

CENTREPAGE

Welcome to the winter edition of **CENTREPAGE** - CIPFA in the Midlands has been very busy since the last edition, so here are a few highlights.....

I have included a copy of the **CIM Development Plan for 2009** setting out our plans for the future. We have to submit our plan for the following year to Robert Street by June of the previous year, so we have to plan well ahead. Please let me know if you have any comments or questions about the plan and your suggestions for further developments.

We have had another very successful round of **Sixth Form Management Team Games** organised by Chris Gill. Chris worked especially hard this year and ran four games involving 21 schools, building on the three events we have run in previous years. This was only possible because of the 56 volunteers from the Region who gave their time and support and helped to make the games such a success. This is an important aspect of our work where we hope to attract students into studying with CIPFA and thereby opening up the wide range of career choices the qualification presents.

Since the last edition of **Centrepage CIM** has won two national awards. The first was for **Innovation** and the second for **Most Improved Region**. **CIM** is the only CIPFA Region to win two awards in the same year.

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The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy was founded in 1885 and it aims to be the leading accountancy body for financial managers working in and with the public services.

CIPFA in the Midlands is one of ten regional organisations that provide an annual programme of activities which update members and students on current issues and enhance professional skills as well as offering a range of social activities.

Please do not hesitate to contact us either through the website at www.cipfamidlands.org.uk or by email to CIM@ipf.co.uk

I hope to meet you soon at one of our events.

Carole Mills-Evans
CIM President
Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Resources at Nottingham City Council



2009

Development Plan

Each year CIM Regional Council produces a detailed development plan which critically appraises our previous years activities and sets out our targets for the following year.

The development plan focuses on optimising the work we do to support members and students in our area by providing topical courses, events, seminars, management games and the website www.cipfamidlands.org.uk

In 2007 the Midlands Region supported 2,458 members and 482 students. We provided 14 seminars/events/workshops, an annual seminar and annual dinner and ran 4 6th form management games. The games involved 147 delegates and 55 facilitators from the Region. Our plans for 2008 and 2009 are even more ambitious, with many events already having taken place this year and more planned; please check our website for details.

The Regions Development Plan supports the Institutes National Development Strategy 2006 - 2010, but we recognise that our main focus is on the Regional membership and students. Therefore, our activity is based on understanding your needs and delivering support locally, whilst contributing to the national direction and plans. Like all regions, CIM relies heavily on the input of volunteers, and we are very fortunate in having an excellent group of hardworking and committed colleagues who have devoted time alongside busy working and personal lives to support the invaluable work of CIPFA nationally and locally. We are also grateful to their employers who allow time off for CIPFA activity and also host many of our events, keeping costs low and improving accessibility for all.

Building on our successes in 2008 and our recent recognition at the CIPFA Conference for the Regions as the 'Most Improved Region' and receiving the award for 'Regional Innovation of the Year', we look forward to

providing an enhanced programme of activities in 2009. We will proactively implement our development plan, and work in partnership with Robert Street and other stakeholders in promoting the success and sustainability of the CIPFA qualification.

The 2009 Development Plan is constructed around three strategic principles:

- Adding value to our members and students
- Enhancing the value and eminence of our Region and Institute;
- Responding to the diversity agenda in public services;

These three principles are delivered through seven themed work areas; with every council member being involved in one or more of these themes:

1. Website and electronic communications
2. Annual seminar and dinner
3. Promoting uptake and development of the CIPFA qualification and CPD
4. Events activities, and resources to support members and students in their working roles and personal development
5. Valuing and maximising the contribution of our students and volunteers
6. 6th form management games
7. Financial strategy

During late 2007 and early 2008, CIM council members engaged in a series of activities and workshops to reflect on our activity and re-energise for the future. The workshop resulted in a revised SWOT analysis which in turn informed a repositioning of our work and activity focus for the remainder of 2008 and the whole of 2009. As a result, the 2009 Development Plan aligns with a new regional strategic direction. In summary we exist to:

- Be an effective face of CIPFA in the Midlands Region
- Provide a conduit for professional networking
- Provide support to the development of our members and students
- Be a vehicle for promoting CIPFA as a qualification _ including CPD

