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## Employee Ownership Learning Event

Wednesday  
18th September  
2024.

10am - 4pm  
Novotel Edinburgh Park

See [page 3](#) for more  
info.



## Third generation family business now in employee ownership

Fife based multi-disciplined contractor **T&N Gilmartin (Contractors) Ltd** is the latest company in Scotland to transfer its entire shareholding to an Employee Ownership Trust. The workforce of around 90 staff will become part owners of the business.

Founded in 1956 by Tommie Gilmartin Snr, T&N Gilmartin (Contractors) Ltd has remained within the Gilmartin family for three generations. Under former MD Tommy Gilmartin and fellow shareholder Pat Gilmartin, the company diversified and grew into a successful multi-disciplined contractor and a key employer in North-East Fife.

Current shareholders Philip and Donna McElhinney acquired the company in 2016 having previously worked in the family business for many years.

Managing Director Philip McElhinney says, "The success of our company is down to the hard work and dedication of our loyal workforce. We have been able to build upon the solid foundations

*established by previous generations of family and work colleagues to ensure the company continues to prosper in the long term.*

*In planning for the future, it was important to us that the core values of the company remain. A sale to a third party was an option, however we felt it was not in the best interests of our workforce. The move to employee ownership secures the long-term future of the business and the employment it provides."*

Philip McElhinney added "Donna and I shall continue in our roles for the short term in support of the new leadership team, however we know the company is in very good hands. It is our intention to fully stand aside and we look forward to watching the next exciting chapter in the company's development."

The transaction was supported by Azets. Graham Cunning, Head of

(Continued)

Corporate Finance in Scotland said: *“Azets are delighted to have worked with the shareholders of T & N Gilmartin to guide them towards Employee Ownership. It has been great working with Donna & Philip helping them bring their succession plan to fruition and supporting them take the next step for this great family business. We wish them, and all the employees all the best in continuing to grow the business from strength to strength.”*

The Azets team included Corporate Finance Executive Christine Rankin, Corporate Tax Partner Katy Thomson & Associate Angus Troop.

Legal advice was provided by Douglas Roberts & Nimarta Cheema of TLT Solicitors.

Douglas Roberts, Corporate partner at TLT, commented *“It was an honour to play our small part in T&N Gilmartin’s transition to*



**L-R:** Scott Mercer - Estimating Director, Peter Reilly - Operations Director, Donna McElhinney - Finance Director, Raymond Hope - Construction Director, Philip McElhinney - Managing Director

*employee ownership and to assist Donna and Philip in achieving their plans for the business. The company has a long history and its fantastic reputation will continue to grow with employee ownership. Congratulations to all at T&N Gilmartin”.*

## Colorado introduces tax credits for employee ownership costs

The US state of Colorado passed legislation recently that offers a refundable corporation tax credit to support employee-owned businesses. The legislation also makes permanent the Employee Ownership Office as a resource for small businesses as they transition into employee-owned businesses. Businesses are eligible if they have been partially or wholly owned by employees for fewer than seven years. This tax credit covers 50 percent of qualifying costs of conversion, granting up to \$50,000 a year in savings. The new law also creates a refundable state income tax credit for costs that come with running a new employee-owned business. The tax credit is available for tax years 2025 through 2033 and businesses are eligible if they have been partially or wholly owned by employees for fewer than seven years. This tax credit covers 50 percent of qualifying costs, granting up to \$50,000 a year in savings.

The legislation is a result of recognition of the benefits employee ownership delivers for the economy. Colorado is home to more than 230 employee-owned companies.



