

Pilot boss Jordan plotting expansion course

Pilot Brewery are flying higher after securing new contracts and adding more staff to their operation in Stewarfield in Edinburgh.

Jordan Palmer (pictured in the company shop by *Nigel Duncan*) has steered the emerging company through COVID-19 and he sees turbulence ahead due to the state of the economy.

But he has plotted his course forward and the future includes brewery tours and tastings and developing a sponsorship with the women's professional team linked to Hibernian FC.

More of that later but Palmer said that the brewery is celebrating their fourth anniversary at Stewartfield after moving from smaller premises at Jane Street at the foot of Leith Walk.

The move allowed for greater capacity and the recruitment of more staff but they COVID hit. He added: "That was a little bump in the road but, luckily, we have come out and we are doing OK.

"We are up to ten staff now and when we moved we had five so it has been quite a nice flow and steady progress. It was a struggle with bars closing and re-opening and closing again, but we have some new clients on the way and we have a media company helping out with bits and pieces and we can't complain really.

"It is a crowded market in the brewery world but there is an appetite for local produce again which has helped us grow but we have genuine concern for the next six to ten months to see how the economy goes and there is a slight worry about the state of licensed premises.

“We have to gamble as we have a lot of staff to look after now and we have invested so much time and effort and money into it now but we have no choice but to bed down and to keep on going.”

The company have launched a partnership with Scot Beer Tours who are a local company and do a lot of work in Edinburgh with the tourist trade.

He said: “There will be taster tours for us every Saturday in the lead up to Christmas and donations will go to the local Foodbank and moving forward there will be tours on-going in the New Year.

“The sponsorship of the Hibs women’s team is quite surreal really but my father-in-law and, indeed, are his whole family, are big fans of Hibs and we are doing lots of bits and pieces with them.

“It is really nice to see the women’s game develop and the ability for that brand to link to local business and it is nice to be part of it.”

He explained that you can’t buy Pilot products in supermarkets but you can access them in well-known pubs in the East and West side of the city.

Beer is also in independent retailers who, said Palmer, had been loyal to them since they started and he added: “We will try and keep that going for as long as it is humanly possible.”

TOURNOTE: People interested can book tours on the company website by clicking the tours tab with a live calendar and he said: “Open days start on December 3, 10 and 17th and we are asking people to donate to the local foodbank. If you can’t bring anything down you can tap your card for a small donation.”