- Reflect views of CIM members and students to the Institute
- Provide low cost, high quality, value for money CPD events
- Be a conduit between Robert Street and members
- Develop and enhance the profile of the Institute
- Support and encourage students and student membership
- Support employers
- Develop and share knowledge
- Deliver within CIPFAs national performance scorecard

The CIM regional structure has been redesigned to enable the delivery of these principles through four themed work areas; with every council member being involved in one or more of these themes:

Communications

- Communicating with members/students
- Employer/member interaction
- Consultation forums
- Website
- Raising our profile to stakeholders and the public at large

Events and Activities

- Providing courses, seminars, events and activities
- Providing networking opportunities
- Student training
- Area Events
- Regional Seminar
- Students society
- 6th form management games
- Joint Robert Street events

Good Governance

- Managing well
- Providing leadership to the Region
- Operating within the Institutes framework
- Delivering against our plans
- Financial strategy and value for money

Sustainability and Growth

- Visibility, participation and representation
- Encourage and support volunteers
- Promoting uptake of the qualification and CPD
- Supporting the head of profession role

So far in 2008 we have held 10 events and 4 6th form management games, have relaunched the Students Society and supported a number of careers fairs. We also launched the Northern area, with our first seminar being held at the National Ice Centre in Nottingham on 24 September. If you would like to get involved with CIM Council or in helping to arrange one of our events or seminars please contact me.



South East Area

Contact: Kelly Watson
KDWatson@northamptonshire.gov.uk

or
Mark Lovell
malovell@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

Southern Area

Contact: Melanie Brittain
m.brittain@worc.ac.uk

Western Area

Contact: Alison Jarrett
JarrettA@walsall.gov.uk

Regional Events

Contacts for the Midlands Regional events are as follows:

Annual Regional Seminar and Dinner

Contact: Lisa Commane
lisa.commane@coventry.gov.uk

CATS (CIPFA Audit Training Seminars)

Contact: Neil Farquharson
neil_farquharson@birmingham.gov.uk

6th Form Management Team Games

Contact: Chris Gill
Chris.gill@staffordshire.gov.uk

Student Society

Contact: Simon Bentley
simonbentley@solihull.gov.uk

Double success for region in National Awards

CIPFA in the Midlands were once again successful in scooping awards at CIPFA's Conference for the Regions being the only region to win **two** of the five awards on offer.

National President Caroline Mawhood presented the Innovation and Most Improved Region awards to Mark Lawrie, Immediate Past President of the Region at the recent Conference for the Regions in Plymouth. (Pictured below)



The Innovation award recognised the Region's move to web based CPD certificates, maintaining the link with the return of event feedback, whilst reducing the amount of paper in circulation. The development has worked well in the region and following discussions with the CPD team at Robert Street has been recognised as best practice with the intention of sharing this across other regions.

The submission for the Most Improved Region identified a considerable number of improvements made during the last year, which hopefully members will have benefited from. This includes a review of the roles, responsibilities and governance of the Regional Council; an updated web strategy; a re-organisation of the area restructure with the rejuvenation of events in the Northern and South Eastern Area alongside the Southern and Western Areas; the strengthening of the Students Society; an increase in

the number of 6th form management team games staged during the year; and an increase in the number of people volunteering to assist with regional activities in one form or another. In announcing the award Caroline Mawhood commented on the Regions improvement in so many areas of its work.

The annual conference is an opportunity for representatives of each of CIPFA's regions to get together to discuss areas of mutual interest in looking at better ways of supporting the CIPFA membership (members, students and retired members) in their particular region.

The conference was preceded by a civic reception at Plymouth's Council House where delegates were welcomed by the Lord Mayor of the City of Plymouth and then it was down to business, this year looking predominantly at the regional core activities and how we could share best practice.

We shared some of our outcomes from the Management Team Games - greater involvement with potential future members, opportunities to visit 6th forms and universities, an increased number of volunteers working for the region as people have also taken on other roles. We listened with particular interest to the Scottish region's experience of organising a "graduation ceremony" for the presentation of membership certificates and subsequently the Midlands Regional Council have set up a group to try and take forward positive changes to its own AGM, where it has traditionally handed out certificates to its new members - watch this space!

