

Spreadsheet

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The online magazine for CIPFA members and students

FEBRUARY 2012

Teaching of the brand new

professional qualification

has now begun



In this issue:

- CIPFA Conference 2012 bookings open
- An update on Fixing the Foundations
- Nominate now for CIPFA Council



CIPFA

The Chartered Institute of
Public Finance & Accountancy



Looking towards 2012

Looking towards 2012 it is all too easy to be pessimistic. But I think there are grounds to be optimistic.

We have much to be proud of, in the UK, both in our public services and industry. Our local government, civil service, health service, schools, universities, pharmaceuticals, formula one racing, nano-technology, creative industries and – despite the financial crisis – the City, are all highly regarded worldwide, and this list could go on.

Regrettably, these positives risk being overshadowed by the economy's continued weakness. Thus the key is for the UK to return to growth. But we must also take this as an opportunity to position ourselves as the world economy continues to change.

We must not be fixated by euro area problems and ignore the shift in the balance of economic and financial power from West to East. This change brings tremendous opportunities as economies grow and public services are modernised – natural territory for CIPFA and our successes there are grounds for optimism.

CIPFA also has a role to play in advocating the need for a pro-growth agenda, and investment in public services. The scale of infrastructure spending needed is huge. And what better time when there is ample spare capacity.

For me, it all began in Autumn 2007 when to my surprise I saw a run on a Northern Rock branch. That's over four years ago now and I really think 2012 could see the turning point.

C Bilsland

Chris Bilsland, President

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**We welcome your feedback on Spreadsheet.
Please send your comments and suggestions for future articles to danielle.holme@cipfa.org.uk.**

Keeping up with CIPFA

You can now join us on LinkedIn, follow CIPFA on Twitter at twitter.com/cipfa, or 'like' us on Facebook. Links are provided on the CIPFA website.



Spreadsheet

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Annual conference 2012: survival of the fittest?

Survival of the Fittest has been decided as the theme for this year's CIPFA and Public Finance annual conference, in Liverpool 4-5 July, and booking is now open.

The public services environment has transformed in the past two years. And it keeps evolving – fast. Unprecedented cuts in funding and big reforms bring new risks as well as opportunities with new providers delivering public services, a localist approach to council finance, and moves towards more open transparent government. And as all eyes continue to focus on the UK economy, public services are expected to support their local economies by stimulating growth.

Making tough decisions on cuts and maintaining services with reduced budgets has become the norm. And as the search for more and more imaginative solutions intensifies, adaptability, ingenuity and intuitive thinking have become the new crucial skills for public sector leaders.

This year's conference will focus on these skills and the knowledge you will need to make sure you and your organisations are fit to take on the challenges ahead.

On the main stage, world-class commentators will provide insight into the febrile global economic situation and how that's impacting on the UK, our public spending and preparedness for growth.

In a series of practical workshops, experts and thought-leaders in their field will explore new thinking in resource and financial management from across the public and private sectors and how public services can best adapt to our altered state.

If you manage money or services in the public sector, join us in Liverpool and make sure you and your team are at your fittest for the public service evolution.

Book early and save £100.

Early bird: £695.00 (£795).

Take any number of colleagues to both days for just £400 each.

Second and every subsequent delegate: £400.

Book now at www.cipfa.org.uk/conference

‘...old forms will be supplanted by **new and improved** forms’

Charles Darwin

Paul Mason, economics broadcaster and author will open CIPFA annual conference 2012.

He is currently economics editor for BBC's Newsnight and recently published *Meltdown – the End of the Age of Greed and Why it's kicking off everywhere – the new global revolutions*.



Sir John Gieve, formerly Deputy Governor of the Bank of England and a member of its Monetary Policy Committee, will share his experience at the heart of economic and financial decision-making in the UK Government.

Sir John also served as private secretary to three Chancellors: Lawson, Major and Lamont.

Amyas Morse has been the Comptroller and Auditor General since 2009. Amyas was born in Edinburgh, and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland.



New PQ teaching begins



Teaching of the brand new CIPFA Professional Qualification (PQ) commenced at the end of January.

Most current students have now been transferred to the new syllabus; however students whose only outstanding exams are at final test stage will be given an opportunity to complete the qualification under the current syllabus, as both Strategic Business Management (SBM) and Finance and Management Case Study (FMCS) will be available in June 2012. Final test exams under the new syllabus won't take place until December.

The new qualification should help to prepare students for the current tough economic environment at the moment by giving a greater emphasis on the commercial and strategic aspects of public finance as well as a sharper focus on leadership.

We'd love members and students to get involved in helping us grow CIPFA and spread the word on the new qualification. You can download the student and employer brochures and assessment guides and syllabus information at: www.cipfa.org.uk/newpq. Or we can provide you with printed brochures and other materials on request.

Fixing the Foundations in action



In December International Director, Alan Edwards spoke about Building a global PFM profession at the International Consortium on Governmental Financial Management, in Washington DC; and in January at the FreeBalance International Steering Committee (FISC), in Istanbul, – as a keynote speaker. He presented to senior government officials and Ministers of Finance from around the world, alongside other speakers, such as Dr Steven Symansky, formerly with the International Monetary Fund, who spoke about PFM Reform and Donor Funding in Post-Conflict Countries.

Further news will be reported in the next Spreadsheet. Find out more about the Fixing the Foundations campaign at: <http://www.cipfa.org.uk/prospectus>.

CIPFA's campaign to raise awareness of the need for better governmental public finance management (PFM) worldwide is starting to attract serious interest from key PFM bodies including professional accounting organisations and firms, development banks and other donors as well as government bodies themselves.

Nominate now for CIPFA council

All Members of the Institute should have received either a letter or email letting them know the results of the recent election process for the Honorary Officer posts, and inviting nominations to serve on CIPFA Council from July 2012.

If you have not received the nominations pack, please contact the Council Secretary at council.secretary@cipfa.org.uk. Nomination forms must be received by 5.00pm on Friday 17 February 2012.

This year's Honorary Officers

CIPFA's Honorary Officers for 2012-2013 will be:

President	Sir Anthony Redmond CPFA
Vice-President	Jaki Salisbury CPFA
Treasurer	Ian Perkin CPFA
Past President	Christopher Bilsland CPFA

Following the Bye-Law changes that were approved at the AGM in 2011, Council members now serve a two-year term of office. Half of the current Council, decided by length of

service, will serve through to the AGM in 2013. Those with longer aggregate service step down at the AGM in 2012, and an election is required to fill 11 seats.

The distribution of the seats that are up for election in 2012 is as follows:

Local Government	5 seats
Health	2 seats
Statutory External Audit	1 seat
Other	3 seats

The nominations pack also invites members in three of the CIPFA Regions to nominate a regional representative to Council. The regions involved this year are:

1. Yorkshire and Humberside/North East
2. South West, and
3. Wales.

If you are interested in finding out more about serving on the Institute's Council, please contact the Council Secretary by email at council.secretary@cipfa.org.uk.

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.

The launch of CIPFA's international prospectus *Fixing the Foundations*, mentioned in the last edition of Spreadsheet received wide coverage throughout the accountancy press and internationally including in Sri Lanka and Nigeria. As a reminder, *Fixing the Foundations* aims to develop a coalition to drive up global public financial management standards to help avert future financial crises.

Linked to this, Alan Edwards, CIPFA's International Director, had a piece on global public sector finances and the UK's Whole of Government Accounts, published in Management Consultancy – *Public sector finances must go global*.

Don Peebles' analysis of Scottish police and fire service reform *Who will police the move to a single force?* in The Herald stimulated an interesting debate including a response letter from a member of Strathclyde Police Authority.

Nigel Keogh, Pensions Technical Manager, gave his thoughts on the evolving public sector pensions debate in *Austerity bites the local government pension scheme*, published in the Local Government Chronicle. He suggests that the increase in employee contributions to the scheme, coupled with other factors which make the cost of living more expensive, will likely result in additional opt-outs and will bring forward the point at which expenditure from the scheme exceeds income.

Is your authority ready for the public health transfer?

We look at the importance of public health and the challenges of its transfer to local government, in the run up to CIPFA's Public Health Finance Conference.

