

British-American Parliamentary Group



Annual Report & Accounts 2019-20

(For the year ended 31 March 2020)

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OFFICERS' & MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2019-2020

Joint Presidents	The Speaker of the House of Commons The Lord Speaker
Vice-Presidents	The Rt. Hon. Dame Margaret Beckett, DBE, MP Ian Blackford, MP The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Boothroyd, OM The Rt. Hon. 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 (<i>stood down at the December 2019 General Election</i>) The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, CH, QC The Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt, MP (<i>as from 10th July 2019</i>) The Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, MP (<i>up to 24th July 2019 when he became Prime Minister</i>) The Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling, DL The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mackay of Clashfern, KT The Rt. Hon. Ed Miliband, MP The Rt. Hon. Andrew Mitchell, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Morris of Aberavon, KG, QC The Rt. Hon. the Lord Owen, CH Tom Watson, MP (<i>stood down at the December 2019 General Election</i>)
Chair	The Prime Minister
Vice-Chairs	The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP Nia Griffith, MP
Honorary Secretary	The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP
Honorary Treasurers	Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

House of Commons

Government

Rehman Chishti, MP
Philip Davies, MP
Stephen Hammond, MP
Ranil Jayawardena, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
Alan Mak, MP

Opposition

Douglas Chapman, MP
Yvonne Fovargue, MP
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP
Dame Diana Johnson, DBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. Kevan Jones, MP
Conor McGinn, MP

House of Lords

Conservative

The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble

Labour

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

Liberal Democrat

The Lord Fox

Cross Bench

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

Secretariat: Hannah Mitchell

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee 2019-20 met on: 22nd October 2019; 4th February 2020 and 19th May 2020. The meeting originally planned on 10th December 2019 was cancelled owing to the snap General Election on 12th December 2019*.

The Annual General Meeting, at which the current Executive Committee was elected, took place on 10th July 2019.

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

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL	2/3
Douglas Chapman, MP	1/3
Rehman Chishti, MP	0/3
Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP	2/3
Philip Davies, MP	3/3
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes, GCB, GCVO, QSO	3/3
Yvonne Fovargue, MP	3/3
The Lord Fox	0/3
The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP	2/3
Nia Griffith, MP	3/3
Stephen Hammond, MP	2/3
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP	3/3
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay of Paddington	2/3
Ranil Jayawardena, MP	2/2**
Dame Diana Johnson, DBE, MP	2/3
The Rt. Hon. Kevan Jones, MP	2/3
The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate	1/3
The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP	3/3
Jack Lopresti, MP	2/3
Alan Mak, MP	2/3
Conor McGinn, MP	1/3
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	3/3
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble	2/3

***The Executive Committee would normally meet four times in a year, aside from the AGM, but the meeting planned on 10th December 2019 had to be cancelled owing to the snap General Election on 12th December 2019.**

****Ranil Jayawardena, MP was appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for International Trade in early May 2020.**

PERFORMANCE REPORT

Foreword to the Accounts

Introduction

The British-American Parliamentary Group (BAPG) was formed in 1937 to promote closer relations and understanding between Members of both Houses of Parliament of the United Kingdom and Members of both Houses of Congress of the United States of America by providing opportunities for discussion on problems common to both countries and for the exchange of visits and information. The BAPG Objectives, Activities and Rules were formally adopted on 5 July 1967 and have since been subject to minor amendments, with the latest in 2018.

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 Chair of the BAPG is the Prime Minister. The two Vice-Chairs 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 with no or little prior experience of the US to learn about the US legislative process and the cultural and political influences in US society, run conjointly with the United States Embassy and the United States Department of State, and attendance as observers at a biennial course conducted by Harvard University for newly elected Members of Congress. Also, every four years, during a Presidential election year, members attend the Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions to see Presidential candidate selection.

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

2019-20 has been the most challenging year in recent history for the BAPG. The playing out of Brexit; the Conservative Party leadership contest in July; the snap General Election in December and the emergence of a global pandemic early in 2020 have had seismic impacts on both the UK and the US, with consequent turmoil for politics, business and bilateral relations. Consequently, this year of upheaval has had a host of implications for the BAPG programme of activities and events, particularly in the second half of the financial year.

We are fortunate that the majority of the BAPG visits to the US took place early in the financial year, before 'events' began to intervene. Hence, in late May, four members travelled to the American Midwest, to inquire into how new technologies and financing models had been used to upgrade infrastructure and create smart, accessible, cities and in July, 16 Parliamentarians (plus one staffer) visited Washington DC, by way of two visits: the annual BAPG / US Department of State 'familiarisation' visit to learn about the US legislative process and the 2019 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference at the invitation of the US Senate.

However, we were not successful in re-scheduling the 2018-19 deferred specialist delegation visit to California, to look at both the regulatory and the innovation aspects of electric and autonomous vehicles, due to EU business and then latterly due to the British Consulate Generals Los Angeles and San Francisco not having capacity to facilitate the visit owing to being very busy with other visits and delegations.

Nor were we able to facilitate the Autumn panel discussion event with the Ditchley Foundation, due to the febrile situation surrounding Brexit, at the time.

We would also expect to host the American Ambassador in Parliament at a reception in his honour, but regretfully had to postpone the event, due to the situation with the Coronavirus. We are currently holding a date in November 2020 for the event, agreed with the Ambassador, the House of Commons and our partner on the event, BritishAmerican Business.

A positive development for the BAPG programme has been the establishment of links with Think Tanks with common interests, with the aim of sharing information and partnering on events. At the directive of the BAPG Executive Committee, at its meeting in October, the BAPG Secretariat reached out to Think Tanks with common defence/security and foreign policy interests to explore possible collaborative opportunities. Both the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) and the Global Strategy Forum (Lord Lothian) expressed an interest in working with the BAPG. Prior to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, we had discussed with both organisations, future collaborative opportunities and look forward to picking this up with them again, when circumstances permit.

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

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

Results for the Year

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (page 16) shows that the BAPG had a net operating deficit of £18,808 for the year 2019-20 (in 2018-19 the BAPG had a net operating income of £35,924). The Parliamentary grant for the year was £118,148 (in 2018-19 it was £115,832).

As at 31st March 2020, the BAPG holds £79,048 in reserves (page 17). This includes £45,000 for the deferred Electric and Autonomous Vehicles (EAV) themed specialist delegation visit to California, which the Parliamentary Budget Holders agreed could be carried over to the next financial year 2020-21, to re-schedule at a later date.

While the reserves currently exceed the expected one fourth of maximum annual funding, the BAPG plans to draw down on the reserves in 2020-21 financial year, circumstances permitting.

Prompt Payment Initiative

In line with best commercial practice, it is BAPG policy to pay bills in accordance with contractual conditions. Where no such conditions exist, it aims to pay within 30 days of receipt of goods and services or on presentation of a valid invoice, whichever is the later. During 2019-2020, no interest has been paid to suppliers for the late payment of invoices.

Reduction of Carbon Emissions

In line with government policy, the BAPG used to off-set its carbon emissions from flights via the purchase of Gold Standard Certified Emissions Reduction (CER) credits, facilitated by the Government Carbon Offsetting Facility, under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

UK government policy is no longer centred on carbon offsetting, now focusing on methods to reduce carbon emissions, via: measurement, baseline and continuous improvement/reduction, as well as using greener forms of energy.

The BAPG plans its programme of activities mindful of this policy, through measures such as flying delegates' to the US in Premium Economy, travelling by train internally in the US, where possible, and arranging ground transport with lower polluting vehicles.

