

CIPFA South East Regional President's Annual Report for 2021

Presented to the 2022 Regional Annual General Meeting on 26 April 2022

I would like to start by thanking all of you for joining us at our first face to face AGM in two years. It is wonderful to return to Grant Thornton's offices as the world starts to regain some sense of normality. I would like to thank you all for your continued support over the past two years through these unprecedented and challenging times. We, alongside the rest of the country, have tried to adapt to ensure that we utilise opportunities to deliver events in innovative and creative ways so we can continue to support our members in the region.

At the end of my first year representing you as Regional President, I am pleased to report that the CIPFA South East Regional Council has continued to deliver a broad programme of regular online events that were designed to be inclusive for all our regional members and students. Supplementing John Barker's work on directing and resourcing this programme was a network of volunteers across the region who helped publicise these virtual events locally and therefore contributed to their success.

Our digital CPD programme for 2021 has been well received and followed a series of themes agreed by Regional Council, with topics covering the following: resilience, risk and governance; budget commentary and analysis; diversity and equality; PFI exit preparation; workplace wellbeing and managing stress levels; and public investment in place. Our April 2021 AGM and Spring Conference was also delivered virtually. We continue to utilise our regional Zoom platform to enable delegate participation.

The CPD programme for 2022 aims to include a mix of virtual and live events and will continue to explore topical issues.

Our regional council were looking forward to being the host region and welcoming colleagues at Public Finance Live, originally planned to take place in London in July 2021. However, a last-minute change in pandemic restrictions meant this became a virtual event. Whilst disappointing, the sessions and topics covered still made for an informative, interesting, and enjoyable virtual event.

The CIPFA Regional Forum was hosted in Newcastle by the North East region this year, where representatives from most of the UK's CIPFA regions attended and remain appreciative of the continuing collaboration and support across the regions. At this event we were very pleased to receive the award for 'Events Programme of the Year' and especially delighted that Phil Butlin received the Hedley Marshall award, acknowledging over 30 years of dedication and support to CIPFA and the South East region.

In November, the Annual Pan Accountancy Lunch returned to Mansion House giving a number of regional council representatives the opportunity to network with other accountancy bodies.

One of the highlights of the year was the Annual Regional Dinner. We were delighted to be able to offer this fantastic event to our regional colleagues, especially since we had been uncertain whether it could go ahead and had to leave many arrangements until the last minute. We saw record numbers in attendance and were able to raise a significant amount of money for my nominated charity, Safer Places. Prior to the dinner we hosted a Newly Qualified Members presentation ceremony for the first time in two years. We were delighted that our CIPFA President Mike Driver was able to present certificates to newly qualified members, recognising all the hard work and dedication that it takes to achieve the CIPFA qualification.

The start of the year saw the formation of the Surrey Hub Group, with their inaugural meeting taking place in June.

Our retired members group has sadly not been able to undertake any events this year as a result of the pandemic, but we hope this can restart in 2022.

Our Regional Students Network was not able to deliver any live events this year but concentrated on putting students in touch with each other virtually.

I would like to thank all our regional volunteers including members of the South East Council for their hard work and dedication, especially in light of having to continually adapt during these challenging times and as restrictions change. I would strongly urge you to consider volunteering and to help keep our region operating. We have been reliant on many of the same people for a few years now, some of whom have indicated their intention to stand down, and we need to secure the future of the region by ensuring we have an adequate succession plan.

We remain especially grateful to those sponsors who have supported our events for several years, plus several others who have sponsored or supported us for the first time this year – either with funding, virtual hosting or providing speakers: They are Grant Thornton, Zurich Municipal, CCLA, CIPFA, CIPFA-Penna, RP Martin, IMPOWER, 31Ten Consulting, Technology One, Hammond-Clark, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Trowers & Hamlins, Aberdeen Standard (Abrdn) and Allen Lane. I would also like to extend thanks to all the CIPFA HQ staff who have delivered support to our remote regional activities during the year.

As I come to the end of my first year as President, I would like to thank you all for your support over the past year and look forward to representing you in the coming year.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you either virtually or in person at upcoming regional and national events later this year.

Kathryn Long
Regional President
CIPFA South East
April 2022