

## Laura Taylor

Location: Kent, South East England

@wildboxbars



### Main Challenges



Accessibility to customers during Covid lockdowns



Balancing income as a small start up business



Ensuring consistent supply from other local businesses

### Rural Youth Project Involvement

Laura spoke at the Rural Youth Project's Kent & Medway Ideas Hack in May 2022, sharing her story.

### Background

After being made redundant at the end of 2019, Laura Taylor set up Wild Box, initially with the aim of creating a mobile bar company available for weddings and local events. At the start of 2020 the diary was full, and Laura was ready for a busy year ahead but in March 2020 when the UK was placed into lockdown her business disappeared overnight.

Laura said, "I didn't really know what to do to be honest, I was in a situation where I didn't have a job, so I had no furlough or anything like that. I also then didn't have a business because it had just crashed so it was a case of really thinking on my feet."

Laura began to deliver the gin, intended for the mobile bar, to her local village and community. Whilst this did not make the business any money, it offered an opportunity to show the local community what she had been trying to achieve. With the same ethos of using local produce and spirits, Laura then started to deliver DIY cocktail boxes to the community and promoted them on LinkedIn.

Laura's resilience continued as she looked for new ways to bring income so her business could survive. She started running virtual cocktail classes, across the UK, enabling groups of people to come together and benefit from her experience. They would receive a box of ingredients ahead of the event, and then Laura would join them on Zoom to make the cocktails, following her guidance.

During this time, Laura's venture was picked up by Tattler magazine and Vanity Fair who named Wild Box in their "Best Booze for Christmas 2020.". Laura's sales went from 3 to 4 boxes per week to one thousand per month. By the end of 2020, Wild Box was sending cocktail boxes across the UK and in January 2021 they were offered a permanent bar space by Folkestone Harbour Arm. Now, Wild Box has both a permanent kiosk stall and a sit-down bar on the Harbour Arm.



“I was in a situation where I didn’t have a job, I also then didn’t have a business so it was a case of thinking on my feet.”

- Laura Taylor

## Background

On the events side of the business, Laura is fully booked for the year with continuous demand, the box deliveries have continued and will be an area of focus for the next year.

However, getting the business to this point was far from easy and Laura has spoken about how challenging the pandemic was not only for her business but personally. “It’s been difficult, and there’s been some dark and gritty times, where I’ve had to pull myself up from a very low place.”

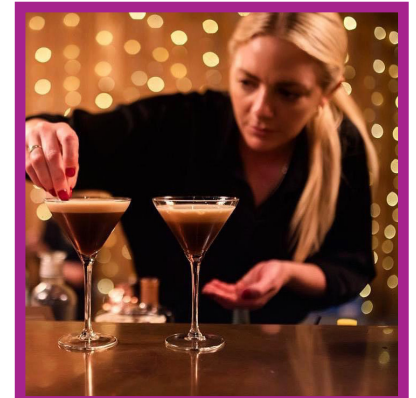
Despite the challenges she faced Laura admits “it’s been worth it” and that the bar at the Harbour Arm has become her happy place. Even when the business gained success due to the media spotlight, it wasn’t easy for Laura as she didn’t have the infrastructure in place for the vast number of Christmas orders.

Wild Box uses local ingredients and has done since the beginning with Laura keen to promote local products, “for me, using local is the key and the core of my business.” She has recognised that working with local and small producers isn’t without its challenges; the weather and yield can make it impossible to deliver sometimes. However, Laura appreciates that the supply challenges and locality “makes a really creative menu and seasonality makes it even more special.” Using local produce Laura also credits for making Wild Box stand out during the pandemic, “If I had been using bog standard ingredients it wouldn’t have been quite as special.”

Laura’s tips for those wishing to follow in her footsteps and step up their own business would be “to find something you enjoy, that makes you happy and run with it and stick with it. And don’t let it go. It’s going to be dark and really hard at times, but you will come through it that it is the best feeling in the world.”

## Solutions

1. Accessibility to customers: Selling products within the local community before expanding to online sales.
2. Balancing income: Fulfilling every order despite challenges and taking on new opportunities.
3. Consistent suppliers: Changing the menu and being creative with cocktails to match what produce is available locally.



This event was kindly supported by:



## We’re social!

- @Rural Youth Project
- @RYP2018
- @RYP2018
- Rural Youth Podcast
- Rural Youth Project

The Rural Youth Project is kindly supported by:

