

British-American Parliamentary Group



Annual Report & Accounts 2020-21*

(For the year ended 31 March 2021)

CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Committee Information	3
Performance Report	5
Accountability Report	7
Governance Statement	8
Financial Statements	15
Notes to the Accounts	19
Activities of the Group (not subject to Audit)	24
Report on the work of the Group during 2020-21 (not subject to Audit)	30
Minutes of the BAPG AGM held 16 th September 2020 (not subject to Audit)	31

***The BAPG Accounts 2020-21 have not yet been audited by the National Audit Office (NAO). We understand the NAO plan to undertake the BAPG audit after the main House of Commons and Lords Annual Reports and Accounts have been certified (expected in July).**

OFFICERS' & MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2020-21

Joint Presidents	The Speaker of the House of Commons The Lord Speaker
Vice-Presidents	The Rt. Hon. Dame Margaret Beckett, DBE, MP The Rt. Hon. Ian Blackford, MP The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Boothroyd, OM The Rt. Hon. Sir Iain Duncan Smith, MP The Rt. Hon. the Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC The Rt. Hon. the Lord Hague of Richmond The Rt. Hon. the Lord Howard of Lympne, CH, QC The Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt, 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 The Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab, MP The Rt. Hon. Sir Keir Starmer, MP
Chair	The Prime Minister
Vice-Chairs	The Rt. Hon. Ben Wallace, MP The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay of Paddington (<i>appointed 15th December 2020</i>)
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
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP
Stephen Hammond, MP
Jack Lopresti, MP
Alan Mak, MP (to 21st April 2021)

Opposition
Douglas Chapman, MP
Yvonne Fovargue, MP
Dame Diana Johnson, DBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. Kevan Jones, MP
Conor McGinn, MP
Chi Onwurah, 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 (to 15th December 2020)
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Robertson of Port Ellen (co-opted 9th February 2021)

Liberal Democrat

The Lord Fox

Cross Bench

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes GCB, GCVO, QSO (retired 9th February 2021).
The Lord Darroch of Kew (co-opted 9th February 2021)

Secretariat: Hannah Mitchell

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee 2020-21 met virtually on: 3rd November 2020; 15th December 2020; 9th February 2021 and 18th May 2021.

The Annual General Meeting, at which the current Executive Committee was elected, took place on 16th September 2020.

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

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Anderson of Swansea, DL	0/4
Douglas Chapman, MP	4/4
Rehman Chishti, MP	2/4
Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP	3/4
The Lord Darroch of Kew	0/1
Philip Davies, MP	2/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Fellowes, GCB, GCVO, QSO	2/2
Yvonne Fovargue, MP	3/4
The Lord Fox	1/4
The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling, MP	3/4
Stephen Hammond, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. John Healey, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay of Paddington	3/4
Dame Diana Johnson, DBE, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. Kevan Jones, MP	0/4
The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate	4/4
The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP	4/4
Jack Lopresti, MP	1/4
Alan Mak, MP	2/3
Conor McGinn, MP	3/4
Chi Onwurah, MP	3/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Robertson of Port Ellen	1/1
The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP	4/4
The Rt. Hon. the Lord Trimble	0/4
The Rt. Hon. Ben Wallace, MP	1/4

PERFORMANCE REPORT

Foreword to the Accounts

Introduction

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

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions on travel and social gatherings, it was not possible to facilitate the BAPG's traditional programme of activities in 2020-21 financial year. None of the planned visits to the US were able to take place, in what should have been a busy year for the BAPG, with additional US election related visits. Where possible, virtual meetings were held in place of in-person meetings.

The BAPG Secretariat quickly adapted to the new landscape and arranged a wide-ranging programme of virtual events for its membership as well invitations to virtual events arranged by other organisations with common interests, those of: The Benjamin Franklin House; The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI); the University of Chicago Booth School of Business; the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics; BritishAmerican Business; the Association of Marshall Scholars; the LSE US Centre and the London POTUS Group.

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 normally paid in one instalment, usually in April each year, but due to the situation with COVID-19 in 2020-21 financial year, the House of Commons and the House of Lords each paid their share of the grant in two instalments (in April and October 2020), to allow the Budget Holders and Finance Representatives an opportunity to re-evaluate the total amount after six months, when they knew what the BAPG's spending pattern would be. This enabled the BAPG the opportunity to offset unused funds of £21,500 to send two members each to the National Party Conventions which in the end cancelled their in-person international programmes.

Results for the Year

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (page 15) shows that the BAPG had a net operating income of £71,100 for the year 2020-21 (in 2019-20 the BAPG had a net operating deficit of £18,808). The Parliamentary grant for the year was £120,510 (£118,148 in 2019-20) plus £21,500 specially agreed for the 2020 US National Party Conventions, which in the end was refunded via the second instalment of the grant funding, owing to the Republican and Democratic Parties both cancelling their in-person international programmes.

As at 31st March 2021, the BAPG holds £156,148 in reserves (page 16). This includes £45,000 for the deferred Electric and Autonomous Vehicles (EAV) themed specialist delegation visit to California.

While the reserves currently exceed the expected one fourth of maximum annual funding, the BAPG plans to draw down on the reserves in 2021-22 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 2020-21, 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)

September 2021

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 from the House of Commons 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 updating 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 last 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." There has been no recent work undertaken by the internal audit team on the BAPG.

The Group's Governance Activities in 2020-21

The Executive Committee met virtually on four occasions in 2020-21 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 2021-22; analysed the Group's accounts for 2019-20 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 the Administrator's net pay, which is paid by Standing Order every month; 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.