Provision of Information to Auditors

As far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the BAPG's auditor, the Comptroller and Auditor General and the National Audit Office (NAO), are unaware. In addition, the Accounting Officer has taken all the steps necessary to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the BAPG's auditors are aware of that information.

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

May 2020

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

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

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

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

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

Governance Statement

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

Governance Framework

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

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

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

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

None of the members of the Executive Committee received a remuneration for their role.

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

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

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

The Financial Memorandum places a responsibility on the Group to ensure that all resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively. During 2011-12, work was done on a new Financial Memorandum, which provided for greater financial reporting to the "budget holders", the Clerks of the Overseas Offices, and limits on reserves. The new Financial Memorandum was in place with effect from April 2012. The Parliamentary authorities undertook a 'light touch' review of the Financial Memorandum in October 2013 and proposed several minor amendments to bring the Financial Memorandum more in line with existing and expected practices. In the Autumn of 2016, in accordance with section 1.2 of the Memorandum providing for a review at least once every three years, the budget holders undertook a further review, proposing several amendments; some merely drafting points, others addressing points from the internal audit review or that had occurred to the Budget Holders independently, which were approved by the Commons Executive Committee, the Commons Finance Committee, the Lords Finance Committee and the grant funded inter-parliamentary committees during 2017. A further review took place in time for the 2020-21 financial year, with contributions invited from the grant funded inter-parliamentary groups (IPGs). The final changes were mostly updates or clarifying points, along with several new House policies included in the annexes, which were reflected across all the IPG FMS.

The Clerks of the Overseas Offices attend meetings of the BAPG Executive Committee to provide assurance to the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords Commission that funding is being disbursed in accordance with the purposes and principles set out in the Financial Memorandum as well as to provide such advice and assistance as requested.

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

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

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

The Group's Governance Activities in 2019-20

The Executive Committee met on three occasions in 2019-20 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 2020-2021; analysed the Group's accounts and the external audit findings for 2018-19 and the Annual Report of the Honorary Secretary, as well as other matters for discussion and endorsement by the Annual General Meeting.

Quality of Data

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

Risk Management

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

The risk register currently identifies 12 risks which fall within the low risk areas after mitigating actions have been taken. The major operational risk is management override of controls. Management is in a unique position to perpetuate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by using its position to override controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. This is mitigated by the segregation of duties: most payments are by cheque (except for Employer and Employee pension contributions, which are required by the Cabinet Office to be paid on-line, and exceptional ad hoc on-line payments, when 'fast payment' is required), which require two of three signatories. Furthermore, there are agreed authorisation/delegation limits on financial expenditure, as detailed in the annex of the Financial Memorandum.

Another area of significant concern, which the BAPG Executive Committee is monitoring, is the future sustainability of the BAPG's long established programme of activities. After five years of no inflationary uplift to the grant (2010-2015), the current base line grant is no longer sufficient to fund the BAPG's traditional programme. This is evidenced from the BAPG's reliance on reserves to make-up the shortfall in budget in 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and again, this year, 2019-20. Indeed, the Group has bid for additional funds in 2020-21, a US General Election year, in order to send two members to each of the US National Party Conventions (which take place every four years, in a Presidential election year) and has cut the number of Members taking part in the annual US government sponsored 'familiarisation' visit as a means to send Parliamentarians to observe the biennial Harvard Bi-Partisan Orientation Programme for New Members of Congress. The only reason the Group's reserves have increased in recent years is due to last-minute cancellations by individual members in visits, the deferment of visits and some savings on individual activities.

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

Personal Data Related Incidents

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

Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance

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

My review of the BAPG's governance is informed by the deliberations of the British-American Parliamentary Group's Annual General Meeting, the decisions of the Executive Committee, as well as the views of the Administrator, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurers of the BAPG, who have day to day responsibility for the governance processes and procedures.

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

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

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

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

May 2020

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

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the British-American Parliamentary Group for the year ended 31 March 2020 under the Financial Memorandum agreed with the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords Commission. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the British-American Parliamentary Group's affairs as at 31 March 2020 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.

Opinion on regularity

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

Basis of opinions

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

We are required to conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the British-American Parliamentary Group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern. I have nothing to report in these respects.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the British American Parliamentary Group's internal control.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the consolidated financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

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

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

Other Information

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

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

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

Matters on which I report by exception

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

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

Damian Brewitt

May 2020

Director for and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General

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

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2020

		2019-20	2018-19
	Note	£	£
Administration Costs:			
Staff costs	3	42,635	40,465
Other administration costs	4	8,910	10,024
		51,545	50,489
Programme Costs:			
Programme costs	5	87,783	31,144
		139,328	81,633
Total Costs			
		139,328	81,633
Income:			
Parliamentary Grant	2	(118,148)	(115,832)
Operating income	2	(1,847)	(1,620)
		(119,995)	(117,452)
Total Income			
		(119,995)	(117,452)
Net Operating Cost/(Income) before Interest and Tax			
		19,333	(35,819)
Bank Interest Received		(648)	(129)
Corporation Tax Payable		123	24
		18,808	(35,924)
Net Operating Cost/(Income) after Interest and Tax			
		18,808	(35,924)

The notes on pages 20 to 24 form part of the accounts.

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 31 March 2020

		<u>31 Mar 2020</u>	<u>31 Mar 2019</u>
	<u>Note</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	7	1,479	947
Cash and cash equivalents	8	82,514	95,174
Total current assets		83,993	96,121
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(4,945)	(4,265)
Total current liabilities		(4,945)	(4,265)
Assets less liabilities		79,048	91,856
Taxpayers' equity:			
General fund		79,048	91,856
Total taxpayers' equity		79,048	91,856

The financial statements on pages 16 to 19 were formally agreed by the Executive Committee on 19th May 2020 and were signed on its behalf by:

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

The notes on pages 20 to 24 form part of the accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows

For year ended 31 March 2020

		2019-20	2018-19
	Note	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating (cost)/ income		(18,808)	35,924
Interest Received		(648)	(129)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions – audit fee		6,000	6,000
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	(532.50)	(188)
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	9	680.50	(2,311)
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		(13,308)	39,296
Cash flows from investing activities			
Net cash outflow from investing activities		-	-
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net cash inflow from financing activities – interest received		648	129
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		(12,660)	39,425
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	95,174	55,749
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8	82,514	95,174

The notes on pages 20 to 24 form part of the accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2020

	Note	General Fund
		£
Balance at 31 March 2018		49,932
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration		6,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		35,924
Balance at 31 March 2019		91,856
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	4	6,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		(18,808)
Balance at 31 March 2020		79,048

The notes on pages 20 to 24 form part of the accounts.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and in accordance with the 2019-20 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM). The accounting policies contained in the FRoM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FRoM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be the most appropriate to the BAPG for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The policies adopted by the BAPG are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

a. Impending application of newly issued accounting standards

In respect of IFRS 16 (Leases), which has been deferred until 1st April 2021, and will be effective for the next reporting period. There will be no impact on these accounts as a result of this standard.

1.1 Non-current assets

Immaterial items of office equipment are written off as expenditure, in full, in the year of acquisition. There have been no new assets purchased in 2019-20.

1.2 Operating income

IFRS 15 (Revenue from Contracts with Customers) is applied as standard and sets out the key recognition and measurement criteria in respect of income.

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

Parliamentary grant income is recognised fully in the year which it is awarded.

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 received from Life Subscriptions is deferred over a period of 10 years (two terms of Parliament) and released on an annual basis.

