

BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



REPORT

of the

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

APRIL 2009 - APRIL 2010

BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Report of the Executive Committee

April 2009 – April 2010

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 on 8th July 2009 to serve until July 2010, are as follows*:

Honorary Joint Presidents	The Speaker of the House of Commons The Lord Speaker
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. Nick Clegg, MP The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC 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. David Miliband, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Molyneux of Killlead, KBE The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Thatcher, LG, OM,
Honorary Chairman	The Prime Minister
Vice-Chairmen	The Rt. Hon. Shaun Woodward, MP The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP
Honorary Secretary	Brian Donohoe, MP
Honorary Treasurers	Bill Olnier, MP** The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

House of Commons

Government Party (as at 8 th July 2009)	Opposition Parties (as at 8 th July 2009)
The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP	Christopher Chope, OBE, MP (<i>Conservative</i>)
Linda Gilroy, MP ***	Nigel Evans, MP (<i>Conservative</i>)
The Rt. Hon. Adam Ingram, MP **	Mark Field, MP (<i>Conservative</i>)
The Rt. Hon. John McFall, MP **	David Heath, MP (<i>Liberal Democrat</i>)
Austin Mitchell, MP	Elfyn Llwyd, MP (<i>Plaid Cymru</i>)
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP (<i>Conservative</i>)

House of Lords

Government Party	Conservative Party
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL	The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC	The Baroness O’Cathain, OBE
Cross Bench	Liberal Democrat Party
The Lord Hannay of Chiswick	The Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally

Administrator: Hannah Mitchell

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

Telephone: 020 7219 6209

* A General Election took place on the 6th May 2010 which resulted in a change of Government from the Labour Party to a Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government. ** Denotes members who retired at the General Election. *** Denotes member not returned at the General Election.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee 2009-10 met on: 27th October 2009; 8th December 2009; 9th February 2010 and 8th June 2010.

The Annual General Meeting, at which the current Executive Committee was elected, took place on 8th July 2009.

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

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea	3/4
Christopher Chope, OBE, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP	2/4
Brian Donohoe, MP	4/4
Nigel Evans, MP	2/4
Mark Field, MP	4/4
Linda Gilroy, MP	3/3
The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP	1/4
The Lord Hannay of Chiswick	4/4
David Heath, MP	1/4
The Rt. Hon. Adam Ingram, MP	2/3
The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP	4/4
Elfyn Llwyd, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. John McFall, MP	2/3
The Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally	3/4
Austin Mitchell, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC	4/4
The Baroness O’Cathain, OBE	3/4
Bill Oler, MP	2/3
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP	1/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Shaun Woodward, MP	0/4

*** A General Election took place on 6th May 2010 at which three members of the Executive Committee retired and one member was not returned. Hence, it was only possible for them to attend a total of three of the four Executive Committee meetings as the final meeting was held on the 8th June 2010.**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
1 APRIL 2009 TO 31 MARCH 2010

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 British-American Parliamentary 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, 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2009.
2. The British-American Parliamentary Group acts as an autonomous body within Parliament. It appoints its own administrative staff to carry out its objectives and the Rules of the British-American Parliamentary Group define the limitations on its powers.
3. The management of the British-American Parliamentary Group is vested in the Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary, who is a member of the Executive Committee, is primarily responsible for the British-American Parliamentary Group's activities; the Administrator, who is an official of the British-American Parliamentary Group and not a Member of the Executive Committee, is responsible for the executive work of the British-American Parliamentary Group. The Chairman of the British-American Parliamentary Group is the Prime Minister. The two Vice-Chairmen of the Executive Committee are normally of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet rank.

Principal Activities of the British-American Parliamentary Group

4. The format of the annual programme of activities has historically consisted of: one Annual Conference; one ad hoc specialist delegation visit to the United States, budget allowing; one familiarisation visit to the United States co-sponsored with the United States Department of State and attendance as observers at biennial courses held in the United States for newly elected Members of Congress. Also every four years during a Presidential election year, members attend the Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions.

Various other activities are held in the United Kingdom with distinguished visitors from the United States.

5. In April 2009, a specialist delegation visited New York City and Newark, New Jersey, to look at company and banking regulation and the regeneration of depressed cities and work fare projects. This visit had been deferred from earlier in the year. In September 2009, the Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in the UK at the invitation of the British BAPG with a delegation from the U.S. Senate. Also in September, the BAPG / U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit took place. Three Members of Parliament participated in a voluntary visitor programme designed to give Members not already familiar with the United States an introduction to the American political system. The following month, in October, the BAPG in conjunction with the Foreign Office sent two Members to Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Washington D.C. to share with the respective state legislatures the UK's best practices and experience with carbon cap and trade schemes. This visit was mainly funded by the Foreign Office.

In February 2010, four members visited Washington D.C., South Carolina and Georgia to look at the U.S. automotive sector, with particular reference to environmental issues.

Relationship with the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee

6. The British-American Parliamentary Group is funded mainly by a grant-in-aid from the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee to which it submits a detailed income and expenditure budget together with bids for expenditure, on a rolling three year programme, usually in February each year or at the request of the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee. 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 installment, usually in April each year. The grant-in-aid is paid by the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee on a 70:30 split, respectively.

Prior to 2008-09 the British-American Parliamentary Group was funded by HM Treasury.

Results for the Year

7. The Operating Cost Statement (page 12) shows that the British-American Parliamentary Group had an excess of income over expenditure of £821 for the year 2009-10. The grant-in-aid for the year was £110,000.
8. The British-American Parliamentary Group currently holds £46,675 in reserves (page 15). The House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee have agreed the British-American Parliamentary Group may carry over surplus funds in view of the freeze to grant-in-aid payments going forward.

Prompt Payment Initiative

9. In line with best commercial practice it is British-American Parliamentary 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.

Provision of information to auditors

10. As far as the Accounting Officer is aware there is no relevant audit information of which the British-American Parliamentary Group's auditors, the NAO, are unaware. In addition, the Accounting Officer has taken all the steps necessary to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the British-American Parliamentary Group's auditors are aware of that information.

Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP

Accounting Officer

8th June 2010

Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

Under the Financial Memorandum, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee have directed the British-American Parliamentary Group to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts to the year ended 31 March. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of British-American Parliamentary Group and of its income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to:

- give due regard to the procedures laid down in the Financial Memorandum including relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgments 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 British-American Parliamentary Group will continue in operation.

The Executive Committee has appointed the Joint Honorary Treasurer of the opposite party to the Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP, as Accounting Officer of the British-American Parliamentary Group. The responsibilities of an 'Accounting Officer' include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances, keeping proper records and safeguarding the British-American Parliamentary Group's assets, as set out in the Financial Memorandum agreed between the British-American Parliamentary Group, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee.

