

British-American Parliamentary Group



Executive Committee Report 2015-16

(For the year ended 31 March 2016)

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OFFICERS' & MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2015-2016

Joint Presidents	The Speaker of the House of Commons The Lord Speaker
Vice-Presidents	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. the Lord Hague of Richmond The Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, QC The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, CBE 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. 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
Chairman	The Prime Minister
Vice-Chairmen	The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP Vernon Coaker, MP
Honorary Secretary	The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP
Honorary Treasurers	The Rt. Hon. Sir Simon Burns, MP The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

House of Commons

Government

Christopher Chope, OBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP
Stephen Hammond, MP
Pauline Latham, OBE, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
Alan Mak, MP

Opposition

The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP
Angela Crawley, MP
Michael Dugher, MP
Kevan Jones, MP
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP
The Rt. Hon. Gisela Stuart, 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 Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally

Cross Bench

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes GCB GCVO QSO

Administrator: Hannah Mitchell

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee 2015-16 met on: 20th October 2015; 8th December 2015; 9th February 2016 and 10th May 2016.

The Annual General Meeting, at which the current Executive Committee was elected, took place on 8th July 2015.

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

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL	3/4
The Rt. Hon. Sir Simon Burns, MP	4/4
Christopher Chope, OBE, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP	1/4
Vernon Coaker, MP	0/4
Angela Crawley, MP	1/4
Michael Dugher, MP	0/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes, GCB, GCVO, QSO	2/4
The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP	0/4
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP	3/4
Kevan Jones, MP	1/4
The Rt. Hon. Sir. Greg Knight, MP	4/4
Stephen Hammond, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP	3/4
Pauline Latham, OBE, MP	3/4
Jack Lopresti, MP	4/4
Alan Mak, MP	1/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord McFall of Alcluith	3/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally	3/4
The Baroness O’Cathain, OBE	2/4
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Gisela Stuart, MP	0/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble	4/4

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

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 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 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.

In July 2015, the Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in Washington D.C., at the invitation of the U.S. Senate. The conference took place over two days with discussion sessions held in the Senate Appropriations Room in the Capitol. On the other two days of the visit, the British delegation took the opportunity of meetings arranged by the British Embassy in Washington D.C. with Members of Congress, various Departments of the Administration, think tanks, business and unions.

Also in July, eight members travelled to the United States to participate in the annual BAPG / U.S. Department of State co-sponsored 'U.S. Legislative Process' visit, designed to give members not already familiar with the United States, an introduction to the American political system. The visit included time in Washington D.C., which coincided with the 2015 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference, and the two delegations came together on the first day for joint briefings from the Pentagon and also for a cultural event that evening arranged by the British Embassy.

In the run up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, at the end of the November, the BAPG sent a cross party delegation of MPs to the US to engage with US decision makers on climate security. The visit was funded exclusively by the Foreign Office's US bilateral Superfund (by way of a BAPG bid) and arranged by the Energy, Environment and Resource Security Team at the British Embassy, in consultation with British Defence Staff at the Embassy and the British-American Parliamentary Group.

The delegation visited Washington DC and met with a range of Administration officials from various agencies with an interest in climate security issues and with Members of Congress on relevant committees in both Houses. They also travelled outside of Washington D.C. to the US Naval Station in Norfolk, Virginia, to discuss climate security and military

readiness as well as undertook calls with Virginia state politicians and officials to discuss how energy and climate security challenges were being approached at state level.

The group was also pleased to be able to host the American Ambassador, H.E. Hon. Matthew W. Barzun, and Embassy Chiefs at a reception in Parliament in June 2015, to which many newly elected Members of Parliament and returning members came to meet the Ambassador and his team to discuss all aspects of US/UK relations.

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 14) shows that the BAPG had a net operating income of £2,390 for the year 2015-16 (in 2014-2015, the BAPG had a net operating income of £30,200). The Parliamentary grant for the year was £111,650 (in 2014-2015, it was £110,000).

The BAPG currently holds £72,740 in reserves (page 15). This high level of reserves has accrued in recent years as a result of lower programme expenditure than originally planned, owing to last minute withdrawals from visits (most notably in the run up to the British General Election), postponement of events (by US counterparts) and savings on individual activities. This year, specifically, the cost of the 2015 Annual Conference had been less than planned as the Honorary Secretary was not able to accompany the British delegation to the meetings in Washington DC. Also, the cost of the BAPG reception for the US Ambassador and Embassy Chiefs had been less, owing to fewer guests attending than budgeted (having allowed for the maximum capacity of guests at the venue). The Executive Committee chose not to spend the reserves in year on ad hoc activities, but to carry over the surplus funds to finance anticipated shortfalls in budget in future years, owing to the grant no longer being sufficient to fund the group's traditional programme of activities, after five years of no inflationary uplift.

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. John Spellar, MP (Accounting Officer)

June 2016

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. John Spellar, 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), which were 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 2015-16.

The Group's Governance Activities in 2015-16

The Executive Committee met on four occasions in 2015-16 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 2016-2017; analysed the Group's accounts and the external audit findings for 2015-16 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) have 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 of activities over the next three years is due to its current level of reserves which have arisen as a result of lower programme expenditure than originally planned owing to last minute withdrawals from visits (most notably in the run up to the British General Election), postponement of events (by US counterparts) and savings on individual activities. Beyond this, if the base line funding continues at current levels, it will likely have an adverse effect on the BAPG's activities and consequently its ability to further good relations and mutual understanding with the US Congress.

The Executive Committee is presently considering additional sources of finance, including sponsorship funding.

