

**Edinburgh Tram Inquiry Office Use Only**

Witness Name: [Grant McKeeman]

Dated: [Date of signing]

**The Edinburgh Tram Inquiry**

**Witness Statement of [Grant David McKeeman]**

Statement taken by Duncan Begg on Wednesday 23 November 2016

My full name is Grant David McKeeman. I am aged 51, my date of birth being [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

My current occupation is as a Director of a print business

Statement:

1. I am a Director of Copymade Ltd., which is what is called a high street copy shop, offering printing and copying services to the public and other businesses. Copymade has been operating for about twenty-three years from shop premises in West Maitland Street, Edinburgh. West Maitland Street is one of the main arterial routes into the city centre, situated in the Haymarket area and my shop is on the south side of the road, a short distance from the junction with Torphichen Street. I would attribute a large part of the longevity and success of the business to the location of the shop.
2. Customers enter the front shop from West Maitland Street and behind this we have a number of printing and copying machines. I employ between seven and eight staff in various roles mainly full-time but dependent on how business is going, I have occasionally had to put some down to part-time hours. Prior to work starting on the Edinburgh Trams, we also had premises on the

Southside of the city in Lutton Place. These other premises, although open to the public, were mainly fed with business from West Maitland Street.

3. The Edinburgh Trams Project had a huge financial impact on my business and we had no compensation at all, although there was compensation available. During construction, West Maitland Street was closed for long periods and customers had to get to my shop by negotiating past large areas of fenced-in road works. Even now, I believe the trams are having an impact on my business. I have handed over copies of my accounts for six years from 2010 (WED00000143) to show the effect the Trams had. In 2011 the business turnover was £471 thousand and the profit was £81 thousand. In 2012, during the time of the street closure, turnover was £462 thousand, profit £58 thousand. In 2013, also during the street closure, £468 thousand turnover and £31 thousand profit and then 2015, £603 thousand turnover, £102 thousand profit. There were a few things that affected the profit, for example our courier bills were massive. People didn't want to come near the place and we had to offer to deliver jobs. There was a noticeable downturn during construction, mainly due to our expenses increasing and we had to drop our prices to try and encourage people in. I think if the Trams had started ten years earlier when we hadn't been in business for so long, we would have gone under. I know there were some businesses that did fold.
4. When footfall in West Maitland Street dropped because of the trams, I ended up having to close our premises in the Southside down. It was more a working factory with different printing facilities and bigger machines. As I've said, it received business from West Maitland Street and when that dropped, I had no option.
5. We were never advised properly about any compensation. I was not aware of it at the time and it was only from speaking to fellow traders in the area that I learned about it. When I enquired about it, we were refused compensation on the grounds that we didn't put the form in on time, which I thought was ironic given the delays the trams faced. Allegedly the application form was left at the counter by someone, but I don't know who by, and I certainly never received

it. I thought it should have been handed personally to me or to my business partner and signed for. It was an important form.

6. The street was closed down collectively for about a year-and-a-half, which had a significant effect. We were having to pull pallets of paper into the shop from round the corner. There was tram worker support available, but the way it worked was that I had to phone someone in Shandwick Place, who would then phone someone else. It wasn't a practical solution and on many occasions, I had to just get on with it myself. The delivery driver would dump the pallet on the street, even in the rain, and I had to take four or five of my staff and unload it. I actually ended up buying a pallet truck to try and make it a bit easier. I felt that was very badly managed and the lack of areas for loading and unloading made my life very difficult.
7. I took a photo (WED00000153) during the construction work, showing the work going on and the fencing around, severely restricting pedestrians' movement and deliveries to my shop. Even now there are no loading facilities in the street and it took me a year and half of campaigning after the trams were completed to get a loading bay relatively close.
8. One of my biggest bugbears during construction was signage. I asked that the signs on the outskirts of the city warning of tram works at Haymarket, also say that businesses were open as usual. This was never done and I thought that was a basic thing as people were avoiding the area because of the works. We put up our own signs on the fencing saying businesses were open as usual, but we were told to remove them. I sent emails asking why this was the case (including WED00000148). I was told it was due to construction regulations forbidding promotional messages and then was told that I could put up two signs that were a specific size and of a specific material, which I had to pay for. This was all detailed in a reply from a Caroline Trainer of Edinburgh Trams (WED00000146) with three attached documents (WED00000155, WED00000154 and WED00000144) and also from David Rule (WED00000147).

9. Despite us having been forbidden from putting up our own signs because of construction regulations, I noticed that signs were put up by the Council promoting the Summer Solstice in June 2012. I emailed a Natalie Wilcock (WED000000148) at the Council and asked about this as I couldn't understand why we were being told one thing and they, the Council, were just ignoring the regulations. There was just no help or come-and-go at all.
10. Some of the signs they were putting up were to advertise events that had been organised in the area to encourage footfall. I understood why they were doing that, but I felt it was not well managed. They were allowing businesses to open up and host events and giving them a budget for that. For example, there was a shop in William Street and, although I'm not sure of the exact figures, I think they were allowed a budget of £500 and of that, I believe, £300 was spent on alcohol.
11. There were some posters and booklets printed for a Council scheme called 'West End Passport', to promote businesses in the area. We were asked if we wanted to be in the booklet and we'd said that we would and asked to submit our own advert as we are a print shop. We were told that we could not and that it had to be done in a certain way. They were dictating and in the end we decided not to participate. I enquired, due to the loss of business we were suffering, if we could provide a quote for the printing, however we did not get asked for one and I believe the booklets were eventually printed down south. I emailed David Rule from the Council (WED000000149), asking who did print them, however I never did find out.
12. Another frustration I had was the length of time it took for things to be dealt with. I would send an email and be told in reply that someone would pop in and see me and two weeks later I was having to send further emails chasing them up. Having to deal with all these issues obviously took time away from my working day.
13. In November 2013, I purchased a property in Clifton Terrace as an investment and to use for my business. I applied to the Council for a change of use for it

and got a letter (WED000000151) telling me that a condition of it being granted was that I contributed £28,600 towards the Edinburgh Tram Project. This was them asking me to contribute towards something that had already cost me thousands and it incensed me.

14. As regards getting information about street closures, traffic circulation and updates on the work, this was generally provided in pamphlets handed through the door and we were often missed. I felt they should have been handed over to me personally and should also have been signed for as it was often information that was crucial to my business.
15. I believe it was mainly the Council that were to blame for all the problems we had. I think the whole thing was badly managed. The dispute they had with the contractors and the delay this caused had a huge knock-on effect on my business. I am aware that Nottingham had a compensation package for traders affected by the construction of their tram and have documentation about this (WED000000152). The levels of compensation in Nottingham were far higher than we were offered and active measures were clearly taken to ensure businesses stayed afloat. We were offered none of this and, as I've said, several businesses closed.
16. Before the introduction of the Trams, there were metered parking bays and loading bays right outside the shop in West Maitland Street. This was important to the business to ensure footfall was high and deliveries could be made. Now, the tram goes directly past the shop so nobody can stop outside at all and it is far more difficult for customers to get close.
17. The whole construction process was a very stressful, trying time for my business, my neighbouring traders and for our customers. I tried to remain positive throughout, although it was not easy, and I produced a number of tongue-in-cheek posters (WED000000145) to display in our shop window to try and relieve some of the anxiety.

I confirm that the facts to which I attest in this witness statement, consisting of this and the preceding five pages are within my direct knowledge and are true. Where they are based on information provided to me by others, I confirm that they are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Witness signature.....

Date of signing.....