**COLORADO**

Office of Economic Development  
& International Trade

*“Employee-owned business models allow locally-owned businesses to stay within their communities; however, the costs and resources that are needed during transition can create barriers for employees seeking to purchase the business,”* said Rep. William Lindstedt, *“This legislation creates a permanent resource and lessens the financial burden of transitioning to employee-owned. We’re continuing the work we’ve done in recent years to make Colorado a national leader in providing support to employee-owned business owners so they can thrive in their communities.”*

*“Employee-owned business models are not only beneficial for retiring business owners, but they also reward hard-working employees for their dedication to the company, promote higher wages, and keep businesses rooted in their communities,”* said Rep. Stephanie Vigil. *“By offering tax credits to new employee-owned businesses, we can incentivise more businesses to stay local and ensure that working people keep more of the value of their own labour.”*

# OAUK News

Issue 50 of Ownership Matters! Who would have guessed 4 years ago a lockdown project would still be going?

The employee ownership community has been eagerly awaiting the out turn of the government's two consultations – one on EOTs and one on employee share schemes. The General Election on July 4th may result in both of these projects being abandoned if/when a new administration comes in. This would be a great pity because many experienced and expert people – from grass roots employee owners to lawyers and tax specialist – invested considerable time and energy into submitting evidence.

The EOT legislation was introduced by the Coalition government in 2014 and I've been asked if I think any new government might overturn the tax incentives. My answer is that this would be highly unlikely; the Labour Party has always been committed to employee ownership and it was a Liberal leader who co-founded the Employee Ownership Association. In Scotland, the SNP has been supportive of the sector and the ongoing funding of Co-operative Development Scotland has launched many Scottish businesses on their EO journey. My hope is that support for employee ownership and the next election places some real champions of EO into government.

It's interesting to keep an eye on what's happening elsewhere. The tax breaks introduced in Colorado for funding the transition to employee ownership is an innovative idea. Many businesses find the advisers costs quite challenging, and this does deter smaller companies from pursuing this route. The importance of getting the right advice is paramount – support for these costs might help more companies take the first step.

The members' body for employee owned companies in the UK, The Employee Ownership Association (EOA) issued a very welcome policy document setting out clearly and concisely the priorities for embedding employee ownership in the economy. The paper looks at sustaining growth of employee ownership, access to funding for EOBs, appropriate business support, and leadership at government level. You can read a more detailed exploration on [page 7](#).

It has been a real privilege sharing all of your employee ownership success stories and Issue 50 might be a good place to halt. Life changes for me mean the production of a monthly newsletter has become increasingly challenging. I am exploring new channels and methods to spread the word. Watch this space!

Thank you for all the support over the past 4 years.

- **Carole**  
01786 611066

## Employee Ownership Learning Event

Wednesday 18th September 2024. 10am - 4pm

- What is employee ownership?
- Role of the Trust in the employee-owned company
- Trustee duties and responsibilities
- How to assess company performance
- How to be an effective Trustee

Novotel Edinburgh Park - Spaces Limited

**£149 + VAT per delegate.**

To register for this event, please email me at [carole@ownershipassociates.co.uk](mailto:carole@ownershipassociates.co.uk)





## Employee-owned care provider scoops major care learning accolade at national awards

HR & Workforce Development Team

**Highland Home Carers (HHC)**, employee-owned since 2004, has scooped top prize in the Care Learning Award category at Scottish Care's National Care at Home & Housing Support Awards. The prestigious national award for HHC's HR & Workforce Development Team recognises the significant investments that HHC has made in training and education, and the thought leadership that they bring across the care sector. It also highlights the importance of continuous training and learning within care at home and housing support services.

Commenting on behalf of HHC, Managing Director, Campbell Mair, said: *"This award is a great achievement, for our HR & Workforce Development Team, for HHC overall and for the Highlands. Established in 2022, Highland Home Carers Adult Social Care Academy is an Employee-Owned Social Enterprise. Since its inception the Academy has grown its capacity to deliver a range of learning opportunities for both HHC colleagues and the wider sector. This award is great recognition of the work being done by the academy."*

*"Against a backdrop of an increasingly inaccessible higher education sector, the Academy was accredited as an SQA Centre in 2023. The Human Resource & Workforce Development (HR & WD) Team that run the Academy is currently supporting 18 colleagues through their SVQ2&3 qualifications, PDA's and CPL."*

New recruits spend a week at the Academy, completing mandatory training, value-added training as well as a Corporate Induction. The facilities and equipment are sector-leading, and colleagues meet ERRICC, HHC's training mannequin (whose name is an acronym for our values of Excellence, Responsibility, Respect, Integrity, Compassion, and Collaboration) at his home at 1A Highlander Way. 1A is kitted out with a tracking hoist, toilet, shower, and other extensive moving and assisting equipment and has different flooring and levels to make the training as realistic as possible.



