

EICC marks its 25 year anniversary

It is rather unbelievably a quarter of a century since the EICC first opened. The first ever event held there was the 25th anniversary Silver Jubilee party held by Sir Tom Farmer for his company Kwik Fit's 25th anniversary.

Since then many other VIPs have followed Sir Tom's lead and visited the EICC, President Barack Obama, Leonardo DiCaprio, George and Amal Clooney being only some of them.

The venue, which is an Arms Length External Organisation owned by The City of Edinburgh Council, has calculated that this economic impact it has produced over the years amount to £720 million.

In 2013 the space was doubled by adding on the Atrium and Lennox Suite where we have spent a couple of election nights and perhaps more enjoyable a few Thistle Awards hosted by VisitScotland.

Last year the EICC hosted TEDSummit in Edinburgh with 1,000 delegates. Since opening 3,500 events have been held with over 1.4 million people attending.

Revenue in the year to 31st December 2019 was £12.6 million (2018: £11.8m), with profits at £1.5 million (2018: £1.4 million).



EICC getting ready for a return to business PHOTO Stewart Attwood

As CEO, Marshall Dallas, reported to the council's Finance and Resources committee meeting last week, the EICC has continued to run events all year. They have been holding online events during lockdown and are about to announce a series of major conference wins.

"2019 was our best ever year, and we came into 2020 with a record number of events on our books before the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to close the venue in March. We continue to take bookings for 2021 and have recently secured a number of major conferences for next year which we will be announcing in the near future. We, of course, remain circumspect about business activity in light of prevailing conditions, however we have focused our efforts on implementing extensive health and wellbeing measures in readiness for safely welcoming delegates back to our venue."

In May, the EICC launched a new online events platform, [Make it Edinburgh Live](#), which was created to enable the venue team to run conferences and events entirely online or via a combination of online and in situ. In turn, significant investment has been made this year in both technology and related training across the team at the EICC.

Marshall Dallas said: "What has been a hopeful prospect during the pandemic is that we have developed a market-leading online events platform that has enabled us to stage conferences which have a greater global reach for audiences around the world. When we combine this in a hybrid scenario once delegates return to the venue, we believe we'll have one of the best offerings of any conference centre worldwide.

"In so many ways, our 25th anniversary will not be the occasion we envisaged it to be pre the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it's a significant milestone and an important

occasion to appreciate the many achievements to date, as well as our position as one of the world's leading conference centres. Looking ahead, we know that conferences and business events will be different going forward, characterised by smaller-scale events in the first phase of the recovery.

"We also know that the business events sector, which is valued at around £35 billion across the UK, will be an important driver in helping to reboot the Scottish economy."

Next in planning is the new hotel and hotel school to be built as part of the Haymarket Edinburgh development close to the EICC.

The completed hotel will be operated by the EICC under a franchise agreement with Hyatt Hotels Corporation.

Earlier this month, the EICC appointed Stuart Bone as its new Finance Director.

Also in September, CEO Marshall Dallas won the "IoD Scotland Director of the Year – Small to Medium Business" award, with the judging panel stating they were "Impressed with Marshall's commitment to staff and team development".



EICC staff getting ready to open again. Picture by Stewart Attwood