Public Health is a critical tool to improve the nation's health and wellbeing. The challenges of an increasingly elderly population, a higher prevalence of long term conditions, obesity, high rates of sexually transmitted infections, drug abuse, rising levels of harm from alcohol and smoking are well documented.

Estimates provided to the 'Marmot Review' for England show that health inequalities account for productivity losses of £31-£33bn, higher welfare payments in the range of £20-£32bn per year and additional NHS healthcare costs in excess of £5.5bn per annum.

The importance of public health highlights the need to be prepared for the transfer of public health functions to local authorities from 2013, under the Health and Social Care Bill, and its financial management aspects.

In a letter to senior members of staff affected by the transition, including Local Authority Chief Executives – Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health, Professor Dame Sally C Davies – stated: 'Subject to the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill, these statutory changes [the new public health system] will take place from 1 April 2013. In preparation, I would encourage all partners to engage in preparing to deliver on the new vision for public health.'

The need to prepare has led CIPFA's health panel to run a Public Health Finance Conference on 1 March 2012 titled Critical Issues in Public Health Funding 2012 - 2013: Your vital role in the transition process. One aspect of the conference will be the consideration the longer term challenges and benefits of the transfer - and what needs to be done next.

So what are the significant challenges facing the Public Health and Finance disciplines in the transition? There are a number including:

- Significant organisation change
- A scarce number of public health staff having to work across two roles in local government and the NHS
- Current NHS public health activities being clearly defined and consistently costed
- Budgets transferred from health are agreed and auditable against expenditure commitments and programmes
- Public health allocations cover existing commitments and provide for improvement
- Enabling excellent governance and co-ordination in the procurement of health and public health services given the increase in the number of commissioners.
- Developing joint strategic needs assessments and health and wellbeing service strategies that input into a complimentary framework of commissioning by the NHS Commissioning Board, GP Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Government in a pressured financial environment
- Providing excellent financial management support and evaluation for the public health discipline, making the case for investment in public health and medium term financial planning that is consistent with allocations and planned outcomes

CIPFA's Public Health Finance conference will address a number of these challenges in more detail.

For further information about the conference please contact Rikki Ellsmore; rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk; tel: 020 7543 5746. You can also keep up to speed with the latest health issues on CIPFA's health web page www.cipfa.org.uk/health and the health panel's web page www.cipfa.org.uk/panels/health.

Sharing brings savings

We look at public sector property-sharing following Francis Maude's claim that central government is using this method to '[get] a better grip' of its property costs.

Property-sharing in the public sector is nothing new, but it hit the headlines in January when the government published previously unseen data on the size of the central government property estate and Francis Maude, minister for the Cabinet Office said, speaking to The Guardian:

'To achieve our savings in property we have introduced tighter property controls, forcing departments to share space and free up buildings. For example, I have asked civil servants from the Cabinet Office to share space with the Treasury to make better use of office space. We will sell or sublet buildings we have no use for.

'This radical new approach is what led to £100m in savings in the first nine months of this financial year and I fully expect even greater savings by the end of this parliament.'

CIPFA takes the same approach as Francis Maude's through the 'one public estate' model of delivery. The place-based management approach which aims to build relationships between public service providers in order to deliver more for less from public land and buildings. While the approach focuses on managing assets throughout a certain area, each project is focused on as if it were dealing with one-estate; giving it the necessary attention and funding.

Our free guide, *One Public Estate*, presents the main concepts of the approach. With this guide and CIPFA's advice, a whole-area place-base approach to managing public assets will deliver great savings in running costs, raise capital, cut carbon emissions, and provide better access to public services.

Many public bodies already have experience of working together on one-off building projects and there are many excellent examples of public service campuses, shared buildings and one-stop shops in places across the UK. Place-based asset management applies this individual project centered approach strategically to the whole public estate within an area, encompassing a community's need for a wide variety of public services. It aligns asset related initiatives and projects across local public service providers to the best effect for the local community.

With the public owning over 180,000 assets including golf courses, pubs, movie theatres and more, management changes need to be made in order to optimize the use of these facilities for the general public. With the use of CIPFA's place-based asset management, councils will be able to adjust their financial management by pairing up with other councils to work as a collective area of assets while still maintaining a focus on each individual estate.

David Bentley, CIPFA, Head of Asset Management said: 'Improved asset management across the public sector can clearly deliver efficiencies, even more so when public sector organisations seek to coordinate their work together in local property solutions. But it's not just about efficiencies, a coordinated approach to asset management focussed on local service delivery can produce significant benefits for communities.'

Download our free guide *One Public Estate* at www.cipfa.org.uk/oneestate.

CIPFA member's extra Christmas present

Before Christmas the winner of the CIPFA member survey prize draw was announced. Sarah West – Business and Practice Manager at Huntingdon Road Surgery, Cambridge – was the lucky winner of a Kindle e-book reader.

Sarah said: 'I was thrilled to have won the Kindle. I am an avid reader so I'm sure I will use it a great deal. It was great that it arrived before Christmas too – an early Christmas present.'

This year CIPFA decided to send the survey to all members (rather than choosing a sample) this was the first all-member survey since 2007. All responses were confidential, as per the requirements of the Market Research Society Code of Practice and Data Protection Act.

In addition to contacting working CIPFA members, individual practitioners, international, associates and affiliate members, passed finalists and retired members were all included.

the new CIPFA Professional Qualification

Delivering more

Designed to deliver the skills your organisation needs for outstanding finance managers and leaders, take a look at the new CIPFA Professional Qualification.

Advancing strategic and leadership skills as well as developing greater commercial acumen, it's *the* essential qualification for today's challenging and fast-paced public services environment.



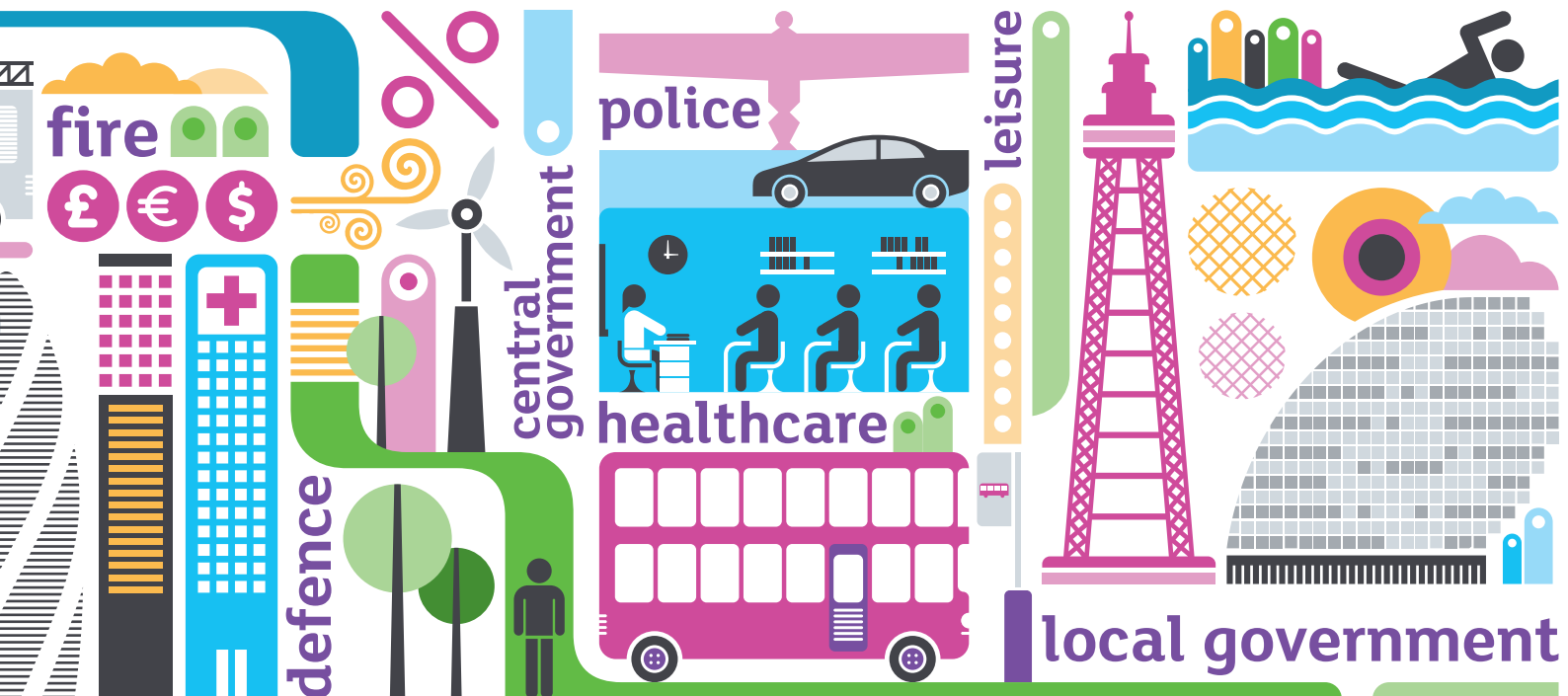
To find out more:

020 7543 5757

employers@cipfa.org.uk

cipfa.org.uk/newpq/employers

Ref: MA1035A3



President's diary



Although I will soon have been involved with CIPFA for 40 years – September 7th 2012 since you ask – it is only really in the last few years that I have begun to understand the extent and importance of CIPFA's international work and so it was with great expectations that I attended the Council meeting of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). This was held in Berlin last November and it was doubly important as CIPFA had been asked to launch our prospectus *Fixing the Foundations* there. I have written to you separately about that, but what I wanted to mention in the diary was just how warmly received Steve Freer's presentation was. It was definitely the highlight of the event and I really could not imagine a tougher audience than the Presidents and Chief Executives of the 167 accounting bodies, who are the members of IFAC. My role was very much a supporting one, but it was great to see just how widely regarded CIPFA is internationally and to bathe in the reflected glory so to speak. Whilst there I was very pleased to also sign a memorandum of agreement with the Institute of Accountants of Sri Lanka.

November is a popular month for annual dinners and the following week I was in Leeds with colleagues from the Yorkshire and Humber region. These are always pleasurable events, especially when you are visiting a region you have worked in and meet up with old friends. And interesting too, as people share with you what is going on in their world.

It is quite different attending annual dinners as a guest of other institutes. These are also enjoyable of course but they are usually somewhat more formal; however I am finding as I work through my Presidential year that I am getting to know more people from the professions and that was the case at the Chartered Accountants Ireland dinner which happened to be held at Belfast City Hall – a fine municipal building. Things are always a bit different in Ireland and we were treated to videos of Gaelic football. The rules, explained to me several times,

appear to be as simple as the application of International Financial Reporting Standards.

However, as enjoyable as dinners are the presentation of certificates to recently admitted members are quite fantastic. I was able to attend two of these – firstly in Robert Street for CIPFA South East and then back to Belfast City Hall for Northern Ireland. It was also my first visit to our Northern Ireland office. As a former examiner I have some idea of just how hard people have had to work and also how much support they need from their employers and their family. For that reason it's even better when supporters are able to attend. I'm always slightly amazed I qualified myself and am now awarding the certificates. When I first joined Council I remember my first conversation with a Council member who had been Chief Examiner in 1976 and gleefully told me that so far I was the only member of the Institute who had qualified without actually balancing a balance sheet at any exam. And if he had anything to do with it I would be the last, (the late, and much lamented, Richard Tettenborn since you ask).

Christmas and New Year did mean there were fewer events but I did manage to attend two more dinners – at the British Accountancy Awards (where I was one of the judges) and at the Society of County Treasurers Annual Dinner. Both held in the City which of course is my own patch which gives me an opportunity just to remind dining companions, in jest, that I still have some historic policing responsibilities, with my own beadle, who can be called upon to deal with people who misbehave!

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 and chris.bilsland@cityoflondon.gov.uk. I'd welcome hearing from you.

Annual Members' Statement

Annual Members' Statements were sent to CIPFA Members in November for return by 31 January 2012. If you have not yet submitted your Members' Statement you must do so immediately.

All designated CPFA's are required to complete the Members' Statement annually as this is your declaration that you have participated in CIPFA's Continuing Development scheme in 2011, or that you have been granted exemption. It is also confirmation as to whether you need to hold a CIPFA Practising Certificate, or not.

The Members' Statement also gives you the opportunity to review the contact information we hold for you and if necessary update it if your details or circumstances have changed. This will ensure that you do not miss out on communications from your Institute.

The quickest and easiest way to complete your Members' Statement is online at <https://ams.cipfa.org.uk>. You will need

your CIPFA Number, a unique number which is not the same as your membership number, and surname to access the area. Your CIPFA Number can be located on the top right-hand side of the letter in your renewal pack.

Renewal of membership fees became due on 1 January and these can be paid on-line at the same time as completing your Members' Statement.

If you need any assistance or have any queries about completing your Members' Statement please contact the Member and Student Operations team on 020 3117 1880.

Minister praises achievements of CIPFA students in Northern Ireland



On 11 January, 43 students and guests celebrated success at the prestigious CIPFA awards ceremony in Belfast City Hall.

Finance Minister, Sammy Wilson congratulated students and presented certificates to those who were successful in a range of CIPFA's qualifications in financial management, payroll administration, procurement and investigative practice.

Mr Wilson highlighted the importance of financial skills within both the public and private sector and how this will help deliver value for money. He also stressed the importance of continued investment in skills which will also be invaluable in creating a bright and prosperous economy for Northern Ireland.

Speaking at the event, the Minister said: 'Against these economic challenges there can be no doubt about the value of investing in strengthening the financial management skills we have, in both our public and private sectors. It is essential that we ensure every penny is spent as wisely as possible. I commend the employers here today who continue to make that investment, especially during this period of economic challenge.

'The achievements we celebrate today will help us to build a better economy for the future.'

CIPFA Cymru-Wales Branch Executive – setting a vision for the future



Cymru - Wales branch executive outside the study centre

John Dwight, Cymru-Wales Branch, explains the branch's vision to 2016.

The CIPFA Cymru-Wales Branch has had an eventful time since it was formally established in March 2011. The branch has been busy:

- developing and delivering a programme of CPD events for members;
- hosting the Conference for the Regions in Cardiff; and
- seeing the appointment of a Chris Tidswell as the new Head of CIPFA Cymru-Wales – we sincerely congratulate Chris.

In addition, over two days in November, the Branch Executive,

with support and guidance from Institute staff Angela Scott and Chris Tidswell, met to set out its vision for 2016. Using his contacts from a previous life, the Branch President – Steve O'Donoghue – arranged accommodation in the Snowdonia National Park's Environmental Studies Centre at Plas Tan y Bwlch – nestling on the hillside overlooking the river Dwyryd valley in the heart of the National Park.

Despite the attractions both inside and outside the study centre, an ambitious vision and how to achieve this was successfully developed. We are particularly grateful for the contributions made by Angela and Chris. This has helped us create a truly joined-up vision and to take shared responsibility for seeing it through over the coming years.

What will CIPFA in Wales look like in 2016?

The vision: CIPFA in Wales: leading, shaping and driving public services, financial management and governance in Wales.

In achieving this we will see:

Membership

- Significantly increased Student Numbers.
- Better links and connections between CIPFA members – a truly connected, participative energised and active membership.
- Members will be active advocates and promoters of CIPFA.
- Members will see value for money from their membership fee.
- Members will have pride in the Institute's activities in Wales.
- The CIPFA-Cymru Wales team will be able to influence the direction of the Institute.
- CIPFA in Wales will be seen by the Institute as self-sufficient, active, a shining star of Institute and Branch connectivity.

Profile

CIPFA in Wales will:

- be the accountancy body of choice for the public sector in Wales;
- have a strong profile against other accountancy bodies;
- be used as the authoritative source for public accounting, financial management practices and standard setters;
- be an authoritative media commentator on Welsh Government / Assembly activity;
- be known by policy makers and be involved in influencing policy making;
- be indispensable to the devolved administration.

Employers

- CIPFA will be an attractive first choice for employers in light of our profile and relevance for public services.
- Employers in Wales will understand and value the benefits of employing CIPFA members.
- CIPFA will be seen as a provider of smart, leading edge finance professionals.



