



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BRITISH GROUP
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
UNION
2019

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The BGIPU Chair, Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP giving his speech at the 130th Anniversary Reception of the IPU in Speaker's House

ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP

Chair's Report



**Rt Hon John
Whittingdale MP
Chair, BGIPU**

I am pleased to be able to provide my first report as BGIPU Chair, covering activities in the period since our last Annual General Meeting in November 2018 to the dissolution of this Parliament for the General Election. With the support of our membership, I have enjoyed a very active period as Chair, notably having the honour to mark the 130th anniversary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at a variety of events. Reflecting on the past year, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all members of the Executive Committee and the broader Group membership for the support they have provided me and the contributions made to our wide-ranging programme of inter-parliamentary activities and exchanges, both here in the Palace of Westminster and other locations overseas.

It has been my objective to work to ensure BGIPU continues to play a leading role in IPU affairs at a time of increasing international turmoil and tension, actively engaging with our closest partners in the 12 Plus geopolitical group and other like-minded delegations. Utilising the opportunities provided by IPU Assemblies and other meetings to engage in constructive exchanges, our main priorities revolve around our programme of bilateral visits hosting parliamentary delegations to the Palace of Westminster and, in turn, calling on parliamentary counterparts abroad in their capitals.

Through these activities, UK parliamentarians are provided with key opportunities to engage with their overseas counterparts in constructive dialogue and debate on some of the most pressing global issues. Similarly, we are able to compare approaches to domestic challenges. Parallel to that, with the UK Government taking forward its post-Brexit plans, BGIPU's inter-parliamentary contacts have provided an alternative source of interaction with European friends and partners and in engaging with MPs in other countries outside Europe to help

shape our global role into the future and to secure new and highly prospective trade, economic and people to people links for the future.

Since the last Annual Report, BGIPU has hosted a wide range of inter-parliamentary delegation visits to the United Kingdom from six parliaments namely, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Kosovo, Italy and Lebanon. As in the recent past, we have continued to maintain a focus on a range of European partners with timely visits at key turning-points of the Brexit process providing visitors with unique first-hand insights.

In a period in which members' travel and overall planning has been made difficult by Brexit-related parliamentary commitments in London, we have mounted just three visits by delegations to Ethiopia, Lithuania and Brazil (although the latter two were greatly impacted by the unexpected recall of Parliament after the Supreme Court ruling in late September 2019). With this lower level of activity to date in 2019, BGIPU will be working hard into the new year to ensure we meet relevant targets of at least ten bilateral exchanges in the current financial year. Detailed overview reports of these activities are published on BGIPU's website which supplements this Annual Report.

I also want to recognise the contribution and commitment of UK delegates to IPU Assemblies and other IPU-hosted thematic meetings during the year. The IPU remains the main global body for inter-parliamentary engagement and its 179-member parliaments benefit from this opportunity for dialogue in a world where global tensions and ideological differences are on the rise which is often reflected in the tone and subjects of IPU debates. In my capacity as BGIPU Chair, I had the honour to lead UK delegations to the 140th and 141st IPU Assemblies which took place in Doha in April 2019 and Belgrade in October 2019 respectively and both broke records in terms of number of participants and the high level of attendees.

The first Assembly of the year in Doha convened a general debate on "Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and

the rule of law” in which our Vice-Chair Baroness Hooper spoke after I and other members of the delegation from the House of the Commons were recalled to London for Brexit-related votes. I spoke on “Strengthening international law: Parliamentary roles and mechanisms, and the contribution of regional cooperation” in Belgrade highlighting the importance to rule of law and parliaments of robust defence of media freedom, against the background of an increasing number of attacks on journalists across the world.

BGIPU also supported at the IPU Assembly in Belgrade a 12 Plus Group side-event organised by the Parliament of Sweden with Nigel Evans MP speaking to highlight the plight of LGBT+ people in defending their rights and being adequately included in efforts to advance the benefits of the global goals for all people.

A landmark resolution from the Committee on Democracy and Human Rights was adopted by the IPU on “Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health” which the World Health Organisation (WHO) hailed as the first truly global statement of support for universal health care.

Other Standing Committee outcomes of IPU Assemblies in 2019 have included resolutions on “Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights” and “The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation” as well as debates on UN peace-keeping, implementation of the Global Goals, climate change and disaster risk reduction, global health challenges, gender issues and international disarmament matters, among many other priorities.

In addition to IPU Assemblies, we have also sent UK delegations to IPU-convened meetings, often providing parliamentary perspectives in connection with major global meetings, including to advance the UN’s Global Goals. As BGIPU Chair, I participated with Shadow FCO Minister Fabian Hamilton MP in the Annual Parliamentary Hearing at

the United Nations in February (addressing the future of multilateralism) and BGIPU sent a delegation to the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) which was also held at the UN in New York in March. On behalf of the Speaker of the House of Commons, I also contributed to preparations for the next World Speakers' Conference to take place in August 2020 in Vienna. BGIPU also sent a small delegation to the 5th IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Asuncion, Paraguay.

A key activity I instigated as Chair this year was the International Parliamentary Seminar on Media Freedom hosted in the Attlee Suite by BGIPU from 9-11 September 2019 attended by some 80 parliamentarians, experts and media professionals. This was aimed at encouraging parliamentarians to hold their governments to account in their undertakings made to advance media freedom and protection of journalists globally after the UK convened a Global Conference in mid-July 2019. This is an issue in which I have long-standing interests and I will continue to work to advance this through IPU channels into the future.

Alongside our formal inward programme, BGIPU also hosted other parliamentarians, officials and interlocutors from a wide array of countries on short-term visits, including from Nepal, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina, in addition to visit exchanges with the IPU Secretariat in Geneva.

A major highlight for 2019 was our marking of the 130th anniversary of the establishment of the IPU in 1889. We hosted a reception on 25 June 2019 for the diplomatic corps in Speaker's House with speeches by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon John Bercow MP, the leader of the Opposition, Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP, and myself as Chair on the IPU's work and legacy, particularly noting the pivotal role of our founder, Sir William Randal Cremer MP.

I also led a delegation of MPs and Peers to Paris from 26-27 June to celebrate with our French counterparts in the National Assembly and the Senate the 130th anniversary by issuing a joint declaration on our

commitment to the IPU where we were also joined by IPU Secretary General, Mr Martin Chungong. I also had the honour on 15 October with my French counterpart Hubert Julien-Laferrière to report on this event to the 141st IPU Assembly when it met in Belgrade. Our presentations as part of a session marking the 130th anniversary of the IPU highlighted the joint declaration made in Paris reaffirming our mutual commitment, the relevance and importance of the IPU and recognising the legacy of its founders.

Our inter-parliamentary activities would not be possible without the invaluable support we receive from UK Ministers and Her Majesty's Ambassadors and Embassy staff overseas along with the FCO colleagues in London for which we are very grateful. I must also acknowledge the key contribution made by the diplomatic community in London in support of BGIPU's work throughout the year. In closing I would also wish to recognise the continuing excellence of the BGIPU Secretariat which despite significant changes in personnel earlier this year, continues to deliver to members a varied and valuable programme of inter-parliamentary engagement.

Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP
Chair, British Group IPU
5 November 2019

Director's Report



Rick Nimmo
Director, BGIPU

I am pleased to be able to outline for members the key management issues addressed by the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) Secretariat in 2019, expressing deep appreciation for strong membership support for our work during the year despite the obstacles posed by an intense parliamentary agenda on the issues surrounding Brexit, finally ending with an unexpected general election. Conscious of the challenges we have faced during the year on the staffing and programme planning front, I pay a heartfelt tribute to the outstanding performance of our Secretariat team (both past and present through the year) who ensured BGIPU was able to deliver an engaging and varied programme of inter-parliamentary activities in pursuit of BGIPU key objectives.

This period saw the completion of the previous three-year Strategic Business Plan and commencement of a new plan adopted by the Executive Committee in February 2019, guiding our work and setting key programme objectives. Alongside the BGIPU Staff Handbook which was also reviewed in early 2019, the plan provides a solid basis for our administrative, financial and human resources priorities in addition to ensuring a well-considered foreign policy foundation for our activities. This works to ensure BGIPU meets all required conditions under the Financial Memorandum (FM) with funding bodies in both Houses as negotiated and signed in 2017. The Secretariat is currently reviewing the current FM for re-negotiation in 2020.

In support of our 2019-20 Request for Funding submitted in September 2019, I undertook a detailed review of our specific achievements against the BGIPU objectives contained in the Strategic Business Plan. This review highlighted key successes for the year including full compliance with BGIPU governance rules, high levels of participation

and satisfaction with our activities from members in both Houses, strong financial management credentials and the minimisation of staffing gaps through effective recruitment processes. Again, BGIPU has sought to meet its targeted number of inward and outward delegations for the financial year, despite disruptions created by the busy and, at times, unpredictable parliamentary agenda. There continued to be highly positive praise for our Secretariat staff from members and visiting delegations alike and strong levels of cooperation with key stakeholders like the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London and UK Missions abroad.

BGIPU has continued to monitor closely its financial reserves to bring them into line with FM requirements and has varied allocations across the year to respond to uneven expenditure patterns across the programme period. In addition, we also need to account for significant changes in the level of IPU subscription due to changes in the IPU's scale of contribution and a volatile exchange rate between pound sterling and the swiss franc which will see a significant increase in early 2020. Overall, the quality and accuracy of our financial accounts was warmly acknowledged by external auditors which was credit to the Finance and Administration Manager, Ms Alex Milsom in her first year in the role.

BGIPU continues to manage human resource issues effectively in line with our employer obligations but faced an unusually high number of staff departures in late 2018 and early 2019. BGIPU responded to this challenge by undertaking a number of recruitment rounds, identifying suitable candidates and finalising new recruitments in a timely and efficient manner.

In the wake of these new appointments, the Secretariat was asked by the Executive Committee to review the factors behind the spike of staff departures and suggest measures to avoid this in the future. Drawing on exit interviews and the recruitment feedback, the application of House of Commons pay outcomes to BGIPU staff was identified as an employment disincentive so senior managers designed a new reward

and retention scheme to partly address this. Following approval by the Executive Committee in October 2019, this scheme was implemented to bolster conditions of service and improve staff retention into the future.

Property issues in the wake of the BGIPU Secretariat moving offices from Fielden House to 1 Millbank in late 2018 continued into 2019 without any success in resolving a lack of storage space, necessitating a gradual reduction of BGIPU stock and the records which we hold.

Nonetheless, the improved office accommodation overall has been greatly welcomed by staff and the general working conditions are vastly improved from previous years as well as hopefully avoiding further disruption related to the planned Restoration and Renewal programmes occurring in Parliament next decade.

After seven years of regular and effective use of the BGIPU website launched in 2012, the Chair approved a comprehensive website upgrade, providing for the redesign of the site for multiple platforms and easier content uploading with work proceeding in the summer months. The new website will be launched at the commencement of the new Parliament.

BGIPU also uses Twitter as a key outreach channel with almost 3,000 Twitter followers and a total of over half a million tweet impressions (effectively the number of times a tweet is seen on a users' timeline) for the year across all its inter-parliamentary activities.

In membership promotion events, during 2019 we arranged three outreach stand events in Portcullis House and hosted an annual charity quiz night on 4 September (this year supporting the Hear Women Foundation) raising £470.00 while also increasing awareness of BGIPU's work and better engaging members and their staff about activities.

There has been continuation of the partnership with the John Smith Trust where BGIPU hosts a Day in Parliament for its fellows from Wider Europe and Central Asia at six-monthly intervals, noting this year at the 141st IPU Assembly we met a new member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine who participated in the scheme in 2017 and remembered BGIPU well from that event.

BGIPU maintains continuing close engagement with other inter-parliamentary bodies, particularly the UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and regular and mutually beneficial engagement with country-based and thematic All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) supporting their various activities in Westminster and in visits abroad through our dedicated APPG funding mechanism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretariat highlights the importance of having a close partnership with the Overseas Offices of both Houses and I acknowledge the cooperation we enjoy with the budget holders, Ms Lynn Gardner (and Mr Matthew Hamlyn for the first part of the period) and Mr Jake Vaughan as well as the assistance of the respective Speakers' Offices of both Houses.

Likewise, we depend heavily on the cooperation of many other staff across both Houses, particularly Committee staff, as well as security, catering and other specialist staff who play an important role in giving international visitors a warm welcome to the UK Parliament.

I offer sincere gratitude to all members of the Executive Committee for their guidance and support of BGIPU throughout 2019, both here in London and on delegations, meetings and Assemblies abroad.

I am particularly grateful to the Chair, Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP, who has made a key contribution to BGIPU's work in advancing the important issue of media freedom and leading our celebrations of the IPU's 130th anniversary both here in London and overseas.

As I commenced, I return to my deep indebtedness to recent past and current BGIPU staff for their brilliant work in what has been a busy and challenging year on so many fronts. I am always grateful for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to the core objectives of the IPU which it is appropriate to recall here in the IPU's 130th year as supporting dialogue between parliamentary representatives worldwide to make the world more peaceful and prosperous for all. I look forward to advancing this cause further with all members of the new Parliament.

