

Law firm doubles headcount in ambitious expansion

Growth signals robust future for legal services in East Lothian.

A long-standing Scottish legal firm has more than doubled its headcount and trebled the number of fee-earners, within the first two years of its new ownership. Turnover has also increased by a third in the past 12 months.

Following a period of growth and concerted investment into the business, Garden Stirling Burnet (GSB), one of East Lothian's oldest and largest legal firms, has grown its team from 17 in 2022 to over 40 this year, with fee earners increasing in number from five to 18.

As it approaches the second anniversary of its merger with Friends Legal, the firm has doubled down on its commitment to investing in the region and its branches in Dunbar, Haddington, North Berwick and Tranent.

Tony O'Malley, Managing Director of Garden Stirling Burnet, said: "On day one of the merger we promised to bring an enhanced service and an exciting new chapter for a trusted brand.

"We're well on our way to doing this and have attracted some top talent through the door to bolster an existing team that had a well-earned reputation in the region. The offices are bustling again which is helping to create a vibrant culture.

"As well as increasing access to qualified solicitors, we have also placed a strong focus on customer service, something that we feel is too often overlooked by the sector.

“As a result, we have introduced dedicated client care colleagues across all aspects of the business, whose remit is purely to ensure customers are kept informed and looked after throughout the process.”

Founded with a vision to offer comprehensive legal services, Garden Stirling Burnet has continually evolved to meet the changing needs to all clients.

In addition to the growth in staff, the firm continues to focus on providing fair pricing and exceptional service, ensuring accessibility and affordability for its clients.

The takeover has resulted in investment across departments, including estate agency, private client and commercial law.

Tony added: “Our growth is not just about numbers; it’s about enhancing our ability to deliver outstanding legal services.

“We are dedicated to maintaining fair pricing while ensuring the highest standards of client care. Our expanded team is a crucial part of this commitment, enabling us to handle more cases and provide better support to our clients.”

In September 2022, Friends Legal acquired Garden Stirling Burnet, while pledging to retain the historic name, which dates back to 1999.

Since then, strategic investments have focused on expanding the team and enhancing the firm’s infrastructure. The initial aim was to double the headcount and turnover within three years.

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