An ongoing 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 a shortfall in budget in 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2019-20. Also, in 2020-21, the Group had to bid for additional funds over and above its baseline funding in order to send two members each to the Republican and Democratic National Party Conventions (quadrennial) as well as cut the number of members taking part in the annual US government sponsored 'familiarisation' visit so that it could send Parliamentarians to observe the biennial Harvard Bi-Partisan Orientation Programme for New Members of Congress. Although, in the end, these visits did not take place due to Covid-19 and the unused funds for the US National Party Conventions were off-set against the second instalment of the grant funding. 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, 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.

Overall, given the business involvement established in BAPG events, as well as the expected continuation of funding from the House of Commons and House of Lords, we are confident that the going concern assumption remains appropriate for the preparation of the financial statements.

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)

September 2021

The Independent Auditor's Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the British-American Parliamentary Group [To be updated by the NAO]

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the British-American Parliamentary Group for the year ended 31 March 2021 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 2021 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

September 2021

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 2021

		2020-21	2019-20
	Note	£	£
Administration Costs:			
Staff costs	3	43,942	42,635
Other administration costs	4	7,406	8,910
		51,348	51,545
Programme Costs:			
Programme costs	5	0	87,783
		51,348	139,328
Total Costs		51,348	139,328
Income:			
Parliamentary Grant	2	(120,510)	(118,148)
Operating income	2	(1,746)	(1,847)
Total Income		(122,256)	(119,995)
Net Operating Cost/(Income) before Interest and Tax		(70,908)	19,333
Bank Interest Received		(237)	(648)
Corporation Tax Payable		45	123
Net Operating Cost/(Income) after Interest and Tax		(71,100)	18,808

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

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 31 March 2021

		31 Mar 2021	31 Mar 2020
	Note	£	£
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	7	349	1,479
Cash and cash equivalents	8	160,274	82,514
Total current assets		160,623	83,993
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(4,475)	(4,945)
Total current liabilities		(4,475)	(4,945)
Assets less liabilities		156,148	79,048
Taxpayers' equity:			
General fund		156,148	79,048
Total taxpayers' equity		156,148	79,048

The financial statements on pages 15 to 18 were formally agreed by the Executive Committee on 18th May 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:

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

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

Statement of Cash Flows

For year ended 31 March 2021

		2020-21	2019-20
	Note	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating (cost)/ income		71,100	(18,808)
Interest Received		(237)	(648)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions – audit fee		6,000	6,000
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	1,130	(532)
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	9	(470)	680
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		77,523	(13,308)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Net cash outflow from investing activities		-	-
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net cash inflow from financing activities – interest received		237	648
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		77,760	(12,660)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	8	82,514	95,174
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	8	160,274	82,514

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

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	General Fund
		£
Balance at 31 March 2019		91,856
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration		6,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		(18,808)
Balance at 31 March 2020		79,048
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	4	6,000
Net operating (cost)/income for the year		71,100
Balance at 31 March 2021		156,148

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

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and in accordance with the 2020-21 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM). The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be the most appropriate to the 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

IFRS 16 (Leases), which has been further deferred until 1st April 2022, will be effective for the reporting period 2022-23. No impact is expected 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 2020-21.

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 2020-21 Accounts show gross interest received of £237, as a result, the total tax liability for 2020-21 is £45 (based on a Corporation Tax rate of 19% for 2020-21; 2019-20: 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 British American 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>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Parliamentary Grant	120,510	118,148
Annual Subscriptions	995	1,131
Life Subscriptions	626	552
Donations	125	164
Total	<u>122,256</u>	<u>119,995</u>

3. Staff numbers and related costs

Staff costs comprise:

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Wages and salaries	32,052	31,106
Social security costs	3,209	3,101
Other pension costs	8,681	8,428
Total	<u>43,942</u>	<u>42,635</u>

There is one part-time member of staff at the BAPG responsible for the day-to-day administration. The Administrator received a consolidated pay increase of 3% effective from 1 April 2020 in line with the HOC pay award to all staff following pay negotiations with the trade unions. The Administrator's last pay award was in December 2018, with an increase of 1.75%, backdated to September 2018.

4. Other administrative costs

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Sundry	100	851
Insurance	1,163	1,920
Website costs	143	139
Non-cash items:	-	-
Auditor's remuneration	6,000	6,000
Total	<u>7,406</u>	<u>8,910</u>

The reduction in sundry and insurance costs for the financial year 2020-21 is a result of event cancellations due to Covid-19.

5. Programme expenditure

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference	-	35,043
Specialist Delegation Visit(s)	-	17,936
BAPG / US Department of State Co-Sponsored Visit	-	34,670
US National Party Conventions	-	-
Harvard new Members of Congress orientation programme	-	-
Hospitality	-	134
Total	<u>-</u>	<u>87,783</u>

As a result of Covid-19, there has been no programme expenditure during the 2020-21 financial year. All events have either been cancelled or deferred.

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>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	349	1,479
Total	<u>349</u>	<u>1,479</u>

8. Cash and cash equivalents

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Balance at 1 April	82,514	95,174
Net change in cash and cash equivalents	77,760	(12,660)
Balance at 31 March	<u>160,274</u>	<u>82,514</u>

The following balances at 31 March were held at:

Commercial banks and cash in hand	160,274	82,514
Balance at 31 March	<u>160,274</u>	<u>82,514</u>

9. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other Payables	858	927
Deferred Income	3,617	4,018
	<u>4,475</u>	<u>4,945</u>

10. Losses and special payments

There were no losses and special payments in 2020-21 (nil 2019-20).

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 2020-21, the Group did not enter into any related party transactions and 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.

Covid-19 has continued to persist around the world and its full impact is yet to be fully realised. As anticipated, Covid-19 has caused a reduction in expenditure during the 2020-21 financial year and this trend is likely to continue into the 2021-22 financial year.

ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP (not subject to audit)

As has already been stated, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions on travel and social gatherings, it was not possible to facilitate the BAPG's traditional programme of activities during 2020-21. In its place, the BAPG Secretariat organized a wide-ranging programme of virtual events, as well as access to online events arranged by other organisations with common interests.

