

CIPFA North West Society

Presidents Blog - July



It's all about the Conference

Well folks, it was all about the national conference this month and for us in the North West, a packed 4 days. The day before the conference I chaired a free event that we hosted for people who weren't usually able to attend the conference to try and highlight some of the topics that were being presented. It was very well attended and we had some excellent speakers on the bill.



Here's me with two of the speakers from the event – Donna Hall, Chief Exec of Wigan Council and Paul McKeivitt, Director of Finance at Wigan Council with some of the Wigan delegates, including our own former Student President, Liga Berzina. Donna and Paul presented on how they are engaging the community in order to make savings for the Council. And Paul even told us the story of Little Red Riding Hood!

After our event was the AGM where new President Brian Roberts was sworn in. I said a few words on behalf of the host region in thanks of outgoing President John Matheson, which I was more than happy to be asked to do especially as John has been a great supporter of the regions during his presidential year.

On the Tuesday evening I was delighted to be invited to the National President's dinner. This is the last year I will probably be invited to this as NW President but I might have to try and find another way to be invited! It really is a fabulous celebratory evening and made even more special this year, to be held in fabulous surroundings at Manchester Town Hall. It was Brian Roberts wedding anniversary too, but at least his wife Kim was there to enjoy the evening with him



The Conference kicked off on the Wednesday and the North West Region had a stand that was directly outside the auditorium. We had an amazing contingent of volunteers who were either out and about on the streets around the venue directing people to the entrance, manning the stand or talking to delegates, providing traditional northern refreshments or encouraging delegates to have a go at the quizzes on offer. We had a good contingent of visitors to the stand and were able to talk to them about the regional activities and support they were able to access as members and students. I think we were most visited for our northern refreshments though as for some it was the first time for a taste of Chorley Cake, Manchester Tart, Boddingtons and Vimto!



Some of our Volunteers
 Jessica Harper from CIPFA
 South West Region,
 Jeremy Valentine, Jen
 Pope and Carol McDonnell



Our Manchester Tarts,
 cans of Boddingtons
 and our 'name the
 birds' quiz on the
 regional stand



Nick Atlay and
 James Williams
 and I raising our
 glasses to our
 stand visitors

On the Wednesday evening the region hosted an informal dinner for regional Conference delegates to attend. We had quite a few attendees from other regions and also had some central CIPFA staff join us which was a great opportunity for us all to get to know each other in a social setting rather than just talking about what CIPFA related things! It was also an opportunity to say thanks to our national CIPFA colleagues who support us to support our members and students as we sometimes lose sight of why we're really here.

On the Friday we had our Regional Council meeting where we welcomed new Council members Andrew Buck from Liverpool Council and Jayne Stephenson from the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner. After a debrief about the past few days we are now into full planning for our Regional Conference and Dinner on 11 November in Blackburn. We have some excellent speakers on the bill including a motivational speaker with a difference – closing our event is John Hotowka who includes magic in his presentation. I've seen John speak before and he's absolutely superb. By interacting with the audience and using magic tricks, the topics he talks about and how to use his techniques in the workplace really stick in your mind and are not forgotten.

And finally.....well I finally made it up Ben Nevis this month. It was a bit of a slog but felt like a great accomplishment to make it to the top. We lost any sight of view about ¾ way up but up to then the scenery was spectacular. There was a bit of snow near the top which was interesting as it was very slippery. On the way back home the next day I stopped off for some whale watching in Oban and of course didn't see any! However we did see some seals and a sea eagle. Olympics next month – I absolutely cannot wait – I'm not going to Rio, I'll just be glued to the TV!

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