

British-American Parliamentary Group



Executive Committee Report 2014-15

(For the year ended 31 March 2015)

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OFFICERS & MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2014-2015

Honorary Joint Presidents

The Speaker of the House of Commons
The Lord Speaker

Vice-Presidents

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Boothroyd, PC, OM
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Carrington, KG, GCMG, CH, MC, DL
The Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg, MP
The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC
The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howe of Aberavon, Kt, CH, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, CBE
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling, DL
The Rt. Hon. Charles Kennedy, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mackay of Clashfern, KT
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Martin of Springburn
The Rt. Hon. Ed Miliband, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Molyneux of Killead, KBE
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH
The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP

Honorary Chairman The Prime Minister

Vice-Chairmen The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP
The Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander, MP

Honorary Secretary Brian Donohoe, MP

Honorary Treasurers The Rt. Hon. Sir. Greg Knight, MP
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE House of Commons

Government

Christopher Chope, OBE, MP
Tobias Ellwood, MP
David Heath, CBE, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
Mark Pritchard, MP
The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP

Opposition

The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP
Michael Dugher, MP
The Rt. Hon. Elfyn Llwyd, MP
Andy Love, MP
Austin Mitchell, MP
David Watts, MP

House of Lords

Conservative

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

Labour

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL
The Rt. Hon. the Lord McFall of Alcluith

Liberal Democrat

The Lord Sharkey

Cross Bench

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

Administrator: Hannah Mitchell

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Telephone: 020 7219 6209; Fax: 020 7219 5972; email: bapg@parliament.uk

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee 2014-15 met on: 21st October 2014; 9th December 2014; 10th February 2015 and 2nd June 2015.

The Annual General Meeting, at which the current Executive Committee was elected, took place on 9th July 2014.

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

The Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander, MP	0/3
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea	4/4
Christopher Chope, MP, OBE, MP	2/4
The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP	1/4
Brian Donohoe, MP	3/3
Michael Dugher, MP	1/4
Tobias Ellwood, MP	0/0
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes, GCB, GCVO, QSO	4/4
David Heath, CBE, MP	3/3
The Rt. Hon. Sir. Greg Knight, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Elyn Llwyd, MP	0/3
Jack Lopresti, MP	1/4
Andy Love, MP	1/3
The Rt. Hon. the Lord McFall of Alcluith	3/4
The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP	3/4
Austin Mitchell, MP	3/3
The Baroness O'Cathain, OBE	2/4
Mark Pritchard, MP	1/4
The Lord Sharkey	0/4
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP	2/3
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble	1/4
David Watts, MP	0/3

N.B. Six of the 12 members from the House of Commons retired at the 2015 General Election and two members were not returned. Therefore, the maximum number of meetings they were able to attend was three, as the last meeting of the reporting year was in early June, after the General Election.

Further, five members were co-opted onto the Executive at the June 2015 Executive Committee meeting, to serve until the AGM on 8th July, at which the Executive Committee 2015-2016 will be elected. The five members are: The Rt. Hon. Simon Burns, MP; The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP; Kevan Jones, MP; The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP & Gisela Stuart, MP.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2014-15

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 and 2009.

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 specialist delegation visit to the United States (budget allowing); one 'familiarisation' visit to the United States, run conjointly with the United States Embassy and the United States Department of State, and attendance as observers at a biennial course held in the United States for newly elected Members of Congress. Also, every four years, during a Presidential election year, members attend the Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions to see Presidential candidate selection.

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

2014 was an election year in the US, with the mid-term elections in November 2014, which had a consequence for the BAPG programme. The 2014 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference was brought forward to March 2014, as Members of Congress would have had difficulty travelling overseas beyond this time, and as such the conference was accounted for in the 2013-2014 Annual Report and Accounts.

The morning following the mid-term elections, the BAPG, in partnership with the US Embassy, hosted a panel discussion in the Speaker's State Rooms, by kind permission of Mr. Speaker, on the election results and what they will mean for the next two years. A few weeks later, in early December, three members of the House of Commons and a member of the House of Lords travelled to Boston to attend Harvard University's bi-partisan orientation programme for newly elected Members of Congress as the only foreign legislators invited to attend and observe the programme.

Earlier in the year, in July, the annual co-sponsored visit to the US took place over nine days, run conjointly with the US Department of State and the US Embassy, for members with little or no prior experience of the US, to learn about the U.S. political, electoral and economic systems, as well as to gain insight into current domestic and foreign policy issues. Eight members were originally selected to participate in the programme but in the end only four members went as a result of late withdrawals due to unforeseen scheduling conflicts. We think these were ultimately driven by the British General Election, due in less than 12 months, making it more difficult for members to justify their absence.

In September, we sent a specialist delegation to Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri, focused on advanced manufacturing developments, with particular reference to the auto industry, and on new agricultural and farming techniques, with particular reference to genetically modified crops.

We had originally budgeted for four members to go on the visit but had two withdrawals late in the day due to unforeseen diary conflicts and events at home. There were no significant losses arising from these withdrawals.

It was not possible to arrange a reception for the US Ambassador and Embassy chiefs in Parliament during 2014-2015, but we have a date confirmed early in the new Parliament, to which we hope many new Members of Parliament together with returning members will be able to attend.

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

The BAPG is funded mainly by a grant from the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee 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 House Committee. 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 13) shows that the BAPG had net operating income of £30,200 for the year 2014-15 (in 2013-2014 BAPG had net expenditure of £28,028). The Parliamentary grant for the year was £110,000 (as it was in 2013-2014).

The BAPG currently holds £65,350 in reserves (page 14). This high level of reserves is largely due to there being less programme expenditure in the year than originally budgeted owing to fewer members participating in visits as a result of last minute withdrawals.

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 presentation of a valid invoice, whichever is the later. There are no figures available to show performance against this target.