Rick Nimmo
Director, British Group IPU
5 November 2019

**Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the British
Group Inter-Parliamentary Union
Tuesday 27 November 2018**

The Annual General Meeting of the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union was held in the IPU Room, Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday 27 November 2018. Mr Speaker, The Rt Hon. John Bercow MP, was in the chair as Honorary President.

Item 1: Opening Remarks by the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt Hon. John Bercow MP—Honorary President

MR SPEAKER:

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, I now call this Annual General Meeting—

RICK NIMMO, DIRECTOR:

Ring the bell.

MR SPEAKER:

Quite right—it is like being at a test match.

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, I now call this Annual General Meeting to order. I apologise for my lateness. I have come straight from a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which was extremely stimulating, but which modestly overran. I extend a very warm welcome to everybody and I hope you have had time to review the 2018 Annual Report, which was published on the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union website on 6 November. Hard copies are available here for those who would like such.

Please note that there is an election ballot today just below us in room W2. The election of the new Executive Committee will be dealt with under item 8.

By the way, in welcoming everybody and all of my colleagues on the platform, I should perhaps, on behalf of you all, extend a particular welcome to the Minister, Harriett Baldwin, from whom we will hear ere long.

Item 2: Apologies for Absence

MR SPEAKER:

Do we have any apologies for absence?

DIRECTOR:

There are seven apologies.

MR SPEAKER:

There are seven apologies, the record of which can be checked by anybody who is sufficiently interested or anorak-ish—or both—to want to do so.

Item 3: Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 6 December 2017

MR SPEAKER:

We are now required to adopt the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 6 December 2017. These are printed on pages 19 to 36 of the 2018 Annual Report. May I have a proposer and a seconder that the minutes be adopted as a true record?

(Proposed by Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger MP and seconded by the Rt Hon. the Lord Dholakia.)

RT HON. THE LORD JOPLING:

I want to speak.

MR SPEAKER:

Very good. I am most grateful to you for that notification. The minutes have been proposed and seconded, but let us hear what Lord Jopling has to say to us.

RT HON. THE LORD JOPLING:

Mr Speaker, at the last Annual General Meeting, as you will see on page 28 of the Annual Report, I drew attention to the fact that the financial report seemed to muddle up whether we had a deficit or a surplus of £108,000. The book said that we had a deficit, but it turned out that we had a surplus. You were kind enough to point out that this was a “printing error”.

I wonder if colleagues will look at the second paragraph of what I am alleged to have said on page 28. It states: “I used to be a member of the audit committee, and I played a major part in hiring the previous auditor.” I actually played a major part in firing the previous auditor.

It occurs to me that the Secretariat is letting things go through that it should not. These figures ought to be checked.

I wonder if I can also say that, I do not know whether anybody else has seen this booklet before, but I had not before I came into the room. I do resent being given the financial report as you come in the room, and it not being distributed earlier. Although I have been on the Executive Committee for many, many years, I do think we have been a bit remiss in not distributing papers before meetings. These are two examples of things that I have picked up. I did not pick up the “hiring” and “firing” point until I came and sat down in this seat this afternoon, which really isn’t very satisfactory. I think that these papers ought to be distributed in advance.

MR SPEAKER:

Thank you, my Lord. I think it only reasonable in the circumstances, having heard your complaint or grievance, which I and colleagues have heard with respect, that we hear Rick Nimmo’s response.

DIRECTOR:

The papers were circulated on 7 November on the BGIPU website. That relates to our movement towards electronic circulation, rather than hard copy. Hard copies are available here today, but the report has been published on our website for about three weeks, which is the requirement under our laws.

In terms of the record, that is a record taken by *Hansard*. If there was a mix-up on “firing” or “hiring”, we could have picked that up, but it was probably a nuance that I did not pick up when I read it.

In terms of the circulation of all the documentation, we are bound by the rules to circulate it in advance of the AGM, in accordance with the number of days. We have met that requirement this year, as far as I know.

MR SPEAKER:

I am minded to leave it there, the legitimate points having been aired and answered. Colleagues can make their own assessment.

All those in favour please raise your hand.

Any against?

I shall now sign the minutes as a true record.

Item 4: Matters Arising from the Minutes

MR SPEAKER:

The next item is matters arising from the minutes. Are there any such matters?

