

BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



REPORT

of the

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

APRIL 2006 - APRIL 2007

BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Report of the Executive Committee

April 2006 - April 2007

The Executive Committee of the British-American Parliamentary Group presents its report to the Members of the Group in both Houses of Parliament.

The Officers and Executive Committee of the Group, who were elected at the last Annual General Meeting to serve from July 2006 to July 2007, are as follows:

Joint Presidents	The Lord Chancellor The Speaker of the House of Commons
Vice-Presidents	The Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett, MP The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Boothroyd, PC, OM The Rt. Hon. David Cameron, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Carrington, KG, GCMG, CH, MC, DL The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith, MP The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howe of Aberavon, Kt, CH, QC The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, CBE The Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling, DL The Rt. Hon. Charles Kennedy, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mackay of Clashfern, KT The Rt. Hon. the Lord Molyneux of Killead, KBE The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH The Rt. Hon. the Lord Pym, MC, DL The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Thatcher, LG, OM, The Rt. Hon. the Lord Weatherill, DL
Chairman	The Prime Minister
Vice-Chairmen	The Rt. Hon. Peter Hain, MP The Rt. Hon. Michael Ancram, QC, MP, up to December 2006, when he was succeeded by The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP
Honorary Secretary	The Rt. Hon. Alan Williams, MP
Honorary Treasurers	Brian Donohoe, MP Peter Viggers, MP

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Government	Opposition
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea	Simon Burns, MP
Linda Gilroy, MP	Derek Conway, MP
The Rt. Hon. John McFall, MP	Nigel Evans, MP
David Marshall, MP	The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP
Austin Mitchell, MP	Elfyn Llwyd, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC	The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP
The Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy, MP	The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble
Bill Oler, MP	David Wilshire, MP

Administrator: Hannah Mitchell

The office is situated at 7 Millbank (Room 6/38), London SW1P 3JA.

Telephone: 020 7219 6209

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee met on 24th October 2006; 5th December 2006; 13th March 2007 and 15th May 2007.

The Annual General Meeting at which the current Executive Committee was elected took place on 12th July 2006.

The following indicates attendances at the Executive Committee meetings since the last AGM:

The Rt. Hon. Michael Ancram, QC, MP	1/1
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea	3/4
Simon Burns, MP	2/4
Derek Conway, MP	4/4
Brian Donohoe, MP	4/4
Nigel Evans, MP	2/4
Linda Gilroy, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP	1/3
The Rt. Hon. Peter Hain, MP	0/4
The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP	2/4
Elfyn Llwyd, MP	3/4
David Marshall, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. John McFall, MP	4/4
Austin Mitchell, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC	3/4
The Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy, MP	3/4
Bill Oler, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble	4/4
Peter Viggers, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Alan Williams, MP	4/4
David Wilshire, MP	3/4

BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
1 APRIL 2006 TO 31 MARCH 2007
FOREWORD

Introduction

1. The British-American Parliamentary Group was formed in 1937 to promote closer relations and understanding between Members of both Houses of Parliament and Members of both Houses of the United States Congress by providing opportunities for discussion on problems common to both countries and for the exchange of visits and information. The Group's Objectives, Activities and Rules were formally adopted on 5 July 1967 and have since been subject to minor amendments in 1968, 1981, 1982, 1996, 2000 and 2003.
2. The Group acts as an autonomous body within Parliament. It appoints its own administrative staff to carry out its objectives and the Rules of the Group define the limitations on its powers.
3. The management of the Group is vested in the Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary, who is a member of the Executive Committee, is primarily responsible for the Group's activities; the Administrator, who is an official of the Group and not a member, is responsible for the executive work of the Group. The Chairman of the Group is the Prime Minister. The two Vice-Chairmen of the Executive Committee are normally of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet rank.
4. The composition of the Executive Committee during 2006-07 and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer are outlined in the Annual Report.

Principal Activities of the Group

5. The format of the annual programme of activities has historically consisted of: one Annual Conference; one ad hoc specialist delegation to the United States; one familiarisation visit to the United States co-sponsored by the United States State Department and attendance as observers by recently elected Members of Parliament at biennial courses held in the United States for newly elected Members of Congress. Various other activities are held in the United Kingdom with distinguished visitors from the United States.
6. In September 2006, eight members of the Group took part in a co-sponsored visit with the U.S. State Department to Washington D.C. and Lansing, Michigan, to look at the Federal and State system of Government as well as spending a short time with a Member of Congress in his/her district. Also in September, three members visited Connecticut and Massachusetts to look at Stem Cell research. At the end of the same month, four members travelled to Chicago to look at Law and Order issues. In November, three members went to Boston to attend, as observers, a biennial induction course for newly elected Members of Congress, conducted by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University. In February 2007, four members travelled to New York to share the American experience of engaging with their Muslim communities. The group was also meant to have visited Dearborn in Michigan but the visit had to be cut short due to a winter storm that swept through the Midwest. This visit was funded entirely by the Foreign Office Superfund, as was a visit later in the month to New Mexico, Texas and North Carolina, where four members looked at Climate Change and Energy. In March, four members visited New England to study and share Energy and Climate Change initiatives. At the end of March, four members travelled to Texas to look at policing, crime and immigration. Further details of the nature and composition of these delegations and other activities are included in the Group's Annual Report.

Relationship with H M Treasury

7. The Group is funded mainly by a grant-in-aid from the Treasury to which it submits a detailed income and expenditure budget together with bids for expenditure, on a rolling 3-year programme, usually in February each year or at the request of the Treasury. Approval of the budget and the amount of the grant for the coming year is agreed in the autumn. Grant-in-aid is paid in one instalment, usually in April each year.

Results for the Year

8. The Income and Expenditure Account on page 11 shows that the Group had a surplus of income over expenditure of £5,217 for the year 2006-07. The grant-in-aid for the year was £97,962. Programme expenditure decreased, as there was no Annual Conference during this financial period with the 2006 Annual Conference being brought forward due to the mid-term elections in the U.S. in November. Instead a number of specialist delegations were funded.

Prompt Payment Initiative

9. In line with best commercial practice, it is Group policy to pay bills in accordance with contractual conditions. Where no such conditions exist, it aims to pay within 30 days of receipt of goods and services or presentation of a valid invoice, whichever is the later. There are no figures available to show performance against this target.

PETER VIGGERS MP	<i>Hon Treasurer</i>
BRIAN DONOHOE MP	<i>Hon Treasurer</i>
RT HON ALAN WILLIAMS MP	<i>Hon Secretary</i>

15 May 2007

STATEMENT OF THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP'S AND ACCOUNTING OFFICERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The financial statements are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the British-American Parliamentary Group's state of affairs at the year end and of its income and expenditure for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the British-American Parliamentary Group is required to:

- give due regard to the procedures laid down in Government Accounting including relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable standards have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Group will continue in operation.