1.3 Gains and losses

The BAPG does not regularly experience gains or losses but these would be recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

1.4 Taxation

From 6 April 2016, banks and building societies have paid gross (untaxed) interest on savings accounts.

The 2019-20 Accounts show gross interest received of £647.76. As a result, the total tax liability for 2019-20 is £123. (based on a Corporation Tax rate of 19% for 2019-20; 2018-19: 19%).

1.5 Expenditure

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

2. Income

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Parliamentary Grant	118,148	115,832
Annual Subscriptions	1,131	965
Life Subscriptions	552	498
Donations	164	157
Total	<u>119,995</u>	<u>117,452</u>

3. Staff numbers and related costs

Staff costs comprise:

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Wages and salaries	31,106	30,884
Social security costs	3,101	3,099
Other pension costs	8,428	6,482
Total	<u>42,635</u>	<u>40,465</u>

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

The increase in overall cost from 2018-19 financial year to 2019-20 is mainly due to an increase in the Civil Service Pension Scheme employer pension contribution rates, which came into effect on 1st April 2019, following a valuation by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD). The rates have been calculated based on the latest actuarial valuation. They also now include the administration charge for the scheme (0.32%), which was previously paid via monthly contributions and an annual invoice. The net effect is that Employer contributions for have increased from 20.9% to 27.1%.

4. Other administrative costs

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Sundry	851	1,392
Insurance	1,920	1,805
Website costs	139	827
Non-cash items:		
Auditor's remuneration	6,000	6,000
Total	<u>8,910</u>	<u>10,024</u>

The decrease in the website costs is due to the investment in the prior year in migrating the website to an alternative operating platform with cheaper hosting fees. The costs this year do not include the services of a web programmer.

The public liability insurance premium was greater due to the anticipated increase in events and visits to the US on the previous year.

5. Programme expenditure

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference*	35,043	-
Specialist Delegation Visit(s)	17,936	(65)
US 2018 Mid-term Election Event	-	1,672
BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit	34,670	24,425
New Members of Congress Orientation Programme (NMOP)	-	4,225
Hospitality	134	887
Total	<u>87,783</u>	<u>31,144</u>

*There is no figure for the 2018 Annual Conference as it was brought forward to 2017-18 financial year at the request of the US House of Representatives BAPG owing to the 2018 US Midterm Elections in November 2018.

The significant difference in cost for the co-sponsored 'familiarisation' visit is due to the number of participants taking part in each year: with the full contingent of eight in 2019-20 versus six in 2018-19 following two late cancellations.

6. Financial Instruments

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

Liquidity risk

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

Interest rate risk

The BAPG was not exposed to significant interest rate risk.

Foreign currency risk

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

Credit risk

The BAPG was not exposed to any credit risk.

7. Trade receivables and other current assets

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	1,479	947
Total	1,479	947

8. Cash and cash equivalents

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Balance at 1 April	95,174	55,749
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	(12,660)	39,425
Balance at 31 March	82,514	95,174
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	82,514	95,174
Balance at 31 March	82,514	95,174

9. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2018-19</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other Payables	927	699
Deferred Income	4,018	3,566
	4,945	4,265

10. Losses and special payments

There were no losses and special payments in 2019-20 (nil 2018-19).

11. Related-party transactions

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

During 2019-20, the Group entered into related party transactions worth £456.17. This figure comprises: £134.08 paid to the House of Commons Catering Service for the provision of hospitality to BAPG guests; £61.54 for in-house printing

and £260.55 on small gifts for the specialist delegation visit to the US Midwest and the 2019 Annual Parliamentary/Congressional Conference hosted by the US Senate in Washington DC.

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

The Officers and members of the BAPG Executive Committee do not receive a remuneration for their role.

12. Events after the reporting date

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10, post Statement of Financial Position events are considered up to the date on which the accounts are authorized for issue by the Accounting Officer. This is the date of the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General. I confirm there are none and there has been no impact on any valuations as a result of Covid-19.

Activities of the Group

8th April 2019

The BAPG hosted a delegation of women leaders from advanced manufacturing industries across Southeast USA visiting the UK on a Foreign Office sponsored visit to engage with leading UK stakeholders across industry, academia and government, on the issue of women in STEM fields.

The delegation met with BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP and BAPG Executive Committee member, Diana Johnson, MP in the Pugin Room, following a tour of Parliament with the BAPG Administrator.

8th April

The BAPG Administrator met with Debra Shirtcliffe, the Head of Financial Accounting, House of Commons, to discuss preparation of the draft BAPG Accounts 2018-19 for audit.

11th April

The Administrator met with Debbie McGuire, Members' Services Manager, House of Commons, to discuss Members' and accompanying persons' travel insurance when participating in visits under the auspices of the BAPG.

15th April

The LSE US Centre hosted the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, in an evening of conversation with the Centre's Director, Professor Peter Trubowitz. BAPG Officers and Members of the BAPG Executive Committee were invited to attend. The discussion ranged over a wide variety of topics, including: Brexit, the Democratic Party and trade relations with China.

23rd April

The National Audit Office commenced audit of the BAPG Accounts 2018-2019.

23rd April

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

25th April

Chi Onwurah, MP invited the BAPG to join her in hosting Steve Israel, former Member of Congress (New York 2001-2017), Chair of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee and Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and accompanying persons in Parliament. The BAPG organised a tour of Parliament for the guests, after which they met with Chi and BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, over tea in the Pugin Room. Congressman Israel discussed his new role as Director of the new Institute of Politics and Global Affairs at Cornell University and possible areas of cooperation with the BAPG.

26th April

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for the British Embassy based Projects and Corporate Services Manager of the Welsh Government, Erin Weyen, and guest.

7th May

The Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission hosted a dinner in honour of the departing Marshall Scholars at Stationers Hall, to which the Officers and Administrator were invited.

14th May

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

20th May 2019

At the request of the Welsh Government Office at the British Embassy in Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a Congressional staffer and guest from Representative H. Morgan Griffith's office (R-VA's 9th district).

21st May

The BAPG arranged tickets to Ministerial Question Time in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords for students from Montana State University visiting the UK on a Study Abroad Trip following their meeting with four separate MPs.

22nd May

At the request of the US Embassy, the BAPG arranged PMQs tickets for two officers from the US Embassy, courtesy of the CPA.

22nd May

The BAPG arranged a further ticket to PMQs, again courtesy of the CPA, for the chief of staff to Paul Andrew, Harvard's VP of Public Affairs and Communications, a former senior advisor to Gordon Brown.

27-31 May

A specialist delegation visit took place to Chicago, Illinois; South Bend, Indiana and Atlanta, Georgia, to inquire into how new technologies and financing models have been used to upgrade infrastructure and create smart, accessible, cities.

On the delegation's return, a member of the delegation, Dr. Lisa Cameron, MP, successfully applied for an adjournment debate on the findings of the visit, which took place on 24th June 2019 (link to Hansard record <http://bit.ly/2FuWkly>).

3-5 June

US President Donald Trump visited the UK.

4th June

The City of London Corporation hosted a reception event for the Honorable J. Christopher Giancarlo, Chairman of the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), at the Guildhall, who delivered a key note address on 'The Future of Financial Services in London', to which BAPG Members were invited.

17th June

At the request of Rep. George Holding's (R-NC) office, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for a valued contact and accompanying persons.

20th June

A report back took place with three of the four participants of the recent 'Smart Cities' specialist delegation visit to the US Midwest and the British Consul-General of the US Midwest, John Saville, chaired by BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP.

26th June

At the request of the Foreign Office, a tour of Parliament was arranged for key contacts of White House Chief of Staff, Mick Mulvaney.

