

Cipfa Midlands Region – Annual Report 2009

1. Overview by the Regional President

2009 represented the first year of my period as Regional President. It has been a year of consolidation for the Midlands region of CIPFA following several years of change. The Institute has prioritised regional development during 2009, publishing new regional guidelines with developing performance indicators and the introduction of minimum common performance standards through its Board for the Regions. These formed the basis for discussions at the Conference for the Regions in Leeds in September 2009, and will continue to be developed, shaping and providing focus to the ways in which regions deliver services to the membership.

Our membership is spread across a wide geographical area. There has been a notable change in the gender balance of our membership of almost 3000 in recent years, and around one-third in total are female. It is also encouraging to see that even in these difficult times there has been a slight increase in the number of student registrations, though this will be a considerable challenge to sustain.

The regional development plan for 2010 includes a summary of the progress made in 2009, with considerable notable **highlights** throughout the year.

- We extended our already very successful programme of sixth form management games
- The Students' Society was successfully reformed and relaunched
- Our extended AGM day at AFC Telford United was hugely successful and led to the Regional President and the Chairman of AFC Telford taking part in a workshop at the 2009 national CIPFA Conference in Manchester
- Our annual dinner and seminar was again well received
- Our CATS seminars again were well attended and contributed significantly to the region's funding

We also faced a number of **challenges** during 2009

- Increasing financial challenges for employers adversely affected the ability of members to volunteer and attend events
- Area activity in particular has suffered because of this
- The changes to the regional guidelines required new reporting processes which have taken some time to become clear

Our successes as a region have always been very dependent on our volunteers and the support they receive from their employers and colleagues. Without this, much of our activity would be impossible, and I am always amazed by their enthusiasm, hard work, and commitment. On all our members' behalf, and on behalf of the Institute, I would like to thank them for all their efforts.

In particular I would like to pay tribute to several who resigned from Council during the year. Chris Gill stood down from Council but continues to play a leading role in the organisation of the 6th Form Management Games, has been a huge support to the Council, and is much missed – the Council expressed their appreciation for his efforts with a presentation at the Annual Dinner. Neil Farquharson has relinquished his role as Chairman of the CATS organising committee after several years' sterling work. Paul Simpson was Deputy Treasurer for CIM until the end of 2009. Their efforts have been much appreciated over the years and we wish them well for the future.

One area of communication which is not a strength nationally is keeping in touch with our retired members. The Midlands Region has been one of the few to try to do this by organising specific events through the December Club. A Summer outing to RAF Cosford proved popular in 2009, and the December luncheon in Birmingham also attracted 20 people. We will be trying harder in 2010 to contact our retired members in the hope that more will want to keep in touch.

The role of Regional President is impossible to fulfil without the very considerable support of all of my colleagues on the Regional Council, for which I thank them profusely. I would also like to acknowledge the huge amounts of work, usually unseen, unsung, but in my case always appreciated, done by my Vice-President Lisa Commane, and our Council's Secretary, Sue Smith. I look forward to continuing to serve as Regional President in what promises to be a busy and exciting 12 months to come, and would encourage all of our membership to participate in celebrating the 125th anniversary of the founding of our Institute.

Steve Wellings

President, Cipfa Midlands Region

2. Events in 2009

One of our main functions is to hold events of varying types across the region. In total during 2009 we held 21 events. This included a revised format for our Annual General Meeting, incorporating a different type of venue and a seminar-type post-AGM session. We also held 5 sixth form games, 4 CATS seminars, and another successful annual seminar and dinner. More details about each of these are shown on our website, but a summary is shown below.

Date	Event Title	Nos.	Location
21.1.09	Comprehensive Area Assessments	32	Deloitte B'ham
6.3.09	AGM & Professional Coaching	73	AFC Telford Utd
29.4.09	Internal Audit Update Day	44	Matlock
29.4.09	The World Class Finance Professional	36	Northants CC
14.5.09	December Club Summer Outing	20	RAF Cosford
23.9.09	Computer Forensics & Digital Investigations	50	Derby Council
2.11.09	Student Soc. Launch/ IPDS Workshop	27	CETC B'ham
6.11.09	Annual Regional Seminar - Innovation	90	Hyatt, B'ham
6.11.09	Annual Regional Dinner	82	Hyatt, B'ham
9.12.09	Annual December Club Lunch	20	B'ham
Total		474	
17.6.09	6 th Form Management Game	11	Worcester Uni.
24.6.09	6 th Form Management Game	11	Wolverhampton Uni.
1.7.09	6 th Form Management Game	16	Nottingham Trent Uni.
8.7.09	6 th Form Management Game	11	Staffs Uni.
8.7.09	6 th Form Management Game	11	De Montfort Uni.
Total		60	
14.9.09	CATS 1 – IT	67	(Scarman House
21.9.09	CATS 2 – Fraud	79	(University of
20.11.09	CATS 3 – Governance	87	(Warwick
27.11.09	CATS 4 – Emerging Issues	53	(
Total		286	
Grand Total		820	

The numbers shown for sixth form games relate only to CIPFA volunteers. In addition to the above, we take part in the Professional Institutes Network for the West Midlands, which enables our members and students to attend events run by other professional bodies.

