

The Accountant & International Accounting Bulletin Young accountant of the year Award Nominees 2016



Thomas Gillan, CFO, Social Investment Scotland, Edinburgh Sustainability & CSR

Thomas qualified as a CA in 2011 following training largely completed in audit and corporate finance in Edinburgh. In 2012 he joined Social Investment Scotland (SIS), a social finance intermediary investing in high impact businesses which have a social mission at the heart of the organisation. Thomas' role allows him to be entrepreneurial and he recently founded SIS Community

Capital; the UK's first mass participation social investment fund backed by social investment tax relief.

“After a further year in CF advisory I knew I wanted to leave practice and go into industry but I was unclear in terms of sector other than I enjoyed financial services and sought a purpose in my job.

In 2012, Thomas joined Social Investment Scotland (SIS) as FD following a search for an organisation which shared his values and demonstrated incredible potential.

Over the years, we have grown the team from five to 18 and increased funds under management by almost £20m, raising over £25m from over 30 new investors - most importantly connecting capital with communities across Scotland which otherwise cannot access investment through commercial means.

This journey has had a profound impact on me personally and professionally. I'm totally motivated by the concept of using profit to achieve purpose and connecting organisations with investors to support growth and social impact. Over the last three years it is clear this concept is gaining significant momentum through-

out the UK, both from an entrepreneur and investor perspective. It's about doing business the right way. My role has organically evolved into a more operational and strategic position. This has allowed me to be more entrepreneurial and is best demonstrated through a fund I founded and operate called Community Capital. This was the UK's first mass participation social investment fund backed by a tax relief; attracting 27 new investors into the market whilst providing more flexible and affordable investment which I hope will unlock significant innovation in the social business sector.

SIS has also developed significant partnerships with leading financial institutions and also Asda over the past 18 months. I was involved in brokering each relationship driven by a passion of influencing large corporate behaviours to act in a more sustainable and social way. What we are now seeing is a shift in attitude across the board and many are appraising social return on investments rather than purely financial.

So in summary, my career path so far has been influenced by several factors and chance throughout. However, at the core is the alignment of mission and values and also having a lot of fun on the way!

The CA qualification has been vital for my career progression to date. Since I was young, I knew I wanted to be involved in business and through ICAS I have had a depth of experience in many different sectors. The rich knowledge gained and networks accessed through the institute have been instrumental for my personal development and career goals. I regularly underestimate the breadth of knowledge and skills leveraged by the qualification. ICAS has also introduced me to partners which have strategically benefited SIS (such as SSE and The Robertson Trust) and also supported platform articles circulated throughout the membership”.