CIPFA North West Society



**Presidents Blog – January 2016**

Well when I originally sat down to write this blog, I thought that not much had happened in January to report on. But when I thought back, we’ve actually made quite a bit of progress this month in the North West.

Exam results were out and many congratulations to those that passed this time round. It’s a great achievement to pass now with full time jobs and a home life so a huge well done to everyone. For those that didn’t quite make it this time, don’t give up as you will get there. I failed what was Accounting for Decision Making 3 times before I finally got through and that was in the days when I you failed one exam you had to take all 4 of them again, even if you’d passed the other 3. How mean! Seriously though, if you are struggling with something specific, have a work with our Student Network as they might be able to facilitate and event to help out as there might be a few people who would benefit.

Excitement was brewing during the month as I met some of the guys from CIPFA Marketing and Redactive, who are organising the National Conference, in Manchester in July. I joined them on their tour of Manchester Central which is where the conference is being held to have a look at the facilities and rooms. I didn’t realise it was so big and considering we get a very good attendance at the National Conference, we are only occupying a part of the venue. While there I was able to plan where the regional stand was going to go so we could easy for delegates to come and see us and have a chat and a drink. I’ve got some good ideas for some regional tasters on the stand too, so make sure you come for a visit and see what’s there. On the last day we’ll be hosting the current and past National President’s on the stand so there would be a good opportunity to come and have a chat to them.

On the Wednesday evening the region hosts a dinner following the regional drinks reception for regional delegates and volunteers. We’ve not finalised where this is going to be as yet, although I think Gaucho and Australasia is probably out of the question! Keep a look out for the literature that will be coming out about the conference as it will contain information on the regional activities that are going on.

We held our first Council meeting of the year in January and although it was a relatively short agenda, still managed to be around 2.5 hours. One of the main things on the agenda was a proposal for the North West to Twin with an international region or mentor students on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). After realising that if we wanted to Twin with the Cayman Islands we’d have to fund the trips from our own pockets we came back down to earth and decided that Pakistan would probably be a region that would benefit from our support.

At CIPFA there isn’t a twinning programme as such as regions can decide what best suits them. Overseas they don’t have the structure as the UK CCAB bodies, where there are events, regional groups and overall development and support. Most of the CIPFA members in Pakistan have come through the Byelaw 5 route. But we recognised that within the North West we probably have a good strong Pakistani community and we could in some way link this to the support we provide overseas. It’s quite a new concept as yet and we are working with CIPFA HQ to develop something but if you have any ideas as to how this might work, we’d love to hear them.

We discussed our programme of events for 2016 and have a good level of seminars, conference and training events. Our AGM is on Friday 18 March starting with a buffet lunch around 12 noon. After the AGM we have two speakers, CIPFA President John Matheson talking about current and future developments in public sector finance and Phillip Lloyd-Williams who will talk on political intelligence and the skills needed to communicate across sectors, with partners, in teams and with Elected Members. Look out for the event coming soon on the website but if you want to reserve a place to this free event, you can email cipfanwnw@cipfa.org and book a place there.

A date for your diary is Friday 11 November which will be our annual conference and awards dinner. It’s a full day event and evening and you can come to the whole event or either the day or evening. The feedback we have from this event is really good so watch out for an early booking for this on the website in a couple of months

**And finally**…..well I’m off on holiday for 2 weeks now so I’m not sure that I’ll be up to much CIPFA wise for the first half of February but I have two main things planned for when I get back. One of which is the Audit, Risk and Governance Group weekend in Shrigley Hall, Cheshire. I attended this event a couple of years ago and it was great, so much crossover from audit to finance and as a non-auditor, I found it really beneficial. You can still book if you want to attend, email Stewart who is taking the bookings at stewartiwatson@gmail.com and he can send you a programme. The other is the Institute dinner in London which I’m really looking forward to, especially as its black tie.

Tough Mudder training update – I have printed off a 4 week training plan and stuck it on the wall so good progress so far hey! I think I’ll acquire an old tyre and a length of rope and drag them round a bit. That’s what they seem to do on the training videos so surely once I’ve done that I’ll be super fit. I think the word deluded comes to mind. I’m sure it will be great fun :-0

I’m also leaving my current job in March for pastures new so I’ve been busy trying to tie p all the loose ends and get everything done before I leave. Although I have been assured that no matter what I do, everything that goes wrong in my old organisation will be my fault for at least 6 months after I gone. Goes without saying really ☺

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