3. Sixth Form Management Games

Back in 2006 CIPFA in the Midlands had a vision - to promote CIPFA to students prior to them making career decisions. The 6th form management games were resurrected as a consequence, creating a stimulating and fun environment for 6th form students to sample the scope, complexity and impact of financial management in the public sector. This plays an important part in “selling” CIPFA to young people who may one day decide to pursue accountancy as a career, and to highlight the CIPFA qualification to their teachers and the lecturing staff at the host universities.

The 2009 round saw five games staged in universities across the Midlands region. Firstly, we would like to thank the universities providing the venues – Staffordshire, Nottingham Trent, De Montfort, Wolverhampton and Worcester. About 170 students from 23 schools took part. This year’s winners were Stourbridge College, Adams Grammar School Newport, The Kings School Grantham, Coundon Court School Coventry, and Walton High School Stafford.

The events also have a CPD benefit for the volunteers who help to run the games. This is sometimes not appreciated by those who have never seen one of the games in progress, and who cannot therefore appreciate first-hand the effort made by those volunteers who act as mentors or play different roles during the course of the day. Anyone wishing to volunteer will find the effort very rewarding.

Schools are given some background information before the event. Then, when they arrive on the day, each school forms a management team, with each student taking on the role of a member of that team. We provide them with information relevant to their portfolio and then set them a task – for this series they were asked to produce a draft report by lunchtime. A few unexpected interruptions add to the spice of the day before the teams present their deliberations to a board of governors.

The enthusiasm and enjoyment of the days are captured in some of the comments taken from feedback forms:

'The game was structured around a real life situation giving us valuable insight into the issues public sector organisations face'. Student quote

'As usual, excellent materials. The kids really enjoyed it - I was particularly pleased to see one of my quieter / shy students smile all day.' Teacher quote

'It was great! The students I worked with had some pre-conceived ideas about public financial management. But the games showed them that there are many tough and varied decisions to be made.' Volunteer quote

'Thanks for an excellent experience. I got a lot out of it and it was nice to give something back'. Director of Finance volunteer quote

'A' level students do not get much exposure to the Public Sector, let alone its finances, despite it comprising a major part of the nation's economy. CIPFA Midlands Region believes that these games, in a small way, help to bridge the gap. In some cases relationships have been developed with the schools and CIPFA volunteers have been going into the school to talk to students about their work as accountants and its impact on their organisation. One member of staff commented that this was the best game to bring his students to as they got so much out of the day.

4. Annual Seminar and Dinner

The annual seminar and dinner is now a well-established feature of our annual programme and was again held at the Hyatt Hotel Birmingham in early November. The theme was Innovation – especially topical given the financial and economic challenges facing the public sector – and it was a lively and thought-provoking day.

The speakers came from a variety of backgrounds and tackled the subject from different perspectives.

Jon Gorrie, Partner with KPMG, opened the day by challenging delegates to think about sustainability and the role of the Finance Manager, explaining the complexities of accounting for sustainability and the importance of this growing agenda.

He was followed by Chris Leslie, Director of the Local Government Network, who gave a fascinating insight into the issues from a central government perspective, linking these to the public sector at more local levels.

Seb Elsworth, Chief Executive of the Association of Chief Executives in Voluntary Organisations, then offered a perspective from the “third sector”, with a strong plea to consider that sector's capacity to provide solutions which are both cost-effective and in many cases innovative, as part of a mixed economy of service provision – very topical in the current climate.

A hugely entertaining session followed from Chris West, Director of Finance and Legal Services at Coventry City Council. His passion to complete the vision of the Ricoh Arena in Coventry was matched only by his determination to see a railway station link to the site, and his clear frustration to date at not being able to achieve it! Rail travel will never seem the same again...

The final session of the day was a more personal and reflective one from Sarah Wood, who gave a practitioner's perspective of the challenges which lie ahead for finance staff, punctuating her address with examples of the innovation which have quietly improved public services in the UK over the years.

The seminar, and the annual dinner which follows, are cornerstone events in the Midlands Region's calendar and do much to promote the work of the Institute with other bodies.