We also heard about IT developments and the possibilities for using facebook, blogs and podcasting in our regional work, and of work being undertaken by CIPFA's Business Development Team at Robert Street to improve contact with employers. We feel that there is scope for the Region to be involved with this exercise and we are now looking at how best we can take this forward. If you have any ideas how we can best help employers in developing their finance teams then do please let us know.

Chris Gill, 13 October 2008

Top marks for School Management Games

The CIPFA in the Midlands 6th Form Management Team Games have made good progress in a number of areas this year.

Schools

A bold decision was taken to stage four games this year and congratulations go to the 21 school teams who put tremendous effort into meeting this year's challenge. They came from across the region, from as far apart as Worcester, Kettering and New Mills in Derbyshire and there was stiff competition between them.

There were some excellent team and individual performances showing a composure and maturity far beyond their age. Coupled with their IT, presentation and other skills this made for a very high standard in each of the games. It was also particularly interesting to see how many different team working models were being employed and how well they all worked (or didn't in some cases !)

Unfortunately, there could only be one winner in each of the four games and the winning teams this year were:

- Pershore High School, Worcester;
- The Kings School, Grantham;
- Adams Grammar School, Newport;
- and John Taylor High School, Barton-under-Needwood - for the second year running !

The comments from many of the pupils and their teaching staff suggest that this is a valuable day for them, providing an insight into the financial priorities faced by the public sector, which their studies seldom cover.

“May I take this opportunity to give my thanks for such an impressive day at Walsall last week. The organisation and running of the game was fantastic and our students had an excellent time and learned a lot, as well as improving their 'life skills' along the way.

We will certainly be applying for at least one team next year, as I thought all-round it was the best trip I have ever taken students on.”

Adams Grammar School, Newport

If you are in any way associated with a Midlands School or College (Parent, Governor, Mentor etc.) with post 16 provision, who may be interested in taking part in future games then please encourage them to contact Chris Gill (chris.gill@tesco.net) for more information about next year's games



Far left:
Pershore High School,
Worcester

Top Left:
The Kings School,
Grantham



Bottom Left:
John Taylor High School,
Barton-under-Needwood

.....Top marks for School Management Games

Volunteers

With the increase to four games, the number of volunteers required was a considerable concern, but there was an excellent response from students, members and retired members alike, with 56 volunteers making themselves available for the games. Those who were involved in the role play certainly threw themselves into the task once again this year, to the extent that some of the apoplectic trade union leaders could easily have been having heart attacks soon !! (picture ?).

volunteers have even been brave enough to go into schools involved in the 6th form management games to talk to them about their work role and training for the CIPFA qualification. Support is available from Robert Street, through the provision of presentations and materials and if there are more people willing to help in this way then it might be something we could offer to all schools involved in the games. Similarly we have also been invited into one of our host Universities to speak to a finance tutorial group alongside other CCAB institutes

and this is an excellent opportunity to spread the word about CIPFA and encourage students to take up the qualification.



Above Left and Right: Volunteers

The role that team mentors play on the day is a vital one for communicating about the profession and the type of activities that occur in the work place and this was managed remarkably well, particularly given the extra demands of keeping some of the less motivated teams on track in the game. An article in the *July Spreadsheet* gives a good account of the role of a volunteer mentor during the day and it is encouraging to see how much the day is enjoyed. Others have been passing on the word **and if you would be interested in volunteering for next year's games then please do not hesitate to register your interest with Chris Gill.**

It has also been encouraging to see how many of our volunteers have subsequently volunteered for other CIPFA roles and a number are now involved in organising CPD events locally or assisting with Careers fairs. If you would be interested in assisting with organising CPD events then please visit the CIPFA in the Midlands website to check out your local area and the appropriate contacts. For involvement with Careers fairs please contact Marilyn Peters at Robert Street (marilyn.peters@cipfa.org), who co-ordinates this activity across the country. New opportunities have also arisen this year and two

Venues

We were delighted to be able to extend the number of games to four, but this would not have been possible without the generous assistance of some new hosts - The University of Worcester, Nottingham Trent University and the Forest Arts Centre in Walsall (courtesy of Walsall MBC) - alongside our old friends at the Stoke site of Staffordshire University. Each venue provides their accommodation free of charge and we are grateful to them for this contribution and all the other assistance they provide during the game. It is good to have them alongside in what we do.

