

# Johnston Press reorganisation

For the business which owns and runs many Scottish newspapers including The Scotsman alterations to the management were announced earlier this week which the firm described as 'significant structure changes'.

Johnston Press explained these changes would help drive the business strategy and accelerate digital growth.

Chief Executive Officer Ashley Highfield has realigned the management team and reshaped divisions of the business to ensure a more cohesive, unified approach to achieving the company goals.

The changes come at a pivotal time for Johnston Press, which successfully refinanced in June – reducing its debt by a third and ensuring a secure financial footing on which to start building for the future.

"The changes I'm implementing are to make us a more agile and effective leadership team and speed up our decision-making processes," said Ashley.

"In addition, we need to allow our digital team to be even more focused on developing great new products and capabilities for our customers. These are exciting times digitally and we need to be even more invested in selecting and delivering the best for our audiences."

The key changes are:

- There will be fewer MDs, each managing larger portfolios and teams, with some also responsible for the 'vertical businesses' such as Property and Motors
- The newspaper circulation team and the marketing team will combine to create a single marketing function, led by Chief Marketing Officer Lucy Sinclair, who will be responsible for circulation and total audience growth
- There will be the creation of a Digital Product Group, led by Jeff Moriarty, focusing entirely on product development and performance across all platforms. To facilitate that, most of the digital sales activities are transferring to another part of the business

- The Chief Commercial Officer role is being replaced by a Group MD position – better reflecting the increasing need for strong editorial and commercial partnerships in our local markets. That role will be filled, on an interim basis, by John Bills (current MD of North Midlands & South Yorkshire)
- A new role of Chief Creative Officer to put innovation and creativity at the forefront of our solutions for advertisers.

All changes are effective immediately.

The new roles and responsibilities for the MDs are as follows:

- Richard Parkinson, MD for the Midlands, has his portfolio extended to include interim responsibility for North Midlands South Yorkshire while John Bills is acting Group MD. Richard will also lead the development of the Property category and, in the interim, national advertising and digital sales development.
- Helen Oldham, MD for Yorkshire, sees her portfolio extended to include the Scottish flagship brands – The Scotsman, Scotland on Sunday and Edinburgh Evening News.
- Stephen Plews, MD for the North East, has his portfolio extended to include all the Scottish brands excluding The Scotsman, Scotland on Sunday and Edinburgh Evening News.
- Karl Dimmock, MD of the South, will now also lead the development of the Motors category.
- Warren Butcher, MD of the North West and Isle of Man, has his portfolio extended to include the Northern Ireland brands.

As a result of these changes to the MD structure, and after a period of transition, Northern Ireland MD Jean Long and Scotland MD Stuart Birkett will leave the business.

“I want to thank Jean and Stuart for their long service – 22 years in both cases – and enormous contribution to the business. I wish them every success with their future

endeavours," added Ashley.