1st July

The BAPG hosted a tour of Parliament for a US congressional delegation led by Senator Roger F. Wicker (R-MS), Co-Chairman Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). We are grateful to BAPG officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, for giving the time to assist with the tour.

2nd July

The US/UK Fulbright Commission hosted a reception to say farewell to its departing Executive Director, Penny Egan CBE, and welcome her successor, Maria Balinska, to which Members and the Administrator were invited.

10th July

The Annual General Meeting of the BAPG took place.

15th July

The BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for contacts of Rep. George Holding's office (R-NC).

16th July

A pre-departure briefing meeting was held for participants of the upcoming 2019 annual BAPG/US Department of State co-sponsored 'familiarisation' visit to the US, to learn about the US legislative process, with the US Embassy/US Department of State represented by Anne Giles from Cultural Affairs at the US Embassy.

17th July

A pre-departure briefing meeting took place for members of the British delegation attending the upcoming 2019 Annual Parliamentary/Congressional Conference in Washington DC at the invitation of the US Senate. Representatives of the North America Department at the FCO and the Department for International Trade attended the meeting to brief the delegation on the current political and economic landscape in the US, UK/US bilateral relations and foreign policy issues.

17th July

The BAPG assisted the US Embassy with a visit to Parliament by the US Ambassador at Large, John Richmond, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, US Department of State, and accompanying officials.

22nd July

BritishAmerican Business and the City of London Corporation hosted a reception to launch its Trade and Investment Guide to the UK, 'Finding Your Way', to which BAPG members and the Administrator were invited.

21-25 July

The 2019 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in Washington DC at the invitation of the US Senate, led by Senator John Boozman (R-Arkansas) and Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont). As part of the programme, the Senate BAPG arranged a briefing by the outgoing National Director of Intelligence, Dan Coats, and the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European Affairs at the State Department, Julie Fisher. The delegation also took the opportunity of meetings arranged by the British Embassy, with Members of Congress, the Administration, business, unions and think tanks.

21-30 July

The annual BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored 'Familiarisation' Visit to the US took place for eight Parliamentarians with no or little prior experience of America to learn about the US political system at the federal, state and local levels, with emphasis on the role and organisation of Congress.

The participants spent the first five days in Washington D.C., studying the federal system of government and how the various branches of government interact, followed by meetings with key U.S. government departments and congressional counterparts. The middle weekend was spent with a Member of Congress in his/her home district and the final two days were spent in Boston, Massachusetts, examining its state legislature and other issues of interest.

The BAPG funds the transatlantic flights, hotel accommodation and daily subsistence. The US Department of State funds the internal flights and the cost of arranging the programme.

22nd August

The BAPG hosted the Director of the International Department at the AFL-CIO (the US' largest trade union federation), Cathy Feingold, and family on a tour of Parliament. When the Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference is held in the US, the BAPG would look to include a meeting with Ms. Feingold in the programme arranged by the British Embassy outside of the conference.

6th September

The BAPG assisted the US-UK Fulbright Commission in hosting a tour of Parliament for the new intake of American Fulbrighters followed by a Parliamentary discussion with the Baroness Warwick and the Lord Robertson of Port Ellen.

11th September

At the request of the Foreign Office, the BAPG hosted Iowa State Senator and prospective Congressional candidate, Jake Chapman, and Mrs. Chapman, on a tour of Parliament.

19th September

The BAPG hosted a Question and Answer session for the 2019 intake of US Marshall Scholars with the Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate. The Marshall Aid Commission Commemoration Commission wrote afterwards "The session is always one of the highlights of the Marshall orientation and the Scholars commented on what a fantastic experience it was to be able to have a frank discussion with British politicians and how engaging the session was. The feedback from the Scholars was incredibly positive".

25th September

BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, and Administrator, met with Tim Vine and Katie Nixon of the Premier League to hear about the Primary Stars initiative being piloted in the US and possible areas for cooperation between the Premier League and the BAPG.

2nd October

The BAPG hosted a tour of Parliament for a Congressional staffer and guest at the request of Congressman George Holding (R-NC)'s office.

2nd October

The Henry Jackson Society hosted a speaker event with Congressman George Holding who discussed current events in US politics and the prospects for a US-UK trade deal, to which Officers and members of the BAPG were invited to attend.

15th October

The BAPG hosted the US-UK Business Council in Parliament to discuss the latest Brexit developments and future US-UK bilateral economic relations. The Government Vice Chair, The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP, chaired the discussion, attended by members of the BAPG Executive Committee and International Trade Select Committee.

22nd October

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

6th November

Parliament dissolved for a General Election.

11th and 13th November

BAPG Executive Committee members: The Lord Fox and the Lord Kirkhope met a delegation from the California State Senate who were visiting the UK to strengthen legislative ties and to exchange information on a number of key public policy areas. The meeting was hosted at the FCO Offices on King Charles Street by the North American Team. The BAPG also made arrangements for the delegation to be given a tour of Parliament.

27th November

The BAPG Administrator met with Rachel Waites and Ally Batty of The University of Chicago Booth School of Business in London (the graduate business school of the University of Chicago) to discuss possible collaborative opportunities. The Administrator is currently exploring with the University the option of hosting a Q&A with Dr. Randy Kroszner, Deputy Dean for Executive Programs and Norman R. Bobins Professor of Economics, who served as a Governor of the Federal Reserve System from 2006 until 2009 and chaired the committee on Supervision and Regulation of Banking Institutions and the committee on Consumer and Community Affairs.

29th November

The BAPG Administrator hosted a tour of Parliament for Jonathan Day and family, Chief of Staff to Congressman Joe Wilson (Republican, South Carolina).

4th December

The Administrator met with the Lord Shinkwin to hear feedback on the 2019 Co-Sponsored 'Familiarisation' visit to the US in the summer.

12th December

British General Election.

13th December

The BAPG arranged two tours of Parliament for good contacts of Senator Lindsey Graham, at the request of the British Embassy Washington DC, and for a contact of BritishAmerican Business from the US Chamber of Commerce.

19th December

State Opening of Parliament.

20th December 2019 – 6th January 2020

Christmas recess

7th January 2020

Parliament returned from the Christmas recess.

15th January

The BAPG hosted an information stand in the Exhibition Corner of Portcullis House for new Members of Parliament. The Administrator reported good interest with new and returning Members joining the Group.

20th January

BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP and BAPG Administrator met with Dr. Karin von Hippel, Director General of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), accompanied by Paul Summerfield, Director of Development, and Caroline Tranter, EA to the Director General's Office, to discuss how the two organisations might be helpful to each other, including possible collaborative opportunities.

21st January

The BAPG Administrator met with the Director, Strategic Partnerships and Events of BritishAmerican Business, Alice Mount, to review the venue options for the annual reception for the American Ambassador, given the Speaker's State Rooms were no longer available owing to planned restoration work (for 12 months), commencing mid-February. *The BAPG had again invited BritishAmerican Business to partner with the Group in hosting the reception, to which senior Executives of the BAB network will be invited to join BAPG members in meeting Ambassador Johnson, who will be accompanied by 20 or so senior members of staff from the US Embassy.*

22nd January

The BAPG Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, together with BAPG Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, and the BAPG Administrator met with the Head of the US Team at the FCO, Jack Fulford, and colleague, Andrew Trueman, from the Prosperity Team, to discuss the BAPG programme of visits to the US planned in 2020 including visits which the BAPG would particularly welcome the FCO's assistance with.