16th April 2020

Audit planning meeting with the National Audit Office

W/C 20th April

National Audit Office audit of the BAPG Accounts 2019-20.

29th April

The Benjamin Franklin House hosted a virtual event with Philip Davies, Professor Emeritus of American Studies at De Montfort University, entitled 'Reflecting on the US Primaries', to which BAPG members were specially invited. Professor Davies discussed what the primary season holds and reflected on the months since the opening contests in Iowa and New Hampshire. Looking forward he speculated on what to expect from the Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions and anticipated the routes that might be taken to Election Day in November.

19th May

A virtual meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

19th June

The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) hosted a webinar event entitled 'Brexit and the UK-US Special Relationship' at which a panel of experts considered the impact of Brexit on the transatlantic relationship and where post-Brexit Britain will stand in the mid-2020s when the dust had settled. The panelists included: The Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG QC, Distinguished Fellow RUSI and former UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and Amanda Sloat, Robert Bosch Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution and former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southern Europe and Eastern Mediterranean Affairs, U.S. Department of State, moderated by Dr. Karin Von Hippel, Director-General of RUSI. RUSI kindly extended an invitation to BAPG members to attend.

23rd June

The BAPG hosted a live webinar event with Anneliese Dodds, MP, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, in conversation with Professor Randall Kroszner, a former Governor of the US Federal Reserve System 2006-2009, who played a major role in responding to the 2008 Financial Crisis.

Professor Kroszner discussed with Anneliese Dodds the way in which economies are influenced by disparate factors, including trade deals like the US/UK deal and outbreaks like the Coronavirus, and what we can learn from past crises, including the 2008 financial crisis and the Great Depression, in responding to COVID-19.

Professor Kroszner is Norman R. Bobins Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, where he also serves as Deputy Dean for Executive Programs.

25th June

The BAPG Administrator met virtually with the new First Secretary Political Affairs, Jay Porter, who was joined by Justine Lancaster, Political Specialist at the US Embassy, to introduce the BAPG and its activities and discuss possible collaborative opportunities.

8th July

The British-American Parliamentary Group was pleased to host the Minister for Trade Policy, The Rt. Hon. Greg Hands, MP, together with the Director, Americas Negotiations and Strategic Engagement, Department for International Trade,

Oliver Griffiths, who gave an update on the latest round of UK-US trade talks, before taking questions from members present.

13th July

BAPG Officers, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP and The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, together with the BAPG Administrator, met online with the American Ambassador, Robert Wood Johnson, who was joined by the new Head of the Domestic Political Unit at the US Embassy, Jay Porter, and the Parliamentary Liaison at the Embassy, Justine Lancaster.

23rd July

The Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, together with Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, met virtually with the Chair of the US House of Representatives BAPG, Rep. Ron Kind (Democrat, Wisconsin) and Vice Chair, Rep. George Holding (Republican, North Carolina), to discuss matters of common interest and possible opportunities for further engagement.

August

The BAPG traditionally sends two Parliamentarians to each of the US National Party Conventions to see Presidential candidate selection. Unfortunately, it was not possible this year, as the organisers of both Conventions cancelled their in-person international programmes in the weeks running up to the conventions, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, although the Democratic National Convention ran a series of virtual panel discussion sessions, to which BAPG members of opposition/non-government parties who had originally applied to go to the Democratic National Convention were invited to attend.

2nd September

The BAPG Administrator met on-line with the Senior External Affairs Manager at the Department for International Trade, Anne Denton Lieberman, for a catch up and to discuss possible ways DIT and the BAPG could collaborate this Autumn.

4th September

The BAPG was invited by Thames Alive to be involved in a ceremony to sign and seal an illuminated scroll which was to be gifted from British Parliamentarians to US Members of Congress to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower to America. The ceremony was held on the House of Commons Terrace, attended by the American Ambassador, Robert Wood Johnson, together with the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, and BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, amongst others.

The scroll was then transported to Washington DC to be presented to the House of Representatives leadership on 17th November 2020, attended by the House BAPG Chair, Rep. Ron Kind (D-NC), and Vice Chair, Rep. George Holding (R-NC), and observed on-line by representatives of the British Parliament, the City Corporation and Thames Alive.

16th September

Due to continued social distancing requirements on the parliamentary estate, the BAPG's AGM was held exclusively online, when members of the Executive Committee 2020-21 were elected. As more nominations had been received from opposition MPs than there were places on the committee, it was declared that a ballot would be arranged at a later date, when circumstances would allow, to decide the opposition MPs on the committee.

23rd September

The British-American Parliamentary Group normally hosts the annual intake of US Marshall Scholars in Parliament, by way of a tour of Parliament followed by a Question and Answer exchange with a Parliamentarian, which was not possible this year, due to the health pandemic and social distancing requirements.

In place of the visit, BAPG Executive Committee member, the Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate, kindly hosted an online session with this year's intake, answering their questions on the UK political process and prevailing issues. We are most grateful to Lord Kirkhope for giving the time to do the event, which was very much appreciated by the US Scholars and the Marshall Commemoration Commission.

5th October

The BAPG Administrator met on-line with the Senior External Affairs Manager at the Department for International Trade, Anne Denton Lieberman, for another catch-up meeting and to discuss possible collaborative opportunities.

20th October

The BAPG Secretariat held a live ballot in the Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, to decide the six opposition MPs on the BAPG Executive Committee 2020-21. Members of the House of Commons, who were fully paid up members of the BAPG, were invited to cast their vote for the six opposition MPs they wished to elect to the BAPG Executive Committee 2020-21. Proxy voting was available for those members who were not able to be in Westminster. The six candidates who received the most votes were declared elected to the Committee. We are pleased to welcome Chi Onwurah, MP as a new member to the committee.