Statement on the System of Internal Control

Scope of responsibility

As Accounting Officer, I 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 I am personally responsible, in a manner that is consistent with the Financial Memorandum issued by the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee for the use of the Group's grant-in-aid.

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. The system of internal control has been in place in the British-American Parliamentary Group for the year ended 31 March 2010 and up to the date of approval of the accounts, and accords with Treasury guidance.

Control framework and management of risk

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, 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

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 Group's relationship with its funding sponsors, the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee, is embodied in a Financial Memorandum. The Financial Memorandum is an integral part of the governance arrangements for which the Accounting Officer is responsible.

The Financial Memorandum places a responsibility on the Group to ensure that all resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively; and also provides that Internal Audit may be used to provide assurance to the Finance Directors of both Houses and to the Executive Committee.

In particular the Financial Memorandum sets out:

- the respective responsibilities of both Houses and the Group with regard to propriety, financial management and the safeguarding of public funds;
- the responsibility of the Executive Committee to appoint an Accounting Officer from its membership who will normally be one of the Joint Honorary Treasurers;
- the responsibilities of the Group's Accounting Officer, and the responsibility of the other Joint Honorary Treasurer to review the accounts before being put to the Executive Committee;
- 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; and
- the responsibility of the Group to ensure that risks faced in relation to fraud are managed in an appropriate manner in accordance with relevant practice in corporate governance.

Capacity to handle risk

The risk management process is the responsibility of the Executive Committee and during 2008-09 the Executive Committee designed a risk register. The Executive Committee members are responsible for overseeing particular risks. This involves a regular appraisal of the existing risks with responsibility for recommending action where necessary, and periodic re-appraisal of the risk register.

As Accounting Officer, I recognise that the Financial Memorandum and the Rules of the British-American Parliamentary Group requires that both Houses are provided with copies of the annual audited Accounts. In part this is to assist both Houses to obtain the assurance that they need that the British-American Parliamentary Group has met its obligations to use its resources in accordance with the terms of the House of Commons Administration and House of Lords Supply Estimate (Vote) and other obligations agreed during discussions about the Group's grant-in-aid estimate.

The Group's governance activities in 2009-10

The Executive Committee met on four occasions in 2009-2010 to consider matters that are set out in the Committee's Report of the Executive Committee. Amongst other things, the Committee examined: the Group's draft programme of activities for the present year; the Group's forecast budget for 2010-2011; including a review of the Group's budgetary position and the Group's audited accounts for 2009-10; the annual report of the Honorary Secretary; and other matters for discussion and endorsement by the Annual General Meeting.

Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining an effective system of internal control and periodically to review the procedures that I have in place. My review of the British-American Parliamentary Group's internal control framework is informed by the deliberations of the British-American Parliamentary Group's Annual General Meeting, the decisions of the Executive Committee, as well as the views of Administrator, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer of the British-American Parliamentary Group who have day to day responsibility for managing the system of internal control.

I have also had regard to guidance on internal control and financial management issued by the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee 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 British-American Parliamentary Group.

On an enduring basis, I advise the British-American Parliamentary Group's Executive Committee on the implications of the periodic reviews of the British-American Parliamentary Group's internal control processes and procedures. I intend to ensure that the British-American Parliamentary Group continues to maintain a reliable system of internal control.

The British-American Parliamentary 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 British-American Parliamentary Group's Executive Committee.

Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP
Accounting Officer
8th June 2010

THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO 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 2010, which have been prepared under the rules of the Group. These comprise the Operating Cost Statement, Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash flows, the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and the Auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, under the terms of the Financial Memorandum agreed with the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee, which includes the financial statements, and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the British-American Parliamentary Groups' circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the British-American Parliamentary Group; and the overall presentation of the financial statements.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the income and expenditure reported in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Group.

Opinion on Regularity

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

Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the British-American Parliamentary Group's affairs as at 31 March 2010 and of its surplus, changes in taxpayers' equity and the cash flows for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the rules of the Group.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the information given in the Foreword for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters for which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records or returns; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Statement on Internal Control does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Helen Booth
Director on behalf of the
Comptroller and Auditor General
9th June 2010

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

THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Operating Cost Statement
for the year ended 31 March 2010

	Note	2009 – 2010		2008 – 2009
		£		£
		Staff Costs	Other Costs	Income
Administration Costs:				
Staff Costs	4	32,520		32,098
Other Administrative Costs	5		10,008	9,489
Operating Income	3			(953) (951)
Programme Costs:				
Programme Costs	6		67,908	74,240
Income	3			(110,000) (106,000)
Totals		<u>32,520</u>	<u>77,916</u>	<u>(110,953)</u> <u>8,876</u>
Net Operating (Income)/Cost Before Interest and Tax				<u>(517)</u> <u>8,876</u>
Bank Interest Receivable				<u>(380)</u> <u>(2,203)</u>
Corporation Tax Payable				<u>76</u> <u>1,272</u>
Net Operating (Income)/Cost After Tax and Interest				<u>(821)</u> <u>7,945</u>

The Notes on pages 16 to 19 form part of these financial statements

Statement of Financial Position
as at 31 March 2010

	Note	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
		£	£
CURRENT ASSETS			
Trade and Other Receivables	8	1,222	8,300
Cash & Cash Equivalents	9	49,010	36,883
Total Current Assets		50,232	45,183
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and Other Payables	10	(3,557)	(4,329)
<i>Total Current Liabilities</i>		(3,557)	(4,329)
Assets Less Liabilities		46,675	40,854
TAXPAYER'S EQUITY:			
General Fund		46,675	40,854
<i>Total Taxpayer's Equity</i>		46,675	40,854

The Notes on pages 16 to 19 form part of these financial statements

Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP
Accounting Officer
8th June 2010

Statement of Cash Flows
for year ended 31 March 2010

	Note	2009 - 2010 £	2008 - 2009 £
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Net Operating Income/(Cost) after Interest and Tax		821	(7,945)
Interest Receivable		(380)	(2,203)
Tax Payable	7	76	1,272
Adjustments for non-cash transactions – audit fee		5,000	5,000
(Increase)/Decrease in Trade and Other Receivables excluding Accrued Income	8	7,387	12,481
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade and Other Payables excluding Tax	10	(383)	(1,414)
Tax Paid		(466)	(808)
Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities		12,055	6,383
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
<i>Net Cash Flow from Investing Activities</i>		-	-
Cash Flows from Financing Activities			
Interest Received		72	2,222
<i>Net Cash Flow from Financing Activities</i>		72	2,222
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		12,127	8,605
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	9	36,883	28,278
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	9	49,010	36,883

