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Personal introduction:

I have been active in our profession since I started training in 1986. Less than 10 years later, I became a partner in 1995 which, despite the pace of change, still feels like yesterday.

Over the last 30 plus years I have been fortunate to work with many exceptional people, be they work colleagues, clients, or other business professionals from whom I have learned and continue to learn a great deal.

I have gained my experience from working predominantly with and for mid-tier accountancy firms. I trained with BDO (Stoy Hayward as was) in London returning in 2013 when BDO and PKF merged. Post-merger, I was delighted to be elected by my fellow partners to sit on BDO's Partnership Council. In total I spent 23 years at the merged PKF/BDO firm, 19 of which were as a partner. I am now a corporate partner at Crowe U.K. LLP, which is in an exciting phase of its continued development and at the heart of the mid-tier firms' space.

Complementing my mid-tier experience is the time I have spent either working for, or alongside both smaller and larger firms. My first years as a partner were, in fact at Crane & Partners, a seven partner firm in Bromley, Kent. I remain grateful to the partners who had the confidence in me to become a partner so early in my career and for the experience I gained from their diverse client base. At the other end of the professional spectrum, I have, on a number of occasions, had the opportunity to work alongside the 'Big Four' on joint projects.

I am now very much an assurance and advisory partner with a core focus on statutory audits, other assurance engagements as well as providing corporate assurance and advice to a domestic and international client base. However, I have been equally fortunate to have gained experience of working in tax and corporate finance. This mix of skills and experience has also meant I get involved in unique and special projects. The most significant of these being a four year high profile project with the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), a multi-country project working alongside the Big Four where we regularly reported to the Commission and other key stakeholders.

My client base has and continues to be varied, including entrepreneurs, through to premium listed entities, but has become concentrated towards private equity and asset management. I have however retained an active interest in trading businesses.

Alongside my client work, I have been active in supporting the firms and network I am a partner in and the sectors I represent. In addition to sitting on BDO's Partnership Council, at PKF I sat on the firm's Assurance and Advisory Standards Committee for nine years and more recently on the PKF International Assurance & Advisory Steering Group. I am also a member of the Association of Investment Company's (AIC) VCT technical sub-committee.

Outside of work, I try to spend time with my growing family where my sons now give me a head start when we take part in "friendly" sporting challenges from tennis, swimming to running.

Involvement with ICAEW:

I have been an ICAEW member since admission, post qualification in 1990. I have valued the Institute's thought leadership which has helped me with my work and my career development and I have attended many events over the years. I have also observed with interest how ICAEW has adapted to a changing commercial and professional environment, as well as their role in raising the profile of the profession both in the UK and internationally. Of particular note has been the increase in the number of faculties and special interest groups and, the innovative use of technology to engage with members.

To date, I have chosen to focus on practice and client matters and have not been involved in committees or district societies. At the time, that was the right decision and one I believe will help ensure I bring a fresh perspective to complement the expertise of the current members of Council. My fresh perspective is also supported by my complementary experience gained from my active involvement with BDO's partnership Council, my experience of working with the ICHEIC, listed company boards, my involvement with committees at PKF UK LLP and PKF International and my current role at the AIC.

Motivation and ability to be a member of Council:

I have and continue to enjoy my time in our profession and recognise that what I and the teams I work with have achieved could not have been as accomplished without the support ICAEW provides to us, its members, through its members' services, thought leadership and lobbying.

Reflecting on how I have benefited, I have reached the point in my career where I want to put something back into the profession which has helped me. My motivation is, however, more than just putting back; I am excited by the changes that are taking place in the business world, driven by innovation in business models and technology. The opportunities for the skills we have mean our current and future members should be well placed to support and add value to business as new roles and requirements emerge.

Exciting as this all is, these advances, compounded by frequently reported concerns about quality and integrity, are causing many to question the value and purpose of our profession which, for some, has moved from trusted advisor to commoditised service provider. The consequences that such sentiment has are that it can be a dissuader to talent entering the profession and a motivator for people to leave.

In short, the opportunities and challenges means it is an exciting time to be in the profession and, as importantly, a key time in the strategic development of ICAEW. I would value the opportunity to play my part in helping shape the future of ICAEW by representing my constituents by drawing on the experience I have accumulated and the energy I have to make an effective contribution. I also have the confidence of knowing that I have the full support of my fellow partners at Crowe.

Strategic focus:

Whether you are in industry or practice, our profession is facing many challenges from different directions, which impacts us all.

We have the commercial and technological challenges which flow from being deeply within the fourth industrial revolution, meaning that some traditional core activities are being replaced or consumed by technology; business models are changing and complexity of data is increasing.

Of equal importance is the changing perception that business leaders, politicians and the press have over our profession. While unwanted and misunderstood attention has been brought into the spotlight in recent months by audit, it impacts us all and we need to ensure we retain and, where necessary, rebuild our reputation as a trusted profession equipped with the skills to add value in the new world economy.

It is also difficult to avoid mentioning Brexit, which in some quarters seems to be offered as the reason for any industry misfortune. However, whatever a professional's political hue, it is an understatement to say we are living in uncertain and unclear times, which can make it difficult for us to advise.

Pulling these compounding challenges together, ICAEW's strategic foci should be to ensure that:

- they help support existing members to adapt and acquire the skills needed to survive and flourish in a fast changing environment, not just now, but for the medium to long term
- our profession remains attractive as a vocational choice for people evaluating their career options
- we are nurturing the right people with the right skills who will continue to enhance the value of our profession and reinforce the quality and objectivity of the advice our membership offers
- no matter their background, everyone who wants to join our profession is given the chance to fulfil their potential and is encouraged to be the best they possibly can
- ways to enhance engagement with our professions' main critics and detractors are identified, leading to a better understanding of the value of chartered accountants
- whatever form of Brexit, ICAEW membership retains its position as a quality qualification, globally.

I believe I am well placed to represent my constituents on Council as I have:

- the right blend of skills gained from working a client base who themselves are having to adapt to the challenges we are facing
- a genuine passion in driving quality and innovation
- experience of sitting on, and working with Committees
- a desire to help the next generation of accountants drive the profession forward.

Underpinning all of these, is that I am both a good listener with the passion and conviction to advocate the key issues and help deliver change.

The experience I bring is enhanced by the fact I have worked either directly or indirectly with firms, service lines and sectors which represent the diversity of ICAEW's membership and key stakeholders.

My experience from working with a variety of committees, coupled with my assurance background, means I am well placed to contribute, constructively challenge and support the views and interests of my constituency members.

Communication with members in the constituency:

My proposed approach to interacting with my constituents are to:

- attend the existing constituency meetings
- liaise with the constituency chairperson to include a periodic feedback session with members at those meetings so they can share views and ideas and voice their concerns if necessary
- set up a dedicated but private social media account where members can post their views, ideas and concerns
- set up a dedicated email account for those who prefer to email to share their views

NOMINATED BY:

- Roland Leo Malkin
- Stephen John Clarke
- Matthew Christopher Stallabrass
- Shona Ann Harvie
- Alan John Knapp