Carbon off-setting

The BAPG off-sets its carbon emissions from flights via the purchase of high quality 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. Sir Greg Knight MP (Accounting Officer)
2nd June 2015

Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Financial Memorandum, the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee have directed the 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 the Joint Honorary Treasurer of the opposite party to the Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, as Accounting Officer of the BAPG. The responsibilities of an 'Accounting Officer' include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the BAPG's grant funding, for keeping proper records and 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 House Committee.

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 House Committee 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-Chairmen 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 House Committee

The House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee 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 do not ask for anything further from the BAPG than 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) and approved by the BAPG Officers at the end of March 2014.

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 House Committee 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, 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. No internal audit work was carried out in 2014-15.

The Group's governance activities in 2014-15

The Executive Committee met on four occasions in 2014-15 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 2015-2016; analysed the Group's accounts and the external audit findings for 2014-15 and the Annual Report of the Honorary Secretary, as well as other matters for discussion and endorsement by the Annual General Meeting.

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: payments are by cheque which require two of three signatories and 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

A significant concern is the future sustainability of the present level of programme activities. The five years of no inflationary uplift to the grant (2010-2015) has meant a real cash cut to the group's funding at a time of rising programme costs (flights, fuel, tax, hotel accommodation) and the current base line grant is no longer sufficient to fund the BAPG's traditional programme.

The BAPG has worked hard to drive down costs where it can, by flying members Premium Economy on restricted tickets and reducing the number of members participating in individual activities, but the shortfall in funding going forward is of significant concern.

The only reason the BAPG will be able to fund its traditional programme over the next two years is due to savings from past budgeted events - that either didn't take place owing to changes in the US Congress or had fewer members participating in due to last minute withdrawals - which the Parliamentary authorities have agreed the Group can carry over to make up the anticipated shortfall in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. These reserves will have been drawn down to such an extent by 2017-2018, that members will have to decide if they want to maintain a small contingency reserve, in case of any unforeseen costs arising, or fund the Group's traditional programme.

Beyond this, if the base line funding continues at current levels, it will likely have an adverse effect on the BAPG's activities and its ability to further good relations and mutual understanding with the US Congress.

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 House Committee under the auspices of the Financial Memorandum, as well as the comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports made to the BAPG. 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 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 International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and each year report the results of their work to the BAPG's Executive Committee.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight MP (Accounting Officer)
2nd June 2015

The Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of the British-American Parliamentary Group

I have audited the financial statements of the British-American Parliamentary Group (the Group) for the year ended 31 March 2015. The financial statements comprise: the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure; the Statement of Financial Position; the Statement of Cash Flows; the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and Auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, under the terms of the Financial Memorandum agreed with the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords House Committee. My responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements. I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Group's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Group; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, I read all the financial and non-financial information in the Foreword to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies, I consider the implications for my report.

I am required to obtain sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Group and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Opinion on regularity

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

Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the British-American Parliamentary Group's affairs as at 31 March 2015 and of the net operating income 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 House Committee.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

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

Matters 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
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; 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
Director for and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General
3rd June 2015

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

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2015

	Note	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Administration Costs:			
Staff costs	3	38,437	34,290
Other administration costs	4	8,931	9,698
		47,368	43,988
Programme Costs:			
Programme costs	5	34,400	95,823
		81,768	139,811
Total Costs			
Income:			
Parliamentary Grant	2	(110,000)	(110,000)
Operating income	2	(1,044)	(1,199)
		(111,044)	(111,199)
Total Income			
		(29,276)	28,612
Net Operating Cost/(Income) before Interest and Tax			
Bank Interest Receivable		(1,155)	(730)
Corporation Tax Payable		231	146
Net Operating Cost/(Income) after Interest and Tax			
		(30,200)	28,028

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 31 March 2015

		<u>31 Mar 2015</u>	<u>31 Mar 2014</u>
	<u>Note</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	7	1,257	1,537
Cash and cash equivalents	8	73,707	31,445
Total current assets		74,964	32,982
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(9,614)	(2,832)
Total current liabilities		(9,614)	(2,832)
Assets less liabilities		65,350	30,150
Taxpayers' equity:			
General fund		65,350	30,150
Total taxpayers' equity		65,350	30,150

The financial statements were formally agreed by the Executive Committee on 2nd June 2015 and were signed on its behalf by:

The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP (Accounting Officer)

Statement of Cash Flows

For year ended 31 March 2015

		2014-15	2013-14
	Note	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating (cost)/ income		30,200	(28,028)
Interest Receivable		(1,155)	(730)
Tax Payable		231	146
Adjustments for non-cash transactions – audit fee		5,000	5,000
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	280	2,159
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	9	6,782	906
Tax Paid		(231)	(146)
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		41,107	(20,693)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Net cash outflow from investing activities		-	-
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net cash inflow from financing activities – interest receivable		1,155	730
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		42,262	(19,963)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	31,445	51,408
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8	73,707	31,445

The notes on pages 17 to 21 form part of the accounts

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2015

	Note	General Fund
		£
Balance at 31 March 2013		53,178
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration		5,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		(28,028)
Balance at 31 March 2014		30,150
Changes in taxpayers' equity for 2014-15		
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	4	5,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		30,200
Balance at 31 March 2015		65,350

The notes on pages 17 to 21 form part of the accounts

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2014-15 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.

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

1.3 Gains and losses

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

1.4 Taxation

The activities of the BAPG are outside the scope of VAT. Corporation tax is paid on bank interest. Total tax paid during 2014-15 was £231.