The Notes on pages 16 to 19 form part of these financial statements

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity
for the year ended 31 March 2010

	Note	General Fund £
Balance as at 31 March 2008		43,799
Accounting Changes		-
Balance as at 1 April 2008		43,799
 Changes in Taxpayer's Equity of 2008-09		
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration		5,000
Net operating cost for year		(7,945)
Total recognised income and expense for 2008-09		(2,945)
Balance as at 31 March 2009		40,854
 Changes in Taxpayer's Equity of 2009-10		
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration		5,000
Net operating cost for year		821
Total recognised income and expense for 2009-10		5,821
Balance as at 31 March 2010		46,675

The Notes on pages 16 to 19 form part of these financial statements

THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Notes to the Financial Statements

1 Statement of Accounting Policies

The accounts are prepared in accordance with international financial reporting standards (IFRS). 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.

1.1 Non-Current Assets

Office equipment is written off as expenditure in full in the year of acquisition.

1.2 Operating Income

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.

Life subscriptions are included as income in full in the year of receipt.

1.3 Gains and losses

All gains and losses are included in the operating cost statement.

2. First-Time Adoption of IFRS

	General Fund £
Taxpayers' equity at 31 March 2009 under UK GAAP	41,446
Adjustments for:	(592)
Taxpayers' equity at 31 March 2009 under IFRS	40,854
	£
Net operating cost for 2008-09 under UK GAAP	7,353
Adjustments for:	592
Net operating cost for 2008-09 under IFRS	7,945

3. Income

	2009 - 2010 £	2008 - 2009 £
Parliamentary Grant-in-Aid	110,000	106,000
Annual subscriptions	579	549
Life subscriptions	280	320
Donations	94	82
Total	110,953	106,951

4. Staff Numbers and Costs

	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
	£	£
Wages and Salaries	24,659	24,317
Social Security Costs	1,696	1,638
Other Pension Costs	6,165	6,143
Total	32,520	32,098

There is one part-time member of staff at the BAPG, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of operations.

5. Other Administrative Costs

	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
	£	£
Sundry	1,955	1,690
Insurance	1,575	1,431
Annual Report	1,096	1,100
Website costs	382	268
Non-Cash Items		
Auditor's Remuneration and Expenses	5,000	5,000
Total	10,008	9,489

6. Programme Costs

	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
	£	£
Annual Conferences	29,876	30,825
Specialist delegations	23,340	-
Co-sponsored visit	10,058	16,741
Reception for American Ambassador	3,790	808
Carbon off-setting of air travel	844	746
Republican/ Democratic Convention	-	16,016
New Members Orientation Programme	-	8,957
Hospitality	-	147
Ad hoc visit	-	-
Total	67,908	74,240

7. Corporation Tax

	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
	£	£
Corporation Tax	76	1,272

8. Trade Receivables and Other Current Assets

	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	774	8,091
Other receivables	78	148
Accrued income*	370	61
Total	1,222	8,300

*The total accrued income figure includes bank interest of £368 that should have been received during 2008-09 and 2009-10 (£90 and £278 respectively). Due to an error by the Royal Bank of Scotland in its interest payments to the Group's Special Interest Bearing Account, the balance was not received until after the financial year end, in May 2010. The total amount of £368 has been included within accrued income to reflect this repayment.

9. Cash & Cash Equivalents

	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	36,883	28,278
Net change in cash & cash equivalents	12,127	8,605
Balance at 31 March	49,010	36,883

The following balances at 31 March were held at:

Commercial banks and Cash in hand	49,010	36,883
Total	49,010	36,883

10. Trade Payables and Other Current Liabilities

	2009 - 2010	2008 - 2009
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other Payables	3,158	3,511
Deferred Income	325	355
Other Taxation and Social Security	74	463
Total	3,557	4,329

11. Related Party Transactions

The House of Commons and the House of Lords are regarded as related parties, providing Grant-in-Aid to the Group under the terms provided in the Financial Memorandum. In addition the House of Commons provides free accommodation to the Group.

During the year the Group entered into related party transactions worth £10,713, of this £3,685 was paid to the House of Commons Refreshment Department for the provision of hospitality to visitors from the United States and £7,028 was paid into the House of Commons Staff Pension Scheme for the Group's Administrator. The pension payment relates to twelve months pension contributions and pension arrears relating to 2009-10.

In addition the Group has had a small number of immaterial transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies. Most of these have been with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Other than these related party transactions, no member of the Group or any other related party has undertaken any material transactions with the Group during the year.

ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP

15th to 20th April 2009

Four members visited New York City and Newark, New Jersey, to look at company and banking regulation and the regeneration of depressed cities and work fare projects.

21st April 2009

A report back took place with Colin Challen, MP and Lord Oxburgh who recently visited Oregon and Washington State to share with the respective state legislatures best practice and experience with carbon cap and trade schemes. The Foreign Office has had excellent feedback on the visit which appears to have made a real difference to the Climate Change debate in both states.

6th May 2009

At the request of the British Consulate General Boston, the BAPG made arrangements for the State Senate President's Chief of Staff and partner to watch PMQs from the Distinguished Visitors Gallery by kind permission of the Speaker.

12th May 2009

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

23rd June 2009

The Associate Parliamentary Group on Wholesale Financial Markets & Services hosted a breakfast meeting and roundtable discussion in Parliament on the changes taking place in the financial markets in the United States and the implications (and potential benefits) this may have for the financial services industry in London, New York and Chicago. Kathleen Doherty, Acting Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs of the United States Embassy, gave a guest address. Members of the BAPG Executive were invited to attend.

23rd June 2009

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the BAPG made arrangements for former U.S. Senator Bob Graham and his wife Mrs. Adelle Graham to watch a debate from the gallery of the House of Commons.

23rd June 2009

BAPG member Baroness Goudie hosted a discussion with Jim Margolis, Senior Advisor to the Obama Presidential Campaign, titled 'The 2008 Presidential Elections: Observations from the U.S. Campaign Trail'. The discussion was held in Parliament and was attended by members of the BAPG and the Administrator.

24th June 2009

The BAPG Administrator met with the Clerk of the Overseas Office, Mark Hutton, and the Head of Internal Audit in the House of Commons, Paul Dillon-Robinson, together with representatives from each of the three All Party Parliamentary Groups: IPU; CPA and BIIPG, to agree a programme of internal audit for the four All Parliamentary Groups funded by the Administration Estimate. It was agreed the internal audit of the BAPG would take place in November 2009.

