

Marketing Edinburgh – mothballed not exterminated?

We are always happy to be corrected if and when we get it wrong.

We reported last week that all members of staff at Marketing Edinburgh had been made redundant, either on a voluntary or compulsory basis. That is not quite correct.

Most members of staff have been made redundant, but Cllr Claire Miller, who is one of the members of the board, contacted us today to advise that the company still has six employees filling five roles.

The roles at [Marketing Edinburgh](#) which continue to be staffed include marketing managers, a member of staff who runs the ambassadors programme and also a person to do back end technical work, presumably with the company's website.

The councillor explained: "We've currently got five roles, which equates to six members of staff because of maternity cover, who are still employed at Marketing Edinburgh. But while the employees know that those roles are likely to become redundant, they aren't currently."

During April the company was branded as miserly for not putting employees on furlough rather than making them redundant. At the time Cllr Kate Campbell explained to The Edinburgh Evening News: "We looked carefully at furlough but there are ongoing liabilities which we don't believe the company could have sustained, alongside the uncertainty of how

long it will last.

“Boards have a duty to make sure a company is solvent, and if we failed in this duty we would have put staff’s contractual redundancy payments at risk, alongside other contractual obligations.

“The staff at Marketing Edinburgh have worked with the board throughout this process and we grateful for their professionalism and dedication.”

Cllr Miller also said that the board continues to seek funding through some of The Scottish Government schemes announced last week. She said: “We’re also still trying to apply for funding to continue those roles if we’re able to, through an application to the government which is in the pipeline now. And generally we continue to speak to industry partners and to the council.”

We asked about the funding of £1.2 million [which the company has been awarded](#) since March 2019, but were asked to put that question in writing to the board and are promised an interview with some or all of the three councillors who constitute it. As well as Cllr Miller, Cllr Kate Campbell and Cllr Mandy Watt are in charge of the [company](#). The previous board resigned in autumn last year and since then the Articles of Association of the company have been changed to allow for only three directors. Previously there were stakeholder directors from bodies such as Edinburgh Airport, who all served on the board for no remuneration.

The board swiftly changed course during March and ditched the business plan which we understand would have been put in place on 1 April 2020. Cllr Miller said: “We had a business plan, which we were hoping to enact and then the Covid crisis came on us when we were just in the middle of a redundancy consultation with the staff about the new business model.

“That has meant that we couldn’t then go forward with that, as

it wasn't a business plan that we could actually put in place, and we've had to completely change the redundancy consultation. So some people have taken voluntary redundancy, and some have been made compulsorily redundant. We didn't make everybody redundant because we could see that there were reasons why we couldn't just shut the doors completely."

The council cut funding for the body which they set up in 2010. In the financial year 2019-20 funding was cut by £300,000 to £590,000. There have been additional monies awarded to the company including funds in April 2020. These appear to us to total around £1.2 million for a company which until this morning we had been told was being put into hibernation. It now appears that the company may yet have a future of some sort. Film Edinburgh which was part of Marketing Edinburgh has already moved in-house to The City of Edinburgh Council. The other parts including Convention Edinburgh appear to have been shelved meantime.

The company is late in filing its accounts with Companies House and may incur a fine of £750 or twice that if the accounts are not filed by June 2020.