

Spreadsheet

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The online magazine for CIPFA members and students

DECEMBER 2011

CIPFA calls for a global step-change to

fix the foundations

of public financial management

In this issue:

- CIPFA heads to Liverpool for our 2012 conference
- CIPFA student crowned Britain's Scrabble champion
- An interview with Neil Hunter, Chair of the Board for the Regions

CIPFA

The Chartered Institute of
Public Finance & Accountancy



The New Normal?

In this edition within my President's Diary I mention speaking about the 'new normal' at an event. What do I mean by that? Well essentially it's about recognising which changes are likely to be permanent as opposed to those which are transient in nature – and adjusting accordingly.

Of course everything is presently dominated by the financial crisis and no one really knows how that is going to turn out.

For us, we are particularly concerned about the impact on public services. There at least we have some certainty. Almost two years ago CIPFA, along with Solace, forecast much of what was likely to happen in their publication *After the Downturn*. This is still worth a read because it signals much of which is yet to come.

At CIPFA we continue to work hard to support our members through these difficult and uncertain times but one thing I continue to take great comfort from is the support and enthusiasm of our members, especially those whom I am meeting at the various regional and professional events I attend. Thank you for that.

C Bilsland

Chris Bilsland, President

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Please send your comments and suggestions for future articles to danielle.holme@cipfa.org.uk.**

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Spreadsheet

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CIPFA takes on the world



Responding to the sovereign debt crisis, CIPFA has launched a major initiative to encourage governments around the world to strive to achieve a step-change in the quality of their financial management practices

In November, CIPFA published *Fixing the Foundations*, a prospectus that aims to create new partnerships to tackle weak public financial management. The Institute argues that it is a significant global problem which will continue to inhibit

market confidence unless it is tackled in a determined and co-ordinated way across the world.

The prospectus, launched at the International Federation of Accounts annual meeting in Berlin in November, calls for a range of prospective partners to work with the Institute to make the required step-change a reality for governments across the world. Only significant improvements in all aspects of financial management – reporting, auditing, management accounting, controls, etc – delivered by trained public finance specialists, will enable real progress in transparent decision making, accountability and, importantly, confidence.

Launching the prospectus in Berlin, CIPFA Chief Executive, Steve Freer said:

‘The time has come for all governments to wake up and confront their financial management shortcomings. We need a concerted global effort to deliver a step-change improvement. The public interest demands nothing less’

Visit www.cipfa.org.uk/prospectus to download the prospectus and find out more.

CIPFA student crowned Britain’s Scrabble champion



Our congratulations go out to CIPFA student Wayne Kelly who has become British National Scrabble Champion 2011. The local government financial adviser from Warrington stole victory with the word caramel, meaning to turn into caramel, worth 69 points.

His victory was no mean feat, the title was contested by more than 300 players, and he competed in seven regional events throughout the country to qualify for a semi-

final event, at which he emerged as one of the top two players to go forward for the title.

His opponent in the London final was Gary Oliver, from Southampton. Neither of the two men had reached the final before, and Wayne beat Gary to win the prize of £2000. Wayne plans to spend his winnings on a new computer, which should come in handy for his studies.

As an enthusiastic CIPFA student he only took three days off in London to celebrate his victory, before returning to his studies for his next CIPFA exams. When asked about how he became a CIPFA student, Wayne said:

‘During a secondment into the Financial Planning and Treasury section of a Local Authority, I was offered the chance to study for the CIPFA qualification.

‘I jumped at the chance, as it would give me a springboard to further my career in local government finance and broaden my knowledge. I also might pick up a few new words to play in Scrabble!’

CIPFA heads to Liverpool for our 2012 conference



We can now officially announce that the next CIPFA annual conference, on 3-5 July 2012, is to be held in Liverpool. So, don't forget to put the date in your diary.

The conference takes place in the ACC conference centre, an impressive venue located on Liverpool's world famous Mersey waterfront, next to the Grade I listed Albert Dock, home to Tate Liverpool. The ACC has hosted high profile events including the MTV Europe Music Awards, BBC Sports Personality of the Year, and the recent Liberal Democrats' Spring Conference.

The conference centre is also a fine example of the excellent work carried out by councils across the country to regenerate our towns and cities. It was financed by Liverpool City Council, English Partnerships, the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding.



If you have any suggestions for speakers you would like to hear at the conference email: corporate@cipfa.org.uk. We will let members know when booking is open.

CIPFA in the news

CIPFA regularly features in national and local news, with spokespeople commenting on the latest news or coverage of recent work from the institute. Thanks to feedback from Conference for the Regions, we will keep you up-to-date with our media coverage via Spreadsheet.

Library surveys

Our annual Public Libraries Survey 2010-11 received considerable coverage in past weeks including in The Guardian. With information on the most popular libraries in each region, it also hit the news around the country, particularly in Norfolk, as the Norwich Millenium Library once again topped the poll as the country's most popular library. Also in the news was our Children's Public Library Users Survey, which showed that in the past year libraries have seen a rise in the number of visiting toddlers. Nursery World was one of the magazines to cover this story.

