ATT Outgoing President’s speech: Gone in a flash

Briefings



21 August 2025

Outgoing President Senga Prior reported back to the AGM on ATT activity over the past 12 months.

This year has passed by in a flash. It feels like just yesterday that I was making my inaugural speech as the 28th president of our Association. Today, I’m reflecting on another busy year for both ATT and the world of tax more widely.

Achievements

Perhaps the biggest achievement for the Association during my time in office is the huge milestone we reached at the end of last year – our 10,000th member. Ten thousand people is enough to fill McDiarmid Park, home of St Johnstone Football Club in my hometown of Perth. The world of tax is arguably more thrilling than some of the football on show at that stadium this season!

It is always wonderful to meet our members and volunteers, although an evening with the London Branch aboard a barge on the Thames was eventful, as the water got rather choppy towards the end of the night! I also spent time with our friends at CIOT, holding joint receptions in London and Cardiff, a brilliant Tax Technology Conference in Birmingham, and culminating in a wonderful evening on the Royal Yacht in Edinburgh.

Our wonderful technical team continue to do sterling work, and we were delighted to add two new technical officers earlier this year – Autumn Murphy and Chris Campbell. One of our longstanding technical officers, Emma Rawson, also made the step up this year to become our very first director of public policy – congratulations Emma.

Three main challenges

In my speech last year, I talked about three challenges in the year ahead. The first of these was Making Tax Digital. Despite ongoing tweaks, the focus now is to get taxpayers and agents ready for the changes, and we have been working alongside HMRC to get the message out, including social media posts, press releases and working with the media. The hope is that this coordinated approach will make the transition as easy as possible for everyone.

The second challenge was HMRC service levels. We welcome the collaboration that we have had with HMRC through the year and their willingness to listen. We must be realistic – there’s still a way to go – but response times are starting to improve, and the new agent query resolution service is a welcome start to this.

Finally, last year I discussed the regulation of agents. The change in government has slowed the progress of this but we continue to respond to consultations and liaise with relevant bodies. Most recently we made a submission on the effectiveness of penalties for rogue agents, and the potential issues with granting HMRC access to information from tax advisers based on a ‘reasonable suspicion’ that the adviser has facilitated an inaccuracy in a taxpayer’s document or return. This subject is not going away.

Areas of focus

I’d also like to reflect on my areas of focus during my presidential year. The first of these is tax education in the world of AI. As well as our exam syllabus, we are also providing more CPD opportunities for members. This year has seen more free webinars than ever. We continue our Fellows interactive webinars and we are now offering four free member webinars annually.

My second area of focus was Scottish taxes. I have attended various roundtable events with ScotGov and Revenue Scotland and was delighted to host representatives from both at our Scottish Reception in May. The expansion of our technical team means that ATT will be in a position to liaise more with devolved administrations in both Scotland and Wales.

Finally, empowering women was a priority for me this year. I was delighted to attend Scottish Women in Tax events and it was reassuring to see so many passionate about the world of tax and willing to share their knowledge and expertise, as well as enjoying networking opportunities.

Conclusion

To conclude, it has been my honour to serve as your President over the last year. Working in tax means that we must be willing to adapt to ever changing legislation and technology. However, our members can rest assured that the ATT will always be on hand to assist with these changes and to represent our members’ views. I remain extremely proud of the continued hard work, enthusiasm and success of the Association, its staff, officers and all its volunteers and members.

I now offer all my support to your incoming president, Graham Batty, as I hand over the reins. Thank you.

This speech has been abridged for space reasons. The full speech can be viewed at: tinyurl.com/ATTAGM25 (11m15s)