30th June 2009

At the request of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, arrangements were made for a staff member of the British Consulate-General in Los Angeles and family to be given a tour of Parliament.

2nd July 2009

The Charge d’Affaires of the Embassy of the United States of America and Mrs. Richard LeBaron hosted a reception at Winfield House to celebrate the 233rd Anniversary of Independence of the United States of America, to which Members of the BAPG and others were invited.

7th July 2009

A special evening to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln was held at Westminster Abbey to which Officers and Members of the BAPG Executive Committee were invited.

8th July 2009

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

8th July 2009

At the request of the National Conference of U.S. State Legislatures, the BAPG made arrangements for NCSL member, Senator Bob Coffin of Nevada, and his daughter, Anna Maria, to attend Prime Minister’s Questions. We are grateful to Mr. Speaker for providing tickets for the guests to sit in the Distinguished Visitors Gallery.

31st July 2009

At the request of the new Political Lead at the British Embassy in Washington D.C., Ms. Victoria Courtney, the BAPG made arrangements for a member of Ms. Courtney’s team, Mrs. Jennifer Benbow and her father Mr. Strigley, to be given a tour of Parliament. We are grateful to Matthew Kay of Austin Mitchell, MP’s office for conducting the tour.

6th August 2009

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the BAPG made arrangements for a group from Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, to be given a tour of Parliament.

3rd to 6th September 2009

The 2009 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in Marlow on Thames, Buckinghamshire, with a delegation from the U.S. Senate. The British delegation was led by BAPG Honorary Secretary Brian Donohoe, MP and the U.S. Senate delegation was led by Senate BAPG Chairman Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) and BAPG Vice Chairman Senator Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi).

4th September 2009

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for spouses and staff of U.S. Members of Congress visiting London.

7th-16th September 2009

A visit co-sponsored by the BAPG and the U.S. Department of State took place. Three members seeking a greater understanding of U.S. federal and state Government visited the U.S. from 13th to 22nd September. They spent five days in Washington D.C., gaining an overview of the federal system of government, two days in individual districts with Members of Congress and two days in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to examine a state capital legislature.

15th September 2009

The BAPG made arrangements for Ms. Kara Seward of the Press, Public and Political Affairs Team at the British Consulate General Los Angeles to be given a tour of Parliament.

17th September 2009

At the request of the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, a tour of Parliament was arranged for the 2009 Marshall Scholars intake followed by a question and answer exchange with the Lord Hannay of Chiswick. We are very grateful to Lord Hannay for kindly giving his time to meet the group.

17th September 2009

Her Majesty's Government hosted a reception in honour of the Marshall Scholars in the Locarno Suite at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, which was attended by Lord Hannay and others.

17th September 2009

At the request of the Foreign Office, arrangements were made for U.S. State Senator John Kissel (Connecticut) and family to be given a tour of Parliament.

5th October 2009

A briefing meeting took place with David Heath, MP and John Robertson, MP (via conference call) who were to be participating in a BAPG / FCO visit to Pennsylvania and North Carolina 6-9 October to share with the respective State Legislatures UK-US Parliamentary views on climate change policy options, specifically, low carbon technology and low carbon growth. The MPs were briefed by members of the Climate Change and Energy Group (CCEG) of the Foreign Office.

6th-9th October 2009

The BAPG in conjunction with the Foreign Office sent two members to Pennsylvania and North Carolina to meet with the respective State Legislatures and share experience and best practice on Climate Change policy options. The visit was funded mainly by the Foreign Office by way of a Superfund bid from the Climate Change Team at the British Embassy in Washington D.C.

21st October 2009

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the BAPG assisted with a visit to Parliament by the U.S. Ambassador's wife, Mrs. Marjorie Susman and guests, who came to watch Prime Minister's Questions. We are grateful to Bill Olnier, MP for kindly welcoming Mrs. Susman and guests to Parliament and escorting the group to the Lower Waiting Room to watch the Speaker's Procession.

21st October 2009

The BAPG made arrangements for overseas students of the University of Southern California (USC) to meet with the Lord Trimble in Parliament for a question and answer exchange. We are hugely grateful to Lord Trimble for giving his time which was greatly appreciated by the students.

27th October 2009

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

11th November 2009

The U.S. Veterans Affairs Medical Musical Group held a British-American Friendship Concert at the Central Methodist Hall, Westminster, which was attended by Executive Committee members The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP and David Heath, MP who each delivered narrations.

18th November 2009

State Opening of Parliament.

18th November 2009

The Honorary Secretary and the Administrator met with the Financial Controller of the House of Commons Department of Resources, Ms. Julia Routledge, and the Finance Director of the House of Lords, Mr. Jonathan Smith, to be briefed on the grant-in-aid position following consideration by the Finance and Services Committee of the three year financial plan. It had been decided by both houses that the grant-in-aid payments to all four All Party Parliamentary Groups would be frozen at 2009-10 levels (i.e., £110,000 for the BAPG) for the next three years through to 2012-13, with no inflationary uplift. This was against a backdrop of HOC funds being frozen in 2010-11 and then cut by 9% in 2011-12 and 2012-13.

25th November 2009

A 'report back' took place from the three participants – Angus MacNeil, MP; Clive Betts, MP and Rosie Cooper, MP – of the 2009 BAPG / U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit (13-22 September). U.S. Embassy officials including the Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, Ms. Sandra Kaiser, and the Deputy Head of the Political Section, Ms. Robin Quinville, attended the meeting along with the BAPG Honorary Secretary and Administrator. The MPs, without exception, reported that the visit had been a great success and very valuable. The visit had taken place at a particularly interesting time when the U.S. was debating Obama's proposal to create a government-run health insurance system.

2nd December 2009

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for students of Brigham Young University.

2nd December 2009

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for overseas students of U.S. Ivy League Dartmouth College followed by a question and answer exchange with the Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville and the Baroness Fookes. We are grateful to Lord Brooke and Baroness Fookes for kindly giving their time to meet with the students.

2nd December 2009

Mr. Mark Hutton, Clerk of the Overseas Office, briefed the BAPG Honorary Secretary, Joint Treasurer, Bill Olnor, MP and the Administrator on a proposal being considered by the House of Commons Commission to create an International Relations Directorate. The premise of the department would be to develop a more strategic approach to the House's international activities. To this effect, the activities of the four interparliamentary bodies (BAPG, IPU, CPA, BIPA) would be directly supported by Parliament rather than through the mechanism of grants-in-aid.

Mr. Hutton's immediate task (for the 9th December) was to prepare a first paper for the HOC Management Board on the implications of this proposal which would form the basis of a paper to be presented to the Commission on the 18th January.

