

# Business Comment

JUNE/JULY 2020

**Special Report:  
ECONOMY AND  
RESILIENCE**

**Edinburgh**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
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## Economy and Resilience

Welcome to the latest issue of your Chamber magazine, **Business Comment**.

It's hard to believe it's just over two months ago, just weeks into the lockdown sparked by the coronavirus pandemic, since our last Business Comment. At that point we remarked: "Virtually no part of our economy has escaped the impact. The scale of the damage to global trade will become known only in time."

As we continue our emergence from lockdown, the relief is felt by everyone. There is concern too. We may just be beginning to understand the scale of the damage to our economy, our businesses, and our people. But the shape our recovery and how long it will take, is still very much unknown.

During the past two months the team at the Chamber has worked hard to ensure that the voice of business in Edinburgh continues to be heard, and we will continue to do everything that we possibly can to support our members as they work to restart and rebuild their businesses with all of the resilience, innovation, energy and determination that has contributed to the recent success of our city.

Just as we were determined to stay open and available for members during the height of the crisis, delivering a free programme of informative and useful events and training programmes for members and campaigning with our colleagues at Scottish Chambers and British Chambers to ensure Government support was forthcoming - we remain determined to work to help renew our economy.

Indeed, as we move to supporting businesses in the recovery phase, we are hosting a series of events entitled Restart, Rebuild and Renew - looking at economic recovery and how businesses can prepare. Our first session was with Benny Higgins, Chair of the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, Cllr Adam McVey, Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council and Chair of the Edinburgh

2020 Strategy Implementation Group (SIG), Charles Hammond, Chief Executive of Forth Ports.

Given the huge importance of tourism to our city, we also hosted a panel event focused on this sector and are working with partners, the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, the City of Edinburgh Council and VisitScotland to support an agreed recovery strategy. In the magazine, the scale of the challenge facing the Tourism sector is clearly laid out by some of those involved most closely in the creation and implementation of the strategy.

The Chamber network has been instrumental in providing a bridge between business and both the UK and Scottish Governments and has helped shape and influence the business assistance packages made available. We have pointed out gaps and lobbied for greater access. We have also been able to gather real-time information and genuine insights to feed back to both the UK and Scottish Governments. That work will certainly continue. We will also work to keep businesses informed on guidance to help them open safely and appropriately.

In the challenging months ahead, we will be working collaboratively and engaging with members and key stakeholders to explore how we build a sustainable, successful and inclusive economy for the future we all want.



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Chief Executive,  
Edinburgh Chamber  
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## Law firm Lindsays encourages employers to keep on top of GDPR when requiring staff to work from home

The current social distancing measures mean the majority of businesses have faced and implemented a quick transition to homeworking for their employees. One of the significant challenges this presents is how to comply with the GDPR and data protection legislation outwith the office.

Data protection legislation has the same parameters, whether your employees are working in the office or at home. The data controller remains responsible for data protection compliance.

Homeworking can often present new challenges to data privacy for businesses. Here are some practical tips to help you consider how to keep data protection compliant:

### Make your employees aware of their data protection responsibilities

It is important that employees understand the underlying concepts of the data protection legislation and what is expected of them. For some employees, homeworking might mean their role has changed slightly and they have access to more data than they would in the office.

It might be helpful to arrange refresher data protection training.

### Ensure your policies are up to date

You should have clear and available data protection policies for your employees. These should cover the data protection principles you expect employees to follow, your data retention policy, how to respond to any data subject requests and any other data protection matters arising.

If employees are using personal devices to work from home, you should have a Devices Policy in place to regulate the use, management and security of any devices that may hold business data.

You should also consider your Privacy Notices and whether any changes are required to reflect any changes to how you are currently working.

### Review your security measures

It's particularly important that you ensure your security measures are robust when employees are working from home.



**Virtual security** - whether your employees are using business devices or personal devices, you should ensure they have appropriate security software and are encouraged to change their password regularly. You should ensure your employees are alert to any phishing or hacking attempts and duly report these.

**Physical security** - homeworking might mean that employees need to access hard copy documents (though you should try to avoid this if possible). While you might have robust confidential waste procedures in the office, it's important that security measures are considered for employees at home as well. Sensitive documents should still be properly held (within locked cupboards or filing cabinets) and securely destroyed in due course.

**Shared spaces** - unlike in the office, employees working from home may be sharing space with family or housemates who are not employees of the same business and should not have access to any business or other confidential information. Employees should be

advised to be mindful of this, and to consider their security and confidentiality obligations.

### Keep managing any data breaches

Any breach of security, whether in the office or at home, should still be carefully considered in case it constitutes a data breach. Employees should be encouraged to report as soon as possible any issues or concerns to whoever is responsible for data protection compliance in your organisation.

You should try to mitigate the effects of any data breach as quickly as you can and evaluate the consequences of the breach. If the breach is reportable, the usual reporting deadlines apply. For more advice on reporting data breaches, click here.

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## New research unlocks the key to the past of St Giles' Kirk as it approaches its 900th anniversary

New research into the original timber used to build the bell tower of St Giles' has uncovered previously unknown details about the construction of Edinburgh's iconic kirk as it approaches its 900th anniversary.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) provided funding for the South East Scotland Oak Dendrochronology project (SESOD), led by Dr Coralie Mills, to investigate the remarkable five-storey timber frame within the bell tower of St Giles' High Kirk on the city's Royal Mile, which is part of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage site. The aim of this research was to recover valuable tree-ring data and determine the date of its construction. While founded in 1124, the church has undergone many additions and alterations over time, particularly in the 19th century.

Dendrochronology - the scientific method of dating tree rings to the exact year they were formed - was conducted on samples taken from a selection of oak timbers in the bell-frame, which has refined the probable date for completion of the St Giles' bell tower to between 1460 and 1467, when the church achieved collegiate status from Pope Paul II.

The testing was able to establish two felling dates for timber in the frame - in the winters of 1453/54 and 1459/60. The research also revealed that the timber was sourced from one of the last remaining reserves of old growth oak timber in Scotland, the Royal Forest of Darnaway, in Morayshire, and that many of these trees would have been over 300 years old when felled.

Dr Coralie Mills, the dendrochronologist who carried out the work, said: "Discovering the date and provenance of the timbers in the tower at St Giles', and allowing a new insight into the medieval history of our native woods, has been a highlight of my career as a dendrochronologist in Scotland.

"The mid-15th century was a pivotal time when Scotland turned to Scandinavia for most of its timber supply, but this research shows that Darnaway still had reserves of old growth oak, by then a very scarce and valuable resource in Scotland. Furthermore, the St Giles' timbers match closely with other material from reused timber in the Chapel Royal at Stirling Castle, which is also thought to have come from Darnaway.



Image credit: Hamish Darrah

"These results enhance our understanding of St Giles' construction history and provide valuable insights into the medieval timber supply in Scotland."

Dr. Kirsty Owen, Deputy Head of Archaeology at HES said: "We're delighted to have supported the work of the SESOD project through our archaeology grants programme, which is part of our ongoing commitment to raise the profile of archaeological science and its practical role in the conservation of our heritage.

"This discovery at St Giles's demonstrates that dendrochronological research has the potential to significantly enhance our understanding of our historic buildings, which in turn will assist in their conservation."

John Andrew, Member of the St Giles' Kirk Session and Convenor of the committee responsible for the building fabric, said: "The investigation and subsequent discovery of the history of the ancient timbers in the crown tower at St Giles' has uncovered another key element in the fascinating history of this great and iconic building.

"The continuing research into the history of St Giles' will continue to improve our understanding on how the building was constructed and will inform how the building will be conserved, and maintained for generations of worshippers and visitors in the future."

John Lawson, Edinburgh's City Archaeologist and supporter of the project, said: "This fascinating research into the original timber used to build the bell tower of St Giles' has given us new insight into the Kirk, a building that we thought we knew so well.

"This has been an incredible piece of work which has helped shed light on the long-asked question of exactly when and how the present tower was constructed. St Giles' Kirk has changed in many ways over the last 900 years and until now various dates had been given for its construction from 14th century onwards. This research now confirms a 15th century date and highlights the importance of undertaking archaeological investigations in our historic buildings."

# Ashley Nicholson becomes first female president of UKHMA

Ashley Nicholson from Forth Ports has been appointed President of the UK Harbour Masters Association (UKHMA). Ashley, who takes on the role, is the first female to hold the title and she is the youngest certificated Harbour Master in the UK to hold the role with the UKHMA.

The UK Harbour Masters Association is the world's oldest and largest Harbour Master Association consists of approximately 480 Harbour Masters and Port professionals from ports across the UK, both publicly and privately owned and represents a unique source of relevant experience in a range of port and marine operations. The main objective of the association, which was formed in 1993, is to encourage the safe and efficient conduct of marine operations in ports and engage with, advise and consult the UK Government and associated Maritime Agencies.

Ashley became a full member of the UKHMA in 2011 and was raised to the Executive Council, then progressing to the position of Vice President and subsequently President elect during 2018. From 10 June 2020, she will serve as President for two years succeeding outgoing President Julian Seaman, the Harbour Master/Marine Director Shoreham Port.

Commenting on her appointment as President, Ashley Nicholson said: "I am honoured to hold the title of President of the UKHMA and I will strive to continue the excellent work of my predecessors in representing the harbour masters of the UK and encourage and grow the association whilst continuing to provide a valuable return to the Harbour Mastering community."

Ashley has worked for Forth Ports for nearly 12 years starting her career with the port group as VTS (Vessel Traffic Service) Operator and since 2017 she has been the Senior Harbour Master based in Grangemouth. Ashley is the youngest certificated

"I am honoured to hold the title of President of the UKHMA and I will strive to continue the excellent work of my predecessors in representing the harbour masters of the UK."



Ashley Nicholson

Harbour Master in the UK. She previously won the prestigious Scottish Engineering / Incorporation of Hammermen of Glasgow Award for the role she played in managing the marine operations during the construction of the new Queensferry Crossing in the River Forth and recently received the Women in Industry award for the first time at the CeeD (Centre for Engineering Education and Development) Industry Awards 2020 for her continued efforts to drive the change required to ensure a more gender diverse workforce within the maritime sector.

Martin Willis Executive Officer of the UKHMA said: "On behalf of Julian Seaman, the outgoing Association President and the full membership of the UKHMA, we welcome Ashley as the newly elected President of the Association and wish her all success in the

role. Ashley has been appointed by her industry peers entirely on merit and richly deserves the honour to lead our highly regarded professional organisation and shall undertake the role as the lead representative of the Association with great confidence, assurance and the full support of all members of the UK Harbour Masters Association during the term of her Presidency."

Captain Alan McPherson, Chief Harbour Master at Forth Ports said: "This is great news for Ashley and on behalf of all her colleagues at Forth Ports, we congratulate her on her Presidency. As a business we know how important it is to support the development of key members of our Marine team and Ashley's appointment to President reflects that professional and career development achievement."

# Getting the most from technology

Endeavour Information Solutions has always been a cloud-first technology solution provider

This is my first time writing an article for Business Comment and instead of being in our office in Edinburgh or Belfast, I am sitting at my kitchen table. My name is Blathin Surgeoner, a partner at Endeavour Information Solutions, and like everyone else in the UK, life has changed dramatically for our business since March. Just before we left our offices, I was interviewed by Helen Compson for the previous edition of the magazine. Our priorities have changed in many ways but the need for communication and working together is still there.

My husband Lee and I started our business in 2009 as a cloud-first technology solution provider based at the same kitchen table that we now find ourselves working from again. One of our main concerns in 2009 was internet access. We live in a beautiful part of Northern Ireland about 2 miles from the Mourne Mountains and a beautiful beach, but it would definitely be called rural! Our internet connection speed hasn't improved much since 2009 but we've managed to overcome that problem fortunately by adding a second 4G-based internet connection into our home network combining the two into a solution that allows us to work, play and relax.

Since starting off in 2009 at our kitchen table and just the two of us, we now have 2 offices and over 30 staff and still increasing even in the current situation. As a business that focuses on providing cloud-first based solutions, we are in the lucky position of being able to work from home as all our staff have laptops and devices that are all securely integrated into our cloud-based systems. As you can imagine being Microsoft partners, we have always embraced the latest solutions from Microsoft to see how we can best use it, and usually end up showing our clients how we put these systems to use ourselves every day, proving that they actually work rather than just talking about the theory of a business moving a critical system to the cloud.

Communication is still the most important part of our new working day, whether that's within our teams or with our clients. We use Microsoft Teams for chats, audio calls and

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video calls throughout the day and, as we also use Microsoft Teams for our phone system across both our offices, our clients still ring the same office numbers and get through to our helpdesk. All our client meetings are also now virtual using Microsoft Teams, as is our recruitment process with interviews and technical tests being held virtually.

Collaboration is the second most important part of our day. We work in teams, so we need to collaborate with our colleagues - we do this using screen sharing in Microsoft Teams as well as working on the same documents stored in Microsoft SharePoint. Having our documents stored in the cloud means that we can be working on the same document together even though we are in different towns, counties, or countries with additional benefits including version control.

Our business helps other organisations get the most out of technology for better communication and collaboration but also uses technology solutions to improve processes, data collection and reporting to allow your business to make the right decisions at the right time. Some of the solutions that we offer are very simple,

for example, a phone app that allows remote workers to send copies of delivery documentation directly to the accounts department, or an app that allows staff to search through company procedures, submit requests for time off, record daily vehicle checks and other health and safety issues.

We use Microsoft's Power Platform where possible to provide quick solutions that are secure and scalable, creating apps that run on mobile phones, tablets and desktops that integrate with other Microsoft products including SharePoint, Dynamics 365, Office 365, Azure and Forms Pro with built-in workflow automation to route information to the right people at the right time.

Our team is passionate about providing solutions to our clients that use technology rather than just selling software or hardware. We all love to talk with business owners and managers, and we haven't met a business yet, that we haven't been able to help!