The Executive Committee has designated the Joint Honorary Treasurers of the British-American Parliamentary Group as its Accounting Officers. The Accounting Officers are responsible for ensuring that the uses to which the Group puts funds received from the grant-in-aid are consistent with the purposes for which the grant was given and comply with the any agreed conditions attached to them. The Joint Honorary Treasurers will also be responsible for signing the annual financial statements and ensuring that proper accounting records are maintained.

BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
Statement on the System of Internal Control

Scope of responsibility

As Joint Accounting Officers, we have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the objectives and activities of the British-American Parliamentary Group whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets, for which we are personally responsible, in a manner that is consistent with the Financial Memorandum issued by HM Treasury for the use of the Group's grant-in-aid.

The objectives of the British-American Parliamentary Group

The origins of the British-American Parliamentary Group date back to before the Second World War. The Group has clearly defined objectives that provide the basic framework against which the Group's governance arrangements, including the system of internal control, should be considered. These objectives are to promote friendly relations and mutual understanding between Members of both Houses of Parliament of the United Kingdom and Members of both Houses of Congress of the United States of America, to discuss problems common to the United Kingdom and the United States, to exchange courtesies and to provide opportunities for discussion with Senators, Members of the House of Representatives, and other distinguished citizens of the United States; and to arrange for the exchange of visits and information between legislators of both countries.

The Group's governance arrangements

The Group's objectives as described above are set out in a single constitutional document, incorporating the Objects, Activities and Rules of the Group. The Group's Annual General Meeting of 5 July 1967 formally adopted the Group's present Objectives, Activities and Rules, subject to minor amendments endorsed by the Annual General Meetings held in 1968, 1981, 1982, 1996, 2000 and 2003.

The Rules of the Group provide for its management to be vested in an Executive Committee. The duties of the Committee include:

- the determination of the Group's programme of activity;
- ensure that the selection of participants in delegations is balanced and reasonable;
- the promotion of membership of the Group;
- the nomination of the Group's Joint Honorary Treasurers;
- the accountability and control of the Group's funds;
- the appointment of the Group's Honorary Secretary; and
- the appointment of an Administrator to co-operate with the Executive Committee and the Officers in carrying out their duties.

The Group's Rules provide for an Annual General Meeting of Members to be held at such a time and place that the Executive Committee may determine. The Rules also allow for the Committee to call Special General Meetings to consider and determine any matter of interest and importance that may arise.

The Rules provide for the Executive Committee to submit a report of its proceedings to the Annual General Meeting. The Rules also require the Committee to provide an audited statement of the Group's income and expenditure and assets and liabilities for the past financial year.

The Group's relationship with its funding sponsor (HM Treasury) is embodied in a Financial Memorandum. The Memorandum sets out:

- the respective responsibilities of HM Treasury and the Group with regard to propriety, financial management and the safeguarding of public funds;
- the responsibilities of the Joint Honorary Treasurers as the Group's Accounting Officers;

- the budgetary, accounting and financial reporting framework;
- the administrative arrangements for the day to day activities of the Group;
- the responsibilities of the Honorary Secretary and the Administrator for the management of the Group's grant-in-aid.

The Financial Memorandum places a responsibility on the Group to ensure that all resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively; and also provides the Comptroller and Auditor General with the possibility of inspecting the Accounts of the Group with a view to satisfying himself as to the value for money achieved by the Group in its operations.

As Joint Honorary Treasurers, we also recognise that the Financial Memorandum requires the Group to provide HM Treasury with copies of the annual audited Accounts. In part, this is to assist HM Treasury to obtain the assurance that they need that the Group has met its obligations to use its resources in accordance with the terms of the HM Treasury Supply Estimate (Vote) and other obligations agreed during discussions about the Group's grant-in-aid estimate.

The Group's governance activities in 2006-2007

The Executive Committee met on four occasions in 2006-2007 to consider matters that are set out in the Committee's Annual Report. Amongst other things, the Committee examined: the Group's draft programme of activities for the present year; the Group's forecast budget for 2007-2008; the annual report of the Joint Honorary Treasurers, including a review of the Group's budgetary position and the Group's audited Accounts for 2005-2006; the annual report of the Honorary Secretary; and other matters for discussion and endorsement by the Annual General Meeting.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the policies, aims and objectives of the Group. In doing this, it can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an enduring process designed to identify and prioritise the risks for the achievement of the Group's agreed objectives and activities, to consider the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively, efficiently and economically.

Effectiveness of internal control

As Joint Accounting Officers, we have responsibility for maintaining an effective system of internal control and periodically to review the procedures that we have in place. Our review of the Group's internal control is informed by the deliberations of the Group's Annual General Meeting, the decisions of the Executive Committee as well as the views of Officers within the Group who have day to day responsibility for managing the system of internal control.

We have also had regard to guidance on internal control and financial management issued by HM Treasury under the auspices of the Financial Memorandum, as well as the comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports made to the Group.

On an enduring basis, we advise the Group's Executive Committee on the implications of the periodic reviews of the Group's internal control processes and procedures. We intend to ensure that the Group continues to maintain reliable system of internal control.

The Group's Accounts and the activities that underpin them are currently subject to external audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General, supported by the National Audit Office (NAO). The NAO carry out their audits in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and each year report the results of their work to the Group's Executive Committee.

PETER VIGGERS MP
BRIAN DONOHOE MP
RT HON ALAN WILLIAMS MP

Hon Treasurer
Hon Treasurer
Hon Secretary

15 May 2007

**CERTIFICATE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO
THE MEMBERS OF
THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP**

I have audited the financial statements of the British-American Parliamentary Group for the year ended 31 March 2007. These comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet, the Cashflow Statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

Respective responsibilities of the Joint Honorary Treasurers and the Auditor

As described in the Statement of the British-American Parliamentary Group's and Accounting Officers' Responsibilities, the Joint Honorary Treasurers of the British-American Parliamentary Group are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

I report to you my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view. I report to you whether in my opinion the other information contained in the Report of the Executive Committee is consistent with the audited financial statements. I also report whether in all material respects the income and expenditure have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

In addition, I report to you if the British-American Parliamentary Group has not kept proper accounting records, or if I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I review whether the statement on the system of internal controls reflects the British-American Parliamentary Group's compliance with Treasury's guidance "Corporate governance: statement on the system of internal control". I report if it does not meet the requirements specified by Treasury, or if the statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit of the financial statements.

