President's page

Welcomes

01 December 2020

My first, my last, my everything

I am very humbled and honoured to be the 56th President of the Chartered Institute of Taxation. I hope many of you will have enjoyed the *virtual* Presidential handover ceremony – a CIOT first – that took place on 17 November. Normally, this would have taken place in May as part of our AGM at One Great George Street, Westminster. However, due to the ubiquitous Covid-19 restrictions, we quickly reshaped the 'handover' around an online training event. This has raised much needed funds for the Bridge The Gap campaign for the tax charities, which particularly need our help and support in these difficult times.

Tax aficionados love transitional rules. To deal with the Covid-19 disruption, Glyn and I agreed to serve Presidential terms of 18 months each – to bring us back to the normal May AGM 'retirement' date in May 2022 – a bit like that transitional year in 1996/97 when we moved from a preceding year basis of assessment for business profits to a current year one
(I am showing my tax age now!)

My first instinct is to pay my respects and huge thanks to our outgoing President, Glyn Fullelove. Glyn has been formidable, indefatigable and a fantastic role model for me to follow. When I first learned about my prospective Presidential role several years ago, my friend and former CIOT president, the late Chris Jones told me: 'There will always be at least one curve ball you will have to deal with!' Well, I doubt that Glyn could have foreseen the large curve ball that fell on his lap – Covid-19!

Under Glyn's leadership, our Presidential Team, our Council, CEO Helen Whiteman with her determined executive team and staff, and our large army of wonderful volunteers have risen to the enormous challenges wrought by Covid-19. Faced with this seismic shock, we acted decisively and creatively to quickly reconfigure our mission plans. And I believe, to use the famous words of Gene Kranz, the renowned

(Apollo 13) Flight Controller, ‘This will be our finest hour!’

I know there will be further difficult challenges ahead but we will continue to build on the solid Presidential legacies left by Glyn and his immediate predecessor Ray McCann. I am very fortunate to have an excellent new Presidential Team working with me – Susan Ball (Deputy President), Gary Ashford (Vice President) and Glyn (as immediate Past-President). One of the beneficial effects of Covid-19 is being able to have frequent online meetings and this has generated a closer working relationship with Helen and the rest of the CIOT Executive team – John Cullinane, Karl Cerski and Roz Baxter. This has made us far more agile and decisive in taking strategic decisions. Special mention must also go to our friends at the ATT – our sister body – especially Jeremy Coker and Jane Ashton who have also worked unstintingly with us.

My biggest thanks goes to all you members for your support. We have a wonderful and revered professional body of which we can all be justly proud. Together we have built a membership organisation and charity that has excellent ethical and technical standards. We are highly regarded by many stakeholders, including HMRC and HM Treasury, because we always choose to do the right things. I will return to the wonderful work done by our Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG) in a future President’s Welcome page – but we must acknowledge their immense contribution to the public during these difficult months.

Unlike US presidents, I am not required to undertake any solemn oath. However, I would like to assure you of one thing. I have always loved the CIOT and consider myself lucky to have worked for it in a number of roles, including being a branch chair, an examiner, chair of Education Committee and (currently) chair of the Conferences Working Party. During my period as CIOT President, I promise that the CIOT will be ‘MY FIRST, MY LAST, MY EVERYTHING’ (with apologies to Barry White – please remember to put that one on your playlist!).

Finally, whatever our Christmas pans out to be this year, I wish you and your families a happy and joyful Christmas with unimpaired seasonal goodwill.

Take care and be safe.

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