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, 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 Ireland) 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)

June 2016

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 2016. 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 and Governance Statement to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. 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 2016 and of the Group's 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 and Governance Statement 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

June 2016

National Audit Office

157-197 Buckingham Palace Road

Victoria

London

SW1W 9SP

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2016

	Note	2015-16 £	2014-15 £
Administration Costs:			
Staff costs	3	39,404	38,437
Other administration costs	4	9,367	8,931
		48,771	47,368
Programme Costs:			
Programme costs	5	62,215	34,400
Total Costs		110,986	81,768
Income:			
Parliamentary Grant	2	(111,650)	(110,000)
Operating income	2	(1,266)	(1,044)
Total Income		(112,916)	(111,044)
Net Operating Cost/(Income) before Interest and Tax		(1,930)	(29,276)
Bank Interest Received		(574)	(1,155)
Corporation Tax Paid		114	231
Net Operating Cost/(Income) after Interest and Tax		(2,390)	(30,200)

The notes on pages 18 to 22 form part of the accounts

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 31 March 2016

		31 Mar 2016	31 Mar 2015
	Note	£	£
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	7	1,171	1,257
Cash and cash equivalents	8	76,523	73,707
Total current assets		77,694	74,964
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(4,954)	(9,614)
Total current liabilities		(4,954)	(9,614)
Assets less liabilities		72,740	65,350
Taxpayers' equity:			
General fund		72,740	65,350
Total taxpayers' equity		72,740	65,350

The financial statements on pages 14 to 17 were formally agreed by the Executive Committee on 10th May 2016 and were signed on its behalf by:

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

The notes on pages 18 to 22 form part of the accounts

Statement of Cash Flows

For year ended 31 March 2016

		2015-16	2014-15
	<i>Note</i>	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating (cost)/ income		2,390	30,200
Interest Received		(574)	(1,155)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions – audit fee		5,000	5,000
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	86	280
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	9	-4,660	6,782
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		2,242	41,107
Cash flows from investing activities			
Net cash outflow from investing activities		-	-
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net cash inflow from financing activities – interest received		574	1,155
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		2,816	42,262
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	73,707	31,445
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8	76,523	73,707

The notes on pages 18 to 22 form part of the accounts

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2016

	Note	General Fund
		£
Balance at 31 March 2014		30,150
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration		5,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		30,200
Balance at 31 March 2015		65,350
Changes in taxpayers' equity for 2015-16		
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	4	5,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		2,390
Balance at 31 March 2016		72,740

The notes on pages 18 to 22 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).

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. This represents a change in accounting policy from previous years when Life subscription income was recognised upfront rather than over the course of the membership. As the Life subscription allows members to access BAPG events and trips free of charge for the life of the subscription, the fee will now be recognised over the life of the subscription, which has been determined as two terms of Parliament based on the average length of service of Members of the House of Commons, who make up the majority of the BAPG membership. This average is based on information from the House of Commons Information Unit and the House of Commons Pensions Unit.

Accordingly, Life subscription income for 2015-16 is shown as £258 (adjusted from £2,580) and the remaining balance (£2,322) is treated as deferred income.

No adjustment has been made to the figures prior to this year due to the adjustments being immaterial and impracticable.

1.3 Gains and losses

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

1.4 Taxation

Bank interest is received net of tax. It has been grossed up to £574 for the Accounts. The tax on the bank interest is offset against the Corporation Tax liability. The total tax liability for 2015-16 is £114 (this is tax on gross bank interest)

2. Income

	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Parliamentary Grant	111,650	110,000
Annual subscriptions	927	834
Life subscriptions	258	120
Donations	81	90
Total	<u>112,916</u>	<u>111,044</u>

3. Staff numbers and related costs

Staff costs comprise:

	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Wages and salaries	30,801	30,414
Social security costs	2,258	2,266
Other pension costs	6,345	5,757
Total	<u>39,404</u>	<u>38,437</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>2015-16</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Sundry	1,442	800
Insurance	1,951	1,908
Annual Report	526	640
Website costs	448	583
Non-cash items:		
Auditor's remuneration and expenses	5,000	5,000
Total	<u>9,367</u>	<u>8,931</u>

5. Programme Expenditure

	2015-16	2014-15
	£	£
Annual Conference(s)	29,270	64
Specialist Delegation Visit(s)	0	7,408
Reception US Ambassador	2,470	0
Co-Sponsored Visit	29,767	11,862
Carbon Off-Setting of Air Travel	165	65
New Members of Parliament Orientation Programme (NMOP)	0	13,365
US Midterm Elections Event	0	1,561
Hospitality	543	75
Total	62,215	34,400

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>2015-16</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	1,167	1,253
Other Receivables	0	0
Accrued Income – Bank Interest	4	4
Total	<u>1,171</u>	<u>1,257</u>

8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Balance at 1 April	73,707	31,445
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	2,816	42,262
Balance at 31 March	<u>76,523</u>	<u>73,707</u>

The following balances at 31 March were held at:

Commercial banks and cash in hand	76,523	73,707
Balance at 31 March	<u>76,523</u>	<u>73,707</u>

9. Trade payables and Other Current Liabilities

	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other Payables	2,521	9,433
Deferred Income	2,433	181
	<u>4,954</u>	<u>9,614</u>

10. Losses and special payments

There were no losses and special payments in 2015-16 (nil 2014-15).

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.

During 2015-16, the Group entered into related party transactions worth £2,890. This figure comprises £2,804 paid to the House of Commons Catering Service for the provision of hospitality to BAPG visitors and £86 for small gifts from the House of Commons retail outlet for the 2015 Annual Conference.

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

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

2nd June 2015

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place, the first since the May General Election.

8th June

In the year of the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta and as a mark of the deep and continuing friendship between the two parliaments and the two peoples of the US and the UK, a flag exchange took place between the US House of Representatives Majority Leader, Kevin McCarthy (Republican, California 23rd district), and the Leader of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, in the Speaker's State Rooms, Speaker's House, attended by members of the BAPG Executive Committee, representatives from the North America Department at the Foreign Office and those who had organised the Union Jack flag and crafted the case to hold the flag. Majority Leader McCarthy presented the Leader of the House of Commons with a Stars and Stripes flag which had flown over the US Capitol Building on 18th May 2015. The Leader of the House gave in return a Union Jack flag which had flown over Parliament in January 2015. We understand the UK flag is located in the Leader of the House of Representative's office in the Capitol. We are grateful to Henry Smith, MP for bringing about this opportunity.

10th June

The Ambassador of the United States of America hosted a reception at Winfield House in honour of the 60th Anniversary of the Marshall Scholarships, to which the BAPG Officers, Administrator and others were invited.

16th June

BAPG Officers hosted a small lunch in the House of Commons for a Council of State Governments delegation over in the UK as part of the celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta. The delegation included Governor Earl Ray Tomblin (West Virginia, Democrat) and Tennessee State Senator Majority Leader Mark Norris (Republican).

19th June

At the request of the British Consulate General San Francisco, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a business delegation from Oregon, visiting the UK to educate and raise awareness about the strong bilateral trade relationship between Oregon and the UK.

23rd June

A special meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place to consider the co-option of additional members to the BAPG Executive Committee.