20th October

The BAPG hosted a live webinar event with Harvard University's Director of Polling, John Della Volpe, who took time out from working on the Biden campaign to do a special session for Parliamentarians, in which he examined the difference between the 2020 and 2016 Presidential election polling, the electoral college and possible alternative simulated outcomes and current polling demographics, with a focus on the Zoomer and Boomer votes. We are most grateful to Executive Committee member, The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay of Paddington, for giving the time to moderate the event.

3rd November

US Presidential and Congressional elections took place.

3rd November

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

5th November

The LSE US Centre hosted a live webinar event entitled 'What just happened? Analysing the 2020 US Presidential Election' to which BAPG members were specially invited. Professor Meena Bose (Hofstra University), Dr. David Smith (University of Sydney), Professor Jeffery Tulis (University of Texas at Austin) and Dr. Linda Yuch (LSE and Oxford University) reviewed the results of the 2020 US Presidential election as well as gave their insights into what we could expect over the next four years.

10th & 12th November

The BAPG arranged online tours of the Houses of Parliament for the US-UK Fulbright Commission and this year's intake of US Fulbright Scholars.

17th November

The BAPG facilitated a virtual gift exchange (via Microsoft Teams) of an illuminated velum scroll from the UK Parliament to the US House of Representatives, created for Thames Alive by the Worshipful Company of Stationers, to mark the London commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the 'Mayflower' to America. The Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Hon. Nancy Pelosi, accepted the scroll from the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, observed by the Officers of the British-American Parliamentary Group in the US House of Representatives, Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wisconsin) and Rep. George Holding (R-North Carolina), and BAPG Officers here, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP and The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP, joined by the British Ambassador to the USA, Dame Karen Pierce, and other guests.

It was a hugely successful and enjoyable occasion, with unexpected and moving stories and anecdotes from Rep. Ron Kind, Madam Speaker and Mr Speaker, which added a real sense of connection between the US and UK guests.

7th & 8th, 14th & 15th December

The Harvard Kennedy School, Institute of Politics, hosted the biennial programme for newly elected Members of Congress. BAPG members would normally attend as observers but the in-person programme was cancelled owing to the pandemic and the programme being moved online. Given the nature of their virtual learning environment and wanting to create a space for the new Members to freely exchange ideas, the organisers decided to limit observers to a small group of Harvard students, faculty and Congressional leadership. They were therefore not able to offer BAPG

members an opportunity to observe the sessions this year, but are hopeful to host BAPG members at the next programme in 2022.

9th December

In a special session for the British-American Parliamentary Group, the British Ambassador to the USA, Dame Karen Pierce, discussed with Tom Tugendhat, Chair of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, what a Biden Presidency will mean for the UK and the world.

The session was held via Microsoft Teams and Ambassador Pierce was joined by the Deputy Head of the Political Section at the British Embassy, Mark Bailey, who give a quick factual overview of the US Presidential Election result, and the First Secretary Economics at the British Embassy, Phil Kenworthy, who gave a short overview of the US economy.

There was an opportunity for Members to ask questions, which was moderated by Tom Tugendhat. We are very grateful to the Baroness Jay of Paddington for opening the event on behalf of the BAPG Executive Committee and introducing the speakers.

It was later reported that the Ambassador found it “a really useful forum” and made a point of mentioning the value of (virtual) exchanges between Parliamentarians and Members of Congress in promoting bilateral relations and UK policy objectives.

11th December

The Association of Marshall Scholars, which works to strengthen US-UK ties, hosted a virtual exchange between British Parliamentarians (many of whom were BAPG members) and US Members of Congress, during which they had an open and unrestricted discussion about the current US/UK political landscapes and bilateral relationship. The BAPG Secretariat gave the Association guidance and practical support in the organisation of the exchange.

15th December

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

3rd January 2021

The 117th United States Congress convened in Washington, D.C.

6th January 2021

The BAPG Administrator met virtually with Anne Denton Lieberman, the Head of Parliamentary Engagement at the Department for International Trade, for a catch up and to discuss possible collaborative opportunities in the year ahead.

14th January

The BAPG Administrator together with the Lord Kirkhope met virtually with Rep. George Holding and staff to Rep. Ron Kind to discuss the upcoming BAPG webinar event ‘Uniting The Political Divide?’ in which the two Members of Congress were to discuss with the Lord Kirkhope what to expect from a Biden Presidency and the 117th Congress and what it may mean for the UK.

20th January

US President Joe Biden’s inauguration.

27th January

The Harvard Political Union of the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics hosted four members of the BAPG Executive Committee – The Baroness Jay of Paddington, Stephen Hammond, MP, Alan Mak, MP and the Lord Fox - in a virtual discussion titled ‘The State of Democracy: Impressions from Across the Pond, A Conversation with Members of Parliament’ as part of its virtual series ‘Democracy Fortnight’. The moderator and audience were students of the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics. The organisers let us know afterwards that they were delighted with the discussion and the range of contributions from the participating Parliamentarians.

28th January

The BAPG Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, and Joint Honorary Treasurer, The Rt. Hon. John

Spellar, MP, met virtually with the leads at the US Embassy, namely: the Charge D'Affaires, Yael Lempert; the Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, Kathryn Crockart; the Head of the Domestic Political Unit, Jay Porter, and the Minister Counselor Economics Affairs, Caryn McClelland, for a courtesy call. It was a very positive and constructive call in which the BAPG Officers discussed the changed political landscape with the leads and what this will likely mean for US-UK relations and how the US Embassy and BAPG may be able to cooperate and support each other's activities.

1st February

The BAPG Administrator met with the new Head of External Affairs in the Speaker's Office, David Clark, who has responsibility for overseeing Speaker's visits as part of a wider external engagement, to discuss the traditional role of the Speaker as Joint Honorary President of the BAPG and how the BAPG may be able to support and add value to any planned Speaker visits or engagement with the US.

