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## KIM WHYTE

**Pawpear**



**W**ith a BA in Graphic Design from the Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD), Kim Whyte, a native of Youghal, Co Cork, had been working as a designer for an east Cork print house, when she decided to move to London in 2010 to pursue creative opportunities.

Once there, Kim worked for stationery boutiques in West London, where she designed personal stationery for the rich and famous, before moving into the corporate world as design team lead at a global not-for-profit organisation.

Then, in December 2019, Kim decided to move back to Ireland for personal reasons. “We had purchased a house in the countryside a couple of years previously, and our trips home were becoming more and more frequent. It’s a different pace of life here, and I guess we missed it,” she says.

Initially, Kim set up Figgydoo, a design and illustration studio specialising in branding and events for purpose-led organisations, in 2020. However, while she still operates that company, Kim also had another business ambition – to create an Irish stationery brand.

“As a lifelong stationery collector, I have always loved the creative possibilities of paper. During the lockdowns, I used to send letters to my grandparents each week. I think there’s something powerful about a handwritten message from a loved one. It creates an enduring connection that a text, email or phone call will not,” she says.

“But when I looked online and in stores, the vast majority of stationery sets were designed and made in the UK or China, so I set out to create an Irish stationery brand that uses Irish suppliers, promotes our indigenous language and combines my love of paper, of colour and of illustration.”

Kim launched online stationery store Pawpear, a phonetic rendering of ‘páipéir’, the Irish word for paper, in July of this year.

“My biggest concern was making connections and becoming part of a network without having to commute to the city,” she says.

“It may have been the case in pre-pandemic times that I would have had to travel to meet people and to network, but when Covid hit everything moved online, and it seemed to level the playing field a bit. I met

a lot of people through online networking events, expanding my reach and growing my customer base organically.

Working from home has also proved to be a positive experience. “My lifestyle has completely changed. Although I still work long hours, working from home in beautiful rural surroundings and getting to see more of the family has been brilliant,” she says.

Kim says that taking part in Back for Business helped her to realise her business idea. “Pawpear was a vague thought when I applied, but by the time we graduated I had products to sell, and I launched the brand a few weeks later. The support and encouragement of my Lead Entrepreneur, Thomas Ennis was invaluable, and the wider entrepreneurial network, that I’m still part of, continues to provide advice and guidance,” she says.

Pawpear hires freelance designers on an ad hoc basis, and Kim plans to make full-time hires as the company develops. She is currently working on new product ranges, while continuing to add to the stationery collection. She is also in talks with retailers and investigating potential export markets.

**pawpear**

### POSITION

Managing Director

### WHAT WE DO

We create Irish stationery that celebrates vivid colour, distinctive design and eco-friendly paper.

### CONTACT US

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