23rd June

White House correspondent, April Ryan, spoke to members on race relations in the US and the record of President Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton on the issue and also gave her reflections on being a member of the White House Press Corps for the past 18 years. We are grateful to The Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally for giving the BAPG the opportunity to host April Ryan and for chairing the event, which took place in the Jubilee Room.

23rd June

Mr. Speaker, as Joint President of the BAPG, hosted a reception for the American Ambassador, H.E. Hon. Matthew W. Barzun, and Embassy Chiefs in the Speaker's State Rooms. It was an opportunity for many members including newly elected Members of Parliament to meet the Ambassador and his team to discuss any aspect of US/UK relations.

24th June

The BAPG ran a stand in the exhibition area in Portcullis House to promote the group and its activities to new Members of Parliament.

30th June

At the request of the US Senate Inter-Parliamentary Services, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for US Senator Shelley Capito (Republican, West Virginia) and husband, Mr. Charles L. Capito Junior, kindly given by Executive Committee member, Baroness O'Cathain, who took the guests for tea afterwards in the Pugin Room. Arrangements

were also made for the guests to watch business questions, by kind permission of Mr. Speaker, in the 'Distinguished Strangers Gallery' and then to meet with Seema Malhotra, MP, the Shadow Minister for Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls, who had been selected as a member of the British delegation to meet with the Senate BAPG (which would include Senator Capito) in Washington DC the following month.

2nd July

The Ambassador of the United States of America and Mrs. Brooke Barzun hosted a reception at Winfield House to celebrate the 239th Anniversary of Independence of the United States of America to which the BAPG Officers and members of the Executive Committee were invited.

8th July

The group's Annual General Meeting took place at which the Executive Committee 2015-2016 were elected. We are grateful to the First Deputy Chairman, Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker, Eleanor Laing, MP, for chairing the meeting on behalf of Mr. Speaker.

9th July

The FCO, in cooperation with The City UK and Canning House, hosted a reception at the Hogan Lovells International LLP offices in Holborn to celebrate and promote the growing network of free trade agreements the UK and Europe enjoys with the Americas, and the opportunities these present to boost the UK's commercial presence in the region, to which the BAPG Officers and members of the Executive Committee were invited.

19-23 July

The 2015 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in Washington DC at the invitation of the US Senate BAPG, led by Senator Thad Cochran (Mississippi, Republican) and Senator Patrick Leahy (Vermont, Democrat). The British delegation were led by BAPG Government Vice Chair and Leader of the House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP. The discussion sessions were held in the grand Senate Appropriations Committee Room in the Capitol over two days and the two delegations discussed: US-UK Defence/Security Co-operation; US-UK Economic/Energy Policies and US-UK Political Overview.

While in Washington DC, the BAPG also took the opportunity of meetings arranged by the British Embassy with calls on Members of Congress, various Departments of the Administration and think tanks, centred on defence and trade related issues.

19th to 28th July

The 2015 BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit coincided with 2015 Annual Conference in Washington DC and the two delegations came together for a joint meeting at the Pentagon and at a cultural event later that evening, organised by the British Embassy.

Eight Members of Parliament participated in the programme, arranged by the US Department of State, to introduce members with little or no prior experience of the US to learn about the US political system; spending five days in Washington DC, learning about the federal system of government, two days with a Members of Congress in his/her Congressional district and the final two days in a State Capital, this year Boston, to learn about the state system of government.

22nd July

At the request of the British Consulate General Los Angeles, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and meeting with members of the BAPG Executive Committee for the Governor of Nevada, Brian Sandoval (Republican), and accompanying state officials who were visiting the UK on a trade related mission to explore opportunities in water and aerospace. Governor Sandoval was on the long list of players for the 2016 election as a possible Vice Presidential pick for the Republicans. The BAPG Honorary Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, was joined by BAPG Vice President, the Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, and Executive Committee member, The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, in meeting the Governor and members of his delegation. We are grateful to the Commons Overseas Office for their assistance with the arrangements.

27th July

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a former Member of the US Congress, Mr. Rick Berg, and family.

28th July

The BAPG arranged tours of Parliament for contacts of the British Embassy: Mr. Burns Strider and family - formerly senior Advisor and Director of Faith and Values Outreach for Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign – and Bishop Mike McKee of the North Texas Conference United Methodist Church and family. We are grateful to Mr. David McBride of Lord Roberts of Llandudno's office for conducting the tours on behalf of the BAPG.

11th August

At the invitation of the US desk at the Foreign Office, Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. Simon Burns, MP, met with the former Governor of Virginia and candidate for the Republican nomination for 2016, Jim Gilmore, who was over in London. We are grateful to Sir Simon for giving the time to meet with Mr. Gilmore.

24th August

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for Harvard University's Assistant Vice President for Development, Marybeth Perlberg, and accompanying persons.

9th September

The Minister of the Embassy of the United States of America, Elizabeth Dibble, hosted a reception at Wychwood House to welcome Political Minister Counselor, Thomas Williams, to which the BAPG Officers and Administrator were invited.

14th September

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a good contact of the British Embassy, Tracy Sefl, a Strategic Communications Consultant and senior advisor to the Ready for Hillary SuperPAC. We are grateful to David McBride of Lord Roberts of Llandudno's office for conducting the tour on behalf of the BAPG.

15th September

The BAPG assisted the British Embassy in Washington DC with a visit by a Congressional delegation focused on TTIP, led by Representative Don Beyer (Virginia, Democrat). The BAPG made arrangements for a tour of Parliament followed by a small lunch with BAPG Officers, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP and The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP together with Guto Bebb, MP, Secretary of the TTIP APPG.

16th September

At the request of the Consul General of the British Consulate General Miami, Mr. Dave Prodger, the BAPG assisted in arranging tickets to PMQs for the Consulate's Honorary Consul, Mr. John Phelps, and his wife.

17th September

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for this year's intake of Marshall Scholars, followed by a Q&A exchange with the Rt. Hon. the Lord McFall of Alcluith, in the Grand Committee Room. We are grateful to Lord McFall for giving the time to meet the Scholars, which they very much appreciated. Lord McFall gave a fascinating insight into the differences between the job of a member of the House of Commons and that of a member of the House of Lords and of the current political scene in Britain.

17th September

The Foreign Office hosted a reception in honour of the Marshall Scholars and Marshall Sherfield Fellow at a reception at HM Treasury to which the Lord McFall, the Administrator and others were invited.

23rd September

The Administrator attended a small dinner organised by the Cultural Affairs Department at the US Embassy to welcome the new Deputy Cultural Attaché, Tim Gerhardson.

