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Creative powerhouse now owned by employees

The co-owners of one of Scotland's leading creative agencies have handed ownership of the company to its employees as part of plans to secure the future of the business that they have owned for over 20 years. **Dynam's** 16 employees - who joint Managing Directors Eleanor Neilson and Karen Green credit with helping make Dynam one of the most respected creative and digital marketing agencies in the country - will have an effective voice and influence in key decisions going forward.

Speaking about the move, co-Managing Director of the agency with offices in Inverness and Glasgow, Eleanor said: "Karen and I have been considering the future of Dynam for a while. This is a great business doing fantastic work for a wide range of clients, both national and international. There's every sign that we're only going to build on that success, and that is largely down to the brilliant

team we have, many of whom have been with us long-term.

"We chose the Employee Ownership route because we believe it embodies the culture of the agency and will strengthen team continuity, making everyone feel increasingly committed to and engaged with the success of the business going forward."

Karen added: "We did consider a sale to a third party but rejected that very quickly as it would undoubtedly have disrupted the way we work and may have jeopardised our culture and, importantly, the employment of our people."

Eleanor and Karen will still manage the day-to-day operations of the business going forward. However, the key difference is that, as owners, the employees will have an effective voice and influence in key decisions.

(Continued)

Growth in Scottish EOBs

170 Scottish HQ'd
businesses now
employee owned.

See [page 9](#) for map.

Dynam was established as a full-service agency by Karen and Eleanor over 20 years ago. Since its founding, Dynam has experienced significant growth, creating an award-winning, independent, and dynamic agency.

Now employing a staff of 16, the creative team consists of brand, marketing, design, and web specialists. Dynam works with brands both in Scotland and worldwide to deliver exceptional results - such as the largest producer of Atlantic salmon, Mowi, global recruitment group, Orion, Nature Scot, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Orkney Harbours.

Senior Account Director and part of the Dynam Leadership Team, Fiona Patience, added: *“This is an exciting new era for Dynam and a great reward for the team. We already have a strong leadership team in place under Eleanor and Karen, who have a real input into the business, so day-to-*



Eleanor Neilson

day things will continue as normal. However, long term, the EO model lets the team benefit from the company’s continued success and gives everyone a say in the future direction of the company. With a talented team in place, we expect the company to continue to grow and flourish going forward, building on the work of Eleanor and Karen in the last 20 years.”

Harvey Maps EOT Funday

A brilliant day was had by all at the recent Fun day held by **Harvey Maps**, despite the atrocious weather! The purpose of the event was to spotlight the company and its employee owners and celebrate the company’s success in its 6th year of employee ownership.

Harvey Maps was founded in 1977 by Susan Harvey MBE and Robin Harvey MBE to provide a professional mapmaking service for the sport of orienteering. Since then the company has become a market leader in the publication of maps for outdoor pursuits, producing detailed mapping for areas in the UK, Ireland and beyond.

In 2017, and with retirement near, Susan and Robin embraced the idea of employee ownership as a succession solution which gave the company, the jobs and the brand the best chance of continued independent success. Harvey Maps was one of Scotland’s early adopters of the EOT legislation.

MD Adam King said, *“This was an opportunity for us to come together and think about something other than maps and celebrate*



the hard work we all do for each other. It was also an excuse to mark the 80th birthday of our inspirational co-Founder, Susan.”

There were a number of activities from a treasure hunt, to Yahtzee, to indoor darts. There was a trophy for the winning team, and a branded golden Harvey Maps watering can as a consolation prize for the runners up.

Tough Construction becomes Scotland's largest employee owned business

500 staff acquire business through employee ownership trust



Alistair Lauder & Bob Leishman

Glasgow-based multi-service construction firm, **Tough Construction**, has become the largest business in Scotland to transfer its entire shareholding to an Employee Ownership Trust. Tough Construction employs more than 500 staff and directly employed on-site personnel.

Founded in 1974, Tough Construction works mainly on projects for house builders throughout Central Scotland, Perthshire, Fife and Ayrshire. With a focus on investing in people and offering a multi-disciplinary service, the company has grown into one of Scotland's construction businesses.

The current shareholders, Bob Leishman, George Duncan and Kenny MacKenzie, took over the business in a management buyout in 2006. When considering their succession options, keeping the workforce secure and maintaining the high standards of service delivery was central to their thoughts.

Managing Director Bob Leishman says, *"Our success is largely due to the loyal team we have at Tough Construction. We are fortunate that we have a low turnover relative to the sector, and that's largely because we like to think we look after our people well, offering opportunities for training and development. A sale to a third party may have disrupted that. This move to employee ownership allows the company to continue to offer excellent service to our clients, and secure*

employment for our people.