Basis of audit opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. My audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Joint Honorary Treasurers in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the British-American Parliamentary Group's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by error, or by fraud or other irregularity and that, in all material respects, the income and expenditure have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which

govern them. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinions

Audit Opinion

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the British-American Parliamentary Group at 31 March 2007 and of the surplus for the period then ended; and
- information given within the Report of the Executive Committee is consistent with the audited financial statements.

Audit Opinion on Regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Paul Keane
Director, Parliament and Justice
for the Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SP

May 2007

**THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2007**

	Note	2006 - 2007 £	2005 - 2006 £
INCOME			
Grant-in-Aid		97,962	144,194
Other income	2	<u>1,289</u>	<u>2,252</u>
Total income		<u>99,251</u>	<u>146,446</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Administrative expenditure	4	33,252	31,738
Programme expenditure	5	<u>61,587</u>	<u>100,646</u>
Total expenditure		<u>94,839</u>	<u>132,383</u>
Operating surplus / (deficit)		4,412	14,062
Bank interest receivable		<u>805</u>	<u>1,774</u>
Surplus / (deficit) before tax		5,217	15,836
Corporation tax	6	0	0
Surplus / (deficit) for the period		<u>5,217</u>	<u>15,836</u>

The notes on pages 12 to 14 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2007

	Note	2006 - 2007 £	2005 - 2006 £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	7	5,604	2,305
Cash & Bank	8	<u>45,757</u>	<u>36,610</u>
Total		<u>51,361</u>	<u>38,915</u>
Creditors	9	(14,515)	(8,987)
Net Assets		<u>36,846</u>	<u>29,929</u>
Financed by:			
General Fund at 31 March	10	<u>36,846</u>	<u>29,929</u>

The Notes on pages 12 to 14 form part of these financial statements.

PETER VIGGERS MP *Hon Treasurer*

BRIAN DONOHOE MP *Hon Treasurer*

RT HON ALAN WILLIAMS MP *Hon Secretary*

CASHFLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2007

	Note	2006 - 2007 £	2005 - 2006 £
Net Cash inflow / (outflow)			
from operating activities		8,148	(114,645)
Return on investments		999	1,529
Taxation		0	0
Advance Funding from HM Treasury		0	0
Increase / (decrease) in cash	8	<u>9,147</u>	<u>(113,116)</u>

**RECONCILIATION OF OPERATING SURPLUS TO NET CASH INFLOW
FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES**

	Note	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
		£	£
Operating surplus / (deficit)		4,412	14,062
(Increase) / decrease / in debtors	7	(3,582)	7,690
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	9	5,618	6,197
Increase / (decrease) relating to creditors due to advance financing from Treasury		0	(144,194)
Notional Charges		1,700	1,600
Net Cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities		<u>8,148</u>	<u>(114,645)</u>

The notes below and on pages 13 to 14 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

1) Accounting Policies

- a) The accounts are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. As such, without limiting the information given, the accounts meet:
 - i. The accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 1985
 - ii. Any disclosure and accounting requirements of HM Treasury.
- b) All gains and losses are included in the income and expenditure account.
- c) Office equipment is written off as expenditure in full in the year of acquisition.
- d) Annual subscriptions cover a 12 month period from 1st April each year. Annual subscriptions paid between 1st January and 31st March each year are treated as subscriptions paid in advance.
- e) Life subscriptions are included as income in full in the year of receipt.

	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
Annual subscriptions	560	646
Unamended standing orders	129	126
Life subscriptions	600	1,480
Total	<u>1,289</u>	<u>2,252</u>

3) Staff Costs

Salaries	21,081	20,118
Pension	4,559	4,347
Total	<u>25,640</u>	<u>24,465</u>

4) Administrative Expenditure	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
Administrative Services (Note 3)	25,640	24,465
Annual Report	1,310	1,019
Audit and Accountancy	1,700	1,600
Insurance	1,133	1,050
Sundry	842	2,346
Bad Debts	0	33
Website costs	2,627	1,225
Total	<u>33,252</u>	<u>31,738</u>

5) Programme Expenditure	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
Annual Conference(s)	0	61,355
Hospitality	656	183
Co-sponsored visit	20,618	19,758
Specialist delegations	31,420	9,848
New Members Orientation Programme	6,690	0
Reception for American Ambassador	2,203	0
NCSL Annual Meeting	0	9,502
Total	<u>61,587</u>	<u>100,646</u>

6) Corporation Tax	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
Corporation Tax	0	0

Under the corporation tax regime, bodies with a taxable income of less than £10,000 are subject to a zero tax rate. This applies to the BAPG, as its only taxable income is bank interest.

7) Debtors	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
Pre-payments	555	438
Accrued income	167	361
Other debtors	4,882	1,506
Total	<u>5,604</u>	<u>2,305</u>

8) Cash & Bank	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	36,610	149,726
Net cash inflow	9,147	(113,116)
Balance at 31 March	<u>45,757</u>	<u>36,610</u>

9) Creditors	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
Miscellaneous Creditors	14,115	8,561
Deferred Income	400	426
Total	<u>14,515</u>	<u>8,987</u>

10) General Fund Movement	2006 - 2007	2005 - 2006
	£	£
General Fund at 1 April	29,929	12,493
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	5,217	15,836
Notional costs for the year	1,700	1,600
General Fund at 31 March	<u>36,846</u>	<u>29,929</u>

11) Related Party Transactions

The House of Commons and HM Treasury are regarded as related parties. HM Treasury provides a grant-in-aid to the Group under the terms provided in the Financial Memorandum agreed with HM Treasury. The House of Commons provides free accommodation to the Group.

During the year, the BAPG entered into related party transactions worth £9,849, (£5,290 with the House of Commons Refreshment Department for the provision of hospitality to visitors from the United States and £4,559 relating to twelve months pensions contribution for the Group's Administrator paid to the House of Commons Staff Pension Scheme).

Other than these related party transactions, no member of the Group nor any other related party has undertaken any material transactions with the Group during the year.

ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP

2006

25th April

At the request of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling, the Honorary Secretary attended a meeting with representatives from the CPA and IPU to discuss the issue of Peers being eligible to claim Parliamentary expenses when on visits under the auspices of the IPU, CPA, BIIB and BAPG. While House rules have recently been amended to permit Peers to claim expenses with respect to formal conferences of the IPU and CPA, they do not include conferences of the BIIB and BAPG. As a result of the meeting, a letter was drafted on behalf of the CPA, IPU and BAPG to Lord Brabazon of Tara DL asking for the recent changes in rules to include formal conferences of the BAPG.

