

British-American Parliamentary Group



Annual Report & Accounts 2017-18

(For the year ended 31 March 2018)

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OFFICERS' & MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2017-2018

Joint Presidents	The Speaker of the House of Commons The Lord Speaker
Vice-Presidents	The Rt. Hon. Dame Margaret Beckett, DBE, MP Ian Blackford, MP 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. the Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hague of Richmond The Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, CH, QC The Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling, DL The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mackay of Clashfern, KT The Rt. Hon. the Lord Martin of Springburn (<i>leave of absence from 13th September 2017</i>) The Rt. Hon. Ed Miliband, MP The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH Tom Watson, MP
Chair	The Prime Minister
Vice-Chairs	The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP Vernon Coaker, MP
Honorary Secretary	The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP
Honorary Treasurers	Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

House of Commons

Government

Mike Freer, MP (*stood down 30/01/18*)
Stephen Hammond, MP
Ranil Jayawardena, MP
Pauline Latham, OBE, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
Alan Mak, MP

Opposition

The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP
Angela Crawley, MP
Kevan Jones, MP
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP
Diana Johnson, MP
Conor McGinn, MP

House of Lords

Conservative

The Baroness O'Cathain, OBE
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble

Labour

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay of Paddington

Liberal Democrat

The Lord Fox

Cross Bench

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes GCB, GCVO, QSO

Administrator: Hannah Mitchell

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee 2017-18 met on: 24th October 2017; 5th December 2017; 6th February 2018 and 15th May 2018.

The Annual General Meeting, at which the current Executive Committee was elected, took place on 19th July 2017.

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

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL	4/4
Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP	0/4
Vernon Coaker, MP	2/4
Angela Crawley, MP	0/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes, GCB, GCVO, QSO	3/4
The Lord Fox	3/4
Mike Freer, MP	1/2
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP	2/4
Stephen Hammond, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay of Paddington	3/4
Ranil Jayawardena, MP	2/4
Diana Johnson, MP	2/4
Kevan Jones, MP	1/4
The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP	4/4
Pauline Latham, OBE, MP	0/4
Jack Lopresti, MP	0/4
Alan Mak, MP	2/4
Conor McGinn, MP	2/4
The Baroness O’Cathain, OBE	4/4
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble	4/4

PERFORMANCE REPORT

Foreword to the Accounts

Introduction

The British-American Parliamentary Group (BAPG) was formed in 1937 to promote closer relations and 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 by providing opportunities for discussion on problems common to both countries and for the exchange of visits and information. The BAPG 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, 2009, 2015 and 2017.

The BAPG acts as an autonomous body within Parliament. It appoints its own administrative staff to carry out its objectives and the rules of the BAPG define the limitations on its powers.

The management of the BAPG is vested in the Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary, who is a member of the Executive Committee, is primarily responsible for the BAPG's activities; the Administrator, who is an official of the BAPG and is not a member of the Executive Committee, is responsible for the executive work of the BAPG. The Chairman of the BAPG 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

The format of the annual programme of activities has historically consisted of: one Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference; one ad hoc thematic visit to the United States (budget allowing); one 'familiarisation' visit to the United States for members to learn about the U.S. legislative process, run conjointly with the United States Embassy and the United States Department of State, and attendance as observers at a biennial course conducted by Harvard University for newly elected Members of Congress. Also, every four years, during a Presidential election year, members attend the Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions to see Presidential candidate selection.

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

It proved to be a busy year for the BAPG, with the hosting of two Annual Conferences in the UK: the 2017 Annual Conference with a delegation from the US Senate in late August/early September 2017 and the 2018 Annual Conference with a delegation from the US House of Representatives in late February 2018, brought forward from financial year 2018/19, at the request of the chair of the House of Representatives BAPG delegation, due to the US Midterm elections in November 2018.

As host, we took the opportunity to showcase the 'Best of British' and the close ties between the US and the UK, by arranging much of the conference programmes outside Parliament, including the discussion sessions. (Hence, the 2017 discussion on international trade was conducted at the McLaren Technology Centre in Woking, Surrey, where the British and Senate delegations had the opportunity to tour the centre, including the car production facility; the 2018 discussion on the global economy and international trade was hosted at the Bank of England and introduced by the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Sir Jon Cunliffe, and the 2018 discussion on defence/security cooperation and foreign policy was held at the new National Cyber Security Centre in Victoria, where the two delegations heard from the CEO, Ciaran Martin, on the close cooperation between UK and the US on security matters). *Full details of the respective conference programmes can be found in the Annual Report following the Accounts.*

2017 was also an election year in the UK, with Parliament dissolved on 3rd May for a General Election on 8th June. The Prime Minister invited Her Majesty to summon the new Parliament to meet on 13th June with the State Opening of Parliament held on 21st June.

The following month, in July, eight members with little or no prior experience of the United States, travelled to the US to participate in the annual BAPG / US Department of State co-sponsored 'International Visitor Leadership Programme' to learn about the US Legislative Process.

In early November, the BAPG partnered with The Ditchley Foundation in hosting a Parliamentary discussion event on 'The Future Defence of Europe'.

In January 2018, the BAPG was pleased to be joined by British-American Business in hosting the new American Ambassador, H.E. Hon. Robert Wood Johnson, at a reception in the Speaker's State Rooms, which was attended by many Members of Parliament together with US/UK business leaders.

In February 2018, four members with an interest in Financial Services, visited New York and Washington DC to engage with policy makers and business on regulatory and competitiveness issues affecting global financial markets and the opportunities for regulatory coherence and co-operation between the US and UK financial services.

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

The BAPG is funded mainly by a grant from the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission in the proportion 70:30. The BAPG submits a detailed income and expenditure budget together with bids for expenditure on a rolling three year programme, usually in September each year, or at the request of the Clerks of the Overseas Offices, who are the budget holders on behalf of the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords Commission. Approval of the budget and the amount of the grant for the coming year is agreed in the first quarter of the following year. The grant is paid in one instalment, usually in April each year.

Prior to 2008-09 the BAPG was funded by HM Treasury.

Results for the Year

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (page 15) shows that the BAPG had a net operating deficit of £5,127 for the year 2017-18 (in 2016-17, the BAPG had a net operating deficit of £28,681). The Parliamentary grant for the year was £114,120 (in 2016-2017 it was £112,990).

As at 31st March 2018, the BAPG holds £49,932 in reserves (page 16). These reserves have accrued in recent years as a result of lower programme expenditure than originally budgeted, owing to a combination of last minute cancellations by individual members in visits, postponement of events (by US counterparts) and savings on individual activities (partly from inviting business involvement in BAPG events).

While the reserves currently exceed the permitted one fourth of maximum annual funding, the BAPG plans to draw down on the reserves in 2018-19, to fund several specialist delegation visits to the US.

Prompt Payment Initiative

In line with best commercial practice, it is BAPG 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 on presentation of a valid invoice, whichever is the later. During 2017-2018, no interest has been paid to suppliers for the late payment of invoices.

Carbon Off-Setting

The BAPG off-sets its carbon emissions from flights via the purchase of Gold Standard Certified Emissions Reduction (CER) credits facilitated by the Government Carbon Offsetting Facility under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

Provision of Information to Auditors

As far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the BAPG's auditors, the National Audit Office (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 BAPG's auditors are aware of that information.

The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP (Accounting Officer)

May 2018

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

Under the Financial Memorandum, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission have directed the BAPG 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 BAPG 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 BAPG will continue in operation.

The Executive Committee has appointed as Accounting Officer, the Joint Honorary Treasurer of the opposite party to the Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP. The responsibilities of an 'Accounting Officer' include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the BAPG's grant funding, for keeping proper records, for safeguarding the BAPG's assets, as set out in the Financial Memorandum agreed between the BAPG, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission, for ensuring that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and for taking personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

Governance Statement

The British-American Parliamentary Group (BAPG) maintains a system of governance that supports the achievement of the objectives and activities of the BAPG whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets in a manner that is consistent with the Financial Memorandum issued by the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission for the use of the Group's grant. In discharging its responsibilities, the BAPG has had regard to the principles of the Corporate Governance Code for Central Government.

Governance Framework

The BAPG acts as an autonomous body within Parliament. The management of the BAPG is vested in an Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary and Joint Honorary Treasurers, who are nominated by the Executive Committee and ratified each year at the Annual General Meeting as additional members of the Executive Committee with full voting rights, are primarily responsible for the Group's activities. The Chairman of the Group is the Prime Minister. The two Vice-Chairs are normally of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet rank.

The Group's rules are set out in a single constitutional document and detail the administrative arrangements and membership of the Group.

The day to day activities are the responsibility of the Administrator who is employed by the Executive Committee and operates under the general direction of the BAPG Officers to implement its policy decisions.

The Group's rules provide that the Executive Committee shall meet four times a year between one year's AGM and the next. The Executive Committee may determine a time and place for an Annual General Meeting of members to which it submits a report of its proceedings. The rules also allow for the Executive Committee to call Special General Meetings to consider and determine any matter of interest and importance that may arise.

