

## Presidents Annual Report 2015

### Introduction

I was proud to be elected president of CIPFA North East last March and would like to look back on what the branch has achieved in the last 12 months. Public services have been going through lean times in the past 5 years and no more so than in the North East. The finance function plays a key role in the provision of services especially when budgets are squeezed and therefore being part of that function gives me job satisfaction beyond measure. Looking back on my first year as president I am reminded that we reaffirmed our strategic priorities for the branch, which were:

1. We will provide **great services** to our members through an interesting and varied series of professional events and social events
2. We will model as a regional institute the **increased collaboration** that our members need to undertake in their day to day professional roles
3. We will **increase our influence** both regionally and nationally with local employers, regional and national bodies and the wider profession
4. We will **support our students** in the region by continuing to explore options with CIPFA nationally to deliver an improved offering

### 2015 – So what did we do?

In line with our strategic priorities we delivered a programme of high quality events developing the best bits of previous year's to finely hone our offering into a professional programme that meets member's needs.

The highlights were:

- *North East Regional Cyber Crime Conference*

Joining up with the North East Fraud Forum to attend the first ever North East Regional Cyber Crime Conference, on the theme of "What Price Reputation?" This was a platform to bring North East businesses and public sector organisations together, to raise awareness of the current cyber threats, and to explore means of preventing a cyber-attack within organisations.

There were over a dozen different speakers during the day, from the police, industry and academia, covering a wide range of subjects. The day also saw further promotion of the North East Regional CiSP (Cyber-security Information Sharing Platform), a joint industry/government initiative to share cyber threat and vulnerability information.

- *North East Accountancy Awards 2015*

For several years CIPFA in the North East has sponsored an award for the Public Services Finance Team of the Year at this prestigious event, as a way of recognising the excellent work of public sector finance and raising the profile of CIPFDA within the region.

The winners of the Public Services Finance Team of the Year were Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) & Sunderland City Council for their collaborative work in health

and social care. Other public sector winners on the night included the Accounting Technician of the Year which went to Abiola Dina of the National Audit Office and the New Accountant of the Year which was awarded to Mark Rutter of the National Audit Office. Richard Dale of Newcastle University won Finance Director of the Year.

- *Annual Dinner 2015*

Over 70 CIPFA members and guests attended the annual dinner, held at The Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne generously sponsored by Zurich Municipal, Sellick Partnership, and Cofely GDF Suez, in the company of official guests from other institutes and newly qualified members, David Jobson and Felicity Cowie, both from Gateshead Council.

Mike Owen, National President, highlighted CIPFA's achievements on a local, national and international level, thanking local representatives George Clark and Jane Cuthbertson for their contributions to the work of the National Institute Council. Bruce Parvin paid tribute to the work of two charities, the Teenage Cancer Trust and Clic Sargent, and all guests gave generously to a raffle which raised over £400.

- *CIPFA North East Golf Day*

For this year's CIPFA North East golf day the location was Matfen Hall, We had 21 players of varying golf ability but all seemed to enjoy themselves. The winners of the morning team round were the experienced team of Barry Blinkhorn, John Little, Tony Kelly and Matt Hughes with a very credible 42 stableford points.

The afternoon 18 hole competition was won by Chris Lindsay, Campbell Dearden won the Lady Lambert trophy, nearest the pin on the 9th hole was Tony Kelly, while Anthony Murphy outdrove everyone on the 10th hole to win the longest drive prize.

Thanks must go to sponsorship and support from: Matfen Hall; PWC (Greg Wilson); Technologyone (David McKechnie); George Clark and Andrea Hewitt.

- *Baker Tilly (RSM UK) - Public Bodies Tax Update Seminar*

The seminar was aimed specifically at those working at a senior level within finance and HR roles across local authorities, police, fire, ambulance and non-profit emergency service providers.