2. Income

	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2013-14</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Parliamentary Grant	110,000	110,000
Annual subscriptions	834	867
Life subscriptions	120	240
Donations	90	92
Total	<u>111,044</u>	<u>111,199</u>

3. Staff numbers and related costs

Staff costs comprise:

	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2013-14</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Wages and salaries	30,414	25,966
Social security costs	2,266	1,832
Other pension costs	5,757	6,492
Total	<u>38,437</u>	<u>34,290</u>

There is one part-time member of staff at the BAPG responsible for the day-to-day running of operations. The 'Wages and Salaries' cost has increased due to an increase in the member of staff's paid hours in February 2014 from 22.5 hours to 26.5 hours net per week and a pay award in July 2014 in line with a HOC pay deal to all members of staff in April 2014.

4. Other Administrative Costs

	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Sundry	800	1,703
Insurance	1,908	1,854
Annual Report	640	737
Website costs	583	404
Non-cash items		
Auditor's remuneration and expenses	5,000	5,000
Total	8,931	9,698

5. Programme Expenditure

	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2013-14</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Annual Conference(s)	64	71,048
Special Delegation Visit(s)	7,408	0
Co-Sponsored Visit	11,862	23,738
2014 US Midterm Elections Event	1,561	0
New Members of Parliament Orientation (NMOP)	13,365	0
Carbon Off-Setting of Air Travel	65	131
Hospitality	75	906
Total	34,400	95,823

The decrease in Programme Expenditure was due to the 2014 Annual Conference being brought forward to March 2014, due to the Midterm Elections in the US later in the year, the annual reception for the American Ambassador being postponed until after the British General Election (fy 2015-2016) and the last minute withdrawal of members from the Co-Sponsored Visit and the Specialist Delegation Visit, owing to unforeseen scheduling conflicts at home, in the run up to the British General Election. There were no significant losses arising from these withdrawals.

6. Financial Instruments

IFRS 7 (Financial Instruments: Disclosures) 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 to risk 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 Group's assets or liabilities and as such it is not exposed to any significant exchange risks.

7. Trade Receivables and Other Current Assets

	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2013-14</u>
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	1,253	1,125
Other Receivables	0	263
Accrued Income – Bank Interest	4	149
Total	<u>1,257</u>	<u>1,537</u>

8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	<u>2014-15</u>	<u>2013-14</u>
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	31,445	51,408
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	42,262	-19,963
Balance at 31 March	<u>73,707</u>	<u>31,445</u>

The following balances at 31 March were held at:

Commercial banks and cash in hand	73,707	31,445
Balance at 31 March	<u>73,707</u>	<u>31,445</u>

9. Trade payables and Other Current Liabilities

	<u>31 Mar 2014</u>	<u>31 Mar 2013</u>
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other Payables	9,433	2,614
Deferred Income	181	218
Total	<u>9,614</u>	<u>2,832</u>

10. Losses and special payments

There were no losses and special payments in 2014-15 (nil 2013-14) that require reporting.

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 in the Financial Memorandum. In addition, the House of Commons provides free accommodation to the Group.

During 2014-15, the Group entered into related party transactions worth £1,823. This figure comprises £1,468 paid to the House of Commons Catering Service for the provision of hospitality to BAPG guests and £355 for in-house printing and small gifts from the House of Commons retail outlet for the Specialist Delegation Visit.

Other than these related party transactions, no member of the Group or any other related party, has undertaken any material transactions with the Group during the year. A Remuneration Report is not required as Members of the Group Executive Committee are unpaid.

Activities of the Group

16th May 2014

First ever joint Twitter Q&A with the U.S. Ambassador to London Matthew Barzun and UK Ambassador to Washington Sir Peter Westmacott.

19th May

At the request of the British Consulate General Los Angeles, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for two guests of the Consulate from CH2M Hill, a global leader in engineering, construction and operations. CH2M Hill is a US headquartered company with thousands of people employed in the UK.

2nd to 5th June

Visit by US Congressional delegation from the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to look at the UK's structure for public-private partnerships.

2nd June

At the request of the British Embassy in Washington D.C., the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for Congressman Doug Collins (R-Georgia) and family.

11th June

At the request of the U.S. Embassy, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for the Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Puneet Talwar, and three colleagues.

13th June

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for US exchange students attending the sixth form at Queen's College, Taunton.

17th June

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for close friends of Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), at the request of the British Embassy in Washington D.C. The tour was very kindly given by Tom Baycock of Jeremy Browne, MP's office.

24th June

Members were invited to an exclusive briefing arranged by British America Business (BAB) on TTIP and its investment dimension. Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht gave keynote remarks on issues raised by a public consultation regarding the EU's negotiation position for investment protections and investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) in a future EU/US trade deal. This was followed by a moderated panel of experts from the business and legal community who explored key aspects of a transatlantic investment protection regime.

25th June

The US Embassy's Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, Tom Leary, Embassy Spokesperson, Lynne Platt, and Cultural Attaché, Monique Quesada, hosted a farewell reception at the North Audley Cantine, to which the BAPG Administrator and others were invited.

26th June

Baroness Warsi, Senior Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, hosted a reception to commemorate First World War Victoria Cross recipients from overseas, to which the BAPG Honorary Secretary and others were invited.

1st July

The All Party Parliamentary Group on EU-US Trade & Investment, held a briefing meeting with American Ambassador, Matthew Barzun, and German Ambassador, Dr. Peter Ammon, which focused on communication issues relating to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, attended by BAPG Officers Brian Donohoe, MP and The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP.

2nd July

The John Adams Society, the alumni association for US Embassy exchange programmes for England and Wales, hosted a reception to celebrate American Independence Day in the State Rooms, Speaker's House, to which previous participants of the annual BAPG / U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit to the U.S. were invited.

3rd July

The Ambassador of the United States of America and Mrs. Brooke Barzun hosted a reception to celebrate the 238th Anniversary of Independence of the United States of America at Winfield House, Regent's Park, to which the Honorary Secretary and others were invited.

9th July

The BAPG's Annual General Meeting took place at which the Executive Committee for 2014-2015 was elected. The Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Dame Dawn Primarolo, DBE, MP, Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means, kindly presided.