Relationship with Sponsor: House of Commons Commission and House of Lords Commission

The House of Commons Commission and House of Lords Commission provide funding to the BAPG by way of a grant in the proportion 70:30.

The BAPG's relationship with its funding sponsors is embodied in a Financial Memorandum. The Financial Memorandum is an integral part of the governance arrangements.

The Financial Memorandum places a responsibility on the Group to ensure that all resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively. During 2011-12, work was done on a new Financial Memorandum, which provided for greater financial reporting to the "budget holders", the Clerks of the Overseas Offices, and limits on reserves. The new Financial Memorandum was in place with effect from April 2012. The Parliamentary authorities undertook a 'light touch' review of the Financial Memorandum in October 2013 and proposed several minor amendments to bring the Financial Memorandum more in line with existing and expected practices. These changes did not ask for anything further from the BAPG over and above the arrangements already in place. The amendments were approved by the BAPG Executive Committee on 4th February 2014, with subsequent alterations requested by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which were approved by the BAPG Officers at the end of March 2014. In line with section 1.2 of the Memorandum, providing for a review at least once every three years, the budget holders undertook a further review (commencing in the autumn of 2016), proposing several amendments; some merely drafting points (e.g. adding references to the new House of Lords Commission), others addressing points from the internal audit review or that had occurred to the budget holders independently. These amendments received the approval of the Commons Executive Committee, the Commons Finance Committee, the Lords Finance Committee and the grant funded inter-parliamentary committees during 2017.

The Clerks of the Overseas Offices attend meetings of the BAPG Executive Committee to provide assurance to the House

of Commons Commission and House of Lords Commission that funding is being disbursed in accordance with the purposes and principles set out in the Financial Memorandum as well as to provide such advice and assistance as requested.

The Executive Committee appoints an Accounting Officer from its membership, normally one of the Joint Honorary Treasurers from the opposite party to the party of the Honorary Secretary, to ensure that the uses to which the Group puts funds received from the grant are consistent with the purposes for which the grant was given and comply with any conditions attached to them including the provisions of the Financial Memorandum.

The BAPG'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 the International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and each year report the results of their work to the BAPG's Executive Committee.

Internal Audit services of both Houses may also be used to provide assurance to the sponsors and to the BAPG Executive Committee. The Internal Audit services have the right of access to all the BAPG records, operations and physical properties of the body and to the Executive Committee members, employees and contractors, as set out in the Financial Memorandum. An internal audit was carried out in 2017-18 to provide assurance that the governance processes in place were adequate to leave the Accounting Officers of each House able to discharge their responsibility to 'ensure prudent management of grant in aid funds, achieve value for money, and ensure that grants are used as envisaged while allowing recipients reasonable freedom to take their own decisions'. Following the audit, the internal audit team reported that they were "able to provide substantial assurance that the processes in place within BAPG result in the intended objects being achieved."

The Group's Governance Activities in 2017-18

The Executive Committee met on four occasions in 2017-18 to consider matters that are set out in the Annual Report of the Executive Committee. Amongst other things, the Committee examined the Group's draft programme of activities for the present year and estimated costs; reviewed the Group's budgetary position and forecast budget for 2018-2019; analysed the Group's accounts and the external audit findings for 2016-17 and the Annual Report of the Honorary Secretary, as well as other matters for discussion and endorsement by the Annual General Meeting.

Quality of Data

In advance of each Executive Committee meeting, an extract of the Treasurer's Report is circulated to the committee, detailing the current finances of the Group, the known liabilities for the year to 31st March and the anticipated balance at the year-end after the costs have been deducted. This is accompanied by a copy of the Minutes of the last meeting and a summary of the activities that have taken place since the last meeting and those planned for the future. The Committee is also sent at periodic intervals updates on the Group's membership figures and a copy of the Group's latest Risk Register for review. This data information assists the Committee in discharging its responsibilities and achieving the objectives and activities of the BAPG whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets in a manner that is consistent with the Financial Memorandum and the principles of the Corporate Governance Code for Central Government.

Risk Management

The risk management process is the responsibility of the Executive Committee and it oversees a risk register which identifies and evaluates possible risks to the Group and sets out the internal controls or mitigating actions in place to manage the risks. It is the responsibility of the Committee to regularly appraise the existing risks and to recommend action where necessary. Importantly, this process is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level, rather than to eliminate all risk. In doing this, it can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The risk register currently identifies 11 risks which fall within the low risk areas after mitigating actions have been taken. The major operational risk is one of fraud, which is mitigated by the segregation of duties: the majority of payments are by cheque (except Employer and Employee pension contributions which are required by the Cabinet Office to be paid on-line and exceptional ad hoc online payments when 'fast payment' is required) which require two of three signatories. Furthermore, there are agreed authorisation/delegation limits on financial expenditure, as detailed in the annex of the Financial Memorandum.

Personal Data Related Incidents

The BAPG had no personal data-related incidents during the reporting year.

Significant Issues

As has been reported previously, a significant concern is the future sustainability of the present level of programme activities. After five years of no inflationary uplift to the grant (2010-2015), the current base line grant is no longer sufficient to fund the BAPG's traditional programme. This is evidenced from the BAPG's reliance on reserves to fund the shortfall in budget (this year and last). This will be of particular concern in a US General Election year (next 2020) when there are additional election related activities which provide the opportunity of increased engagement with US counterparts. The only reason the Group's reserves have increased in recent years is as a result of last minute cancellations by individual members in visits, postponement of events (by US counterparts) and some savings on individual activities.

In 2016, the BAPG Executive Committee considered other possible sources of finance to help offset the anticipated budget shortfall, including inviting business involvement in BAPG events. We have since had some success with this, particularly in respect of the 2017 and 2018 Annual Conferences, both of which we hosted in the UK, and the annual reception for the American Ambassador. While we cannot guarantee this revenue stream for future activities, particularly when the Annual Conference is hosted in the US (next 2019 and 2020, hosted alternately by the Senate and then the House of Representatives), we will continue to utilise it as an option when we can, to help reduce programme costs and leverage funds for the BAPG's core function of establishing people to people relations with the US.

Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance

The Accounting Officer has responsibility for maintaining effective governance and periodically to review the processes and procedures that are in place. The Accounting Officer's statement is set out below.

My review of the BAPG's governance 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 the Administrator, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurers of the BAPG, who have day to day responsibility for the governance processes and procedures.

I have also had regard to guidance on internal control and financial management issued by the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords Commission under the auspices of the Financial Memorandum., as well as the comments made by the external auditors, the Comptroller and Auditor General, supported by the National Audit Office (NAO), in their audit of the BAPG Accounts and the activities that underpin them, which is carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and each year reports the results of their work to the BAPG's Executive Committee. As far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there have been no significant internal controls issues raised during the year.

On an enduring basis, I advise the BAPG's Executive Committee on the implications of the periodic reviews of the BAPG's governance processes and procedures. I intend to ensure that the BAPG continues to maintain a reliable system of governance.

I consider that the Executive Committee has an effective stewardship over the resources of the Group.

The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP (Accounting Officer)

May 2018

The Independent Auditor's Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the British-American Parliamentary Group

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the British-American Parliamentary Group for the year ended 31 March 2018. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

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 2018 and of the Group's net operating cost for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Memorandum agreed with the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission.

Opinion on regularity

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

Basis of opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate. Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2016. I am independent of the British-American Parliamentary Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit and the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

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.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Financial Memorandum.

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. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the British-American Parliamentary Group's internal control.

- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the British-American Parliamentary Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the consolidated financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

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 House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Other Information

The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises information included in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the information given in Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on 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 returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Damian Brewitt

May 2018

Director for and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General

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

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2018

		2017-18	2016-17
	Note	£	£
Administration Costs:			
Staff costs	3	39,945	39,665
Other administration costs	4	8,320	9,938
		48,265	49,603
Programme Costs:			
Programme costs	5	72,580	93,905
Total Costs		120,845	143,508
Income:			
Parliamentary Grant	2	(114,120)	(112,990)
Operating income	2	(1,581)	(1,449)
Total Income		(115,701)	(114,439)
Net Operating Cost/(Income) before Interest and Tax		5,144	29,069
Bank Interest Received		(21)	(484)
Corporation Tax Payable		4	96
Net Operating Cost/(Income) after Interest and Tax		5,127	28,681

The notes on pages 19 to 23 form part of the accounts.