Geographically we are not quite equally spread across the region and next year we are potentially looking for a fifth venue in the Leicester area. If you work at, or have contacts with, a University in the Leicester area who you think might be prepared to offer accommodation free of charge for a game at the end of June or beginning of July next year, then please let Chris Gill have any contact details as soon as possible.

Chris Gill, 10 October 2008

6th Form Games Volunteer

What does it involve to be a mentor at the Cipfa in the Midlands 6th Form Management Game?

The day starts by helping to unload the contents of Chris Gill's car and setting up the room for the day. Then it's time to get a cup of coffee and catch up with colleagues who have also volunteered to help with the event.

Following a briefing on what is expected of us as mentors and what we might expect in return it is time to meet our teams. The first priority is to settle them in, ensure they have read the background information and find out what their respective roles are going to be in the management team of Rainbow Hills B.C.

The teams are given an introduction to the day after which the first task is issued soon followed by the first of many interruptions that the team have to deal with. A key task as mentor is to ensure the team are clear about the deadlines they have to meet and understand what is being asked of them in the tasks and interruptions. The extent of your involvement is a matter of judgement. It is necessary to have some input to get the ideas flowing, get individuals involved and create some momentum around the task, how much input you have depends on the motivation and enthusiasm of the team, which is usually very high. It is important that you don't do the task for them, after all who would willingly volunteer to undertake a case study.

Before you know it the day is drawing to a close and the students are being congratulated and rewarded for their efforts with certificates and Cipfa mugs before posing for photographs. As a mentor your hardest task of the day is yet to happen, which is to select a star player from your team, who is rewarded with a prize. So far in three attempts this has not been an easy task because each member of the team has worked hard, made a contribution and shone in some way on the day, never the less a selection has to be made. The finale is the announcement of the runners up and winners of the game and what do you know for the first time a team I have mentored has won.

So what do I get from the day to make the return journey down the M6 worthwhile? Primarily it is the feedback and positive comments by the students, the day is a journey for them and they clearly get something from the day, a sense of achievement, had some fun in doing the tasks and learnt something that may stand them in good stead in the future and their thanks at the end of the day shows they have appreciated your contribution to making the day a success. Further to this it is always enjoyable working with other volunteers in the Cipfa family and it's often said but worth saying again that the level of volunteering by members and the mindset behind that is what sets our institute apart from the rest. Volunteering is a chance to give something back and raise the profile of the institute. Finally there is the all important CPD certificate and to use a well known catch phrase BEG (your Bus Fare Home).

Regards

Jeff Carruthers

Financial Planning Manager
01926 415000 Ext.8113

Practice Assurance Scheme

The Practice Assurance Scheme was launched earlier this year. So far approximately 300 members have signed up to the scheme.

Regular updates have been included in both Spreadsheet and Public Finance, to inform members about the scheme introduction and requirements. Many members who may be affected have been sent direct mailings. But it is not always possible to tell this from your Membership records

Now that the scheme is operational, we recognize that there are still some members who may not be aware that the Practice Assurance Scheme is now operational and that they should be reminded of what they need to do!

The scheme is not limited to consultants and contractors. And in particular, if you are working as an interim accountant, it is very probable that the scheme applies to you. The scheme also applies if you obtain assignments via an agency - including when you are an employee of the agency.

It is a mandatory requirement for CIPFA members who provide accountancy services to third parties (i.e. someone other than their employer) to register. Members do not have a choice - if they are providing these services to clients they must register for the scheme.

Recruitment agencies that place CIPFA members have been made aware of the scheme and will require confirmation that you hold a Practising Certificate and employers have been made aware that these requirements are now in place.

If members choose not register with the scheme but continue to provide accountancy services to a third party, either directly or via an agency, they would face serious consequences. This could ultimately result in disciplinary proceedings.