29th January

At the request of the US Embassy, the BAPG arranged four tickets to PMQs for the new Deputy Head of the Political Section at the Embassy, Jason Donovan, and colleague, Abyssinia Lissanu, along with two visitors from Washington DC (guests of the Middle East specialist in the Political Section at the Embassy, Munir Madyan, who included, Josh Hsu, the Policy Director to the former Democratic Presidential candidate Senator Kamala Harris).

4th February

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

4th February

Following the Executive Committee meeting, the Honorary Secretary, together with the Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, and the BAPG Administrator, met with the Lord Lothian (Michael Ancram) and Jacqueline Jinks, respective Chair and Director of the Global Strategy Forum, to discuss possible areas of collaboration and upcoming opportunities.

11th February

The BAPG Administrator met with the Lord Cromwell, who wished to learn more about the BAPG and its activities, with a view to joining the Group.

12th February

The BAPG Administrator met with Anne Lieberman, the Parliamentary Engagement Lead at the Department for International Trade, to discuss the work of DIT and the BAPG and how they may be supportive of each other.

13th February

Following a meeting with RUSI to discuss possible areas of cooperation between the two organisations, the Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, was invited to take part in an off-the-record roundtable discussion with Richard Fontaine, Chief Executive Officer, Center for a New American Security, entitled '2020 and the Path Ahead for U.S. Foreign Policy', held in the Council Room at RUSI.

Richard Fontaine was previously foreign policy advisor to Senator John McCain and worked at the State Department, the National Security Council, and on the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

17th February

At the request of the Trade Team at the British Embassy in Washington DC, the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament and meeting with BAPG members for a delegation of senior Hill staffers, mainly representing the two committees of jurisdiction on trade policy (Senate Finance and House Ways and Means), who were visiting the UK on a FCO sponsored trade focused mission.

We are grateful to Julia Lopez, MP, The Lord Fellowes and the Lord Fox for giving the time to meet the delegation during a Parliamentary recess. We are also delighted that there was an opportunity for the delegation to engage and compare notes with clerks in the Lords and the Commons who work on trade scrutiny for committees while they were in London.

The delegation also met officials at: DIT, DEFRA, BEIS, HMT and a few business associations, before travelling to Scotland, for a site visit at a distillery and other meetings with Scottish industry.

29th February

At the request of the US Embassy, the BAPG hosted the United States Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer, and accompanying staff and family members on a tour of Parliament. The Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, conducted the tour with the support of the BAPG Administrator. Secretary Lighthizer wrote afterwards to Mr. Spellar that "it was one of the highlights of his visit to London".

4th March

The LSE hosted a roundtable event titled 'Shaping America's Future' about the results of 'Super Tuesday', as part of the LSE Festival 2020, 'Shape the World', to which BAPG officers and members were invited to attend.

5th March

The BAPG hosted a visit by the US-UK Business Council, arranging for the delegation to observe International Trade Questions from the Commons Gallery, followed by a meeting with BAPG members and members of the International Trade Select Committee, to discuss the future bilateral trade talks between the US and the UK and also more broadly the views on the wider US-UK relationship (Huawei/5G/ digital tax, Airbus subsidy tariffs/retaliation, cooperation on WTO reform, to name some). The delegation had just spent three days in Brussels and it was an opportunity for the Parliamentarians to hear from the delegation what they had learned while there, including views on the UK-EU relationship.

6th March

The BAPG Administrator hosted the former Chief of Staff to Congressman Tom Petri (R- Wisconsin) and longstanding friend of the BAPG, Debbie Gebhardt, to dinner.

10th March

The BAPG Administrator together with the leads in the Secretariats of the other three grant funded Inter-Parliamentary Groups (IPGs) met with the Yeoman Usher, the Black Rod and the Serjeant at Arms, joined by the Clerk of the Commons Overseas Office, to discuss the proposed revised passes for the IPGs.

13th March

At the request of Rep. George Holding (R-North Carolina), the BAPG arranged a tour of Parliament for Connor McCarthy and guests, the son of the US House of Representatives Minority Leader, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-California).

The BAPG also made arrangements to host other US guests later in March, including a visit by a high ranking US military delegation, as well as officials from the US Embassy, which were all subsequently cancelled due to the Coronavirus crisis and implementation of social distancing measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Report on the Work of the Group during 2019-2020

The Annual General Meeting of the Group took place on 10th July 2019. BAPG Joint Honorary Treasurer, Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP, took the chair, in the absence of the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. John Bercow, MP, who had to preside at a debate in the Commons Chamber.

It was reported that between April 2018 and April 2019, there had been no Annual Conference during the year, as the 2018 Annual Conference had been brought forward to the 2017-18 financial year, at the request of the US House of Representatives BAPG, due to the US Midterm elections in November 2018. In the 12 months to April 2019, Parliamentary business was dominated by the debate on the UK's departure from the EU, which had a consequence for overseas visits, with the Whips requiring members to remain in Westminster. As a result, the BAPG had to postpone two planned specialist delegation visits to the US to the following financial year (with the approval of the Budget Holders) and it was not possible to field the full contingent of members to Harvard to observe the Bi-Partisan New Members of Congress Orientation Programme. The end effect was that we had fewer members travel to the US in this year, with only seven out of the original 20 planned.

April 2019 to April 2020 was another tumultuous year, dominated by events, with the playing out of Brexit; the Conservative Party leadership contest in July; the snap General Election in December and the emergence of a global pandemic early in 2020. This particularly impacted the BAPG programme in the second half of the financial year, with the postponement of events and the deferment (for the third time) of the Electric and Autonomous Vehicles specialist delegation visit to California. All in, the BAPG sent 20 out of the original 26 members planned, to the US.

These were by way of the following visits:

In late May, four Members travelled to Chicago, Illinois; South Bend, Indiana and Atlanta, Georgia, to inquire into how new technologies and financing models had been used to upgrade infrastructure and create smart, accessible, cities. The programme was arranged by the British Consulate Generals Chicago and Atlanta in consultation with the BAPG.

On the delegation's return, a member of the delegation, Dr. Lisa Cameron, MP, successfully applied for an adjournment debate on the findings of the visit, which took place on 24th June 2019 (link to Hansard record <http://bit.ly/2FuWkly>).

In late July, the 2019 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place in Washington DC, at the invitation of the US Senate BAPG. The British delegation was led by BAPG Opposition Vice Chair, Nia Griffith, MP. BAPG Government Vice Chair, The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP, was not able to take part, nor any other Minister, due to the Conservative Party leadership elections at the time, the result of which was announced three days into the visit.

Other members of the delegation were as follows:

Government

Adam Holloway, MP
Nigel Huddleston, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble

Opposition

The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay of Paddington (Labour)
The Rt. Hon. David Lammy, MP (Labour)
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP (Labour)

Hannah Mitchell, BAPG Secretariat, accompanied the delegation.

The BAPG Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, would ordinarily also have accompanied the delegation ex-officio, but wasn't able to go, due to an unforeseen diary conflict.

In addition to the meetings with the Senate BAPG, which took place over one and a half days, the British delegation also took the opportunity of meetings arranged by the British Embassy (over two days), with: The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the BritishAmerican Business Association (BAB), the US Chamber of Commerce, the US State Department, the Congressional

Budget Office (CBO), Members of Congress and professional staff on trade, foreign policy and defence related House committees.