How will we get there?

Three key priorities will guide the work of the Branch Executive:

1. Developing and supporting a connected and active membership;
2. Becoming a source of excellence in all our outputs and products; and
3. Becoming an authoritative commentator and policy influencer.

In focussing on these priorities, we will need to be clear on how responsibilities are allocated between the CIPFA Cymru-Wales Office and the Branch Executive, to get some of the basics right and then to use our collective Branch experience, skills, knowledge and contacts, together with the work of the CIPFA Cymru-Wales Office to take forward a range of developmental activity.

So much to do... But looking back at our achievements as an Executive since March 2011, it's a challenge we accept!

Member, Eric Pasco is interested to hear from any members who worked at Harlow Development Corporation between 1951 and 1961. If you would like to get in contact with Eric please contact Terry Woodman, Member and Student Operations Manager on **020 3117 1882** or email terry.woodman@cipfa.org.uk.

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:

Channel Islands

Anne Homer

Anne.Homee@gov.je

Europe

Leslie Milne

Europe@cipfa.org

Midlands

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CIM@cipfa.org.uk

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Cymru Wales branch member wins HFMA Award



Kavita Gnanaolivu receiving her award from Suzanne Tracey, HFMA National President

CIPFA Cymru Wales Branch Executive member, Kavita Gnanaolivu, won an Outstanding Contribution Award at the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) Annual Conference in December in London. The Outstanding Contribution Award is given to someone who has gone above and beyond their regular duties to deliver a particular project that has benefited the association.

Kavita received the Award following her overhaul of e-learning modules released in Wales earlier this year. As well as recruiting others to write the modules, she wrote some herself and quality assured the modules. Her work has benefited the association and the wider NHS enormously.

Reminder: 2012 Practice Assurance Annual Returns

If you are a Member of CIPFA's Practice Assurance scheme your annual return should have been submitted to the scheme's Coordinator by 31 December 2011.

As of 1 January your certificate has expired. You must submit your annual return so a valid certificate can be issued to you.

You should contact the Practice Assurance Coordinator, Joanna Hall immediately to either discuss changes to your circumstances or request a copy of your return.

Practice Assurance Coordinator

020 3117 1881

joanna.hall@cipfa.org.uk

practiceassurance@cipfa.org.uk



CIPFA office contacts

London, Robert Street

T: 020 7543 5600

CIPFA Scotland

T: 0131 550 7530

CIPFA Northern Ireland

T: 028 9026 6770

CIPFA in the Republic of Ireland

T: 00 35 31 668 6233

CIPFA Cymru·Wales

T: 029 2052 3470

CIPFA Property

T: 01244 399 699

Technical enquiry service

T: 020 7543 5888

Member and student operations

T: 020 3117 1880

Business Development (E&T)

T: 020 7543 5851

Education and training

T: 020 7543 5678

Regional and volunteer support

T: 020 7543 5781

CIPFA in the Midlands 2012 AGM and Development session

CIPFA in the Midlands invite members and students to attend their Annual General Meeting and development session.

This is the fourth year CIPFA in the Midlands have held an award-winning development session alongside their AGM. It will take place on 8 March 2012 at Deloitte LLP, Four Brindley place, Birmingham, B1 2HZ.

This event is open to all CIPFA members and students and will include the opportunity to meet the national Vice-President and network with colleagues across the region. If you have recently-qualified, this is your opportunity to be presented with your certificate by the national Vice-President.

The development session will be provided by the Principal of the Walsall Adult and Community College, Maria Gilling who has inspired and led the college into financial excellence in 2011. She is an inspirational leader who will give us 90 minutes of developmental thinking in the area of emotional intelligence and support in improving our inter-personal communication skills.

The event commences with lunch from 12.30. The AGM business and addresses will start at 2pm, and once concluded will be followed by a quality line up of speakers including:

- Brett Crabtree, Employer Relationship Manager at CIPFA – the new Professional Qualification
- Maria Gilling – the developmental session
- CIPFA national Vice-President – Presidential Address and issue of certificates to newly qualified members
- Regional President – Closing Remarks

The day will conclude with closing remarks by the Regional President, followed by networking and drinks from 5.30pm.

For further information please contact Steph Simcox at simcox@walsall.gov.uk or Lisa Commane at lisa.commane@coventry.gov.uk.

To book your place email Sue Smith on CIM@cipfa.org.uk.

Welcome New Members

A warm welcome goes out to all our newest Members, may we wish you a long and prosperous career! Don't forget that, as long as you are a Member you may use your designatory letters, CPFA and term yourself a Chartered Public Finance Accountant.

Johirul Alam	Staffordshire County Council
Caroline Attwood	Audit Commission
Sarah Jane Bellerby	Capita Children's Services
James Edward Beveridge	Audit Commission
Johnathan Paul Bowden	Department for Work and Pensions
Kathryn Louise Busby	Fareham Borough Council
Kerry Louise Chinn	Hampshire County Council
Alison Julia Chubbock	Breckland Council
Natalie Coates	The Grammar School At Leeds
James Christopher Collins	Audit Commission
Robert Cottrell	Audit Commission
Bryony Ellen Croome	Crannock Chase District Council
Janice Katherine Darnley	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Susan Davies	Torfaen County Borough Council
Kevin Leslie Edwards	The Ramblers
Lesley Anne Fairhurst	Stoke-On-Trent City Council
Penny Flint	PricewaterhouseCoopers, Poland
Timothy Andrew Gorman	Newcastle City Council
Steen Gourlay	Cardiff City Council
Robert James Green	Cardiff City Council
Martin David Hannan	Not currently employed
Michelle Heaney	Glasgow City Council
Jessica Heath	Audit Commission
Michael Gerard Heery	Northern Ireland Audit Office
Martyn Vaughan Hencher	Rooftop Housing Group
Fiona Susan Hesketh	Coleg Sir Gar
Richard Hill	Warwickshire County Council
Susannah Hill	Not currently employed
Matthew Jouke Hoeksma	Stoke City Council
Xiao-Ming Hu	Birmingham City Council
Satinder Singh Jas	Audit Commission
Isabel Joanne Jones	Veritau Limited
Joanna Keily	Home Office
Eleanor Kelly	The Christie NHS Foundation Trust
Michael Lavender	Scott Moncrief
Luke Linnell	PricewaterhouseCoopers UK LLP
Timothy Edward Lloyd	Audit Commission
Joni Elizabeth McBride	Audit Scotland

Stephanie Violet McCoy	Northern Ireland Audit Office
Elizabeth McCue	Fife Council
Ross James McKie	South Lanarkshire Council
Alistair James Baxter McMillen	City Of Edinburgh Council
Peter Millilken	Audit Commission
Laurie Anne Milne	The Highland Council
Lucy Katherine Monks	Deloitte
Stephen Mors	Audit Scotland
Matthew Peter Murray	Essex County Council
Pauline Murray	Audit Scotland
Rose Nelson	Glasgow City Council
James O'Donoghue	Whipps Cross NHS Trust
David Partridge	Basildon Borough Council
Eilidh Petro	Argyll and Bute Council
Lisa Dawn Proctor	Audit Scotland
Alexander Pygram	Hammersmith and Fulham London Borough Council
Yen Daniel Quach	Ministry Of Health and Long Term Care
Jane Redfern	Haringey London Borough Council
Terence James Rickeard	Audit Commission
Clare Margaret Elizabeth Rickett	Nottingham Trent University
Alexander James Robinson	Sector Treasury Services
Lorna Jane Robinson	Currently Not Working
Christopher James Scott	Department for Work And Pensions
Laura Jayne Shaw	Bracknell Forest Council
Louise Janette Smith	South Lanarkshire Council
Nicholas James Smith	City Of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Phillipa Susan Storey	Hammersmith And Fulham London Borough Council
Gillian Lee Tabener	Audit Commission
James Edward Thirgood	Audit Commission
Jenny Lynn Thomas	Denco Lubrications Limited
Emma Catherine Tunney	Hampshire County Council
Susan Mary Ward	Isle Of Wight Council
Iain Watters	Hillingdon London Borough Council
Andrew Wickes	Surrey County Council
Gareth Edward Williams	Wrexham County Borough Council
Gary John Wilson	Midlothian County Council
Nicola Jane Woods	Northern Ireland Audit Office
Sarah Joanna Wren	Mersey Internal Audit Agency

Have you recently completed all elements of the PQ qualification and been informed you are eligible to apply for membership? There is still time for you to apply for membership at our next election on 19 April.