So if you're interested in talking about your business and how technology could help, contact me on **0131 376 0090** or at **solutions@endeavour-is.com** or visit our website **www.endeavour-is.com**.

For now, I'll put my music back on, make another coffee and when we all get back to a new normal way of life and business, I look forward to meeting you in person at one of the Chamber's events in Edinburgh and sharing many cups of coffee.

## Hope and hard work for a better future

Many of the social issues and inequalities being talked about as a result of the current pandemic are not new.

The groups of people in the UK who suffered disproportionately from poverty before are the same ones whose vulnerability is exposed now - young people are more than twice as likely to work for employers that have closed down; black and minority ethnic communities seem to be more at risk from the virus; women make up 77% of high risk workers, 80% of unpaid carers and 69% of low earners.

Evidence from previous recessions suggests young people entering the labour market this year will face lower employment and earnings for years to come, especially those who face 'double disadvantage'. A recent survey of young people from all demographics in Scotland concluded that 96% fear for their future and 77% are worried about their mental wellbeing.

We've seen recently how our collective wellbeing as a society is connected. As John Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe". For key sections of our workforce the current situation has highlighted not only their vulnerability, but also their considerable value. Charities deliver difficult, specialised and essential services vital to the proper functioning of our society. Schools and care homes perform many more functions for us in our society than they are given credit for. We've seen how reliant we all are on huge sections of the workforce we've too frequently taken for granted and even, in the worst cases, stigmatised as low-skilled.

The nature of the challenges facing us – not only inequality, but also other long-term trends, such as an ageing population – can only be solved by working across sectors and through focused, clear ambition. The Beveridge report that laid the foundations for the welfare state offered several guiding principles, including that a "revolutionary moment in the world's history is a time for revolutions, not patching". I hope the current context can provide a similar opportunity for agreeing on ambitious actions to create a better future.

### Finding common purpose for better social outcomes

We've moved beyond Milton Friedman's narrow view of the role of business in society. The potential, and indeed the responsibility, of the private sector in helping us achieve the social



goals we want to see can be developed further. This begins with principles for fair work such as the importance of a Living Wage, security of hours and being treated with respect. Progress is also being made on expectations for diversity and inclusion in the workforce, although this needs to accelerate significantly and we'll need to work doubly hard in the years ahead. Tax is a contribution businesses make to the greater good, not something that can or should be avoided if you want to partake in the other benefits that society gives.

The Edinburgh Poverty Commission, of which I'm a member, recently published an interim report looking at the impact of Coronavirus. It highlighted some bold moves already made, such as those to address homelessness and food poverty. It's vital we lock these gains in and where possible, go further. Our Commission has listened to the voices of those experiencing poverty and we need to continue to ensure their voices are heard if we're to identify the best solutions.

Employers of all sectors need to provide employees with decent, secure income and treat people fairly at work. In Edinburgh

in particular, low-paid, volatile work is too common and we currently pay the price elsewhere. Right now, this is a particular issue for younger workers. For many employers, even pledging to maintain and protect their apprentice and school-leaver pathways in any coming recession will be a vital contribution to our city's wellbeing.

As the Greek proverb says "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in" and if we want to give future generations hope that they can live in a better and fairer world than we do now, we need to take the seeds of what we already have and start planting, invest in an ambitious future vision, and work hard for it now.

Sandy MacDonald, Head of Corporate Sustainability at Standard Life Aberdeen Plc and DYW Industry Task Force Member



## Making the most of your membership (virtually)

Over the past three months, the Edinburgh Chamber alongside many other businesses, has adapted its way of working, moving all operations online. We're pleased to be able to continue supporting members and to offer a wide range of benefits which can be accessed remotely.

This has been a really difficult and turbulent time for businesses across the city, however we are here to support you as best we can and would like to share the many ways you can keep engaged and ensure you maximise your membership.

### 1. Use our marketing support

It's arguably more important than ever to stay visible and maintain your messaging in the current climate. We offer members a suite of marketing support to help you reach a wider audience and amplify your message amongst the business community.

We publish member news items and blogs to our website daily, so if you have a great piece of news or an article you'd like us to share, please send it in. These items are also shared across our social media platforms too, so it's a great way to ensure your story reaches a wider audience. You can also send in details of an upcoming webinar or course too – we can help to push this out to our members.

We are continuing to produce our Business Comment magazine too (digitally for now) – and in here we highlight some of the great news that has been shared by members.

Please contact our marketing team on [marketing@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:marketing@edinburghchamber.co.uk) if you'd like to share an article or for any questions – we're here to help!

### 2. Membership Directory

Networking remains at the heart of what we do. As a member, you can access our online Membership Directory, which is a list containing contact details of fellow members. This list is searchable and can be filtered by company size, sector and postcode, so if you are looking to connect with a particular member, or group of members, please do use this tool. Members on here have consented to have their data in the directory, so please do reach out and stay connected.



### 3. Virtual Events

Over the past few months, we have moved our events calendar online and we're pleased to offer a range of events to suit all. Our 1hr business support webinars offer practical support to businesses on a range of topics. To date we've covered areas including managing remote teams, crisis communications and stress management. Going forward, we'll continue these, and focus on preparing businesses for the re-start and re-build. We also recently launched a series of panel events entitled 'Restart, Rebuild and Renew', where expert speakers are invited to share their view on economic recovery in their sector – more of these to come. In addition, we have our weekly virtual tea break which is great for networking and keeping up with fellow members. More on the social front to come too. There's plenty going on, so please do continue checking out events calendar for the latest updates.

### 4. Online Training

Our dynamic calendar of open training courses is still running, with all sessions

being delivered remotely. These courses cover topics including leadership, management, internationalisation, digital skills and marketing. In addition to our paid courses, we are pleased to offer a range of free support webinars – please check our training page for more information.

### 5. Free HR, Legal, H&S and Tax advice

As a member of the Edinburgh Chamber, you can access four free services: Chamber HR, Legal, Health and Safety and Tax. With one phone number, one website and a library of over 750 documents all included in your membership – we have got you covered. For more information, please visit our website [here](#).

If you would like any more information on getting the most out of your membership, please contact our Head of Membership, Richard Ellis – [Richard.ellis@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:Richard.ellis@edinburghchamber.co.uk)

# Reuse of everyday products to enhance lives

A business with its origins in tackling the devastating impact of period poverty on girls attending school in rural Kenya is now making its mark on the UK market – and it is doing so in Circular Economy style.

Lilypads may have begun life to tackle an issue in Kenya, but it is the brainchild of University of Edinburgh alumnus Alison Wood, and she continues to build its success from Scotland's Capital.

She is engaging with a range of organisations and advisors, including Circular Edinburgh.

The way we traditionally design, build, use then dispose of products means that a lot goes to waste. A circular economy looks to keep the flow of materials and products within the economy for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them whilst in use.

The Circular Edinburgh project is supported as part of Zero Waste Scotland's Resource Efficient Circular Economy Accelerator Programme, which will invest £73m in circular economy and resource efficiency projects, thanks to support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This programme provides funding and support for small and medium sized businesses in Scotland to be more resource efficient and create a more circular economy.

In creating an affordable, reusable, comfortable and efficient product, Lilypads is also tackling major environmental issues such as reducing plastic waste as well as the social issue of period poverty.

Alison said: "It began in rural Kenya about two years ago when, while working on a research project, I learned that women could not afford sanitary products and in desperation to remain in school some were exchanging them for sex.

"It changed my path in life. Since then we have worked to reduce the cost of manufacture through changing the design of sanitary pads, whilst ensuring they are a good fit and comfortable."

A sanitary pad can contain up to 90% plastic. A year's supply of "ordinary" sanitary pads can have the same CO2 emission as driving a small diesel car almost 60 kilometres. Much of this waste can end up in the sea or washed up on beaches. In rural Africa, disposing of plastic waste can be deeply challenging.

After learning about the level of plastic in disposable products, the business adapted their reusable product for the British market too. Alison added: "Sanitary products are an essential product and the most important criteria for most women is that it doesn't leak and is comfortable. Alongside that there are also loads of women who are looking to reduce their environmental impact. We can see examples from reducing the plastic bottles we use to utilising public transport.

"However, for many women the prospect of swapping sanitary products is often difficult because it doesn't fit into their lifestyle. That is why we are producing a product that's very comfortable, well-fitted AND reusable so instead of being thrown out after each use it can be washed dried and reused for at least two years."

Lily pads continues to work both overseas and also in the UK providing an affordable, comfortable and environmentally friendly sanitary product. They also provide puberty and mental health education in schools.

Alison would like to see more companies – particularly small businesses – encouraged to pursue the Circular Economy route through the creation of an ecosystem of help and advice to help navigate an easier path. The rewards, she believes, lie not only in improving our business impact on our environment, but also in improved commercial opportunities as more and more consumers are values driven.

For further information please visit [www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/circular-edinburgh](http://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/circular-edinburgh) or contact Mayan Grace or Lauren Ridgley on 0131 221 2999 (option 5) or email [circulareconomy@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:circulareconomy@edinburghchamber.co.uk) [www.lilypads.org.uk](http://www.lilypads.org.uk)



John Clarke, partner specialising in small and medium size business and corporate recovery at Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie LLP, discusses ways businesses can recover, resume trade and remain resilient in a post-lockdown world.

**Has there been an increase in businesses getting in touch in recent weeks because they are struggling or worried and in need of advice?**

There has been an increase in businesses seeking help as a result of COVID-19. However, perhaps not surprisingly, businesses can initially be reluctant to reach out, as doing so is an admission that their company is in difficulty. It's not an easy admission to make. But our experience during lockdown has shown us the sooner businesses seek advice, the greater the chance that their problems can be fixed. This is an extraordinary situation and a lot of companies are facing similar struggles right now. So don't be embarrassed to admit that your business is facing difficulties and that you need help if that's the case.

**What steps can businesses take to assess whether or not a restart or continuance of trade is financially viable?**

First, start by asking the simple question – can your entire business survive the impact of lockdown and if not, can part of it survive? That's where advice from accountants and solicitors will come in especially helpful. Now is a good time to take forward the parts of your business that are working and cut out aspects that aren't profitable. When doing this, you need to consider a number of things – are the

changes you are making viable? Do you have the resources to run this service going forward? Will a change of course cause issues with employees? Are your customers going to follow you? Be brutally honest – what is the minimum your business can survive on? It's a difficult process, but you must consider the most cost-effective options.

**If survival is possible, how can companies plan for resumption of trade in a post-lockdown society?**

Lockdown will ease, but social distancing measures are set to remain in place for some time. Therefore, businesses will have to equip themselves to be functional within the 'new normal'. Looking to the future, the number one thing is to be realistic. For example, if you run a bar which could previously hold sixty people, but with social distancing in place can only hold twelve, it raises questions around financial viability. It will be a long time before we'll see 'business as usual' so a rule of thumb is to hope for the best but prepare for the worst. Work out what personnel you need going forward and have a survival plan in place which doesn't leave you vulnerable to employment claims. The nature of the current situation – many workers on furlough and companies facing great financial uncertainty – could lead to an increase in claims in the future so if in

doubt seek legal advice. Be prepared by having a robust redundancy process in place which will protect you and your business..

**Moving forward, how can businesses ensure that their brand remains resilient?**

There are lessons from this unprecedented time which can be taken forward and used to strengthen your business. Owners can be very emotionally attached to their company, so it's vital to have the right team in place to advise you from an objective viewpoint.

At WJM, we are fortunate to have experts across a range of sectors and can quickly assemble a team who are able to advise on a diverse range of matters – whether it be employment, contracts or family business. WJM recently unveiled a refreshed brand identity and values that underline our commitment to delivering a quality service for clients in the face of the current pandemic. We want to remind businesses across the country that, as they prepare their recovery strategies, our experts are here for them.

[www.wjm.co.uk](http://www.wjm.co.uk)



## What will your business need in the future? Time!

In unparalleled times, the UK Government has stepped in to save the economy in the form of hundreds of billions of pounds.

Unheard of sums are going towards wages, tax breaks and emergency loans as the government fights to ensure we have an economy to return to when this awful virus passes. As lockdown starts to ease what will our new dawn look like?

However with all the financial support being offered to business, it is a measure with no monetary value which many directors may look back on as being the most valuable.

### The gift of time.

Over the last several weeks, directors have had to make big decisions – ones that would usually have months of planning and discussion – within a matter of hours.

However, recent proposed changes to insolvency legislation announced by the UK Business Secretary Alok Sharma in late March have the potential to allay fears of the future for companies.

Up until now, company directors would be held liable if they fail to wind up a company when they know or ought to have known that it is running out of money and facing insolvency. It is known as wrongful trading.

The temporary suspension of those rules, applied retrospectively from March 1st, means that directors will not be personally liable for their decisions during the pandemic.

Crucially, he also introduced a moratorium, which Middlebrooks believes will be absolutely vital to the continuing survival of limited companies in the difficult weeks and months ahead.

Up until now, there has been no mechanism for solvent companies to access a breathing space to give them time to plan their business strategy for the future.

The company moratorium will give directors the time to make big decisions in the knowledge that they will not be pursued by creditors.

In essence it creates a 'bubble' around the company which stops all legal action being taken against the company whilst it considers its future and how to formulate a plan to trade out of the precarious situation that it now finds itself in.

At present, all enforcement action has essentially ceased, courts are running at



reduced capacity, HMRC have issued guidance that unless criminality is suspected, they will not take enforcement action against companies for the next 3 months. Regrettably it is likely that this position will change.

### How will a moratorium help your business?

The moratorium is available for all companies and will be vital in the coming months. It will provide the breathing space needed for directors to make decisions:

- You will retain control of your business;
- You have a professional insolvency practitioner assisting you with a restructuring plan;
- You have the added peace of mind that you will steer clear of wrongful trading;
- The exit can be anything from an informal plan with your creditors, to a formal restructuring package;

Most importantly, it gives time to find new investment if possible.