8th October

The Administrator met with Penny Egan, Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission, to discuss possible areas of co-operation.

12th October

The BAPG assisted the Welsh Government Office, based at the British Embassy in Washington DC, with a Parliamentary programme for the first ever US Congressional delegation visit to Wales, which stopped off in London for TTIP centred talks. The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and a lunch in the House of Commons for the Congressional delegation, who were joined by Susan Elan Jones, MP and David Morris, MP.

15th October

At the request of the US Embassy London, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for members of the US House of Representatives Financial Services Committee, led by Chairman Jeb Hensarling, which included an exclusive tour of the House of Lords at a time when it was being secured for business later that morning. We are grateful to the Yeoman Usher for specially allowing the tour to proceed at this time. It was very much appreciated by the Members of Congress, accompanying spouses and senior officials of the committee.

16th October

At the request of the British Embassy, Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for the Chief of Staff to Senator Jeff Sessions (Alabama, Republican), Mr. Rick Dearborn, and his wife. We are grateful to Parliamentary staffer Hugh Critchley for giving the time to conduct the tour on behalf of the group.

20th October

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

23rd October

To mark the launch of its US Centre, the London School of Economics hosted a panel discussion and reception at the Lincoln Centre Auditorium, to which Officers and members of the BAPG Executive Committee were invited to attend. The panel discussion addressed 'the US Election: What to Expect?' with panellists: Michael Cox, Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey and Peter Trubowitz of the LSE.

27th October

The BAPG Honorary Secretary hosted a pre-departure briefing meeting for the four members participating in the Foreign Office sponsored specialist delegation visit to Washington D.C. and Norfolk, Virginia, to engage with US decision makers on climate security. The new Head of the North America Department at the Foreign Office, Mr. Patrick Reilly, attended the meeting to brief members on the bilateral relationship, the US political scene and the US position on climate change.

28th October

The BAPG, in partnership with the Ditchley Foundation, hosted a panel discussion event on 'Big data: better services, individual privacy and cyber security' in the Speaker's State Rooms, Speaker's House, by kind permission of Mr. Speaker. The event was introduced by the Rt. Hon. the Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, the Chairman of The Ditchley Council of Management, and chaired by Sir John Holmes, the Director of The Ditchley Foundation. The panellists comprised: Mr. Matthew Kirk, Group External Affairs Director at Vodafone; Professor Sir David Omand GCB, Visiting Professor, King's College London; Mr Hugh Stevenson, Deputy Director of the Office of International Affairs, US Federal Trade Commission and Anthony Walker, Deputy CEO of techUK. Around 80 members of both Houses and outside guests attended.

1-5 November

In the run up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, 30 November to 11 December 2015, the BAPG sent three members (originally to have been four but one member withdrew at the last minute) to the US to engage with US decision makers on climate security. The visit was funded exclusively by the Foreign Office's US bilateral Superfund and arranged by the Energy, Environment and Resource Security Team at the British Embassy in consultation with British Defence Staff at the Embassy and the British-American Parliamentary Group in the UK.

The delegation visited Washington DC and met with a range of Administration officials from various agencies with an interest in climate security issues and with Members of Congress on relevant committees in both Houses. They also travelled outside of Washington D.C. to the US Naval Station in Norfolk, Virginia, to discuss climate security and military readiness as well as undertook calls with Virginia state politicians and officials to discuss how energy and climate security challenges were being approached at state level.

2nd November

At the request of the British Embassy in Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for the Lt. Governor of Arkansas and guests.

3rd November

Again, at the request of the British Embassy, the BAPG arranged a lunch in the House of Commons for a delegation of US Journalists focused on TTIP. The Journalists met with BAPG Officer and Chairman of the TTIP APPG, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP; Executive Committee member, the Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP; Guto Bebb, MP, Secretary of the TTIP APPG and Julian Smith, MP, Assistant Government Whip. The lunch was funded by the British Embassy.

5th November

The Industry and Parliament Trust (IPT) hosted a breakfast meeting in the House of Commons to discuss the UK-US relationship and explore how trade, exports and travel between the UK and North America could be further promoted, to which Officers and members of the BAPG Executive Committee were invited. The discussion was chaired by the Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint, former Minister of State for Trade and Investment, who was joined by guest speaker Craig Kreeger, Chief Executive of Virgin Atlantic.

6th November

At the request of the British Embassy Washington DC, the House of Commons Overseas Office kindly hosted a tour of Parliament for Christina Stottmann, from the office of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Paul Ryan (Republican, Wisconsin).

7th November

The Medical Musical Group (MMG), a US based medical chorale and symphony orchestra founded by Victor Wahby, a senior physician and a fellow of the American College of Physicians, hosted a British-American Friendship concert in Central Hall, London, on Saturday, 7th November at 7.30 p.m., sponsored by BAPG Joint President, the Lord Speaker, Baroness D'Souza.

9th November

At the request of the North America Department at the Foreign Office, the BAPG assisted in arranging meetings for a US Congressional delegation visiting the UK on a British Embassy sponsored trip focused on TTIP and the financial services. The BAPG arranged for the delegation to meet The Rt. Hon. Mark Field, MP and to hear from Officers of the BAPG and members of the TTIP APPG at a round table discussion. We are grateful to The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP for chairing the meeting, which was also attended by: Guto Bebb, MP; The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble; Mark Pawsey, MP; Emma Reynolds, MP; Adrian Bailey, MP, the Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling and Phil Wilson, MP.

13th November

At the request of the North America Department at the Foreign Office, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a business delegation from the US, consisting of corporate and leisure business who were brought over by the FCO to showcase the UK as a travel destination for both business and tourism.

8th December

The BAPG Administrator met with Scott Dore of the National Audit Office and Crispin Poyser, Clerk of the House of Commons Overseas Office, to discuss the BAPG budget, 2015-16 activities and HOC Overseas Office oversight of the BAPG, as part of its planning enquiries for the 2015-16 audit cycle.

8th December

The BAPG Honorary Secretary and Administrator met with Ms. Samantha Job, Foreign Policy and Political Counsellor-designate at the British Embassy, shortly before she departed for Washington DC. Samantha will be responsible for the bilateral and political relationship and it was recommended by both the Embassy team and the North America Department that she meet with the BAPG for her new role.

8th December

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

21st December

BAPG Executive Committee member, Jack Lopresti, MP, organised a Parliamentary dinner in the Palace of Westminster to celebrate the life of General George S Patton, held on the 70th anniversary of his death, to which Officers and members of the BAPG Executive Committee were invited.