Consultation coverage

Our expertise generated more coverage after the Local Government Resource Review's consultation on business rates concluded, including within the Local Government Chronicle. This was thanks to our submission in response to the consultation and our provision of expert comment. Articles

specifically highlighted CIPFA's concerns that the review fails to consider council tax income.

The media also picked up on submissions by CIPFA Scotland to consultations. In one consultation, on new borrowing powers for the Scottish Government, CIPFA suggested that the new powers could lead to debt servicing payments of up to £250m a year. The Scottish Daily Telegraph, The Times Scotland and the Scottish Daily Mail all covered this.

Transatlantic trailing

CIPFA's work with the Government Finance Officers' Association in North America was in the press, including in Accountancy Age. The GFOA is adopting a modified version of CIPFA's FM Model.

Expert exposure

Finally, Alison Scott, CIPFA Director of Local Government Finance & Policy, wrote her regular Money Matters article for the MJ and Louise Dunne, Manager of CIPFA's Housing Advisory Network, wrote a blog for Inside Housing entitled 'Have Courage'.

Please note some of the links in this article may require a subscription to the particular magazine or newspaper.

Skills Development Award judged by CIPFA

This Autumn, CIPFA supported the Guardian Public Services Awards. Our Education and Membership Director, Adrian Pulham was one of the judges of the Skills Development Award.

Congratulations to the Scottish Social Services council who was a very deserving winner of the award for its e-learning model – which uses Sony Playstation portable consoles to give on-the-spot training to social care workers and improve their learning retention. The other nominees for the award were Framework Housing Association and Stoke city council. In addition to judging the award, CIPFA was also a sponsor, helping to fund the recognition of public service excellence.

The awards, which were held on 22 November in London, recognise and showcase innovation and best practice across Whitehall, local government, the NHS and beyond. The awards have been running for the past eight years, and other categories include:

- Children and young people;
- Complex needs Carers;
- families and communities;

- Care of older people;
- Housing and regeneration;
- Transport and mobility;
- Sustainability;
- Transformation;
- Customer service;
- Partnership working;
- Diversity and equality;
- Skills development;
- Citizenship and Volunteering;
- overall Guardian Public Services Awards team of the year; and Public Servant of the Year.

If your organisation won an award, get in touch. In these tricky times in the public sector it's great to have good news to celebrate.

CIPFA Certificates Awarded to Kosovan Internal Auditors



Congratulations to the 32 internal auditors who successfully completed the CIPFA training program for Internal Auditors in Kosovo. They were awarded with certificates at a ceremony on 27 September, in the nation's capital city Pristina.

Certificates were delivered in conjunction with the Center of Excellence in Finance (CEF), the leading training institution for capacity development in public financial management and central banking in South East Europe. Giles Orr, head of the CIPFA Education and Training Centre, attended the event.

Twelve of the 32 also successfully completed training of trainers for internal auditing and received certificates for this.



Newly awarded certificate holders were addressed by Mr Ramadan Avdiu, Deputy Minister of finance, who congratulated the holders stating:

‘With these results, the project has helped to create a powerful political, legal and institutional framework, developing local capacity for implementation.’

A representative of the European Commission, Rron Dadallaku, also attended the event, and offered support from the Commission in further building of public finance capacity.



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Our latest publications provide the guidance and information needed so that finance practitioners are better informed.

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- Whole Life Costing (2011)
- The Commissioning Joint Committee Guide to Open Public Services (2011)
- Option Appraisal: A Practical Guide for Public Service Organisations (2011)

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President's diary



One of the golden rules of presentations or articles is never to start with an apology – but I'm going to anyway. When I last wrote up the diary I was due to visit Northern Ireland for their conference but alas an illness forced me to cancel at the last moment; I do apologise to colleagues for that.

Luckily, the next day, I was able to attend the CETC 25th anniversary celebration where around 70 people representing employers, past students, the CETC governors, and the regional Executive members attended. The event also coincided with the retirement of one of the CETC tutors known to many of us – Bob Smith – who has been with CIPFA since 1986.

October started with the 2011 London Audit Group 'Chief Internal Auditors' day which – convenient for me – was at the Guildhall at which I was asked to say a few words. As a former Chief Internal Auditor it's great to have the chance to find out what is topical nowadays – in my early days it was all about moving from auditing internal controls into measuring business risk and review. Nowadays it seems there is much talk about governance and audit committees.

However, budgets are once again coming back into focus. And at my last major event in October – the Power of Local Government Conference – I gave a speech on Managing budgetary expectations within local government – adjusting to the 'new normal'. If only we know for sure what the new normal is going to be

November is always a busy month in the Regions and I was pleased to be asked to attend the Yorkshire and Humber Professional seminar in Leeds followed the next day by the North West Conference and dinner. At both events I presented certificates to newly qualified members – which was a particular pleasure.

