



REGIONAL NEWS *(ISSUE 2)*

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Here at CIPFA North East we would love to hear from you with comments, queries and suggestions, please get in touch via the contact links throughout this newsletter.

SECTION 1 - Welcome from the President



Dear members

Thank you for reading our second newsletter and also for the positive feedback we received on our first edition.

This newsletter covers updates on many of the areas included in the previous issue including another article from our Secret Accountant!

I am coming to the end of my first year as NE President and it has flown over. It has been an absolute pleasure so far and I am looking forward to the next 12 months before handing over to James Charlton in March 2021.

North East Regional Development Plan

As part of my role as President, I am responsible for the compilation and submission of the annual Regional Development Plan (RDP).

This is an important document as the aim of the RDP is to outline the priorities of the NE Executive over the forthcoming 12 months and how we ensure that they fit into CIPFAs priorities

Our 2020 priorities include -

- Profile raising with the North East;
- Member engagement;
- Event planning;
- Communications; and
- Governance

If anyone would like a full copy of the RDP do not hesitate to contact me.

2020 Activities

2020 looks like being a really exciting year for CIPFA NE with a number of high quality, thought provoking events lined up (you can find these in section 2). However, we are adhering to the coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance issued by the Government and the Institute and as such this programme may be

subject to change to ensure the health and wellbeing of our Members.

Please be aware we will communicate regular updates through email, social media and our website.

In addition to our forthcoming dates CIPFA NE has been requested to host the 2020 Autumn Regional Forum - the first time that this event has come this far North!

The award of this event shows how highly the NE Executive is rated nationally and is testament to the hard work of Executive members. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the North East - we know it is fantastic up here and now we can show others!

Jim Dafter
President

The Forum will be held in November and will be dovetailed in with the NE Annual Conference in order that we can provide the highest quality of speakers and best event possible.

Even though we have a busy calendar of events in place, we can always make space for anyone willing to share their experiences and tell the region what you have been up to...or if anyone wants to be more involved with the Executive more widely then please let me know.....

Each e-newsletter will also be posted on our website, Facebook page and Twitter.

Thanks again for taking the time to read this newsletter.

SECTION 2 - UPCOMING EVENTS

 <p style="text-align: center;">CIPFA in the North East Dinner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Friday 15 May 2020 In light of the current Covid-19 position, and the importance of social distancing and self-isolation, we have decided to postpone the CIPFA NE Dinner, to be arranged at a later date.</p> <p>The dinner will be held on the above date at the Crown Plaza Hotel, Engie and Mazars are kindly sponsoring this event.</p> <p>The dinner represents an excellent opportunity to relax in the company of friends and colleagues in an informal atmosphere with your CIPFA NE President Jim Dafter, and senior representatives of other local Institutes. Guest of honour is CIPFA National President Carolyn Williamson.</p> <p>Tickets are attractively priced at £30, and CIPFA North East students and newly qualified members are invited to attend free of charge, as long as they book their place by emailing:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">northeast@cipfa.org by Friday 1 May 2020 Bruce Parvin CIPFA North East Dinner Organiser</p>	<p>Planned Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 March - CIPFA in the NE AGM & IFRS16 Technical Update Where: Gateshead Civic Centre, 3pm start Event postponed - we will endeavour to reschedule at a later date. • 27 March - 6th Form Management Games Where: Durham University Event postponed - we will endeavour to reschedule at a later date. • 17 June - Professional Update Event - Subject to change • September - Student Graduate Ceremony Student Meet and Greet • 5 November - CIPFA NE Annual Conference Where: The Sage, Gateshead Confirmed speakers include Rob Whiteman (CIPFA Chief Executive), John Fenwick (Nexus, Director of Finance & Resources) and Ken Bremner, MBE (Chief Executive, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust). <p style="text-align: center;">There may be more student events added shortly</p>
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Please note that the Executive will be discussing the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on practical issues surrounding our programme for the rest of the year and members will be informed via social media and further emails.