21st December

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for senior professional staff members of the Senate Appropriations Committee who had been involved with the 2015 Annual Conference in Washington DC in July, hosted by the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Thad Cochran. Following the tour, the guests took coffee with the BAPG Administrator in Portcullis House.

10th January 2016

Lady Auriol Moate passed away. Lady Moate had served as the group's Administrator for 23 years. The current Administrator attended Lady Moate's funeral, together with the former Chief of Staff to Congressman Tim Petri, Debbie Gebhardt, who had worked with Lady Moate on several exchange conferences with the House of Representatives when Congressman Petri was chairman of the House BAPG.

12th January

The BAPG Administrator met with Colin Bloom and Cynthia Tran of the Conservative Party Outreach Office at Conservative Party Headquarters to ask for their assistance in securing invitations to the Republican Party National Convention in July. They were happy to assist and committed to reserving two tickets for the BAPG.

12th January

The BAPG Officers hosted the new British Ambassador to the United States of America, Sir Kim Darroch, to lunch in the Palace before he travelled out to Washington DC to take up his post. It was an opportunity for the Officers to brief Sir Kim on the work of the BAPG and the value of the FCO sponsored BAPG specialist delegation visits to the US.

13th January

On the recommendation of members of the BAPG Executive Committee, at its last meeting on 8th December, the BAPG Officers and Baroness O'Cathain met to discuss the principle of sponsorship.

13th January

At the request of the British Embassy, the BAPG arranged two tickets to PMQs for guests of the Chief of Staff of the Republican National Committee (RNC). We are grateful to the Speaker's Office for kindly giving tickets to the Distinguished Stranger's Gallery.

18th January

At the request of the British Embassy Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a contact of the Embassy, Debbie Marshall, a former Senate staffer and lead lobbyist for Chevron Oil.

18th January

At the request of the office of Senator Patrick Leahy (Democrat, Vermont), Vice Chairman of the Senate BAPG, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for the Senator's Press Secretary on the Judiciary Committee, Jessica Brady and partner. We are grateful to Theo Bachrach of Pauline Latham, MP's office and Laura Round of David Warburton, MP's office for taking the tour.

26th January

The Honorary Secretary, together with the Administrator, met with the new Head of the North America Directorate at the Foreign Office, Patrick Reilly, and colleague, Hanno Trayhurn, Head of the US Section, to discuss the possibility of submitting further joint bids to the FCO's Prosperity Fund to fund specialist delegation visits to the US.

2nd February

The BAPG assisted the U.S. Embassy in arranging a briefing at short notice by the American Ambassador to Members of both Houses of Parliament on changes to the US Visa Waiver Programme. The BAPG Honorary Secretary introduced the Ambassador, who together with his Consul General and DHS Visa Chief, informed members of the recent changes

to eligibility for travel under the Visa Waiver Programme. The meeting was well attended by Members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

9th February

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

15th February

At the request of the British Embassy Washington DC, the BAPG hosted two US Congressional delegations visiting the UK on Foreign Office sponsored trips to discuss Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP). The two delegations comprised high ranking staffers (Chiefs of Staff and Legislative Directors) from the House and Senate. They met with BAPG Executive Committee members, the Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally and Christopher Chope, MP, together with the Lord Tugendhat, Chair of the Chair, EU Sub-committee C (External Affairs), and discussed a range of issues including TTIP and energy issues in TTIP.

19th February

Following a request from the North America Department at the Foreign Office, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and meeting with the Leader of the House of Commons and BAPG Government Vice Chairman, the Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP for a high level US Congressional delegation stopping off in London following a four day visit to Gibraltar on a British Embassy sponsored visit. We are most grateful to Mr. Grayling for giving the time and for hosting the delegation in his office.

1st March

At the request of the British Embassy Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a valued contact of the Embassy, Beth Myers, who had been Governor Romney's Chief of Staff in the 2012 Presidential Campaign and is well connected within the Republican party and the 2016 Presidential field. We are grateful to The Rt. Hon. Mark Field, MP, for giving the time to take Ms. Myers on a tour, who was accompanied by members of her family.

3rd March

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and meeting for students from Richmond American International University studying political communications who met with BAPG Executive Committee member, Alan Mak, MP. We are grateful to Mr. Mak for giving the time to meet the students, who very much enjoyed Mr. Mak's account of his selection by his constituency party, subsequent election and current work in Parliament.

8th March

At the invitation of BBC Worldwide, the BAPG co-hosted a preview screening in Parliament of a documentary series on President Obama, titled 'Inside Obama's White House', produced by Ten Alps/Brook Lapping with Al Jazeera America. Despite the screening clashing with a major event to mark International Women's Day, it was well attended and we are grateful to BBC Worldwide for giving the BAPG an opportunity to showcase the series to its member prior to transmission on BBC 2.

9th March

The BAPG Officers met with the Minister Counselors for Commercial Services, Economic Affairs and Political Affairs from the U.S. Embassy to discuss how the BAPG might get the involvement of US business in the group and it's activities.

23rd March

The BAPG had arranged a tour of Parliament for a senior member of staff in Congressman Kenny Marchant's (Republican, Texas) office.

26th March

At the request of the British Embassy Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a good contact of the Embassy, a Democratic Lobbyist and partner.

1st April

Following a request by the American Embassy, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for US Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, and family with the Baroness King of Bow. Secretary Perez was most appreciative of the private tour and the opportunity to meet Baroness King.

Report on the Work of the Group during 2015-2016

The Annual General Meeting of the Group took place on 8th July 2015. The Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, Eleanor Laing, MP, First 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 between April 2014 and April 2015, some 10 Members of Parliament had been to the United States under the group's auspices. This number would have been higher had six members not withdrawn late in the day due to unforeseen scheduling conflicts. Furthermore, the 2014 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference had been brought forward to March 2014, at the House of Representative BAPG's request, owing to the US Midterm Elections later in the year.

During the 12 months to April 2016, 19 members had visited the US during the year under the auspices of the BAPG. This was by way of the following visits:

In July 2015, the Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in Washington DC, at the invitation of the US Senate delegation. The British delegation were led by the BAPG Government Vice Chairman and Leader of the House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, together with BAPG Joint Honorary Treasurer, the Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, who led on the opposition side.

