ATT welcome: Spring is beckoning us all

Welcomes



24 February 2023

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Hello, and welcome to the Deputy President’s page for March. I commented last month about the oddities and anomalies of the UK tax system and the fact that the mainstream media finally seemed to be waking up to the fact that the rules that

govern the calculation and collection of tax in the UK aren't necessarily clear, or fair. Since then, tax has once again been in the headlines with Nadhim Zahawi departing from his position as Conservative Party Chair following allegations concerning his tax affairs.

There has also been continued concern over service levels at HMRC, a theme touched upon by David Bradshaw, the current ATT President, when he spoke at our AGM last July. We have seen several stories about how some of those anomalies are creating further pressure on individuals and families during this era of rising prices. To me, more scrutiny from the press is to be welcomed if that reporting is fair and accurate, and genuinely serves to educate the public about how their tax is calculated. Meanwhile, it is left to tax professionals, many of them ATT members, to act as the intermediary between clients and HMRC to ensure that the tax system functions as it should and HMRC can collect the tax that it is due so that our public services can be funded.

Talking of ATT members, I've been fortunate enough over the last few weeks to have met many individuals who are just embarking on their careers in tax and who will one day be ATT members and help to shape the future of our profession. I have been very impressed by their calibre. If our interactions are anything to go by, our profession has a bright future. Hopefully, these new recruits will go on to become members of the ATT and CIOT and will want to have an influence on the operation of the Association and the Institute and on the way the tax system operates in the future.

One of the best ways to have a voice is to join the hundreds of people who volunteer with the ATT and CIOT. There are many reasons why people volunteer; to give something back, learn new skills, improve their network to name but a few, but for many people the branch network is the ideal starting point for getting involved.

The branch network has 36 branches, representing a diverse range of areas, with city-based branches, rural branches, an international branch and a newly created online branch.

One of the key aspects of the branches is that they provide the opportunity for members and students to attend professional seminars and clock up some all-important CPD, as well as the chance to network and meet other tax professionals that they might not otherwise have the chance to meet with.

Traditionally, branches met face to face but the arrival of the pandemic meant that was not possible. The branch network adapted quickly to the change in circumstances and continued to provide CPD – but this time online. Whilst this meant that networking was not as easy, it did mean that a much wider audience could be reached, and as featured in the February 2023 edition of *Tax Adviser*, an online branch was created in July 2022. Under the leadership of Reshma Johar, the branch will be looking to deliver a programme that is exclusively online.

Just like the daffodils that are coming into bloom, the branch network is emerging after the pandemic and local branches are now looking at returning to face-to-face events. Around the country, local committees, made up of ATT and CIOT members who have volunteered to help, are now planning their forthcoming season of events and CPD. Branches are run for the benefit of members and students and rely on volunteers to run them. If you would like to have a say in how your local branch is run, and the things that it offers, then why not come along, and have a chat. You can find details of your local branch and contact details at www.att.org.uk/branch-network. To help the branches continue to flourish, please support them, and attend the events that are on offer and consider getting involved. Being involved has huge benefits both personally and professionally and it is a great way to demonstrate your interest in the tax world. Who knows what it could do for your career!