Campbell Mair

(Continued)

Mair adds: *“The Academy provides a career pathway for operational and support colleagues regardless of the role they join HHC in. The HR&WD Team has a significant and positive impact on supporting colleagues throughout the sector to develop themselves by providing high-quality learning and development thus improving operational excellence throughout the Highlands.”*

In receiving the award, HHC was particularly praised for the support it has given colleagues at the later stages of their careers, with many worried they would have to leave the roles they enjoyed immensely because they were hesitant or lacked confidence to navigate the world of SVQs. In addition to supporting colleagues the HHC team is supporting another provider whose business was at risk as skilled but unqualified Care Practitioners were going to have to leave the sector.

Hosted at the at the Radisson Blu, Glasgow on Friday 17th May, this is the 18th consecutive year of Scottish Care’s National Care at Home & Housing Support Awards. Hosted by TV and music celebrity Michelle McManus and Scottish Care CEO, Dr. Donald Macaskill, the event was attended by the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Maree Todd MSP.

Two other employee-owned companies were recognised for their excellence in care. Stewartry Care featured in the Care Innovation award as part of the Dumfries & Galloway Care



at Home Collaborative. Elaine Couplan of Aspire Housing and Personal Development was a finalist in the Care Service Administration/Coordination Award.







## Thurso cinema now owned by employees

The company behind the most northerly cinema on the British mainland is to transfer ownership to its staff.

**Merlin Cinemas** operates a diverse range of cinemas and restaurants across the country, including at Thurso.

Now the Westcountry-based independent operator has announced plans to soon become an Employee Ownership Trust.

The company says that the move will protect the interests of its 320 staff who work from Thurso to Penzance at the tip of Cornwall.

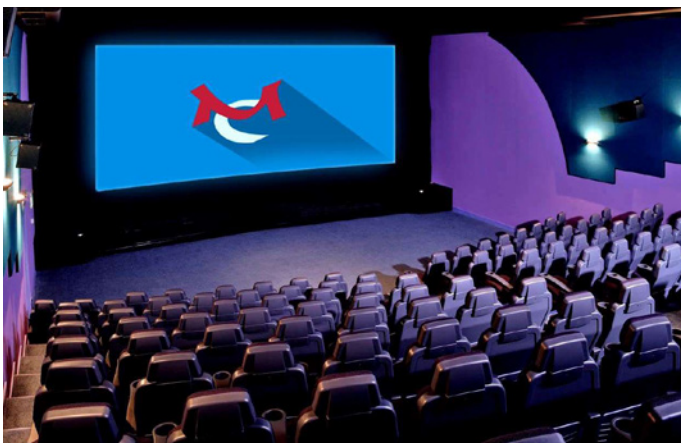
The existing managing director, Geoff Greaves, will stay on in a new role while the current senior management team, based mainly in Redruth, Cornwall, will not change, it stated.

Company founder Mr Greaves said: *“This is a fantastic and exciting route to protect the*

*company and our ethos, and to reward all those people who together have been part of the success in bringing the ‘magic of the movies’ to so many people around the UK.*

*“I have always believed that the best place to see a film is at the cinema, it’s memorable and sociable, and without their own cinema locally people just don’t go very often, which is why I believe so much in cinema being local and engaged in the community.”*

The company specialises in operating rural and coastal cinemas, mainly in towns where without the Merlin venue there would be no local cinema. With an eclectic chain of venues, including converted historic buildings and reopened old traditional cinemas, they also operate a multi-screen cinema and live theatre in the Regal at Redruth.