Other members of the delegation were as follows:

Government

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, CH QC (Cons.)
Jack Lopresti, MP (Conservative)
Craig Tracey, MP (Conservative)

Opposition

The Lord Davies of Stamford (Labour)
Seema Malhotra, MP (Labour)
Kevan Jones, MP (Labour)

Hannah Mitchell, the BAPG Administrator, accompanied the delegation.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, would ordinarily have joined the delegation in his role as Honorary Secretary of the group, but unfortunately was unable to go, due to a prior engagement in his constituency.

In Washington D.C., the British delegation visited the German Marshall Fund, the US Department of Defense, the US Department of State, the AFL-CIO and the US Chamber of Commerce.

- At the offices of the German Marshall Fund (GMF), the delegation met with the GMF and several other Washington think tank organisations, including the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Heritage Foundation. The subjects discussed included: Russia and the Ukraine; the challenges in the Middle East; China; NATO enlargement; defense spending; the Balkans; the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).
- At the US Department of Defense, the delegation met with James Townsend, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Policy, to discuss the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR); transatlantic security co-operation; NATO and US-UK defence procurement.
- At the US Department of State, the delegation met with Victor Hurtado, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and Danny Russel, Assistant Secretary of State, to discuss US foreign policy in relation to China and Asia, North Korea, Russia, the Ukraine, NATO, the Balkans.
- At the AFL-CIO, the delegation met with Celeste Drake, Senior Policy Specialist, to discuss the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the view of the unions.
- At the US Chamber of Commerce, the British delegation met with Myron Brilliant, Executive Vice President and Head of International Affairs, and Marjorie Chorlins, Vice President, European Affairs, to discuss TPP and the TTIP negotiations.
- Also in Washington, the delegation met informally with members of the US House of Representatives BAPG delegation, including its Chair, Representative Ander Crenshaw (Republican, Florida), together with representatives of British business, at an event hosted by Diageo in its townhouse.

- On the last day in Washington, the delegation met with Congressman Adam Smith, (D-Washington), Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, in the Rayburn House Office Building, to discuss defence and security related issues.
- Before departing Washington, the delegation visited Lockheed Martin for an update on the F-35 programme.

The BAPG is enormously grateful to the British Embassy in Washington: both for their extensive work in establishing a programme for the Washington visit and for the very generous hospitality given to the delegation which included a useful and informative briefing hosted by the Ambassador, Sir Peter Westmacott, who was joined by Susannah Goshko (First Secretary Political) and Matt Mazonkey (Congressional Affairs Officer) on the first morning of the visit.

On the Wednesday, the Ambassador welcomed the delegation again to his residence at an Atlantic Partnership breakfast meeting chaired by Kurt Volker, Executive Director of the McCain Institute for International Leadership and former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, at which the Lord Howard spoke on US–European relations. The invitation was greatly appreciated by the delegation.

The second half of the programme was kindly hosted by the Senate delegation, whose members were as follows:

Senator Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi), Chair of the Senate BAPG and Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee
 Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont), Vice Chair of the BAPG
 Senator Pat Roberts (R-Kansas)
 Senator John Boozman (R-Arkansas)
 Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyoming)
 Senator Bob Corker (R-Tennessee)
 Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Alabama)
 Senator Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi)
 Senator Roy Blunt (R-Missouri)
 Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin)
 Senator Tim Kaine (R-Virginia)
 Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa)
 Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas)
 Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa)
 Senator Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island)
 Senator Dick Durbin (D-Illinois)
 Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio)
 Senator Chris Coons (D-Delaware)
 Senator David Perdue (R-Georgia)
 Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee)
 Senator Shelly M Capito (R-West Virginia)
 Senator Cory Gardner (R-Colorado)
 Senator James Lankford (R-Oklahoma)

N.B. Not all the Senators were able to attend all three discussion sessions, but in some cases, one or part of a discussion session, according to their interests and availability.

The three discussion sessions, held over the Tuesday and Wednesday in the Senate Appropriations Room, concentrated on the following topics:

1. **US-UK Political Overview**, which included:
 - Overview of the UK and US elections
 - Strengthening transatlantic ties
 - Data interception
 - UK-EU relationship
2. **US-UK Defense/Security Overview**, with particular reference to:
 - Iran in a new era: balance of power in the Middle East
 - Russia
 - China

- Containing regional threats: ISIS and the Taliban
 - Countering violent extremism at home and abroad
3. **US-UK Economic / Energy Overview**, which included:
- Global economic outlook, the Eurozone and Greece
 - Budget austerity vs economic stimulus
 - US/UK energy policy.

Our very extensive thanks are due to the American delegation and foremost to Senators Thad Cochran and Patrick Leahy for the excellent agenda for the meetings and for the very generous hospitality we received; to the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives staff, who worked so hard on the schedule; to the North America Department at the Foreign Office for the helpful written briefings and especially to the British Embassy in Washington DC for the considerable amount of work which they did in setting up meetings in Washington and all that they did to help make the conference an undoubted success.

- Also in July, eight members 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, who had 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. The first five days of the programme was in Washington DC, which coincided with the 2015 Annual Conference, and the two delegations of Parliamentarians came together on the first day to attend a defense related meeting at the Pentagon and later the same evening at a cultural event arranged by the British Embassy.
- In November, in the run up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, three members (originally it was to have been four but one member withdrew at the last minute owing to a family emergency) travelled to Washington DC and Norfolk, Virginia, to engage with US decision makers on energy and climate security issues. The visit was funded by the Foreign Office by way of a bid by the BAPG to the FCO’s bilateral ‘superfund’.

In June, Mr. Speaker graciously hosted a BAPG reception in his State Rooms in honour of the American Ambassador, Matthew W. Barzun, who brought along with him 20 senior members of staff from the Embassy to meet many new Members of Parliament who attended together with returning members to establish contacts and discuss US/UK relations.

In the UK over the year, the BAPG has been able to welcome 13 Members of Congress and one Senator to Westminster as well as two Governors and the US Secretary of Labor. There is an increasing trend for Members of Congress and Senators to travel during the recess periods and we are hugely grateful to those members from both Houses who make themselves available during Parliamentary recess to meet their American counterparts.

There have been several changes in personnel at the American Embassy and at the Foreign Office and we were delighted to welcome the new Minister Counsellor for Political Affairs, Tom Williams, at the Embassy and the new Head of the North America Team at the FCO, Mr. Patrick Reilly, together with the new Head of the US Section there, Mr. Hanno Trayhurn.

Also arranged, have been various tours of both Houses for visiting Americans at the request of the Foreign Office or the American Embassy and a visit by the 2015 Marshall Scholars.