2nd February

The BAPG Administrator spoke with the Director of Senate Interparliamentary Services, Sally Walsh, about the 2021 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference and the feasibility of an in-person exchange taking place later in the year as well as the alternative option of a virtual exchange.

4th February

The BAPG hosted the Chair of the US House of Representatives BAPG, Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wisconsin), and former Co-Chair, Rep. George Holding (R-North Carolina), who had stood down from Congress on 3rd January 2021, together with his successor, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Nebraska), in a virtual exchange moderated by The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate, who discussed with them what to expect from a Biden Presidency and 117th Congress and what it may mean for the UK. Despite minor technical issues, it was an interesting discussion, attended by 50+ Parliamentarians.

9th February

A meeting of the BAPG Executive Committee took place.

10th February

The LSE US Centre hosted Professor Robert Lieberman (the Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University) and Professor Suzanne Mettler (the John L. Senior Professor of American Institutions in the Government Department at Cornell University) who discussed with Professor Peter Trubowitz (Professor of International Relations and Director of the US Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science and Associate Fellow at Chatham House), 'The Recurring Crises of American Democracy', America's current predicament and how it differs from past threats to democracy in the US, to which BAPG members were invited.

18th February

The BAPG Administrator met virtually with the leads at BritishAmerican Business to discuss possible collaborative events.

18th February

The BAPG Administrator hosted a virtual meeting with Damon Silvers, Policy Director and Special Counsel for the AFL-CIO, and John Spellar to discuss a possible BAPG webinar event on President Biden's re-engagement with the trade union movement.

23rd February

The BAPG Administrator met virtually with Anne Denton Lieberman, Head of Parliamentary Engagement at the Department for International Trade, to discuss the possibility of arranging an on-line briefing by the leads involved in the UK-US trade talks on the start of the trade negotiations with the Biden Administration, working with the new Trade Representative Katherine Tai and an understanding of the narrative going forward.

25th February

To mark the 60th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's inauguration, the Kennedy Trust hosted Professor Fredrik Logevall of Harvard University to discuss his new biography, 'JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917-1956', to which BAPG members were specially invited.

3rd March

The London POTUS Group, a non-partisan group set up in 2018 to develop a dialogue between those from the worlds of public service, the Fourth Estate and academics, hosted a talk by Mike Gapes, former MP and Chair of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee, on the presidency of Bill Clinton, to which BAPG members were invited.

4th March

The LSE US Centre hosted a webinar event entitled 'Isolationism: the future of US foreign policy?' with Professor Charles Kupchan who discussed with Dr. Lesslie Vinjamur and Professor Peter Trubowitz how the resurgence of isolationism is reshaping America foreign policy and what it means for the post-COVID world. A virtual guest list was specially opened for BAPG members.

15th March

In preparation for a collaborative event the next day, the BAPG Administrator joined the leads at BritishAmerican Business together with representatives of British Airways and American Airlines for a run through of the planned discussion with the CEO of British Airways and the President of American Airlines on the safe return of transatlantic air travel.

16th March

The BAPG in partnership with BritishAmerican Business hosted a virtual meeting and discussion with the CEO of British Airways, Sean Doyle, and the President of American Airlines, Robert Isom, on the safe return of transatlantic air travel. 100 plus guests attended, comprising Parliamentarians and senior executives from US / UK business.

17th March

The BAPG Administrator met virtually with Chris Evans, MP, the new chair of the Archive & History APPG, and staff from his office, to discuss a possible collaborative retrospective event on the Watergate scandal on the occasion of its 50th anniversary in June 2022

24th March

The BAPG hosted Damon Silvers, Policy Director and Special Counsel for the AFL-CIO and a leading figure in relations between the Biden Administration and the union movement, in a discussion titled 'The State of the Union', in which he discussed the Biden administration's re-engagement with the Trade Union movement and what this may mean for domestic and international policy, moderated by BAPG Officer, The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP.

24th March

The London POTUS Group hosted an online panel discussion on Franklin D. Roosevelt with Professors Tony Badger, Iwan Morgan and David Reynolds, who examined the legacy of the one twentieth-century president regarded as 'great' by historians, to which BAPG members were specially invited.

Tony Badger discussed Roosevelt's record on race, Iwan Morgan explored his role as the Great Communicator and David Reynolds considered his foreign policy.

30th March

The LSE US Centre hosted a webinar event about race and racial inequity in the United States, past and present, titled 'Race and Democracy in America' with Professor Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Professor of History, Race and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and the Suzanne Young Murray Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies, to which members of the BAPG were specially invited.

31st March

The BAPG Administrator met virtually with Dame Diana Johnson to discuss the BAPG developing contacts with women Members of Congress to discuss women's issues.

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GROUP DURING 2020-21 (not subject to audit)

The Annual General Meeting of the Group took place on 16th September 2021. The First Deputy Chair, Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker, The Rt. Hon. Dame Rosie Winterton, DBE, MP, took the chair in the absence of the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, who was detained in a debate in the Commons Chamber.

It was reported that the 12 months from April 2019 to April 2020 had been a turbulent period of political upheaval, driven in part by the UK's departure from the EU and the uncertainty this created across all levels of the political sphere, including a Conservative Party leadership contest in July and a snap General Election in December, followed by the emergence of a pandemic early in 2020. This frenetic period of domestic political uncertainty led to the deferment of BAPG activities and visits in the second half of the financial year. All in, the BAPG sent 20 out of the original 26 members planned, to the US.

April 2020 to April 2021 has been one of the most testing times in living memory for societies around the world and governments and inter-parliamentary groups have been impacted like everyone else. The ban on travel and social gatherings has resulted in the curtailment of the BAPG's traditional programme of activities. It had been anticipated that 2020-21 would be a busy year, with additional election related visits to the US, however the extraordinary circumstances have meant no visits have taken place. Instead, the BAPG has adapted to provide a wide-ranging programme of virtual events.

