# ATT welcome, July 2017

Welcomes

01 July 2017

## The final countdown

This is my last ATT welcome page. The past year has flown by, and for the final time I am sitting here faced with a blank sheet of paper (well, computer screen) once again wondering how I can cram in all the things I would like to say in just 800 or so words. Needless to say, I am looking forward to my next year as President, at a time that could see some significant changes becoming clearer (more on MTD in this issue) and I look forward to hearing how the ATT can support you at this time.

One significant change comes from the result in the general election. Who would have expected that result and a hung parliament? We are now faced with a period of political, economic and fiscal uncertainty as deals are done and while I predicted in last month's welcome page that the bits of the Finance Bill that were lost in the pre-election wash would simply all be reintroduced in a new post-election bill, who can tell? This is not helpful given how many of the provisions were supposed to come into effect from 1 or 6 April and many of our clients will have planned accordingly.

Before I say goodbye there is just time to open up Old Batty's Almanac and look at a couple of the issues facing us over the next 12 months. By far the biggest challenge is going to be MTD. Irrespective of which government is in power it is going to go ahead so the ATT will be working with HMRC to try and make sure that the end product is workable.

This is not going to be easy – but we are already sharing what we know through our free MTD Events and these are proving a very useful source for hearing your current comments and concerns. We are nearly at the end of our current run, but look out for more events in the autumn. Another source that is helping us in a similar way is our annual conferences, and it is always heartening to hear how much you enjoy these events and enjoy sharing your experiences with fellow professionals.

MTD is certainly going to change the way you work but may in the long run turn out to be more of an opportunity rather than a threat. The idea of taxpayers (and their agents) being able to interact with HMRC via an online account that uses Big Data to pull together all of the information relating to them into one place is fundamentally a good thing. However, the answers that the MTD system produces must be right and all taxpayers must be able to use the system and have confidence in it. There are simply too many instances of HMRC's systems not working correctly at the moment to be sure this will happen. It is essential that the end users, ordinary taxpayers, can understand the rules and what is required of them.

This brings us to the UK tax code, one of the longest and most complex in the world, which even ATT members and other qualified tax professionals can find hard to follow and understand. There is a real need for both simplification and an improvement in the quality of drafting. This is not something that can be achieved in the short term, but is something where the ATT can contribute to the debate.

It is also an area where our excellent technical team and the members of the Technical Steering Group can continue to be a critical friend to government policy makers. At the end of June, Helen Thornley and Emma Rawson joined our Technical Team and together with Will Silsby one of their first jobs will be to review the Finance Bill and submit comments to the government to reflect the views of members. They will be introducing themselves in next month's Tax Adviser and you will hear more from them in our technical news pages in the coming months.

So that is it! I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible as I travel around the country during my year as ATT President. Thank you for reading and to all of you who have been in touch to say you have enjoyed my ramblings.

Over to you, Tracy.