The following week I was pleased to have a business meeting with the President from the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants, with whom we have a number of new partnership initiatives. That was followed quite quickly by a trip to Brussels for the CIPFA European Seminar, hosted by the CIPFA European Group. Later that week I hosted his party, and that of the President from the Australian Institute of Chartered Accountants, at a dinner at Robert Street.

Over dinner we spoke about the international crisis from the point of view about how virtually the whole world is affected by just one country's economic woes which again emphasised how finance is a global business and how that has to be reflected in the work of our institutes and indeed is one of the reasons for our cooperative work.

It may have been jet lag, but that dinner finished quite early and so I was able later on to attend the South East and London Dinner – always a great event and a good place to wind up the CIPFA diary.

As I said last time, being the Chamberlain of London is one of the most interesting jobs in public finance. As I write this diary I am just getting ready to attend the Lord Mayor's Banquet at the Guildhall. This is historically the event when the Prime Minister unveils his plans for the next year. Should be plenty to hear!

I look forward to reporting back to you in the next Spreadsheet. In the meantime, if you do want to contact me you need only drop me a line and I have two emails: president@cipfa.org.uk and chris.bilsland@cityoflondon.gov.uk. I'd welcome hearing from you.

Regions pull out all the stops to support members

In recognition of the pay freeze that the majority of CIPFA Members are currently experiencing, CIPFA Council has agreed that the 2012 membership fees will be held at 2011 prices.

In recognition of this decision, the Board for the Regions wanted to visibly endorse this support of members by

recommending to Council that Regions and Branches received a reduction in the subvention monies to fund their activities, and to make contributions from their reserves, to help offset the resulting budget shortfall.

An interview with Neil Hunter



Spreadsheet talks to Neil Hunter, the Chair of the Board for the Regions, about this decision and his role as Chair.

Neil is a dedicated CIPFA member and was instrumental in the creation of CIPFA North East and CIPFA Yorkshire and Humber, and was the final Chair of the former North Eastern Region.

Neil is Head of Audit, at Leeds City Council, and is also Chair of York City athletics club. He is also a keen Leeds United fan and went to school, and played in the same football team as Steve McLaren. Only one of them went on to have a successful football career, even though Neil thinks he was the better player!

It's rare to see a Board recommend a reduction in its funding – was this a difficult decision?

Surprisingly not – we reached an ‘in principle decision’ very quickly. The regions exist to support members and in this instance we felt that it was our duty to use these funds to directly benefit members facing their personal challenges.

We are working really hard to deliver the same quality programme of activities that our members expect from us for less.

This is a difficult challenge as the regions already offer amazing value – accounting for less than 1% of CIPFA’s total annual budget – but the volunteers in the regional network are a dedicated and inventive bunch and I’m sure we’ll learn much from the experience.

How would you sum up the role of the Board for the Regions?

The Board is the focal point for all regional activity. Each of CIPFA’s regions, branches and societies is represented on the Board and it encourages best practice through the sharing of ideas and achievements.

What do you see as the Board’s main achievements during your tenure?

My view is that the key to success has to be a consistent minimum offer to each and every member and we’ve made good progress in updating and significantly increasing minimum expectations. Last year we delivered over 100 CPD events – a healthy increase from 2010 and proof that the more joined up approach we are taking works.

What have been the personal highlights of your time as Chair?

There have been many. It was a great pleasure to speak at this year’s Conference for the Regions hosted by the new Wales Branch in Cardiff. The event was really thought-provoking and I had to keep reminding myself that we didn’t even have a Wales Branch until March this year. It was also a great pleasure to see the Dr Hedley Marshall Memorial Award presented to Brian Berry and George Clark. Both have made a huge contribution to the work of the Regions over the years.

How would you like to be remembered?

As someone who cared enough to challenge. A healthy Institute is in all our interests and I’ve never been one to watch from the sidelines.

Regional contact details

If you would like to get involved with your region or find out more about member events and activities, contact details for the Regional Chairs are:

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CIPFA Wales appoints new Head



Chris Tidswell has been appointed as the new Head of CIPFA Cymru-Wales.

Many of you will already know Chris as he has been working with Cymru-Wales for the past year. During his time with CIPFA Cymru-Wales, he has helped to oversee the modernisation of the branch which now has a codified constitution, AGM and formal structures in place to support members. He

was also integral to the recent successful CIPFA Conference for the Regions in Cardiff.

Chris has over 28 years' experience working in and with the public sector as both a practitioner and advisor. He was previously a Director at Charles Nicholas Consulting Ltd.

Chris will be delivering support to membership and organisations through a programme of activity including events and conferences, and promoting CIPFA in Wales to increase its influence in the public sector.

Chris commented,

'It is an honour to be appointed as the new Head of CIPFA Cymru-Wales. I hope to continue to work to promote CIPFA in Wales' profile and to establish CIPFA as a key commentator on public sector financial management in Wales.'

Steven O'Donoghue, Head of Assembly Resources at the Welsh Assembly and CIPFA Cymru-Wales President, said,

'I am delighted that CIPFA has appointed Chris to this key role supporting public services in Wales. As President of CIPFA Cymru-Wales, I and the Branch Executive will continue to work closely with Chris in ensuring CIPFA delivers for its members in Wales and in providing advice and support to public services to help steer a course through these troubled times.'