8th May

The Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission hosted a dinner at Painters' Hall in London in honour of Marshall Scholars and Marshall Sherfield Fellows completing their awards, to which the Administrator was invited.

10th May

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the Honorary Secretary very kindly gave a Parliamentary tour to a group of 20 Scholars from the McConnell Centre for Political Leadership, University of Louisville, followed by a question and answer exchange over coffee.

16th May

A meeting of the Executive Committee took place.

26th May

At the request of Michael Fabricant MP, arrangements were made for the MP and a group of his constituents (Lichfield, Staffordshire) to tour the White House and the Capital in Washington D.C.

19th June

The Minister of the Embassy of the United States of America, Mr. David T. Johnson and his wife, Ms Scarlett Swan, hosted a Summer Drinks party at Wychwood House, Kensington, to which the Administrator and others were invited.

22nd June

At the request of the US Embassy, the BAPG arranged for the President of the Center for the Study of the Presidency, Dr. David Abshire, and colleagues on a Task Force trip to London, Brussels and Lisbon, to meet with members of the BAPG to discuss the idea of building crosswalks between EU, G8 and NATO on respective homeland security and science and technology co-operation. We are grateful to Members for taking the time to come to the meeting which was arranged at short notice.

4th July

The Ambassador of the United States of America and Mrs. Robert H. Tuttle gave a reception to celebrate the 230th Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America at Winfield House. The Honorary Secretary and the Administrator were invited.

12th July

The Annual General Meeting took place. Mr. Speaker kindly presided.

19th July

At the request of the Foreign Office, the BAPG made arrangements for a visiting delegation of Native American Indian Chiefs to be given a tour of Parliament. The Honorary Secretary very kindly conducted the tour and accompanied the delegation to meet Mr. Speaker at a reception in Speaker's House. Mr. Speaker very generously arranged for the delegation to watch Prime Minister's questions from the

Distinguished Visitors' Gallery. The delegation was in the UK to participate in a Virginia Indian Festival in Gravesend, the resting place of Pocahontas, hosted by the Jamestown 2007 British Committee.

10th to 20th September

A visit co-sponsored by the BAPG and the US State Department, took place. Eight Members who had not been on a U.S. State Department sponsored programme in the last five years and who were seeking a greater understanding of U.S. Federal and State Government visited the US from 10th to 20th September. They spent five days in Washington, gaining an overview of the federal system of government, three days in individual districts with Members of Congress and two days in Lansing, Michigan, to examine a state capital legislature.

18th to 21st September

Three Members travelled to Massachusetts and Connecticut to look at Stem Cell research. The British Consulate General in Boston very kindly organised the programme which included meetings with world leaders in scientific research at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute and meetings with Massachusetts and Connecticut Legislatures. The delegation reported on their return that "The visit was a great success, exchanging views, starting to develop sustainable relationships across the Atlantic on stem cell research . . . We are grateful to the BAPG, they started something that will not end here".

21st September

At the request of the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, a tour of Parliament was arranged for the 2006 Marshall Scholars intake. The Honorary Secretary and the Rt. Hon. Denis MacShane, MP, very kindly met with the group afterwards for a question and answer exchange.

21st September

The Foreign Office hosted a reception in honor of the Marshall Scholars in the Locarno Room at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to which the Honorary Secretary and the Administrator were invited.

25th to 28th September

Four Members travelled to Chicago to look at Law and Order and in particular policing focusing on learning about innovative / effective policing models. The Consulate General in Chicago very kindly organised the programme which included visiting 311 and 911 Centres (non emergency and emergency call centres respectively) and CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy) Police Department. The delegation also attended the British American Business Council Chicago 4th Annual British Consul General Award Dinner at which, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, a senior member in the delegation, spoke on behalf of the BAPG.

24th October

A meeting of the Executive Committee took place.

25th October

The BAPG organized a meeting of the Officers and Secretariat of the CPA; IPU; BIIPG and the BAPG to discuss the proposed budget cuts by the Treasury. The BAPG Honorary Secretary chaired proceedings.

15th November

The Executive Committee of the UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association hosted a reception in the CPA Rooms to mark the State Opening of Parliament to which the Honorary Secretary and others were invited.

15th November

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) hosted a private dinner at the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts (RAC) which was attended by U.S. State leaders and industry representatives from America. Joint Treasurer Peter Viggers, MP, attended the dinner on behalf of the BAPG.

20th November

The BAPG hosted a reception for the American Ambassador and his senior staff in the State Rooms of Speaker's House. The event was very successful and provided an excellent opportunity for members of the BAPG to meet with the Ambassador and his staff. We are grateful to Mr. Speaker for generously allowing us to use his rooms and for formally welcoming the Ambassador at the event. To show his appreciation of the occasion, the Ambassador generously offered to host next year's meeting at Winfield House. Michael Ancram, in his final engagement as Opposition Vice Chair, kindly thanked the Ambassador on behalf of the Group.

21st November

The Honorary Secretary hosted a small lunch at the House for the visiting Chicago Consul General, Andrew Seaton, which was also attended by Joint Treasurer, Brian Donohoe, MP and the Administrator.

23rd & 24th November

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the BAPG organized a tour of Parliament and Gallery tickets to the House of Commons Chamber for a group of American citizens.

28th November to the 1st December

Three Members attended as observers an induction course for newly elected Members of Congress, conducted by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University. The British Consul General Boston, John Rankin, very kindly met the group for an informal briefing meeting before the start of the programme.

29th November

A 'report back' meeting took place with six of the eight participants from the 2006 Co-Sponsored Visit to the United States. Senior members of the U.S. Embassy attended the meeting including the Deputy Chief of Mission, David Johnson.

5th December

A meeting of the Executive Committee took place.

5th December

The Chairman of the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission and the Vice Chancellor of the University of London hosted a reception for Marshall Scholars at the University of London, Senate House, to which the Administrator was invited.

6th December

The Minister of the Embassy of the United States of America, Mr. David T. Johnson and his wife Ms. Scarlett Swan, hosted Christmas Drinks at their residence, Wychwood House, Kensington, which was attended by the Honorary Secretary and others.

11th December

The Overseas Office hosted Christmas Drinks at the House to which the Administrator was invited.

13th December

The Ambassador of the United States of America and Mrs. Robert H. Tuttle hosted Christmas Drinks at their residence, Winfield House, to which the Honorary Secretary was invited.

18th December

The BAPG Honorary Secretary chaired a meeting of the Officers and the Secretariat of the four Parliamentary groups: the BAPG; CPA, IPU and BIIPG, to agree a unified approach for the meeting with the Chief Secretary of the Treasury, Stephen Timms, the following morning, at which they were to discuss the Treasury's proposed cuts to funding for the CSR period 2008/09-2010/11.