Bob Leishman added: *"A sale to an employee ownership trust lets us have our exit, knowing that the company is in safe hands. We have a talented leadership team ready to take over and it's time for the old guard to step aside. So far, the news has been well received by staff and clients. It remains business as usual and that's good news for everyone."*

The three shareholders will retire following the completion of the transaction and the company has made two new board appointments. Gary Hassan will become Commercial Director and Mhari Greer is promoted to Finance Director. They join Craig Lavery (Construction Director) and



(Continued)

Gillian Beaton (Procurement Director) on the board, alongside Alistair Lauder who has been promoted to the position of Managing Director.

Alistair Lauder welcomed the changes: *“The shareholders are demonstrating tremendous vision in transferring their shareholding to the trust. I believe it is good for the company and for the employees. The company will celebrate its 50th birthday next year, it will be good to do that as an employee-owned business. It’s a real privilege to be at the helm of such a great business at this exciting time. Yes, there will be challenges ahead but I’m confident that with the brilliant individuals we have working with us that the future for Tough Construction will be very bright indeed.”*

Graham Cunning, Head of Corporate Finance in Scotland with accountancy firm

Azets, which has been managing the transaction said: *“Azets are thrilled to have worked with the shareholders of Tough Construction to guide them towards completion of Scotland’s largest EOT to date. It has been a great pleasure working with George, Bob and Kenny on their succession planning process through to the transfer of the business to the staff.”*

“The sale to an EOT puts the future of the business in the capable hands of the new management team and their employees. We wish them every success with their future plans, and look forward to seeing Tough Construction continue to grow as an employee-owned business.”

Carole Leslie of Ownership Associates has provided specialist employee ownership support with legal advice provided by Wright Johnston Mackenzie.

20/20’s Employee Awards

At the start of every financial year, **20/20** celebrate their journey and give additional recognition through annual employee awards.

There were three categories this year and winners are nominated by their fellow team members.

So, without further ado the winners for this year’s employee awards are...

‘The Neil Munro Award for Team-Working’ and an employee who exemplifies excellent collaboration goes to... Gemma Pegler!

‘The Values Award’ for demonstrating our company values consistently to an exceptional standard goes to... Rachel Scott & Pauline Buchanan!



The **‘Employee of the Year Award’** for an outstanding contribution to the company over the full financial year goes to... Chloe Mora!

Congratulations to you all, very well deserved!

Clansman Dynamics attends GIFA2023

The **Clansman Dynamics** team were certainly showcasing the best of Scottish Engineering at GIFA2023 – the world’s leading trade fair for the foundry industry that took place in Düsseldorf recently. Special mention to Chris and Derek in kilts!



OAUK News

Another landmark achieved with Scotland's largest company yet to make the transition to employee ownership! It was great to work with Tough Construction and see their 500 employees become owners. It was equally rewarding to work with Dynam in their transaction – certainly smaller in terms of employee numbers but a fantastic business that just bursts with creativity! There is now a whole range of companies opting to move to an Employee Ownership Trust – all sizes and all sectors. This demonstrates the flexibility of the model. A sale to an EOT won't be appropriate for every business, but if it's a good fit, we can usually make it happen.

I believe we can now say that the EOT is a mainstream business structure. It was interesting to see employee owned businesses featured as a category in the recent Institute for Family Business research into trustworthiness. Employee-owned businesses were ranked second to family businesses, with 17% of the Scottish public viewing them as most trustworthy. Family businesses were rated most trustworthy by 23.5% of respondents. Firms backed by venture capital were rated most trustworthy by 10% of people in Scotland. PLCs (public limited companies) by 8%, and private equity backed companies by 5%. Indeed, many family businesses choose employee ownership as a means to continue the high levels of trust and confidence built up over generations. There is a lot of synergy between the two forms of ownership; there is usually strong local connections, a real team culture and an embedded commitment to deliver high levels of service. For many family businesses, the EOT presents a succession solution that protects a company's legacy and maintains continuity for all parties.

There were lots of celebrations around the EO community with EODay – the annual day marked for celebrating employee ownership. I was chuffed to bits to be invited to take part in Harvey Maps' activities. The torrential rain didn't dampen anyone's spirits and I'm delighted with my Harvey Maps fleece! It was so nice to see Susan Harvey who came along for a short while. Susan is now largely retired from the business



but arrived in time to join in some of the games. It's good to see employees taking time away from work to appreciate their colleagues and just have fun.

EODay does have the important purpose of raising awareness of employee ownership as a business model and Ivan McKee MSP brought the Holyrood Government's attention to EO. However, Claire Baker MSP did point out that the Scottish Government is now lagging far behind its target of "500 EOBs by 2030". She highlighted that at the current pace, it would take another 12 years to hit the 2030 target and urged the government to increase that pace significantly.