The annual dinner was attended by the President of the Institute, Roger Latham, and his wife, along with representatives of our partner Institutes from the West Midlands Professional Institutes Network (PIN). One highlight of the evening was the local presentation of one of the Institute's more heavyweight trophies, the Sir Harry Page Award, to the Finance team from West Midlands Police for their innovative work on a new performance management system. Derek Smith collected the award from the President on behalf of his team and a crane was organised to take it on to Lloyd House afterwards.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by an eighties tribute band, 80s Invasion, who were extremely successful in keeping the audience active throughout the rest of the evening.

The event could not have taken place without the hard work of the organising committee and the support of our sponsors, to whom we are very grateful.

In particular, the Sellick Partnership play a large part in organising donations for our nominated charity. For 2009, this was Compton Hospice, and £430 was raised to help the Hospice in its valuable work supporting patients and their families at the most difficult times. A big thank you to everyone who contributed to that very worthy cause.

5. Website

During 2009, CIPFA decided to introduce a common "brand" across the Institute's activities, including standardising URL addresses. As a result of this most access to the CIPFA Midland Region part of the CIPFA website is now through the CIPFA homepage and it is no longer useful or accurate to try to record "hits" in the way previously shown in the annual report. Nonetheless, the Website continues to be the primary method of communication with our members and students, and contains details of current activity as well as an archive of valuable material for their use.

6. Implementing Our Development Plan

The 2010 Development Plan for the Midlands region also contains a review of progress against the 2009 plan, to show how progress is being made from year to year. Almost all of the activities and targets shown in the 2009 plan

were met or exceeded, with only 3 not being achieved – in every case for reasons outside the control of the regional Council.

7. Summary Activity Indicators

The requirement to provide information to CIPFA has changed during the year to match the requirements of the Institute's Regional Guidelines. The new information has necessitated a change to our information collection and collation. The information submitted to CIPFA at the year end was as follows.

No.of CPD event hours	51
No. of best practice events	10
% members attending at least 1 event	3
% Customer satisfaction with events	79
No. of student events	1
% students attending at least 1 event	11
Annual survey – members' satisfaction %	72
-- students@ satisfaction %	70

8. The Work of the Regional Council

The Council of CIPFA Midlands Region meets at least four times a year to plan and monitor the implementation of a range of activities and events to support the students and members across our region, and in particular to enhance the CPD opportunities available to them. With the exception of secretarial support, all of the work undertaken by the Council is on a voluntary and unpaid basis and could not be done without the support of our families and employers, for which we are extremely grateful.

For 2009 the officers of CIPFA Midlands Region were:

Regional President	Steve Wellings Independent Consultant
Regional Vice-President	Lisa Commane Assistant Director (Special Projects) Coventry City Council
Secretary	Sue Smith
Deputy Secretary	Ben Jarrett West Midlands Police
Honorary Treasurer	Andy Morley Chief Accountant, Leicester City Council
Deputy Treasurer	Paul Simpson Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Immediate Past President	Carole Mills-Evans Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Resources, Nottingham City Council

The table below sets out the attendance at Council for the elected members and officers and their main roles.

Name	Role	Attendance
Steve Wellings	President	4/4
Lisa Commane	Vice-President	4/4
Sue Smith	Secretary	4/4
BenJarrett	Deputy Secretary	2/4
Andy Morley	Honorary Treasurer	2/4
Paul Simpson	Deputy Treasurer	0/4
Brian Berry	Regional Representative	4/4
Carole Mills-Evans	Immediate Past President	1/4
Andy Burns	Council member	2/4
Jon Crockett	Council member	2/4
Paul Hector	Council member	3/4
Alison Jarrett	Council member	2/4
Tony Kirkham	Council member	3/3
Michael Kitts	Council member	2/3
Mark Lawrie	Council member	1/4
Sean Pearce	Council member	3/4
Brian Roberts	Council member	1/4
Stephanie Simcox	Council member	1/4
Melanie Brittain	Area Council representative	1/4
Suzanne Jones	Area Council representative	2/4
David Kane	Area Council representative	0/4
Mark Lovell	Area Council representative	1/4
Phil Spencer	Area Council representative	0/4
Colin Sharpe	Website co-ordinator	0/4
Martin Jones	Academic representative	0/4
Chris Lees	Academic representative	2/4
Neil Farquharson	CATS representative	0/4
Nick Harvey	NSF Representative	1/3
Carl Ford	Student Society Representative	0/1
Kelly Watson	CIPFA Student	1/4
Azhar Ashraf	AAT representative	0/4
Mike Burns	HFMA representative	1/4

