

# Anna Lamotte

Age: 29

Location: Perthshire



@Guardswellfarm

## Main Challenges



Digital connectivity



Long-term & affordable  
housing

## Rural Youth Project Involvement

Anna was a delegate at the Rural Youth Project Ideas Festival in 2018.

“The Rural Youth Project is invaluable. Having a group of people saying, ‘this is a challenge we face’ and taking that forward as a collective has a stronger impact compared to everyone independently shouting in their own little corners of

- Anna Lamotte



Image: Anna Lamotte

## Background

Growing up in the Perthshire countryside, Anna Lamotte had little idea she would later return to become a pioneering young businesswoman, just a stone's throw away from the family farm of her childhood.

After completing a degree in marine biology, Anna wanted to combine her love of baking and teaching children about growing food. She also explored Edinburgh's restaurant scene, briefly considering a career as a chef. Unexpectedly, it was returning home to rural Perthshire to start a family venture, that provided the platform Anna needed to innovatively marry these passions together in one place.

The rural venture “grew arms and legs” from its first incarnation as a few getaway huts and simple washroom facilities. Guardswell is now a vibrant events space, hosting weddings, parties and workshops, alongside stunning accommodation, all of which attracts visitors from around the world.

Anna is passionate about drawing people out to the countryside to experience the connection and relaxation that rural life affords, “we can encourage people who lead super hectic lives, to come out of urban areas and enjoy a rural setting. Here, people can reconnect with the outdoors, learn something new and have fun.”

Anna's enterprising spirit and flare for marketing and communication has, to a large extent, been the backbone of their success - enabling them to curate a strong 'brand' that has wide reaching appeal. Harnessing the power of platforms such as Instagram, Anna has been able to capture the essence of who they are as a business, celebrate the beauty and charm of their rural backdrop, and create a buzz around their creative ventures. These images, however, do not communicate the difficulties behind the lens. Poor broadband connectivity remains a key challenge;

Check out the Rural Youth Project website for more cases studies:

[www.ruralityouthproject.com](http://www.ruralityouthproject.com)




Image: Guardswell Farm

“Internet speed and access is a huge rural challenge, especially when running a business and relying on the social media and website element to make that business thrive.”

- Anna Lamotte

## Background

“Internet speed and access is a huge rural challenge, especially when running a business and relying on the social media and website element to make that business thrive. At times it can take me a good minute to upload an image to our website, whereas if I were to go sit in a café in Dundee, it would only take 10 seconds.”

Another key issue for Anna has been the affordability and availability of rural housing. Having established the core business, finding a suitable property nearby was vital for the around-the-clock profession. This took two and half years to secure.

“Finding a house in a 5-mile radius here is extremely challenging. Abernigh is one of the closest villages but properties don’t come up for sale there. Affordability stakes is a huge challenge to young people trying to live in this rural area.”

Guardswell is a value driven family business, built on intergenerational collaboration, with community at the heart of what they do. Anna is passionate about future proofing rural areas and caring for her community. As such, she is involved in a campaign to help support the local school that is under threat of closure- an initiative passionately led by the thriving local community.

“We’re fortunate here to have a very energetic community - however, it is slightly ill balanced with fewer younger families and residents in the area- but what happens when the older generation need looking after and there’s no young people in the community to keep an eye on them? Therefore, it is vital to have a broad demographic of ages if rural communities are to survive.”

Anna’s key focus moving forward is to develop the educational arm of the business, facilitating more opportunities for young people to connect with and learn about the outdoors.

“2020 is [Scotland’s] Year of Education. We want to introduce children’s outdoor camps and involve more skilled workshops. Now the core events business is set, we just need to continue running it well.”

## Solutions


1. Good marketing: retaining the perspective of an outsider to be able to connect with the needs of a diverse target market, establishing a clear brand image and leveraging power of social media to help communicate this.
2. Collaboration with others: For Anna, intergenerational connections have been vital to the success of the business; harnessing the wisdom and experience of the elders; and energy, passion, and vision of the young people.
3. Have a simple ethos, a clear vision and stay true to your values. Central to Anna’s vision for Guardswell, was always education, connection to the outdoors, and growing and cooking good food. Although the business has grown arms and legs, this thread remained strong throughout.

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