DIRECTOR:

None, apart from the point made by Lord Jopling.

MR SPEAKER:

Indeed.

Item 5: Adoption of the Annual Report for 2018

MR SPEAKER:

Item 5 is the adoption of the Annual Report for 2018. I now invite the Minister of State at the Department for International Development and Minister of State for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Harriett Baldwin, to propose the adoption of the 2018 Annual Report.

HARRIETT BALDWIN MP:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Because I am so short, I am going to stand. Hopefully that will help people at the back to hear my voice.

I formally propose the adoption of the Annual Report, and I do so with great admiration for the work of the BGIPU. In my role as Minister for International Development and Minister for Africa, since January I have had the opportunity to visit almost 20 African countries. I feel that it gives me enormous perspective as a British parliamentarian to look back from those countries on what we are going through in the UK at the moment in terms of our parliamentary democracy.

It is absolutely fascinating to see the work that this important Group has done over the past year to extend and build a network of close

relationships with so many Parliaments around the world. It is incredibly important to our work at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that we are able to work with you and that you are able to work as extensively as you have done with Parliaments around the world, which may or may not want to learn from some of the things that we are going through at the moment. I truly think that building those alliances between parliamentarians, and seeing the benefits of those close links between parliamentarians on our travels, really underlines the way this work and the support that you give for democracy around the world aligns with so much of the Foreign Office's policy work. I want to thank you all for everything that you have contributed to it.

From reading the report, I can see that you have had a very busy parliamentary and policy outreach year. You have been to Hanoi, I understand.

MR NIGEL EVANS MP:

Not myself.

HARRIETT BALDWIN MP:

You have been to Ho Chi Minh city and Baghdad. You have done trips to Belarus, and I know that Nigel has led a delegation to Bosnia-Herzegovina and to Nepal. You have had important seminars on the Western Balkans and on women's rights. As so many delegations have been welcomed to Westminster, they have been able to see the very best of British parliamentary practice as well as witness PMQs on a regular basis. I know that you have hosted Austrians, and I had the pleasure of meeting the Angolan delegation. There has been a delegation from South America, and we have welcomed legislators from Lithuania, Liberia and Luanda.

As you reach the end of your term as Chair, Nigel, I thank you on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for all of your amazing, hard work. I can see that the organisation has truly gone from strength to strength under your chairmanship. In a world where things are changing so fast, I think that the permanent presence of this Group—and its endorsement not only of parliamentary democracy, but of our rules-based international order and the role that Parliaments have in scrutinising that—could not be more relevant and more important than it is today.

I wish the incoming Committee and incoming Chair the very best. On behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, let me say how much we look forward to working with the BGIPU on our shared work over the year ahead. Thank you very much.

MR SPEAKER:

Harriett, thank you very much on behalf of one and all for what you have said and for the way you said it. Consistent with our long-established practice on these occasions, I now invite your opposite number, the shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament, Fabian Hamilton, to second the 2018 Annual Report.

FABIAN HAMILTON MP:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do not think that I will be quite as brief as you were, Harriett, but thank you very much for proposing the Annual Report. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you and everyone else in the room for attending this year's AGM and for your attendance over all the years that I have been privileged to be on the Executive Committee. I would like to thank my fellow members of the Executive Committee for their sterling work in maintaining the British Group of the IPU over the past year. I also thank our excellent director Rick Nimmo, his brilliant staff and our very able and active Chair, Nigel Evans. Thank you for all your hard work.

We are coming to the end of another tumultuous year at home and abroad. As we enter the twilight of 2018, I think it fitting to look back on what we have achieved together—it is a lot. It is fairly true to say that many of us have differing opinions on some of the most pressing issues that we as a country face today and on how we deal with them. Brexit is only one of those great challenges on which we differ. However, we have worked together as a team—Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National party, Plaid Cymru, the DUP, the Labour party and, of course, our Cross-Bench peers—in continuing the great work of the British Group IPU over many years in pursuing peace and stronger democracies all across the world. That we can put our differences aside and work for the greater good is in itself something of which we should be very proud.