- At the AFL-CIO, the largest federation of unions in the United States, the delegation met with Catherine Feingold, Director International Policy, and discussed the US economy; the US administration's current economic policy; the United States-Mexico-Canada (trade) Agreement (USMCA) and considerations for a future US/UK bilateral trade agreement.
- At the offices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a bi-partisan foreign policy think tank, Scott Kennedy, the Freeman Chair of China Studies, hosted a working lunch with colleagues for the BAPG delegation. The subjects discussed included: current US thinking on China; the US perspective of the UK's policy on China; China's human rights infringements; China's involvement in Africa and the Caribbean.
- On the Hill, the delegation met with Democratic professional staff from the House Ways and Means Committee and discussed the progress of recent USMCA trade talks in Mexico and key concerns; the Democrats' prerequisites for agreeing a US/UK bilateral trade deal (1. upholding the Good Friday Agreement in the final UK / EU withdrawal agreement; 2. A clear framework for trade between UK/EU); possible time frame for agreeing US/UK bilateral trade deal; US trade relations with China.
- At the offices of BritishAmerican Business Association, the British delegation met with representatives of BT, Rolls Royce and the CBI. The Association discussed with the delegation US business concerns and priorities in respect of a future US/UK bilateral (free) trade agreement.
- At the US Chamber of Commerce, the delegation met with the US-UK Business Council, headed by Marjorie Chorlins and Garrett Workman. They were joined by senior representatives from Conoco Phillips, Fedex, Jaguar Land Rover, JP Morgan Chase, MetLife and the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG). They discussed the US Chamber of Commerce's view on current US trade policy; the Chamber's objectives; its input into US/UK trade negotiations; latest political events in the UK and the status of Brexit; the prospects for a No Deal Brexit; business planning for a No Deal; regulators input into trade negotiations; the potential opportunities of a US/UK bilateral trade agreement (financial services and flow of data); US business community view on Huawei issue; the prospects of a digital services tax in the UK; US auto tariffs and the likely timing of a British General Election.
- The British Embassy also arranged for the delegation to meet with the Deputy Director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Mark Hadley, who explained the work of the CBO, producing independent analyses of budgetary and economic issues to support the Congressional budget process. There was a lengthy discussion about the sustainability of the US federal budget deficit, forecast to hit \$1.103 trillion in fiscal year 2020.
- Back on the Hill, the British delegation met with the Professional Staff (Democrat and Republican) of the House Armed Services Committee, who outlined the committee's work and resources and current thinking on: Huawei, China, the Foreign Agent Registration Act and the US' withdrawal from the JCPOA/Iran nuclear deal.
- The delegation went on to meet the Republican professional staff, including the Chief Counsel, of the House Ways and Means Committee. The staff discussed with the Parliamentarians their hopes for a comprehensive trade agreement with the UK; referenced the USMCA as a model for future trade deals; outlined areas of concern or possible contention; expressed interest in moving quickly to agree a deal in the transition period as the TPA expires in July 2021.
- The Parliamentarians also met with professional staff (Republican and Democratic) of the House Foreign Relations Committee who briefed the delegation on the committee's work and current focus.
- The final meeting of the visit was with the co-chairs of the House of Representatives UK Caucus: Rep. George Holding (R- North Carolina); Rep. Joe Wilson (R-South Carolina) and Rep. Ron Kind, (D-Wisconsin) to discuss international trade (in particular the USMCA trade talks in Mexico), foreign policy and defence and security related issues.

The BAPG is enormously grateful to the British Embassy in Washington DC: both for their extensive work in establishing a programme for the Washington visit and for the useful and informative briefing on the first morning of the visit hosted by the Deputy Ambassador, Michael Tatham, who was joined by James Hooley (First Secretary Political) and Grant Kerr (Chief Congressional Affairs Officer) on the first morning of the visit.

The second half of the programme was kindly hosted by the Senate delegation. The following Senators took part in the exchange:

Senator John **Boozman** (R-Arkansas), Chair of the Senate BAPG
Senator Patrick **Leahy** (D-Vermont), Vice Chair of the Senate BAPG
Senator Charles **Grassley** (R-Iowa)

Senator James **Inhofe** (R-Oklahoma)
Senator Debbie **Stabenow** (D-Michigan)
Senator Richard **Burr** (R-North Carolina)
Senator Robert **Casey** (D-Pennsylvania)
Senator Sheldon **Whitehouse** (D-Rhode Island)
Senator Roger **Wicker** (R-Mississippi)
Senator Dr. Bill **Cassidy** (R-Louisiana)
Senator Doug **Jones** (D-Alabama)
Senator Cindy **Hyde-Smith** (R-Mississippi)
Senator Rick **Scott** (R-Florida)

There were 13 Senators in total: eight Republican Senators and five Democratic Senators.

The exchange took place over one and a half days with the majority of the discussions held in the Senate Appropriations Room in the Capitol, excepting a briefing at the US Department of State, hosted by Julie Fisher, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

The Parliamentary delegation discussed with the Senators the following items:

- Huawei's involvement in the deployment of future 5G networks in the UK;
- US thinking on China;
- Overseas aid;
- The state of the 'Special Relationship'
- The prospects for a future US/UK bilateral trade deal and potential areas of difficulty;
- Trade tariffs;
- The possibility and practicality of taxing and regulating the giant internet companies;
- The rise of populism;

The briefing at the US Department of State from Julie Fisher and colleagues in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs covered:

- The Special Relationship and the value of collaboration between the two countries;
- The activities of revisionist powers and US policy;
- The de-militarisation of North Korea.

The British delegation were also invited to brief the US hosts on recent political events in the UK and the prospects going forward.

In the final discussion session with the US Senate BAPG, the British delegation heard from the outgoing National Director of Intelligence, Dan Coats, who gave a briefing on current US security concerns and areas of focus, principally Chinese and Russia infiltration activities.

As part of the programme, the Senate BAPG generously organised a memorable reception and dinner at the Smithsonian Castle (the Smithsonian Institution Building), of which Senators Boozman and Leahy are both regents, with a welcome address by the Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie Bunch, and brief history from Dr. Richard Kurin, Smithsonian Ambassador at Large, over dinner .

The meetings concluded with a farewell luncheon in the beautiful Members Room of the Library of Congress, where guests heard from Dr. Carla Hayden, the Librarian of Congress.

Our very extensive thanks are due to the American delegation and foremost to Senator John Boozman and Senator 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 DC and all that they did to help make the conference an undoubted success.

In the same week the 2019 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference took place, eight Parliamentarians with no or little prior experience of the US, spent five days in Washington DC, as part of the US government sponsored 'International Visitor Leadership Programme' to learn about the American political system at the federal, state and local levels. The delegation then split up and spent the middle weekend with a Member of Congress in their congressional district before re-convening for the final two days in Boston to learn about the state system of government.

We would normally host an autumn panel discussion event with The Ditchley Foundation, but given the febrile situation around Brexit at the time, decided to postpone.

We would also expect to host the American Ambassador in Parliament at a reception in his honour, but regretfully had to postpone the event, due to the situation with the Coronavirus. We are currently holding a date in November 2020 for the event, agreed with the Ambassador, the House of Commons and our partner on the event, BritishAmerican Business.

Over the year, the BAPG has been able to arrange lunches for visiting VIPs from the United States and various tours of both Houses at the request of the Foreign Office, the American Embassy or directly from the offices of US legislators. Arrangements were also made for the 2019 Marshall Scholars and the 2019 US Fulbright Scholars to visit Parliament and afterwards meet with Parliamentarians for a question and answer exchange.

Contact with the United States Embassy in London has been well maintained throughout the year and a significant part of our programme is dependent on good liaison with both the 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 in Washington D.C. and the Consulates across the USA for their very great input in to the programmes arranged for our delegations. We are grateful for all their very considerable help that they give to the BAPG thereby enabling us to maintain our programme from year to year.