### How will it be likely to work?

Out of court applications (great for now when the courts are not quite at full capacity);

Initial period of 3 months bubble (can be extended);

Insolvency Practitioner appointed as Monitor;

Ongoing supplies need to be paid;

Historic outstanding amounts can be parked;

Suppliers still have to provide utilities, components and raw parts;

Exit can be whatever is best for your company;

Middlebrooks firmly believes that the changes will be fair to creditors as well as limited companies in these extraordinary times.

The moratorium is the gift of time needed for many to pivot to go on and thrive!

[www.middlebrooksadvice.com](http://www.middlebrooksadvice.com)



## Established JV to inject £10m into Ocean Terminal to refocus shopping centre future in Edinburgh

An established investment and asset management joint venture (JV) between ICG Real Estate and its Scottish partner Ambassador Group, has taken control of Ocean Terminal, Edinburgh's leading waterfront shopping centre. This approach aims to move away from previous thinking about transforming the centre into an outlet mall and instead will deliver a more community focused approach to meet the needs of the expanding residential and commercial areas across Leith.

The JV has resulted in the removal of Resolution Property's involvement in the shopping centre following a negotiated transfer of the asset to ICG and Ambassador. Under the new ownership, Ocean Terminal will continue to build on its strong brand heritage and the previous Porta concept will no longer be progressed. The centre will also receive a £10m injection to carry out various upgrades to create a mixed offering with the introduction of residential, office and amenity space to the centre.

Chris Richardson, Investment Director, Ambassador Group, said: "Ocean Terminal

should be the centre of Leith. It has got great leisure and F&B offerings and one of the busiest cinemas in Edinburgh. Our plan is to reposition the centre with residential, office and other amenity space, that will allow us to retain and build on the existing experience Ocean Terminal is known for and liked. We will create a more mixed-use environment for the people of Edinburgh and Leith.

"Over 3,500 houses will be delivered around the site and the tram will arrive at the front door, so it is a great opportunity. We plan to give it a local touch through our initiatives and have already progressed a number of deals in the past few weeks."

Discussions have been taking place during lockdown to negotiate new deals with tenants, including Vue Cinemas, Debenhams, French Connection, GAP and H&M. Existing discussions continue alongside attracting new enquiries to achieve full occupancy in the future of the 420,000 sq ft centre.

Kevin Crowley, Head of Partnership Capital UK at ICG Real Estate, said: "A lot of retail

assets in the UK may be distressed from an occupational point of view, but many owners are also distressed having third party debt and private equity ownership.

"At Ocean Terminal you now have two well-capitalised counterparties and no third-party debt. We have allocated £10m to invest in the asset. As a result, when we have been having discussions with tenants, those talks have been focused on what is the best long-term strategy for the asset, rather than what's good for short term cashflow. And that is a key reason why Ambassador is already securing deals with tenants."

Our current priority is working with tenants to be able to stage a sustainable, phased re-opening of the centre as lockdown restrictions ease, to ensure we provide a safe alternative to online shopping and enter a new normal for both our community and tenants.

Donald Syme has been appointed as Retail Asset Manager and Savills and Syme Property Consultancy have been appointed on joint letting agency roles.

## Helping your Business Trade Internationally

As lockdown measures start to ease in Scotland and businesses start to explore their restart and recovery, we would like to share our upcoming international support programme with you.



Following on from the success of our first virtual outward trade mission to Philadelphia in March and our first inward mission from Bulgaria on 10th of June, we are pleased to bring you our upcoming programme of virtual missions for 2020.

Our outward trade missions will help you understand key trading opportunities in new markets and give you the opportunity to make connections in these markets. During the mission, you can attend a virtual market awareness session where a range of speakers will present on the opportunities, and attend B2B meetings, matched individually, based on your business needs. The outward virtual missions enable you to participate from the comfort of your own home and the only cost is a nominal booking fee to secure your place.

For participation in the inward missions you will meet new contacts and have a chance to promote your business from home and attend short half an hour B2B meetings with delegates from all over the world.

### Outward virtual missions

**Shenzhen, China 14th-18th September**

**USA 5th - 9th October**

**Germany 3-6th November**

### Inward virtual missions

**Finland 28th September**

**France 19th November**

We will soon be announcing further inward missions and outward missions to Canada, Dubai and Europe. The world is your oyster so let us help you with your international trade ambitions.

If you are interested in taking part in our outward missions please visit [www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/events/](http://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/events/) to download an application form. The deadline for applications is Friday 26th June. For any other enquiries contact the international team on **0131 221 2999 (option 5)** or email [international@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:international@edinburghchamber.co.uk)

## Transforming Our Future

We have heard the phrases 'new normal' and 'unprecedented times' more than we would care to remember over recent months. Whilst both may be true, perhaps now is the time to adapt to this reality and to embrace the opportunities that may result from such a challenging period.



By **Jamie Watts**  
Commercial Director

Some might say that if we had further adopted technology into our lives then lockdown might have been less distressing. Has Covid-19 inadvertently turned all of us into early adopters? Companies across the UK will know things now, about themselves and their customers, that they couldn't have known before. The question is, how can they adapt to benefit from this new knowledge?

Let us look at video conferencing, no doubt one of the 'winners' of lockdown. It provides a way for businesses to communicate with customers and indeed for teams within these businesses to tackle problems together. However, would we all agree that all the well-known platforms have perfect functionality? Security issues and network speed have meant that many of us have been cautious to put full faith into the technology. The young companies who have developed their own video conferencing platforms may now be given the stage to scale up and solve the technical problems that the existing providers could not.

We have also learned that access to healthcare and medicine can become incredibly complicated when our traditional providers are not able to cope with demand. Health tech is one of the fastest growing areas of technology. There are now several businesses, including many local scale-ups, who have designed intuitive platforms allowing the individual to order and schedule medicines, remotely test themselves against illness and check in on the health of vulnerable family and friends. Each development in this area has the potential to further improve the standard of life for all of us, particularly during uncertain times.

Innovation is essential to safeguard the future of your business. Not only that, you can also be rewarded for trying. The UK is one of over 40 countries globally that offer an incentive to businesses in the form of research and development tax credits. Administered by HMRC, it is the most generous business



incentive that the government offers. If a business is taking steps to overcome technical uncertainties at its own cost, then it is likely that the business will qualify for the incentive. Companies can benefit from up to 33% of their qualifying expenditure as a cash injection directly back into the business.

It can be equally important for young, agile businesses who need the cash rebate to give them runway to operate, as it is for established companies who depend on the tax deduction to ensure they can continue to create and improve products and services at a competitive speed of delivery.

Amplifi Solutions works with businesses across many sectors, including software, manufacturing, engineering and food & drink. Each of these industries has its own unique set of challenges and opportunities, both technical and commercial - that's why we

have industry experts as part of our team with backgrounds such as mechanical, electrical and software engineering, to ensure that we really understand your unique process and deliver a great result on your R&D tax credit claim, helping you to reinvest in your business.

As we all try to navigate our way through these challenging times, a strong cash flow will be crucial. So, at a time when cash really is king, can you afford not to be innovating? You can find out more about R&D tax credits at [www.amplifi.solutions](http://www.amplifi.solutions)



TOP TIPS ON: IMPROVING RESILIENCE BY DEVELOPING BUSINESS AGILITY

**Name:** Audrey Boyers  
**Business name:** MaxCap Consultants

In these challenging times we need our internal operations to be truly 'Agile', as having the ability to flex our business quickly and effectively to follow changing customer, market and business needs is vital for our survival.

Harnessing the power of our entire workforce to deliver that 'Agility' will ensure we can rapidly adjust our course to navigate that ever-changing landscape.

To achieve true business agility we face two main challenges:

Firstly, we need to ensure that the technical capabilities of our existing people, processes and/or systems are not constraining our ability to adjust direction quickly.

Secondly, we need to be confident that our current culture is not working against our ambition! Cultural resistance to change comes in many forms, however at its source is usually extremely stressed, often overburdened, and anxious people.

If we can engage, educate and empower our own people to be able to collaborate effectively, change quickly and innovate regularly, we will achieve 'Business Agility'. In addition, we will create a positive culture that will pro-actively support the well-being of our people.

We have helped many businesses successfully achieve agility by implementing the following 4 key foundation steps.

**1. Connect Strategy to the 'Day Job'**

The challenge with strategy is usually the lack of ability to effectively execute it.

The workforce often see strategic objectives as work 'over and above' the day job and therefore if they already feel stretched, then no matter how much emphasis you put on strategic objectives, they will simply never get round to doing them.

The key is to develop strategic deployment planning systems, a combination of visual management systems and regular reviews, which allows strategic objectives to be broken down into executable tasks that can

be consumed by the entire workforce on a 'daily' basis.

For this system to work reliably you must ensure this is a living entity, any changes made at the top should automatically cascade down into the day job.

**2. Create Reliable Output**

Setting and maintaining good standards across your business ensures you can maintain high quality, cost effective and timely outputs.

Regardless of whether you are producing products, or delivering services, you need to ensure you do not disrupt current performance when you adjust for future needs.

Strong compliance to your current standards is essential in ensuring confidence in your capability levels, and as a result, changes become simpler, faster to implement and much lower risk.

**3. Implement Workload Management Systems**

Often the forgotten process, good workload management across all roles is key to deliver maximum productivity, whilst reducing overburden and stress across your workforce.

A good process will ensure:

- The work is always visible
- A collaborative team-based approach
- Your teams can effectively solve their own issues
- The 'Productivity' bar is continuously raised



Audrey Boyers

**4. Develop Practical Problem-Solving Capability**

Particularly powerful when combined with step 3, educating your people on how to problem solve effectively, and get to the 'true' root cause of an issue, will help drive creativity and innovation to new levels. This, in turn, will have a transformational impact across all areas of your business, not just workload management.

Implementing a team-based problem-solving approach across the entire workforce will ensure no strategic objective is beyond your reach.

Audrey Boyers is the founder of MaxCap and brings 30+ years of practical expertise in leading businesses to achieve their 'Operational Excellence' ambitions.

To learn more about 'Business Agility' or to discuss any other operational challenges, please contact us:

Web: [www.maxcapconsultants.com](http://www.maxcapconsultants.com)  
Email: [enquiries@maxcapconsultants.com](mailto:enquiries@maxcapconsultants.com)

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



Rhea Balfour is founder and Director of RJB Property Consultants and Surveyors, a boutique property concierge firm in Edinburgh. Positioned specifically to meet the needs of property owners and investors across the city, RJB Property is regulated by RICS and delivers a suite of carefully considered services to the most exacting standards.

[www.rjbproperty.co.uk](http://www.rjbproperty.co.uk)

At Landsberg Orora, we offer total solutions with custom and standard packaging for all industries. From monitoring your inventory levels to creating a custom packaging design for your products, Landsberg Orora helps you take your concept to the consumer with a level of service that is above the rest.

[www.ororagroup.com](http://www.ororagroup.com)



First Phycology is a leading independent provider of psychology, mental health, EAP and training services to business and organisations in Edinburgh and throughout Scotland. They provide counselling, psychotherapy, CBT, relationship/couples counselling and coaching services for individuals, couples, families, children and young people, offering a range of therapy packages to suit each individual's needs. They also offer bespoke services to businesses, promoting psychological wellbeing through training programmes especially suitable to the workplace.

[www.firstpsychology.co.uk](http://www.firstpsychology.co.uk)



Golf Concierge Scotland Ltd was founded in 2018 by director Callum Taylor borne out of his love and background in golf and tourism. Based in Edinburgh their tours include all the leading Scottish links and inland courses in tailored packages which include high quality accommodations, transport, food & drink and other activities.

[www.golfconciergescotland.com](http://www.golfconciergescotland.com)



ClearWater Hygiene have been guaranteeing hand sanitiser to front-line workers and the NHS since the beginning of the pandemic. Now, we want to help Edinburgh get Back to Business with our managed sanitiser service. Contact us: [info@clearwaterhygiene.com](mailto:info@clearwaterhygiene.com)

[www.clearwaterhygiene.com](http://www.clearwaterhygiene.com)



Would you like more information on joining the Chamber?

Membership prices start at only £25.80 per month. Please contact us for more information.

Richard Ellis Head of Membership,  
[Richard.ellis@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:Richard.ellis@edinburghchamber.co.uk)



Richard Ellis



## Apropos delivers for self-managing landlords

### Digital property management platform responds to increased demand for transparency in the marketplace

Digital property management platform, apropos, provides a solution for self-managing landlords who have previously lost faith in letting agents and decided to go it alone.

Offering complete transparency at every stage of the process, apropos has been designed to transform the rental experience, enabling landlords to track and manage their property portfolio 24/7, whilst benefitting from end-to-end property management with a consistency of service excellence.

As evidenced by the National Landlords Association (NLA) 'Q4 2019 Landlords Panel Survey', the proportion of private landlords shunning letting agents in favour of letting and managing their own properties increased to 43%, up 7% from Q3 2019. This is further demonstrated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's 'English Private Landlord Survey 2018' in which 52% of landlords stated that they did not use an agent, 34% used an agent for letting services, and only 9% using an agent for both letting and management services.'

David Alexander, joint managing director of apropos stated: "The findings of these surveys are an accurate reflection of the changing nature of the industry. Throughout the UK, there are over 10,000 letting agents who use the same old traditional business model, working on the basis of landlords handing over their property in order to maximise profits at all costs.

"Born out of a desire to set a new standard in property management, apropos is completely reinventing the process by offering a fair and reasonable property management service, to both landlords and tenants alike, whilst maximising income for landlords and providing transparency at every stage of the process.

Earlier this year, there have been several new legislative measures that have come into play specific to the industry – from tenant fees to energy efficiency. New legislative measures often create uncertainty around what is and isn't allowed across certain aspects of the industry, with added complications for self-managing landlords. Apropos is on hand to offer support throughout the process,

whilst providing professional guidance to address any concerns caused by the introduction of new legislation, ensuring that landlords are protected and following all procedural guidelines.

