

Victoria Cocken

Victoria Cocken is the definition of a Boss lady, with an eco-conscious twist. She runs three businesses to date, alongside being a wife and mother of two children, and still manages to get time in her schedule for fitness and self-care. I honestly think she might be in possession of a 'Bernard's watch.

Victoria has lived in Clayton for ten years but has always been local to the area. She grew up in Great Harwood, before her parents moved to Clayton, whilst she was at York University studying English Language, Linguistics and Literature.

After receiving her first degree, Victoria spent some time working in the property industry, but deep down she had a nagging feeling that she wanted to be a primary teacher. So, when her son was little, she enrolled onto a teacher training course. During this course, Victoria was introduced into the concept of 'forest school.' The ethos resonated with her personally and educationally, as she had grown up playing within the woods and fields of Great Harwood. She believed in the educational and holistic benefits of 'playing out'.

It wasn't until a few years later, when Victoria had left teaching due to needing more time with her children, that she started helping out her sister's fledgling business 'Hydro at the Barn.' Her sister had been watching Countryfile and had come across 'Forest School'. It was at this moment that she pointed to the woods near the barn and motivated her to give it a go.

Everything escalated from there. After taking her forest school course, Victoria opened up 'Great and Small Forest school' in 2015 as a one-woman band. Two years later she became Ofsted Registered, enabling her to create longer sessions. She was soon joined by her friend Lisa, and then Matty, and now deliver Accredited Forest School Training. The business expanded in 2018, when Victoria opened the Great and Small Kindergarten based on Rishton Road.

It didn't stop there. Victoria had linked up in the past with Turtlebee in Great Harwood to deliver workshops, and felt inspired to take over the refill shop, when she heard of its closure. Changing the name to 'Flow Well-being Network, the shop linked well with Great and Small, inspiring others to respect nature and the environment. She also admitted 'I always enjoyed weighing things.' Flow Well-being Network is becoming a hub to promote an eco-conscience way of shopping, connecting other small local businesses, and soon to be a space used to promote holistic health within the community.

Although Victoria is spinning all these plates, she does believe in 'Filling your own cup first.' When she is not working you can find her at the gym, walking in nature, wild swimming, reading or involving her own children in sports. Each business is an expansion of the woman herself, as she believes whole-heartedly of the work she does.

When graduating from her second degree, she remembers a lady saying 'If you've got a dream, follow it. If you have an idea, run with it. It could be a gamble, it might not work, but it may be the best thing you have ever done.' This advice has stuck with Victoria throughout the years and has inspired her to take such brave action.

It was an absolute pleasure speaking with Victoria and I wish her every bit of success in whatever she takes on next.