Delivered by Caroline Rai, Tim Bridgett and Scott Harwood from Baker Tilly Tax Team and John Hanratty from Nabarro LLP this extremely informative programme covered a range of subjects from VAT treatment to employing consultants and many points in between. In attendance were representatives from the regions local authorities, including both Finance and HR, NHS and CCG's (approx. 20 delegates in total).

- *Pizza and Pre-Seen Event*

Students who were sitting the Finance & Management Case Study exam were invited to this free event at Newcastle Civic Centre on 10 November 2015 to get a feel for the exam conditions and sorts of questions they were about to face.

- *Best Possible Value Regional Launch - Leeds*

The Future-Focused Finance initiative held four free regional learning lab events in the autumn of 2015 to introduce finance professionals and their colleagues to value and value-oriented approaches to decision-making.

The learning labs, hosted by CIPFA, were held at various venues around the country, including one in Leeds. These interactive all-day workshops introduced delegates to materials that can help approach value and better decision-making in a practical, hands-on way.

- *Fifth Annual Regional Conference*

Almost 100 delegates from across the North East of England and the rest of the country gathered at The Sage, Gateshead, on Friday 20 November 2015 for the fifth annual CIPFA in the North East Regional Conference.

Expertly chaired by Sir Tony Redmond, Past President of CIPFA, the conference themes were Devolution, Growth, and Public Sector Reform." With sessions covering the future landscape of the North East; managing public service demand; the devolution of public health services in England and the integration with social care in Scotland; the outlook for the next generation as they grow older, and the future of risk management from local services.

The inaugural Joint EY/CIPFA in the North East Award was presented to Jim Mackey (NHS Improvement) and Tom Clarke (Nexus). There was a plenary session from CIPFA updating student members and introducing CIPFA's Professional Experience Portfolio (PEP) for students.

The mix of presenters and topics and the panel sessions which allowed further exploration of cross cutting themes all resulted in an interesting, enjoyable and often challenging day at the conference. Thanks go to organisers, speakers, sponsors and delegates make the conference a success.

I have tried, above, to give a brief flavour of the events we have ran during the year and I would recommend reading the reports on the website for further details.

## **2016 what next?**

With the continued challenging financial position for public services, especially in the North East and the proposed changes to their delivery vehicles coupled with changes in the delivery of the finance function itself, it is imperative that we provide a focal point for members in the region to develop their skills and make a positive contribution to the lives of the citizens in the region.

We will continue to strive to provide members with the service they require. Working on our four strategic priorities we will continue to provide support for students, putting on educational and social events that excite and engage our members. In the future we will look to make such events as flexible in their delivery as possible to make it easy for members to engage with us. We need to work closely with other organisations, to learn from them and to share best practice with them to the benefit of the region, as a whole and CIPFA

as a brand. CIPFA is going from strength to strength and we must support its aim both locally, nationally and internationally. This region with the enthusiasm and energy of the membership can play a big part in how CIPFA develops. I will call of every member to give as much time and talent to making us a powerhouse within the CIPFA family and to support the development of our profession, our institute and our region.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am extremely fortunate to have dedicated and talented colleagues on the Executive Committee. The events programme is down to their hard work, diligence and all round enthusiasm, and for that I'm truly grateful. Such a programme requires a lot of work by many people and the executive are supported by volunteers and sponsors and I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in 2015. Here's to pushing the boundaries further in 2016.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the efforts of two particular stalwarts of the Executive Committee who are stepping down this year. George Clark and David Young have been active members of CIPFA North East for more years than they would care to mention. Their energy, enthusiasm and organisational skills have helped this region deliver the best of programmes we are all the better for their input. Hopefully they will still be available to pass on their knowledge to the next generation of volunteers.

Due to the dedication of Peter Sullivan, our website and social media lead, there are numerous ways to contact us, so please do so through any of the following routes and make our region something to be proud of.



[www.cipfa.org/regions/north-east](http://www.cipfa.org/regions/north-east)



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**March 2016**