

Gillespie Macandrew report growth in profit

Legal firm Gillespie Macandrew which has its main office in Atholl Crescent, has reported growth in profits for the sixth year in a row. In 2017-18 they say their turnover rose by 6% and profit by 8% to just over £2.9 million. With offices in Edinburgh Glasgow and Perth, the firm has 144 partners and staff.

The firm did some reorganising in 2017 taking Willie Hunter's name off their property division with its office in Morningside and rebranding it under its corporate colours. Their Energy Team won Corporate Deal Team of the Year at the Scottish Legal Awards.

As well as legal matters the firm also concentrates on Corporate Social Responsibility and donated 1 per cent of profit to the two chosen charities The Rock Trust and Children in Scotland.

The firm runs its own development and training academy using a mix of internal and external providers, aiming to make leaders out of its employees. This helps those who are perhaps approaching partner status to cope with that transition to doing more than just practising law. This began in 2015 and the programme takes more than 12 months to complete.

Two non-lawyers now lead the firm, making it the only one in Scotland to do so.



One of those non-lawyers, Chief Executive Officer Robert Graham-Campbell, told The Edinburgh Reporter he was very pleased about the figures which come at the end of the year that he joined the firm, and which follow a very strong year last year with profits of over 8% too.

We asked if the size of the firm was an important factor but Mr Graham-Campbell did not agree that being a medium sized firm mattered, rather it is being focussed on the services that the firm provides. He explained : "Our approach is sector led and to a certain type of client with a certain type of work. That is the advantage, rather than the size of the firm I believe."

This was historically a legal firm which had many clients in the land and rural sectors along with energy and what is known in the profession as 'private client' work. This means reacting to individuals, small to medium sized businesses and charities across a range of needs. So it could be employment contracts one minute and house buying the next.

The CEO of Gillespie Macandrew is emphatic that today the modern Gillespie Macandrew has a wide range of services to offer in commercial and property law, and that clients are

commercial entities, not for profit organisations as well as private clients. He said : "The areas that we are known for were land and rural, energy and renewables and private clients. Those are particularly part of our sector focus those three areas. We have invested in the teams in those areas with two new tax specialists in the Private Client tax team and also we have planning advisors as part of our commercial property offer now too."

He also explained that having a CEO who is not a lawyer allows the firm's top lawyers to concentrate on clients rather than running the firm. Graham-Campbell does however have some external experience both in investment banking and managing legal businesses in his career, and he pointed out that chair Fiona Morton has experience in the property sector on her CV.

Mr Graham-Campbell continued: "It has been a full and exciting year for the firm. We have achieved another year of strong financial performance with satisfactory growth in turnover and profits. We continue to be debt free and with strong cash balances, providing a strong financial base for investment in improvements in our services to clients, for example in training and developing our staff and in IT solutions, as well as in growing our business through expansion.

"Against a backdrop of continued political and economic uncertainty, Gillespie Macandrew continues to see opportunities for growth in our sector-led focus. With offices in Edinburgh, Perth and Glasgow, our priorities remain to further reinforce our existing service areas and to expand our presence in these locations in order to deliver long term profitable growth."

Chair Fiona Morton said: "I am delighted with the progress made this year which continues to build on the substantial growth we achieved last year.

"It is testament to the hard work of everyone associated with

the firm and as ever we are grateful for the loyalty of existing clients and the engagement with new ones.

“I am particularly proud of our training academy as it provides the skill-set needed for future partners so that our lawyers are all round business people who can interact and work well with clients in any situation. Clients appreciate a knowledgeable advisor who can speak on their level and advise on a wide range of issues, not just purely legal issues.”

The firm's turnover rose by 6% to £12.01m in the year to March 2018 and the firm says its profits rose by 8%.