

minutes

CIPFA Midlands Council Meeting

Date 9 September 2010

Venue County Buildings, Staffordshire County Council

Present

Steve Wellings	President
Lisa Commane	Vice President
Sue Smith	Regional Secretary
Brian Berry	Regional Representative
Paul Hector	Council Member
Jon Crockett	Council Member
Andy Burns	Council Member
Drew Cullen	CIPFA

1 Apologies

Andy Morley	Honorary Treasurer
Ben Jarrett	Deputy Regional Secretary & Website Co-ordinator
Carole Mills-Evans	Immediate Past President
Tony Kirkham	Council Member
Mark Lawrie	Council Member
Michael Kitts	Council Member
Steph Simcox	Council Member
Brian Roberts	Council Member
Sean Pearce	Council Member
Suzanne Jones	Council Member
Alison Jarrett	Council Member
Kelly Watson	CIPFA Student Rep & SE Area Rep
Colin Sharpe	Website Co-ordinator
Peter Farrow	CATS Chair
Chris Lees	Academic Rep
Riz Dhanani	Student Society President
Carl Ford	NSF Representative
Mike Burns	HFMA Rep
Alex Cenic	CIPFA

Andy Burns welcomed everyone to Staffordshire, Steve Wellings thanked Andy for allowing us to hold the Council meeting in the White Room at Staffordshire County Council.

2 Minutes of the meeting 11 March 2010

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2.1 Updates from the previous meeting.

There were no updates which were not covered later in the agenda.

There was some discussion about the number of apologies received for the Council meeting, it was felt that this reflects work issues in the current climate, and will possibly be repeated in the number of delegate bookings for events. Council felt that it is more important than ever in this climate to ensure that we are supporting CM members. Steve offered to write to all Midlands Finance Directors to stress the importance of CPD and the events, including free events, the annual seminar and the CATS seminars, provided by CM showing that we are supporting members and organisations.

3 Updates

3.1 Area Reports

Western Area – Alison Jarrett was unable to attend the meeting as she was ill, but sent a verbal update of the events coming up in the Western Area, and said that membership of the Area Executive is waning as people become more pressured at work.

South Eastern Area – Kelly Watson was unable to attend the meeting, but had sent an update of two events being organised in the South East.

Events Team – Kelly also sent an update that the National Presidents event in October will be on the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Northern Area – there is no progress with the Northern Area.

Southern Area – no report.

The area updates were followed by more discussion about the type of events CM needs to be providing to ensure that as many members as possible attend, and are supported.

It was felt that free evening events would be the best attended, and that CM may need to pay for refreshments in the future to ensure that events are 'free' to members. It was agreed that the resources CM have should be used to ensure that events continue to be 'free'.

Lisa Commane reported that some members of event organising teams have reported that they their employers are unable to pay for them to attend. It was agreed that CM should pay where employers are unable to do so.

A financial update is required so that the Council are aware of the current financial position, particularly as there are quite a few big events planned for the near future which may need financial support from the Council.

Brian Berry said it had been discussed centrally that there may be no capacity for people to do anything outside work which may affect National and Regional Council membership as well as attendance at events, and that we should look at this as an opportunity to change, that we can add value to organisations as well as individuals, that CIPFA are part of the way things will be in the future.

It was felt that the public sector has faced challenges in the past, but that this is the toughest one so far.

Andy Burns felt that Finance Directors can use their influence to help locally, Staffordshire have just taken on 3 graduate trainees, which it is sharing with Stoke and the Police.

Jon Crocket said that the next Midlands President demonstrates that we are looking to the future and supporting younger members.

Drew Cullen stated that what is happening in the Midlands is typical of the issues being faced by other regions and by CIPFA nationally.

3.2 Student Society

There was no one from the Student Society available to attend the meeting, but Steve wanted to pass on the thanks of the Regional Council to Carl Ford and his team saying what a fantastic job they've done, the CM Student Society is a real 'success story'.

At the recent, and first ever AGM, Carl had stood down as President and had been succeeded by Rizwan Dhanani. Carl is now Vice Chair of the NSF.

Lisa also wanted to pass on her thanks, and added that all members of the Student Society are very keen, which is reflected by students in the workplace who are an excellent resource.

3.3 CATS

Council felt that the topics are very relevant and the seminars demonstrate good value for money, but once again were concerned that the current climate may affect the number of delegates.

Council wished to pass on their thanks to the CATS committee and hoped that delegate numbers would not be too badly affected.

It may be that this year Council will have to subsidise CATS if numbers do not reach the 'break even' point. It was felt that it is acceptable and necessary to use resources in order to ensure continuity of events and safeguard our reputation.

Drew to include CATS details in the e newsletter which reaches 25,000 people. Lisa to liaise with Drew re text and link details.

4 Events

4.1 Conference for the Regions

Steve thanked Lisa and all members of the team for all the work they had done so far.

Lisa had attached the revised programme to her paper on the Conference, and ran through the main things the team need to focus on during the following two weeks.

It was reported that the Lord Mayor wouldn't be able to attend the evening dinner, so Stephen Hughes, Birmingham Chief Executive be asked to do the 'welcome' speech. Lisa has also prepared a list of 'team roles' for during the Conference.

Council asked for a volunteer to write an article on the Conference for Spreadsheet.

Lisa then ran through the mechanics of the workshops and how the outcomes would culminate in a panel session on the Friday morning. The outcomes of the Conference will be key to how the Board for the Regions moves forward.

The budget is unchanged at the moment.

Lisa to contact Jon Graham and then liaise with workshop facilitators.

There are 7 delegates for the Partners Programme during the day so far, but more for the evening dinner. The closing date for the programme is 13th September, after that date any unrequired Ballet tickets must be returned to the Hippodrome.