2nd December 2009

The Speaker of the House of Commons kindly hosted a reception on behalf of the BAPG for the new American Ambassador Louis B. Susman in the State Rooms of Speaker's House. The event was very successful and provided an excellent opportunity for many members of the BAPG to meet with the Ambassador and his staff. We are grateful to Mr. Speaker for hosting the event and for formally welcoming the Ambassador to Parliament on behalf of the BAPG.

8th December 2009

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

9th December 2009

Joint Treasurer Bill Olnor, MP and the Administrator met with the new Head of the North America Team Andrew Millar and the new Team Leader of the U.S. Section Justine Allan at the Foreign Office to discuss two possible BAPG visits to the United States to look at the U.S. automotive sector with particular reference to environmental issues and separately the relationship between climate change and marine science. The FCO and its posts would assist in arranging the programme of calls for each visit and the BAPG discussed with the team the objectives of the visits and possible timings.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss greater co-operation between the BAPG and the Foreign Office in light of the success of previous collaborative visits. Andrew Millar was particularly enthusiastic and agreed there was real value in sending BAPG delegations to states which had previously had few visits by British Members of Parliament.

16th December 2009

The Administrator met with Katharine Chappell, Assurance and Control Auditor of the House of Commons Internal Audit Team, to discuss the timetable for the internal audit of the BAPG.

6th January 2010

Start of the internal audit of the BAPG.

12th January 2010

At the request of the BAPG, a joint meeting took place of the Officers of the four inter Parliamentary bodies: BAPG, CPA, IPU and BIPA, together with Mark Hutton, Clerk of the Overseas Office of the House of Commons and Rhodri Walters, Clerk of the House of Lords Overseas Office, to discuss the House of Commons Management Board proposal before the House of Commons Commission to create an International Relations Directorate. It was agreed at the meeting that the BAPG Honorary Secretary would write to the Speaker requesting an urgent meeting with the Chairs of the four inter-Parliamentary groups before any decision was taken by the House of Commons Commission on an IRD.

13th January 2010

The Administrator met with Elena Cardnell, Audit Principal, and Afi Haneefa of the National Audit Office to discuss the time table for the 2010 audit.

19th January 2010

The Honorary Secretary, Joint Treasurer, Greg Knight, and the Administrator met with Derek Wyatt, MP, Co-Chair of the All Party Communications Group, to discuss his proposal to locate a joint Parliamentary-Congress Communications Group inside the

BAPG. There was concern from the officers of the possible conflict of interest with external sponsorship of visits to the United States. Mr. Wyatt's main objective was to have a dialogue with counterparts in Congress on IT issues. The Honorary Secretary suggested that a member of the APComms Group consider standing on the BAPG Executive Committee to have an input on the programme of activities. The BAPG would be happy to co-operate on talks.

25th January 2010

The Mayor of London Boris Johnson hosted a reception to introduce the National 9/11 Memorial and Museum New York project to which members of the BAPG and others were invited including the British Consul General New York, Sir Alan Collins.

3rd February 2010

At the request of Baroness Flather, the Administrator met with the Baroness and friend, Mr. Sahadeva Torpy, to discuss Mr. Torpy's proposal for U.S. author Mr. Eric S. Petersen to talk to members on the essays of Thomas Jefferson.

9th February 2010

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

15th February 2010

At the request of the U.S. Embassy on behalf of a Senator, a tour of Parliament was arranged for two U.S. local government officials and their partners.

15th-19th February 2010

Four members visited Washington D.C., South Carolina and Georgia from Monday, 15th February to Friday, 19th February 2010 to look at the U.S. automotive sector, with particular reference to environmental issues.

2nd March 2010

Representatives of the four inter Parliamentary groups – BAPG, CPA, IPU and BIPA – met with the Speaker and the Lord Speaker together with the Clerks of the respective Overseas Offices to discuss the House of Commons Management Board proposal to create an International Relations Directorate (IRD). The four groups proposed establishing a working group of officials reporting through a member committee to take forward the work on international relations, without prior commitment to an IRD.

8th March 2010

A meeting of the House of Commons Commission took place at which there was agreement to establish an International Relations Directorate. The Commission agreed to establish a working group of officials to take forward the implementation of an IRD but did not agree to the group reporting through a member consultative committee due to the "range of stakeholders whose interest should all be treated equally by the working group". (Letter from the Speaker of the House of Commons.)

22nd March 2010

A preliminary meeting of the Working Group took place, to which the BAPG Administrator was invited to attend.

23rd March 2010

The House of Lords House Committee agreed in principle to the establishment of an International Relations Directorate but was concerned to see the details of the final scheme.

30th March 2010

The BAPG Honorary Secretary, Brian Donohoe, MP and Joint Treasurer Bill Oler, MP met with Lord Dubs, Vice Chair of the BIPA, to discuss the recent decision by the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee to establish an International Relations Directorate. It was agreed that member input in the implementation process was essential and that representations to this effect would be made at the next meeting of the Working Group of officials.

N.B. The off-year interim conference with the House of Representatives BAPG, which usually takes place in February on the back of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly meetings in Europe, was postponed by the House BAPG to November 2009, but then subsequently cancelled as it was not possible for Members of Congress to travel overseas at this time.

and attainment of Climate Change goals; Anglo-American relations; the Middle East peace process; the idea of an institutional framework for the Middle East akin to the European Union; Afghanistan and Pakistan; working with the Taliban/Hamas; Syrian alliance with Iran; non nuclear proliferation; NATO enlargement; Russia; Cyber Warfare; the current U.S. and UK political scenes.

We would like to thank our guest speakers: the Minister of State for the Department of International Development, Gareth Thomas, MP, who spoke on Third World Aid and the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ivan Lewis, MP, who was invited to speak and answer questions on Afghanistan-Pakistan and the Middle East.

On the Thursday afternoon and Friday there was a separate programme for those accompanying the delegations which included visits to Cliveden House; Jane Austen House Museum and Chawton House Library. We were most grateful to Mr. Richard Knight (descendant of Jane Austen's brother Edward Austen-Knight) for kindly hosting the party at Chawton House.

At a more formal dinner on the Friday evening, held in the Versailles Suite at Danesfield House Hotel, we were delighted to welcome the following guests who had been invited to come to meet the American delegation:

Ms. Sara Thornton
Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police.

Mr. & Mrs. David Lidington, MP
Then Shadow Minister for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs.

The Rt. Hon. Theresa May, MP & Mr. Philip May
Then Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Shadow Minister for Women.