It was the MP Sir Randal Cremer who, more than 130 years ago, saw the benefits of working together, not just with parliamentarians

from across the world. It is through dialogue among one another, and especially with those of a different ideological background, that we understand one another better and achieve the best results. All too often these days, people seem to be speaking above or over, rather than to or with, one another. All too often, we seem to retreat into our own “safe spaces” and talk among ourselves, while demonising others. In the IPU, however, we have admirably maintained dialogue with countries with which we may not see eye to eye. Indeed, that was one of the objectives that Sir Randal Cremer had in mind when he began his journey to promote peace and understanding by engaging with parliamentarians internationally, no matter what their race, creed or ideology, and what a success it has become! I am sure that if he were here among us now, he would be very proud of an institution that today encompasses the vast majority of Parliaments around the globe, representing a population of nearly 6.5 billion people.

We here today are just one, albeit a significant, member of this union, and we in this room have a lot to be proud of, too. In the past year, as my colleague Harriett has said, we have visited, or been visited by, parliamentarians from across the globe. We have discussed with our fellow parliamentarians from abroad some of the most pressing issues of our time—from gender rights through refugees to climate change, among many others. These are issues that no nation can overcome on its own, but they are critical issues on which we must work collectively and closely with other Parliaments if we are to stand a chance of resolving them. It is through democratic consensus that we will build a better future for all.

Parliaments are the cornerstone of democracy, and I believe that, as parliamentarians, we have a special duty to maintain and enhance that democracy both at home and abroad. Parliamentarians are the representatives not just of their constituents, but of the values of their nations and states. Through the British Group of the IPU, we have continued our great British tradition of promoting peace, democracy and the rule of law throughout the world. As much as we are just mere representatives of national constituencies, it is vital that we maintain an international perspective in relation to our values and principles, for we are indeed fortunate in this country. As we have heard at every meeting that we have had in the past year, many of our fellow parliamentarians in other countries suffer harassment and discrimination daily, so it is

vital that we continue to work with our colleagues in those Parliaments to counter the harassment and violence that is sadly only too common against parliamentarians across the globe, especially in the countries that we have highlighted—Turkey, Uganda and Venezuela, to name but a few.

We need to continue our work together. I believe that the role and work of the British Group IPU is more vital today than it was even in Cremer's time. We are now a global community, one that has rapidly interwoven itself into a complex web of trade, politics and communications. We are, overall, a more prosperous world than we were 130 years ago.

We are, overall, more knowledgeable of the world around us. We are, overall, one human race. I am always reminded of that when I meet parliamentarians from other countries, especially during my time as a member of the BGIPU's Executive Committee. When I take on the task of showing them around Parliament, when delegations come to us at Westminster, we often share the same concerns, the same needs and the same beliefs, but we continually worry about our peace and security. For example, as shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament, I have, thanks to the British Group IPU, exchanged views with many of my fellow parliamentarians in other countries on how we work together to create a nuclear-free world. Thanks to the British Group IPU, I have also over the years cultivated many friendships, as we all have, and good connections, which I have found invaluable in pursuing peace agendas in places such as Cyprus. Indeed, it is often the personal and informal contacts that the BGIPU creates that have been invaluable to me and the rest of us in pursuing these agendas.

Another thing that we have in common as a global community is that we try to aspire to make our countries more equal and more just. Inequality, whether it is financial, gender-specific, racial or even religious, is a common issue found in so many countries that are members of the IPU. We have learned valuable skills and insights from the experiences of other nations in how they have tackled such issues. By working together, I believe that we have highlighted many deficiencies, including the lack of representation of women in national Parliaments in many countries of the world, including our own.

By interacting with parliamentarians in other European countries, such as Norway and Estonia, we have looked at how best we can

create a more successful Brexit. Together, we are working hard to halt climate change and the devastating effects that it is already causing throughout the world. Last month, the British delegation at the annual IPU Assembly worked closely with fellow countries to formulate much stronger action against climate change.

Through the BGIPU, we have seen how seriously the universality of democracy and human rights is taken by many of our members. It has always been one of the greatest traits of the BGIPU that it has from its inception ceaselessly maintained its vigilance against any threats to democracy and human rights around the globe. This year, we worked with Dutch parliamentarians to fight against the erosion of parliamentary democracy in Venezuela. We have worked on over 500 cases in which parliamentarians abroad have had their rights violated.

We are coming to the end of not just another year but the end of the momentous process—we hope—of leaving the European Union next year. We live in a world that sometimes seems to be retreating from the ideals of openness, dialogue and democracy that Sir Randal Cremer espoused. But these issues create new challenges and opportunities for us as a country and for the BGIPU. If anything, it means that we must work even harder to promote openness and democracy at home and abroad.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I am sure that all of us here this afternoon will proudly stand with resolution in the face of adversity and carry on the great work that we have achieved this year. I look forward to continuing to be part of that journey.

