ATT welcome: It isn’t all over yet…

Welcomes

25 January 2022

I would be interested to learn from our many members in practice who were starting the inevitable January rush of tax returns being processed for clients (who demonstrate the naturally human trait of leaving everything to the last minute!) whether they breathed a sigh of relief or, more likely, cursed as the late-night pizza delivery arrived, when HMRC announced an effective extension of the filing deadline to 28 February 2022. I promise not to tell your clients. Let’s hope no one else lets it slip – if they get wind of it, you can guarantee they will down tools immediately and stop stuffing their box files full of stubs and receipts (in no particular order!). Instead of that glorious moment of release as midnight strikes on 31 January, the January nightmare may well continue on through February!

Well, let’s look on the bright side. In the good old days before online filing, we had to get our clients to sign hard copy tax returns and then deliver them to the nearest tax office, albeit by 5 April not 31 January. I remember bowling up at Newcastle 3 District after office hours and attempting to force my last tax returns through the letterbox to see them drop onto a gigantic pile of similarly delivered envelopes! Happy Days.

I look forward with trepidation to the arrival of Making Tax Digital for Income Tax Self Assessment, when one deadline could be replaced by multiple deadlines.

So, what does 2022 have in store for us? We had hoped that we would be back to the new ‘normal’ in 2022 but with the current government guidelines of ‘working from home if you can’ our plans once again have changed. We are, though, hoping to see some of you again in 2022 and we plan to hold the Prize-winners lunch and Admissions ceremony as face to face events. The Prize-winners lunch planned for March has been moved to June, by which time we are hoping that restrictions will have been lifted and we can celebrate the achievements of those of you who have not only passed our examinations but have achieved the highest marks.

Our ATT Annual Tax Conferences will stay as online only events this year. Feedback has indicated that the majority of you are happier for the time being to attend these online. This gives those who live long distances from venues the chance to join without the cost or stress of travelling and receive the same material as all our delegates.

We have already started planning for these conferences and I can assure anyone who wants to make sure their knowledge is up to date that these are very worthwhile and informative events to attend. Michael Steed (Co-Chair of our Technical Steering Group) and our Technical Officers will all be presenting at the events and available for questions in the live sessions. I for one look forward to learning more about the aforementioned Making Tax Digital for Income Tax Self-Assessment and how the change in basis periods will affect my clients. There are also Topical tax sessions and a session on crypto assets which 2.3 million people now hold.

Our return to the office is on hold, but our staff have all embraced the new ways of working and have made the move to homeworking a successful one. I miss the face to face meetings of Council and Steering Groups but we are still as productive online and I get to be at home more often, which is probably just as well with a new arrival in the house.

Yes, the pitter patter of tiny little feet. Four feet to be exact and, no, not twins – rather Bandit the rescue dog, a setter/collie cross of dubious heritage. In an operation similar to that last seen in Mission Impossible 3, the dog was handed over to us in Gretna Green on the Scottish/English border, having been collected at the Cairnryan ferry terminus following transportation from Northern Ireland and brought back to Hexham. He is only just adjusting to the change in dialect (so he is!). We are fostering him and attempting to deal with his behavioural issues before delivering him to his ‘forever home’.

The only other resident of Northern Ireland that I know well is our current President. In this context, I have not been made aware of any behavioural issues or dubious heritage affecting Richard. However, I can tell you that fostering is out of the question!