There are benefits available to our Members in Practice. These include inclusion on the CIPFA Members in Practice List on the CIPFA website, compliance with the HMRC Money Laundering Regulations and the ability to describe oneself as a CIPFA Member in Practice. Future benefits will include exclusive access via the CIPFA Learning Centre to helpsheets to support our members in Practice.

It is intended that the scheme will develop over the next few years to support our Members in Practice, and provide them with more direct benefits. We are actively seeking feedbacks from members to inform this process to enable us to manage a scheme that meets the requirements of our CIPFA Members in Practice.

decemberclub comes up roses

On 17th July the December Club held its annual summer outing, which this year was a visit to the world famous David Austin Rose Garden in Albrighton, Shropshire, preceded by an excellent lunch at The Park House Hotel in Shifnal.

Over the past 15 years the company has been working to create an entirely new breed of cut roses, known as the new English Rose. The breeding programme for a new rose takes 10 years and costs £2m.

David Austin's Rose garden contains the National Collection of English Roses, 900 varieties in total, the Plant Centre contains over 400 varieties of container roses, and they now export cut flowers all over Europe and also have outlets in Australia and America. David Austin Roses have

been awarded 14 Gold Medals at Chelsea. We were given a guided tour of the whole site which was followed by a delightful cream tea and a visit to the gift shop where plants could be purchased or ordered.

Our grateful thanks go to Stuart Aldridge and Norman Rozzell for arranging another excellent day out. The next December Club event will be the Annual Luncheon on 3rd December at the Clarendon Suites in Birmingham. Further details will be circulated later. Any retired CIPFA members in the Midlands Region who would like further details about the December Club should phone Norman Rozzell on 01952 604492. Ron Badham.



CIPFA EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRE

By Chris Lees, Course Director CETC Midlands

Exam Results

This is my first opportunity to share the CETC Midlands results from the June 2008 exam sitting with a wider audience than our select band of employers and students.

In most areas they were very pleasing, but there were one or two disappointments. At the certificate level we achieved a pass rate of 70% in Financial Accounting (FA) and 50% in Management Accounting (MA). Whilst the Management Accounting figure is disappointing it is still above CIPFA's national pass rate of 45%. CIPFA is reviewing the MA paper to see what, if any, lessons can be learnt for the future.

On a more positive note, at the certificate level we achieved a 100% pass rate in Financial Management, Systems and Techniques (FMST) and 90% in Financial Reporting (FR). Many congratulations to a fine performance by the students, particularly in FMST, where I think it is fair to say this was not their most popular subject.

At the diploma level, on Audit and Assurance (AA), Financial and Performance Reporting (FPR) and Governance and Public Policy (GPP) our results surpassed CIPFA's national pass rate. Particularly pleasing is the 93% pass rate we achieved in GPP. The one blip was in Accounting for Decision Making (ADM), where our pass rate of 61% was below CIPFA's average of 66%.

It is interesting to note the difference here between those students who had previously attended the MA classes and those that had not. Every student who had previously sat the MA class went on to pass ADM. This is something for would-be students and employers to think about. Even if, as a student, you may be exempt from MA it may still be worth attending the course to ensure you get a good grounding prior to sitting ADM. More and more employers are insisting that their students attend every module whether exempt or not, and personally I think this is a sensible approach.

The final test results were really excellent. I teach on SBM and am heavily involved in the case study course, so I am especially aware of the final test students. The group comprised very good students whose positive attitude coupled with a willingness to support each other were the factors that helped them most in achieving such great results. 88% passed SBM, and 91% passed the case study, against CIPFA averages of 75% and 64% respectively. Well done to all concerned.

Everybody loves Philip

It is official everybody loves Philip, that is Philip McCosker, a lecturer based here at CETC Midlands.

For the last three years, many of us have been aware of the praise lavished on Philip both formally (via course evaluation questionnaires) and informally by students. Richard Pennington and I in the Midland's office often joke that everybody loves Philip. These jokes are usually to disguise (certainly my) slight envy at the fantastic feedback he pretty much always gets. As Course Director, I am naturally pleased he gets such great feedback all the time, but part of me, a nasty little part of me, would like to see him attract just one negative comment to prove he is human like the rest of us. However, it hasn't happened yet in the three years he has been here, and I can't see any reason why that will change now.