Apropos enables landlords to track and manage their entire rental portfolio by monitoring all activity via an online dashboard that delivers complete visibility of all transactions. The dashboard is accessible 24/7 from their laptop, mobile device or desktop along with live notifications of all transactions as they happen.

Tenants can book viewings and provide feedback on the property, submit and track their full rental application online, pay their rent and book their check in date. In addition, they can report and monitor maintenance online during their tenancy. In many cases they can do all of this with no face to face contact, an increasingly important consideration during the current pandemic.

Apropos, the bespoke property management solution and the essential landlord resource for delivering better tenancies can be accessed at [www.apropos.app](http://www.apropos.app).

## What Impact Will the Dominic Cummings Crisis Have on Trust in the Government's Communications?

I write this the day after Dominic Cummings' press conference in the Downing Street Rose Garden.

By Heather Astbury

MD & Co-Founder of The Reputation People

By the time you read it, events may have moved on, however, I am sure the crisis communications lessons to be learned won't have altered.

By his own admission:

- Dominic Cummings returned to No10 after being close to someone he believed was showing COVID19 symptoms.
- He later drove his family to another part of the country.
- He then drove his family to another town, spent time by a river and played in the woods.

These are at least three clear cases of rule breaking. So, when you have broken the rules and it becomes public, how do you handle the communications? It's simple. You have to admit you were wrong and you have to apologise.

The announcement that Dominic Cummings was going to give a press conference was a surprise. Not least because the code of conduct for special advisers specifically prohibits this sort of action, but also because it was hard to imagine what he could say that would justify holding a press conference.

Cummings admits he broke the rules. But he wanted the public to know there were extenuating circumstances that made it ok for him to break them and that is why he held the press conference. It seems he believed that casting himself as the victim was the way to recover the situation. However, the circumstances were no more severe or unusual than those experienced by many people across the UK. Indeed, less so than by many.

From a communications point of view, the only acceptable course of action was for him to accept responsibility for his mistakes, apologise unreservedly and offer his resignation. That should have been done much earlier than Monday and via a written statement or video message. The press conference allowed media questions, which saw his story unravel and become more unbelievable.



The aim of crisis communications is to shut down any negative story as quickly as possible. The PM's disastrous press conference on Sunday, followed by Dominic Cummings' even worse attempt on Monday, have had the opposite effect.

You close down a negative story by telling the truth, admitting responsibility and apologising for any wrongdoing. You also have to be sincere or it will look like a stunt. Remember the three Ps - pity, praise and promise. In this case he could have shown pity for the people who have lost their lives and loved ones, praised the people who had followed all of the rules despite difficult circumstances and promised that, if allowed to keep his job, he would never disregard the rules again.

Instead we got a statement that appeared geared towards making the public feel sorry for him and didn't ring true in a number of areas. That has allowed continued media speculation, increased social media discussion and intensified criticism.

He admitted he broke the rules, but didn't accept his actions were wrong, thereby not accepting responsibility. And most damaging of all - he didn't apologise.

If he had done these things it is much more likely that this story would have run over one

or two news cycles – and it is even possible he might have kept his job. As it is, many people are now even more angry and are seeking ways to keep the story alive. It is now very unlikely the story will go away until he resigns or is removed from office.

Almost certainly this affair has undermined the government's COVID19 lockdown messaging and it is not far-fetched to suggest that lives could be lost as a result. This saga has eroded trust in the government and its decisions at a time when they need our trust to enforce hard rules.

In a Twitter poll I ran yesterday, I asked what effect people thought recent events had had on the UK's reputation. 83% said they thought the UK's reputation had been damaged.

These are the consequences of badly handled crisis communications. Humility, honesty and hope – the three Hs the government and its advisers are failing to deliver right now.

[www.thereputationpeople.com](http://www.thereputationpeople.com)



# The case for wider business support in the months ahead

Changes in both funding support and market dynamics mean that companies must plan ahead for life after lockdown.

With a chink of light at the end of the tunnel and the hope of something resembling normal economic activity later in the year, business leaders may soon find their plates are full.

Many will foresee that the doses of economic medicine, vital to maintaining finances and retaining skills during the worst of the crisis, will eventually recede. Thankfully the widespread furloughing of workers has spared us an estimated 374,000 redundancies in Scotland, according to a survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. To this end we must give praise for the extension of furloughing beyond June to October. But we know this scheme can't last.

So as we witness the tapering of support, Scottish businesses face the vital task

“Over the mid to long term, we at the Royal Bank of Scotland are encouraging businesses to revisit their strategies against the market backdrop and identify new risks and opportunities.”

of managing their liquidity to survive the transition. Over the mid to long term, we at the Royal Bank of Scotland are encouraging businesses to revisit their strategies against the market backdrop and identify new risks and opportunities. Emerging from the crisis, success will be marked by how well businesses adapt and respond to new market conditions.

We believe this should start with the fundamentals of sound business oversight. Consider, for instance, cash flow. Examined at regular intervals – even weekly – cash forecasts will help inform business plans and budgets, allowing for the flexible return of employees, and balanced cash requirements that suit levels of activity and expected – if lumpy – revenue.

Not all businesses, of course, face the same challenges. While some parts of the economy, such as tourism and hospitality, may face lacklustre sales in the short term, others may need to respond rapidly to pent up demand. The economy halted as one, but it will not restart together. So to help themselves adapt, businesses must assess what has changed – both temporarily and permanently – across their parts of the economy, whether that is customers, partners, suppliers or competitors. What impact will the establishment of remote working and direct transactions, for example, have on a business, and what investments are needed to support staff and access customers? We'd like to see businesses reopen with plans that befit these new circumstances.

So as our industry slowly opens up, we also urge businesses to understand what steps they need to make, based on a mixture of such useful tools as sensitivity analyses, modelling, and scenario planning. With the pundits predicting a deep recession, the journey towards growth could take several different forms – but each will rely on robust information that supports leaders in making the right decisions.

Resilience and agility should be chief among every leader's thoughts, but they should be proud to ask for help, too. Plenty is on offer, whether from trade and government bodies – the government's Find Business Support website is a useful source of support and advice - <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot>, from accountants and solicitors or from ourselves at the Royal Bank of Scotland. Those businesses that succeed will be those that maximise the help that is on offer.

And we'd like to be a part of that.

For more information about how Royal Bank of Scotland can help your business, please visit [www.rbs.co.uk](http://www.rbs.co.uk). You may also find our Business Hub is a useful source of guidance [www.rbs.businesshub.com](http://www.rbs.businesshub.com)



## Making the unusual, “business as usual”

### The impact of COVID-19 on UK business

On 23 March 2020, our world changed. The UK government announced that the nation was entering lockdown – measures so wide ranging that perhaps nothing like it had been seen since the Second World War. Britain's workforce was essentially sent home overnight, with companies nationwide scrambling to get their people back online, and quickly. Laptops were rapidly purchased or re-deployed, offices and call centres emptied. We acclimatised to working from home the hard way – now juggling not only our career, but also childcare and home-schooling – less than 24 hours after Boris Johnson made his TV address. The impact has been huge across all sectors. Hospitality businesses have been forced to think on their feet and repurpose. Retailers have watched turnover plummet as they struggle to ramp up their online offer. Smaller businesses have fared worse – those lacking financial or digital resource struggle to make ends meet, while high street traders board up their windows. As some homeworking staff grappled with unfamiliar systems, well-intentioned others repurposed their own equipment for work, while many shared their workspace with family. It's no surprise then that security and confidentiality are at greatest risk right now. Effective home-working is a much more serious business than mastering Zoom and making sure your backdrop looks bookish.

#### An agile response in remarkable times

Though our customers include a broad swathe of organisations across public sector, security and retail, their immediate needs as we entered lockdown were the same: to get all of their people working from home, with no compromise on security. For one major utilities company, for example, we delivered just that: transforming their call-centre operation into a home-working model, more or less overnight. The customer experience was uninterrupted, and, though the open plan, city centre HQ had been replaced by the staff's spare rooms and kitchen tables, the end-user interface was the same as at work. Business as usual. This provider's customer base is particularly demanding, so it was a major achievement for everyone that customer confidence remained high throughout, which in turn kept staff upbeat and fully engaged.

#### Solutions for any new normal

Now that we've delivered a first response to lockdown for all of our customers, we're planning for the next phase. But what will the future bring? The easing of lockdown looks markedly different north and south of the border, bringing considerable challenges. It's also possible that we will endure several

periods of further lockdown – a gruelling “in-out” working model in which only the most adaptable businesses will thrive. Further, the UK's employees themselves have changed. Experiencing the personal and environmental benefits of home-working, it's likely that many will demand more flexible arrangements. In turn, senior management now question the sense in renting expensive inner-city office space. But whatever our future brings, two features are key to success: agility and security. It's our job to ensure readiness for any new normal, even one that changes daily. Throughout the weeks to come, we're working closely with our customers to guarantee that they have all the appropriate devices and systems they need to work – whether at home, in the office, or a hybrid of both, without compromise on security. As an ISO27001 accredited company, security is embedded into every one of our processes, services and hardware – so that your business may operate with confidence, whether from the boardroom, or the garden shed.

[www.dacollgroup.co.uk](http://www.dacollgroup.co.uk)



# The A to Z of investing: From Alternatives to ZDPs

Amanda Forsyth provides the next instalment in the series demystifying some stock market jargon

**P** ... is for Profits warning

While listed companies are not permitted to provide too detailed forecasts of future trading, and especially not to a limited audience, they are also obliged to let the market know if their expectations are materially different to those in the market at the time. Occasionally, that can mean that trading is far better than anyone thought, and the shares leap as profit forecasts are raised. More often, though, the surprise is a bad one; and the challenge the company's management team faces is deciding how much pain to explain in one announcement. The scale of that challenge is reflected in the adage that "Profits Warnings Come In Threes".

**Q** ... is for Quote

The price indicated at which a share may be bought or sold. Or can it? Where shares are illiquid, the price advertised may not be the price achieved; if the normal market size of a trade is a block of 25,000 shares, one may not be able to sell 2.5 million at the same price. On the other hand, if the market maker – the intermediary in the process of buying and selling – has a ready buyer on the other side of the trade, he may make a better offer.

**R** ... is for Revolver

Ten years on from the credit crunch many companies are still shy of taking on debt, but having the facility is still attractive when equity markets are volatile. Meet the Revolving Credit Facility: for the payment of an upfront fee, the borrower can then draw down and repay funds flexibly, up to a maximum lending limit. As so often in financial market parlance, the lengthy title is abbreviated, in this case simply to "revolver".

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# What Can Businesses Take Away From the Recent Lockdown?

With so many businesses transitioning certain parts of the workforce to (and from) remote working over the last several months, there has been a lot of discussion about the best way to manage this.

There has been all the talk of the logistical elements—which computer is appropriate to use, what should be in the background of video calls, and how will everyone's internet connection hold up.

And then there are security considerations—how secure is your video calling platform, how do you use VPN, and where are your team storing their files.

But once we got over all the practical stuff, my team and I have spent more time reflecting on our remote working experiences. What we've enjoyed about working from home. What we haven't enjoyed. And how we can bring the good bits back with us when we return back to the office.

## Benefits to Remote Working

Almost everyone here at OpenCRM found themselves enjoying some aspects of home working...even if it was just getting up a bit later with a shorter commute!

A lot of our developers and non-phone answering people said they found it much easier to "get their heads down" on a particular task. Working from home gave them a reduction in interruptions so they could keep focused on particularly tricky tasks.

Some others cited a more relaxed approach as their favourite thing about working from home. Now we don't have a very formal uniform in the office, but apparently even jeans and t-shirts is too formal for some! So the relaxed dress code was a winner.

I have to say that I quite enjoyed being able to take our dogs for a lunchtime walk. It was a really nice way to unwind from the stress of the morning and get re-focused for the afternoon.

Saying that, when it came to pets and kids, the team was a bit mixed in their response. We all have enjoyed getting to spend more time with our immediate families during this lockdown, but the interruptions could make things tricky from time to time.

## Downsides to Remote Working

In reality, those distractions at home were the thing our team most often mentioned as making remote working difficult. In some cases, it was kids or pets, in others it was the lure of the laundry basket or washing up bowl. When in the office, those tasks can be happily put to the back of your head, but when they're in the next room... well, it's a lot harder.



I will say that everyone found a way to work through these distractions, but the transition was not easy.

Add to that the isolation and worry for family and friends? And I would say you've hit the nail on the head with the biggest downside to remote working during a global pandemic lockdown: the mental health challenges.

This was something we as a company (as with every other business making the same transition) had to address very quickly.

Our shift to video calls instead of normal voice calling or instant messaging for scheduled meetings and impromptu chats went a long way to helping everyone feel connected. We also added a "tea and toast" session every morning before the start of the work day, just to take the place of all those little chats you have with your office mates when you first get into the building.

I won't say that fixed everyone's worries, but it did help to make us all feel like we were part of the same team. That we were all "in this together".

## Transitioning back to the office

On balance, there were positives and negatives to having our team all working from home. We did what we could to address the downsides, putting a variety of mechanisms in place to keep people feeling connected and on task.

But what about all those positives? How do you make sure to bring the benefits of remote working back as we all transition into a shared office once again?

The first question is whether remote working

could be made a part of your business going forward. For those job roles that CAN work from home and found a benefit from it, should it be something they do a couple of times a week? Or even just a few days a month?

If you have people who are more productive when they aren't in the office, then you certainly don't want to lose that!

What about all those people who most enjoyed wearing loungewear while working? Well, you probably aren't going to change your dress code to allow bunny slippers, but are there other things you can do to make your staff more comfortable?

You could institute casual Fridays, for example. Or relax the dress code for those people who are never customer facing?

The important thing to consider when returning to the office after lockdown is ask yourself (and your team) what elements of home working they'd like to bring back with them to the office? I am sure that an open and frank conversation about the pros and cons will tell you everything you need to know about what your team most values.



