



Celebrating the Humber's Lockdown Entrepreneurs

Hi! I'm Lara and I own Plant & Paint on Humber Street, Hull.

Plant & Paint is a houseplant shop in Hull stocking a huge range of indoor plants and plantware. We're also stockists of Annie Sloan Chalk Paint. It's a tropical paradise!



  @plantandpainsull

Why did you decide to take the plunge and set up your own business?

I started my business in my final year at the University of Hull to make some pocket money from a hobby. After graduating I felt it made sense to make a proper go of it before getting involved in anything else. I rented a commercial unit and went full time with my business. After growing steadily there for four years, I decided to change the direction of my business slightly in line with current trends and opened Plant & Paint in The Fruit Market.

What was the inspiration behind your business?

Plants and paint! I love indoor plants and think their benefits are more important now than ever. Plants and beautiful coloured paints have such a positive impact on our lives and wellbeing. I wanted to spread that joy to the people of Hull.

Has the Humber been a supportive place to grow your business?

Definitely! I've found myself in such an amazing group of indie city centre shops. Everyone is so lovely and supportive. There's loads of help on offer. It's also such an affordable city for a small start up business. The response from the indie community and our customers, particularly over the last year, has been immeasurable. People have been out in force to support us!

What do you love about what you do?

I love being completely in charge of every aspect of my work, being let loose on ordering hundreds of plants every week and just having a good old chat to my lovely customers in the shop.



What has been your highlight so far?

The amazing response when I opened my online shop during the first lockdown was so incredible. At a time when everything was so uncertain and up in the air my customers gave me clarity and brought me back down to earth. I will never forget the reassurance that brought me, I'm so thankful for it.

What are some of the biggest lessons you have learned?

I've learnt to not be afraid to hire staff, I should have done this pretty much straight away after having a strong start. The same goes for investing in a good online presence.

How has your business had to adapt during COVID and what are your future plans?

I set up an online shop offering local delivery and a click & collect service. The shop was transformed into a warehouse / packing station and everything was set up to run in a completely different way. I also invested in a van to be able to get more orders out. Being forced to offer this service was a silver lining as it was very popular. It showed us that customers don't have to choose between shopping local or shopping online, they can do both. I plan to hire staff so I can continue to offer this service alongside the shop being open.

What advice would you give to other people looking to set up their own business?

Don't underestimate the power of social media, always ask for help on anything you're unsure of and trust your instincts when it comes to sourcing and merchandising. If you love it, then your customers will!