Most notable, was a virtual ceremonial exchange facilitated by the BAPG, in collaboration with Thames Alive, of an illuminated velum scroll between the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Nancy Pelosi, to mark the London commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower to America and to celebrate the links between the UK and the USA. It was an incredibly warm occasion attended by the Chair and Co-Chair of the US House of Representatives BAPG and the officers of the BAPG in Parliament, along with the British Ambassador to Washington DC, representatives of Thames Alive and the City of London Corporation.

The BAPG Secretariat has also arranged for its members to attend virtual events hosted by other organisations with common interests, those of: The Benjamin Franklin House; The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI); the University of Chicago Booth School of Business; the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics; BritishAmerican Business; the Association of Marshall Scholars; the LSE US Centre and the London POTUS Group.

We have maintained contact with the BAPG network in both Houses of Congress as well as with the US Embassy London and the North America Department at the FCO and British Embassy in Washington DC. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each of them for their continued support of the British-American Parliamentary Group and its activities.

Members may wish to be reminded that information about the Group's forthcoming activities can be found on the All-Party & Associated Group Notices and we will also circulate details via email direct to members.

Members who would like further information should telephone 020 7219 6209, fax 020 7219 5972, or e-mail bapg@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 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 3.30 P.M.**

The First Deputy Chair, Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker, The Rt. Hon. Dame Rosie Winterton, DBE, MP, took the chair in the absence of the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, 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, the Lord Speaker and BAPG Government Vice Chair, The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP, together with 13 others (a list of these were uploaded to the Teams Chat for Members to refer to).

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting, having been circulated in the Annual Report at pages 37-43, 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 2019 to April 2020 and the Accounts for the Year Ending 31st March 2020

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 33-36 of the Annual Report.

April 2019 to April 2020 had been a tumultuous period, with the UK's departure from the EU and ensuing political upheaval; the Conservative Party leadership contest in July and the snap General Election in December followed by the emergence of a pandemic early in 2020. This had 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 26 members originally planned to the US.

These were by way of the following visits:

In late May 2019, 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.

Members may be interested to know that on the delegation's return, Dr. Lisa Cameron, MP, a member of the delegation, successfully applied for an adjournment debate (on 24th June 2019), in which she was able to talk about the findings of the visit.

In late July, eight Parliamentarians attended the 2019 Annual Parliamentary / Congressional Conference in Washington DC at the invitation of the US Senate BAPG, led by Senator John Boozman (R-Arkansas) and Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont). Nia Griffith had the honor of leading the British delegation in her role as Opposition Vice Chair. Dr. Liam Fox, government Vice Chair, was not able to join the delegation, nor any other Minister,

due to the Conservative Party leadership contest at the time, the result of which was announced three days into the visit.

While in Washington DC, the Parliamentary delegation had the privilege of meeting 13 senior Senators (eight Republican Senators and five Democratic Senators) with whom they discussed matters of common interest and also received defence and security briefings from the outgoing National Director of Intelligence, Dan Coats, and the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Julie Fisher, who was joined by members of her team.

In addition, the Parliamentary delegation took the opportunity of meetings arranged by the British Embassy 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. Nia Griffith commented that those they met with were interested to know what their trade position would be going forward. Of particular interest to Ms. Griffith was the expertise on China that was shared with the delegation by US colleagues. She had found it to be a very worthwhile experience remarking: "it was as much an opportunity for us to question them and find out more about the thinking of our colleagues in the United States, but also, in listening to the questions they asked us to reflect on the view that quite clearly those of our closest Allies perhaps have of the UK going forward."

In the same week, 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.

In recent years, the BAPG has co-hosted a panel discussion event with The Ditchley Foundation in the autumn, but owing to the febrile situation around Brexit at the time, it was decided to postpone.

The group would also expect to host the American Ambassador in Parliament at an annual reception in their honour, but, regrettably, had to postpone the event due to the pandemic. A new date of November 17th had been provisionally scheduled, in consultation with the Ambassador, the House of Commons and the BAPG's partner on the event, BritishAmerican Business, but this was now doubtful with the on-going situation with the pandemic.

Over the year, the BAPG had arranged 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, and it is a part of the Group's role which it is always keen to expand and develop.

Ms. Griffith added that it was a great privilege to be able to host guests of this sort, but she recognised the huge amount of work of the BAPG Administrator in actually setting up the arrangements.

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.

Members were referred to the group's complete list of activities for the year, which could be found on pages 25 to 32 of the Annual Report. They showed the contribution the group had made over the year to promoting good relations with the US and the role which the group had 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 the BAPG's programme is dependent. The British Embassy is particularly helpful when it comes to arranging meetings and other aspects of any programme for BAPG delegations to Washington D.C., as are the Consuls-General in other parts of the USA.

The group is very grateful for all of their considerable help that they give, enabling the BAPG to maintain its 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 personally thanked all those who had given their support, including the BAPG Administrator.

The Chair thanked the Vice Chair for her extensive report and remarked that even though it had been an incredibly difficult year, it felt as though there had been a substantial number of exchanges and dialogue.

The Chair asked for Proposers and Seconders to accept the Annual Report, but before that, invited any questions to Ms. Griffith, of which there were none.

The Chair asked for a Proposer for the acceptance of the Annual Report: Lord Fox. Secunder: Lord Kirkhope. The Chair thanked them both and confirmed acceptance of the Annual Report.

The Chair then moved onto the Accounts and called upon Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP, Joint Honorary Treasurer, to move the adoption of the accounts. The accounts had been circulated to all members of the group and appeared on pages 5-24 in the Annual Report of the Executive Committee 2019-2020. It was noted that the group's auditors, The National Audit Office, had yet to complete its audit and certification of the BAPG Accounts 2019-20, which was expected in the next few weeks. Accordingly, the adoption of the Accounts was subject to their certification by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Sir Christopher began with some thank yous: to his co-Treasurer, John Spellar, and to the Administrator, who did all the book-keeping. She had been as scrupulous as ever and had also recommended during the course of the year that the group switch its reserves to the Nationwide and that had put it in a position where it was going to have to pay a bit of tax on the interest, which showed that it was a really good move. Thanks were also conveyed to Dan Goodwin, the Financial Accountant at the House of Commons, who had prepared these Accounts for audit.

