

# CIPFA North West Society

## Presidents Blog – November



### **Conference and Dinner Special**

November is a very special month for us in the North West as it's the month we hold our Annual Conference and Dinner. It's a big occasion and this year was no different. As our region is vast in size, we alternate holding the event in the north of the region and the south of the region to try and at least minimise travelling for our members. This year it was the North's turn and the event was held in the Mercure Dunkenhalgh Hotel and Spa in Blackburn.

### **Regional Conference**

The event got off to a great start with the opening presentation from MP Jim McMahon who talked about the regeneration happening in Oldham, despite the borough being (incorrectly) described as the most deprived area in the UK. His honest and candid presentation provoked many questions from delegates, so much so we had to cut him short.

The second presentation by Tom Jackson, Liverpool CCG and Becky Hellard, Liverpool Council was a case study on what the locality is doing to address health and social care integration. It was quite eye opening to see the extent of the situation but there were some excellent areas of best practice and new methods for working together that Liverpool are already achieving to address the issue

Before lunch, Sharon Senior from North West Employers gave a an interactive session on Coaching. It was a great learning experience to think differently and how the way we listen and assume things can alter our perceptions on situations. Sharon even let us into a secret that she uses the techniques on her husband without him knowing!

The afternoon session was kicked off by Andy Burns, Director of Resources from Staffordshire Council who talked about their transformation journey and how they achieved significant savings with minimal impact on service delivery. Andy was instrumental in designing the Aligning Public Services initiative that he produced for CIPFA and is now a nationally used technique

A bit of free consultancy came next with John Wroe and Louise Horton from Grant Thornton who gave us advice on the tax implications of setting up alternative service delivery vehicles. This is by no means a new initiative but I think the delegates recognised that they were all still struggling with the implications for different vehicles which if not modelled correctly could be make or break for these organisations

James Craig from Chartered Management Institute was next up who gave us a live demonstration of the free tools and information available to us as CIPFA students and members on the CIPFA website. There is a whole host of learning and development materials including Harvard Business Review journals, video clips and publications free for us to use, even lending a book from the library that is posted to you and you post it back once you've finished with it. Once you log into MyCipfa you can access all the material available.

And last but by no means least, motivational speaker and magician John Hotowka closed the event with his session on achievement thinking. This highly interactive session had delegates up from the audience to perform magic tricks with a leadership message. It was the highlight of the day and everyone I spoke to said they went home feeling highly energised and motivated to take over the world!

### **Annual Dinner**

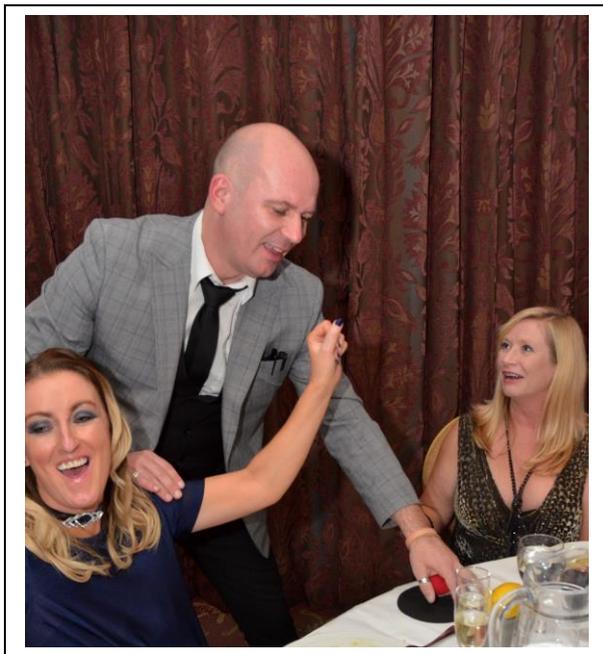
The evening played host to the Annual Society Dinner which is a fantastic celebratory event to recognise the successes of North West members and students over the past 12 months. New members Emma Skelly and Adam McKnight had their certificates presented to them by National CIPFA President Brian Roberts and student prize winners Dave Blanchard and David Hallworth received accolade for the highest scoring marks in the final Strategy papers on the PQ.

Two special awards were presented on the night – the Barbara Kay Award for lifetime contribution to regional activities was presented to Ken Finch, a former North West and North Wales President and National Council Member, who despite the split of the North West and North Wales Region some years ago is still a great supporter of the North West and MC to the Annual Dinner every year. Society Council Member and former North West Student President, Carol McDonnell was presented with the William Joliffe award as the volunteer of the year. Carol had been instrumental in re-establishing the now thriving Students Section and was very deserving of the award amid a very strong list of potential contenders.

The evening finished with a fun casino and disco and I believe, a very late bar. It was great to see everyone up and raring to go at breakfast the next morning though proving that despite being able to party until all hours, it won't deter us from getting up early to still pack in a full day.

Our amazing sponsors Axon Resourcing, Heylo Housing and Zurich enabled us to put on both events and without them we wouldn't have been able to hold such successful events so many thanks to them for their support.

**And finally.....**dedicated solely to the event, here are some photos that perhaps some people might not have wanted me to disclose 😊



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