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 US 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 Consulates in the USA for their very great input into the programme 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 now stands at 615 members of whom approximately 71% have a Life Subscription.

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.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
HELD IN THE CPA ROOM
ON WEDNESDAY, 8TH JULY 2015 AT 3:30 P.M.**

The Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, Eleanor Laing, MP, First 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.

1. *Apologies*

The Chair conveyed apologies for absence from Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, together with 31 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 30 to 35, 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 2014 to April 2015 and the Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2015.*

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 The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, Joint Honorary Vice Chairman, to report on the work of the group during the aforementioned period.

Mr. Mitchell thanked Madam Deputy Speaker for taking the chair on behalf of Mr. Speaker. He advised members that the report on the last year was well set out on pages 28 and 29 of the Executive Committee Report.

Members were reminded that the 2014 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference had been brought forward, at the House of Representative BAPG's request, to March 2014, owing to the US Midterm Elections later in the year, which made it difficult for Members of Congress to travel overseas beyond this time. The conference was hosted in London and Kent and full details could be found in the 2013-2014 Annual Report.

During the 12 months from April 2014 to April 2015, 10 Members had been to the United States under the Group's auspices. We always hope to send slightly more than that but six of the members who were coming had to withdraw due to unforeseen diary conflicts/engagements in their constituencies.

The 10 Members who went to the States were sent by means of:

The BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit. In July, four members (out of the original eight members selected) travelled to the U.S. to learn about the U.S. political, electoral and economic systems, as well as to gain insight into current domestic and foreign policy issues. 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.

Specialist Delegation Visit. In September, two members (out of four members originally selected to go) participated in a 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".

Harvard Bi-Partisan Programme for New Members of Congress. In December, four members attended, as observers, the bi-partisan orientation programme for newly elected Members of Congress conducted by the Institute of Politics. It provided a valuable opportunity for the Parliamentarians to engage with 50 new Members of Congress and to learn about major public policy issues such as foreign policy, health care and the Federal budget, via intensive seminars and lectures by prominent scholars and practitioners, from across the political spectrum.

While after the 2014/2015 financial year, the BAPG hosted an excellent reception a few days ago, kindly hosted by Mr. Speaker in his State Rooms, for the American Ambassador, H.E. Hon. Matthew Barzun, who brought along with him some 20 of his heads of department in the American Embassy in London and it was a tremendous opportunity for many new Members of Parliament here to meet all of them and establish firm contacts.

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., which is a role that it is always keen to expand and develop. The group were particularly grateful to Mr. Speaker for generously hosting many of these events in his State Rooms, which US guests greatly appreciate.

The Group's complete list of activities for the year can be found on pages 22 to 27 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 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 expressed his gratitude to the group for having had him as its Vice Chairman over the last three years. He had enjoyed the role enormously and, Douglas Alexander, who had been his co-Vice Chairman and, with whom he was in touch, had also expressed these same sentiments.

Mr. Mitchell finished by expressing on behalf of everyone his gratitude to Hannah Mitchell, an absolutely brilliant administrator of the group, without whom none of this would be possible, and also similarly to his fellow officers, for the skilful way in which they had conducted the business of the group.

The Chair thanked Mr. Mitchell 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 2015 had been sent to all members of the group and they appear on pages 5-21 of the Annual Report of the Executive Committee 2014-2015.

They showed a balance of £73,707 in the Accounts and also showed a substantial increase in the reserves, from £30,000 to £65,000. The reason for that was budget and expenditure was £134,000 in the last financial year and only £81,000 was actually spent, mainly due to a decrease in programme expenditure: the 2014 Annual Conference had been brought forward to March 2014, at the request of the US House of Representatives BAPG because of their mid-year elections; the Annual Reception for the American Ambassador, referred to previously, was deferred until after our General Election and we also, as a result of the General Election, had the last minute withdrawal of some members from the Co-Sponsored Visit and the

specialist delegation visit, owing to unforeseen scheduling conflicts at home. However, there were no significant losses arising from those withdrawals in terms of lost deposits etc.

Administration costs actually decreased by 8%. Operating income remained at a similar level, slightly decreased, due to lower Life Subscriptions. Of course, we are hoping that in this financial year, there will be a substantial increase, with the influx of new members.

We had an increase of Trade Payables, which members may see in the tables, and that is basically employee pension contributions, owing to the Administrator's pension - like all House of Commons pensions - being transferred to the Civil Service Pensions Scheme and there was a period of transition that was experienced as a result of that.

The conclusion of the National Audit Office was:

"The draft accounts presented for audit were of good quality and we are grateful for the co-operation of the BAPG Administrator, Hannah Mitchell, during the audit process." The NAO Director, Parliament, for and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG). The 2014-15 financial statements were signed with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification.

Mr. Spellar was accordingly pleased to move the Accounts for acceptance by the meeting.

The Chair thanked Mr. Spellar and invited any questions on the Accounts or on the Annual Report, of which there were none.

The Chair put to the meeting a formal motion to adopt the Annual Report and Accounts which was proposed by Mr. Spellar and seconded by Lord Anderson and carried unanimously.

The Chair thanked those who had taken the trouble to compile the Annual Report and the Accounts and remarked that it was gratifying to notice what a great year it had been.

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. 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. the Lord Howard of Lympne, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, CBE
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. Ed Miliband, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH

There was unanimous agreement to adopt these names.

The Chair paid tribute to former Vice President, the Lord Molyneux of Killead, who had sadly passed away earlier in the year and would be very greatly missed.

The Executive Committee had also recommended that The Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond, MP, as Foreign Secretary, and The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, who had completed his three year term as Government Vice Chair, both be elected as Vice Presidents, which was received with great enthusiasm.

The Chair put a formal motion to that effect and it was unanimously passed.

The Chair then paid warm tribute to those who had been Officers of the Group during 2014-2015.

The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP, Government Vice-Chairman, had completed the third year of his three year term. He had given the Group a great deal of his time and support over the years, including chairing meetings, leading a delegation to meetings with the Senate BAPG in Hampshire and had always been happy to give both help and advice when asked. The group were enormously grateful to him for all that he had done and sincerely hope that he will continue to take an active interest in its activities in his new role as a Vice President.

The Executive Committee recommends that The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP, Leader of the House of Commons, becomes Government Vice Chair for a term of up to three years, which received unanimous approval.