To make our envious natures worse, this persistent excellence has been given more tangible recognition. Philip has been awarded the CIPFA National Student Forum (NSF) Excellence in Education Award, announced at the 2008 NSF Conference in Manchester on 3 July 2008. My only surprise is that he hasn't won it before.

So, well done Philip, really well deserved.

CIPFA
Education and Training Centre

wallsallgrads

Having graduated in the summer of 2007 with 2:1 degrees in a range of subjects, Tahera Sultana, Michael Page and Bret Nightingale, successfully beat 49 other hopefuls who competed for the three graduate trainee accountant posts at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

The aim of the scheme is to produce qualified accountants who continue to drive forward financial excellence, through hard work, dedication and commitment both to the council and to their studies.

The four year programme consists of improving technical, practical and managerial skills and aims to support and train potential senior finance professionals capable of attaining future posts within the authority. During the scheme all three graduates get the opportunity to work in a number of finance roles and the opportunity to get involved in a number of corporate projects whilst studying for the CIPFA professional accountancy qualification (PAQ).

The graduates joined Walsall MBC in November 2007, and have just completed their first semester at college, and are awaiting their exam results.

Tahera Sultana

After gaining a degree in accounting and finance I wanted to pursue a career in public sector finance by training for the CIPFA PAQ.

Although I have a related degree I still find the CIPFA approach very different to my university studies. Upon starting CIPFA I had thought that it would be of a similar level to my university course (at least the certificate and diploma stage would be, as I am exempt from a few modules at these levels). However once my studies began in February, I learnt this not to be the case. CIPFA is a challenging qualification and requires a lot of dedication as you need to be able to balance full time working with studying, which is not something I had experience of.

However, by working as a trainee accountant while studying CIPFA it has given me the advantage of gaining a better understanding of the modules that I have studied so far. The reason for this is because you see what you have learnt in practice instead of reading about examples from

text books. For example my placement in internal audit which made clear a lot of the process/procedures I learnt in the audit module.

Working for the local government on the other hand is different all together. Support from colleagues is always readily available, whether it is work related or study related. Generous study leave is an added bonus along with the flexible working pattern which works out to be perfect around exam time.

I am looking forward to the opportunities that will come my once I have completed my CIPFA studies. I enjoy the practical work I am involved in and look forward to progression once I come to the end of the graduate programme.

Michael Page

After finishing University, like most people I was never 100% sure as to the career path I wanted to take. I was however always interested in working within the public sector so when the opportunity arose at Walsall I decided to go for it.

Although I had done a couple of basic accountancy modules at University, I was still very unsure as to what a job in accountancy actually consisted of, or whether it was right for me. However after meeting staff from Walsall during the selection process and reading up about CIPFA I knew that I had the right platform to build from, and after 9 months in the job and with my first two modules completed I am happy with the choice I made.

It hasn't however been easy for me. Having had a couple of months in the job before starting college at CETC Birmingham I had just about managed to adjust into the role of working life. This was then thrown right out the window when I started my modules at the beginning of the year.

Perhaps having done those accountancy modules at university, and getting reasonably high scores in them made me believe that the first lot of exams were going to be easier than they were. It wasn't particularly the theoretical parts I had trouble with (although the thought of an afternoons worth of linear programming was difficult to take) it has been more of a struggle trying to balance workload and finding the free time and motivation to study at home.

I struggled with this throughout the modules, but in doing so I have learnt some key lessons that will hopefully help me improve my studying techniques for the next set of modules. Probably the key thing I will take is the need to work over sessions notes as soon as possible after that session. Having not really done this over the last modules I struggled when it came to revising for the mocks and exams proper and a lot the time spent on revision could have been saved by doing it earlier.

I am however looking forward to starting back at CETC in August. I feel that I have learnt a lot of basic knowledge in the modules FA and MA, and I am looking forward to building on it in the coming modules. I know that by combining these theoretical aspects and the practical skills learnt on the job this will allow me to develop in my career at Walsall Council and then open up a wide range of possibilities once I am fully CIPFA qualified.