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 31 March 2018

		<u>31 Mar 2018</u>	<u>31 Mar 2017</u>
	<u>Note</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	7	759	995
Cash and cash equivalents	8	55,749	53,363
Total current assets		56,508	54,358
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(6,576)	(5,299)
Total current liabilities		(6,576)	(5,299)
Assets less liabilities		49,932	49,059
Taxpayers' equity:			
General fund		49,932	49,059
Total taxpayers' equity		49,932	49,059

The financial statements on pages 15 to 18 were formally agreed by the Executive Committee on 15th May 2018 and were signed on its behalf by:

The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP (Accounting Officer)

The notes on pages 19 to 23 form part of the accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows

For year ended 31 March 2018

		2017-18	2016-17
	Note	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating (cost)/ income		(5,127)	(28,681)
Interest Received		(21)	(484)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions – audit fee		6,000	5,000
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	236	176
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	9	1,277	345
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		2,365	(23,644)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Net cash outflow from investing activities		-	-
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net cash inflow from financing activities – interest received		21	484
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		2,386	(23,160)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	53,363	76,523
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8	55,749	53,363

The notes on pages 19 to 23 form part of the accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2018

	Note	General Fund
		£
Balance at 31 March 2016		72,740
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration		5,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		(28,681)
Balance at 31 March 2017		49,059
Changes in taxpayers' equity for 2017-18		
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	4	6,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		(5,127)
Balance at 31 March 2018		49,932

The notes on pages 19 to 23 form part of the accounts.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2017-18 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM). The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the BAPG for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the BAPG are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

In respect of the new accounting standards (IFRS 9 and 15), which come into play in 2018/19 financial year, the BAPG does not expect there to be any impact.

1.1 Non-current assets

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

1.2 Operating income

Such income relates directly to the operating activities of the BAPG. It principally comprises grant, Annual Subscriptions, Life Subscriptions, donations and interest on the bank deposit accounts.

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 (deferred income).

Income from Life Subscriptions will be recognised on a pro-rata basis over a period of 10 years (two terms of Parliament) and the remaining balance of Life Subscriptions will be treated as deferred income. Accordingly, Life Subscription income for 2017-2018 is £108 and the deferred income from 2016-2017 is £318, making a total Life Subscription income of £426.

1.3 Gains and losses

All gains and losses are included in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

1.4 Taxation

From 6 April 2016, banks and building societies have paid gross interest on savings accounts. The 2017-2018 Accounts accordingly show gross interest of £21.16.

The total tax liability for 2017-18 is £4.02 (based on a Corporation Tax rate of 19% for 2017-2018).

1.5 Expenditure

The British-American Parliamentary Group pays all the associated costs of events it organises, however, where it collaborates with a partner, such as BritishAmerican Business or the Ditchley Foundation on an event, and their guests join BAPG members at the event, they may cover the cost of the refreshments.

2. Income

	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Parliamentary Grant	114,120	112,990
Annual Subscriptions	1,016	956
Life Subscriptions	426	318
Donations	139	175
Total	<u>115,701</u>	<u>114,439</u>

3. Staff numbers and related costs

Staff costs comprise:

	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Wages and salaries	30,427	30,255
Social security costs	3,096	3,056
Other pension costs	6,422	6,354
Total	<u>39,945</u>	<u>39,665</u>

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

4. Other administrative costs

	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Sundry	353	1,695
Insurance	1,840	1,978
Annual Report	0	860
Website costs	127	405
Non-cash items:		
Auditor's remuneration and expenses	6,000	5,000
Total	<u>8,320</u>	<u>9,938</u>

5. Programme expenditure

	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference(s)	*28,164	27,115
Specialist Delegation Visit(s)	11,585	9,406
Annual Reception for the US Ambassador	0	42
BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit	32,328	30,851
Carbon Off-Setting of Air Travel	311	376
New Members of Congress Orientation Programme (NMOP)	0	10,583
Republican and Democratic National Party Conventions.	0	15,212
Hospitality	192	320
Total	<u>72,580</u>	<u>93,905</u>

*Represents two Annual Conferences: 2017 and 2018 (brought forward from 2018-19 financial year due to the US Midterm Elections).

For the second year running, the BAPG partnered with BritishAmerican Business (BAB) in hosting the annual reception for the American Ambassador and BAB covered the cost of the refreshments at the event at £3,585.91 (£2,974.72 2016-17).

The BAPG also collaborated with the Ditchley Foundation in co-hosting a Parliamentary panel discussion event on 'The Future Defence of Europe', held in the Speaker's State Rooms. Ditchley funded the cost of the refreshments at £1,746.81 (£1,810.64 2016-17).

In respect of the '2016 Co-Sponsored Visit', it should be noted that six of the eight participants returned two days early to vote in the Trident debate (thereby saving on hotel accommodation and subsistence costs).

6. Financial Instruments

IFRS 7 (Derivatives and other Financial Instruments) requires disclosure of the role which financial instruments have had during the period in creating or changing the risks an entity faces in undertaking its activities. The BAPG has limited exposure in relation to its activities.

Liquidity risk

The BAPG was financed by a grant from both Houses of Parliament. As such, it was not exposed to significant liquidity risks.

Interest rate risk

The BAPG was not exposed to significant interest rate risk.

Foreign currency risk

Foreign currency would not usually form part of the Groups assets or liabilities and as such it is not exposed to any significant exchange risks.

7. Trade receivables and other current assets

	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	759	991
Accrued Income – Bank Interest	0	4
Total	<u>759</u>	<u>995</u>

8. Cash and cash equivalents

	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Balance at 1 April	53,363	76,523
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	2,386	(23,160)
Balance at 31 March	<u>55,749</u>	<u>53,363</u>

The following balances at 31 March were held at:

Commercial banks and cash in hand	55,749	53,363
Balance at 31 March	<u>55,749</u>	<u>53,363</u>

9. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other Payables	3,233	2,584
Deferred Income	3,343	2,715
	<u>6,576</u>	<u>5,299</u>

10. Losses and special payments

There were no losses and special payments in 2017-18 (nil 2016-17).

11. Related-party transactions

The House of Commons and the House of Lords are regarded as related parties, providing grant to the Group under the terms provided by the Financial Memorandum. In addition, the House of Commons provides free accommodation to the Group as well as accounting services at the year end.

During 2017-18, the Group entered into related party transactions worth £8,906.80. This figure comprises £8,457.54 paid to the House of Commons Catering Service for the provision of hospitality to BAPG visitors and £86.96 for in-house printing and £362.30 for small gifts from the House of Commons' retail outlet for the two Annual Conferences and the specialist delegation visit.

There are no amounts outstanding with any of the related parties.

12. Authorisation for Issue

There have been no changes to the Accounts between the date when the Accounting Officer signed the Accounts and the date the Accounts were authorised to be issued on the date of the Director's signature on behalf of the C&AG signature.

Activities of the Group

4th April 2017

BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, and others attended a reception hosted by the City of London Corporation in partnership with the US Embassy to commemorate the centenary of the US entry into the First World War and the opening of the exhibition 'Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace: The Doughboys 1917-1918.'

10th April

At the request of the Welsh Government office at the British Embassy Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a valued contact on the Hill.

12th April

The BAPG Administrator met with the Clerk of the Commons Overseas Office, Matthew Hamlyn, in Portcullis House to discuss the BAPG's Request for Funding 2017-2018.

18th April

The Prime Minister Theresa May announced a snap election for 8th June.

18th April

The National Audit Office (NAO) commenced audit of the BAPG Financial Statements 2016-2017.

18th April

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Wholesale Financial Markets and Services hosted a dinner in honour of Member of Congress George Holding, Chair of the US House of Representatives BAPG and Member of the House Ways and Means Committee, in the Palace of Westminster, to which Officers and Members of the BAPG Executive Committee were invited.

8th May

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a US delegation sponsored by GlobalWIN, a bipartisan organisation which provides a forum for women who work in innovation driven fields / are passionate about innovation. The group comprised senior women staff from the US House of Representatives whose legislative portfolios cover: telecommunications, innovation, energy and commerce, trade and judicial issues. Prior to the announcement of a snap General Election the BAPG had also arranged a meeting with several Members of Parliament with related interests which unfortunately had to be cancelled owing to the dissolution of Parliament.

9th May

The Chair of the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, Mr. Christopher Fisher, hosted a dinner in honour of the departing Marshall Scholars and Marshall Sherfield Fellows at Stationers Hall to which BAPG members and the Secretariat were invited.

23rd May

At the request of the Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration Commission, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a member of staff and guest to Senator Ryan McDougle (Republican) of the Senate of Virginia.

23rd May

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for contacts of the Welsh Government office at the British Embassy Washington DC.

8th June

British General Election.

15th June

BritishAmerican Business hosted a Corporate Citizenship Awards Dinner at the Merchant Taylors' Hall in London which was attended by Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP and the BAPG Administrator.

21st June

State Opening of Parliament.

27th June

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

29th June

The Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the United States of America, Mr. Lewis Lukens and Mrs. Andrea Lukens, hosted an event at Winfield House to celebrate the 241st anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America, to which Officers and Members were invited.

3rd July

The BAPG Officers met with Congressman George Holding (R-NC), Chair of the US House of Representatives BAPG, for an informal exchange.

6th July

The BAPG Administrator met with Mr. Gerry Kaufman, the new Second Secretary in the Public Affairs Section at the US Embassy, to discuss the BAPG and the annual co-sponsored visit to the US for Parliamentarians with little or no prior experience of the US to learn about the US Legislative Process.