19th December

The Officers of the four Parliamentary Groups met with the Chief Secretary to the

Treasury, Stephen Timms, to discuss the Treasury's proposed cuts to funding and offered a compromise agreement of a one off 5% real cut to the following year's grant-in-aid followed by a cost of living increase thereafter. It was agreed at the meeting that the individual groups would submit to the Treasury impact statements showing the implications of a 5% real cut year for the CSR period 2007/08-2010/11.

19th December

The Hon. Robert Tuttle, United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James and the Jamestown 2007 British Committee, held a ceremony to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the departure of the first permanent English settlers to Virginia at the Museum in Docklands, to which the Administrator was invited.

19th December

The Jamestown 400th Commemoration Commission hosted a reception and dinner at the Middle Temple, London, under the patronage of the Honorary Robert Tuttle, United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James, and Sir David Manning, British Ambassador to the United States, to which the Honorary Secretary and Administrator were invited.

21st December

The Administrator met with the new desk officer at the North America Team, Mark Woodham, and bade farewell to Louise Kendall who was moving to a new department at the Foreign Office. We would like to thank Louise for her support and assistance during her time with the North America Team, which was very much appreciated.

10th January 2007

The Honorary Secretary chaired a joint meeting of the Officers and the Secretariat of the four Parliamentary Groups: CPA, IPU, BAPG and BIIPG, to discuss a joint response to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, whom they met before Christmas.

17th January

The Officers and Secretariat of the four Parliamentary Groups – BAPG, CPA, IPU and BIIPG – met to review a joint letter to the Treasury objecting to the cuts and urging the Treasury to reconsider. Those present also discussed the proposition of transferring from the Treasury to the HOC Commission which was favoured by the BIIPG. Sir Stuart Bell of the HOC Commission attended the meeting, at the invitation of the BAPG Honorary Secretary, to advise on the implications of such a move.

18th January

The CPA hosted a New Year's drinks party in the CPA Rooms which was attended by the Administrator.

11-14 February

A delegation of four Members visited New York to share the American experience of engaging with their Muslim communities. The visit was specially funded by the Foreign Office Superfund. The group was also meant to have visited Dearborn in Michigan but the visit had to be cut short due to a winter storm that swept through the Midwest. The British Consulate General Chicago, who organised the original programme of calls in Michigan, are hoping to resurrect the visit and have bid for special funds from the Foreign Office Superfund to reconstitute the visit.

18-23 February

A delegation of four MPs visited New Mexico, Texas and North Carolina to study and share Energy and Climate Change initiatives. This visit was also specially financed by the Foreign Office Superfund.

9th-13th February

At the request of BAPG Member, Neil Gerrard, MP, the BAPG made arrangements for a group of students from Mr. Gerrard's constituency to tour the White House and the Capitol. We are grateful to Debbie Gebhardt, Chief of Staff to Congressman Tom Petri, former Chair of the House BAPG, for kindly assisting with the arrangements.

21st February

At the request of the Foreign Office, the BAPG organised tickets to PMQs for a party of U.S. Congressional Press Secretaries including the Communications Director from Senator McCain's Press Office and the Communications Director from Senator Pat Roberts' office. We are grateful to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for donating their tickets.

27th February

The Director-General of the Foreign Office (Defence & Intelligence) hosted a drinks reception at the Foreign Office to say good bye and thank you to Steve Williams, the outgoing Director of America, and to welcome his successor, Chris Wood, to which the Administrator was invited.

27th February

On accepting our invitation to become Joint President of the Group, alongside the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Lord Speaker met with the Honorary Secretary for a briefing on the Group and its activities. Baroness Hayman was very enthusiastically in favour of what the BAPG are doing and offered to meet visiting Members of Congress and the use of the River Room, subject to availability.

6th March

The Administrator met with Patricia Lee, Visits Officer of the British Consulate General Chicago, over coffee in Portcullis House. The meeting provided an opportunity for the BAPG to thank Patricia for all her work with previous BAPG delegations visiting the Chicago Consular district and to let her know of activities planned for the future.

7th March

BAPG Member Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP, Chair of the new All Party Tax Group, organised a policy roundtable discussion with guest speakers from the US Internal Revenue Service and the Washington based Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, to which Members of the BAPG Executive were invited to join the audience.

7th March

The Ambassador of the United States and Mrs. Robert H Tuttle held a screening of the HBO Films production 'Iron Jawed Angels' in commemoration of International Women's Day, to which the Administrator was invited.

7th March

In honour of delegates from Overseas Branches of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association attending the UK Branch 56th Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure, Her Majesty's Government held a reception at 10 Downing Street, which the Administrator attended.

11th to 15th March

Four members visited New England to study and share Energy and Climate Change initiatives. The visit was timed to coincide with the Sustainable Energy Conference in Boston and also included calls in Maine to look at recent developments.

13th March

A meeting of the Executive Committee took place.

14th March

The BAPG hosted a working lunch for Gary Hart, former U.S. Senator, in the House with Members of the BAPG Executive Committee, presided over by The Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy, MP. Mr. Speaker very kindly made arrangements for Mr. Hart to watch PMQs from the Distinguished Visitors' Gallery beforehand. Mr. Hart was principally in London to give the Twelfth Annual Douglas W Bryant Lecture at the British Library later that evening. The title of the lecture was: "The New Security: A Post-Cold War Understanding of Security in the 21st Century".

14th March

The Ambassador of the United States of America and Mrs. Robert H. Tuttle hosted a reception at their residence Winfield House to mark the launch of "Aspects of America", a new guidebook for the American Museum in Britain, which was attended by Members of the Executive.

20th March

The Officers and the Secretariat of the BAPG, CPA, IPU and BIIPG met in the House to discuss a joint response to the Treasury's recent proposal that if the four groups are content to transfer the funding responsibility for the Groups from the Treasury to the HOC Commission from 2008/09 onwards, the Treasury would agree to offer the Groups the level of funding which each sought originally for 2007/08. The BAPG Honorary Secretary chaired proceedings.

20th March

At the request of the Foreign Office, the BAPG arranged for Members of the Executive to meet with US law enforcement and home land security experts visiting the UK on a fact finding / best practice sharing visit. The visiting delegation included the Director of Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia's Director of Homeland Security and several very senior Police Chiefs. The BAPG also invited members of the Home Affairs and Defence Select Committees to attend the meeting and the Chair of the Home Affairs Committee, the Rt. Hon. John Denham, MP, kindly chaired proceedings.

26th to the 30th March

Four members visited Texas to look at Crime, Policing and Immigration. The British Consulate General Houston kindly organised the programme which included calls in El Paso and San Antonio.