Jon Graham, Managing Director of CIPFA, said,

'I am pleased to be able to welcome Chris to the role. I look forward to working closely with Chris to develop CIPFA's offering in Wales, forging strong relationships with public services and supporting our members.'



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Education and training

T: 020 7543 5678

Regional and volunteer support

T: 020 7543 5781

CIPFA Northern Ireland Annual Conference



On 29 September more than 120 public sector officials attended the Annual Conference in Belfast.

A number of encouraging messages were delivered on the day including the prospect of strong political leadership in the next four years, the need for simplification of public sector procurement and greater involvement of the third sector and social enterprises in improving public services.



(L-R) Steve Mungavin, Head of CIPFA Northern Ireland, Michele Woods, Chairperson, CIPFA Northern Ireland Branch, Sammy Wilson MLA, Minister of Finance and Personnel and Martin Pitt, Partner, PwC

Read more about CIPFA Northern Ireland at www.cipfa.org.uk/ni

Make a difference to the career chances of young people in your area



Chris West, Director of Finance and Legal Services at Coventry City Council explains how his council is working to support 16 to 19 year olds in Coventry.

CIPFA accountants, both qualified and training, have a lot to offer as part of the programme through mentor support and also work placements.

Last year, I was approached by a colleague who had been asked to generate support for a new Career Academy based at Lyng Hall School – a large secondary in a relatively deprived area of Coventry. The aims of the charity immediately struck a chord with me.

Career Academies UK leads and supports a movement of 130 schools and colleges and over 1000 employers to raise the aspirations of 16 to 19-year-olds predominately in areas of social need. Students follow a rigorous two-year enrichment programme alongside a curriculum equivalent to at least three A levels, enabling students to progress to higher education or the world of work. Nearly 85 percent of Career Academy students progress to university, often the first in their family, or into employment. Finance and business are the most popular areas for study with 64 percent of students choosing this option in 2010.

Although I'm an accountant, I spent nine years of my career in Coventry as Assistant Director of Education. I have always been passionate about helping young people to achieve their potential and could really see how those targeted for the programme might benefit. As a father of two teenage sons, I could also see an opportunity to support some young people who may not have had the advantages that my own sons enjoy.

I have always tried to push the importance of learning and professional development, and getting involved seemed a natural extension to this. We routinely offer short term work experience placements, normally to pupils in year 10 and these invariably go well. Far from being a burden they have a strong motivating impact on staff. The Career Academy offered a chance to build on this through internships, and to use staff as mentors to the students.

Helping young people to achieve their potential fits completely with the role of a local Council that is also the

Education Authority, so I was always assured of support from Councillors and the Chief Executive.

I raised the idea with my management team and was greeted with great enthusiasm. When we sought buy-in at a wider briefing of managers, I got the same response and was amazed by the number of people contacting me to get involved. I had a real sense that at a time when many of my staff are identifying and implementing spending cuts, involvement in the programme offered a new and uplifting strand of activity where people could use their skills in a positive and rewarding way.

The Lyng Hall Career Academy has completed its first year with eight students. We have provided four mentors, senior staff time to deliver lessons, and five summer internships. I have chaired the Local Advisory Board, and tried to get other colleagues involved both at Lyng Hall and other local Career Academies. I was also able to source some free laptops, and arrange a visit to see the business operation at the Ricoh Arena (home of Coventry City Football Club).

We have all enjoyed getting involved with the students, and were really impressed with them when they were on their internships. I really believe that our involvement will be of great help and support to them individually and to the wider school.

I have also noticed the positive impact it has had on our department. The enthusiasm and commitment has astounded me, not just from mentors and internship supervisors, but from colleagues in human resources and administration (especially my PA) who have pulled out the stops to make the programme work effectively. I think there has been as much learning and development for myself and my staff as there has been for the young people – this programme takes us out of our comfort zone. As someone well-used to public speaking, addressing 40 sixth formers on their home territory made me more nervous than I have felt for a long time!

We are now into the second year and although it is still early days, it feels like a win win for all involved. In some strange but uplifting way, the challenges of the times seem to make my staff want to get involved at exactly the point when some additional support will be so crucial to young people in our city.

Anyone interested in finding out more about supporting their local Career Academy please contact alison.jack@careeracademies.org.uk.

Welfare reform brings two institutes together



The first ever joint event of CIPFA in the Midlands and the Midlands IRRV (Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation) was hosted by Coventry City Council in October.

The event 'Welfare and Council Tax reform: Big changes, Big challenges' considered the challenges that lie ahead in the world of welfare reform, and the huge policy changes being proposed by the government including localisation of Council Tax, introduction of universal credit and changes to benefit fraud investigation.

The speakers included David Airey, Director of ACS Ltd, and Chris West, the Council's Director of Finance and Legal Services.