If you have any questions about the process please contact Joanna Hall – Membership Administrator on 020 3117 1881 or email joanna.hall@cipfa.org.uk

Behind the scenes at London 2012

Bill Capps reports back from a visit to the Olympic site by CIPFA South East retired members at the end of November

London won the privilege of hosting the 2012 Olympic Games because of the quality of the plans to regenerate the area where the Olympics will be held, and to provide facilities which will be available for public use following the Games. A party of retired members from the South East were able to see this for themselves during a tour showing them the progress being made in constructing the main buildings, and sharing the plans for the area's future.

We were a party of 45 including partners. After meeting at Robert Street we boarded our coach and journeyed to Stratford where we met our guide before heading to the main Olympic site. Passing over the Lee Valley we progressed to the interestingly-named Pudding Mill and Fish Island. A short walk took us to the viewing platform from which we were able to see the main stadium. It will be the venue for athletics events and for the opening and closing ceremonies both for the Games and the Paralympics. This building, and the others which we saw, are virtually complete and are within budget.

For the Games, the Stadium will have a seating capacity of 65,000, but the design and construction allow for this number to be reduced to meet future needs. Adjacent to this building is a metal tower, the Orbit, which will be the same height as the Eiffel Tower, and become Britain's largest piece of public art. It was designed with interlocking rings and will be surmounted by a restaurant. The design is by Anish Kapoor and it has been funded by a sponsor.



The Orbit, under construction

Also visible from this point are the Velodrome, the Basketball Arena and the Aquatic Centre; each designed and built to be modified for future community use. There is also a huge

media centre. Within the area around the Stadium is a canal which, before the current redevelopment, was unusable. It has been cleared and cleaned so that it could be used to transport construction materials and later to form an attractive feature. Hundreds of trees have been planted and a park created. Some areas will be used to build houses, many of which will be managed by Housing Associations, while others will be sold on the private market.



The Olympic Stadium

After lunch at a friendly pub, we were taken past the newly-opened massive shopping centre to the area of the Royal Dock, passing the ExCel Centre which will host the boxing, judo, weightlifting, wrestling and taekwondo, to a view of the O2 arena (formerly the Millennium Dome). For the games, the O2 will be re-named as the North Greenwich Arena because the present owners are not official sponsors of the Games. This building will feature events including rhythmic gymnastics, trampoline and the basketball final. Then we went over the river to Woolwich Barracks where the shooting events will be held.

Throughout, our guide pointed out numerous points of interest and told us much about how the Games will be run. For example, no provision will be made for spectators to attend by car, but public transport is being greatly improved, and, for example, there will be a direct service from St Pancras International with a travelling time of 7 minutes. Rail stations are being modernised. The Docklands Light Railway will bring passengers close to the Olympic Stadium.

We came away from our visit with pride in the arrangements already visible and the belief that Stratford and the four surrounding London Boroughs will benefit significantly from the presence of the 2012 Games.

Introducing the new look student section

Carl Ford, gives an overview of this edition's, new and improved, student section of Spreadsheet.

The February student section is packed with brand new, regular, features, such as interviews to get to know CIPFA and NSF staff (meet...), and pieces providing tips on a particular skill or examination (focus on...). We provide more detailed regional student society contact information. This issue we also announce the date for the NSF 2012 CIPFA National Student Conference.

Meet... is a new feature where in each issue, we'll pose the same 10 questions to a member of CIPFA staff and a member of the NSF (I've started this off this issue, by volunteering as the NSF interviewee) and Adrian Pulham, CIPFA's Education and Membership Director is the CIPFA staff member.

Each issue of Spreadsheet will also help students improve their skills or gain more knowledge, with 'focus on' pieces. This issue the focus is on speed reading, and the Public Sector Financial Reporting (PSFR) examination, formerly known as Financial and Performance Reporting (FPR).

This year's NSF CIPFA National Student Conference marks a significant milestone; the NSF is 10 years old. The planning process is already well under way, check out our conference feature to see how you can get involved and help celebrate this momentous occasion.

During February the NSF will be holding its first open meeting followed by a student event in Bristol, part of CIPFA's South East region. We're also well on the way to planning our next open meetings in Newcastle, Liverpool and Leeds.



Nominate now for the Tom Sowerby Award 2012

Know an amazing tutor, colleague or mentor and want to say thank you? Well now is your chance!

CIPFA is inviting nominations for the Tom Sowerby Award 2012. The Award provides a unique opportunity for us to celebrate those who, tirelessly and often selflessly, dedicate their careers to providing an excellent and outstanding service to CIPFA students. The nomination process is open until midday Friday 16 March 2012, so get your nominations in now.

Presented by the President, at the National Student Forum (NSF) Annual Conference (part of the CIPFA Annual Conference) in Liverpool in July 2012, the Tom Sowerby award is an excellent opportunity for you to thank someone who has helped shape your career and has had a positive impact on your time as a CIPFA student.

Who is eligible for the Tom Sowerby Award?

Anyone who has given service to CIPFA students! This usually means that candidates up for nomination are CIPFA

members but you don't have to be a CIPFA member to receive the award. If you have a colleague, tutor or mentor who has shown particular dedication to CIPFA students, why not make a nomination?

In 2011 Bob Smith, one of the longest serving CIPFA trainers at the CIPFA Education and Training Centre (CETC) won the award after 25 years of service. Bob's enthusiasm, creativity and energy in the classroom was inspirational, bringing the subjects he taught to life – dedicating his career to serving the needs of students as they study for the professional qualification. If you know someone who is equally deserving of such an accolade then now is the time to nominate! To make a nomination for the Tom Sowerby Award 2012, go to www.cipfa.org.uk/sowerby. As well as the official nomination form, this website includes profiles of recent winners and should give you some ideas on the types of candidates we are looking for as well as an example of a completed nomination form.

Friday 16 March 2012 is not too far away. So we hope to hear from you soon!

Focus on speed reading

The National Student Forum gives tips on speed reading, a highly valuable skill that can save valuable time in exams, and is very useful in the workplace too.

Speed reading is a crucial tool for students at all stages of the CIPFA Professional Accountancy Qualification (PAQ), but this is especially true for students sitting the Finance & Management Case Study, which includes a case file of around 30 pages.

Reading is a skill that most people take for granted by the time they've reached eleven or twelve. When you consider that reading consumes so much of our daily lives, speed reading is a skill that people can and should practice more often. Many people believe that reading more frequently, and choosing to read more complex documents and highbrow texts means that they are a better reader, but this isn't true if you have bad habits while reading. The key to becoming a better reader, and master speed reading is to unlearn all of the old poor habits that you've picked up, then you'll be able to read faster, and more efficiently while still understanding sufficient detail of what you've read.

There are six common reading bad habits, most of which you are probably doing without even realising it.



1. Reading word by word

Children learn to read word by word, but concentrating on each individual word slows your reading down and also means that you may miss the overall concept of what is being said. Generally people who read word by word, each distinct unit at a time, tend to understand less than those who group together words, sometimes referred to as 'chunking', where the reader takes in two, three or even five words at a time.

To overcome this bad, time-wasting practice, try expanding the number of words you read at a time. Start by reading a sentence and taking in two words at a time, once you're comfortable with this then increase your range to taking in three words at a time, and keep expanding this range.

If you simply start taking in two words at a time, then you've instantly doubled your reading speed, and your understanding of the text will also improve. If you think of a written page as being like a digital image, if you just looked at a pixel at a time the image wouldn't make sense.

2. Regression

Regression is the unnecessary re-reading of text, people have a habit of skipping back a few words or sometimes even a few sentences, just to ensure that they've read the text correctly and understood it. The problem is that this skipping back seriously slows down your reading speed, but potentially a more serious problem is that regression interrupts the structure and flow of the text, this can lead to a decreased understanding of the text.