Sponsorship has held up well considering the financial climate. Jim Moran to co-ordinate sponsors at the evening dinner.

4.2 Seminar and Dinner

Alison was unable to attend the meeting but had sent a verbal report, stating that there were still issues with speakers.

Council felt that the flyer must be sent out to members as soon as possible showing those speakers who have confirmed so far.

Drew suggested Gareth Davies if we need a 'national name', Andy Burns has his contact details and offered to help. Alison to contact Andy.

Also Paul Brown of Ernst Young is currently working on some interesting ideas for asset management.

4.3 Soft Skills Seminar

Sue Smith reported that the initial event in July had been a great success.

The event had been held at Nottingham City Council, and the Council passed on their thanks to Carole Mills-Evans for facilitating the use of their new offices as a venue.

Sue reported that she was holding a waiting list of people unable to attend the July event as maximum numbers had been reached. Initial discussions for a second event to be held in November had been taking place with People Development Works, and Ernst Young in Birmingham.

The Events Team had approached CIPFA with initial enquiries for providing the training for this event, but had made the decision not to proceed due to CIPFA costs being higher than PDW, and a delayed response during which time talks had proceeded with PDW.

The initial soft skills event had made a loss of £45, Council therefore agreed to transfer their financial support to the second event being held in November.

4.4 2011 AGM

It was agreed to postpone discussions on the AGM until after Christmas.

Brian Berry voiced some concern that we may not be doing enough to encourage newly elected members to attend the AGM. There was some discussion around how this could be improved, including an open day at Robert Street, invite all the Student Society Council, inviting Chris West and the Chief Exec of the Ricoh Arena to give a presentation on how they work together after the developmental session in the afternoon.

4.5 6th Form Games

Steve reported that he had been to one of the Games, and the students and staff were very enthusiastic. The Council passed on their thanks once again to Chris Gill for all the hard work he puts into organising the Games, and also to everyone who took part.

It was very disappointing that Welsh schools had dropped out at the last minute, and the Games in Wales had to be cancelled.

Drew reported that CIPFA are very keen to extend the Games into other Regions, and nationally with Corporate support. One problem with extending the programme may be the narrow window when the Games can actually be held, when 6th formers are still at school, but have finished their exams.

It was felt that CM have reached capacity so corporate support would be necessary to take the Games forward, but it may be difficult to get sufficient volunteers in the current climate. Other issues may be that sponsorship would have to be sought and a bank of Games would be needed. Universities are happy to provide venues.

5. Presidents Report

Steve had nothing to report that hadn't been covered already in the meeting, but he did feel that we need to review progress against the current Development Plan, and that he and Lisa need to work on the Plan for 2011.

Lisa asked Drew whether a new format of Development Plan can be devised. This was not something that Drew is in a position to answer, but he would speak to Adrian Pulham on his return to Robert Street.

Steve and Lisa to work on a new model for the CM development plan, one that links in with the Regional Model, and the KPI's.

6. Treasurers report

Andy Morley was not at the meeting. There was no Treasurers report.

7. Regional Rep's report

Brian reported that there were some issues around the website workshop, but they won't affect CM as organisers. He further reported that a working party had been formed to look at improving the standards of regional websites. This may involve a new model being created which will show the basic standard expected for all regions and weighting showing the key minimum things to be included. This model could then be used to judge the regional website award.

8. Robert Street Issues

Sue Smith reported on recent problems encountered when working with the Robert Street communications team, especially the new on-line booking system. This had been reported to CM Council at the June meeting, but further problems meant that it took 6 weeks to prepare the CATS flyer and booking form, and delegates were still encountering problems when trying to make bookings. Sue also stated that the Regional and Volunteer Support Manager had been extremely helpful and supportive throughout the process.

Drew apologised for any problems and said he would look into why things had taken so long.

9 AOB

Brian Berry said there are some changes in CIPFA Directors roles, but that this had not been announced yet. Drew reported that Adrian Pulham had taken on the membership part of Barry Mathers role, and that Julia Attridge would become more involved with the Regions.

Drew reported that members would be receiving daily electronic news updates.

Drew also stated that there would be some 'locally sensitive pricing' for Midlands volunteers for the National Conference next year. Steve said that in the past if someone volunteered they would get into the Conference free for that day, Drew thought that this may be something that could be repeated in 2011. Students to be encouraged to volunteer.

Birmingham City Council to be 'encouraged' to support the event.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm

CM Council Meeting 9 September 2010**Action Points**

Agreed Action	Agenda item	By whom?	By when?
Steve to write to all Midlands Finance Directors to stress the importance of CPD events, and CM support of members and organisations	Item 2.1	Steve Wellings	asap
Andy Morley to provide a financial update to the next CM council meeting	Item 3.1	Andy Morley	2nd December
Drew to include CATS details in the e news letter	Item 3.3	Drew Cullen	asap
Lisa to liaise with Drew re the CATS details as above	Item 3.3	Lisa Commane	asap
Lisa to contact Jon Graham re the workshops for CftR, and then liaise with the workshop facilitators	Item 4.1	Lisa Commane	asap
Alison/Sue to ensure that the Seminar & dinner flyer goes out to CM members asap	Item 4.2	Alison Jarrett/Sue Smith	asap
Alison to contact Andy Burns re Gareth Davies	Item 4.2	Alison Jarrett	asap
All to review progress against the 2010 Development Plan	Item 5	All	2nd December
Steve and Lisa to work on the 2011 Deveolpment Plan	Item 5	Steve Wellings/Lisa Commane	asap
Drew to investigate the length of time taken to prepare the CATS flyer and booking form	Item 8	Drew Cullen	asap
CM students to be encouraged to volunteer for the National Conference 5 - 7 July 2011	Item 9	All	asap