**Graham Anderson, is the CEO and founder of OpenCRM, one of the UK's leading customer relationship management systems.**



## APARTHOTEL ADAGIO EDINBURGH ROYAL MILE \*\*\*\*

*A temporary second home – apartment living for the business traveller*






Apartment living is more on trend than ever before for the modern business and leisure traveller. Adagio is the European market leader in aparthotels – serviced apartment living is our business, our passion and our expertise.

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The Aparthotel Adagio Edinburgh Royal Mile features 146 light, beautiful modern apartments and a public space that is bold, creative and as welcoming as the

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**Email:** h9289@adagio-city.com

**Name:** Paul Taylor

**Company Name:** IBM Ltd

**Role:** Managing Director, Royal Bank of Scotland Integrated Account, IBM Ltd



Paul Taylor

**1. Tell us about IBM and its role in the City?**

IBM is a globally integrated enterprise operating in over 175 countries, bringing innovative solutions to a diverse client base to help solve some of their toughest business challenges and build smarter businesses. IBM manages much of our Scottish business from our Edinburgh offices and we have been part of this City for decades.

**2. What does your role at IBM involve?**

I'm responsible for all aspects of the relationship between RBS and IBM.

**3. How did IBM initially respond to the Covid-19 challenge?**

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented, global challenge - suddenly, we're living in a very different world. As the general public plays their part by social distancing, healthcare workers take care of the sick, key workers keep essential services running and our government mobilises resources to respond to this crisis, the role of technology is emerging as pivotal to the response to - and how we work to emerge stronger from - this pandemic.

IBM has assembled our resources and brought together the right communities of experts - clients, scientists, developers, partners, academic institutions, the government and IBMers. We have focused effort in critical areas such as helping new and existing clients shore up their supply chains, accelerate their agility with cloud, safeguard against cybersecurity risks and ensure their IT systems are resilient in order to maintain business continuity.

**4. How is IBM helping prepare for the immediate future?**

As the evolving impacts of COVID-19 ripple through our communities, we are all facing unforeseen challenges. All around the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken away lives and jobs, damaged industries and enterprises, and turned the unimaginable into the usual. A return to normal, whenever it comes, will be a different normal. What we do right now will define the future, and yet making decisions and acting with assurance has never been more challenging.

But even though each day brings more uncertainties, there are definitive actions that can improve our resilience and strength. IBM recently held a two-day digital conference, Think 2020, involving approximately 100,000 people from our clients and business partners around the world to gain new skills needed to adapt and evolve. Together, we explored new ways of working, considering how to protect our people, stabilise our organisations and most importantly, stay better connected.

**5. Are there any exciting projects on the horizon at IBM that you would like to share with our readers?**

We made a number of announcements at Think 2020 concerning Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Hybrid Cloud, the dominant forces driving digital transformation.

IBM has a broad range of AI-powered capabilities and services that are designed to help CIOs automate their IT infrastructures to be more resilient to future disruptions and to help reduce costs. Hybrid Cloud will also help businesses make the most of the opportunities presented by 5G and edge computing, and autonomously manage workloads across a massive volume of edge devices.

The business impact of these technologies will be felt across all industry sectors and could fundamentally reshape both traditional and new businesses.

**6. Other than your current position, what would be your dream job?**

Growing up in the blue half of Liverpool, it would have to be the manager of a successful Everton Football Club, which would take some dreaming!

**7. Outside of business, what is most important in your life?**

There is nothing more important to me than family, although the current climate has also reinforced how important it is that we actively support all aspects of society.

**Name:** Jonny Kinross

**Company Name:** Grassmarket Community Project

**Role:** CEO

**Q In five words or less, what does your organisation do?**

**A** Transforms lives through community enterprise

**Q How long have you been in your current role?**

**A** 5 years

**Q What does a week in your job look like?**

**A** Online meetings, fundraising, adapting, innovating and supporting my team

**Q Your proudest moment with your organisation, or biggest 'win'?**

**A** Every time a beneficiary/trainee becomes more independent or demonstrates increased confidence, oh and of course winning Scottish Social Enterprise of the Year 2017

**Q Your favourite top tip or quote in business?**

**A** It often takes longer to see the benefits of a good decision whereas we all too quickly see the consequences of a bad one.

**Q How long have you been a member of the Chamber for and why did you join?**

**A** 8 years. Joined because the Chamber team are welcoming and responsive. I was ambitious for my business, still am, keen to make connections and love the way the Chamber brings people together across sectors

**Q Where do you read your copy of Business Comment?**

**A** In my office normally, but sometimes in the foyer of the Grassmarket Café, where it ends up.



Jonny Kinross

# GET WITH IT

By Bill Magee

Scottish Business Technology Writer of the Year

If ever there was an opportune time to invest in digital solutions to emerge stronger from the prolonged Coronavirus pandemic it's now. In fact it's the businesses that are doing just that who are having an easier time from the Covid-19 long haul.

Technology can play a critical role in business success and inextricably-linked economic resilience in these uncertain times - supporting remote working, collaboration and cloud infrastructure and services and exceeding their customer needs.

We're talking about tackling a crisis response where digital means different priorities to organisations but common to all ensuring service delivery and reconfiguring supply chains along with reducing the impact from the current crisis to hard-earned revenues.

The independent review to focus on how the

tech sector can help Scotland's economic recovery is, of course, timely. Finance Secretary Kate Forbes urges all of us to "think radically about embracing digital technologies and low-carbon reforms.

Edinburgh is slap bang in the middle of what she describes as "one of the most innovative, high-growth sectors we have" and absolutely critical to Scotland after Covid-19 - whenever that might be - in terms of restarting the economy.

Through necessity we're witnessing sectors embrace new technologies and innovation at a rate and scale that would ordinarily have taken years. Ironically the health scare provides us with a unique opportunity.

Summed up by Scott McGlinchey, chief executive of Exception, Scotland's leading indigenous high-tech company: "Let's show



the world what's terrific about technology in Scotland, and while we're at it, let's get our next generation of workers enthused about the possibilities the sector offers!

# Thinking long-term to reshape our economy

First, the bad news. It was difficult to contain my sense of horror when a very well-respected, well-known former senior government official opined to me recently that we are only 10% of the way through the Covid-19 crisis.



**Iain Gibson**  
Associate Partner, Charlotte Street Partners

Applying a mathematical calculation to that statement would indicate that we will be somewhere into 2022 before we can safely say that the pandemic has passed. In truth, we are probably only approaching, as Boris Johnson said recently, the end of the beginning. So we are in for a long haul and businesses need to prepare accordingly.

We await a glut of unprecedentedly bad economic figures, with a reduction in GDP for Q2 2020 the likes of which we have never seen before. This will not be pleasant reading, and we may well see their likes again if further

spikes in the virus, before any vaccine is available, force us into further widespread lockdowns. This may be when businesses really suffer, as it is one thing having to weather a one-off significant shutdown of our economy, but the prospect of one, two, or three further occasions will test contingency planning to the limit.

Our view is that, right now, it is impossible to make projections, or provide accurate forecasts as to the effects of the substantial government intervention we have seen so far. The pandemic planning exercise carried out by the UK Government in 2016 – Project Cygnus – was based on dealing with consequences whilst keeping businesses and schools open, not on isolating people. There has never been a voluntary shutdown of global economies before, in order to preserve life. This was the right decision, albeit one that was made possible by so many jobs being able to function from home, an option not really available to governments in the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic or the Hong Kong Flu outbreak exactly 50 years later.

So, we can ask questions about whether the ending of the Job Retention Scheme later this year will immediately result in mass redundancies, or whether a subsequent return of the virus will be more or less economically

impactful than this first wave. The truth is that we just don't know. As Professor Michael Sharpe at the Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, has pointed out, the situation is too fast-moving for conventional economic metrics such as GDP to be of any use. Unfortunately, we can be relatively sure is that early optimism for a "V" shaped economic recovery, that is a quick rebound, looks misplaced. The sheer probable length of this pandemic may suggest more of a Nike swoosh, offset by peaks and troughs.

Despite the uncertainty, we can still draw some more general high-level conclusions about the world we are now entering. Firstly, because the easing of lockdown restrictions in most countries will be gradual, so will a resumption of economic activity. Second, the market of the world is already smaller and that means the market for goods and services will follow suit. Thirdly, this loss of capacity means that businesses which were already failing will be unable to bounce back.

Finally, we can be certain that for businesses large or small, planning for

future shocks is no longer an option, it is now a necessity. Significant time and effort will now have to be invested in contingency planning, rehearsal and resilience, and we are already working with multiple clients on how they can best manage this. The optimal response for businesses will be to build more thorough risk registers, with a proper emphasis on allocating resource, responsibilities, personnel and guidance in event of a crisis. The reputation of a business is also more vulnerable – we saw a number of instances in the early days of lockdown where companies behaving badly and treating staff poorly were called out publicly. This dynamic will only intensify once the full economic picture becomes clear.

However, there is also some good news, and that relates to the opportunity we now have to remake whole economies in the mould of what works best for us in the 21st century. Having been caught flat-footed, governments are now trying to get on the front foot and, in Scotland, the establishment of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery is an important development. Its chair Benny Higgins has a remarkable mind and a deep commitment to the country.

His role is to curate the best ideas and accelerate them into action. Its recommendations are due shortly after this magazine goes to print, but we can expect some fresh thinking and a focus on four key pillars: financial and physical capital, natural capital, human capital and social capital. In

the words of one of the group's leaders, their objective is to "make recommendations that can give Scotland a robust and resilient future that focuses on wellbeing". That wellbeing requires businesses, jobs and the economy to grow back substantially.

The next few years will be tough and we are already working with clients to help them navigate some incredibly challenging situations. Over the past three months, most of us have learned more about ourselves, and the world we live in, than we had at any point before now. If we all pull together, support each other and accept that things will never quite return to what they were, we can eventually emerge from this experience as a better, kinder, stronger society, with an economy to match.

"The reputation of a business is also more vulnerable – we saw a number of instances in the early days of lockdown where companies behaving badly and treating staff poorly were called out publicly. This dynamic will only intensify once the full economic picture becomes clear."



# Tourism Books its Return Journey

It's hard to find a part of our economy that hasn't felt the force of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic – but perhaps no sector has felt it harder, or faces a more challenging recovery, than our tourism and hospitality industry.

Hotels are empty of guests, the myriad restaurants, bars and cafes which create such vibrancy for our city are closed. Theatres lie dark. Our festivals – famed all over the world – have had to be cancelled for the first time. Our international airport, normally packed with business and leisure travellers, lies almost deserted.

Edinburgh, one of Europe's tourism success stories, has seen a decade of growth hit the buffers in a shuddering way. And there are enormous implications for the city and its citizens.

In Scotland's Capital, the figures speak for themselves. In Edinburgh, tourism:

- Accounts for sales of £1.3 billion of services to staying visitors
- Supports more than 30,000 jobs directly
- Pays salaries of £400 million per year.

The scale of the sector is obvious – and consequently so is the scale of the threat to the vitality and well-being of the Capital's economy. It is estimated that the virus could cost up to 18,000 jobs in this sector alone.

However, while acknowledging the scale of the challenge ahead those who must plan the recovery are optimistic. However, the plans are that the recovery will not lead to "business as usual" but rather to a smarter, more sustainable, more inclusive and dynamic growth.

Donald Emslie is the Chairman of Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, a body of industry stakeholders. He took on the role in December. ETAG is working in close collaboration with

others, including the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and others, to help the sector recover.

He said: "The crisis has brought into sharp relief the enormous contribution the sector makes to the economic health and cultural wellbeing of the city. Much of the vitality of the city exists through the tourism and hospitality industry – it's what drives our hotels, our restaurants, bars, cafes, theatres. It drives enormous investment in the fabric of the city, helping support our construction industry, and apart from those employed directly employs tens of thousands more through the huge logistics and supply chain that depends on it.

"One need only look at St Andrew Square, at what has happened around that square, to see the enormous benefits that tourism helps to bring and support in our city.

"As an industry we have come together to work with other major stakeholders in the city, notably the City Council and Edinburgh Chamber, to work together to plan how we bring this sector back to life and health post this pandemic, and to do it in a way that brings the local population along with us, creating a dynamic, sustainable, enjoyable future."

The pillars of the tourism strategy for 2030 identified through the collaboration of key stakeholders remain in place and will help to guide the recovery through the work of the Strategy Implementation Group that has been established.

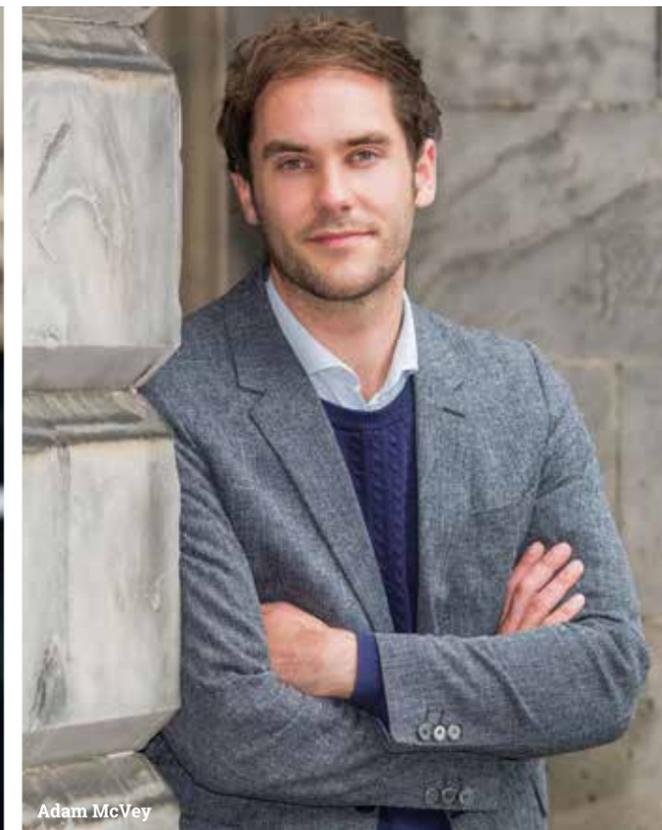
Councillor Adam McVey is Leader of City of Edinburgh Council, and is a committed supporter of the strategy.