The solution to regression is tough, you must very consciously focus on preventing regression and do not allow yourself to re-read text. A technique to help prevent you re-reading text is to use a pointer (pen, pencil or finger) while you are practising. Your eyes will naturally follow the tip of the pointer, allowing you to have a smooth, flowing reading style and prevent you re-reading the text. Start off by moving the pointer slowly, then as you get better move the pointer faster. Mastering this skill will significantly improve your speed reading ability and also your comprehension of documents.

3. Reading Linearly

Right from day one we are taught to read in a linear fashion, reading across and down carefully taking in every word of every sentence of every paragraph on the page, always in a set sequence. But doing this means that you pay the same level of understanding, comprehension and attention to every single word, rather than paying the most attention to the core information of a text.

Scan pages for headings, bullet points and text that is in bold or in italics. There is an assumption that a document must be read in the order that the author intended, but there is no rule to enforce this, so scan the document quickly and make a decision which parts are important and which parts aren't. Skim over the non-important stuff and pay attention to the key materials, authors may add extra little words to make the document more engaging and pad it out. If you understand the key point, ignore the little anecdote. When reading, decide if it's required to re-read a section (despite regression being a bad habit), it is far better to re-read a paragraph twice then waste time reading every word of an unimportant, fluffy paragraph.

4. Sub-Vocalisation

Sub-vocalisation is a common habit that we pick up as children learning to read, and never really grow out of. Sub-vocalisation is the habit of reading words in your head, pronouncing every word as you read it. This takes far more time, because your eye can take in a word and your brain can understand it far quicker than you can say it.

The key to breaking this time wasting habit is first of all to acknowledge the voice is there, I'm sure it is there while you are reading this article! Once you acknowledge the voice exists, you need to turn the voice off – effectively you need to practice non-speaking. You will need to make a real conscious effort not to sub-vocalise the text you are reading, a technique to help break this habit is to focus on blocks of text, it is far harder to vocalise a block of text than a single word, this will take lots of practice until the voice has been erased. The average adult can say around 250-300 words per minute, and while you are sub-vocalising your reading speed will be limited to 250-300 per minute too.



5. Poor Concentration

Reading has to be done in the correct environment, with minimal distractions. Try reading an important document while the TV and radio is on and you will be constantly distracted, it will be hard to concentrate on one word – let alone a whole sentence or paragraph. Reading without distractions is a crucial part of your speed reading strategy, if there are lots of distractions and you are chunking blocks of text together and stopping the sub-vocalisation then you may have covered five or six pages before you realise you haven't understood a thing!

Therefore, you need to stop multitasking while reading. Give the document your full attention, poor concentration will slow down your reading speed and significantly limit your ability to understand the text and process its information.

6. Inefficient Eye Motion

People read slowly because they focus on each word and they slowly work their way across the line, but the human eye can span four to five centimetres at a time, which for most average documents is usually about five words. Another factor in slow reading is that readers fail to use their peripheral vision to see words at the end of each line.

Try to soften your gaze when reading text, by relaxing your face and expanding your gaze you'll be able to more easily see blocks of four or five words, rather than individual words. As you get better at softening your gaze, you'll notice your eyes starting to move across the page faster and faster, when you get near the end of the line use your peripheral vision to take in the last block of text, this will enable you to quicker move on to the next line of text.

Keys to Successful Speed Reading

Practice is key, the more you practice the more efficient your reading will become. But remember, it took you years to learn to read and you've been building up the bad habits ever since so don't expect to see immediate improvements.

When you first start practicing your speed reading don't dive straight into a really heavy detailed textbook, choose something lighter like a novel.

Try to benchmark your progress while you are practicing and improving your speed reading, this way you will know that all of your hard work is paying off when you can see how much time you are saving. There are lots of free speed reading assessments available online, just google free speed reading assessment.

Do not always use speed reading, sometimes speed reading is just not appropriate. If you have to read an legal document, a contract, a companies Annual Report or even a love letter, these are documents that should be read more slowly and deliberately.

Focus on Public Sector Financial Reporting

The Public Sector Financial Reporting (PSFR) examiners explain what to expect from this new paper and how best to approach, and hopefully pass it.

As students will no doubt be aware, 2012 brings the introduction of a new syllabus for CIPFA's professional qualification, examinable for the first time in June 2012. This new syllabus includes the Public Sector Financial Reporting (PSFR) paper which replaces, Financial and Performance Reporting (FPR), which has been running since December 2004.

About PSFR

PSFR is very similar to FPR. Indeed the examiners and moderator of the FPR paper are in post for the new PSFR subject, and the examination is structured in an identical way to the previous FPR examinations.

Unlike some other subjects at the Diploma level of the new professional qualification which have moved to 25 mark questions, the PSFR examination consists of six 20 mark questions, of which candidates need to answer five in the three hour examination (if time is split equally between all questions, this would equate to 36 minutes per question).

The examination is split into two sections, A and B. Section A consists of two compulsory questions and section B consists of four optional questions (of which students choose three). The two compulsory questions in section A are likely to be predominately accounts preparation questions. One will examine the local government sector, and the other will examine either the central government or health sector. The questions in section B are likely to be slightly more varied, predominately consisting of both numerical and discursive elements.

In this respect, at first glance the June 2012 PSFR paper will appear to be much like prior FPR papers. However due to major changes that have taken place in public sector accounting over the last few years students are advised to use the questions in the learning materials and question packs, rather than past FPR papers, for revision purposes to ensure they are referring to the most up-to-date material.

The overall syllabus aims for PSFR have a slightly different weighting from the syllabus aims for FPR, and these are set out here.

Overall aim		PSFR (%)	FPR (%)
A	Identify the external financial reporting framework for the public services	15	15
B	Prepare the key external financial statements for public services organisations applying relevant current statute, regulation and accounting standards	60	70
C	Discuss the regulatory framework for measuring performance in public service organisations	25	15

As can be seen, there is a greater emphasis given to the area of measuring performance within PSFR, and it is therefore likely that one full 20-mark question will be set within each paper covering this syllabus aim.

Candidates are also directed to the guidance notes for the syllabus which state that 'Consolidation should be tested in each examination paper, with marks of around 5% to 15%' (CIPFA Professional Qualification Syllabus and Syllabus Guidelines, PSFR, page 13). Students may be required to complete consolidation adjustments as part of preparing financial statements for the core areas of central government, local government or NHS trusts/Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), or they may need to demonstrate – by journal entries or through discussion – an understanding of the framework through which group financial statements would be prepared for the non-core areas of housing associations, charities, further and higher education establishments, or NHS foundation trusts. Full consolidated accounts are not required to be prepared.

We would strongly recommend that students have a sound understanding of the syllabus and syllabus guidelines for PSFR prior to sitting the examination. The syllabus and syllabus guidelines are useful documents and can be accessed at www.cipfa.org.uk/students/prospective/syllabus.

While FPR tended to have a fairly stable pass rate (between 57% and 67% over the last eight sittings), it is a subject that students commonly report struggling with. We feel this could be due to a few key reasons.

One is that, whilst the subject covers a wide breadth of areas, each area needs to be revised in sufficient depth

to appropriately answer a set examination question. For instance, students need to be able to prepare financial statements for central government supply and non-supply financed organisations, local government, PCTs and NHS Trusts, as well as having detailed knowledge on the non-core public sector organisations. The paper is constructed in such a way that it is difficult (and certainly not recommended) that students 'question spot' what might come up and therefore revise selectively. Since both questions in section A of the paper are compulsory accounts preparation questions, it is likely that the preparation of a statement of financial position and statement of comprehensive income (or equivalent), and a statement of cash flows will be required in whole or in part, over two different sector areas. So while it may have been possible within the earlier subjects of Financial Accounting and Financial Reporting to avoid statements of cash flows say, this will not be possible within PSFR. It is valuable for students to be aware from the outset of studying this subject that there will be a lot of work involved to pass the examination!

A second reason for students potentially struggling with this module is due to the fact that the subject matter of the module (covering as it does public sector organisations) does not remain stable for long. From one sitting to the next, there may be changes in the learning materials to reflect changes in regulation, policy or practices within particular public services. This may lead to what we observe as lower pass rates with candidates who are re-sitting the module, to those who are sitting it for the first time.