8th July

BAPG Officers, Members and Administrator were invited to attend the Ditchley Foundation 53rd Annual Lecture delivered by The Honorable John F Kerry, 68th US Secretary of State, at Ditchley Park.

13th July

BritishAmerican Business hosted a breakfast event at One George Street to launch a joint publication with the British Embassy Washington DC titled 'Across the Pond: American Trade & Investment Success Stories in the UK' to highlight American companies that have successfully 'crossed the pond', attended by Officers and Members of the BAPG.

13th July

The BAPG Administrator met with Erin Weyen, Project Manager for the Welsh Government based at the British Embassy Washington DC, to discuss opportunities for co-operation.

18th July

A pre-departure briefing meeting took place with the participants of the 2017 annual BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit to the US attended by representatives from the US Embassy, the BAPG Honorary Secretary and the BAPG Secretariat.

18th July

The Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the United States of America, Lewis Lukens, and BritishAmerican Business hosted a summer reception at Wychwood House to which senior representatives of the transatlantic business community were invited as well as stakeholders from UK and US government.

19th July

The BAPG Annual General Meeting took place at which the 2017-2018 Executive Committee were elected.

19th July

The BAPG Officers and Administrator met with Mr. Zachary Harkenrider, Political Counselor, and Ms. Justine Lancaster, Political Specialist, from the US Embassy, to discuss the BAPG programme of activities, including the annual reception for the US Ambassador, and the political outlook in both the US and the UK.

23rd July to 1st August

Eight Members of Parliament with little or no prior experience of America travelled to the United States to participate in a US Government sponsored International Visitor Leadership Programme to learn about the US Legislative Process. The programme opened in Washington DC and comprised an overview of the federal system of government and how the various branches of government interact. The middle weekend was spent with a Member of Congress in his/her home district and the final two days were spent in Boston where the participants reunited to examine a state capital legislature and other issues of interest. The BAPG paid for the transatlantic flights, daily subsistence and hotel accommodation. The US Department of State arranged the programme and all internal travel.

31st August to 2nd September

The 2017 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place at the invitation of the UK BAPG with a delegation from the US Senate led by Senator Patrick Leahy (Democrat, Vermont).

There were originally to have been eight Senators taking part in the meetings but in the end only two made it over to London, with three Senators cancelling shortly before departure owing to Tropical Storm Harvey, one withdrawing due to ill health and two as a result of unforeseen conflicts. This was very disappointing, but given the seniority of the two Senators who were able to travel and who had confirmed they still wished to attend, the decision was taken to proceed with the conference.

The conference opened with a dinner hosted by the City of London Corporation at the Guildhall on Thursday, 31st August and concluded with a farewell dinner at the George Watts Gallery in Surrey on Saturday, 2nd September.

There were three discussion sessions covering: (1) Foreign Affairs, defence and security co-operation; (2) the political outlook in the UK and US and UK/US relations; (3): the global economy and international trade. Two of the sessions were hosted in Parliament and the final session on international trade was hosted at the McLaren Technology Centre in Woking. We are grateful to McLaren Automotive Executive Director, Alan Foster, for giving the time to meet the two delegations and provide an overview of the McLaren Technology Group and the Technology Centre as well as host a lunch for the British and American delegations following the discussion session. The programme also included a dinner at the V&A on the middle evening in the Painting Galleries at which the two delegations were joined by V&A Trustee, Edmund de Waal OBE, artist and writer.

4th September

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a senior official from the US House of Representatives, David Hauck, and accompanying guest.

14th September

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for the 2017 intake of Marshall Scholars followed by a Question and Answer exchange with BAPG Officer, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP in the Grand Committee Room.

14th September

The Rt. Hon. Mark Field, MP hosted a reception to welcome the 2017 Marshall Scholars and Marshall Sherfield Fellow in the Locarno Suite at the FCO, to which BAPG Officer, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP and Administrator were invited.

19th September

BritishAmerican Business hosted an Annual Gala Dinner at One George Street to celebrate the transatlantic relationship attended by the Secretary of State for Defence, Sir Michael Fallon, MP and senior representatives from the transatlantic business and government communities.

20th September

The BAPG Administrator met with Penny Egan of the US-UK Fulbright Commission to discuss a possible collaborative event in Parliament in September 2018 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the signing of the treaty which created the US-UK Fulbright Commission, signed by Ernest Bevin, then Foreign Secretary and Don Bliss, Public Affairs Officer from the US Embassy, in Parliament on 22 September 1948.

The BAPG Officers subsequently gave their agreement to partnering with the Fulbright Commission in hosting the event and Mr. Speaker has approved the use of Speaker's House as a venue for the event on Wednesday, 12th September 2018, 6-8 pm.

The event would consist of a discussion on the theme of 'the special relationship'/the importance of soft-diplomacy/the continued relevance of cultural exchange, followed by a reception, which would include BAPG members, Fulbright Commissioners and Patrons, Fulbright alumni and current scholars, Senior US Embassy Officials and Vice Chancellors.

28th September

At the request of the BAPG, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP and the BAPG Administrator met with Adam Bye and Jonathan Williams of the North America Directorate at the FCO to discuss the BAPG Programme 2017/18 and ideas for possible thematic visits to the US.

10th October

The BAPG Administrator met with US Embassy Political Specialist Justine Lancaster for lunch to discuss the BAPG programme and possible collaborative events.

11th October

The BAPG Administrator met with Mandy Marks, Internal Auditor, House of Lords, to discuss internal audit of the BAPG in the first quarter of 2018.

16th October

At the request of LSE Enterprise, the commercial arm of the London School of Economics, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and Q&A exchange with the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP for a group of 30 undergraduate students from UC Davis, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz and UC San Diego, who were participating in a 10 week programme at the LSE on international political economy with a focus on the European Union and its policies.

16th October

At the request of the British Embassy Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and working lunch with Members of the BAPG Executive Committee for a US Congressional Staff Delegation visiting London and Northern Ireland to engage on trade. We are grateful to the Stephen Hammond, MP for chairing the meeting and to Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP; the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP; the Lord Fox; the Baroness O'Cathain, OBE and Mike Freer, MP for giving the time to meet with the delegation.

17th October

A report back meeting took place with three of the eight participants of the 2017 BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit to the US. Unfortunately, a number of participants cancelled shortly before the meeting, which was disappointing, but those who cancelled are being encouraged to provide either a written report or to report back direct to representatives of the US Embassy involved with the programme at a later date.

18th October

The BAPG Administrator met with the Communications Officer from the Ditchley Foundation to discuss the upcoming annual BAPG / Ditchley Parliamentary discussion event on Wednesday, 1st November.

24th October

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

1st November

The British-American Parliamentary Group, in partnership with The Ditchley Foundation, hosted a Parliamentary panel discussion event on 'The Future Defence of Europe' in the Speaker's State Rooms with panellists: **General Sir Richard Barrons** KCB CBE, former Commander Joint Forces Command; **Lieutenant General Frederick Benjamin Hodges**, Commanding General of the US Army Europe and **Ambassador Torgeir Larsen** from the Norwegian Diplomatic Service (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway), formerly Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General, NATO. The Ditchley Foundation covered the cost of the refreshments at the event.

1st November

The Government BAPG Vice Chair, the Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, met with the US Embassy Minister Counselor Political Affairs, Tom Williams, and the new First Secretary of Political Affairs, Jason Ullner, to discuss the possibility of joint meetings with the US House of Representatives and the US Senate when hosted in the UK.

2nd November

The BAPG Administrator met with the Cultural Affairs Team at the US Embassy to discuss opportunities for the BAPG and US Embassy to collaborate on speaker events, particularly around the US Elections.

6th November

BAPG Officers and Members were invited to a European Atlantic Group speaker event at Parliament organized through the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library titled 'US Politics One Year on from the Presidential Election' with two ex US Members of Congress, Sam Farr (D-CA) and Dan Benishek (R-MI).

15th November

BAPG Officer, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, together with the BAPG Administrator, met with the Deputy Head designate of Political Affairs at the British Embassy Washington DC, Mark Bailey, before he travelled out to Washington to take up his posting. He had spent the year working as Foreign Affairs Assistant to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street.

20th November

At the request of the US Embassy, the BAPG Administrator hosted a tour of Parliament for Senator Debbie Stabenow (Democrat – Michigan) who was over in London on a private visit.

20th November

The BAPG Government Vice Chair, the Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, met with the Chair of the US House of Representatives BAPG, Representative George Holding (R-NC), to discuss the BAPG and the political outlook in the UK and the US.

21st November

BritishAmerican Business hosted its annual Thanksgiving celebration reception at the BT Tower to which the BAPG Officers and Members along with the BAPG Administrator were invited.

22nd November

At the request of Representative George Holding (R-North Carolina), chair of the House of Representatives BAPG, the BAPG arranged for him to meet with BAPG Officers over drinks in the Commons. Representative Holding was joined by Representative Mike Turner (R-Ohio) together with US congressional staffers and military escorts, over in London on an official visit. We are grateful to the Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate for giving his time to join the Officers in meeting the Members of Congress and accompanying persons. Tickets were arranged for the guests to visit the Commons gallery to watch some of the debate.