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

Members may wish to be reminded that information about the Group's forthcoming activities can be found on the All-Party Whip from time to time. We also e-mail members 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 bagp@parliament.uk. The Group's office is currently at Richmond House on the Parliamentary estate.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
HELD IN THE JUBILEE ROOM
ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH JULY 2019 AT 3.30 P.M.**

The BAPG Joint Honorary Treasurer, Sir Christopher Chope, MP, OBE, took the chair in the absence of the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. John Bercow, MP, who had to preside at a debate in the Commons Chamber.

The Chair welcomed everybody to the AGM.

1. *Apologies*

The Chair conveyed apologies for absence from the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Speaker, together with 28 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 35-40, were approved and signed as a true record.

3. *Matters Arising*

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

4. *To Receive the Annual Report from the Executive Committee for April 2018 to April 2019 and the Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2019*

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 Nia Griffith, MP, BAPG Opposition Vice Chair, to report on the work of the group during the aforementioned period.

Nia Griffith thanked the chair and advised members that the report on the last year was well set out on pages 33-34 of the Annual Report.

During the 12 months to April 2019, there was no Annual Conference, because it had in fact been brought forward to February 2018, at the request of the US House of Representatives, due to the US midterm congressional elections in November 2018, which made overseas travel difficult for Members of Congress in the run-up.

As Members know, in the 12 months to April 2019, Parliamentary business has been dominated by the debate here on the UK's departure from the EU, which has impacted on the overseas visits, with the Whips in both Houses often requiring Members to remain in Westminster at quite short notice. This has meant that the Group has had to postpone two planned specialist delegation visits to the US and also has not been able to field the full contingent of Members to the Harvard Bi-Partisan Orientation Programme for newly elected Members of Congress. The result has been that we have had fewer members travel to the US this year with only seven members out of the original 20 planned visiting the US under the auspices of the Group.

These were by means of: (1) The annual US government sponsored 'International Visitor Leadership Programme' (IVLP) in July 2018, when six out of an original eight Parliamentarians (two cancelled late in the day owing to unforeseen diary conflicts), with no or little prior experience of the US, went to the United States with the Group to learn about the US political system at the federal, state and local levels. The Opposition Vice Chair remarked that she had had very positive feedback from some of the participants on that; (2) The already mentioned Harvard Bi-Partisan Orientation Programme for New Members of Congress in early December, when one BAPG member out of an original four selected, attended the biennial programme conducted by the Institute of Politics. *(The visit coincided with the EU withdrawal debate and vote on the programme motion).*

Throughout the year, the BAPG has partnered with organisations with common interests to co-host events for its members:

In September 2018, the BAPG partnered with the US-UK Fulbright Commission, to host a reception in the Speaker's State Rooms to mark the 70th anniversary of the signing of the treaty which created the US-UK Fulbright Commission.

On the eve of the 2018 US Midterm Elections, 5th November, the BAPG partnered with the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library in hosting a panel discussion on 'What to look for at the US Midterm Elections'.

Later in November, the BAPG partnered with the Ditchley Foundation in hosting a panel discussion event on the theme of the 'The Special Relationship in the AI Age', exploring how the UK can capitalise on its strengths to become a leading country in the next stage of the technological revolution and in AI in particular.

In February 2019, the BAPG partnered for the third year running with British-American Business in hosting a reception for the American Ambassador, H.E. Hon. Robert Wood Johnson, who was accompanied by a team of his key staff.

All these events were held in the splendid surroundings of the Speaker's State Rooms, for which we are most grateful to Mr. Speaker.

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

Arrangements were also made for the 2018 Marshall Scholars intake to visit Parliament and meet with a Member of Parliament for a Question and Answer exchange.

Members were referred to the Group's complete list of activities for the year on pages 25 to 32 of the Annual Report. They show the contribution the Group has made over the year to promoting good relations with the US and the role which the Group has played in the programmes of American visitors.

Ms. Griffith 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. We are very grateful for all of their considerable help that they give us enabling us to maintain our programme from year to year.

Appreciation was also expressed to Members who kindly provide Gallery tickets or special permits for visiting Americans.

Finally, Ms. Griffith thanked Hannah, the Administrator, for absolutely outstanding work, without whom we couldn't have done a fraction of what had been achieved this year and she had certainly been a great help to her in her first year in the role as Joint Honorary Vice Chair.

Members were reminded that full details of the Group's activities can be found on the All-Party Whip and through Members' emails.

The Chair thanked the Vice Chair and invited any questions or comments.

Lord Jopling expressed disappointment at hearing that only one out of a potential four Members attended the Harvard programme to meet and to spend a good time with newly elected Members of the United States Congress. He had initiated the programme between 20 and 30 years ago and "whereas a number of other countries around the world had been as jealous as cats for the programme we have had and nobody else has

had I would hate to see it disappear". He understood that there might have been a whipping problem for getting Members of the House of Commons but when he negotiated it was for Parliamentarians and therefore he could see no good reason why Members of the House of Lords who are new to the political process could not also be included. He asked for the committee to look into this because he thought it one of the most valuable things which this group does and he could name a number of very close personal relationships between our Members and Members of the House in Washington and hate to see it collapse.

The BAPG Honorary Secretary, Sir Greg Knight, MP, commented that he agreed with everything Lord Jopling had said. It was entirely due to the whipping issues we have had and the unusual nature of the business that we are still grappling with that we are in this position. Peers are eligible to apply and we do consider them but we can only consider sending someone who has asked to go in the first place. Sir Greg confirmed with Hannah that we didn't have a surfeit of Peers on this occasion and that he can give Lord Jopling the reassurance he seeks that it isn't a case of this deteriorating, it was a one-off situation this year due to very unusual circumstances. It is valued very highly and we expect to see a full take-up in future years.

Lord Jopling responded that on the occasion where there is a shortfall, he was sure that there were a number of Peers, Ming Campbell, Margaret Jay here and himself, who would be delighted to trawl the House of Lords, if there was a shortage, in trying to find newly appointed Members of the House of Lords who would be interested.

Sir Greg confirmed we do put the visit on the All-Party Whip, but it was a very generous offer and we will take Lord Jopling up on it, should the need arise in future.

Lord Patel agreed and was concerned that it wasn't taken up. He was also a new Member of the House of Lords and was also interested and had expressed his interest. So if there were opportunities there and someone couldn't take it up why wasn't it that someone asked him for example or others who could have taken up the places?

The Chair asked if the Administrator wanted to say something and she confirmed that the cancellations were very last minute. The Members were primed to go and then they were told they couldn't, at the very last minute. It was unfortunate.

John Spellar commented that presumably if Members who were due to go couldn't go then other Members of the Commons wouldn't be able to go as well because this was to do with the Government whipping. Sensibly, they should have allowed Members from the government and opposition to go paired, but that was not how this came out. His recollection was that pairing was blocked off.

Sir Greg added it was unique because it was the issue of Brexit. The Whips took the view that you can't assume that pairing is pairing like the opposite view and that it would interfere with their numbers. It was very unfortunate and that is why we hope this issue isn't ongoing after the 31st October.

The Chair commented that there are lots of former chief whips in this room and the good news is that having been told that we were not going to be able to have pairing for the last week of July, for the forthcoming visit, we have now been told that it will be possible to pair then and that suggests that the much rumoured vote of no confidence in the last week of July is not now going to be scheduled for that particular time. That is good news.

The Chair invited any other questions, of which there were none. He asked for somebody to formally propose the adoption of the Annual Report, with John Spellar proposing and the Lord Kirkhope seconding it.