Lisa Commane, CIPFA in the Midlands President, and Jan Evans, West Midlands IRRV President were the driving forces behind the event.

Lisa Commane said: 'The speakers gave their own individual takes on what these massive changes will mean for councils, the economy of our areas, service users we support and council staff.'

'This was a really interesting event, well attended with over 60 delegates from across the Midlands region. Jan Evans and I plan to hold another joint event in the coming 12 months, once the impact of the changes is clearer. We want to share knowledge on how authorities and individuals are standing up to the leadership, logistical and financial challenges presented by the reforms.'

Delegates debated a number of key issues including:

- Localisation of Council Tax by April 2013 and Universal Credit implementation by October 2013 – in particular the significance of the changes and the tightness of the timescales.
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Subsidy – the housing benefit subsidy forms a significant proportion

of funding (18%) in Coventry. Council tax also makes up a huge proportion of overall funding (19% for Coventry). It is a big issue in Coventry especially if there are changes proposed that will reduce funding and at a time when significant other funding reductions are in train.

- The potentially huge impact of Welfare and Council Tax reform on the local economy, for instance if there are changes that affect the housing market or spending power of individuals or councils within the local economy.
- The administration of benefits in light of proposed radical changes for individuals and for the role of councils.
- The tackling of the current welfare system – it is complicated, expensive and a product of evolved changes over time
- The proposed transfer of risk to local government from central government by Council Tax Benefit proposals. There will be a 10% cut in the grant that currently supports the scheme. The proposals require pensioners and vulnerable individuals to be protected which means any cuts must be made elsewhere.



There was also a debate on whether Government has created the right policy response, whether the communications have been well handled and how up-to-speed councils are in assessing the implications and some of the tough decisions that will need to be made at a local level to design a Council Tax Benefit scheme.

To find out about upcoming CIPFA in the Midlands events go to: www.cipfa.org.uk/regions/mid/events

South-East Summer school – good value for grown-ups

Rosanne Fleming takes us back to the balmy days of summer with a write up of CIPFA South East's Summer Conference.

Every year for the past 54 years the CIPFA South East Region has organised a two day summer school. More recently referred to as the South East Summer Conference, it remains true to its original title in delivering a mix of practical learning, excellent speakers and opportunities to network with colleagues across the public sector. So in austere times with training budgets slashed and time such a precious commodity, how do we prove to employers and taxpayers that some training events really are time and money well spent?

This year, the conference theme was 'Joker in the Pack – Radical thinking for radical times' and our speakers were selected to talk about how they had used innovation or radical thinking to overcome the wave of change that is sweeping the public sector.

David Clarke, Treasurer for Warwickshire Police Authority, spoke about how local authorities can drift away from delivering what people really want and need when swept up with driving efficiency. He pointed out that we should be working on enabling users to help themselves to services, giving them more choices and more ways of accessing services in ways that suit them. David talked about how we might approach the Big Society agenda. His advice for delivery of real localism was centred on empowering people, developing good local leadership and working with Members to establish working relationships with the public.

Business coach Roz Gadd ran a participative workshop on how we communicate in the workplace and how to do it effectively to get the best results from people. Roz started her session by asking us all to think of a frog and then describe it to the person sitting next to us. The varying descriptions simply demonstrated that our use of even the simplest words does not necessarily convey the message we want to get across. Roz went on to emphasise that during radical changes we should tell staff the truth about what is happening as soon as we can and make them feel valued. We should lead by example and motivate our staff by empowering them through being understanding, encouraging and supportive. Roz also helped us discover strategies we can use to capitalise on our strengths and improve in areas outside of our comfort zone. In changing times we are all likely to be spending more time outside of the comfort zone.

Lynne Haig and Richard Hewitt from Taylor Haig Consulting talked about how they have used their expertise to help

organisations to deliver services in a more innovative way. They explained the three stages of innovation: 1. maintaining services over time; 2. innovation within the existing paradigm, which enables existing services to keep pace; 3. Disruptive innovation to improve strategic fit over time.

They explained that disruptive innovation could be achieved by focusing on the connections between services and users. To deliver customer-focused services, we should be looking at customer needs and how they want the service to be provided, rather than delivering in a way that is convenient.

Kishamer Sidhu, Director of Finance and Contracting at North West London NHS Trust talked about the ongoing changes in the NHS and how the allocation of diminishing resources around the system affects the response of NHS bodies to the growing needs of a growing and ageing population.

Chris Bilisland talked about the direction CIPFA was taking with its newly updated qualification and on-going collaboration with other professional bodies. Chris, and Vice President Sir Tony Redmond also joined us for our annual black tie dinner in Wantage Hall's beautiful wood panelled dining hall.

The summer school also incorporates participatory learning. Delegates were split into groups and asked to work together to produce a 10 minute presentation along a designated theme. In the past, this has generated song writing, acting, comedy and delegate feedback on speakers. This group activity provides an excellent opportunity for people at different stages of their careers to work together on a level playing field, learn how to manage group situations and make their voices heard. Presentation skills and creativity are important for all finance professionals, and gaining confidence in a friendly environment can really help.