Mr. and Mrs. John Howell, MP

Sir William McAlpine, 6th Baronet, & Lady McAlpine

Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher & Lady Fletcher
Sir Henry is Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire

The delegations also visited Windsor Castle where they were warmly welcomed by Mr. Mark Hinks, Deputy Castle Superintendent.

The Senate delegation returned to Washington on the Sunday morning from Buckinghamshire.

Our extensive thanks are due to the North America Department of the Foreign Office for the very informative briefings they specially prepared for the British delegation.

The following visits to the U.S. took place:

- In April, four members visited New York City and Newark, New Jersey, to look at company and banking regulation and the regeneration of depressed cities and work fare projects.
- In September, three members went on a visit to the United States, sponsored jointly by the BAPG and the U.S. Department of State. This visit, primarily for members with little or no experience of the United States, is designed to give an introduction to the American political system. After five days in Washington D.C. for meetings and visits which illustrated the workings of the U.S. federal government, the members spent a weekend with individual Members of Congress in their districts, before spending the remaining days of the visit in Harrisburg and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to learn something of the state system of Government.

- In October, the BAPG in conjunction with the Foreign Office, sent two members to Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Washington D.C to share with the respective state legislatures the UK's best practices and experience with carbon cap and trade schemes. This visit was financed by the Foreign Office.
- In February 2010, four members visited Washington D.C., South Carolina and Georgia to look at the U.S. automotive sector with particular reference to environmental issues.

In the UK over the year, the BAPG has been able to welcome several state legislators to Westminster.

Various tours of both Houses have also been arranged for visiting Americans at the request of the Foreign Office or the American Embassy. Arrangements were also made for the 2009 Marshall Scholars to visit Parliament and to meet with a member for a question and answer exchange.

The Speaker of the House of Commons very kindly hosted a reception on behalf of the BAPG for the new U.S. Ambassador Louis B. Susman in the Speaker's State Rooms. The reception was a great success and gave many members of the Group the opportunity to meet the Ambassador and senior personnel from the U.S. Embassy.

There have been changes in personnel at the Foreign Office and we were delighted to welcome the new Leader of the North American Department, Mr. Andrew Millar, and the new Head of the U.S. Section, Ms. Justine Allan.

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 Department 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 their 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 before the General Election stood at 655 of whom approximately 78% had 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.

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 16
ON WEDNESDAY, 8th JULY 2009 AT 3:30 P.M.**

The Rt. Hon. John Bercow, 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, the Foreign Secretary and the Opposition Vice Chairman, the Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP, together with 71 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 2008 to April 2009 and the Accounts for the Year Ending March 31st 2009.

The Government Vice Chairman, The Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy, MP, presented the Report of the Executive Committee for 2008/2009.

Mr. Murphy first gave Mr. Speaker his warm congratulations and those of the group on his election as Speaker and thanked him for presiding at the Group's AGM.

Mr. Murphy then reported on the work of the Group during the year to April 2009. He reminded members that full details of all the Group's activities appeared in the printed report, which had been circulated before the AGM.

During those 12 months, 28 Members of Parliament went to the States under the Group's auspices:

- The 2008 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference in April which took place with the House of Representatives BAPG in Washington D.C. and Roanoke Island, North Carolina (12 members participated);
- The Democratic National Convention held in Denver, Colorado, in August to which the BAPG, in conjunction with the British Embassy, sent two members (Government and Liberal Democrat).
- The Republican National Convention, in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, to which the Group sent, with the assistance of the British Embassy and the support of the International Wing of the Conservative Party, two members (Government and Conservative).
- The BAPG/U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit in September when six members participated in a programme designed to give members with little or no experience of the U.S. an introduction to the American political system. The Group spent the first five days in Washington D.C., gaining an overview of the federal system of government and how the various branches of government interact; three days in individual districts with Members of Congress and two days in Boston, Massachusetts, to examine a state capital legislature.
- The New Members Orientation Programme conducted by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University in early December to which four BAPG members attended as observers.

- A specialist delegation in March to Oregon and Washington in conjunction with the Foreign Office to share with the respective state legislatures best practice and experience with carbon cap and trade schemes. The delegation consisted of two members (Government and Cross Bench) and was entirely at the Foreign Office's expense.

It had been hoped to send a specialist delegation to New York in March to look at financial issues but the visit was pushed back to April due to the limited availability of staff at the British Consulate General New York.

Also in London, the Group had been able to arrange some meetings/tours/lunches for visiting U.S. Members of Congress/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.

The then American Ambassador and Mrs. Robert H. Tuttle generously hosted a reception for BAPG members in November at the Ambassador's official residence, Winfield House, which provided an opportunity for many members to say good bye to the departing Ambassador and his wife. The position of Ambassador as yet remains unfilled although it is expected that Mr. Louis Susman, a Chicago Lawyer and Financier, will take up the position during the middle of August.

The Group's complete list of activities for the year are shown on pages 20 to 26 in the Annual Report. They show the contribution the Group has made over the year to promoting good relations with the U.S. and the role which the Group has played in the programmes of American visitors.

Mr. Murphy paid tribute to the co-operation which the Group had received over the year from the American Embassy, particularly from the Political and Cultural Affairs Departments, and support was always forthcoming from the then U.S. Ambassador Robert Tuttle. We are also indebted to the North America Department at the FCO and to the British Embassy in Washington D.C. 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 D.C., as are the Consuls-General in other parts of the USA.

Mr. Murphy reported that Group membership, as at 1st July 2009, stood at 654 with 394 Members from the Commons and 260 from the Lords.

Mr. Murphy announced that he would be stepping down on the second occasion as Government Vice Chairman of the BAPG. He had had an extremely interesting time as an Officer of the Group and had been very proud to be Co-Vice Chairman with William Hague and thanked all the Officers and Hannah (the Administrator) in particular for the co-operation that he had had in those years.

Mr. Speaker thanked Mr. Muphy and invited any questions.

There being no questions Mr. Speaker called upon The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP, Joint Honorary Treasurer of the Group, to present the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009. The Accounts had been circulated previously to members.

The Honorary Treasurer made the following points as regards the Accounts to March 31st 2009:

Format of the Accounts

The format of the accounts had remained the same as last year.

Cash and Bank

The group currently held bank accounts with the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) and the National Westminster Bank (NatWest). Of the balance of £36,883 shown in the accounts; £35,133 was held with the RBS, £1,749 was with the NatWest and £1 was

held in petty cash. Cash had increased by £8,605 in the year. The components of this increase were detailed on page 12 of the Accounts.

Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)

2008-09	£(8,284)
2007-08	£1,974

The group's deficit balance was due in part to the group's programme expenditure being funded by the group's reserves; expenditure was greater than the grant-in-aid received, as planned. The additional expenditure was due to a greater number of activities as a result of the U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections.