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GROUP DURING 2006-2007

The Annual General Meeting of the Group took place on 12th July 2006. Mr. Speaker, Joint President of the British-American Parliamentary Group, kindly presided and was warmly welcomed by all the Members present.

It was reported that as at the 28th June 2006 the Group's membership stood at 650 and that between April 2005 and April 2006 two Annual Conferences had taken place, giving 23 Members of Parliament the opportunity to meet with 15 Members of Congress, and that 14 Members had visited the U.S. under the auspices of the Group.

Members will have noticed from the previously listed 'Activities of the Group' that during 2006/2007 there has been no Annual Conference. The reason for this is because, at the Americans' request, the 2006 Conference was held early, in February 2006, and was reported in last year's Annual Report. The 2007 Annual Conference is due to take place in July 2007.

However, during the 12 months to April 2007, 34 Members have visited the United States under the auspices of the BAPG.

The following visits took place:

- In September 2006, eight members went on a visit to the United States, sponsored jointly by the BAPG and the US State Department. The visit is designed to give an introduction to the American political system. The Group spent five days in Washington D.C., gaining an overview of the Federal system of Government, three days in individual districts with Members of Congress and two days in Lansing, Michigan, to learn something of the State system of Government.
- Also in September, three members visited Massachusetts and Connecticut to look at Stem Cell research. The British Consulate General in Boston kindly organised the programme which included meetings with world leaders in scientific research at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute and meetings with Massachusetts and Connecticut Legislatures.
- At the end of September, four members visited Chicago to look at Law and Order and in particular, policing, focusing on learning about innovative / effective policing models. The programme included visiting 311 and 911 Centres (non emergency and emergency call centres respectively) and CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy).
- In late November, three members attended, as observers, the biennial induction course for newly elected Members of Congress, conducted by the Institute of Politics, at Harvard University.
- In February 2007, four members visited New York to share the American experience of engaging with their Muslim communities. This visit was specially funded by the Foreign Office Superfund. The group was also meant to have visited Dearborn in Michigan but the visit had to be cut short due to a winter storm that swept through the Midwest.
- Also in February, a delegation of four MPs visited New Mexico, Texas and North Carolina to look at Climate Change and Energy. This visit was also specially funded by the Foreign Office Superfund. The British Consulate Generals Houston and Atlanta organised the programmes.
- In mid March, four members visited New England to study and share Energy and Climate Change initiatives. The visit was timed to coincide with the Sustainable Energy Conference in Boston and also included calls in Maine to look at recent developments.
- At the end of March, four members visited Texas to look at Crime, Policing and Immigration. The British Consulate General Houston kindly organised the programme which included calls in El Paso and in San Antonio.

In the UK over the year, the BAPG has arranged various tours of both Houses for visiting Americans at the request of the Foreign Office, the American Embassy or directly from United States Senators or Members of the House of Representatives. Arrangements were also made for the 2006 Marshall Scholars to visit Parliament and meet with Members for a question and answer exchange.

The reception for the American Ambassador, H.E. Hon. Robert Tuttle, which Mr. Speaker so kindly hosted on behalf of the BAPG, was a notable success and gave many members of the Group the opportunity to meet the Ambassador and several of his Embassy colleagues.

Contact with the United States Embassy in London has been well maintained throughout the year and a significant part of our programme is dependent on good liaison with both the U.S. Embassy and the Foreign Office. Our extensive thanks are due to the North America Team at the Foreign Office for the very informative briefings which they are always kind enough to provide for BAPG delegations and to the British Embassy in Washington D.C. and the Consulates across the U.S.A. for their very great input into the programmes arranged for our delegations. We are grateful for all the very considerable help that they give to the BAPG thereby enabling us to maintain our programme from year to year.

We are also extremely grateful to Members who kindly provide Gallery tickets or Special Permits for visiting Americans.

Group membership now stands at 651 of whom approximately 78% have a Life Subscription.

Members may wish to be reminded that information about the Group's forthcoming activities is not usually sent out individually but can be found on the All Party Whip from time to time and on the BAPG website: www.bapg.org.uk.

Members who need further information should telephone 020 7219 6209, fax 020 7219 5972 or email bapg@parliament.uk. The Group's office is at 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 11
ON WEDNESDAY, 12th JULY 2006 AT 4:00 p.m.**

The Rt. Hon. Michael Martin, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons and Joint President of the British-American Parliamentary Group, presided.

1. Apologies

Mr. Speaker conveyed apologies for absence from the Prime Minister together with 72 others.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting, having been circulated, were approved and signed as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. To Receive the Annual Report from the Executive Committee for April 2005 to April 2006 and the Accounts for the Year Ending March 31st 2006

Owing to the Senior Vice Chair Peter Hain being delayed, the Opposition Vice Chair Michael Ancram kindly presented the Report of the Executive Committee for 2005/2006.

On behalf of all the members of the BAPG, Mr. Ancram thanked Mr. Speaker for agreeing to preside at the AGM and recorded the Group's appreciation of his continuing interest in the Group's affairs.

Mr. Ancram added that he believed it was his final appearance as the Co-Vice Chair and thanked the members of the Committee for the assistance and support that they have given him in the time that he has been a Vice Chairman and wished his successor a similarly happy time as he has had.

Mr. Ancram then reported on the work of the Group during the year to April 2006. The written report had been circulated to all members and it appears on pages 19 to 23 of the Annual Report.

During those 12 months, which had been busy ones for the Group, 14 Members went to the States under the Group's auspices. There were also two Annual Conferences – the scheduled 2005 Conference and the 2006 Conference, which took place in February, earlier than usual owing to the U.S. elections later in the year. Both of these conferences took place in the UK, giving 23 Members of Parliament the opportunity to meet with 15 Members of Congress.

The 14 Members who went to the States were sent by means of:

1. A small delegation to Seattle in August 2005 to attend the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) at which a question and answer exchange was specially arranged for the British delegation with Members of State Legislatures (two members);
2. The Co-Sponsored Visit in September 2005 to Washington, Michigan and individual Congressional Districts (eight members);
3. A specialist delegation to Chicago, also in September, to mark the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the British Consulate in Chicago (two members);
4. A specialist delegation to Louisiana and Texas in March 2006 to look at the disaster recovery programmes post Hurricane Katrina and at the opportunities in Louisiana for U.K. business (two members).

We have been very grateful for the interest shown in the Group by both the Speaker and by the Lord Chancellor, our Joint Presidents. In November 2005, Mr. Speaker

very generously hosted and funded a reception for the new American Ambassador, Robert H. Tuttle, in his State Apartments and in February 2006 the Lord Chancellor kindly hosted a pre-dinner reception in his State Apartments for the Congressional delegation and other guests attending the opening dinner to the 2006 Annual Conference.