There is also time for networking and relaxing. We have a pub quiz on the first night and it is surprising what accountants know about all kinds of things! On the second night after the black tie dinner, there is karaoke in the bar for those who wish to watch or participate, or time for a drink and a chat.

The delegates left the conference with CPD hours, a certificate, but perhaps more importantly they acquired practical skills, and made some useful professional connections, if not some lifelong friends. It sounds like cracking good value for money and time to me, for the (CIPFA) kids, and for the grown-ups.

Rosanne Fleming was chair of the organising committee for the conference and is an independent consultant specialising in internal audit and risk management.

NSF Chair's update

Carl Ford, NSF Chair provides a reduced update due to exam and work pressure, plus a key member of the National Student Forum suffering from a nasty case of "man-flu". But don't worry the student section will be back to full strength next issue.

Running for exam success!

October and November have proved to be very busy months for me, both in terms of studies and activities away from studies.

On the 23rd October I ran in the BUPA Great Birmingham Half Marathon, to raise money for the Eve Brook Scholarship Fund, a local charity. The training beforehand was not only a welcome distraction from my studies, but it actually improved my mental capacity to study!

Firstly, exercise increases the amount of oxygen entering our bodies, 20% of which is used by the brain, so it helps fuel our brains ready for study!

My healthy diet in the run-up to this event was also good for my studies. The fruit and vegetables I ate was a great source of antioxidants, and my increased tuna intake meant that I was also getting omega 3. Omega 3 is great for improving brain capacity and capability, while also reducing blood pressure which combined with the antioxidant properties of the veg helps reduce stress.

Stress leads to a build up of harmful chemicals in the brain, both to impair your short term learning ability, but also over a prolonged period of time these chemicals can damage your brain's memory ability.



So, it looks like participating in the Great Birmingham Half Marathon has done my study preparation the world of good.

I'm not suggesting that you all go out and run a half marathon as part of your revision plan, but this does help underline why in the build up to exams it's important to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and remember to take regular relaxation breaks in between those study sessions

Strategies for 'exam' success

I also attended, along with other members of the NSF Executive, a meeting with Adrian Pulham, Eileen Cummins and Aga Jop of CIPFA Education and Membership department, where we discussed issues that are currently affecting students. This was a really positive meeting, and I look forward to seeing the outcomes start to filter through.

Then during November, I attended the CIPFA Midlands Annual Seminar "Strategies for Recovery" held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Birmingham. Yet again this was a fantastically well-arranged and attended event organised by CIPFA in the Midlands. There was a great variety of speakers, covering Local Government, NHS and even Central Government.

Dr Colin Sharpe, Chief Executive NHS Derby City and NHS Derbyshire County, kicked off proceedings with a very thought provoking talk on what happens "If you win the pools but spend like a lottery winner". Dr Sharpe described the many financial crises that the NHS has faced and how they are beginning to rein in expenditure.

James Binks, Lead Development Officer on Public Service Reform for Manchester City Council, gave a very insightful talk on public service reform that Manchester City Council are involved with, including the trials of community based budgeting.

Paul Heaven the CEO of Blue Sky Corporate Finance Ltd, spoke about the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), what his role on the LEP Panel was and what influence and experience, as a local Businessman, he could use to shape the future of Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Jessie Hamshar, Deputy Director Business Rates and Valuation, gave the seminar delegates the preliminary feedback from the Business Rates consultation earlier in the year and outlined what future models of devolved Business Rates will look like.



The final slot of the day was handed to Martin Cresswell, the Chief Executive of iMPower Consulting. Martin, a fully qualified CIPFA member, talked through a range of alternative strategies to managing change and how to get your message across to different stakeholders with varying needs.

All of the talks were extremely useful and insightful, and a great source of research material, for any of us about to sit the Strategic Business Management exams.

As is customary, the day's proceedings ended with a black-tie dinner and a great chance to relax and network with colleagues.

2012 Student Conference

Once the December 2011 exam sittings are out of the way, the NSF will commence planning the 2012 National Student Conference. The 2012 event will mark a landmark in the NSF history; we'll be 10 years old! So, we are determined to put on our best ever event and for that we need your help. The NSF would like to know what you want from your student conference. We are looking for ideas of speakers you'd like to see, or speakers you can recommend. We also want to find out

which topics and areas you would like our speakers to cover. Let us know what you want for your conference and the NSF will do its best to achieve this.

Email us with your ideas and we'll try to incorporate them into the planning process.

Getting social

There are many ways of getting in contact with the NSF and staying up to date with all the latest news and views of other students.

First of all you can share your views or ideas with the NSF via the rather traditional method of email, nsf@cipfa.org.uk

Or follow us on Twitter to join in all the latest debates and student news feeds @CIPFA_NSF

Alternatively you could 'like' our Facebook page

I look forward to hearing from you soon, I hope your exams went well and fingers crossed that you all get the results you are looking for on the 27 January 2012. I would also like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very happy and successful 2012.