The Chair then called upon The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, Joint Honorary Treasurer, to move the adoption of the accounts. The accounts had been circulated to all members of the group and appear on pages 5-24 in the Annual Report of the Executive Committee 2018-2019.

John thanked the Chair and remarked as Nia had taken a number of the issues that he would cut it fairly short.

He first drew members attention to page 3, that the National Audit Office had signed off the 2018-19 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. Secondly, he drew members attention to the Group's appreciation of the grant received each year from the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission, of course, without which, it wouldn't be able to function. But also to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who had not just been helpful in arranging programmes, but also in financing some of the specialist programmes that actually contribute to our reach inside the United States and not just on the two coasts, which he thought had been an important development and one which we hoped to continue with them. Of course, one or two of those had either been postponed or cancelled, as Nia rightly mentioned, which has led then to an increase in our reserves, but we are hoping to reinstate some of those programmes, which will of course then bring it more into balance. So that's why members are seeing an increase in our reserves, but we are not treating that just as long term, but as part of ongoing sustainability. With that he wished to move the accounts.

The Chair invited any questions on the accounts, of which there were none. The Chair moved that a formal motion, proposed and seconded, should be passed accepting the Accounts, with Philip Davies as proposer and Afzal Kahn as seconder.

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

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

The Rt. Hon. Dame Margaret **Beckett**, DBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. Ian **Blackford**, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness **Boothroyd**, OM
The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan **Smith**, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Falconer** of Thoroton, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Hague** of Richmond
The Rt. Hon. Philip **Hammond**, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Howard** of Lympne, CH, QC
The Rt. Hon. Boris **Johnson**, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Jopling**, DL
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Mackay** of Clashfern, KT
The Rt. Hon. Ed **Miliband**, MP
The Rt. Hon. Andrew **Mitchell**, MP
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Morris** of Aberavon, KG, QC
The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Owen**, CH
Tom **Watson**, MP

And that, The Rt. Hon. Jeremy **Hunt**, MP, in his position as Foreign Secretary, be elected as a Vice President, as is the tradition with Foreign Secretaries.

The Chair put forward a formal motion to approve these names, proposed by John Spellar and seconded by Nigel Evans.

The Chair then paid warm tribute to those who had been Officers of the Group during 2018-19 and asked for formal ratification of their appointment in their respective roles.

Both **The Rt. Hon. Sir Liam Fox, MP**, BAPG Government Vice Chair and **Nia Griffith, MP**, BAPG Opposition Vice-Chair, had completed the first year of three-year terms. We are most grateful to them for the interest which they have both shown in the group in spite of their very many other commitments. We are particularly delighted that Nia is able to take part in meetings with the US Senate later this month in Washington DC. Sadly, Liam Fox is not now able to do it.

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

We are also extremely pleased that **The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP** is content to continue, as am I (**Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP**), in our respective roles as Joint Honorary Treasurers. We, I think particularly John, give a considerable amount of time to the Group's affairs and we much appreciate his hard work.

A formal motion to approve the Officers was passed unanimously.

6 To Elect 18 Members to serve on the Executive Committee 2019-20

The Chair advised that under 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, two Labour, one Cross Bench and one Liberal Democrat.

In relation to the election of members from the House of Commons, as only six nominations had been received from the Government Party for the Committee this year, the following members from the Government Party had been elected unopposed to serve on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2020:

Government

Rehman **Chishti**, MP

Philip **Davies**, MP

Stephen **Hammond**, MP

Ranil **Jayawardena**, MP

Jack **Lopresti**, MP

Alan **Mak**, MP

As we had received seven nominations from the Opposition Parties for the Committee this year, it will be necessary to have a ballot to decide the six members of the Opposition Parties. The candidates are:

Opposition

Douglas **Chapman**, MP (SNP)

Yvonne **Fovargue**, MP (Labour)

Kevan **Jones**, MP (Labour)

The Rt. Hon. John **Healey**, MP (Labour)

Diana **Johnson**, MP (Labour)

Conor **McGinn**, MP (Labour)

Chi **Onwurah**, MP (Labour)

The Chair confirmed that members of the House of Commons have a vote in the ballot and that ballot will be closed at the end of this meeting. He asked for two Tellers to stay on after the meeting had finished to count the ballot papers, one from the government party and one from the opposition.

In relation to the House of Lords, as we had received the requisite number of nominations as there are places, the following members were elected unopposed to represent the House of Lords on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2020:

Conservative

The Lord **Kirkhope** of Harrogate

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

Labour

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

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

Cross Bench

The Rt. Hon. the Lord **Fellowes**, GCB GCV O QSO

Liberal Democrat

The Lord **Fox**

The Chair recorded the Committee's thanks to The Rt. Hon. **Clwyd**, MP and to the Baroness **O'Cathain**, OBE, who had both not sought to stand for re-election to the committee, after a combined service of 21 years (11 and 10 years respectively). We are most appreciative of the support which they had given and hope that they continue to take an active interest in the affairs of the Group.

Following the meeting, the votes were counted and the following MPs having received the most votes, were duly confirmed as the MPs representing the Opposition Parties on the committee:

Douglas **Chapman**, MP (SNP)
Yvonne **Fovargue**, MP (Labour)
Kevan **Jones**, MP (Labour)
The Rt. Hon. John **Healey**, MP (Labour)
Diana **Johnson**, MP (Labour)
Conor **McGinn**, MP (Labour)

7. Any other business

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

The Honorary Secretary thanked the Chair and reported that he had been visiting the usual channels on both sides so often that he thought he had been recalled to the Whips office, but we had managed to get agreement that two delegations can go ahead:

2019 BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored 'Familiarisation' Visit to the US, 21st to 30th July

Eight Members of Parliament with no or little prior experience of America will travel to the United States to participate in a US Government sponsored 'International Visitor Leadership Programme' (IVLP) to learn about the US Legislative Process. The programme will open in Washington DC 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 BAPG pays for transatlantic flights, daily subsistence and hotel accommodation. The US Department of State covers all internal flights and ground transport and arranges the programme.

2019 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference, 21-25 July

At the same time of this visit, there will also be another BAPG delegation in Washington DC, attending the 2019 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference, at the invitation of the US Senate, hosted by Senator John Boozman (R-Arkansas) and Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont). The British delegation will hopefully be led by former BAPG Government Vice Chair, Chris Grayling (in the absence of Dr. Liam Fox) and Nia Griffith.

Outside of the meetings with the Senate BAPG, the British delegation will also undertake meetings arranged by the British Embassy, with: Members of Congress, the Administration, business, trade unions, think tanks and political pundits.

Specialist Delegation Visit(s)

In respect to the specialist delegation visit to California, to look at both the regulatory and innovation aspects of electric and autonomous vehicles, Sir Greg advised that we have had to re-schedule and un-schedule this twice, so we have decided to leave rearranging another date until after the 31st October.

Sir Greg thanked his fellow Officers, Dr. Liam **Fox**, Nia **Griffith**, John **Spellar** and Sir Christopher **Chope** for their help and support and indeed all those who have assisted with delegations/visits during the year.

He also remind members 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 asked if there were any questions to the Secretary, of which there were none.

As there was no other business members wished to raise, the Chair reiterated thanks to Hannah Mitchell for all her hard work. It had been a particularly trying year organising events in great detail and then having them cancelled at the last minute and you wouldn't know it.

At the suggestion of Nigel Evans, John Spellar confirmed with Members that a letter of appreciation would be sent to Sir Kim Darroch.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.05 pm