Sir Christopher reported that the position was a healthy one financially. The group had reserves, in terms of net assets, of over £79,000. Expenditure in the year was £139,000, which was about £4,000 more than had been budgeted, some of which was attributable to the increase in pension contributions required under the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The group's income was up by £2,500, but almost all its income was attributable to Parliamentary grant, which was now £118,148. Sir Christopher recorded the group's appreciation of the grant received each year from the House of Commons Commission and the House of Lords Commission, without which it would not be possible to maintain a programme.

The Chair thanked Sir Christopher on behalf of the group for the report and for everything that he was doing.

The Chair reminded members that these accounts were subject to certification by the Comptroller and Auditor General. She invited a Proposer and Secunder to accept the Accounts. Proposer: Seema Malhotra, MP; Secunder: Viendra Sharma, MP.

The Chair also thanked John Spellar as co-Treasurer for his work with Sir Christopher.

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. the Lord **Howard** of Lympne, CH, QC
The Rt. Hon. Jeremy **Hunt**, 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

And that, The Rt. Hon. Dominic **Raab**, MP, in his position as Foreign Secretary and The Rt. Hon. Sir Keir **Starmer**, KCB, QC, MP, in his position as leader of the Labour Party, be elected as Vice Presidents, as is the tradition with Foreign Secretaries and leaders of the main opposition parties.

The Chair put forward a formal motion to approve these names, proposed by Barry Gardiner and seconded by Virendra Sharma.

The Chair then moved on to the Officers of the Group, for whom she required formal ratification of their appointment in their respective roles.

Both **The Rt. Hon. Dr. Liam Fox, MP**, BAPG Government Vice Chair, and **Nia Griffith, MP**, BAPG Opposition Vice-Chair, had each completed two years in their roles as Joint Honorary Vice Chairs and the group wished to record warm thanks to them both for their leadership and support of the BAPG in this time.

In light of the recent changes to both the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet, it was incumbent on the Executive Committee to recommend their successors.

In the role of BAPG Government Vice Chair, the Executive Committee recommend, **The Rt. Hon. Ben Wallace, MP**, Secretary of State for Defence, and in the role of Opposition Vice Chair, the Executive Committee recommend, **The Rt. Hon. Hon. John Healey, MP**, Shadow Secretary of State for Defence, each for the term of three years.

The Chair hoped that this could be agreed and asked if there were any objections to that. Lord Dykes proposed that the names were accepted, which was also seconded by Barry Gardener.

The Chair, again, gave a very big thank you to Dr. Liam Fox and to Nia Griffith for all that they had done for the Group and it was hoped that they would both continue to take an active interest in its activities.

The Chair further reported that **The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP**, the Honorary Secretary, had completed his fifth year in that office, which had a maximum term of eight years. The Group had been very fortunate to have such a hard-working Honorary Secretary who gave an enormous amount of his time to the group's affairs.

The Rt. Hon. John Spellar, MP and **Sir Christopher Chope, OBE, MP** were both content to continue in their roles as Joint Honorary Treasurers. They both had given a considerable amount of time to the group's affairs and the hard work which they had done and continue to do is very much appreciated.

The Chair invited a Proposer and a Seconder to the fact that Sir Greg Knight, John Spellar and Sir Christopher Chope, continue in their positions. Proposer: Stephen Hammond, MP and Seconded by Rosie Cooper.

6 To Elect 18 Members to serve on the Executive Committee 2020-21

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.

The Chair reported 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 until the AGM in 2021:

Government

Rehman **Chishti**, MP
Philip **Davies**, MP
The Rt. Hon. Chris **Grayling**, MP
Stephen **Hammond**, MP
Jack **Lopresti**, MP
Alan **Mak**, MP

As seven nominations had been received from the Opposition Parties for the Committee this year, it would be necessary to have a ballot to decide the six members of the Opposition Parties, which it was not practicable to hold at the current time and would be held at a later date, when circumstances allow.

The candidates are:

Opposition

Douglas **Chapman**, MP (SNP)
Yvonne **Fovargue**, MP (Labour)
Dame Diana **Johnson**, DBE, MP (Labour)
The Rt. Hon. Kevan **Jones**, MP (Labour)
Conor **McGinn**, MP (Labour)
Chi **Onwurah**, MP (Labour)
Taiwo **Owatemi**, MP (Labour)

In the meantime, the Officers recommend that the current opposition members on the committee 2019-20 continue to serve.

They are:

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

The date of the ballot would be confirmed in due course, when circumstances allow. The Chair confirmed that this was acceptable to the Group.

In relation to the House of Lords, as the requisite number of nominations had been received as there were places, the following members were elected unopposed to represent the House of Lords on the Executive Committee until the AGM in 2021:

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 GCVO QSO

Liberal Democrat

The Lord **Fox**

The Committee wished to record its warm thanks to Ranil **Jayawardena**, MP who had stepped down from the committee in mid-May on his appointment as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for International Trade. It was hoped that he would continue to take an active interest in the Group and the role it can play in cultivating support for UK policy interests with counterparts in the US Congress.

The Chair confirmed with members that this was acceptable and that there were no problems before moving onto agenda item 7, to ratify a change to rule 8f, with the effect of creating a third Vice Chair position appointed from the House of Lords.

7. To ratify a change to Rule 8(f) with the effect of creating a third Vice Chair position appointed from the House of Lords

The Chair reported that the Executive Committee recommend a change to Rule 8(f) in respect of the appointment of Vice Chairs with the effect of creating a third Vice Chair position appointed from the House of Lords.

