

CHAMPION CHALLENGES

Laurie Beagle FCICM, EICM outlines his hopes and aspirations as the new CICM chair.



I feel very privileged and proud to be appointed Chair of the Chartered Institute of Credit Management. Having joined the CICM in 1983 and become a Fellow in 1990, I definitely see this appointment as the pinnacle of my career.

Firstly, I would like to introduce myself. Having initially been a member of the Thames Valley Branch, I moved north in 2007 and am the current Chair of the Sheffield and District Branch. Like many of you reading this I didn't start my career in credit. I was in retail, window dressing, shipping and Accounts payable before joining the finance team at Sperry Marine. Then I began working in credit in the timber industry followed by the IT sector with Digital Equipment.

Shortly after my world was shattered when I was made redundant. At the time, however, I didn't realise that this would present me with many new opportunities and I would begin experiencing many different aspects of credit management: business and credit information; consultancy; and training and credit forums which we run in the UK and Europe for various industries.

My current position is Managing Director of Forums International and while I may have had many roles and titles over the years, I am passionate about my profession, credit management. I was on the Executive Board when we were granted the Charter, and it made me feel very proud to be a CICM member. This, was in my opinion, a defining moment for the Institute.

I see the Executive Board as a team that works closely with the Chief Executive, Advisory Council and the SMT at the CICM headquarters. As Chair I see my role as being to lead and support the team in delivering our three core strategic objectives to 'Engage', 'Promote' and 'Support'. Having worked in many aspects of the credit profession, and with my interaction with credit professionals across many different industries and geographies, I believe I will bring to the Board experience, awareness, professionalism and an open mind.

There is, and always will be, many challenges

and we don't have a magic wand. But you, the members, are vital to the future of the CICM and this leads me firstly to a 'big thank you' to all those who are involved at branch level. We know that you all have day jobs and families, and that being involved at branch level is purely voluntary. What you are delivering to the members, however, is so important. How we maximise the branch network in the future is an ongoing topic of discussion, and how we can continue to add value. I hope we can share what is working well and lend help and guidance where further support is needed.

Two of the key areas we also need to focus on are profitability and membership. A strong financial infrastructure and management are key to ensuring we have the funds to deliver programmes and build the CICM of the future. In terms of membership, the Charter helped further raise our profile which not only helped to attract new members but also support our existing professionals. We will continue this positive trend with various initiatives, closer ties with appropriate colleges and educational establishments and the apprenticeship scheme, all of which I hope will have a positive impact in the next 12 months.

One of our greatest challenges is always to demonstrate just how far we have come over the years. We need to continue to engage with the whole membership and encourage the more experienced members to support their younger team colleagues to become CICM qualified and receive the many benefits of CICM membership.

I am excited about the future as a champion of the CICM and the credit profession. I also look forward to working with my colleagues Pete Whitmore, David Thornley, Sue Chapple, Glen Bullivant and Larry Colman.

My goal for the next two years is to serve the membership to the best of my ability and be actively involved in developing the CICM of the future. Please contact me and let me have your thoughts and opinions email: governance@cicm.com

● Laurie Beagle FCICM, EICM