29th November

The North America Department at the Foreign Office hosted a conference call with BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, and BAPG Administrator to discuss the planned financial services themed visit to New York and Washington DC in February 2018 with the leads at the British Embassy Washington DC and the British Consulate General New York.

30th November

The BAPG Administrator met with the Director, Strategic Market and Program Development of the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education, Bridget Gildea, to discuss respective programmes and opportunities for collaboration. It was a particularly useful meeting in exchanging contacts and discussing possible collaborative projects.

15th December

At the request of the Director of the US House of Representatives Inter-Parliamentary Services, Janice Robinson, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for two contacts.

17th January 2018

The BAPG arranged a ticket to PMQs for the new First Secretary Political Affairs at the US Embassy, Jason Ullner.

23rd January

The British-American Parliamentary Group, in partnership with BritishAmerican Business (BAB), hosted a reception in honour of the new American Ambassador, H.E. Hon. Robert Wood Johnson, in the Speaker's State Rooms.

It was a successful event with good turnout from BAPG members and business who met the Ambassador and accompanying Embassy chiefs. The Speaker was also able to attend and say a few words.

BAB covered the cost of the refreshments.

The new CEO of BAB, Duncan Edwards, wrote afterwards to BAPG Government Vice Chair, Chris Grayling, thanking him for the opportunity to partner with the BAPG in hosting the event and reporting very positive feedback from his team and business clients. He hoped that BAB would be able to work more closely with the BAPG on its common endeavour of strengthening transatlantic relations and understanding.

6th February

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

7th February

A pre-departure briefing meeting was held for the MPs participating in the Financial Services themed specialist delegation visit to New York and Washington DC in mid-February to inquire into the issues around and opportunities for regulatory coherence and cooperation between the US and UK financial services. Representatives from the Foreign Office, HM Treasury, the City of London Corporation and the Financial Conduct Authority, joined the BAPG Honorary Secretary and the Administrator, to brief the four MPs in advance of departure.

11-15 February

Four members with an interest in Financial Services visited New York and Washington DC to engage with policy makers and business on regulatory and competitiveness issues affecting global financial markets and the opportunities for regulatory coherence and co-operation between the US and UK financial services.

The programme was arranged by the British Consulate General New York and the British Embassy Washington DC in consultation with the British-American Parliamentary Group.

13th February

The BAPG Administrator joined Matthew Hamlyn, Clerk of the Commons Overseas Office, in meeting with representatives of the NAO to discuss the timetable for the 2017/18 Audit.

18th February

At the request of the US Embassy, the BAPG arranged a private tour of Parliament for a high level US Congressional delegation, led by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs and Chair of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism. Senator Graham was accompanied by six Senators and one Member of Congress along with accompanying spouses, staff and military escorts. The delegation was also joined by two Members of Congress (Democrat Co-Chairs of the UK Caucus) from a Foreign Office funded trade related visit to the UK. We are grateful to the Lord Trimble for giving the time on a Sunday to host the tour.

19th February

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for 25 US Embassy American personnel.

20th February

At the request of the Ministry of Defense, the BAPG assisted with a visit by a US Congressional staff delegation made up of senior members of staff from the offices of Members of Congress who sat on the House Armed Services Committee. The delegation was on a Foreign Office sponsored visit focused loosely around NATO / Europe themes. The BAPG arranged for the delegation to attend a hearing of the Defence Select Committee on the UK Armed Services Covenant after which they met with the Chair, Dr. Julian Lewis, MP, and members of the Committee, before taking lunch with the

Clerks of the Committee (funded by the British Embassy Washington DC) and concluding with a partial tour of the Palace, including a visit to the Commons gallery to watch proceedings in the chamber.

21-23 February

The 2018 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in the UK with a delegation from the US House of Representatives, led by House BAPG Chair, Rep. George Holding (R-NC), who serves on the House Ways and Committee. The conference had been brought forward from 2018/19 financial year at the request of the House BAPG Chair due to the Midterm elections later in the year, which made it difficult for Members of Congress to travel overseas in the run up and early in a new Congress.

An excellent programme was arranged for the two delegations, opening with a reception and dinner on the House of Lords' terrace, followed the next day by discussions on the global economy and international trade at the Bank of England, hosted by Deputy Governor, Sir Jon Cunliffe, and in the afternoon discussions on defence/security cooperation and foreign policy at the National Cyber Security Centre, with contributions from the NCSC CEO, Ciaran Martin, before drinks that evening at the new Embassy building in Nine Elms hosted by the American Ambassador, Robert Wood Johnson, and concluding the next day with a discussion on the political outlook in the US and the UK and US/UK relations at Chevening House before ending the conference with a tour and afternoon tea at nearby Chartwell, Sir Winston and Lady Churchill's former home.

Up to 15 Parliamentarians participated in the conference (some for part of the time) with eight Members of Congress.

23rd February

The BAPG was pleased to arrange a tour of Parliament for Mr. Jessup Taylor and family. Mr. Taylor had recently taken up his post as a Political Officer at the US Embassy.

1st March

The BAPG arranged for a group of students from Richmond University (the American International University in London), studying a political communications module with Public Relations Professor Trevor Morris (formerly CEO of Chime Communications Public Relations), to meet Diana Johnson, MP, BAPG Executive Committee member. The students heard from Diana on how she communicated with her party, electorate and the media. Diana very kindly brought along with her campaign literature from past General Elections to show and discuss with the students.

W/c 5th March

An internal audit review of the BAPG took place in the week commencing 5th March. The purpose of the review was to provide an assurance that the governance processes in place were adequate to leave the Accounting Officers of each House able to discharge their responsibility to 'ensure prudent management of grant funds, achieve value for money, and ensure that grants were used as envisaged while allowing recipients reasonable freedom to take their own decisions'. The internal audit team reported that they were "able to provide substantial assurance that the processes in place within BAPG result in the intended objects being achieved." They made one recommendation that the Executive Committee review the Risk Register biennially.

6th March

The Lord Kirkhope together with the BAPG Administrator took US Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer Kim Dubois on a brief tour of Parliament including the galleries of both Houses. It was an opportunity for the BAPG Administrator to discuss possible collaborative projects with the US Embassy.

6th March

The BAPG Honorary Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, and BAPG Administrator met with Dr. Philip Budden, Senior Lecturer MIT and former Consul General of the British Consulate General Boston to explore the possibility of an Innovation themed visit.

13th March

The BAPG Administrator met with Amy English, a consultant for the Global Women's Innovation Network (GlobalWin) based in Washington DC, to discuss the arrangements for an upcoming visit by a GlobalWin delegation to Parliament. They were joined by Diana Johnson, MP who had kindly agreed to chair a meeting with MPs to discuss gender diversity and women's safety in the workplace.

14th March

The BAPG Administrator met with the CEO of the US-UK Fulbright Commission, Penny Egan, and colleague, Jo Downey, to discuss arrangements for a collaborative event in the Speaker's State Rooms to mark the 70th anniversary of the signing of the US-UK Fulbright Treaty.

27th March

The BAPG office arranged a tour of Parliament for US Representative Liz Cheney (R-Wyoming at Large District) and family with BAPG Officer, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP. Rep. Cheney serves on the House Armed Services Committee and prior to her election to Congress in 2016 served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East. She is the daughter of former Vice President, Dick Cheney.

27th March

The US Ambassador, Robert Wood Johnson, hosted a reception at the new Embassy building to mark its opening attended by the BAPG Government Vice Chair, the Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, and BAPG Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, amongst others.

28th March

At the request of the Global Women's Innovation Network (GlobalWin), a bipartisan non-profit organization based in Washington DC, which brings together female leaders in government, academia and business, who work in or have an interest in innovation driven fields, the BAPG arranged for a GlobalWin delegation to meet with Members of Parliament for a conversation around gender diversity and women's safety in the workplace. The GlobalWin delegation included nearly 20 representatives of its corporate sponsors and Board of Directors who were in London for two days of high-level meetings and networking around issues such as Brexit, leadership, and innovation. We are grateful to BAPG Executive Committee member, Diana Johnson, MP for kindly chairing the meeting, which was attended by the Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee, The Rt. Hon. Maria Miller, MP, together with the Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, Dawn Butler, MP, along with five other Members of Parliament. It was an opportunity to share respective experiences and the work being done to change the dynamics of gender on both sides of the Atlantic.

28th March

The BAPG office arranged PMQs tickets for the US Ambassador Robert Wood Johnson (for whom it was the first time) and Deputy Chief of Mission, Lewis Lukens. We are grateful to the Speaker's Office for providing tickets to the Speaker's Special Gallery.

Report on the Work of the Group during 2017-2018

The Annual General Meeting of the Group took place on 19th July 2017. The Chairman, Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker, The Rt. Hon. Lindsay Hoyle, MP, took the chair in the absence of the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. John Bercow, MP, who had to preside at a debate in the Commons Chamber, and was warmly welcomed by all the members present.