At least there is some attention now being paid to employee ownership at government level. HMRC have two consultations, one looking specifically at EOTs and the other on share schemes and incentives. I'm often asked if I think the EOT tax incentives will be withdrawn anytime soon and putting resource into these two areas suggests that the EOT is here to stay. The Scottish government has put together an Advisory Group to look at tax for businesses although it's not clear as yet whether there will be any examination of EOTs and their contribution to the economy.

As ever, it's down to employee owned businesses in Scotland to make as much noise as possible to make the case for employee ownership. And you're all doing a great job of that!

Yours in Partnership

- Carole
01786 611066



Shore Group: Wellbeing at Work

Leith based medical device designers, **Shore Group**, share how they have integrated wellbeing into their workplace:

Balancing work and life: Shore's commitment to wellbeing

At Shore, we know that life is more than just work—it's about embracing a balanced lifestyle that allows us to commit to our responsibilities, while also pursuing the things we love outside of the office.

Here are just some of the ways we prioritise wellbeing:

Collaboration and growth

We firmly believe that when minds come together, we achieve much more. We work as a team, learning together and enjoying what we do. This collaborative attitude not only drives our success but also builds strong relationships among team members.

Through our training and development process, we foster an atmosphere where personal growth is not only encouraged but actively supported.

Making a positive impact

Our focus on medical design means that we have a positive impact on people's lives. Every project we undertake is driven by the desire to make a difference. The team finds immense satisfaction in knowing that their hard work and dedication directly contribute to improving the lives of others. We form great partnerships with clients, some being small start-up teams, so seeing their successes is rewarding.

Employee owners

As an employee-owned company, we have a unique advantage – we all have a personal investment in the company's future, and we all share in its success. In a recent employee survey, it was found that people feel a strong sense of being part of a team and have an influence on the future direction of the company.

Work-life balance

Life extends beyond the workplace, and we value the importance of a healthy work-life balance. We work hard, but make sure to finish on time so we can do the other things in life we love.

A range of initiatives support this balance. We have a hybrid model for working between the office and at home. Our cycle-to-work scheme encourages eco-friendly commuting options, promoting physical well-being while reducing our carbon footprint. There is a great network of cycle paths to get us to and from work.

We're a sociable bunch. At the end of the week, we have the option to unwind and socialise at the pub conveniently located next to our office. Additionally, our social committee plans special event days throughout the year. You'll see us getting involved in activities like attending Edinburgh Fringe Festival shows, taking part in treasure hunts around the city, and playing pitch and putt.

Many of us at Shore have a passion for the outdoors, so it has been known for the team to get together to climb the Scottish Munros at weekends.

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Local discounts and support

As residents of Leith, we take great pride in its recognition as one of the world's coolest neighbourhoods. We understand the importance of supporting local businesses and the positive impact it has on our community. That's why we've partnered with local delis to offer exclusive discounts to employees.

Thursday mornings are another highlight of the week, always expect a stampede towards the kitchen when the breakfast rolls from our nearest deli are delivered.

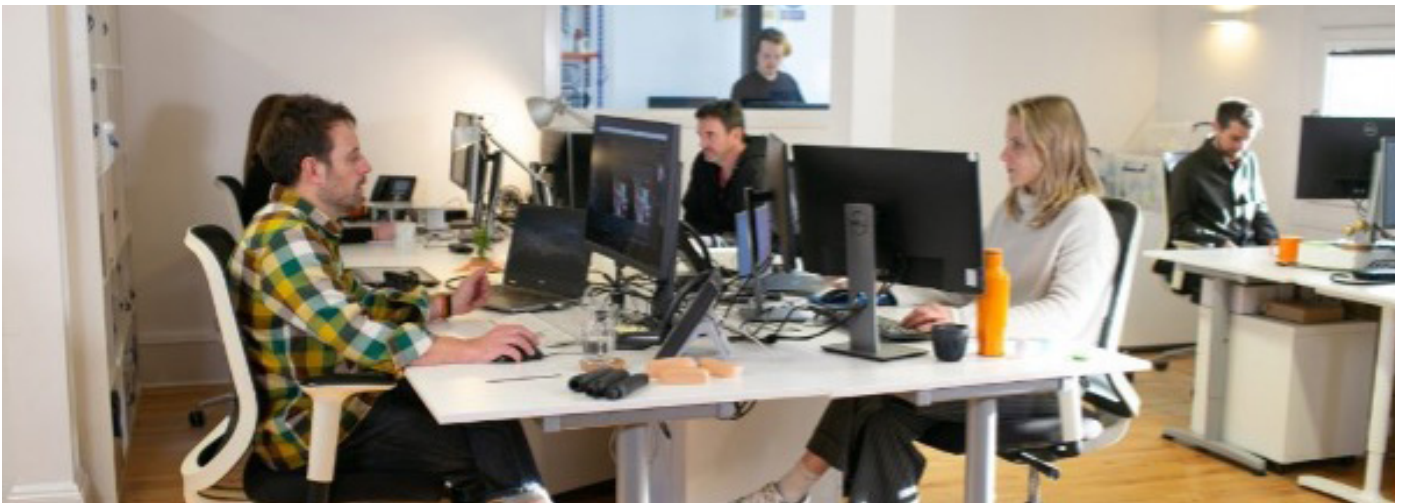
We are also committed to giving back to the community and supporting charitable causes that align with our values. We select four each

