

# **Urquharts says thriving business is golden opportunity for young talent**

**City legal firm Urquharts has had another impressive year and aims to use the positive results to attract the next generation of legal talent to 16 Heriot Row.**

Operating from the heart of the New Town, the firm has just completed one of its busiest periods on record, growing turnover by 5% in each of the past two years, despite the pandemic, and all the challenges brought by that disruption to our working lives.

The latest results come a year after the retirement of Senior Partner, Roderick Urquhart, which ended an unbroken connection with the family who founded the firm in 1876.

The current five partners of the firm, which employs 15 staff including five fee earners, say its performance demonstrates that there is definitely still a place in the modern legal market for a firm like Urquharts.

Senior Partner, Stephen Blane, said: "Clients appreciate the high level of personal service that they receive here, and they come back time and time again.

"They also recommend the firm to their friends, family and contacts. The client base is growing from strength to strength and operationally the business is in excellent shape, all of

which bodes well for the future of the firm.”

The partners have been undertaking succession planning at a senior level for a number of years with the addition of new partners, Sara Smith (formerly Shoosmiths) in 2018 and Alison Grandison (formerly Simpson & Marwick) in 2020.

Now they are turning their attention to finding the next generation of lawyers to join them. Stephen, a professional negligence expert and the firm’s sole court practitioner who, as a Solicitor Advocate pursues cases in the Court of Session and Sheriff Courts, would be delighted to find the right young lawyer to mentor and take over his court practice.

He added: “We offer fantastic opportunities for junior solicitors who want hands on experience with a high-quality case load. And looking to the future, there are great prospects for those who want to progress to partnership. The benefits of being a partner in a small firm cannot be overestimated as everybody round the table is involved in all decision making from start to finish.”

The Urquharts team acknowledge that many young lawyers are initially attracted to larger, corporate law firms. However, they are keen to emphasise the benefits and appeal of working with their firm – including a better work-life balance, more direct exposure to a variety of work and a greater level of support and mentoring given by more senior fee earners (including partners).



L-R Urquharts Solicitors, Alison Grandison and Sara Smith Partners Sara Smith and Alison Grandison are enthusiastic about the opportunities awaiting younger lawyers who can actively shape the future of the firm.

Alison, who specialises in residential conveyancing for private and investor clients, said Urquharts offers a rewarding career choice alternative to working for a larger national or even international firm.

She said: “There is no getting away from the fact that life in the legal sector is stressful- wherever you work. However, in a smaller firm there is a great support network from colleagues which can help when things are especially busy. At Urquharts we are absolutely focused on client service which makes the work extremely rewarding. Financials are, of course, very important but they are only part of the story here.

“The exposure that a more junior solicitor would have to the breadth and quality of work done at Urquharts would not be

something that they would experience at a larger firm being part of a bigger but highly specialised team.”

Sara, who specialises in private client work, said: “Many young lawyers are naturally attracted to the bigger corporate firms because they have a higher level of visibility at law fairs, in the press or on social media.

“However, there are alternatives to that career path. Urquharts may be viewed as ‘traditional’ but that does not mean old-fashioned. We are proud of our history but, equally, are looking forward to the years ahead when we can continue to grow and develop the business and our people.

“All of our partners worked elsewhere in firms – both big and small – before moving to Urquharts and appreciate the work-life balance offered by a smaller and successful firm, where evening and weekend working is a rarity, not an expectation.”