12th July

The Chairman and Council of Management of The Ditchley Foundation hosted the 50th Ditchley Annual Lecture 'The post-Ukraine world order' delivered by Professor Michael Ignatieff, to which the Administrator and others were invited.

15th July

A pre-departure meeting took place with those members participating in the BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored visit to the US, 20th to 29th July, attended by representatives of the US Embassy and chaired by the BAPG Honorary Secretary.

20th to 29th July

The annual BAPG/U.S. Department of State co-sponsored visit to the U.S. took place from the 20th to 29th July. Four of the original eight members selected participated in the programme, arranged by the U.S. Department of State and designed to give Members of Parliament with little or no experience of the U.S. an introduction to the U.S. political system. Four members withdrew late in the day due to unforeseen diary conflicts. The delegation spent five days in Washington D.C., gaining an overview of the federal system of government, three days in individual districts with Members of Congress and two days in Boston to examine its state capital legislature.

29th July

The BAPG arranged a tour of the Capitol for a group of Regional Ambassadors from the UK Holocaust Educational Trust visiting Washington D.C. We are most grateful to the office of Representative Tom Petri (R-Wisconsin) for their assistance in organising the tour.

3rd September

At the request of the office of the British Ambassador to the U.S., the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and tickets to PMQs for four guests of the Embassy.

3rd September

A pre-departure briefing meeting took place with members who were to participate in a BAPG specialist delegation visit to Chicago and St. Louis, from 8-11 September. The meeting was chaired by Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, who was joined by Ramin Navai, Deputy Consul of the British Consulate General Chicago. Mr. Navai provided information on the programme and those with whom the delegation would be meeting.

8th to 11th September

BAPG thematic visit to Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri, focused on advanced manufacturing developments, with particular reference to the auto industry, and on new agricultural and farming techniques, with particular reference to genetically modified crops. The British Consulate General Chicago arranged the programme of calls, in consultation with the BAPG. The visit was timed to coincide with the International Manufacturing Technology Show (IMTS) in Chicago, one of the world's premier tech shows, which hosted a variety of next generation/advanced design and manufacturing themes/exhibits, including 3D printing and advanced auto-manufacturing. The British Consul General Stephen Bridges reported the visit "a real success".

10th September

The BAPG assisted the British Embassy with a visit to Westminster by a group of US Mayors of midsize US cities, viewed as having the potential to be future state-wide or federal office holders. The group met with The Rt. Hon. David Lammy, MP over breakfast which was followed by a tour of Parliament.

16th September

The BAPG hosted the Governor of Massachusetts, Deval Patrick (D-MA), who was visiting the UK with a delegation of senior Massachusetts cabinet members and business leaders focused on innovation and 'investment for the future'. The BAPG arranged a meeting with several members of Parliament, including the Minister for Life Sciences, Department of Health, George Freeman, MP, chaired by the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP. It was a most useful exchange which gave rise to a commitment on both sides to follow up on particular points discussed.

We are most grateful to Theo Bachrach, of Andrew Mitchell's office, and to Hugh Critchley, of Daniel Kawczynski's office, who kindly assisted the BAPG at short notice in showing the business delegation, accompanying Governor Patrick, around Parliament while the meeting was underway.

17th September

The Minister of the Embassy of the United States of America, Elizabeth Dibble, hosted a reception to welcome Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, Eric Johnson, Press Attaché, Kathryn Crockart, and Cultural Affairs Officer, Anneliese Reinemeyer, to which the BAPG Honorary Secretary and others were invited.

18th September

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for this year's intake of Marshall Scholars, which was followed by a question and answer exchange with BAPG Officer, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP.

18th September

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office hosted a reception in honour of the Marshall Scholars in the Grand Locarno Room at the FCO.

22nd September

The U.S. Embassy hosted an advance screening of the new documentary by acclaimed film-maker Ken Burns, 'The Roosevelts', to which the BAPG Honorary Secretary and others were invited. The evening included a short excerpt from the film and a discussion with Ken Burns in person.

7th October

The APPG on EU-US Trade & Investment hosted a U.S. Congressional delegation led by Representative Dave Camp, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who was accompanied by three other high ranking members of the committee and others, visiting the UK, after meetings in Brussels focused on TTIP. Officers of the BAPG and other members were invited to attend.

15th October

Participants of this year's BAPG/U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit to the U.S. reported back on the visit. All the members commended the programme, particularly the meetings in Washington D.C. and the time spent with Members of Congress in their congressional districts. They reported that their understanding of the U.S. political system had been greatly enhanced by the visit and that they had made good contacts, with whom they continued to be in touch.

15th October

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and tickets to PMQs for the Economic Development Director and Special Projects Coordinator of Congressman Mike McIntyre's (D-NC) office, Kara Spencer, and guest. Congressman McIntyre is co-chair of the UK Caucus. The Administrator met with Ms. Spencer over coffee following PMQs.

15th October

The Administrator met with Parliament's 2015 Anniversaries Senior Campaigns Manager, Caterina Loriggio, to discuss Parliament's plans to mark the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the Simon De Montfort's first Parliament and the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta in 2015. The BAPG Administrator discussed with Ms. Loriggio how the BAPG might support the programme of events and explored the possibility of co-ordinating the annual BAPG reception for the US Ambassador with the anniversary of the Magna Carta on 15th June and inviting Mr. Speaker as host (in his position as Joint President of the group) and the US Ambassador to both speak on the significance of the Magna Carta today.

Later that day, the BAPG met with the CPA to discuss their plans for the anniversaries, which included arranging a conference on human rights in early February. They asked if the BAPG would like to partner the CPA in hosting the conference. They would ideally like to have six Members of Congress/ Senators attend the meetings and asked for the BAPG's assistance in identifying those members.

