President’s page

Welcomes

02 March 2021

A Hard Day’s Night

I hope you are keeping well and safe during the current lockdown. I am sure that none of us thought we would still be suffering social deprivation almost a year on. Of course, we have managed to enjoy virtual contact with our families, friends and colleagues thanks to the likes of Teams, Zoom and Skype.

This has also been a tremendous blessing and has even given us moments of exceptional hilarity. My particular favourite has been listening to Jackie Weaver hosting a Zoom meeting of the Handforth Parish Council – you can find it at tinyurl.com/ 1hgw0ac8 – and I can assure you that CIOT council meetings are nothing like this!

What have we done with the extra time saved by not having to travel? I suspect a large number of you would say that you have worked even harder! Music aficionados will appreciate that the idea for the hit song A Hard Day’s Night came from an exhausted Ringo Starr following a filming session in March 1964. ‘We went to do a job, and we’d worked all day and we happened to work all night ... so we came to A Hard Day’s Night.’

In recent months, I have been praising the excellent hard work of some of the Institute’s activities, which have included the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG) and our Examinations Team. This month focuses on our great technical and tax policy work, which is driven by our public benefit objectives. As an Institute, we can be justly proud of our collective technical excellence on a wide range of tax areas, which we are able to harness for influencing the tax policy debate. Our technical work helps to ensure that proposed tax legislation and practice is clear, robust, efficient and works fairly.

Our technical committees

A tremendous amount of our technical input and critique comes from our many technical committees. To give you a proper appreciation of their wide coverage, I list each of them below:

- Private Client (UK)
- Private Client (International)
- Corporate Tax
- Employment Taxes
- Indirect taxes
- Management of taxes
- Digitalisation and Agent Services
- Property taxes
- International tax
- Owner Managed Businesses
- Scotland
- Wales
- EU and Human Rights Working Group
- Climate Change Working Group

Increased engagement with HMRC and the Treasury

We have worked very closely with HMRC during the Covid-19 disruption and it is heart-warming to see the strengthening of this key relationship. We have been able to put forward many constructive refinements to the government's financial support schemes and the various easements to relevant areas of tax, including the statutory residence test and the deferral of VAT liabilities and so on.

Some of our work is driven directly by our Technical Policy and Oversight Committee, either because it is of strategic importance or because it spans several technical committees. For example, we engage with HMRC at senior levels, work with HMRC and the Government Digital Service to secure improvements to HMRC's guidance, and are represented on the Charter Stakeholder Group.

We are particularly delighted with our increased technical engagement throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been substantially assisted by the ability to hold virtual meetings (without the need to travel). This has resulted in an increased number of meetings and greater input from our network of expert technical volunteers. These factors have certainly increased the technical quality of our ideas

and submissions.

Thank you

All this work is spearheaded by our great in-house technical and policy unit, which is headed up by John Cullinane (Director of Public Policy) and Richard Wild (Head of Tax Technical), who are ably supported by a diverse team of experts.

However, much of our technical effort would not be possible without our army of wonderful volunteers. On behalf of the CIOT, I thank each and every one of you. If you would like to get involved with this important work and join one of our technical committees, please contact us via our website at www.tax.org.uk/policy-technical/join-technical-sub-commitee.

International Women's Day

I draw your attention to the piece on page 16 of this edition – 'Choosing to challenge' – which shares the interesting experiences of four female tax practitioners and the challenges they each faced in building their careers. May I wish all our female members and readers a happy International Women's Day for 8 March.

Let's all keep safe and well. Hopefully we are at the beginning of the end!

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