Reserves Held (*Net Assets*)

1 April 2008	£43,799
31 March 2009	£41,446

The group held £43,799 in reserves at 1 April 2008. It was agreed that the BAPG draw down upon these reserves to part fund programme expenditure during 2008-09. It transpired however that two planned events had to be re-scheduled to later in the year, after the financial year end, hence the reason for the reserves not being substantially drawn down.

The BAPG shall hold at least £4,500 in cash as a contingency reserve, as agreed by the Executive Committee.

Budget Expenditure

Budget Spend	£138,997
Actual Spend	£115,235

Total expenditure was £23,762 less than budgeted for. Two visits originally planned to take place in 2008-09, the interim conference and the specialist delegation visit to New York, had been re-scheduled to 2009-10. The total budget for these two visits was £23,000

Significant variations between 2007-08 and 2008-09

The group's income and expenditure had remained fairly constant in comparison to the prior year. The group's income increased by 2% and the expenditure had increased by 3%.

Income

The grant-in-aid for 2008-09 has increased by 5% (£5,099).

There was a significantly increased level of expenditure forecast for 2008-09 due to the US elections to be funded via the group's reserves. There was no prospect of increasing the grant-in-aid.

Other income (membership subscriptions) had increased by 17% (£135).

Expenditure

Staff costs had increased by 1% (£293).

- Pension costs had decreased by 13% (£893) due to the House of Commons Staff Pension Scheme rate reducing from 30.6% to 25% in June 2008.
- Salaries and National Insurance Contributions had increased by 5% (£1129) due to the Administrator receiving a 4% pay increase effective 1st April 2008.

Administrative Expenditure has increased by 75% (£4074) (excluding staff costs)

- The increase in administration costs was due to the increase in the notional audit fee from £1700 in 2007-08 to £5000 in 2008-09. The insurance costs had also increased due to a change in provider.

Programme Expenditure had increased by 18% (£11,125).

The increase had been largely due to the elections in the U.S.; during the year there were the Republican and Democratic National Conventions and the Harvard Newly Elected Members of Congress Programme (costing a total £24,973). The planned specialist delegation was re-scheduled to later in the year, after the financial year end. Costs relating to the Reception for the American Ambassador were significantly reduced due to the reception being hosted by the Ambassador.

Balance Sheet

Debtors and pre-payments had decreased by 60% (-£12,500).

Pre-payments were particularly high last year as the majority of the Annual Conference in April 2008 was paid in March 2008. 2008-09 pre-payments largely relate to payments for the Annual Conference 2009 and the specialist delegation to New York, which were both paid in part prior to the year end.

Creditors and Accruals had decreased by 29% (-£1,542)

This is largely due to a pension creditor of £1,893 in 2007-08, relating to an increase in pension rate. In 2008-09, pensions had been fully paid by year end. In 2008-09 there are two creditors dating back to 2006 totaling £796. Accruals largely relate to the Annual Report, Carbon Offsetting and corporation tax.

Mr. Knight reported that Group membership, as at 1st July 2009, stood at 654 of which approximately 78% had a Life Subscription.

On behalf of the Officers Mr. Knight placed on record the Group's appreciation of the grant-in-aid without which it would not be possible to maintain a programme.

Mr. Speaker put to the meeting formal motions in respect both of the report and of the accounts.

In relation to the Annual Report, it was proposed by The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP and seconded by The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson that the report be adopted, which was carried unanimously.

In relation to the accounts, it was proposed by Bill Olnor, MP and seconded by Lord Oxburgh that the accounts also be adopted which received unanimous agreement.

5. To Ratify Vice-Presidents' & Officers Proposed by the Executive Committee

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. 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. the Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC

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. David Miliband, MP

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Molyneux of Killead, KBE

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH

The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP

The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Thatcher, LG, OM,

and that, The Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg, MP be elected as a Vice-President.

It was proposed by Sir Nicholas Winterton and seconded by The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson that these names be adopted, which was unanimously agreed.

Mr. Speaker paid warm tribute to those who had been Officers of the Group during 2008/2009.

The Rt. Hon. Paul Murphy MP, Government Vice-Chairman, had been Vice Chair of the Group (for the second time) since March 2008. He has indicated his wish to stand down from the role since leaving the Cabinet. Paul has always been most supportive of the Group and we are most grateful to him for having been our Vice-Chairmen during this time.

The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP, Opposition Vice-Chairman, is commencing his third year of a three year term. We would like to thank him for his involvement with the group and the time he gives in support of its activities. We are delighted that it will be possible for William to attend part of this year's Annual Parliamentary/Congressional Conference, to be held this year in Marlow on Thames, Buckinghamshire.

Also, **Brian Donohoe, MP, Bill Olnier, MP, and The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP**, had indicated they are all happy to continue in their roles of *Honorary Secretary* and *Joint Honorary Treasurers* respectively.

Brian Donohoe, MP, the Honorary Secretary, had just completed his first year in that office. The Group has been very fortunate to have such a hard working and dedicated Honorary Secretary who had given an enormous amount of his time to the Group's affairs.

The Group is also extremely grateful to Bill Olnier, MP and the Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP who both had given a considerable amount of time to the Group's affairs.

The ratification and election of the Chairman, the Joint Presidents, Vice-Presidents, the two Vice-Chairmen, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurers was proposed by Adrian Sanders, MP and seconded by Elfyn Llwyd, MP with the unanimous agreement of members present.

6. To Elect 18 Members to serve on the Executive Committee 2009-10

In accordance with Rule 8a, 18 Members are to be elected to the Executive Committee, consisting of 12 members from the House of Commons – of which there are to be six members from the Government Party and six members from the Opposition Parties – and six members elected to represent the House of Lords, the proportion of which is determined by the Lord Speaker and the representatives of the parties and groups in the House. Accordingly, the Lord Speaker's office has confirmed the proportions as: two Government Peers; two Conservatives; one Liberal Democrat and one Cross Bench.

In relation to the election of members from the **House of Commons**, as we have received only six nominations from the Government Party for the Committee this year and only six nominations from the Opposition Parties for the Committee, the following Members are elected unopposed to serve on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2010:

Government	Opposition
The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP	Christopher Chope, MP
Linda Gilroy, MP	Nigel Evans, MP
The Rt. Hon. Adam Ingram, MP	Mark Field, MP
The Rt. Hon. John McFall, MP	David Heath, MP
Austin Mitchell, MP	Elfyn Llwyd, MP
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP

In relation to the House of Lords, as we have received the requisite number of nominations as there are places, the following members are elected unopposed to represent the House of Lords on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2010:

Government

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC

Conservative

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble

The Baroness O’Cathain, OBE

Cross Bench

The Lord Hannay of Chiswick

Liberal Democrat

The Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally

The Chairman paid tribute to Simon Burns, MP, on behalf of the Group, who had stood down from the Executive Committee having served since 2001. Simon had made a valuable contribution to the Group and we hope he will continue to take an active interest in the Group’s affairs.