21st October

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

22nd October

The Ditchley Foundation, in partnership with the BAPG, hosted a panel discussion on 'British defence policy and the transatlantic relationship' in the Speaker's State Rooms. The panel comprised: Mr. James J Townsend Jr., US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for European and NATO policy; Professor Francois Heisbourg, Special Advisor, Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique, Paris; Lord Robertson, Secretary General, NATO and Chairman North Atlantic Council (1999-2003) and The Rt. Hon. James Arbuthnot, MP, Chairman Defence Select Committee (2005-2014). Sir John Holmes, Director of The Ditchley Foundation, chaired the discussion. The expert panel addressed questions such as how British defence spending plans and policies were affecting relationships with the U.S. Administration and the most effective security role Britain and other European countries can play in the future.

The event was well attended and a summary of the panelist's presentations and the discussion which followed is available on The Ditchley Foundation website: <http://www.ditchley.co.uk/news/post/147-british-defence-policy-and-the-transatlantic-relationship>.

27th October

Mr. Speaker, together with the U.S. Ambassador, Matthew Barzun, and Radio 4 presenter, Justin Webb, hosted the Alistaire Cooke Memorial Lecture in the Speaker's State Rooms on Monday evening, 27th October, attended by the BAPG Honorary Secretary and others.

5th November

At the request of the British Consul General Miami, Mr. Dave Prodger, the BAG arranged tickets to PMQs for a VIP delegation from Jacksonville, Florida.

5th November

The British-American Parliamentary Group, in partnership with the US Embassy, hosted a post US Midterm Elections panel discussion in the Speaker's State Rooms on the results and what they will mean for the next two years. The discussion was chaired by the Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP and the panel comprised:

- Professor Philip Davies, Director of the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library;
- Bill Barnard, former chair of Democrats Abroad UK (the official overseas arm of the U.S. Democratic Party) ;
- Stacy Hilliard, spokesperson for Republicans Overseas (a Political Action Committee).

The event was well attended and guests included members of both Houses, members of the diplomatic corps, the media, business, academia, Republicans Overseas and Democrats Abroad.

10th November

The European-Atlantic Group hosted a discussion on 'US politics after the Midterm Elections' with speakers from the Association of Former Members of Congress: the Honorable Mary Bono (Republican, CA) and the Honorable Brian Baird (Democrat, WA). The event was chaired by Geoffrey Clifton Brown, MP and opened by Professor Philip Davies, Director of the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library. The BAPG Administrator and others attended the discussion which took place in the House of Commons.

19th November

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for North Carolina General Assembly Representative Grier Martin and family.

20th November

The Pilgrims Society hosted a celebration of Thanksgiving at St. Margaret's Church to which BAPG Vice Presidents, Officers and members of the Executive Committee were invited.

24th November

The BAPG Administrator met with Mandy Smith, Executive Officer, of the British Consulate General Atlanta to discuss the work of the Consulate General and of the BAPG and possible areas of co-operation.

25th November

At the request of the British Embassy in Washington D.C., the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament at short notice for The Lt. Governor-elect of Maryland, Boyd Rutherford, and family.

26th November

The BAPG Honorary Secretary chaired a pre-departure briefing meeting for members attending the Harvard Institute of Politics New Members of Congress Orientation Programme, 2-5 December. The Head of the North America Department at the Foreign Office, Ms. Lucy Joyce, kindly attended the meeting to brief members on the recent Midterm Elections, the issues that are likely to occupy Congress going forward and US/UK relations.

2nd to 5th December

Four Members of Parliament attended the Harvard Institute of Politics orientation programme for new Members of Congress, as elected at the Midterm elections on 4th November 2014. The programme took place over three days at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and involved 'issue seminars' and lectures by Harvard academics and eminent outside speakers. British Members of Parliament were the only foreign legislators invited to attend.

9th December

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

15th December

A report back meeting took place with the members who attended the Harvard Institute of Politics bipartisan orientation programme for newly elected Members of Congress, chaired by the Honorary Secretary, Brian Donohoe, MP.

13th January 2015

The British-American Parliamentary Group hosted David Brock, a Democratic strategist and key insider with the Clintons, who was in London to headline a 'Ready for Hillary' fundraising event. He is among the leading campaign fundraisers in American politics and has created an online/super PAC/social media empire to advance liberal interests. While in London he met with Labour Members of Parliament to discuss his fundraising and campaign work.

4th to 6th February

On behalf of the CPA, the BAPG wrote to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Foreign Affairs and Judiciary Committees in both Houses of Congress to invite them to nominate up to two members from each committee to participate in an international Parliamentary conference hosted by the CPA in Parliament on the development of Human Rights in the modern day Commonwealth: "Magna Carta to Commonwealth Charter", 4th to 6th February 2015. While the invitations were self-funding, the CPA would have provided all hospitality throughout the conference. Unfortunately, it was not possible for the committees to take up the invitations as both Houses of Congress were in session at the time of the conference and the membership of the committees was still being finalised following the start of a new Congress.

10th February

The BAPG Administrator, together with BAPG Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, met with the Political Lead of the British Embassy Washington D.C., Susannah Goshko, who was in the UK to support the Governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker's, trade mission to encourage UK companies to invest in Wisconsin. Susannah welcomed the BAPG's suggestion of a joint bid to the Foreign Office's bilateral Superfund to fund a specialist thematic delegation visit to the US and said that she would follow up on her return to the US with posts to establish possible objectives for a BAPG visit later in the year. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss the 2015 Annual Parliamentary Congressional Conference, which was to be hosted by the Senate BAPG in the US (likely late July), and seek Embassy assistance in securing invitations to the National Party Conventions in July 2016.