Also in London, the Group has been able to arrange some meetings/tours/lunches for visiting U.S. State Legislators / other visiting U.S. VIPs and this is a part of the Group's role which we are always keen to expand and develop. Our thanks are due to the Foreign Office in London, the British Embassy in Washington and the American Embassy in London, all of whom help us to maintain the momentum of this activity.

The Group's complete list of activities for the year are shown on pages 15 to 18 in the Annual Report. They show the contribution the Group has made over the year to promoting good relations with the US and the role which the Group has played in the programmes of American visitors.

The Group's thanks were recorded unanimously to the American Embassy for their help and co-operation over the year, particularly from the Political and Cultural Affairs Departments, and also for the support always forthcoming from the DCM (David Johnson) who has been a very good friend to us in the years that he has been there. We are also indebted to the North America Team at the FCO and to the British Embassy in Washington on whom a significant part of our programme is dependent. The British Embassy is particularly helpful when it comes to arranging meetings and other aspects of any programme for BAPG delegations to Washington, as are the Consuls-Generals, in other parts of the USA.

Finally to report, Group membership, as at 28th June 2006, stood at 650 with 385 Members from the Commons and 265 Members from the Lords.

The Annual Report was adopted with unanimous agreement.

John Maples made a couple of suggestions: one that the Group concentrate on sending more specialist subject delegations to the United States, which are very valuable to all Members of Parliament; second, to do more meetings which are open to all members by inviting important Americans to talk to the Group.

In reply, Mr. Ancram pointed out that there were in fact two specialist delegations during the year. He accepted Mr. Maples' point and said that he was sure his successor and others will want to look at how that can be taken forward in the future. On the question of expert speakers, he deferred to the Honorary Secretary, who he understood would touch upon this in his report later.

Mr. Speaker then called upon Brian Donohoe, MP, Joint Honorary Treasurer of the Group, to present the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2006. The Accounts had been circulated previously to members.

The Honorary Treasurer made the following points as regards the Accounts to March 31st 2006:

Format of the Accounts

- The format has remained the same as last year.

Explanation of the Results for the Year

Operating Surplus

- The grant-in-aid for 2005-06 is higher than that of 2004-05. Additional grant was approved by Treasury and FCO explaining the increase in operating surplus
- Other income has increased from £939.00 in 2004-5 to £2,247.00 in 2005-6. This is as a result of a significant increase in the membership of Life subscriptions after the General Election.

Significant variations between 2004-05 and 2005-06

- Programme expenditure has increased by 39% since 2004-05. There have been two Annual Conferences this year, explaining the increase.
- Administrative expenditure has increased by 13%. This is in part due to National Insurance contributions and pension costs for the Group Administrator, which did not exist in previous years. Around a third of this cost increase is due to website construction costs, which are a non-recurrent cost.
- The group's current assets, other than cash, have decreased. In 2004-5 there was a pre-payment which consists primarily of the portion of the Annual Conference for 2005-06 and a re-payment due from the Inland Revenue due to Statutory Maternity Pay. These pre-payments do not exist in this year's balance sheet.
- The Refund from Creditors of £1,506 is owing to three duplicate payments being made in this financial year, but relating to the previous financial year, and is as a result of an error made by the NAO. During the audit of the 2004-05 accounts, the NAO wrongly advised the Group Administrator that three cheques had not been cashed and gave instructions to re-issue payment. It was subsequently found that the original cheques had been cashed. The NAO has sent a letter apologising for the error. All three creditors are happy to refund the duplicate payments.
- Miscellaneous creditors have increased when compared to the previous year, 2005-6 £8,461.00 (2004-5 £2,328.00) 260% higher. This is because at the end of 2005-06 there were liabilities for the 2006 Conference outstanding.
- Deferred income has decreased due to the grant in aid for 2006-07 from HM Treasury not being received before 31 March 2006, as was the case in the previous year. This explains the lower cash balance and deferred income figures at 31 March this year.
- Cash & Bank: of the cash balance of £35,890 shown in the accounts, £33,687.30 was being held in an interest bearing account with the Halifax, £2,190.95 on current account with the National Westminster and the remainder £11.75 in petty cash.

The Group's appreciation of the grant in aid received each year from the Treasury, without which it would not be possible to maintain a programme, was recorded unanimously.

Mr. Donohoe recorded his thanks to Hannah, the Administrator, for all the assistance given over the year.

It was proposed by Sir John Stanley and seconded by Lord Morris of Aberavon that the Accounts be adopted. This was carried unanimously.

5 To Elect Vice-Presidents

The Chairman announced the Executive Committee had recommended that the following individuals should be re-elected as Vice-Presidents of the Group:

The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Boothroyd, OM
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Carrington, KG, GCMG, CH, MC, DL
The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith, MP
The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP
The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howe of Aberavon, Kt, CH, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, CBE
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling, DL
The Rt. Hon. Charles Kennedy, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mackay of Clashfern, KT
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Molyneux of Killead, KBE
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Pym, MC, DL
The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Thatcher, LG, OM
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Weatherill, DL

And that, The Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett, MP and the Rt. Hon. David Cameron, MP be elected as Vice-Presidents.

The adoption of these names was agreed unanimously.

Mr. Speaker then paid a warm tribute to those who had been Officers of the Group during 2005/2006.

The Rt. Hon. Paul Peter Hain, MP, Government Vice-Chairman, had now completed the first year of his three year term. We are very grateful to him for his support of the Group.

The Rt. Hon. Michael Ancram, QC, MP, Opposition Vice-Chairman, is in the third year of a three year term, ending in December (having been appointed in December 2003). He has given the Group a great deal of his time and support over the years, including chairing meetings, hosting events for Congressional delegations in London and always being happy to give both help and advice when asked.

In accordance with the rules of the Group, the Executive Committee had recommended that the Rt. Hon. Alan Williams, MP, Brian Donohoe, MP, and Peter Viggers, MP, be re-appointed in their respective roles.

The Rt. Hon. Alan Williams, MP, the Honorary Secretary, had just completed his fourth year in that office. The Group has been very fortunate to have such an effective and hard working Honorary Secretary who gives an enormous amount of his time to the Group's affairs and to expanding its programme and we are delighted that he, too, is happy to continue in this role.

Appreciation was also recorded to Brian Donohoe, MP, and Peter Viggers, MP, who had both agreed to continue as Joint Honorary Treasurers. They had both given a considerable amount of time to the Group's affairs and the hard work, which they have done and continue to do, is very much appreciated.