The Rt. Hon. Douglas Alexander, MP, was Opposition Vice-Chairman, until the General Election, and would have today completed his full three year term had he been returned to Parliament. The group recorded its appreciation of the support given by Douglas in his time as Opposition Vice Chair.

The Executive Committee recommends that Vernon Coaker, MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Defence, becomes Opposition Vice Chair for a term of up to three years, which was received with enthusiasm and approved.

Brian Donohoe, MP, had been the Group's Honorary Secretary until the General Election. Brian would have completed at this AGM seven years of an eight year term, had he been returned. The Group was hugely fortunate to have had such a dedicated and hard-working Honorary Secretary who gave an enormous amount of his time to the Group's affairs. His commitment to the Group over the years had been immense and his advice and experience shall be much missed.

In accordance with rule 8 (b), the Executive Committee recommends that The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, previously Joint Honorary Treasurer to the BAPG, should become the new Honorary Secretary and that The Rt. Hon. Sir Simon Burns, MP, previously a member of the BAPG Executive Committee, should become the new Joint Honorary Treasurer, alongside The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP. There was unanimous approval of these names.

The group were very grateful to Sir Greg, John and Sir Simon for the considerable amount of time they had given and continue to give to the Group's affairs and the hard work that they do is very much appreciated. A formal motion to that effect was passed with unanimous approval.

6 To Elect 18 Members to serve on the Executive Committee 2015-16

The Chair 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 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, one Liberal Democrat, two Labour and one Cross Bencher.

In relation to the election of members from the House of Commons, as we had 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 were elected unopposed to serve on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2016:

Government

Christopher Chope, OBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP
Stephen Hammond, MP
Pauline Latham, OBE, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
Alan Mak, MP

Opposition

The Rt. Hon. Ann Clwyd, MP
Angela Crawley, MP
Michael Dugher, MP
Kevan Jones, MP
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP
The Rt. Hon. Gisela Stuart, MP

The Chair formally agreed these names with unanimous approval.

The Chair paid tribute to members of the 2014/2015 Executive Committee who had retired from the House of Commons at the General Election. They were:

David Heath, CBE
Sir John Stanley
Elfyn Llwyd
Andy Love
Austin Mitchell
David Watts

They had each made valuable contributions to the Group and would be greatly missed.

The Chair also recorded the Committee's thanks to Mark Pritchard, MP who had chosen not to stand for re-election after five years on the Committee. They were most appreciative of the time he had given to attend committee meetings and events and hoped he would continue to take an active interest in the affairs of the Group.

In relation to the House of Lords, as the requisite number of nominations had been received as there were places, the following members were elected unopposed to represent the House of Lords on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2016:

Conservative

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

Liberal Democrat

The Rt. Hon. the Lord McNally

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 Chair formally agreed these names with unanimous approval.

The Chair paid tribute to Lord Sharkey who had served on the Committee for two years. Members were most appreciative of the time he had given to attend committee meetings and events.

7. To Change the Rules of the Group: update of Rule 3

The Chair reported that the BAPG Executive Committee wished to recommend the following amendment to Rule 3 of the 'Rules of the Group' to bring it up to date with the new subscription charges introduced at the start of the new Parliament:

'The Annual Subscription shall not be less than £10 (ten pounds), payable upon joining and thereafter on 1 April in each year. Any member may opt to pay a Life Subscription of £60 (sixty pounds), subject to the other Rules of the Group.'

instead of:

'The Annual Subscription shall not be less than £5 (five pounds), payable upon joining and thereafter on 1 April in each year. Any member may opt to pay a Life Subscription of £40 (forty pounds), subject to the other Rules of the Group.'

It was confirmed to the committee that the change was an update of the rule following the Executive Committee's decision in February 2015 to increase the Group's Annual and Life Subscription charges to coincide with the start of the new Parliament. The Annual Subscription charge of £5 had been in place since February 1984 when the House had set a maximum Annual Subscription charge of not in excess of £5 which had been removed at the start of this Parliament. The Life Subscription charge of £40 had been set in July 2003, with no inflationary uplift in the interim.

There was unanimous approval to change the rule with immediate effect.

8. Any Other Business

The Honorary Secretary thanked Madam Deputy Speaker for presiding at the Group's AGM and reported on activities planned for the future:

- **2015 Annual BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit to the US**
This year's BAPG / U.S. Department of State Co-Sponsored visit to the United States will take place from the 19th to the 28th July. Eight members 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 US 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.
- **2015 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference in the US, 19-23 July**
The 2015 Annual Conference will take place in the US at the invitation of the Senate BAPG, led by Senator Thad Cochran (Republican, Mississippi) and Senator Patrick Leahy (Democrat, Vermont). The Senate Leadership have decided to have the meeting on a smaller scale and hold it exclusively in Washington D.C. While the social events have been cut, we are glad that they have retained the three discussion sessions, as we feel there will be a great deal to discuss, particularly at such an interesting time, six or so months in to a new Congress and at the start of a new Parliament.

The BAPG will also take the opportunity of meetings arranged by the British Embassy, with calls on Members of Congress, various Departments of the Administration and think tanks. The meetings will be primarily focused on defence/security and trade.

- **FCO Superfund Visit to the US**

Following a BAPG bid to the Foreign Office's US Bilateral Programme (Superfund) Budget, the Foreign Office has confirmed a BAPG specialist delegation visit to the US on Climate Change and National Security. The Administrator is working with the British Embassy in Washington D.C. on the detail of the visit and will advertise the visit to members in due course.

- **BAPG / Ditchley Foundation Autumn Panel Discussion Event**

The BAPG, in partnership with the Ditchley Foundation, is to hold a panel discussion event on Wednesday, 28th October at 1.00 pm in the Speaker's State Rooms. All members of the group will be invited to attend. Further details will be circulated in due course. The subject is going to be big data.

The group continues to try to arrange lunches/meetings for Congressional delegations to London and other VIP visitors. Indeed, we are hosting the Governor of Nevada, Brian Sandoval, and accompanying State Officials who will shortly be visiting the UK to explore opportunities in water and aerospace. The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP will be meeting with Governor Sandoval in meeting room 'O' in Portcullis House on Wednesday, 22nd July, at 11.00 hours and members are most welcome to join him.

The Honorary Secretary thanked Andrew Mitchell and fellow Officers, John Spellar and Sir Simon Burns.

Finally, 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 notices on the Whip.

The Chair thanked the Honorary Secretary and commented that it sounded like a very exciting programme ahead. Members were invited to raise any questions or points, of which there were none.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.55 pm