

JH Greenwood & Company



Director Gareth Greenwood

With a particular focus on the agricultural sector, JH Greenwood & Company's service is underpinned by a personal approach. Central to this is ensuring that every one of their clients understands the practical implications of their accounts, empowering them to make the right decisions. As the sector has changed, they have adapted their service, expanding into administering probate and will writing. Director Gareth Greenwood explains their personal service and how this leads to a wider client base.

In an increasingly competitive market, we like to think that what sets us apart is the proactive, client-centred personal service we provide. We view the compliance work we do as the mere foundation for building upon a greater level of service, which sees us become trusted business advisors for our clients. We seek to ensure that our clients regard us as being inextricably linked to their business by continually providing ongoing advice and support, in addition to fulfilling their basic compliance needs.

Evolution of the firm

Based in Berwick-upon-Tweed and founded in 1980 by the now retired Jim Greenwood, we have evolved considerably and currently have three directors: myself, Mark McLeman and Gillian O'Dea.

We have a diverse client base including many small and medium-sized companies, specialising particularly in the agricultural sector. Our clients are predominantly based across the Scottish Borders, north Northumberland and East Lothian but we also have clients as far north as Inverness and as far south as London. We have recently acquired a base in Edinburgh where we have found a steady stream of new business.

The majority of our new clients come from personal recommendations from existing clients or from other professionals with whom we have built relationships. We take great pride in receiving such personal recommendations, but we never take this for granted; what we are really passionate about is getting the opportunity to make a real difference.

We feel this difference comes from the high level of personal service that has always been central to our ethos and runs through every task that is undertaken to this day. As we take the business forward, we maintain this as the cornerstone on which we are building and growing the firm.

Personal service

Of utmost importance to us is investing the time to make sure our clients understand the fundamentals of their accounts and what the figures mean for their company in practical terms. It sounds fairly basic, but it never fails to astound us how many new clients are not accustomed to the level of detail we provide and how far we drill into

AT A GLANCE JH GREENWOOD & COMPANY

- » Directors: Gareth Greenwood, Mark McLeman and Gillian O'Dea
- » Founded in 1980
- » Located in Berwick-upon-Tweed and Edinburgh
- » Services: Accountancy and tax advice
- » No. of employees: 19
- » www.jhgreenwood.co.uk

their figures. We feel that presenting clients with this level of knowledge and understanding empowers them while instilling confidence.

Our concept of personal service is to understand the exact needs and aspirations of our clients so that we can provide a proactive and agile service, ultimately leading to action and in turn growth. Key to our service is our ability to adapt and to acknowledge that one size does not fit all. We pride ourselves on our strong reputation and proven track record of understanding and developing our clients' businesses by way of tailored advice and planning. As an ambitious and growing company ourselves, we are passionate about what we do, and we can identify with many of our clients' needs and desires. This allows us to grow alongside them.

Challenges and changes

Although there are many challenges facing the accountancy profession, we like to think that they provide us with opportunities for advancement. Making tax digital and the introduction of online accounting software has proved difficult in terms of educating clients. However, this has been outweighed by the benefit of having real-time information that bolsters the way in which we work and enhances the service that we are already providing. Rather than reviewing accounts and performance at the year end, we are now better placed to continually review and monitor clients' affairs, providing advice as well as implementing strategies as we go. This fundamentally allows for a greater level of collaboration with our clients.

Additionally, advances in software inevitably mean that we must adapt or be left behind. Some of the more traditional bread-and-butter work like bookkeeping is not as in demand these days, and we are therefore continually striving to diversify the range of services we offer. In this regard we are now in



Providing accountancy services for 40 years

the position where we can deal with non-contentious probate and write wills. We produce asset statements and provide inheritance tax planning advice for many of our clients. Given our in-depth knowledge of their affairs, we feel that we are well placed to provide these services. As this is traditionally the domain of the legal profession, encouraging uptake of these services is proving difficult, but this will always be the case where diversification requires people to break with convention.

Finally, the uncertainty of the current political situation regarding Brexit and a potential second Scottish independence referendum looms over us and our clients. As we have clients on both sides of the border, a potential second independence referendum with a different result could have far-reaching implications for us as and for our clients. However, uncertainty is exactly that and we must do all we can to ensure our clients have strong and resilient businesses which can weather any political storm.

As we look forward to our 40th birthday this year, we can reflect upon the advancements that have been made and what has been achieved. However, more importantly, we look forward to growing our success, turning challenges into opportunities and making the most of the foothold we now have in Edinburgh. We will do all this, though, by never straying far from the values that underpin the way we work and which have brought us to where we are today.

“Of utmost importance to us is investing the time to make sure our clients understand the fundamentals of their accounts and what the figures mean for their company in practical terms”