



A 'first time' experience of the IDPE Conference 2018
By Roger Howard, Foundation Director, Woodhouse Grove School

From starting in my role in late 2017, I have been constantly impressed by the collegial nature of my peers within the profession. My earliest forays into the wider world of 'development' were meetings with Graham Papenfus, Director of Development and Fundraising at Kingswood (a fellow MIST school), and a seminar meeting hosted by Jim Lewis, Head of Development at St Columba's College. The key role of IDPE was strongly endorsed and as a result I attended regional meetings along with the IDPE Bursaries conference in London. All were extremely insightful and useful, with a recurring message from the experienced practitioners I met – 'oh you must go to conference' and 'you are bound to get a lot out of it'.

I signed up, and was not disappointed. The event had a clear structure and sense of purpose from the opening key note, Sir Timothy Smit, through to my final session choice, 'The art of flying – a story of raising aspiration and realising ambition'. I found the presentations both informative and thought-provoking. The exhibition hall proved a bustling atmosphere with the chance to meet a vast range of exhibitors and sponsors, along with the opportunity to network with fellow delegates and perhaps follow up on conversations from the previous evening's extremely convivial awards dinner. The whole experience was worthwhile.

I went to sessions on a range of themes but essentially focused on those covering alumni relations and fundraising techniques. All the presenters were knowledgeable and, in many cases, inspirational. All were approachable. I still cannot claim to be an expert in this complex field, but in the main it centres upon people, and this event is a coming together of people who perhaps unlike, to a degree, in my other profession (sport) are not rivals. There is a genuine sharing culture which is most enlightening and reassuring. I may not yet be an expert, but if I need guidance, I know more clearly where I can go for help. I wholeheartedly recommend the conference for those new to the development profession.

Find out more about what is on offer for new conference delegates at the IDPE 2019 Annual Conference [here](#).

[Book your place now](#) to take advantage of our early bird discount!