Carl Ford
NSF Chair.

CIPFA Live Online – one year on

With almost a full year of teaching completed, and in line with CIPFA's ongoing commitment to quality assurance, we recently undertook a review of Kaplan's Live Online tuition which included surveys of all students studying through this route and their employers.

Kaplan started teaching the CIPFA qualification in January 2011 and deliver Live Online courses to professional qualification students. Students can access these courses from anywhere with an internet connection, with lectures then available for download or streaming if students have missed them or wish to view them again later.

The survey highlighted that students and employers are increasingly appreciating the benefits of CIPFA Live Online with around three-quarters of employers saying they would

recommend Kaplan to others. The detailed and useful feedback provided has also enabled Kaplan to look at the areas where they can improve their services, including providing live induction sessions for new students, improved communications with students, a service level agreement, regular face to face employer meetings and a CIPFA tutor meeting in advance of this semester's courses to ensure that all their tutors understood the particular needs of CIPFA students and improved communications with CETC regarding workbooks and support materials.

For more information on tuition provision, contact Student Support on 0207 543 5678 or visit www.cipfa.org.uk/students/current.



Student societies

If you would like to get involved with your student society or would like to find out about student focused events in your region, contact details are:

Midlands

Riz Dhanani
E: cmss@cipfa.org.uk

Yorkshire and the Humber

Claire Grant
E: yorksandhumber@cipfa.org.uk

North East

Eleanor Goodman
E: eleanor.goodman@newcastle.gov.uk

North West

James Williams
E: james.williams@trafford.gov.uk

South East

Lillian Manning
E: southeaststudent@cipfa.org.uk

South West

Peter Stabb
E: cipfasw@cipfa.org.uk

Scotland

Helen Carter
E: helen.carter@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Northern Ireland

Jill Adair
E: cipfanistudentsociety@googlemail.com

Wales

Chris Taylor
E: walesbranch@cipfa.org.uk

National Student Forum

Jane Çika
E: nsf@cipfa.org.uk

CIPFA goes international in the January 2012 PMM

Since CIPFA's international conference in March 2011, the experts that spoke at the conference have been expanding their event commentaries for a Public Money & Management (PMM) January 2012 edition themed: trust and accountability in public financial management.

The speakers, include academics, practitioners and policy-makers from government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), standard setters, regulators, politicians and commentators.

Their contribution has provided an exciting set of sometimes speculative commentaries from people who are leaders in their fields. This is especially timely considering the sovereign debt crisis, and the difficulties governments are facing at the moment.

Writing in the introduction to the new edition of PMM, Drew Cullen, Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications at CIPFA said:

'As the crisis continues, governments around the world are grappling with sovereign debt issues, emergency budgets, fiscal stimulation measures and austerity programmes.

'In many cases, they are doing so with limited confidence in the quality of information and financial reporting available in relation to the public finances. That means that decisions of dramatic importance are being taken based on information which may be incomplete, and/or inaccurate and/or out-of-date.

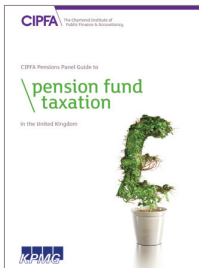
The risks and consequences of widespread failings and weaknesses in public financial management are therefore very serious... If we fail to tackle the need for improvement of public financial management, we can expect to experience ongoing difficulties in all of these areas. The overall effect will, at best, be suboptimal performance and, at worst, more fundamental system failure.'

Visit www.cipfa.org.uk/pt/pmm/ to order PMM; or contact michaela.lavender@cipfa.org.uk for more information.

New guidance on public sector pensions

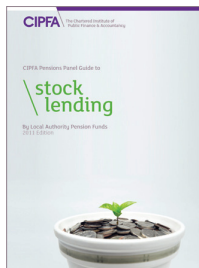
More than two million public service employees have been told they will pay £1.1bn in extra contributions from April 2012, under government reforms that continue to affect everybody.

As public sector pension schemes are under the spotlight more than ever, it is imperative that the funds are managed wisely. Our new publications will help you to understand just what is needed to manage them effectively and efficiently.



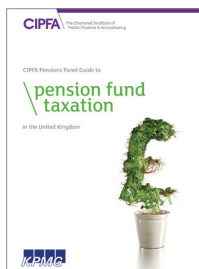
Code of Practice on Public Sector Pensions Finance Knowledge and Skills

This new code is aimed at those charged with managing pension schemes governance, including audit committees and relevant scrutiny groups. It will provide the skills and knowledge needed to be more effective in your role, and will embed the requirements needed and put these into a structure for public sector pension schemes.



CIPFA Pensions Panel Guide to Stock Lending by Local Authority Pension Funds

This guide demonstrates the need for in-house knowledge and expertise rather than being over-reliant on agent lenders for guidance. Revisions reflect what has been learnt from the Lehman Brothers collapse in 2008 and regulators such as the Financial Services Authority.