[Keep up to date with CIPFA events in the North East](#)

SECTION 3 - CIPFA UPDATES

In case you have missed them CIPFA have published the following items recently, check them out there is some interesting stuff here:

- [Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting](#)
- [2019/20 Cash Flow Statement Toolkit](#)
- [Financial Management Code](#)
..... [and many more](#)

For those that subscribe to the Technical Information Service ([TIS Online](#)) there has been a range of new releases, such as;

- [Libraries including charging](#)
- [Health and Safety Audits](#)
- [Roads](#)
- [Insurance](#)

As well as lively discussions on the forums covering VAT, Fraud and Capitalisation of development costs.

SECTION 4 - THE LAST 6 MONTHS

CIPFA North East Annual conference

Over 90 people gathered for the 2019 CIPFA NE annual conference at the Sage, Gateshead, on Friday 22 November 2019. The day started with sessions around the Northern Spire and its place in the overall development of a primary access corridor between the A19 and Sunderland's Port area, followed by a NHS update around funding challenges and priorities faced by the health service. The next session focused on the UK economy, highlighting the challenges markets and businesses are facing in an unprecedented period of financial uncertainty. Next up, a representative from the North East Counter Terrorism unit provided an insight into the workings of UK counter terrorism along with some sobering thoughts and advice on how to best protect yourself in the event of being caught up in a terrorist incident.



After a quick lunch and opportunity to catch up with colleagues, the focus moved on to public audit with a presentation from the Comptroller and Audit General of the National Audit Office covering the work of the NAO, updates on the Redmond Review and their own strategic review and a summary of the Code of Audit Practice due imminently. 'Leadership and Kindness' was the subject of penultimate session of the day, looking interactively at how a culture of kindness in organisations can reap rewards in terms of higher staff morale and lower attrition rates, to name a few. The day concluded with an update from the current CIPFA president around financial management. This highlighted how CIPFA is working to help public sector organisations in the current financial climate and the need to look at innovative ways of working, with the recently released FM Code. This is designed to provide an indicator of the financial sustainability of public sector organisations.

Autumn Forum 2020 Planning

The North East region will be hosting the CIPFA Autumn Forum in November 2020 and preparations are well underway to plan and organise this event which will welcome CIPFA volunteers from all over the country - a fantastic opportunity to showcase the North East.

CIPFA 2020 Workshop

CIPFA announced last year it was undertaking a full review of the Professional Qualification (branded CIPFA 2020). On the 21st January 2020, Niall Hamilton, CIPFA 2020 Project Manager facilitated a workshop at the Mansion House, Newcastle as part of the qualification consultation phase, gathering feedback from CIPFA members and students in the North East.

The aim of the workshop was to produce, as a group, a high level qualification based on what attendees deemed to be important skills or characteristics needed to carry out the role of a professional accountant. These traits were organised in groups of similar skills / characteristics and were revisited and revised throughout the morning until arriving at a 'final product' identifying what modules ought to be included in a refreshed CIPFA qualification.

This was a really productive group exercise which presented an added benefit of self-reflection and it will be interesting to see the outcome of the qualification review later in the year.

Inspiring Women 2

Our second 'Inspiring Women' event was held at Northumbria University 28 January 2020 and it was a great success. Attendees heard from many speakers talking about their work, career and personal experiences, providing invaluable tips and advice to empower delegates to achieve their goals. Some clear themes that emerged from the event were: the importance of mentoring, volunteering and seeking opportunities outside work such as trusteeships, and how we can learn from history about the courage and determination of other women.

After a brief introduction from Judith Savage, CIPFA North East past president, Jaki Salisbury started the day taking everyone through her career path including setting up a new unitary council in Bedfordshire. The next speaker, Lucy Winskell CBE from Northumbria University, following a similar theme, gave an informative insight into her career to date with key messages echoing those of Jaki. After a short break the Rt. Hon Baroness Joyce Quin took delegates through a fascinating insight into her book 'Angels of the North - Notable Women of the North East', from Suffragettes to MPs to local heroines! The last morning session, presented by Charlotte Windebank, discussed challenges she has faced, from humble beginnings on a boat on the River Tyne to running her own business helping connect young entrepreneurs with established business people.



Following the lunch break the afternoon started in earnest with breakout sessions covering topics including 'In conversation with....', financial planning and exploring issues and solutions facing women in the workplace. Delegates then reconvened in the main room for the final two sessions. The first, by Jo Smith, centred around career tips from her experience as a partner in a large firm. The final session of the day by Sarah Salter focused on coaching and provided an entertaining introduction, including music and dancing!