# Unlocking the Potential of Employee Ownership: The Why and How for People Powered Growth

The Employee Ownership Association's policy paper sets out a clear strategy for our policymakers to grow and support employee ownership in the UK. This is a topic that garners support across all political persuasions; the 10 years since the introduction of the EOT legislation hasn't shown much action from our politicians. This might be an opportune moment to remind them they have to turn their words into actions and this document is a good place to start.

There are four pillars to the strategy; sustaining growth, access to capital, appropriate business support, and government leadership.

Despite the lack of champions in government, growth in employee ownership has been stellar. Much of this has been driven organically by employee-owned firms themselves, spreading the word amongst suppliers, customers and their wider network. **The paper** calls for the government to act on the responses to the recent consultations, and to recognise the value delivered by EOBs when it comes to public procurement exercises.

Improving access to capital is important. Banks and funders will give verbal support to employee ownership. It's often a different story when EOBs try to access funding, particularly from mainstream sources. The truth is many financial institutions are set up for the traditional shareholder model; collective employee ownership just doesn't fit their processes and lending criteria.

The document suggests an enhanced capital allowance for EOBs, and suggests that the British Business Bank reports on its investments in alternative businesses. The paper calls for a Fair Banking Act that guarantees inclusion of alternative business models.

The strategy sets out a framework for improving support to the sector, compelling business organisations to include the EOT as a feasible and attractive model and asks for government backing for programmes designed to encourage and assist the sector. Interestingly, the paper widens scope calling for a revision of the apprentice scheme which impacts beyond the EO world.

The paper makes some bold policy asks. The introduction of a Better Business Act would be a radical initiative to align business interests more closely with society and there is a request for a review of the tax and policy landscape to increase confidence in British business. The paper asks for a reinstatement of the Minister for Employee Ownership position. It was the Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP who, as Minister for Employee Ownership, set the wheels in motion for the introduction of the EOT legislation.

This is an important and encouraging piece of work which should put employee ownership back on the political agenda. Whichever party or parties succeed on 4th July, let's hold them to delivering it.

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## guitarguitar celebrates 20th birthday

Happy 20th Birthday to all at **guitarguitar**. The leading national retailer are celebrating their anniversary throughout the year, kicking off with some enticing customer offers.

A special birthday present was being recognised again as one of the UK's top internet retailers for the second year running.

**2004** **2024**

**20 YEARS** 2004-2024 | **guitarguitar.**

**IT'S GUITARGUITAR'S BIRTHDAY!**

**CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF MAKING MUSIC BETTER**

We are thrilled to announce that today is officially our **20th birthday!** Over the past two decades, we've had the pleasure of sharing our passion for guitars and music with **you**, our loyal customers. Your support has been instrumental in our journey, and we are deeply grateful for your continued trust and enthusiasm.

To show our appreciation, from Monday we will be offering a **brand new deal every day for 20 days**, featuring fantastic discounts on guitars and equipment. Stay tuned for these exciting offers and join us in celebrating our special milestone!

Thank you for being a part of the guitarguitar family.

Warm regards,  
**The guitarguitar Team**





# TEFL Team tackle Hairy Haggis

Congratulations to the **TEFL** team for battling the worst of the stormy weather to run the Edinburgh Marathon Hairy Haggis Relay Race. They were running to support the TEFL's charity of the year **TheirWorld** which supports young people all over the world in getting a fair education. Well done, Alan, Lucas, Euan and Rory.



## We're a Best Place to Work!

THE SUNDAY TIMES  
**Best Places to Work 2024**

**i-confidential**  
 Building Trust, Reducing Risk



## Cyber -Security experts is one of the Best Places to work

**i-confidential** is delighted to be recognised as one of **The Sunday Times** 2024 Best Places to Work!

The whole team is extremely proud of this achievement which reflects the commitment we make to our employees, but also that of the firm's associates and clients.

The company has been employee-owned since 2018 and has achieved fantastic growth by assembling a talented team of people.

You can read an employee-owner's perspective [here](#).