Donald Emslie



Rob Lang



Adam McVey

He said: "There are five main pillars to the strategy we agreed before the pandemic, which essentially focused more on the need to more closely manage the growth of our tourism sector to ensure that it offered a sustainable, inclusive and positive future to visitors, to local people and – just as important – to the thousands who work in the sector.

"The decade since the financial crisis of 2008 saw a focus on growth and was successful in that aim. As we work together on our City's recovery we want to have a different focus based around Our People, Our Place, Our Environment, Our Partnerships and Our Reputation.

"There will be a fundamental shift, ensuring that our focus on is our people, our environment and our place- putting residents' experience at the heart of what we do and therefore protecting everything that's amazing about our City which will make it a City worth visiting. Tourists will return – all of the evidence before the pandemic shows a global rise in international tourism and that it is driven by a desire to visit iconic destinations, such as Edinburgh. People will continue to want to come here.

"We can all see the enormous impact this sector has on our city. Right now our city centre is not as anyone would want to see it, empty, all of the vitality from our fantastic restaurants,

bars, shops and many attractions is missing. We'll need to work together as a City to support the sector in the short to medium term and the real challenges it faces. But as we start again, we want to make sure that we anticipate the growth that we're likely to see so that the sector might look a little different. We are lucky to have a living city centre, people want to live there, so we need to balance the approach.

"For example, in terms of Our People we're working with Edinburgh College and Edinburgh International Conference Centre to create a hotel school. We want to encourage people to see this sector as one where they can have a fulfilling and rewarding career, with a genuine career pathway. In previous years, the sector has had to wrestle with the issues of a very transient workforce. We want to capture the opportunities the industry has to offer our citizens.

"Our slogan for some years has been 'This Is

"Our slogan for some years has been 'This Is Edinburgh' and it may sound a little arrogant to some, but we have incredible architecture, two World Heritage Sites, Festivals which are the envy of the World, and a hospitality offering among the very best."

Edinburgh' and it may sound a little arrogant to some, but we have incredible architecture, two World Heritage Sites, Festivals which are the envy of the World, and a hospitality offering among the very best. People will want to come here, the sector will come back better than ever and can very much be part of how we drive forward to being a more inclusive, sustainable City."

Rob Lang, a Director of ETAG, has been spearheading some of the planning around the recovery, and believes the balanced approach will be successful – particularly as it will be driven by the partnership working at which Edinburgh excels.

He said: "The sector is hugely important, and the impact of the pandemic could put as many as 18,000 jobs at risk. We need to work together to make sure we recover as quickly as we can, for the wellbeing of the city and its people.

"The path to recovery remains through the strategy that stakeholders agreed just a few months ago. We are planning to start that recovery here, by engaging with the local population and encouraging them to enjoy all of the hospitality, amenity and attraction that this amazing city of ours has to offer.

"We then see that extending out through Scotland, then we expect to see UK short-break visitors return, and finally we will see international tourists – who are the highest spending and stay longest – back in our hotels and self-catering accommodation.

"That rippling out is the path we are most likely to see.

"Team Edinburgh has a proven track record of coming together to achieve tremendous things, and so we can be confident that all of the essential stakeholders will pull together on this journey. Who knows what innovation and new ideas might come from this adversity. The Festival was born in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War to promote international peace and good will through culture and look at the enormous success it has become and all that our festivals generate.

"What might come from this? We just don't know – but I wouldn't be surprised if we see something really special grow out of this work."

# Keeping Scotland connected to international trading routes

The world a mere few months ago looks vastly different to the 'normal' the country is now living.

But the situation we are all facing is anything but normal. The impacts of COVID-19 are wide ranging and of serious consequence. As we begin to look ahead and develop plans to recover, one of the most vital elements is to turn our attention to getting the UK's economy back up and running.

The UK's aviation industry is the third largest in the world, reflecting 100 years of innovation and leadership. It has propelled the country into an economic position of strength as this island nation has taken advantage of access to international trading routes. The UK is one of only three countries in the world with leading positions in all parts of the value chain; aircraft and engine manufacturing, oil, airlines and airports.

Aviation is not just another economic sector. It is the cornerstone of the economy and a key strategic one for the whole of the UK. Every year, forty per cent of the UK's non-EU exports by value are flown in the cargo hold of passenger planes from Heathrow. This cargo capability is invaluable in meeting demand for Scottish products like salmon and whisky across the globe, flown from Scottish airports to Heathrow and on to long-haul markets such as the US, Vietnam and Singapore.



As Heathrow has remained open throughout this unprecedented situation, we have been able to use our capabilities to prioritise air freighters with medical supplies and scaled up our cargo operations to help all corners of the UK get equipped in the fight against this pandemic. Our spare capacity has also allowed us to welcome Scotland's own Loganair to our terminals, as the airline strives to keep lifeline air services between London and the Isle of Man open even after the closure of their usual base at London City airport.

While dedicated freighters have been indispensable in the fight against the pandemic, the nation's economy relies on the passenger planes that we normally welcome, filled with inbound tourists and international students enjoying Scotland's beautiful scenery, learning at its world-leading universities and taking advantage of its innovative business environment. And this is on top of cargo coming in that keep Scottish industries going and supply chains open. Unless UK aviation can get up and running in the coming months, there will be massive job losses in sectors that extend beyond the aviation sector and in all four nations. The Scottish economy, as in the rest of the UK, will be held back; leisure and tourism will grind to a halt, factories will remain idle and all kinds of Scottish exports won't get to market. Action is needed now to deliver a new way of travel in the future that will get the economy going, in a safe and sustainable way.

This is why Heathrow is calling on the UK Government to take a lead and develop a Common International Standard that will be fundamental in restoring trust back in safe travel. And critically, it will be consistent in all airports that passengers travel through on our island.

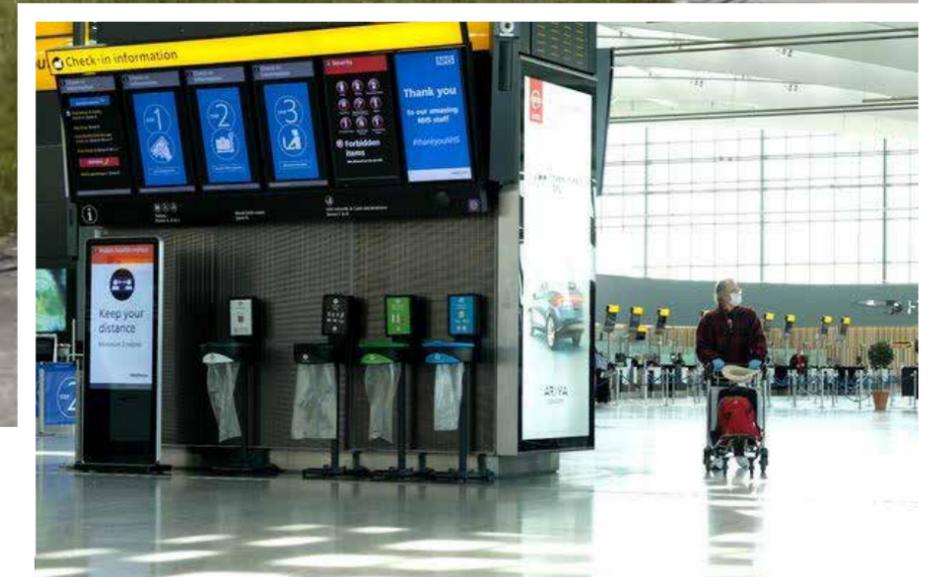
Until a vaccination is developed, it's likely multiple measures will need to be in place to tackle the threat. That is why Heathrow has started to trial



what these future measures could look like. We are testing a host of technologies and reviewing all of the airport's processes to develop a suite of measures that work together to reduce the risk of transmission and infection. We're at the very start of this process but we know that any measures ultimately implemented will need to be scientifically necessary, passenger friendly, medically beneficial and suitable for air travel. We are also clear that this should not come at a cost that is unaffordable for smaller airports who are the lifeblood of economies such as Inverness. All our findings from the trials will be shared with the UK Government and airports, all working towards a shared goal – to get the benefits of aviation flying again.

Whilst we work through this crisis, it would be remiss to forget about the challenges that lie beyond it. In hindsight, it is now possible to see that some of the early warnings of a pandemic were missed by governments across the world, at huge personal and economic cost. We must not make the same mistake again and continue to dismiss the early warnings of climate change, jeopardising the progress which was made pre-COVID-19.

Before this pandemic, Heathrow had progressed our plans for carbon neutral growth including funding a regenerative carbon offsetting project near Dundee and the UK aviation sector had taken a global lead in committing to meet the Paris Accord target of net zero emissions by 2050.



The plan should be to accelerate this, not take our foot off the pedal. For example, as part of any post-crisis economic regeneration plan, the Scottish Government could stimulate development of Sustainable Aviation Fuel production, a sector in which Scotland could be a global leader, using its natural resources and low cost energy to create a new export sector in synthetic and biofuels.

The unprecedented circumstances we are facing require an unprecedented response. Both the

Scottish and UK governments must prevent a prolonged economic paralysis where holidays, celebrations, reunions and travel are put on hold indefinitely. When this virus is beaten, the country must emerge fighting and raring to tackle the recovery ahead together. Heathrow is more than just an airport – it is this country's economic cornerstone supporting supply chains, tourism, retail and education – and we stand ready to help build a prosperous and resilient future with our Scottish partners.

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## The world has changed, have you?

I was going round the house and the shed during the Covid-19 lockdown questioning why I have so much 'stuff'. Drawers, shelves, storage boxes are all full to bursting point and I have even found small stacks on the floor.

Anyone who knows me well will know that I am no fashion icon but I still seem to have amassed more shirts, fleeces and work suits than I need. Similarly, I found car magazines dated 2002, old paint in the shed for rooms that are no longer that colour and paperwork for appliances that we no longer have. Somehow throwing away these items always seems like discarding some part of our past; we worry that we might need it despite the fact that we haven't used it in 5 years and we link it with throwing away a bit of ourselves.

I believe all this clutter is similar to all the 'stuff' we store in our heads, from past experiences, to attitudes and beliefs. They were probably relevant or applicable before the Covid-19 pandemic but are they relevant today? Think about this for one minute, how similar is applying your old ways of working before the Covid-19 pandemic to guide your working day to wearing that old favourite fleece that you bought 10 years ago. You have a new fleece in the cupboard, you know it will look better, be more comfortable but you continue to wear the

old one. Likewise, you know your workforce's needs and wants have changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic but are you still hoping to go back to the same tried and tested methods to manage them because like the old fleece it feels comfortable.

This brings us to the crux of the clutter problem. To make room for any new items you need to clear out those drawers, shelves and storage baskets. Similarly, to make room for learning new ways of working, having new ideas and staying relevant you need to let go of these old beliefs, attitudes and ways of working that are no longer relevant. It is easy just look in the mirror and like your old clothes, the ones that are no longer fashionable, fit for purpose or relevant to your working life.

So during this lockdown and as we adjust to our new 'norms' don't just go round the house clearing out your old clutter, spend some time decluttering your mind and making space for all the new things you can learn, experience and embrace our new 'norms'.



Mark Douglas, Blue Ptarmigan

### TRAINING COURSES

#### JUNE

**Tuesday 23rd**  
Documentary Letters of Credit

**Wednesday 24th**  
Presentation Skills

#### JULY

**Wednesday 01st**  
Excellence in Customer Care

**Wednesday 01st**  
Project Management Fundamentals

**Tuesday 07th**  
Boost your Sales Success

**Thursday 23rd**  
Mastering Account Management

**Tuesday 28th**  
21st Century Management

**Wednesday 29th**  
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) - An Introduction

#### AUGUST

**Wednesday 26th**  
Digital Marketing Strategy

**Wednesday 26th**  
Blogging for Business

**Thursday 27th**  
Dealing with difficult situations

## Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home reopens for rehoming

With lockdown measures now easing across Scotland, and with the R-number continuing to reduce, local animal welfare charity Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home have begun rehoming again, from the 15th of June. In the first 24 hours of opening, the home received more than 440 rehoming applications.

The Home had to close its doors to rehoming on 23 March when the nation went into lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. Although the charity wasn't able to find new homes for the animals in their care, their front-line staff were still working hard to care for the many dogs and cats at the centre. In addition, the Home has continued to take in stray, lost and abandoned dogs and cats throughout the pandemic.

With social distancing measures still fully in place, Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home have had to completely overhaul their rehoming process. Now, all initial rehoming enquiries will be taken via an online form, followed by a telephone interview for people who may be a match for an animal. Only then if the interview is successful will the person be invited down to meet the dog or cat of their choice and discuss their rehoming further in a socially distant and safe manner. Walk in visits will not be allowed whilst social distancing measures remain in place.

Nonnie Kent, Rehoming Operations Manager said "We are so excited to be able to start rehoming again on Monday. There are so many amazing dogs and cats ready and waiting for their forever Homes and we know that there are so many people who are waiting to rehome."

"Whilst many people are spending a lot more time at home at the moment, we would strongly encourage anyone who is thinking about bringing a new pet into their life to carefully think through what their lifestyle will be post-pandemic and how a dog or cat will fit into that. We know just how much joy a pet can bring and we want to make sure we find that perfect match."

In advance of rehoming opening back up, the charity has released a new film featuring some of the people who have rehomed a pet from Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home before the pandemic hit, sharing their rehoming experiences. To see the film visit [edch.org.uk/rehome/our-stories/](http://edch.org.uk/rehome/our-stories/)



"Whilst many people are spending a lot more time at home at the moment, we would strongly encourage anyone who is thinking about bringing a new pet into their life to carefully think through what their lifestyle will be post-pandemic and how a dog or cat will fit into that."

