



The chief executive officer: Richard Catt

Networking on behalf of the CFA members

I WAS personally relieved there wasn't immediate consensus at the G20 conference regarding regulation to stop financial institutions making the same mistakes again. Some healthy debate on the subject gives us cause for hope.

My slightly sceptical view of current politics also extends to the future. I agree with Matthew Parris in The Times who suggested we should be suspicious of any politician who, when recovery arrives, implies that his or her party has a 'new economic model or vision for a post-millennial economy'.

There was nothing wrong with the old one. It just went out of control. It was badly regulated with no-one in government, or the financial world, taking any meaningful steps until it was too late.

I'm sorry that this is turning into my first rant in CFJ, but could the commonsense police stop politicians using some of the new political speak. My least favourite is 'the green shoots of recovery' which I think should be banned and attract an on the spot fine. This phrase or any other cuddly vision of spring won't make us forget past difficulties or feel good about the future.

Even worse is 'toxic debt'. Does any politician or banker really believe that such abstract terms fools the average person into believing that this debt is anything

other than poor lending decisions? Did I mention regulation? That should warrant a custodial sentence.

As your voice in the industry, the CFA is trying hard to provide appropriate support. John Alcock and I recently attended a reception at the House of Lords organised by the Construction Products Association. A number of MPs from different parties were present. John and I spotted people such as Kenneth Clarke and Margaret Beckett.

We lobbied several MPs on key issues in supporting our industry. Credit insurance was high on my list as something causing problems for our problems.

The CPA is also lobbying the government to give industry other breaks to help ride the recession and prepare for recovery. I'm specifically thinking of things such as the suspension of property rates for empty buildings. Without this many empty properties could be demolished to achieve a short term saving.

We also networked with other attendees, sharing stories of responses from MPs. Did it do any good? I honestly don't know, but consider what would we have achieved by not attending? It's something we have a duty to do on behalf of members; John certainly found it more valuable than he expected.

On a more day-to-day basis, we are helping flooring contractors

with benefits such as free credit checks, legal and contractual help and, of course, promoting the benefits of using a CFA member through the pages of CFJ, our website, member's handbook etc.

Continuing the regulation theme, we are re-issuing membership certificates with an expiry date to ensure that benefits are only enjoyed by members. We recommend you ask potential clients if all companies they use to quote are definitely current CFA members. A simple check can be made by visiting our website, but in case a photocopy of a certificate is provided, the expiry date now provides authenticity.

The CFA is affiliated to two bodies who work hard for us at government level, the Construction Products Association (CPA) on behalf of manufacturers and the National Specialists Contractors Council (NSCC) for contractor members.

For information on the work they are doing on your behalf, or if you have an issue you want brought to their attention, contact the CFA on **T: 0115 941 1126** or email us on **info@cfa.org.uk**

But now to happier thoughts. We still have a few places at the CFA dinner dance at the Bristol Marriot Hotel next month. It's close to the city's new shopping amenities, as well as the beautiful city of Bath. It's an opportunity to let your hair down and network at the same time. Contact the CFA for details.



CFA president: John Alcock

We can work it out together

COMMUNICATION – yes I know I'm always banging on about it, but I still don't think we've got it right. For example, I know that my colleague at the CFA Richard Catt is always putting things up on the CFA website; it's often timely and important information too.

At the last council meeting Richard said with regards to a recent posting that he would leave it there to see the number of hits it attracted. If it received too few he'd take it off.

If its important information on the CFA website, how can you tell if anyone is taking any notice, if it has been widely seen or had any impact?

But I'm not just talking about website information, but about the free-exchange of information that should be passed from older flooring contractors to the younger guys. Publications such as the CFJ do a great job, but what if in your organisation the magazine gets delivered straight to the

senior people?

Again at the last council meeting I asked what areas were attracting most disputes; for example I have recently come across several problems with asphalt –if people posted just small notes on the website we'd have a better picture of what's going on out there. Information like this gives us the ammunition to try and find out more. Pooling information benefits everyone.

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