MR SPEAKER:

Fabian, thank you for that splendid and stirring speech in seconding the report. It was greatly appreciated, as the audience response testifies.

Colleagues, the 2018 Annual Report has now been proposed and seconded. Is it agreed that we adopt the report?

All those in favour, please raise your hands. Thank you.

Is anybody opposed? No. It is carried unanimously. Thank you.

Item 6: Presentation of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2018 by Nic Dakin MP, Honorary Treasurer of the BGIPU

MR SPEAKER:

Nic Dakin MP, the Honorary Treasurer of the BGIPU, will present the Financial Statements of the Group.

NIC DAKIN MP:

This is the really exciting bit.

I start by thanking Jackie and Rick for all their work on the financial stuff, including preparing the Financial Statements for this evening.

I present the Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2018, shown on pages 42 to 69 in the 2018 Annual Report. These cover the 2017-18 financial year, noting that the rest of the report reflects all BGIPU activities since the 2017 Annual General Meeting, which was held on 6 December 2017, on a calendar year basis rather than a financial year basis.

Kreston Reeves LLP conducted the audit and they are represented here today; we thank them. On page 53 of the 2018 Annual Report, our auditors report their unqualified opinion of the Financial Statements. The Audit Committee deliberated on 26 June 2018 and recommended that the Executive Committee approve the Financial Statements, which the Chair and Treasurer signed at the Executive Committee meeting on 3 July 2018.

The income and expenditure account appears on page 58. Income decreased from £1,300,969 to £1,247,913. The Group received £1,247,730 grant-in-aid, representing 95% of the maximum available, compared with £1,300,400, or 100%, in the year ended 31 March 2017. Bank interest fell from £509 in the previous year to £123, due to falling interest rates.

Expenditure increased from £1,192,232 to £1,249,743. Subscription expenses increased by around £2,000 with most of this cost being the IPU subscription fee, which reduced due to changes in the UN scale of assessment which saw total UK share in Swiss francs rise to CHF475,800 from CHF465,800 in 2017.

The aggregated costs of conferences, IPU seminars and outward delegations rose from £185,770 to £295,288. The main Assembly costs rose from £43,641 in the prior year to £76,429, comprising a large portion of the costs from the 2017 spring Assembly in Dhaka, those of the autumn Assembly in St Petersburg, and the costs of the 2018 spring

Assembly in Geneva. Delegates were sent to 13 smaller IPU meetings for a total cost of £90,434.

Seven outward delegations were undertaken at a total cost of £128,426. Five inward delegations and 11 smaller events, classed as “Days in Parliament”, were hosted at a total cost of £102,552. Funding was claimed by four all-party groups at a total cost of £4,252. It is positive that all-party groups have been coming forward with proposals.

The cost of staff salaries and related expenses increased from £436,261 to £445,197, with an average of eight permanent employees in post. One employee resigned during the year, with her administrative and finance support post left vacant, while another staff member, previously providing mixed duties maternity cover, was made permanent as Executive Officer. Employees received pay increases in line with the House of Commons pay settlements.

Printing, stationery, postage and telephone costs fell for the eighth successive year, due to increased use of electronic communications, which we touched on earlier. Publishing and public relations costs have fallen, mainly due to the costs of the EU referendum observation event having been included in that budget header the prior year.

General hospitality costs increased, while depreciation costs have fallen slightly. Audit fees decreased due to timings of chargeable Audit Committee meetings, while insurance costs fell marginally. Sundry expenses including bank charges and other office costs have fallen, mainly due to fewer purchases of giftware and scrapping of the franking machine. The net effect was a deficit for the year of £1,830. The balance sheet on page 59 shows net assets have decreased from £731,214 to £729,384, reflecting this small deficit. Fixed assets have decreased marginally with a full summary of changes to these appearing in note 5 on page 65.

Current assets have increased, mainly due to the rise in the bank balances from £440,740 to £485,868, although prepayments fell from £315,178 to £299,935. The debtors of £2,471 comprise mainly recharged hotel costs of House of Commons and House of Lords employees at the 138th Assembly, refunds on cancelled flights and an employee season ticket loan.

Creditors and accruals have increased from £36,767 to £64,696.