7. Change to the Rules of the Group: Rules 8a; 8e and 9f.

A copy of the proposed changes to the rules had been circulated to members present at the AGM.

The Chairman called upon the Honorary Secretary, Brian Donohoe, MP, to present the proposed changes.

The Honorary Secretary reported that the proposed amendments were recommended to bring the rules in to line with the changes made at the AGM the previous year; increasing the size of the Executive and the number required to form a quorum from five to six.

Accordingly, the Executive Committee proposed the following changes:

Rule 8 (d) “The Executive Committee shall meet as and when summoned by the Honorary Secretary, or at the request of either of the Joint Vice-Chairmen, or of any **six** (*changed from five*) members, not fewer than four times between one year’s AGM and the next”.

Rule 12 (b) “In the event of fewer than **six** (*changed from five*) members of the Executive Committee being re-elected (at a General Election), the Honorary Secretary (or other eligible Officer should the Honorary Secretary not be elected) shall take immediate steps to arrange for the election of a new Executive Committee and will call a Special General Meeting of the Group for this purpose”.

As per Rule 13 of the Rules of the Group, “Any amendment of the Group’s rules shall be made by simple majority at the Annual General Meeting of the Group..”.

Mr. Donohoe moved the amendments formally which was seconded by Sir Nicholas Winterton, MP and unanimously agreed by members present.

Any Other Business

The Honorary Secretary welcomed Mr. Speaker in his role as the Joint President of the group and thanked him again for presiding at the Group’s AGM.

Mr. Donohoe also recorded the Group's appreciation of the support given by the former Speaker, the Rt. Hon. Michael Martin, MP, who had served the Group extremely well.

Mr. Donohoe reported that:

- This year's Annual Conference will be taking place from 3rd to 6th September in the U.K. at the British invitation to the Senate. The Senate delegation will be led by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont), Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and fourth most senior U.S. Senator. 12 British Members of Parliament are to attend the conference.
- Every year, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Department of State, the BAPG sends a group of up to eight MPs to the U.S. to participate in a programme designed to give members with little or no experience of the United States an overview of the federal and state system of government and it includes a short time with a member of congress in his/her district.

This year, we have received no applications, to date, from members of opposition parties and therefore the visit, for the first time, is in doubt. The visit is scheduled to take place 13-22 September. We have invited Michael Fabricant, MP of 'Conservative Friends of America' to assist us in stimulating interest and have further extended the deadline to Thursday, 9th July for receipt of applications. We would be grateful if members could please assist us in stimulating interest. It should be noted members who have been on a U.S. government funded programme in the last five years would not be eligible to apply and the U.S. Department of State gives preference to members with little or no experience of the United States and "with a stretch of active professional development ahead of them".

The U.S. Department of State organizes the programme and all internal travel and the BAPG pays the transatlantic flights and subsistence allowance. Members should contact Hannah Mitchell at the BAPG office if they are interested.

- After the success of the BAPG Climate Change visit to Oregon and Washington State in March, the National Climate Change Team at the British Embassy in Washington D.C. has recently submitted a bid to the Foreign Office superfund to finance a BAPG visit to Indiana and Pennsylvania, 8-12 October 2009. The purpose of the visit is for a small knowledgeable bi-partisan parliamentary team to meet with State Legislatures and other actors concerned with Climate Change for a general discussion on what the UK/EU is doing and why this issue has cross-party support in the UK. It was noted the Foreign Office would only fund Premium Economy flights to the West Coast which is a tremendous distance to expect anybody to go in these seats. We continue to make some representations about this and indeed are looking at our own reserves, if necessary, to upgrade members. The Honorary Secretary presumed he had the support of the group to do that. In conjunction with the UK Caucus in the House of Representatives, the BAPG is running a Sister Member programme, which aims to pair a Member of Parliament (from either House) with a Member of Congress, based on similar ideals, committee assignments or districts. The pairings are informal and once introductions have been made it is the responsibility of the individual members to manage the relationship. We have had a tremendous response to the programme and have forwarded members biographical information to the UK Caucus to assist them in the pairing process. The Co-Chair of the UK Caucus, Congressman John Campbell, is to next write to individual Members of Parliament welcoming them to the programme and introducing them to the Member of Congress they have been paired with.

- Following the change in funding arrangements from HM Treasury funding to direct funding from the Administration Estimate, the House of Commons Commission has asked its internal auditors to include assurance on the use of the grants made to inter-parliamentary groups in its internal audit plans for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The assurance will be that the funds are reasonably being used for the purposes intended and are in line with the requirements of the financial memoranda between the commission and each group. The work will be carried out in liaison with the head of internal audit in the House of Lords who will rely on this work in providing assurance to the Lords authorities.

An internal audit of the BAPG has been scheduled to take place in November this year.

- We continue to try to arrange lunches/meetings for Congressional delegations to London and other VIP visitors.
- Members were reminded that Group functions/visits are always advertised by means of the All Party Whip and also on the BAPG website www.bapg.org.uk. Increasingly we are using e-mail to alert members to BAPG events advertised on the APW.
- The Honorary Secretary recorded his thanks to fellow officers: Paul Murphy, William Hague, Bill Olnor and Greg Knight. Special thanks were also given to the Administrator for all her hard work.

Sir Nicholas Winterton commented that it is becoming difficult to get members to go on various visits. This is common in the CPA and the IPU and it is due to the media now focusing on this sort of visit. “I believe this is a matter which the Speaker and people in authority are going to have to take a hand in because the relationship we have with other countries and not least with our long standing partner the United States of America is very important.”

Mr. Speaker replied that this was a fair and robust challenge to us all. “And for my part, and I hope that this will carry the assent of all colleagues here assembled, I am absolutely committed to transparency and accountability. We all recognize that to be essential. I am also absolutely committed to a robust and articulate defence of democratic politics and all the engagement that that robust and articulate defense entails. In other words, the idea that because any thing costs anything it is not worth anything and should be prevented is quite wrong ... but we have got to be prepared to stand up for ourselves when the activities in which we are engaged are perfectly legitimate and in deed more legitimate – positively desirable. It seems to me that the activities of this group manifestly fall in to that category, but it does of course apply much more widely”.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4:05 p.m.