10th February

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

11th February

At the request of the British Embassy Washington D.C., the BAPG made arrangements for the Governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker (Republican), and accompanying officials to meet with the Speaker of the House of Commons and to observe PMQs from the Distinguished Strangers Gallery. Governor Walker was in the UK leading a trade mission of economic development officials from the Wisconsin Economic Development

Corporation (WEDC) as part of the state's efforts to encourage companies in the United Kingdom to invest in Wisconsin. They met with UK business executives about establishing new operations in Wisconsin and providing additional capital to established state businesses to expand their Wisconsin operations and create jobs.

Walker has 2016 presidential ambitions and at the time of the visit was leading in an Iowa poll on the 2016 Republican presidential list of candidates.

We are most grateful to Mr. Speaker for giving the time to meet the Governor and accompanying guests, particularly as it was immediately prior to PMQs.

12th February

The Administrator met with the Cultural Affairs Team at the US Embassy to discuss the 2015 BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit.

16th February

The BAPG assisted the British Embassy with a visit to Parliament of a delegation of US Congressional staffers focused on trade. The visit was sponsored by Embassy's Trade and Agriculture Team. The delegation met with Julian Smith, MP, Vice Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on EU/US Trade and Investment.

7th April

At the request of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for the Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives, Representative Tim Moore, and family.

8th March

The BAPG had the pleasure of hosting the US House of Representatives Appropriations Committee in Parliament. BAPG Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, kindly took the committee on an exclusive tour of Parliament on Sunday morning, 8th March, specially agreed with the Serjeant at Arms. The delegation was led by the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Representative Hal Rogers (R-KY), and included Congressman Ander Crenshaw (R-Florida), recently appointed lead of the House BAPG for this Congress.

We are most grateful to Mr. Speaker who generously agreed to an impromptu meeting with the delegation and invited them to Speaker's House to see the state rooms.

11th March

The BAPG arranged tickets to PMQs for Lindsay Chura, Senior Policy Advisor, Science and Innovation, British Embassy Washington D.C. and guest.

16th March

At the request of the Foreign Office, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for two US citizens.

The Annual General Meeting of the Group took place on 9th July 2014. The Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Dame Dawn Primarolo, DBE, MP, Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means, in the absence of the Speaker, as Joint President of the British-American Parliamentary Group, kindly presided and was warmly welcomed by all the members present.

It was reported that the Group's membership stood at 630 and that between April 2013 and April 2014, some 17 Members of Parliament went to the United States under the group's auspices. There were also three Annual Conferences during the 12 months – one deferred from 2012 with the House of Representatives; the scheduled 2013 Annual Conference with the Senate and the 2014 Annual Conference with the House, which was brought forward, due to the mid-term elections in the US later in the year. Two of these conferences took place in the UK.

During the 12 months to April 2014, 10 members had visited the US during the year under the auspices of the BAPG. This was down from a total 16 members originally confirmed to go, with six members withdrawing late in the day, due to diary conflicts/events in their constituencies.

The 10 members visited the US by way of the following visits:

In July, four members (out of the eight originally confirmed to participate in the programme) went to the United States to take part in a US government International Visitor Leadership project entitled "US Legislative Process", the purpose of which was to acquaint the members, with little or no prior experience of the US, with the American political system at the federal, state and local levels with emphasis on the role and organisation of Congress.

In September, two out of four members originally confirmed to participate in the specialist delegation, visited Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri, to look at advanced manufacturing developments, with particular reference to the auto industry, and at new agricultural and farming techniques, with particular reference to genetically modified crops.

In early December, four members attended as observers the Harvard University Institute of Politics' Bi-Partisan Programme for Newly Elected Members of Congress. The British Members of Parliament are the only foreign legislators invited to observe the programme and it provides an unrivalled opportunity for members to develop contacts with new Members of Congress at the start of their careers. The programme comprises intensive seminars on major public policy issues such as foreign policy, health care and the Federal budget, led by prominent scholars and practitioners representing viewpoints from across the political spectrum and workshops focused on the "how" of getting things done in Washington, led by current and former senior officials from Congress, the White House, cabinet departments, regulatory agencies, and the national media.

It was not possible to arrange a reception for the US Ambassador and Embassy chiefs in Parliament during 2014-2015 but we have a date confirmed early in the new Parliament, to which we hope many new Members of Parliament together with returning members, will be able to attend.

Our extensive thanks are due to the North America Department at the Foreign Office for the very informative briefings they specially prepared for the British delegations visiting the US.

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 2014 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.

Group membership stands at 630, with 366 members drawn from the House of Commons and 264 from the House of Lords.

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 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA.

The Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Dame Dawn Primarolo, DBE, MP, Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means, presided in the absence of the Speaker, the Rt. Hon. John Bercow, MP, who was unable to attend the meeting at the last minute. We are grateful to Mr. Speaker for allowing the meeting to take place at short notice in his State Rooms due to the original meeting room, Committee Room 6, being re-assigned for a Select Committee meeting.

1. Apologies

The Chairman conveyed apologies for absence from the Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Leader of the Opposition, together with 47 others.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

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

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. To Receive the Annual Report from the Executive Committee for April 2013 to April 2014 and the Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2014.

The Government Vice Chairman, The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, was called upon to present the report of the Executive Committee for 2013/2014.

Mr. Mitchell first thanked the Deputy Speaker for chairing the Group's AGM particularly at short notice. He then reported on the work of the Group during the period April 2013 to April 2014. He reminded members that full details of all the Group's activities appeared in the printed report which had been circulated before the AGM. The report on the work of the group could be found in particular on pages 29-35.

During the 12 months from April 2013 to April 2014, some 17 Members of Parliament went to the United States under the Group's auspices. There were also three Annual Conferences during the 12 months – one deferred from 2012 with the House of Representatives; the scheduled 2013 Annual Conference with the Senate and the 2014 Annual Conference with the House, which was brought forward due to the U.S. mid-term elections later in the year. Two of these conferences took place in the UK.

