

# STV announce 59 job losses along with new strategy

STV announced this morning a swathe of cuts to staff which will allow them to move forward as Scotland's home of news and entertainment.

It is reported this afternoon that staff have now staged a walk out at Pacific Quay in protest at today's announcement, and it was only last week that the channel's news programme and Live At Five programme won gongs at the Royal Television Society Awards.

25 jobs will go and £1 million will be saved by closure of STV2.



The company will launch a change programme in news which will need a new Head of News and 34 jobs will disappear as a result of that.

STV2 which has offices at Fountainbridge in Edinburgh, Glasgow and a base in Aberdeen and Dundee will close down at the end of next month as management say it is making a loss. Instead the company will plough any available funds into their main STV channel and the STV Player. £15 million is promised for

new content and creative partnerships in the next three years.

Bobby Hain will be appointed Managing Director of Broadcast and two other Managing Directors for the Digital and Production divisions will be recruited shortly to a 'leaner management team'.

The announcement says there will be 'high quality cost-effective news and entertainment', digital growth through the new vehicle STV for Everyone and with the help of STV Productions which will be a 'world-class independent production company'.

The STV Edinburgh channel was an effort to bring more local news to the capital, but perhaps today's news is not so unexpected. It was a couple of years ago that the channel stopped broadcasting a bespoke Edinburgh edition from Fountainbridge and moved all filming to Glasgow, apparently in an effort to make savings.

Financial results from the three individual divisions are expected to report a profit when they announce interim results in September 2018.

The newly appointed CEO Simon Pitts was appointed in January this year when he took over from Rob Woodward. Along with today's announcement the Chief Technical Officer Alistair Brown announced his departure and Paul Hughes who was Head of Programmes at STV has announced on LinkedIn that he had already decided to leave the company.

**John Toner, national organiser NUJ Scotland, said: "Today's announcement to cut 59 jobs across STV news and STV2 is a devastating blow to the staff who work**

tirelessly to provide some of the best news and current affairs programmes in Scotland.

“The loss of 34 jobs in news and the closure of STV2 with the ending of the flagship ‘STV News Tonight’ Scottish and international news programme will lead to a massive reduction in the breadth and depth of news coverage viewers in Scotland currently enjoy. It is also clear that a multi-platform newsroom will introduce an entirely new way of working, which will have consequences for the way that news is gathered and delivered. Staff have worked extremely hard on the STV2 channel, and the quality of the output is not in doubt. The decision to bring this channel to an end is no reflection on the abilities or professionalism of the staff.

“We also find it bizarre that the Edinburgh edition of STV News at Six will cease and will be replaced with a 10-minute opt. The NUJ will work with STV management to try to reduce the number of

**redundancies required, and we are resolved that compulsory redundancies will be strongly opposed.”**



Simon Pitts, STV Chief Executive, said: “This is a positive vision for STV that will re-establish the company as a creative force in Scotland and beyond. We will invest in creative talent, new original programming and digital to ensure STV becomes Scotland’s home of news and entertainment and delivers long-term value for advertisers, shareholders and viewers alike.

“Our de-risked broadcast business is resilient and provides the engine room for STV’s growth. We will use our unique marketing platform to showcase new formats from STV Productions, drive viewing to STV Player and get even closer to advertisers through the launch of our new Growth Fund for Scottish business.

“News is fundamental to the STV brand and we remain committed to offering the best news service in Scotland. However, given how quickly news consumption is changing it is vital that STV evolves to stay competitive, and we are therefore launching a comprehensive change programme – STV News 2020 – that will see us invest in skills, technology and digital as well as delivering cost savings.

“As a result of the challenging economics of local television and anticipated increased competition from BBC Scotland, we have taken the difficult decision to close our loss-making STV2 channel to focus our future content investment on STV and the STV Player. I’d like to thank the STV2 team for everything they have achieved over the last 4 years.

“We have ambitious growth plans for STV Productions which is well placed to take advantage of the surge in demand for new programming from the Nations and Regions. We will exploit STV’s unique producer-broadcaster status to attract the best creative talent and showcase new formats and ideas for the UK and international markets.

“The STV of 2020 will have creativity as its heart, working in partnership to drive the Scottish economy and showcase Scotland to the world.”