CIPFA Pension Panel Guide to Pension Fund Taxation in the United Kingdom

The Local Government Pension Scheme prides itself on the high standards of governance that its members and practitioners display – in particular the ability to keep track of all fund administration. Managed effectively, tax can add value to the pension fund but with it comes risk – it is important to get specialist advice.

Retail Savings

Members can take advantage of an exclusive 7.5% discount on the SayShopping Pass – the multi-retailer gift voucher that can be spent in some of the UK's biggest and best outlets for shopping, activity, entertainment and dining. For example, if you buy £100 of vouchers, you'll only pay £92.50 plus delivery (Delivery £1.00 P&P). The SayShopping Pass can be used at Boots, River Island, Debenhams, Comet, Waterstones, American Golf and Robert Dyas to name just a few.

For more information, go to the CIPFA Rewards website. If you wish to book by telephone, simply call 01765 609 648 and quote phbenefits

CIPFA Rewards is managed on behalf of CIPFA by Parliament Hill Ltd of 127 Cheapside, London, EC2V 6BT.

An Introduction to Treasury Management

London, 16 January 2012. Contact Alana Roberts,
E: alana.roberts@cipfa.org.uk; Tel: 020 7543 5600

HRA Self-Financing Reforms

London, 30 January 2012. Contact Rikki Ellsmore,
E: rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk; Tel: 020 7543 5600

The CIPFA Treasury Management Network Conference

London, 6 March 2012. Contact Rikki Ellsmore,
E: rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk; Tel: 020 7543 5600

Local authority accounting technical update days: Closing the accounts

London and Leeds, April 2012. Contact Alana Roberts,
E: alana.roberts@cipfa.org.uk; Tel: 020 7543 5600

The CIPFA Audit Conference

Nottingham, 23 and 24 May 2012. Contact Rikki Ellsmore,
E: rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk; Tel: 020 7543 5600.

Critical issues in public health funding 2012-2013: The CIPFA Public Health Finance Conference

London, 1 March 2012

A panel of high profile speakers will debate the implications of the transfer of public health functions to local authorities from 2013 and discuss the challenges and opportunities this presents. Delegate fee £195 & VAT; early bird fee £100 + VAT, available until 15 January 2012

For further details contact E: rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk

CIPFA Networks

For a full listing of our open and accredited courses and to book your place online visit www.cipfanetworks.net/training.

Finance for Finance Professionals

A – Z of Capital

Leeds, 24 January 2012; London, 25 January 2012

Practical Guide to Open Booking Accounting

London, 29 March 2012; Leeds, 19 April 2012

Essentials of the CIPFA Infrastructure Code

Leeds, 8 May 2012; London, 9 May 2012

Governance, Audit, Risk and Fraud

Lean Audit

London, 7 February 2012; Leeds, 27 March 2012; London, 20 June 2012

Auditing People Risks

Manchester, 8 December 2011

Finance for Non Finance Professionals

Economic Appraisal – Making the Right Choices London, 13 March 2012; Leeds, 22 May 2012

Delivering Savings through Better Contract Management

London, 23 February 2012; Leeds, 22 March 2012

Practical Tender Evaluation

London, 20 March 2012; Leeds 29 March 2012

Shared Services Architects

London, 27 March 2012

Accredited or longer courses:

Leadership Academy for aspiring or existing CFOs

www.cipfanetworks.net/training

Open Book Accounting

London, 15 – 16 May and 29 May
www.cipfanetworks.net/training

Accredited Courses

Corporate Governance Certificate

17 January 2012 – Edinburgh
www.cipfa.org.uk/scotland/governance

From discussions with Chairs and Chief Executives of public bodies, we have identified the need for a practical and structured training programme that will increase the knowledge and skills of those charged with making governance work in public bodies.

The overall aim of the programme is to increase skills and make governance more effective in organisations. Specifically, the programme seeks to:

- ensure that organisations are appropriately constituted, structured and operate the appropriate governance processes
- support good practice financial reporting as well as a system of internal controls
- exemplify standards of behaviour as a way of enabling good governance in organisations

Seminar: 13 December 2011 Scotland’s Public Services: The Practical Challenges – Edinburgh

This one day seminar will examine the fundamental, but practical, issues that are facing Scotland’s public services. www.cipfa.org.uk/scotland

Open Training Courses:

For a full listing of open training courses in Scotland visit www.cipfa.org.uk/scotland

Programme Budgeting and Marginal Analysis
12 December 2011, Edinburgh

Building a Better Balanced Scorecard
13 December 2011, Glasgow

Lean Thinking
14 December 2011, Glasgow

Perfect Proofreading
14 December 2011, Edinburgh

Influencing Skills
15 December 2011, Edinburgh



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For an exciting new way to, openly and fully, discuss the issues that matter to the public finance industry with other public finance professionals, CIPFA members, students and CIPFA join our online communities today.



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LinkedIn

Join the discussion on our CIPFA LinkedIn group and engage with your peers on the hottest topics of the moment



Facebook

‘Like’ our facebook page to see the latest CIPFA updates in your news feed. And don’t forget to comment on our posts, we want to hear from you.