“The one which I had the pleasure of leading the British delegation, had five Senators come over from the States and was held in really excellent conditions in Winchester in Hampshire. It was three days of fascinating discussions. The first conference that I have attended I think since I went to the States as a new boy in 1988. I thought it was really worthwhile and a very good team from Britain and a very good team of Senators, who's 'Anglophilia' shone through, and we had really a most interesting and constructive discussion. At the end of it, I was left with the very firm impression and conclusion that it was a really valuable meeting and underlined the importance of the work that the BAPG does.”

The 17 Members who went to the States were sent by means of:

The BAPG / U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit when eight Members of Parliament travelled to the U.S. in July 2013 to learn about the U.S. political system. The MPs spent the first five days in Washington D.C., looking at the federal system of government, the middle weekend with Members of Congress in their congressional districts and the final two days in Boston to learn something of the state system of government.

The deferred 2012 Annual Conference which took place with the House of Representatives in Washington D.C. in November 2013 (nine Members). The conference was coordinated with a Foreign Office funded thematic visit, focused on the US / EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which took place over three days in advance of the Annual Conference. This enabled a greater number of members to participate in the thematic visit than would have

otherwise been afforded. The delegation made calls on business and on state and local officials in Pennsylvania and Delaware. In Washington D.C., they met with Congress, the Farm Bureau, the European Commission, business and the AFL-CIO labor union.

It had been hoped to send a specialist delegation to the U.S. in March 2014, but in the event, this was postponed and will now take place in September.

We have been very grateful for the interest shown in the group by both the Speaker and the Lord Speaker, our Joint Presidents. Mr. Speaker kindly hosted a Harvard University speaker programme on the state of American politics in his state rooms and gave permission for the BAPG, in partnership with the Ditchley Foundation, to hold a panel discussion on TTIP in his rooms. The Lord Speaker kindly hosted a reception in the River Room for the Congressional delegation and other guests attending the opening dinner to the 2014 Annual Conference.

Also in London, the Group had been able to arrange some meetings/tours/lunches/receptions for visiting U.S. Members of Congress/state legislators/other visiting VIPs from the U.S. 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 22 to 28 in the Annual Report. They show the contribution the Group had made over the year to promoting good relations with the U.S. and the role which the Group had played in the programmes of American visitors.

Finally, Mr. Mitchell paid tribute to the co-operation which the Group had received over the year from the American Embassy, particularly from the Political and Cultural Affairs Departments, and also for the support we have received 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.

Mr. Mitchell finally offered very special thanks to Hannah Mitchell for all the work she does, absolutely brilliant. There's an enormous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes and she does it with apparent ease and grace.

The Chair thanked Mr. Mitchell and asked whether there were any comments that anybody wished to make, of which there were none. The Chair then invited formal agreement of the Annual Report, which was proposed and seconded and carried unanimously.

The Chair then called upon The Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP, Joint Honorary Treasurer, to move the adoption of the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014. The Accounts had been circulated previously to members and appear on pages 5-21 of the Annual Report of the Executive Committee 2013-2014.

The National Audit Office Director, Parliament, for and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), had signed the 2013-2014 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification.

Members should know that the authorities of the House of Commons and the House of Lords approved the BAPG's annual funding for 2014-15 at £110,000, which was level with the grant funding agreed for the previous year 2013/14, with no inflationary uplift.

During the year, the authorities undertook a 'light touch' review of the Financial Memorandums with the four grant funded inter Parliamentary groups which resulted in some minor amendments that were either inconsequential in nature or updates to bring the FMs more in line with existing and expected practices. The amendments asked nothing further of the groups than the arrangements already in place. The final amendments were approved by all four inter Parliamentary groups.

It was reported Group membership now stands at 630 members with 365 members drawn from the House of Commons and 265 from the House of Lords. Of these, 67% have a Life Subscription

to the group. There is a fall in membership from the previous year when it stood at 644 members and all of this fall, bar one, is attributable to the House of Lords.

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

The Chair invited comments and the Baroness O'Cathain suggested in reference to House of Lords membership that the group might send a letter round to people as there were a lot of new members in the House of Lords who might not know about the BAPG and it could really be very useful to them. Mr. Knight responded that it was a very good idea and that the Officers would action it.

The Chair put to the meeting a formal motion to adopt the Accounts which was proposed and seconded and carried unanimously.

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

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

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Beckett, DBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Boothroyd, PC, OM
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Carrington, KG, GCMG, CH, MC, DL
The Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg, MP
The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC
The Rt. Hon. William Hague, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howe of Aberavon, Kt, CH, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, CBE
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling, DL
The Rt. Hon. Charles Kennedy, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mackay of Clashfern, KT
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Martin of Springburn
The Rt. Hon. Ed Miliband, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Molyneaux of Killead, KBE
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH
The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw, MP

There was unanimous agreement to adopt these names.

The Chair then paid warm tribute to those who had been Officers of the Group during 2013/2014:

Both the Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, Government Vice Chairman, and the Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander MP, Opposition Vice-Chairman, had completed the second year of their three year terms. We are 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 pleased that Mr. Mitchell was able to lead the British delegation at the meetings with the U.S. Senate in September last year.

Brian Donohoe, the Honorary Secretary, had completed his sixth 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 time to the Group's affairs.

The group is also extremely pleased that the Rt. Hon. Greg Knight, MP and The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP had both agreed to continue as Joint Honorary Treasurers. They both give a considerable amount of time to the Group's affairs and the hard work which they had done and continue to do is very much appreciated.

The ratification and election of the Chairman, the Joint Presidents, Vice-Presidents, the two Vice-Chairmen, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurers was formally proposed and seconded and received the unanimous agreement of members present.

6. To Elect 18 Members to serve on the Executive Committee 2014-15

The Chairman reported that in accordance with Rule 8a, 18 Members were to be elected to the Executive Committee, consisting of 12 members from the House of Commons – of which there were to be six members from the Government Parties and six members from the Opposition Parties – and six members elected to represent the House of Lords, the proportion of which is determined by the Lord Speaker and the representatives of the parties and groups in that House, that being: two Conservatives; one Liberal Democrat; two Labour and one Cross Bench.