The Chair called on The Honorary Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Sir Greg Knight, MP, to move the adoption of the change to Rule 8(f).

Sir Greg thanked Madam Deputy Speaker. He wished to move the adoption of the change to rule 8(f).

The Group's current rules provide for two Vice Chair positions and while there was no specificity as to which House they should come from, in practice they both tended to come from the House of Commons, where most Ministers are based, and it was thought only fair, therefore, to create a third Vice Chair position which would be allocated to the Lords and would better reflect the 70:30 financial contribution that is made by the House of Commons and the House of Lords respectively.

Sir Greg reported this had not been controversial. There was no dissent on the Executive when it was discussed and so he begged to move the change be adopted. He understood the wording had been circulated.

The Chair confirmed that the motion before members was a change to rule 8(f). She asked if anyone wished to speak on it. It was then asked that if anybody was against it if they could indicate. With no objections, the Chair confirmed the change had been made nem con.

The BAPG Administrator then drew the Chair's attention to the fact that Chi Onwurah had her electronic hand raised.

Chi confirmed that she had raised her hand a little while ago because as one of those standing for the committee she wondered when the election might take place and under what circumstances.

As the Chair understood the position, it was not practicable at the moment to hold the election, but the Executive Committee would look at a future date when circumstances allowed. The Chair wasn't clear whether that was because it needed to be done in-person, but she was sure that the Executive Committee would keep a very beady eye on it. She speculated that perhaps at the moment, because of the way Parliament was operating, it was not proving easy to have it.

The Chair asked if anybody else wished to comment on that. Virendra Sharma thanked Madam Deputy Speaker and asked if it would be possible to hold the election by postal vote, rather than waiting for a certain period, when circumstances allow, which may not be for the next year or so.

The Chair suggested this was taken back to the Executive Committee. She was sure they would contact members to look at whether it could be done under the current Standing Orders or whether there would need to be any changes to the Standing Orders and that it would then be circulated to members. The Chair asked the BAPG Administrator if it would be possible to take back to the committee, which was confirmed.

The Chair confirmed that the change to rule 8(f) had been approved by the AGM and that the rule will be changed with immediate effect.

8. Any other business

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

Sir Greg announced in connection to the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower to America that the BAPG had been working in conjunction with Thames Alive on arrangements for a virtual ceremonial presentation of an illuminated commemorative velum scroll from British Parliamentarians to US Members of Congress to mark the anniversary and celebrate the links between the UK and the USA. There had recently been a ceremonial signing of the scroll on the House of Commons Terrace with John Spellar attending together with Mr. Speaker and the American Ambassador. Thames Alive were therefore very pleased with the assistance this group had given.

With regard to the BAPG future programme, to underline what Nia Griffith had said earlier, the Officers were keeping it under regular review in the light of the pandemic and hoped to have some announcements soon and would announce in the usual way, by email and also on the All Party Whip.

Sir Greg also wished to add his thanks to Liam Fox, to Nia Griffith, to John Spellar and to Christopher Chope, for their help and assistance throughout the year and to say to everyone keep safe.

The Chair thanked Sir Greg and thanked him for all that he had done.

The Chair observed there were several members who wished to ask questions:

Chi Onwurah remarked that she had been active in arguing for a digital Parliament and she hoped that it would be possible that the Group could hold elections despite the Covid circumstances.

The Chair thanked Chi and then called on the Earl of Devon, who wanted to provide an update on the Mayflower programme.

The Lord Devon explained he was patron of the Mayflower 400 commemorations and had been working very closely with Plymouth, who had done an enormous amount of work. They appreciated the support of the BAPG, but asked that the Group provides additional support, given the terrible impact of Covid on their celebration and commemoration programme. There will be further opportunities during the year to commemorate the Mayflower and there will be a four-nation commemoration in July 2021: the Wampanoag nation, Leiden in the Netherlands, the UK and the US, as well as opportunities in the US next year. Lord Devon asked if the group could continue to keep the Mayflower in their thoughts and also active in the US / UK discussions. He thought it incredibly important for us to emphasize these cultural links during the trade negotiations, that were on-going.

The Chair thanked Lord Devon and was sure all of the Officers had noted that and would want to do whatever was feasible in terms of supporting any events. It sounded very good consideration to take forward and she hoped the events were successful.

The Chair invited Barry Gardiner to come in. Barry Gardiner was wholly in support of the fact that we had sent the Charter with the Mayflower and wondered, given the situation on the west coast of the US at the moment, if it might also be appropriate to extend our sympathy and solidarity to the governors of California, Washington and Oregon States, for the devastating wild fires that they were currently experiencing.

The Chair asked the BAPG Administrator if this was something that could be taken back to the Officers, to perhaps draft something and express the Group's solidarity, as Barry had outlined.

Margaret Ferrier, MP wished to congratulate all those who had been elected so far and she hoped it would be possible to carry out the election that was outstanding. With the US Presidential election coming up, in which there was huge interest, she wondered what the Group was going to do in the days leading up to it, because, unfortunately, due to Covid, trips to America have had to be cancelled and she was keen to know if there would be some sort of agenda for that in the next 48 days, if there may even be a virtual meeting with people over in America, to find out what was happening in the election and what the feeling was around voting and turnout etc.

The Chair thanked Margaret and confirmed with the BAPG Administrator that this was something that could be taken back to the Officers and that perhaps something might be circulated as to any events and information, virtual or in person meetings, that might be taking place, as there will be lots of interest in what is happening and members will want to be kept up to date and informed.

As there was no other business, the Chair closed the meeting, but again with particular thanks to the Officers, who had served and who may be stepping down from their posts, but continuing to take an interest, and all others who were continuing to serve as well as very big thanks to the BAPG Administrator for all her work.

John Spellar thanked Madam Deputy Speaker for coming in at such late notice and for doing it so effectively.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.08 pm