Bret Nightingale

As a student embarking on the first stages of this qualification, I have found that to be successful a student needs to put in the time and effort, and needs to be fully focused during their studies. The courses are intense, and a lot of the work is expected to be completed away from the classroom, however the lecturers are always available to help.

Having come from a non financial background, doing a degree in Disaster Management & Technology, I have not found it difficult to adapt, as the first modules taken are designed to lay the foundations for the rest of the course. The life style change from being at university where students had a lot of free time available to give to their studies, compared to working full time, and then having to find spare time to complete the required material has been difficult to adapt too. Therefore only dedicated and committed students willing to put the work in should apply to do this, and as a result of their hard work they will certainly reap the rewards of this earlier than they think.

Overall to be successful students wanting to study for the CIPFA qualification must be willing to put in the hard work required, but the knowledge and experience gained gives the students great opportunities to further their careers in finance. Here at Walsall MBC the career progression prospects offered for CIPFA students

qualified or part qualified are readily available, and many students are actively encouraged to take on more responsible roles, and further their skills and experiences. As students progress through the CIPFA course more promotion opportunities become available to them, and with the reputation of the CIPFA qualification in the public finance sector it gives students huge advantages over other applicants.

I have found the people at Walsall MBC including my manager, my mentors, heads of Finance etc... all to be very supportive of students studying to complete CIPFA. They offer advice, support, help on areas students are having problems with, and are role models for what can be achieved through gaining the CIPFA qualification. Also as part of Walsall MBC's training policy students are given sufficient study leave and exam leave away from work which gives them extra time to prepare/revise for exams and further there progression.

Overall I enjoy working at Walsall, and can see the prospects that CIPFA will open up for me. The job is interesting, and as well as finding the time to study very challenging I can see that in the not to distant future my hard work and commitment will have all paid off.

Although coming from a wide range of academic disciplines each of the three graduates have all experienced many of the same benefits as well as the same difficulties over the past few months. These difficulties haven't however put them off continuing with CIPFA, and all are looking forward to returning to CETC in the near future. The main motivation for this is that they know by moving towards completing the CIPFA PAQ will allow for a wide range of career development opportunities both at Walsall and beyond.

Tahera, Michael and Bret would like to acknowledge the support they have received from staff and fellow students at CETC, as well as colleagues at Walsall Council in helping them achieve all they have up until this point, and hope for this to continue into the future.

East Midlands Strategic Health Authority Graduate Training Scheme

The East Midlands SHA has successfully launched a Graduate Training Scheme for trainee CIPFA Accountants with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in the East Midlands region

The scheme has been developed to improve the number of appropriately qualified accountants within the East Midlands PCTs as a means of avoiding longer term recruitment problems.

The scheme has been developed in close collaboration with Nottingham Business School and CIPFA who will be supporting the students through their studies. Nottingham Business School was also involved in the recruitment of the trainees and the induction of Placement Managers within the PCTs.

8 new Trainees have been recruited representing a mix of relevant and non-relevant graduates. The scheme itself will

mirror the National NHS Graduate Training Scheme in terms of support for students including the appointment of a PCT based placement manager and a mentor to advise on personal development. There will also be regular formal and informal feedback for trainees on their performance and progress throughout the scheme, including competence mapping against a key skills framework.

If you would like any further information on the development and operation of the scheme please contact Andrew Bond (Assistant Director of Finance - Finance Skills Development NHS East Midlands), or Martin Jones (CIPFA Programme Leader Nottingham Business School)

Andrew.Bond@eastmidlands.nhs.uk

Martin.jones@ntu.ac.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date Title

Location

28.11.08

CATS Seminar 4 - Governance

Scarman House, University of Warwick

03.12.08

December Club Annual Luncheon

Clarendon Suites, Birmingham

JANUARY 09

**Comprehensive Are Assessments
(details to follow)**

Deloitte, Birmingham

06.03.09

CIM AGM

AFC Telford United,
New Bucks Head Stadium,
Watling Street,
Wellington,
Telford TF1 2TU
Details to follow

Please visit the website for further details