In relation to the election of members from the **House of Commons**, as the group had received only six nominations from the Government Parties for the Committee this year and only six nominations from the Opposition Parties for the Committee, the following members were therefore elected unopposed to serve on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2015:

Government

Christopher Chope, OBE, MP
Tobias Ellwood, MP
David Heath, CBE, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
Mark Pritchard, MP
The Rt. Hon. Sir John Stanley, MP

Opposition

The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP
Michael Dugher, MP
The Rt. Hon. Elfyn Llwyd, MP
Andy Love, MP
Austin Mitchell, MP
David Watts, MP

In relation to the House of Lords, as the group had received the requisite number of nominations as there were places, the following members were elected unopposed to represent the House of Lords on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2015:

Conservative

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

Liberal Democrat

The Lord Sharkey

Labour

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL
The Rt. Hon. the Lord McFall of Alcluith

Cross Bench

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes GCB GCVO QSO

The Chairman formally agreed these names with unanimous approval.

The group wished to pay tribute to Stephen Williams, MP who stood down from the Committee in December 2013 on his appointment as Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government.

7. *Any Other Business*

The Honorary Secretary thanked the Deputy Speaker for presiding at the Group's AGM.

Mr. Donohoe reported:

- As had been mentioned, we have had three Annual Conferences this year, two of which were hosted in the UK. It has to be said these conferences were very successful, involving senior members from both the Senate and the House of Representatives, with whom we had very useful and insightful discussions. We know that the views shared in these meetings were of interest to the respective party leadership in the U.S., particularly at the height of the Syria crisis and also in relation to Europe and the Scottish referendum.
- This year's BAPG / U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored visit to the United States will take place from the 20th to the 29th July. Four of the original eight members selected (four members unfortunately withdrew late in the day due to unforeseen diary conflicts) will spend nine days in the United States examining the U.S. political system. The program will open in Washington D.C. and comprise an overview of the federal system of government and how the various branches of government interact. This will be followed by meetings at key U.S. government departments and with congressional counterparts. The middle weekend will be spent with a Member of Congress in his/her home district and the final two days will be spent in Boston where the participants will reunite to examine a state capital legislature and other issues of interest.

The U.S. Department of State organizes the programme and all internal travel. The BAPG pays transatlantic air fares and a daily subsistence allowance including hotel accommodation.

- Arrangements were being finalized for a BAPG specialist delegation visit to Chicago and St. Louis in September to look at the dual themes of: (1) agriculture and agri science, with particular reference to the use of GM crops, and (2) U.S. manufacturing, with particular reference to the auto industry. The British Consulate General Chicago is organizing the programme of calls.
- The Institute of Politics at Harvard University has invited the BAPG to send four members to observe its orientation programme for newly elected Members of Congress as at 4th November. The programme is tentatively scheduled the first week in December, subject to confirmation from the House leadership, and will involve 'issue seminars' and lectures by Harvard academics and eminent outside speakers. We will notify members via the All Party Whip of the visit before the summer recess and invite applications in the autumn.
- The 2015 Annual Parliamentary Congressional Conference is to be hosted by the Senate in the U.S. next year and we are working with the Senate BAPG and British Embassy to determine suitable dates for the meeting.
- The BAPG, in partnership with the Ditchley Foundation, is to hold a panel discussion event on 'British defense policy and the transatlantic relationship' on Wednesday, 22nd October 2014 at 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. in the Speaker's State Rooms. We are hoping that Douglas Lute, Ambassador to the United States Mission to NATO, will be able to participate on the panel. All members are welcome to attend and a formal invitation confirming the speakers will be circulated in early September.
- We hope to arrange a BAPG reception for the U.S. Ambassador, Matthew Barzun, and senior representatives of the U.S. Embassy during the year and will circulate further details in due course.
- We continue to try to arrange lunches/meetings for Congressional delegations to London and other VIP visitors. Indeed, we are hosting a working lunch for the Governor of Washington State, Jay Inslee, on Wednesday, 16th July, who is leading a state aerospace delegation to the UK to promote trade and investment in Washington State and is keen to engage with members on trade and investment and other key priorities while here. Any members interested in attending the working lunch should please contact Hannah for further details.

- The Honorary Secretary added his thanks to the two Vice Chairs, Andrew Mitchell and Douglas Alexander; to fellow Officers, the two Joint Treasurers, Greg Knight and John Spellar, and particular thanks to Hannah.
- As we're in the run up to a general election, members may wish to refer to Rule 12 of the 'Objects, Activities and the Rules of the Group':
 - (a) *The re-elected members of the Executive Committee who were in office on the date of the dissolution of Parliament shall carry on the affairs of the group until the next Annual General Meeting. In the event of any of the Officers not being re-elected, the Executive Committee, as then constituted, shall nominate a member or members of the Executive Committee to act in their place until the election of Officers takes place at the next Annual General Meeting;*
 - (b) *In the event of fewer than six members of the Executive Committee being re-elected, the Honorary Secretary (or eligible Officers should the Honorary Secretary not be elected) shall take immediate steps to arrange for the election of a new Executive Committee and will call a Special General meeting of the Group for this purpose;*
 - (c) *When the results of the elections held by virtue of the rule above are known, those Officers and members of the Executive Committee still eligible for membership of the Group shall, with the exception of the ex-officio Officers, Vice-Presidents, and Honorary Secretary, retire forthwith unless re-elected to office.*
- Members were reminded that group functions/visits are always advertised by means of the All Party Whip and the BAPG website www.bapg.org.uk and we also use e-mail to draw members' attention to the notices.
- Finally, Mr. Donohoe added his thanks to the Deputy Speaker for presiding at the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.55 pm