It was reported that between April 2016 and April 2017 (an election year in the US) some 32 Members went to the United States under the Group's auspices. The visits included additional election related visits including sending Parliamentarians to the Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions and to the Harvard Bi-Partisan New Members of Congress Programme conducted by the Institute of Politics. The Foreign Office also funded an outreach visit early in the new Congress to promote UK/US relations, shared security interests and strong trade links.

During the 12 months to April 2018, a British General Election year, there had been two Annual Conferences during the year, both of which were hosted in the UK. These were the 2017 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference with a delegation from the US Senate and the 2018 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference with a delegation from the US House of Representatives, brought forward from 2018/19 financial year, due to the US Midterm elections later in the year. 12 members had visited the US during the year under the auspices of the BAPG.

The 2017 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference was held in London and Surrey from 31st August to 2nd September 2017 with a delegation from the US Senate. Disappointingly, several Senators cancelled for a mix of last minute reasons, with the Senate BAPG Chair, Senator Thad Cochran, withdrawing due to a health complication and several Senators cancelling due to their states being affected by tropical storm Harvey. We had been expecting eight Senators but in the end just two came with a delegation of people. Not with standing that, they were very senior Senators, and there were some very productive discussions over a couple of days.

The British delegation was led by the BAPG Government Vice Chair, The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, Secretary of State for Transport, and Opposition Vice Chair, Vernon Coaker, MP.

The other members of the delegation were:

Government Parties	Non-Government Parties
The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP (Conservative)	The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP (Labour)
Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP (Conservative)	Jonathan Reynolds, MP (Labour)
Ranil Jayawardena, MP (Conservative)	The Rt. Hon. David Lammy, MP (Labour)
The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate (Conservative)	Stephanie Peacock, MP (Labour)
	The Lord Fox (Liberal Democrat)

Ms. Hannah Mitchell (BAPG Secretariat) and Mrs. Andrea Pull (conference support) accompanied the delegation.

The United States Senate delegation was led by Senate BAPG Vice Chair, **Senator Patrick Leahy** (Democrat, Vermont district). Senator Leahy is the ranking member on the Senate Appropriations Committee and serves on several of its sub committees as well as also being a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, again serving on several of its sub committees, along with being a member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and Rules and Administration Committees. Senator Leahy was joined by **Senator Ron Wyden** (Democrat, Oregon) who is the ranking member on the Senate Finance Committee and the leading Senate Democrat on the Joint Committee on Taxation as well as being a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the Budget Committee and Select Committee on Intelligence.

The conference opened with a reception and dinner hosted by the City of London Corporation in the Crypts of the Guildhall, which was attended by the Representing Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir David **Wootton**, city officials, members of the diplomatic service and leaders of business and banking with connections to the U.S.

The two delegations were also delighted to be joined that evening by colleagues:

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of **Lympne**, CH, QC, BAPG Vice President;
The Rt. Hon. Tobias **Ellwood**, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence;
The Rt. Hon. Mark **Field**, MP, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, Foreign and Commonwealth Office;
The Rt. Hon. Andrew **Mitchell**, MP, BAPG Vice President and
Chi **Onwurah**, MP, Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy.

And the new US Ambassador, Robert Wood **Johnson**, on one of his first engagements in London, having only recently arrived.

It was a sparkling evening for which we are most grateful to the City of London Corporation and we would particularly like to thank Sir David **Wootten**; Catherine **McGuinness**, Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee and Mr. Paul **Double**, the City of London Remembrancer, for the warm hospitality afforded to the two delegations that evening.

There were three conference sessions over the following two days, with the first two sessions held in Parliament and the final session hosted at the McLaren Technology Centre in Woking, Surrey.

The first conference session addressed 'foreign affairs, defence and security cooperation' and we would like to thank our guest speaker, The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Robertson** of Port Ellen KT GCMG hon FRSE PC, former NATO Secretary General from 1999-2003 and UK Defence Secretary from 1997-1999, who opened the discussion with an overview of what had taken place in the last five years and speculating as to what he thought might happen in the next five years.

The two delegations went on to discuss:

- the future of NATO;
- the joint counter terrorism effort;
- the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran) and
- East Asia (North Korea, China and the tensions in the East China Sea).

The second conference session covered the UK and US political outlook and UK/US relations. We were delighted to be joined by the Lord **Tugendhat**, member of the Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, who opened the discussion with an overview of Britain's exit from the European Union, of the current state of discussions and his predictions of the medium to long term effects of exit from the EU.

We took the third discussion session on 'the global economy and international trade' out of Parliament to the new McLaren Technology Centre in Woking, Surrey, a Norman Foster designed building of towering glass and immaculate white floors, where the two delegations heard from McLaren Automotive Executive Director, Alan **Foster**, on the McLaren Group and toured its car production facility before meeting in the McLaren board room to discuss future trade relations between the UK and the US. We are most grateful to McLaren Automotive for hosting the two delegations and for their generous hospitality while there.

While the final discussion session was underway, the accompanying persons visited the nearby George Watts Gallery and Artists' Village for a tour of George and Mary Watts' former home and studios, Limnerslease house, before being joined by the two delegations in the early evening for a tour of the George Watts Gallery, which was followed with a drinks reception and a farewell dinner in the Dairy.

On the middle night of the conference, the two delegations visited the Victoria and Albert Museum where they had a private dinner in the Painting Galleries joined by V&A Trustee, Edmund *De Waal* OBE.

The Senate delegation returned to Washington D.C. on the Sunday morning from London.

The 2018 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference was brought forward to 21-23 February at the request of the House BAPG Chair, Rep. George Holding (R-NC), due to the Midterm elections later in the year. The conference was hosted over three days in London and Kent. 15 Members of Parliament participated in the British delegation (for part or all of the conference) and met with eight US Members of Congress over the course of the three days together with accompanying spouses/partners and staff, who were included in all hospitality.

The British delegation was led by the BAPG Government Vice Chair, The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, Secretary of State for Transport, and Opposition Vice Chair, Vernon Coaker, MP.

The other members of the delegation were:

Government Parties	Non-Government Parties
Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP (Conservative)	The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP (Labour)
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Anelay of St. Johns, DBE (Cons.)	The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP (Labour)*
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble(Conservative)	Chi Onwurah, MP (Labour)
The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate (Conservative)*	Diana Johnson, MP (Labour)
	The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour)*
	The Lord Empey, OBE (Ulster Unionist Party)*
	The Lord Fox (Liberal Democrat)

The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP (Conservative) attended ex-officio*

Ms. Hannah Mitchell (BAPG Secretariat) and Mrs. Andrea Pull (conference support) accompanied the delegation.

***Denotes not able to participate in the final day's programme.**

Lord Fox participated in the final day only.

The United States House of Representative delegation was led by Representative George Holding (R-NC), Member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The other members of the US House of Representatives delegation were:

Rep. French **Hill** (R-AR)
 Rep. David **Rouzer** (R-NC)
 Rep. Robert **Aderholt** (R-AL)
 Rep. Kenny **Marchant** (R-TX)
 Rep. Jim **Costa** (D-CA)*
 Rep. Richard **Hudson** (R-NC)*
 Rep. Jeff **Fortenberry** (R-NE)

***Denotes not able to participate in the full conference.**

Unfortunately, Rep. Eliot **Engel** (D-NY) withdrew shortly before the conference due to sustaining a knee injury.

The conference formally opened with a reception and dinner on the terrace in the House of Lords, hosted by the Lord Speaker, The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Fowler**, in his position as Joint President of the BAPG. We were delighted to have the following guests join the two delegations at the event:

Graham Stuart , MP (the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department for International Trade)
The Rt. Hon. Dr. Julian Lewis , MP (Chair of the Defence Select Committee)
The Baroness O' Cathain , OBE (member BAPG Executive Committee and sponsor of the dinner)
Nigel Evans , MP (Chair of the British Group, Inter-Parliamentary Union)
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen (BAPG Vice President)
Jack Lopresti , MP (BAPG Exco. member)
The Rt. Hon. Ian Blackford , MP (Leader of the SNP)
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, CH, QC (BAPG Vice President)
The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell , MP (BAPG Vice President)
Kevan Jones , MP (BAPG Exco. member)

Pauline Latham , OBE, MP (BAPG Exco. member)
Ranil Jayawardena , MP (Member BAPG Exco.)
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling , DL (BAPG Vice President)
Ms. Justine Lancaster , Political Specialist, US Embassy
Greg Burton , Econ Minister Counselor, US Embassy
Zachary Harkenrider , Political Counselor, US Embassy
John Simmons , Commercial Attache , US Embassy
Jonathan Williams , Head US Political Team, US and Canada Department, Americas Directorate, FCO
Adam Bye , Deputy Director, US and Canada Department, Americas Directorate, FCO
Helena Beeley , Desk Officer, US and Canada Department, Americas Directorate, FCO
Penny Egan , CBE, Executive Director of the US/UK Fulbright Commission

We were also thrilled that the Foreign Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Boris **Johnson**, MP, was able to drop into the pre-dinner drinks and formally welcome the Members of Congress to Parliament.