Tips for securing success

So what are the best ways to secure success first time? Clearly preparation is key, and you should practice as many examination standard questions as you can prior to sitting the exam. When in the exam, use your time wisely. When embarking on the reading time, remember that you need to choose three out of the four questions in section B, and it is recommended that you spread your time out evenly over all five questions. All too commonly we see strong candidates who have managed their time poorly and have made a cursory attempt at their final question. It is much more easy to pick up marks from attempting all aspects of all five questions, than to spend time unnecessarily searching for an extra half a mark on a question that has already been fairly soundly attempted.

A further common pitfall is for students to clearly spend more time (likely within their revision, as well as in the examination) on the numerical questions or numerical aspects of questions, rather than on the discursive elements. It will not be possible for a candidate to pass the PSFR paper relying on numerical competence alone. Each paper will

require students to demonstrate an understanding of the techniques they apply, and be able to discuss wider aspects of the materials. The module is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills required for financial reporting responsibilities within the public services, which goes beyond pure accounts preparation.

An example of candidates' reluctance to give appropriate attention to discursive elements of the paper can be taken from the December 2011 FPR paper. In a question which required candidates to 'prepare journal entries to account for the above transactions and for each, clearly explain the reason for your treatment' (FPR December 2011, page 6), all too often candidates produced journal entries but provided either no, or minimal explanations. The marking scheme was constructed such that there tended to be half a mark for a pair of journal entries and then between one and two marks for each explanation. Candidates who provided solely journal entries could never pass this requirement.

There is a certain degree of examination technique that can help to ensure candidates read, and thus respond, to the question as asked. In the example above for instance, for all of the transactions in the question students should have structured their answers to provide the journal and then an explanation, in each specific case. There are many questions that require two distinct parts in their answer, for example 'identify the four areas of regulation that govern financial reporting in the public services, providing examples of each for the UK Higher Education sector' (FPR December 2010, page 11), or 'describe the four statutory targets set for NHS trusts identifying what each target shows the users of the accounts' (FPR December 2008, page 10). Those students who present their answers to these two distinct parts clearly (for instance by splitting the answer script page into two parts so for each area of regulation there is an example, or for each described target there is detail on what it shows the user), tend to score higher marks than those who answer the questions more generally.

By familiarising yourselves with the syllabus guidelines for PSFR, and with plenty of practice, you will put yourself in a sound position to take on the examination!

Meet Adrian Pulham



The NSF interviews Adrian Pulham, CIPFA Education and Membership Director.

When did you join the institute?

I took up my post as Education and Membership Director with CIPFA in 2005, and qualified as a CIPFA member in 2008.

Why did you choose to study with CIPFA?

Firstly, because I wanted to experience the training we offer our students so I could do a good job of supporting them. Secondly, because a high quality financial management qualification is incredibly useful to all senior managers, not just practising accountants!

What advice would you offer to current CIPFA students about the current job market?

No one can deny that times are hard, there are fewer jobs out there and the competition for them is intense. For that reason, relevant qualifications are more important than ever to people hoping to stand out in a very competitive environment. And right now, the state of the global economy and the importance of improving public financial management mean that the CIPFA qualification is fantastically valuable to public sector employers.

What advice would you offer to PQs just embarking upon their CIPFA studies?

Exams can seem like the top priority – and, of course, they are very important. But don't forget that professional training is also embedded in what you learn at work too. You will be

required to submit your Initial Professional Development Scheme (IPDS) portfolio in due course, and this will be made easier if you bear this in mind throughout your studies and collect the relevant information as you go along.

If you could be anyone for the day, past or present, who would you be?

Leonardo da Vinci. I have just been to the brilliant Leonardo da Vinci exhibition at the National Gallery in London. While this focuses on Leonardo's time as a painter at the Court of Milan, I was reminded of his abilities as an engineer and philosopher as well as an artist – a true polymath!

What's your favourite animal?

The pig. A noble animal, and you can eat every part!

What was the last book you read?

The Sense of an Ending, by Julian Barnes. I've just turned fifty, and predictably seem to be reflecting more and more on existential matters!

What was the last movie you watched?

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy – a great film, with real texture, both visually and in the narrative. This motivated me to watch the classic BBC Alec Guinness television series again and compare the two.

What was the last song/album you purchased (downloaded)?

Bad As Me, by Tom Waits (and always purchased in the HIFI version if possible – I have a real problem with the poor sound quality of downloads – too compressed and so mean with the bandwidth). I've been a Waits fan since back in the day, and this is a classic for those of us who love to spend a little time on the wrong side of the tracks.

If Hollywood made a movie about your life, who would you like to play the lead role as you?

I would like to see George Clooney in the lead role, but I fear it might be Ray Winstone!

Meet Carl Ford



The NSF interviews Carl Ford, National Student Forum Chair.

When did you join the institute?

I joined CIPFA as a student member in January 2009, and I'm looking forward to full membership soon (hopefully).

Why did you choose to study with CIPFA?

My initial reasons for 'choosing' CIPFA was because I was told to! I work for Birmingham City Council and the only chartered qualification they will support is CIPFA. But, I'm so glad that I am with CIPFA. CIPFA's Professional Accountancy Qualification (PAQ) prepares PQs so well for life in corporate management, not just number crunching.

What advice would you offer to current CIPFA students about the current job market?

Things are tough in the job market at the moment, but there are opportunities out there. The best advice I can offer is to do something that makes your CV stand out from the crowd and get you noticed. Things like volunteering for your local student society or the NSF will really stand out on your CV and show potential employers you are willing to go the extra mile.

What advice would you offer to PQs just embarking upon their CIPFA studies?

The best advice I can offer is from personal experience, start work on your Initial Professional Development Scheme (IPDS) portfolio EARLY, including retaining evidence!!!! Ever since I started Diploma level of the PAQ I'd been planning how I should tackle IPDS, but with work and study commitments, my IPDS really struggled to get passed the planning stage.

Now I am frantically running around trying to get evidence to support my IPDS activities.

If you could be anyone for the day, past or present, who would you be?

That's a really tough question! I guess if I could be anyone then I'd probably say Richard Branson. He's a brilliant example of someone who didn't do particularly well at school, but proved through hard work and entrepreneurial spirit that anyone can make something of their life.

What's your favourite animal?

My favourite animal would have to be fish, I think watching fish swim around in a garden pond or tropical fishes swimming around in their tank is so peaceful. One of my best holiday memories is scuba diving in the Mediterranean Sea, just off the coast of Turkey, and swimming with all the fishes.

What was the last book you read?

I've just finished reading *The Rose Labyrinth* by Titania Hardie, an entertaining book that seems to get more and more surreal as it progresses! It was a decent read, but not a patch on any of the Kate Mosse books.

What was the last movie you watched?

The last movie I watched at the cinema was *Arthur Christmas* and I thought it was absolutely brilliant. I swear I laughed for most of the movie (probably more than the kids in the cinema!). The last movie I watched at home was *Midnight in Paris*, I loved this film. It was funny (Rhinoceros discussion!) but also reminded me what a beautiful city Paris is.

What was the last song/album you purchased (downloaded)?

The last album I downloaded was *Breathe* by Kenny Thomas, his first album for ages, and I really like the fact that there are songs from different genres on there. I especially love *The Show is Over*.

If Hollywood made a movie about your life, who would you like to see play the lead role as you?

I think it would be great for Simon Baker to play my role, with Ewan McGregor a close second.

