-quality Listoke Distillery look, scent, and feel of the product. We quickly became the preferred choice for healthcare, schools and hospitality providers. We have a permanent license to produce sanitisers and they continue to sell strongly. It will remain part of our product portfolio for the foreseeable future.

We continue to innovate to stay at the forefront of our sector. For example, our First Sip Society is a subscription service where members receive a different limited edition gin each month with the perfect pour garnishes and mixer. We draw inspiration from the seasons and festivities to create these unique blends and surprise and delight our members.

**Watch The  
Listoke Distillery Story  
On Youtube:**





### What supports did your Local Enterprise Office give you along the way?

The **Priming Grant** in 2016 was hugely important. Not only did this investment help us to establish our operation, but it validated our vision. The Local Enterprise Office evaluation committee looked at our concept, our business plan and our projections. They shared that vision and they backed it. We later accessed a **Business Expansion Grant** to help expand production and continue investment in the business.

Along the way we accessed a variety of other Local Enterprise Office supports. The **Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters (TAME)** grant allows companies like ours to investigate and research export markets. It's a really practical support, contributing to the costs of attending trade fairs and the costs of developing marketing and web materials for international markets. Coupled with the superb Export Development Programme, we're breaking into new markets with the support of our Local Enterprise Office.

Expert mentors has been invaluable to the development of our business. Local Enterprise Office Louth have always connected us to great mentors. People with the right expertise who can both challenge and guide us in equal measure.

Sustainability was important to us since the very start of the business. The **Green for Micro** programme helped us to re-assess our processes and identify more ways to reduce our CO2 emissions.

Every business can be more efficient. **Lean for Micro** helped us to look at our working methods, to reduce waste, drive efficiency and cut costs. It's also given us ideas for efficiencies that we can incorporate as the business grows.

We've accessed the Financial Capability Programme, Illuminate and many other training opportunities to help us to grow. It's important to say that LEO events and programmes have allowed me to create a network of really valuable contacts. This network have seen me through both tough times and exciting opportunities.

### What difference would you say that Local Enterprise Office Louth has made to your business?

The Local Enterprise Office have always been there with the right supports at the right time. People often approach them looking for financial supports, but I believe that the true value is in the knowledge I've been able to access through my Local Enterprise Office. The grants that we have received have been very important. But the mentoring, training, development programmes and networking that we've had access to has made all the difference. Without doubt, it's accelerated our growth and success.

### What advice would you give someone starting off in business?

Listen. Really listen to the experience, expertise and advice of others. Yes, it's true that you and you alone know your business. But the advice and insights of others are truly valuable. So network, ask questions and listen. Then take that information and distil it down into what's right for your business. That's a really important key to success.

# Discover more about the supports Bronagh mentions in her story



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## Financial Supports

Local Enterprise Offices have a range of financial supports for eligible businesses. These include low interest Microfinance Loans, Priming, Business Expansion, Feasibility and Agile grants. Smaller supports such as TAME grants and Trading Online Vouchers are also available.



## TAME Grant

The Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters grant is available to help micro enterprises in Ireland unlock new overseas markets for their products and services, within Europe and beyond. This grant can cover up to 50% of qualifying expenditure, up to a maximum of €5,000 [exc. VAT].



## Green for Micro

This free programme helps small businesses take the first step towards becoming more sustainable. A green consultant will show you the small changes in your business that can have a big impact on your company - and the world around you.



## Lean for Micro

Lean is about doing things quicker, better and saving costs. Lean strives to remove waste and to continually improve a company. Lean For Micro is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisations to increase performance and competitiveness. Lean is for all companies, regardless of sector

Visit [www.localenterprise.ie/louth](http://www.localenterprise.ie/louth) to find out more about these and other supports.

**LISTOKE**



Listoke Distillery & Gin School - Bronagh Conlon

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