**The SOSE Spotlight podcast**

**Series 2, Episode 2 transcription**

**Presenter – Lesley Forsyth**

Hello and welcome to the SOSE Spotlight podcast.

Wherever you are, in Dumfries and Galloway, the Scottish Borders or beyond, if you're a business, entrepreneur, community enterprise or aspiring to be one, this is for you. We are South of Scotland Enterprise and we're all about helping people in the South of Scotland to thrive, grow and fulfil your best potential.

This series is focused on Pathways, the Scottish Government funded pilot that has been delivered by South of Scotland Enterprise, which aims to help aspiring entrepreneurs across the region to find the confidence and strength to begin their business journey. In these six episodes, we will be speaking to SOSE staff, our dedicated Pathways coaches and the clients to find out all about Pathways and their experience.

We will be finding out: What is it? Why is it critical for aspiring entrepreneurs? Why now? What opportunities are there for you and how can South of Scotland Enterprise help?

I'm Lesley Forsyth and with me today is Beverley Vining, one of the Pathways clients. Beverley moved to Hawick in 2017 with her husband, Martin, after living in France for seven years. Beverley and Martin opened a B&B in 2018, but due to COVID, the B&B closed its doors for the last time in 2020. Sadly, Martin passed away in May 2023, and Beverley had to reassess what life journey and direction she would now take. And I'm pleased to have Beverley here today to tell us more of her story. Hello and welcome to the SOSE Spotlight Beverley.

**Guest – Beverley Vining, Pathways client**

Hello, thank you for having me.

**Lesley**

So, Beverley, tell us a little bit about yourself and how you first heard about Pathways.

**Beverley**

I'm 63 years old. I'm a mum, grandma and recently a new great grandma. I moved to Hawick seven years ago. I'm originally from Ashford in Kent. And I've just opened my new wedding boutique in Hawick. I heard about Pathways through my neighbour, who happens to be our local councillor, and he put me on to South of Scotland Enterprise as I'd never heard of Pathways before. And then they put me on and I had a phone call from Anne who became my coach.

**Lesley**

Excellent. And part of the support offered is being assigned a dedicated coach. Can you tell us how working with Anne and the support offered by Pathways has helped you set up your business?

**Beverley**

Anne’s been great. She's so lovely. She's really helpful. I was so nervous on my first meeting, but she really made me feel at ease. She's helped me with all sorts of things, opening windows to joining the Chambers of Commerce, networking with other people in the same industry like wedding venues and things like that. Also, media things that she's helped me with that I wasn't au fait with. She's been absolutely great.

**Lesley**

I think the feedback that we're getting is the coaches are almost that security wall, the part of the process that you might have found a bit scary, they're there to help you through, those loops and those rings, and also it's a friendly face that you feel really comfortable to maybe ask the questions that you've never felt comfortable in the past.

**Beverley**

Definitely yes. And she rings me often. You know, she keeps in touch, which is great. And she’s keen to see how I'm getting on and how things are going, so it's good.

**Lesley**

So we often talk about the barriers that people face when starting the business. Were there any barriers that had been stopping you from starting your business?

**Beverley**

I think at first it was my age. I was worried because I'm older and I think I lack self-confidence after losing my husband. But as time has gone on and the shop’s now open and meeting Anne, I've gained confidence again and I think I'm feeling more relaxed now and I'm finding myself again. So, no real major barriers, but I think it's quite difficult when you get older to get back into the working world.

**Lesley**

And I think when life throws us difficult situations, it does knock confidence. And sometimes it can knock confidence and you don't even realise how much it has affected. So, I'm sure having Anne there every step of this journey has really helped you to grow on your confidence, grow on your network and get yourself out into the community.

**Beverley**

Yes, it has. It's been a great thing to do.

**Lesley**

How do you feel when you get up every day knowing that you're going to work as your own boss with a gorgeous bridal boutique, helping brides-to-be find their dress for the big day?

**Beverley**

Oh, it's lovely. Every time I put the key in the door and I go in, I have to pinch myself because I think, “This is mine” and I put the lights on and it's lovely. It's a lovely place to be. And when the brides come in at first, they're nervous but excited at the same time and then they start to try on the dresses. And when they find the dress and I get tears, that's the ‘wow’ moment. And I just think it's fantastic.

**Lesley**

It is such a special moment, though, isn't it? Brides coming in to pick their dress for their special days. It's great that you've built this business and this amazing, safe, beautiful space for people to come in. And you're now making them feel confident, you know. You're passing that confidence on to them.

**Beverley**

Yes, it's a big thing. Buying a wedding dress. It's the main thing about your wedding. So it's huge.

**Lesley**

It’s the main event, isn't it? So your business is now up and running, as you've said. And through Pathways you've been introduced to a whole network of learning opportunities online events, face to face events and other clients who you can now share experiences, knowledge, guidance. How important do you think this community and support that has been built through Pathways, is to you and your business journey?

**Beverley**

Oh, it's huge. I mean, next week I'm doing a talk at one of the Pathways events and I'm really looking forward to meeting other people that are just starting their journeys through Pathways. So it's a great thing to be part of. It's a huge help.

**Lesley**

And I think that it’ll be really good for you to share your experience as well with other people that are looking to start their journey. Sometimes just hearing someone's experiences and what they've gained and learned can be that confidence boost, that excitement boost for somebody to think, “Right, this is it. I'm going to do it” instead of maybe still having the fear and the doubt of their business ideas.

**Beverley**

Oh yes, definitely, definitely.

**Lesley**

Beverley, it's been lovely and eye-opening to hear your story today. For any listeners out there who think the entrepreneurial journey is for them, but they just don't know how to get started, what would your advice be?

**Beverley**

I would say do it. Don't hesitate if you've got a dream or a passion. Make it happen and go down the Pathways route because it's a great way of bonding with other people, finding other businesses and you need that network. You need to network when you're starting your own business, but do it. Go for it. It’s fantastic.

**Lesley**

Brilliant. Thank you, Beverley, for coming along today and sharing the successes and the experiences you have enjoyed as a Pathways client. South of Scotland Enterprise is proud to be supporting new entrepreneurs.

To find out more about Pathways and the success stories along the way, visit our website: southofscotlandenterprise.com/pathways or send us an email. Or you can email us at clienthub@sose.scot or give us a call on 0300 304 8888. That's 0300 304 8888.

We'd love your feedback and please subscribe so you don't miss our next episode. I'm Lesley Forsyth. Thanks for listening to the SOSE Spotlight. Do join us again next week for more inspiring Pathways stories from around the South of Scotland.