The conference was an opportunity to promote the UK and its close ties with the US, by taking the discussion sessions out of Parliament to dynamic venues which had a connection to the subjects being discussed. To this effect, the discussion on the global economy and international trade was hosted at the Bank of the England, in the City; the discussion on defence/ security cooperation and foreign affairs was held at the new National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) in Victoria and the discussion on the UK and US political outlook and transatlantic relations was hosted at Chevening House in Kent. We also arranged for the two delegations to visit Bloomberg’s new European HQ in the City, following the discussion at the Bank of England, where the two delegations were given a tour of the building (including the Roman temple beneath) and hosted to lunch by the Director of Bloomberg Europe, Constantin Cotzias.

We would like to thank our guest speakers who gave the time to attend the discussion sessions: the Deputy Governor for Financial Stability at the Bank of England, Sir Jon **Cunliffe**, who stepped in at short notice when Governor Mark **Carney** was no longer able to attend and gave an assessment of the prospects for the British economy and the world economy. Also, the Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion and Government Spokesperson for the Department for International Trade, the Baroness **Fairhead**, CBE, who introduced the discussion on international trade and reported on the state of the Brexit negotiations and the preparatory trade talks with the US. Finally, the CEO of the NCSC, Ciaran **Martin**, who joined the two delegations towards the end of the discussion on defence / security co-operation and foreign policy (covering defence spending, information sharing, NATO, Russia, China, North Korea and the Middle East) and gave a candid assessment of current and future cyber security threats and the co-operation between the UK and the US on security matters.

Following the meeting at the NCSC, the two delegations visited the new US Embassy building in Nine Elms for a drinks reception hosted by the American Ambassador, Robert Wood **Johnson**, in the Chandelier Room overlooking the Thames. Both the British and American delegations greatly appreciated the opportunity to see the building, particularly as the staff had only recently moved in.

The BAPG is also hugely appreciative of the Foreign Secretary’s assistance in securing Chevening House as a venue for the final discussion on the UK and US political outlook and UK/US relations. We are most grateful to the North America Department for all their work in liaising with the team at Chevening. The two delegations had exclusive use of the House and we wish to thank Colonel **Mathewson**, OBE and his team for the excellent hospitality provided while there.

The day and conference concluded with a tour of the nearby former home of Sir Winston and Lady **Churchill**, Chartwell. We are most grateful to the team at Chartwell for accommodating the two delegations while the House was closed to the public and for organising a sumptuous afternoon tea following the tour to round off the visit and conference.

The House delegation returned to Washington D.C. the following morning from London.

Our extensive thanks are due to the North America Department at the Foreign Office for all their support and assistance with the two conferences including preparing written briefings for the British delegation on both occasions.

Other than these meetings, there were the following visits to the US:

- In July 2017, eight members with no or little prior experience of the US, went to the United States with the BAPG to take part in a US government sponsored 'International Visitor Leadership Programme' to learn about the American political system at the federal, state and local levels, with emphasis on the role and organisation of Congress.
- In February 2018, The BAPG sent four members with an interest in financial services to New York and Washington D.C. to engage with policy makers and business on regulatory and competitiveness issues affecting global financial markets and the opportunities for regulatory coherence and co-operation between the US and the UK financial services.

In November 2017, the BAPG partnered with The Ditchley Foundation in co-hosting a Parliamentary panel discussion event on 'The Future Defence of Europe' which was held in the Speaker's State Rooms by kind permission of Mr. Speaker. Members of both Houses were joined by members of the diplomatic corps, the media, business bodies and think tanks. The Ditchley Foundation covered the cost of the refreshments at the event.

In January 2018, the BAPG partnered with BritishAmerican Business in co-hosting a reception for the new American Ambassador, Robert Wood Johnson, in the Speaker's State Rooms by kind permission of Mr. Speaker. Ambassador **Johnson** brought along with him 19 senior members of staff from the Embassy to meet Parliamentarians and leaders of US / UK business to establish contacts and discuss US/UK relations. BAB arranged payment of the refreshment costs.

Over the year, the BAPG has been able to arrange lunches for visiting VIPs from the United States and various tours of both Houses at the request of the Foreign Office, the American Embassy or directly from the offices of U.S. legislators. Arrangements were also made for the 2017 Marshall Scholars to visit Parliament and to meet with a Member of Parliament for a question and answer exchange.

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 USA for their very great input in to 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.

Members may wish to be reminded that information about the Group's forthcoming activities can be found on the All Party Whip from time to time. We also e-mail those members on e-mail to alert them to BAPG notices on the All Party Whip.

Members who need further information should telephone 020 7219 6209, fax 020 7219 5972 or e-mail bapg@parliament.uk. The Group's office is at Richmond House on the Parliamentary estate.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6
ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH JULY 2017 AT 3.30 P.M.**

The Chairman, Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker, The Rt. Hon. Lindsay Hoyle, MP, took the chair in the absence of the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. John Bercow, MP, who had to preside at a debate in the Commons Chamber.

1. *Apologies*

The Chair conveyed apologies for absence from the Commons Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the BAPG Government Vice Chair, The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, together with 20 others (a list of these were available at the meeting).

2. *Minutes of the last Meeting*

The Minutes of the last meeting, having been circulated in the Annual Report at pages 36 to 41, were approved and signed as a true record.

3. *Matters Arising*

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting which were not due for discussion under a later item.

4. *To Receive the Annual Report from the Executive Committee for April 2016 to April 2017 and the Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2017*

The Chair advised that although this came under one agenda item it was in fact in two parts: the first being the Annual Report and the second being the Accounts. The Chair first called upon Vernon Coaker, MP, BAPG Opposition Vice Chair to report on the work of the group during the aforementioned period.

Mr. Coaker thanked the Deputy Speaker for presiding at the meeting. He advised members that the report on the last year was well set out on pages 32 to 35 of the Executive Committee Report.

During the 12 months from April 2016 to April 2017 (an election year in the US), 32 Members went to the United States under the Group's auspices for the following visits:

- In May 2016, the BAPG Government Vice Chair, The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, led a delegation to the 2016 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference, hosted by the US House of Representatives BAPG in Washington DC. Over the course of three days, eight Parliamentarians met with 28 Members of Congress to discuss a range of subjects, including National Security/Foreign policy, TTIP/international trade and the political outlook in both countries. Outside of this, the British delegation undertook meetings arranged by the British Embassy, which included meetings with the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper; the Chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security, Representative Michael McCaul (R-TX); the US Supreme Court Justice, Stephen Breyer; think tanks; unions and representatives of business.
- Also in July, eight members with no or little prior experience of the US, went to the United States with the BAPG to take part in a US government sponsored 'International Visitor Leadership Programme' to learn about the American political system at the federal, state and local levels, with emphasis on the role and organisation of Congress. Unfortunately, six of the eight participants had to depart the programme early, after the individual visits to the Congressional districts, to return to Westminster to vote in the Trident debate.
- Later in July, the BAPG sent two Parliamentarians (one government member and one opposition member) to each of the National Party Conventions to participate in the respective international programmes and see Presidential candidate selection.

- In December, four Parliamentarians attended, as observers, the biennial Harvard Institute of Politics bipartisan orientation programme for newly elected Members of Congress in Boston, which involved 'issue seminars' and lectures by Harvard academics and eminent outside speakers.
- In March 2017, eight Parliamentarians travelled to Washington DC on an outreach visit co-funded with the Foreign Office (by way of a bid to its US bilateral fund) to promote UK/US relations, shared security interests and strong trade links.

In October, the BAPG partnered with BritishAmerican Business to co-host a farewell reception for the American Ambassador, Matthew Barzun, in the Speaker's State Rooms by kind permission of Mr. Speaker. Ambassador Barzun brought along with him 20 senior members of staff from the Embassy to meet Parliamentarians and representatives of US / UK business to establish contacts and discuss US/UK relations. It was the BAPG's first foray into private sponsorship of events and proved very successful.

Over the year, the Group has been able to arrange meetings/tours/lunches for visiting U.S. Members of Congress/State legislators/other visiting US VIPs and this is a part of the Group's role which we are always keen to expand and develop.

The Group's complete list of activities for the year are shown on pages 23 to 31 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.

Finally, Mr. Coaker paid tribute to the co-operation that the Group had received over the year from the American Embassy, particularly from the Political and Cultural Affairs Departments, and also for the support from the Ambassador. The Group was also indebted to the North America Department at the FCO and indeed to the British Embassy in Washington D.C., on whom a significant part of its 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.

The Chair thanked Mr. Coaker and called upon The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, Joint Honorary Treasurer, to present the Accounts and move their adoption.

Mr. Spellar thanked the Chair and reported that the Accounts for the year to 31st March 2017 had been published on-line and notified to Members in advance of the meeting and appeared on pages 5-22 of the Annual Report of the Executive Committee 2016-2017.