year, the most recent charities we've supported are: **Empty Kitchens Full Hearts**, **Edinburgh NE Foodbank**, **Citadel Youth Centre**, and **NHS Lothian Charity**.

We transitioned to employee ownership 3 years ago and we haven't looked back.

Shore Group used their annual summer social event to mark Employee Ownership Day and to showcase this impact employee ownership has on employees, businesses, the wider economy, communities, and the environment.

"Employee owned businesses are more productive, more resilient, and are rooted in their local areas and communities, securing good jobs for the longer term in the regions"



Workpro by CAS go multinational for EODay!

For this year's EO Day on the 23rd June, **Workpro** joined the EO community to celebrate being an employee owned business. Workpro staff enjoyed a multinational meal - where each dish was provided by an employee owner - celebrating the diverse range of cultures represented in the workforce!

CAS Workpro is renowned for its case management software, used in the NHS, MOD, financial institutions, ombudsmen, and HR and Employee Relations. The company has been developing software since 1969—reputedly the first software company in Scotland! CAS became employee-owned in January 2014.





Leading social care provider HHC gives staff £1k shares windfall as it appoints former health minister as chairman

The Highlands' largest social care provider, **Highland Home Carers** (HHC), has announced that it is to reward staff with £1,000 worth of shares in the company. Despite pressures across the sector, every employee who works 30 hours or more will be granted £1,000 worth of shares. Those working less than 30 hours per week will receive a pro rata allocation.

Speaking about the windfall for staff, Campbell Mair, Managing Director of the employee-owned business, said: "As the Highlands' leading Adult Social Care organisation, we are taking a significant decision and making a very significant investment in our most precious assets: people. In the face of sector-wide workforce challenges, this investment is made with a focus on retention and recruitment, and maximising the opportunity for employees to be the beneficiaries of our Business Model of Employee Ownership."

The share award will cost HHC in the region of £175,000.

Former Finance & Public Services Minister appointed Chair

In further good news for HHC, former MSP and Minister for Finance and Health, Andy Kerr, has joined the company as Board (Non Executive) Chair. Also Chair of the Scottish Government Fair Work in Social Care Implementation Group, in his time in government Kerr was responsible for the introduction of the smoking ban in public places.

Speaking about his new role, Kerr said: "I am very pleased to join a great organisation with great people doing great things for the people we support. I look forward to working with everyone at Highland Home Carers and contributing to the ongoing success of this innovative, people centred and caring organisation."

(Continued)

Speaking about Kerr’s appointment, MD, Campbell Mair, commented: *“We are delighted to welcome Andy as our new Chair. In his role he will be a public voice for the organisation, acting as an ambassador and champion of the good work we do - including our Employee Ownership, our Vision, our Mission, and our Values. Andy’s depth and breadth of experience and knowledge will be of benefit not just to Highland Home Carers, but also across the wider sector and Highland economy.”*

“As a member of the Board, Andy will exemplify HHC’s core values (Excellence, Responsibility, Respect, Integrity, Compassion and Collaboration) and facilitate a culture of openness and debate, ensuring that the Board is effective, that relations between Directors are constructive, and that the Board upholds the highest standards in all its endeavours.”

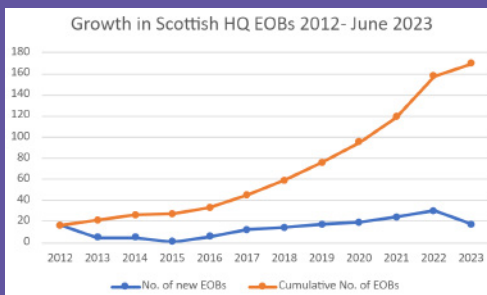
HHC was recently recognised for its groundbreaking work on the prevention of pressure ulcers in a care at home setting. At the Scottish Care Awards in Glasgow, HHC won the Scottish Care Award for Technology & People in



recognition of its highly successful prevention pilot scheme for potentially fatal pressure ulcers. The trial is expected to pave the way for new practices that could save unnecessary suffering - and millions of pounds for the NHS due to the prevention of costly pressure ulcers.

Due to the far reaching measurable health and financial benefits, HHC pilot is being hailed as a game changer for the care sector.

Employee Ownership in Scotland



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let's make it happen