CIPFA Student Conference is coming to Liverpool

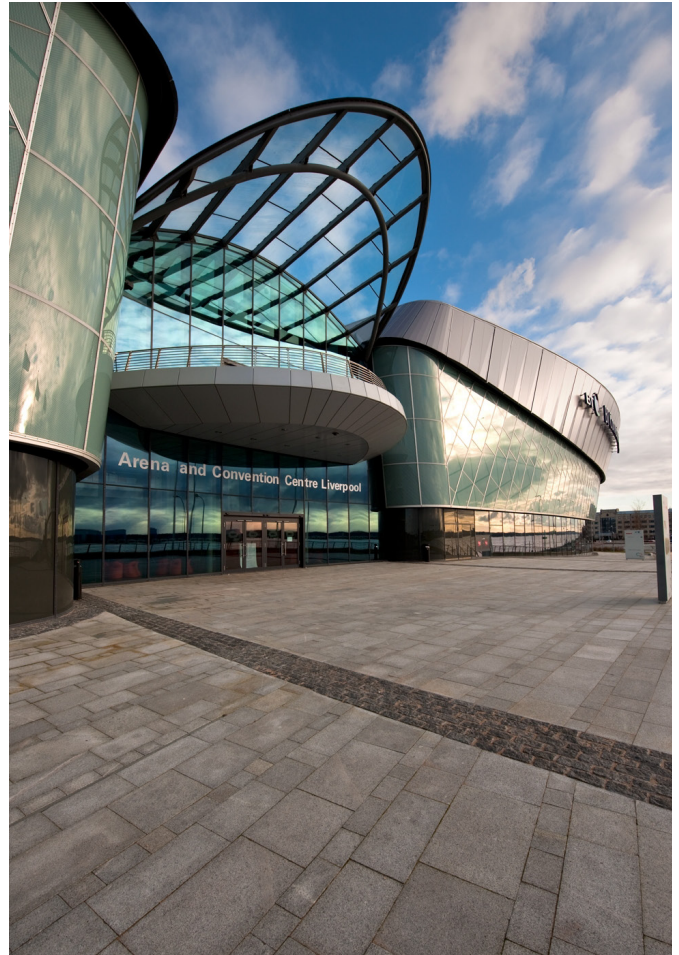
The CIPFA NSF can now officially announce that the 2012 CIPFA National Student Conference will take place on 4 July in Liverpool. So, don't forget to put the date in your diary.

The 2012 CIPFA Student Conference marks the 10th Anniversary of the NSF, and takes place before the CIPFA Conference 2012 at the ACC Liverpool. This impressive venue is 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 planning process is already in full swing, but the NSF are more than happy to hear students' views on what the focus of the 2012 conference should be, and suggestions of speakers.

In the past student conferences have attracted great head-line speakers like Michael Tipper and his *How to read faster and remember more* presentation, or the equally amazing Kate Hull Rodgers and her *Pearls of bizdom*, with tips on how to put some humour back into the work place.

These are tough acts to follow, but the NSF is working hard to ensure we celebrate our 10th anniversary in style!



Get involved in the discussions at:

nsf@cipfa.org.uk



@CIPFA_NSF



CipfaNSF

National Student Forum representatives

The National Student Forum (NSF) representatives are detailed below. The NSF represents the interests of students on a national level, and we attract representatives from all of CIPFA's regions.

Scotland

Alastair McMillen – Vice Chair
Finance Manager
City of Edinburgh Council

Northern Ireland

Nicola Woods
Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office

North West

Carol McDonnell
Senior Auditor
St Helens Council North East

North East

Vacant
Interested in joining? Then email us to get involved!

Yorkshire & Humber

Vacant
Interested in joining? Then email us to get involved!

Wales

John Bellett
Trainee Accountant
Cardiff City Council

Midlands

Chris Perfitt – Honorary Secretary
Management Accountant
Derbyshire Community Health Service

Carl Ford
Business Analyst
Birmingham City Council

South West

John Bougeard
Senior Accountant
Plymouth City Council

South East

Jane Cika
Senior Accountant
Westminster City Council

James Donegan – Honorary Treasurer
Project Officer
London Metropolitan Police Service

Contact the National Student Forum

It has never been easier to contact the NSF, you can send us an email, tweet us and/or follow us on Facebook.

nsf@cipfa.org.uk



@CIPFA_NSF



CipfaNSF

Your region

CIPFA regional student society representatives are listed below. Each CIPFA Region either has its own Student Society or a dedicated student liaison officer for the region.

Scotland

Chair – Emma McGrotty
Vice-Chair – Kirsty Stanners
Past-Chair – Keira Shepperson
Contact –
cipfascottishstudents@cipfa.org.uk

Northern Ireland

Chair – Nicola Woods
Vice-Chair – Laura McCullagh
Past-Chair – Jill Adair
Secretary – Lynsey Gardiner
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North West

Chair – Carol McDonnell
Executive – Faria Shaheen
Executive – Ruth Baker
Executive – Frank Fallon
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Vice-Chair – Victoria Hundleby
Past-Chair – Rizwan Dhanani
Secretary – Owen Campbell
Contact – CMSS@cipfa.org.uk

South West

Chair – John Bougeard
Contact – NSF@CIPFA.org.uk



South East

Chair – Lillian Manning
Vice-Chair – Michael Godfrey
Past-Chair – James Donegan
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Contact –
southeaststudent@cipfa.org.uk

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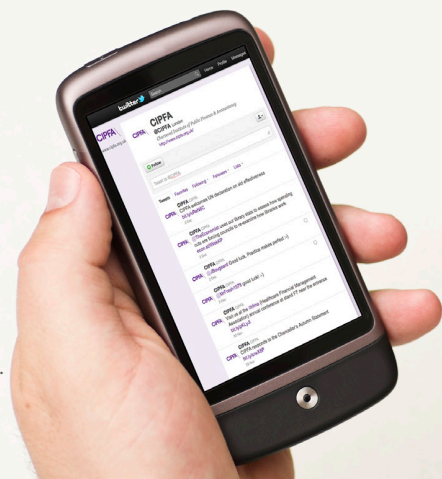
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A selection of CIPFA events are described below. CIPFA also provides a wide variety of training and development. Our 2012 directory is out now at: www.cipfa.org.uk/training.

Critical issues in public health funding 2012/2013 March 1 2012

This event will outline the challenges and benefits of the transfer of public health functions to local authorities and will also examine ways of achieving better value for money than is currently provided. Delivered in partnership with the Public Health Action support Team, speakers include Bob Alexander, Finance Director of NHS South of England Cluster, Dr Ruth Hussey, Regional Director of Public Health and Medical Director for NHS NorthWest and Jazz Bhogal, Senior Team Leader, Public Health Outcomes at the Department of Health.

London
Rikki Ellsmore
020 7543 5746
rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk
<http://seminars.cipfa.org.uk>

CIPFA Treasury Management Conference 2012 March 6 2012

During a period of unprecedented economic uncertainty, our conference will examine the key factors facing treasury managers over the duration of the medium term financial strategy: what is the forecast for investment and borrowing?; how can we manage the risks? Treasury Management continues to be one of the most fast moving and challenging areas of local authority finance, this event will help you keep up.

London
Alana Roberts
020 7543 5854
alana.roberts@cipfa.org.uk
<http://seminars.cipfa.org.uk>

Developments in Children's Services Finance March 8 2012

This one day conference will provide delegates with an update on the most significant issues affecting children's services finance and showcase both the challenges and potential solutions. The current climate is one of unprecedented reform – one key area, among others, is the growth of academies and free schools and the financial reporting requirements these bring.

London
Rikki Ellsmore
020 7543 5746
rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk
<http://seminars.cipfa.org.uk>

Local Authority Accounting Conference April 10, 17 2012

This annual event on local authority accounting and finance offers an in-depth examination of all the current issues that you, as a local government strategic finance professional need to know, in particular: the emerging issues on the IFRS Code for 2011\12 and beyond; and developments in SeRCOP to ensure CIPFA members comply with all the mandatory requirements of SeRCOP as it defines best practice in terms of financial reporting.

London (April 10)
Leeds (April 17)
Alana Roberts
020 7543 5854
alana.roberts@cipfa.org.uk
<http://seminars.cipfa.org.uk>

The CIPFA Annual Audit Conference\audit in a continuing era of change May 23 & 24 2012

The 2012 2-day conference will continue, and build on, the themes of last year's event. It will bring together auditors and audit committee members to discuss the key strategic developments affecting the public services, examining how new legislation, initiatives and professional development affect the assurance, governance and audit agendas.

Nottingham
Rikki Ellsmore
020 7543 5746
rikki.ellsmore@cipfa.org.uk
<http://seminars.cipfa.org.uk>