## COVID-19: How home working is increasing cyber vulnerability

The overnight move to a virtual workplace has resulted in a cyber crime surge, with unprepared businesses at increased risk of being exploited, Intqual-pro has warned.

Following advice and restrictions to help slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, businesses worldwide have closed their doors and sent staff to work from home for an unknown duration. With many unprepared and unaware of the cyber security risks involved with remote working, online fraudsters have begun to capitalise on vulnerability.

Figures from the National Economic Crime Centre in early April reveal that more than 500 Coronavirus-related scams and over 2,000 phishing emails had been reported to investigators in the UK. Losses among those targeted totalled £1.6 million, with this figure expected to rise.

Consumers are being continuously warned by regulators of schemes including bank payment frauds and data phishing attempts, but businesses too must remain vigilant.

A representative at Intqual-pro said: "The cyber threat of a home/remote working environment shouldn't be unexpected by businesses, but the current pandemic has created an increased exploitative opportunity for cyber criminals. It is crucial that businesses encourage increased awareness and personal responsibility for cyber security amongst all employees."

One key threat comes from a lack of face-to-face communication, making it difficult to verify identities. This vulnerability allows fraudsters to target businesses through impersonation. In recent incidents, Coronavirus-related spear phishing through impersonation has included senior executives requesting fund transfers, suppliers changing bank details to divert payments and landlords agreeing to a rent deferral in return for a down payment.

Amid the pandemic and global cyber crime surge, Intqual-pro have launched the latest phase of the Cyber Stars Initiative, Cyber Stars 365, to help business gain true insight into employee cyber security awareness.

Intqual-pro's representative added: "We believe

the launch of Cyber Stars 365 has come at an important time. Many businesses will be looking to educate their staff on cyber security as a result of increased risk, but it is vital to gain insight into cyber awareness understanding for training to be effective. Cyber Stars 365 has been developed to provide a cost effective, efficient and sustainable solution to ongoing cyber awareness training and metrics."

The Cyber Stars 365 platform allows an organisation to provide a snapshot of understanding and risk at any given time, identifying those with legitimate training needs, without providing additional unnecessary training to those that already can demonstrate an effective level of competence.

To arrange a Cyber Stars 365 trial or to find out more information, contact [enquiries@intqual-pro.com](mailto:enquiries@intqual-pro.com) 01234 381158

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## Business resilience checklist through covid-19

The Coronavirus continues to impact every area of business and life and we are all now used to new ways of living and working.

**By Neil Amner**

**Business Resilience Lead, at Anderson Strathern**

Whilst the message from the Scottish Government remains 'stay at home', many business leaders will now be starting to plan for lockdown measures in Scotland to gradually change.

Whilst we can take clues from what's currently happening in England, our Scottish businesses will have their own circumstances. Ensuring your business is as resilient as it can be in preparation for change is a vital step to take.

It remains important, even in the rapidly unfolding situation, to think strategically and focus on the essentials to create as stable a platform as you can, going forward from there. A Business Resilience Checklist can help to prioritise the key areas in which to build further resilience:

### Your people

**Risk** - have you assessed specific risks to your staff from Covid-19, its impact and how they could return to work? Have you updated your policies and procedures?

**Job Retention Scheme** – have you kept abreast of the evolution of the scheme?

### Operations

**Response** - have you adjusted the way you conduct business in response to the pandemic?

**Identify** - replacement staff or reallocation of duties to cover key and emerging roles?

### Communication

**Staff** – are you providing regular staff briefings and updates as the situation develops?

**Customers** - are you communicating with your wider customer base on a regular basis?

### Technology and Data

**Software licences** - do you have sufficient licences for all the applications your staff will be using?

**Training** - have you provided suitable training to your staff?



### Cash flow

**Support** – Do you understand how to apply for business support measures? Have you done so?

**Debt recovery** - are you being proactive in recovering debts, or negotiating payment of outstanding balances in instalments?

### Contracts, customer and supplier

**Payments** - what are the payment, interest and default terms?

**Flexibility** - how much flexibility on delivery or performance is there?

**Force Majeure** - do you understand the concept of Force Majeure and how it may apply?

### Insurance

**Risk coverage** - have you checked the coverage under business insurance policies?

**Claims** - are you able to claim for losses suffered or expenses incurred due to the pandemic?

### Premises

**Adjustment** - have you modified your premises to allow for continued or re-opened operation?

**Rates relief** - are you eligible for rates relief? Have you applied?

### Regulatory matters

**Legal status** - do you understand the legal status and the enforceability, of guidance and instructions applicable to your business from the government and other bodies?

**Compliance** - Are / will you be able to operate your business in compliance with the applicable regulatory conditions?

### Emerging situation

The situation for Scottish businesses is evolving rapidly and we are all now beginning to start looking to the longer term, we're here to help our Scottish businesses with a business resilience team. We are offering pro-bono initial assessments for fellow members of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, contact Neil Amner on 0141 242 7984 or visit our Business Hub for a copy of our full Business Resilience Checklist [www.andersonstrathern.co.uk/business-hub](http://www.andersonstrathern.co.uk/business-hub)

## Business School Survey Of Entrepreneurs Aims To Inform Government Response

Initial results from a nationwide survey conducted by University of Edinburgh Business School show that 68 per cent of the UK's most dynamic entrepreneurs have cashflow concerns, up from 25 per cent before the Covid-19 crisis.

The survey analysed responses from 565 fast growing entrepreneurial businesses. These firms represent 6 per cent of all UK businesses but play an outsized role in economic growth, providing half of all new jobs and a high proportion of the country's export and productivity growth.

Findings also show that almost half of businesses surveyed have halted all strategic investment, 59 per cent are seeing a significant fall in business turnover and 51 per cent are experiencing supply chain issues. One third of companies surveyed felt the government's Coronavirus Job Retention scheme is unlikely to benefit them and 1-in-5 think all of the relief measures do not go far enough.

Follow-on surveys will be conducted in the coming months to gather information on business performance. Businesses taking part will provide information on the current state of their operations, including employee numbers and turnover figures, and what the government can do to help. This kind of information isn't readily available as many small firms and self-employed workers are not obliged by law to provide it.

The ongoing study is being led by Professor Francis Greene and Dr Alessandro Rosiello from University of Edinburgh Business School and aims to provide up-to-date information about the prospects of entrepreneurial firms in order to guide the government response to the Covid-19 crisis. It is supported by the UK's Productivity Insight Network and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Greene and Rosiello also asked entrepreneurs about their levels of stress before COVID-19 and their current levels of stress using a scale where 0 equals not stressed, and 10 is extremely stressed. The baseline reflects the fact that entrepreneurship is intrinsically stressful as entrepreneurs seek to juggle competing and difficult tasks, often with limited information and resources. Before the outbreak, the average score was 5.7. However, since COVID-19, the average rose to 7.8, an



**Professor Francis Greene**

increase of 37 per cent. This points to the wider challenges entrepreneurs face in running a business in a time of crisis.

Prof Greene, Chair in Entrepreneurship at the University of Edinburgh Business School, said:

"Covid-19 has caused significant losses for over half of our most growth-orientated companies and stalled a substantial proportion of the investment these firms would have otherwise made in growing their business.

"These firms are the key growth engine of the economy and of the nation's export trade. We will depend on their entrepreneurial dynamism to repair the UK economy after COVID-19. The government needs to start developing a long-term plan to support these firms after the lockdown ends when many will have little or no revenue."

Further information about the survey and how to take part in the follow-ups is available here: <https://www.business-school.ed.ac.uk/research/areas/entrepreneurship-innovation/coronavirus>. The survey takes no more than 10 minutes to complete.

"These firms are the key growth engine of the economy and of the nation's export trade."



## Powering Business in Edinburgh

I'm extremely proud of the essential work of our staff throughout the COVID-19 crisis – supporting homes and businesses across Edinburgh and beyond.

**By Ian Johnston**

**District General Manager at SP Energy Networks.**

Their efforts ensure the power continues to flow to help people stay connected with friends and family, while giving everyone the reassurance that Edinburgh continues to benefit from a resilient and reliable electricity network.

We have worked with other network operators, Government and Ofgem to adjust our operations so we continue to work safely and maintain network resilience throughout this crisis. This has included supporting new connections for hospitals, nursing homes, water treatment works and food supply chain businesses to support the containment of COVID-19.

Looking to the future, it's incredibly important that no community is left behind. As the city's businesses begin to rebuild our economy, SP Energy Networks is ready to support future construction and regeneration – the forefront of which will be acceleration of the green economy. We are committed to helping business connect and deliver a low carbon

future. Now is the time to start planning for a future that is more sustainable, inclusive and environmentally-friendly, will act as a stimulus for economic growth across a variety of sectors and help attract investment and jobs to Edinburgh.

Green recovery must be front and centre of our economic recovery. The challenges we all face at the moment are an opportunity to make faster, more resilient progress on decarbonisation which benefits us all.

We're well on our way with significant investment across the city. This includes the installation of a new substation and cabling for the new St James Centre, while developing the network to prepare for phase two of the tram extension from York Place to Newhaven. We've also been working to increase the network capacity to support Edinburgh University's 'Super Computer' by building a new substation at the university's Roslin campus.

We've extended the network to support the development of housing and schools on the west side of Edinburgh. Projects like these led to us recently surpassing £1 billion of capital

investment in our distribution network since 2015 to ensure resilience and security of supply as we prepare for a green economy.

We're committed to strengthening the resilience of our network to cope with future demands of clean transport and heating, alongside the roll-out of Edinburgh's electric vehicle charging infrastructure. For example, we're adding EV charging capacity at 14 sites across Edinburgh which will result in 66 new chargers and a new way of life for many people and businesses.

These are challenging times for all of us but the decisions we take now will help ensure a brighter, greener future. As a critical operational business, I'm so proud of the way we've adapted to these incredibly challenging times.

We know that now, more than ever, our staff, customers and suppliers are relying on us to keep them safe and warm by ensuring the power continues to flow. We are committed to doing that throughout this crisis and beyond, so we can all enjoy a better business future quicker.

## 'It is time to focus on connecting with the local community rather than the global elite'

While a coordinated global approach to tackling the virus is paramount, one clear trend coming out of this pandemic is 'localism' – a focus on local communities, local action and local support.

At Standard Life Aberdeen, we recently withdrew from the 2021 World Economic Forum at Davos and are instead dedicating these resources to high-impact causes closer to home. Our view is that with a significant global recession dawning and the virus creating real hardship in our local communities, we must redirect our time, effort and funds to those causes on our doorstep. For example in Edinburgh, SLA's Sustainability team have donated to Edinburgh Children's Hospital Trust for emergency medical supplies and supported Edinburgh Cyrenians to enable them to deliver 40,000 meals to the most disadvantaged around the city. We have also placed supporting elderly and vulnerable people who are living alone or isolating at the centre of how we are engaging locally.

The vast majority of SLA colleagues are now in our tenth week of working remotely and without the usual buzz of our offices at St Andrew Square, George Street and Dundas House. In being largely restricted to our homes, the social distancing policies to curb the spread of Covid-19 would have been expected to weaken social networks. However, as I have seen both internally and in the community, the opposite has happened. Video conferences, the inspiring and highly-publicised efforts of NHS fundraiser Captain Sir Tom Moore and small acts of neighbourly kindness have certainly encouraged this theme of localism. The summer months are usually a window for work experience where young people join SLA to learn about the financial services industry. While our offices are closed, we've undertaken online workshops for students which will hopefully showcase how SLA is dedicated to investing



**Keith Skeoch – Chief Executive, Standard Life Aberdeen**

for a better future. We recognise the importance of our role as a local employer and have committed to making hires in our early careers programmes to give certainty to those starting in the world of work.

The role of investors like SLA also extends to offering a helping hand to those small and medium businesses currently being squeezed in a socially distanced world. For our fund managers running real estate mandates

who have witnessed this squeeze first hand, they have, where appropriate, engaged with smaller occupiers on practical measures to support them through this difficult time. Across Edinburgh we have worked in partnership with some restaurants, kiosk occupiers and hairdressers, recognising their individual and collective value to the local economy. Offering breathing room where we can to such businesses will hopefully allow for the green shoots of recovery, however small, to show as economies reopen.

It is a blend of these actions that I hope the financial services industry will take on to heal the economy from the scarring of Covid-19. We regrettably do not know how long the tunnel back to normality is, but it is the small community actions, generosity and greater sense of understanding which gives me optimism for the future.

"Our view is that with a significant global recession dawning and the virus creating real hardship in our local communities, we must redirect our time, effort and funds to those causes on our doorstep."

## Collaboration – the key to Edinburgh’s recovery

There is no doubt that we are facing one of the biggest challenges of our lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought silence to busy cafes, empty streets to town centres and uncertainty to many business owners over the past months.

As heart-breaking as this is to see, we can assure Edinburgh business owners and customers alike that this will change.

Already we’ve provided extensive support to local businesses throughout the lockdown period. Nearly 7,000 businesses have benefitted from almost £90m in government funding and many more have been supported by Business Gateway and Licensing and Trading Standards to operate as safely and efficiently as possible under the lockdown measures. As well as providing 1-2-1 support to businesses other Business Gateway resources include webinars across a wide range of topics and a digital boost programme which encourages exploring digital and online options.

This has also been a challenging time for those who are self-employed, and we have been encouraging everyone who is eligible to apply for a one-off grant of £2,000.

We’ve asked residents to change how they shop, urging them to visit local retailers and businesses online throughout this time, and this will continue. Soon we’ll ask them to continue to support businesses in their communities as shops are able to reopen, but of course this will only happen once safe to do so.

Many businesses are accessing rates relief through Scottish Government and as a Council we’ve granted three-month extensions for license holders across taxis, private hire and civic purposes.

Along with this support, we have been working tirelessly to lay the groundwork for Edinburgh’s economic recovery and ensure that as we do so, we build a more sustainable city for the future.