They showed a balance of £53,363 in the Accounts. There was a slight underspend from the budgeted expenditure as a result of a late withdrawal of two members from visits and, although we save money, the Officers take a pretty dim view of people taking the places that other colleagues could have had and members are advised to only put in if they are serious about it.

As was mentioned by the Opposition Vice Chair, we've been involved with BritishAmerican Business with co-hosting and financing the annual reception for the American Ambassador and also the Foreign Office has been helpful in assisting through their outreach to the United States and we are grateful to them for that.

However, notwithstanding the fact that we underspent on the projection, we spent more than we did the previous year and that was the 'New Members of Congress' programme but also, of course, the Conventions. We finally, through the good offices of one or two colleagues, managed to get the Republicans to allow a Labour member to attend the convention. The Democrats were far more reasonable.

To conclude, with the National Audit Office, who of course audit our books, they have signed on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) the 2016-17 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion without modification.

Mr. Spellar finally recorded the Group's appreciation of the grant received each year from the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee, without which, it would not be possible to maintain a programme.

The Chair thanked Mr. Spellar and moved that formal motions, proposed and seconded, should be passed accepting both the Annual Report and the Accounts, which was unanimously approved.

The Lord Anderson commented that when colleagues withdraw at a late stage it has often affected other colleagues who actually intended and maybe could have participated and he hoped that we had a collective memory and that it is taken into consideration the next time those members who cancelled apply. The Officers gave reassurance on this point.

The Baroness O'Cathain, a member of the BAPG Executive Committee, pointed out that she had had to withdraw from a visit with two days' notice due to really serious Whipping. The Chair observed that this was due to the Whips and not the individual member.

The Chair thanked those who had taken the trouble to compile the Annual Report and the Accounts.

5. To Ratify Vice-Presidents and Officers proposed by the Executive Committee

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

The Rt. Hon. Dame Margaret **Beckett**, DBE, MP
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. the Lord **Falconer** of Thoroton, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Hague** of Richmond
The Rt. Hon. Philip **Hammond**, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Howard** of Lympne, CH, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Jopling**, DL
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Mackay** of Clashfern, KT
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Martin** of Springburn
The Rt. Hon. Edward **Miliband**, MP
The Rt. Hon. Andrew **Mitchell**, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Morris** of Aberavon, KG, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Owen**, CH

The Executive Committee also recommended that, The Rt. Hon. Boris **Johnson**, MP, in his position as Foreign Secretary; Tom **Watson**, MP, in his role as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and the new leader of the Westminster SNP, Ian **Blackford**, MP, all be elected as Vice Presidents, as is the tradition with Foreign Secretaries and leaders of the main opposition parties.

The Chair put forward a formal motion to approve these names which was unanimously agreed.

The Chair paid tribute to former BAPG Vice Presidents, Angus **Robertson** and Nick **Clegg**, who were not returned at the General Election. They were both extremely supportive of the group and its objectives. The BAPG Honorary Secretary has written to each of them to thank them for all that they did for the BAPG during their time as Vice Presidents.

The Chair then paid warm tribute to those who had been Officers of the Group during 2016-2017.

Both **The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP**, Government Vice Chairman and **Vernon Coaker, MP**, Opposition Vice-Chairman, had completed the second year of three year terms. The group were most grateful to them for the

interest which they had both shown in the group in spite of their very many other commitments. We were particularly delighted that Mr. Grayling was able to lead the British delegation to the 2016 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference, hosted by the US House of Representatives in Washington DC, last year.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, the Honorary Secretary, has completed his second year in that office, which has a maximum term of eight years. The Group has been very fortunate to have such a hard working Honorary Secretary who gives an enormous amount of his time to the Group's affairs.

We are also extremely pleased that **The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP** is content to continue as (Opposition) Joint Honorary Treasurer. He gives a considerable amount of time to the Group's affairs and the hard work which he has done and continues to do is very much appreciated.

Our Government Joint Honorary Treasurer was, until his retirement at the General Election, **The Rt. Hon. Sir Simon Burns**. We are most grateful to Sir Simon for the time and attention which he gave to the Group and its affairs and we shall miss his keen interest in US politics.

In accordance with rule 8 (b), the Executive Committee recommends that **Christopher Chope, OBE, MP**, previously a member of the BAPG Executive Committee, should become the new (Government) Joint Honorary Treasurer, alongside John Spellar.

A formal motion to approve the Officers was passed unanimously.

6 To Elect 18 Members to serve on the Executive Committee 2016-17

Now, under 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 from the House of Lords, the proportion of which is determined by the Lord Speaker and representatives of the parties and groups in the House. That being: two Conservative, two Labour, one Cross Bench and one Liberal Democrat.

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 2018:

Government

Mike **Freer**, MP
Stephen **Hammond**, MP
Ranil **Jayawardena**, MP
Pauline **Latham**, OBE, MP
Jack **Lopresti**, MP
Alan **Mak**, MP

Opposition

The Rt. Hon. Ann **Clwyd**, MP
Angela **Crawley**, MP
Kevan **Jones**, MP
The Rt. Hon. John **Healey**, MP
Diana **Johnson**, MP
Conor **McGinn**, MP

In relation to the House of Lords, we have received the requisite number of nominations as there are places for the Labour, Cross Bench and Liberal Democrat places on the Committee. The following members are accordingly elected unopposed until the AGM in 2017:

Labour

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson **of Swansea, DL**

The Rt. Hon. the Baroness **Jay** of Paddington

Cross Bench

The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Fellowes, GCB GCVO QSO**

Liberal Democrat

The Lord **Fox**

The Chair informed Members that as three nominations had been received from Conservative Peers for the Committee this year, it will be necessary to have an election to decide the two members from the following candidates:

Conservative

The Baroness **O’Cathain**, OBE

The Lord **Kirkhope** of Harrogate

The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Trimble**

The Chair asked for two Tellers to stay on after the meeting had finished to count the ballot papers which had been given to members of the House of Lords on their way in. The BAPG Officers, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg **Knight**, MP (Conservative) and The Rt. Hon. John **Spellar**, MP (Labour) agreed to act as Tellers, which received unanimous approval.

The Chair recorded the committee’s thanks to The Rt. Hon. the Lord **McNally** and The Rt. Hon. the Lord **McFall** of Alcluith, who had both decided to step down from the Committee, after years of service. We are most appreciative of the support they have given and hope that they continue to take an active interest in the affairs of the Group.

The Chair formally agreed these names with unanimous approval.

Following the meeting, the votes were counted and The Lord Trimble and the Baroness O’Cathain, having received the most votes, were duly confirmed as the Peers representing the Conservative Party on the committee.

7. To ratify a change to Rule 10© to reflect that the Annual Report and Accounts are now being published on-line.

To reflect the fact that the BAPG Annual Report and Accounts are now being published on-line, the BAPG Executive Committee recommends the following amendment to Rule 10(c) of the ‘Rules of the Group’:

Current rule: ‘10 (c) Notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Group together with the Agenda and copies of the Annual Report and Accounts shall be posted to every member not less than fourteen days before the day appointed for such a meeting.

Change to: ‘10 (c) Notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Group together with the Agenda and the URL address to view the Annual Report and Accounts on-line shall be posted to every member not less than fourteen days before the day appointed for such a meeting.’

The Chair put forward a formal motion to approve the change which was proposed and seconded and passed unanimously.

8. Any other business

The Chair asked if the Honorary Secretary would like to make any announcements.

The Honorary Secretary thanked the Deputy Speaker and reported that there were funds available this year to send one or two specialist delegation visits to the US. The number of visits will depend on the destination and the number of members participating. Further details will be announced by the Executive in due course.

Members may know that President Trump has nominated Robert Johnson IV to become the next US Ambassador to the Court of St. James. He is an heir to the Johnson and Johnson business empire and is also the owner of the New York Jets but his appointment needs to be confirmed by the Senate. We understand this could happen in August but is more likely to be completed by September and once he has been formally appointed we will seek a date from him as to the reception for him in Parliament.

Sir Greg wished to place on record his thanks to John Spellar and to Sir Simon Burns for the work they had done throughout the year and to remind all members of the group that future functions and visits are always advertised on the website www.bapg.org.uk and the All Party Whip.

The Chair thanked the Honorary Secretary and asked if there was any business.

The Baroness O’Cathain asked if there had been any further progress in approaching people outside the House for contributions or sponsorship.

BAPG Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, responded. He reported that we had been a little busy over the last few weeks but it is something to which we will return. There is new management now at BritishAmerican Business and we will be exploring that with them further.

BAPG Opposition Vice Chair Vernon Coaker, MP also wished to pass on the Group’s thanks to the Administrator for all the work she does for the Group, which was enthusiastically supported by members present.

The Chair reminded members, if there was no other business, that ballot papers were available for eligible people and not to forget to vote.

The Honorary Secretary confirmed that once the result of the ballot is known we will inform members by email and may announce it on the All Party Whip as well.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.05 pm