Judith wrapped the day up by thanking attendees, along with hosts, volunteers and sponsors who made the second Women in Leadership event a big success. Feedback has been very positive, so watch this space for more of these events.

SECTION 5 - STUDENTS

If you're a CIPFA student working, living or studying in the North East, we want to hear from you and how we can support you through the qualification. CIPFA events are a great way to network with other students and members, and our CPD events can be a useful complement to your studies. Let us know what kind of events you would like to see by emailing us at northeast@cipfa.org

March should have seen us undertaking our annual **Sixth Form Management Games** but unfortunately due to circumstances beyond our control we have reluctantly decided to postpone for the safety of our volunteers, the staff and school's involved. Please look out for updates as we endeavour to reschedule at a later date.

These are held in the North East every year and schools from all across the region take part. It's a highly enjoyable and interactive event which puts sixth form students in the roles of senior managers of fictitious public sector organisations, facing various challenges and making important decisions throughout the day, all whilst our brilliant volunteers, deep in their characters, throw various spanners in the works...

We're always looking for volunteers to help out with the games and there's various roles you can get involved with. If you are interested in volunteering for next year's games or would like more information on what this entails then please do get in touch.

David Clark Award



Winner of the Award in 2019 - Jason Smith, Newcastle City Council

This award is given out to a student who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to supporting their fellow students or has made an outstanding contribution in general to CIPFA in the North East. The award is presented at our Annual Dinner on 15th May, if you would like to nominate a student for this award, please email REGNEA.President@cipfa.org

<https://www.cipfa.org/members/regions/north-east/students>

We would like to encourage students to feedback any topics they would like covered in this section. Please get in touch at northeast@cipfa.org

SECTION 6 - SECRET ACCOUNTANT

An alternative perspective on the benefits of CIPFA membership

When is a New Year not a "New" Year - when it's a financial one!



No doubt some of you will be grimacing as we speak at the thought of impending long work hours, all in the name of "closing the accounts". Who'd have thought managing budgets could prove so difficult - we work with our service department colleagues to set perfectly reasonable and rational budgets, meant to last the full twelve months from April to March only for the funds in some cases to run out not long after the Christmas decorations have come down.

Maybe that's the solution for public finances, scrap the altogether artificial construct of a March year end and move everything in line with a calendar year. There are real benefits - most of the hard work would be getting done in the three most miserable months of the year, weather wise at least. Enjoy your Christmas, folks as we are closing the accounts next month - surely there is something to be said for that?

Imagine the joy of no longer needing to explain to why no leave was allowed during the "Merry Merry Month of May" - clearly a song written neither by or for accountants. All of those beautiful bank holidays, and a half term too wasted while we remind our colleagues that their accruals were really due by the third week in March and if they don't submit them soon well then we will bevery cross indeed - and they will be overspending next year !

Aha but there is another way, a third way if you like from your growing band of flat earthers, sorry "Academic Year Advocates" out there ! Having worked too long with your teaching colleagues, you are convinced that August is the true year end, and that we are all really attuned to starting afresh in September - and not just because your students have forgotten everything you have taught them previously over the extended Summer break. You even insist on preparing budgets on that basis - Department for Education, know ye no shame!?!

I can vaguely remember the consequences of an academic year, and the challenges of studying in June with the park / pub calling (delete as appropriate!) as the sun beats down relentlessly challenging the rigor of your revision schedule. Again if all examinations, (CIPFA included!) were rescheduled to be sat in late November or early December, no warm weather temptations and think how good those Christmas parties would be then !

And if this all seems a bit unlikely, let's take our lead from Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced the Calendar as we now know it back in 1582 - this involved the far more radical move of removing 10 days from the previous Julian version - imagine if you had leave booked !

Of course this may take some time ...it took 350 years to get the Calendar adopted across the whole of Europe - and we do hold somewhat less influence there these days - but at least it will give us plenty time to sort out those accruals.....

Website: <https://www.cipfa.org/members/regions/north-east>

Email address: northeast@cipfa.org

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