We have come together with industries across the city to take a good look at the challenges we face, the opportunities that will come and how we can maximise them to build Edinburgh’s economy back in a better way as we move through and out of recovery.

Experts have met for various roundtables across construction, skills, hospitality and other industries to discuss the very real impact that COVID-19 has had on jobs and the economy, and to chart how we start to bring these industries back while making sure they are futureproofed.



One of the first roundtables saw members of Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, Chamber of Commerce, Visit Scotland and more join together virtually to discuss the future of the tourism industry. The existing commitment to Edinburgh’s 10-year Tourism Strategy was reaffirmed, aiming to manage tourism in such a way to balance the needs of those we want to attract to our city with those who already live, work and study here.

These conversations have continued across employability and skills, investment and development, arts, culture and festivals and retail – among others.

All of these discussions – alongside our ongoing conversations with Edinburgh’s Economic Advisory Panel, Climate and Poverty Commissions – will inform actions that make up our city’s recovery plan, the framework for which was proposed in May.

One thing that has become incredibly clear throughout this crisis is that nothing can happen in silo – we have got to work together. Our residents have helped by staying at home to help others stay safe, and our council colleagues are working around the clock to deliver essential services. We can only come through this if we do it together.

Edinburgh’s recovery will see the need for public and private sectors to work closer together than they have before. Working together on issues like public transport to get services running in our communities again –

but we have to make sure that’s done safely and that demand is managed appropriately. That could mean changes to working hours and therefore travel practices but it’s only through a truly collaborative approach to communication and solutions that this kind of essential change can happen.

A few years ago, we undertook the largest public consultation in Edinburgh’s history for a vision of how Edinburgh should be in 2050. We found that people wanted our city to fair, welcoming, pioneering and thriving. These are the four key values that we see forming the cornerstones of our recovery, underpinning a long-term vision of how the Capital should mould itself.

These principles are what we’re taking to heart at the Council, and soon, we’ll be asking local organisations to commit to this Vision too as they plan for and move into their own recoveries.

We know this is a journey, and we have a long way to go but these immediate changes have put us in a position that we can build a more sustainable economy from. We live in a great city, but we all know it can be better, and only by working together can we build a fairer, more sustainable Edinburgh; a city for the future.

**Cllr Adam McVey**  
Edinburgh Council Leader

**Cllr Cammy Day**  
Depute Leader

We thank our Partners for their continued support of the Chamber.

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Malcolm Roughead OBE



Julia Amour



Donald Emslie

## Virtual Events at the Edinburgh Chamber

Over the past two months, as with many organisations, the Edinburgh Chamber has moved all of its operations online, including our events programme.

In the first few weeks following lockdown in Scotland, our focus was very much on offering a series of business support webinars on a range of topics to address immediate issues.

We were pleased to hear from Heather Astbury from The Reputation People on Crisis Communications and how to use digital channels to maintain communications between your businesses and clients, customers and stakeholders during this uncertain time. Dr Rebecca Williams, Founder of Williams Stress Management, also joined us to talk through how we can manage stress and our mental health during Covid-19. We've also covered topics including managing remote teams, building personal resilience and the Job Retention Scheme – all of which have been very important to businesses during lockdown.

As we made our way through the second month of lockdown, having adapted to new ways of working, we realised many organisations were beginning to look to the

future and what re-start and recovery may look like. With this in mind, we launched a new series of panel events - Restart, Rebuild and Renew. At the first of these events we were joined by three panellists - Benny Higgins, Chair of the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, Cllr Adam McVey, Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council and Chair of the Edinburgh 2020 Strategy Implementation Group (SIG), Charles Hammond, Chief Executive of Forth Ports. Over 60 delegates joined the session, where our speakers shared their views on the shape and pace of economic recovery from their differing perspectives and outlined how they are responding to the current situation and preparing for recovery.

The next in this series of events focussed more specifically on the Tourism and Culture sectors. Malcolm Roughead OBE, Chief Executive of Visit Scotland, Donald Emslie, Chair of the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group and Julia Amour, Director at Festivals Edinburgh joined us to lead this session. At

this event, panellists shared views on what they are doing to support the sector during lockdown and beyond, and how they are helping preparing for recovery in their various areas. Key issues which delegates raised included the importance of collaboration and leadership for the sector, the need for a speedier and less bureaucratic approach to planning to support adaptation of premises and outdoor operating when it's permitted, the 2 meter distance rule and differentials with other countries, and the impact of the 14 day quarantine for international arrivals.

Over the coming weeks, we will be announcing the next instalments of our Restart, Rebuild and Renew series, so please keep an eye on our website. We will also be continuing our range of business support webinars and our weekly Virtual Tea Breaks – a new staple in the Chamber event calendar and a great way to stay connected with our fellow members.

We hope you can join us (virtually) at our upcoming events, see you soon!



## Edinburgh Chamber Policy Update

It's difficult to think of a busier time on the policy front here at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce.

Since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown, we have been working hard to keep our members as informed as possible, using our links with local, national and UK Government to feedback the experience of businesses on the ground to help ensure support mechanisms are in place and fit for purpose. To date, our work has focussed on the following areas:

**Keeping members informed.** In addition to very quickly moving our regular events programme online, including our CEO Briefings and Roundtables, we created a Covid-19 Hub on our website which contains key information and links to relevant sources of support – and is now the second most visited page on our website. We have also been issuing a weekly member update, highlighting key developments which have taken place each week, and signposting members to where they can access further support.

**Communicating member issues.** From the outset, we have worked very closely with

both British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) to feedback member issues to the most senior levels of Government in Holyrood and Westminster. Working in partnership with other membership organisations, the Chamber network has been instrumental in lobbying for support measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Bounce Back Loans and VAT and PAYE payment holidays, amongst others. Sharing the experiences of the business community we represent has been critical to that effort.

**Closer to home,** we have also been working closely with the City of Edinburgh Council and other key city stakeholders to ensure localised support measures are reaching businesses effectively. Our Chief Executive is a member of the city resilience group which is chaired by the Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive of the City Council, representing the views of businesses and the economy.

**Providing member support.** Where possible,

we have been providing guidance and support to individual members since the start of the crisis, both by signposting them to sources of help based on specific circumstances, and by acting on their behalf to ensure they can access the support measures available. As an example, we were able to help one member access a £25,000 business support grant, and helped another claim a substantial discount on business rates.

Although we are still working on lobbying Government to help plug gaps in support provision (such as owner/directors, and businesses who do not qualify for any of the grant schemes on offer), attention is now firmly turning to the economic restart and longer term economic recovery. Now that the Scottish Government has issued their 'Route Map Through and Out of the Crisis', and specific sectoral guidance for re-opening in some areas is beginning to be published, our focus is now also on ensuring members have access to the latest information, and that any gaps, issues or lack of clarity with the guidance being produced is addressed.

As ever, please contact the Policy team at [policy@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:policy@edinburghchamber.co.uk) if you'd like to get involved.



**Joanne Davidson**  
Head of Policy and Innovation, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce

“We have also been working closely with the City of Edinburgh Council and other key city stakeholders to ensure localised support measures are reaching businesses effectively.”



**Euan Mellor**

Euan Mellor's recent appointment as a Partner in Anderson Strathern's commercial real estate team has bolstered the Edinburgh arm of the firm's already significant team, which spans its Edinburgh and Glasgow offices. Mellor has a wealth of experience in commercial property transactions, with a focus on property investment transactions and property development and infrastructure.

He has longstanding relationships with both public sector and private clients on challenging projects having advised public sector clients for over 10 years on strategic oil and gas infrastructure. Further, Mellor has worked on the delivery of a large mixed use residential and commercial development site for almost 15 years. Establishing lasting associations and understanding his clients' businesses is something that he really values.

Mellor is a Committee Member of the Commercial Real Estate Legal Association, a not-for-profit professional organisation for non-contentious commercial real estate.



**Elin Williamson**

Elin Williamson joined the City of Edinburgh Council in February as Senior Manager in the Business Growth and Inclusion team, where part of her remit is to deliver the Edinburgh Economy Strategy, as set out in 2018. In doing so, she will work collaboratively with a wide range of public and private sector partners to promote and drive sustainable growth, innovation and inclusion in the city and wider region.

Since joining the Council, she has also been involved in developing and implementing the strategy setting out the recovery of the Edinburgh Economy following the impact of Covid-19, working with representatives from various sectors and industries to support the city, its businesses and people through the effects of this pandemic.

Elin comes most recently from Aberdeen Standard Investments, where she was head of the Global Business Management team in the Distribution function.

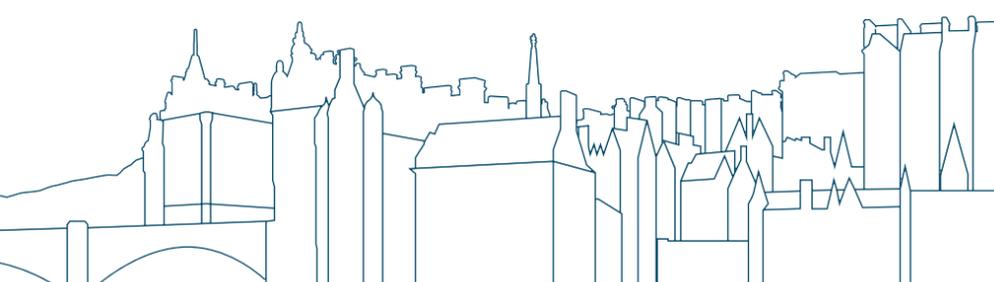


**Andy Morrell**

Andy Morrell joined SGS as the company's new Scottish Regional Development Manager. With over 15 years' experience in B2B safety training Andy is now providing UKAS ISO accredited certification and training to organisations with his network of auditors, both locally and throughout the UK.

Andy said, "I welcome the opportunity to meet fellow members of the Chamber to help them showcase their businesses to their clients and help them attract new customers by demonstrating that they have Quality, Health and Safety, Environment, Energy and IT Security at the forefront of everything they do. If you are looking to win new business, are completing tenders or looking to improve processes such as safety compliance and want to stand out from the crowd, certification is the way to go."

Andy looks forward to meeting more of you from the Chamber and sends his best wishes to all during these unparalleled times.



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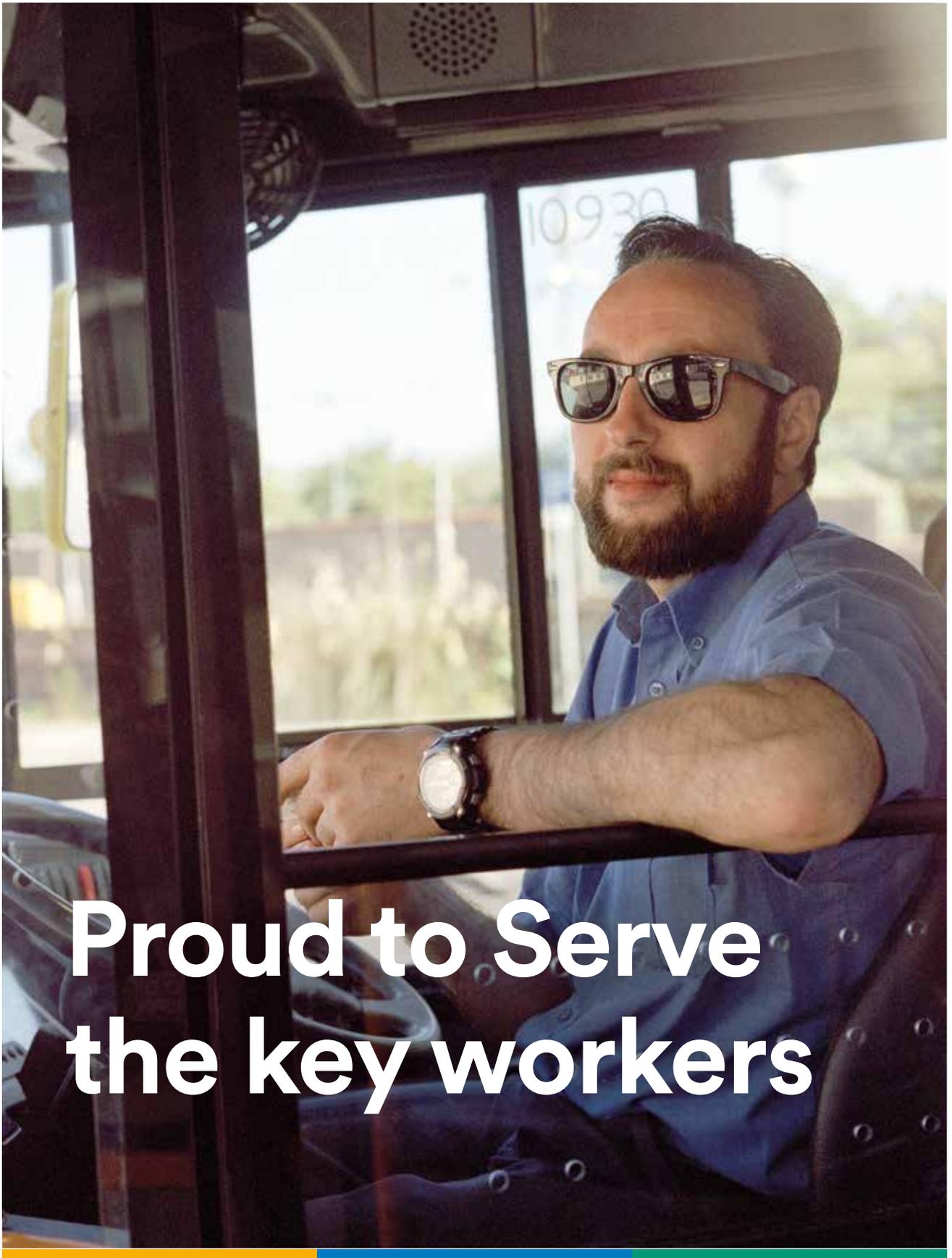
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