The ratification and election of the Vice-Presidents, the two Vice-Chairmen, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurers were agreed unanimously.

The Chairman paid tribute to the late Lord Merlyn-Rees – who was a Vice President of the Group, former Vice Chairman and long-standing member of the Executive – and to the late Lord Stratford (Tony Banks), who was a colourful and active member of the Group. Both Members made valuable contributions to the BAPG and will be greatly missed.

The Chairman also thanked Hugh Bayley, MP, who had served on the outgoing 2005-06 Executive Committee and who had decided not to stand for re-election. We very much hope that he will continue to take an active interest in the Group's activities.

6. To elect sixteen Members to serve on the Executive Committee

Extract from the Group's Rules 8(a) states:

The Executive Committee shall consist of not more than 16 Members who shall be elected each year at the AGM of which eight Members of the Government Party and eight Members of the Opposition Parties who receive the most votes being declared elected.

The Chairman informed members that as nine nominations had been received from the Government Party and ten nominations from the Opposition Parties for the Committee this year, it will be necessary to have an election. Ballot papers have been placed on the table and the candidates are:

Government

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea
Linda Gilroy, MP
Andrew Love, MP
David Marshall, MP
The Rt. Hon. John McFall, MP
Austin Mitchell, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC
The Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy, MP
Bill Olnier

Opposition

Simon Burns, MP
The Lord Chidgey,
Derek Conway, MP
Nigel Evans, MP
The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP
Elfyn Llwyd, MP
Brooks Newmark, MP
The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble,
David Wilshire, MP

The Lord Bach and Angela Watkinson, MP, kindly agreed to act as Tellers.

7. Any Other Business

- Mr. Williams, Honorary Secretary, reported that this year's Co-Sponsored Visit will take place from 10th to 20th September. Eight Members (four Labour and four from the Opposition Parties) will spend 10 days in the States on a visit co-sponsored by the U.S. State Department, which is organising the programme. The purpose of the visit is to give an introduction to the American political system. The Group will spend five days in Washington, gaining an overview of the Federal system of Government, three days in individual districts with Congress Members and two days in a State Capital to learn something of the State system of Government. The Group pays transatlantic fares and subsistence allowance.
- In answer to one of John Maples' points, last year's specialist delegations were sacrificed in order to meet the request from the House BAPG delegation that the July Annual Conference is brought forward to February. As a result, we had two Annual Conferences last year in our financial year and lost a couple of our specialist delegations in its place. Going forward, we plan to send three specialist delegations to the United States during the Summer recess. During the first two weeks of September, we will send a delegation to New England to look at Climate Change and Energy and another delegation to Connecticut and Massachusetts to look at Stem Cell Research. The third delegation will visit Chicago during the last week of September to look at Law & Order. This visit has been timed to coincide with the British American Business Council Chicago Annual Dinner to which the delegates would be invited by the Consulate-General. Each delegation would consist of four Members who would visit for four days or so.

The visits are presently being advertised on the BAPG's website www.bapg.org.uk and the All Party Whip and Members with a particular interest in these fields and who would like to go on the visits are invited to apply by writing to the Administrator, Room 6/38, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA no later than Monday, 17th July.

- We also plan to send four members at the end of the year to participate in the induction programme for newly elected Representatives run by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University. This will take place over four days during the first two weeks of December. Details will be confirmed nearer the time.
- The Speaker has very kindly said that he would be willing to host a reception for the American Ambassador in his State Apartments, sometime in the Autumn. We hope that this will provide an opportunity for many members of the Group to meet the Ambassador and his senior staff.
- Members may also wish to know that while the Treasury and Foreign Office could not agree to the continuation of the additional core funding on a matching basis of £25,000 each, totalling £50,000, the Foreign Office has offered this year the opportunity to bid for up to £25,000 for a specific project or visits. The Officers are presently preparing such a bid for a second wave of specialist delegations to the United States.
- In relation to long term funding, the Foreign Office has recommended that we look at private sector sponsorship. The Executive Committee will give this careful consideration and come back with recommendations.
- In conjunction with the CPA and the IPU, representations have been made to Lord Brabazon of Tara and Members of the Lords' House Committee to extend recent changes to the rules on Peers' expenses, allowing Peers to claim expenses with respect to formal conferences of the IPU and CPA, to also include formal conferences of the BAPG.
- The American Embassy has come forward with an initiative that they are willing to host and finance lunches for BAPG members at the House of Commons with senior personnel from the Embassy and possibly members of the Administration. The Office of the Parliamentary Commission for Standards has advised that only if the value of the benefit to the member (i.e. the lunch) exceeds £595 should the member register the benefit. Obviously, if the same member attends more than one lunch in the course of a calendar year and the cumulative value of the lunches exceed £595, the lunches should be registered. So we are negotiating with the Embassy as to how we do this. Except where the lunches are organised at short notice, the lunches will be advertised on the Whip and will be open to all Members of the group.
- We will need to look at our constitution in relation to the recent appointment of the new Lord Speaker who is to take over some of the duties of the Lord Chancellor. There is a probability that the Lord Speaker will have to take over the role of Joint President now undertaken by the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor has been very supportive of everything we have asked for and we are very grateful to him.
- Members were reminded that Group functions/visits are always advertised by means of the All Party Whip. Only occasionally will we notify members individually about BAPG events.
- Mr. Williams recorded his warm thanks to Peter Hain and to Michael Ancram for their commitment and support of the BAPG, to the Administrator, Hannah Mitchell, and finally to Mr. Speaker for coming to the meeting and for his readiness to help the BAPG.

The Chair invited questions and Lord Jopling rose to make two comments. He informed the Honorary Secretary that, with regard to negotiations with the Treasury and the question of having an outside sponsor, the Honorary Secretary should be aware that the BAPG has once had outside sponsorship when he, Lord Jopling, personally negotiated with Harvard to send a delegation to the induction programme for

newly elected Members of Congress. The group had already been given the grant in aid and the Treasury was not able to give any more money. The then Committee decided just for once that the Hanson Trust would finance the visit. It was on the understanding that it was once and never again.

Secondly, with regard to Lords expenses, the rules have been extended to cover formal conferences of the CPA, IPU, BIIPG and BAPG only. Lord Jopling has recently written a letter to the Chairman of the Committees with regard to extending this to all visits of the CPA, IPU and BAPG and has been invited to attend a meeting of the House Committee which will be presided over by the new Lord Speaker to argue the case for extending the payments for Peers to all IPU, CPA and BAPG visits. Lord Jopling hoped that the members present would permit him to put the case for the BAPG very strongly as it is an overwhelming case.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4:45 p.m.