Those mostly comprise invoices and expense claims related to events held in February and March 2018, pension contributions and payroll taxes for March. The cash flow statement on page 60 highlights an increase in cash of £45,128 compared with an increase in cash of £63,404 the previous year.

The financial memorandum concluded in September 2017 was in effect throughout the 2017-18 financial year. The Annual Report containing the Financial Statements has been published on the BGIPU website for the seventh year running.

MR SPEAKER:

Thank you, Nic, very much indeed. Are there any questions for the Treasurer? There are not. We thank you warmly and congratulate you on telling us everything, to the extent that no one has a question for you.

Item 7: Re-appointment of Auditors

MR SPEAKER:

We now have to appoint auditors for the current year. Do we have a proposal that our current auditors, Kreston Reeves LLP, be reappointed? May I have a proposer and a seconder?

(Proposed by the Rt Hon. the Lord Dholakia and seconded by Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods MP.)

All those in favour please raise your hands.

Any against? No.

Kreston Reeves LLP are appointed unanimously as the Group's auditors for the current year.

Item 8: Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee for the period 2018-19

MR SPEAKER:

I now move on to the elections. I take it that the AGM is willing to confirm the election of the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Group, as notified to all members by the Secretariat by all-member email and published on the website on 22 November, including a late confirmation from the Rt Hon. Emily Thornberry MP. As there are no objections to that outcome, the Presidents and Vice-Presidents are

are confirmed in accordance with those arrangements.

Regarding the composition of the BGIPU Executive Committee, there are some members standing unopposed, including to Officer posts, as already advised to members. I am very pleased, therefore, to confirm that the following Officers and Executive Committee members are elected unopposed.

As new Chair, replacing Nigel Evans MP, to whom I likewise extend my cordial thanks for his genuinely expert and passionate leadership, and from whom we will hear later in the agenda, we have John Whittingdale MP. I want—with your support, I hope—to congratulate him on his election as Chairman. There is a certain piquancy to the fact that on the day John was elected Chair of this Group, he was on his feet probing the Executive about Ukraine-Russia relations, as a result of recent events. He reminded us of the interest he has long taken in that subject. John, we wish you great success in your new role. I think colleagues will feel confident and emboldened by the fact that somebody of your experience and level of interest has been elected.

As a returning Vice-Chair for the Government party, Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger MP; as Vice-Chair for the Opposition, the Rt Hon. Ann Clwyd MP; as Vice-Chair for the House of Lords, Baroness Hooper; and as Honorary Treasurer, Mr Nic Dakin MP. Standing unopposed as Committee members for the Government party are Mr Bob Blackman MP, Mr Conor Burns MP, Mr James Duddridge MP, Mr Nigel Evans MP, Mr Ranil Jayawardena MP, Mr Mark Menzies MP, Mr Andrew Rosindell MP and Mr Laurence Robertson MP, and as Conservative peers, the Rt Hon. the Lord Jopling and Lord Gilbert.

I am also pleased to confirm the election unopposed of Labour peer Lord Dubs—is Alf Dubs here?

DIRECTOR:

We have an apology.

MR SPEAKER:

We are extremely grateful to him. I can also confirm that the Cross-Bench peers are the Rt Hon. the Baroness D'Souza and the Earl of Sandwich, and the Liberal Democrat peer is the Rt Hon. the Lord Dholakia. I congratulate all these returning members on their election and acknowledge their ongoing commitment to the Group. Thank you

one and all.

Voting is under way for the Labour party and SNP House of Commons members of the Committee. The ballots will close at 5.15 pm, but we will need two tellers. Can I have two volunteers willing to stay on after the close to be tellers? This is a great test. Oh dear! The Chair, in the spirit of duty, has volunteered—as has Nigel, the outgoing Chair. What a beautiful partnership!

As he is in my line of vision, it is a pleasure again to welcome John Austin, who unfailingly turns up. Even though he left the House in 2010—if memory serves me correctly—he has maintained his strong link with this Group. That is both appreciated and respected.

The final election result will be confirmed following this AGM, and it will be posted on the IPU Room door and on the BGIPU website.

Item 9: Speech by outgoing Chair of the BGIPU

MR SPEAKER:

We now come to the moment for which I know people have been waiting with beads of sweat upon their brow and with eager anticipation for a flow of logic, argumentation and eloquence unsurpassed in the modern history of our nation. That is to say, I now invite the outgoing Chair of the BGIPU, Mr Nigel Evans, to take the floor for the last time at the end of his three-year term as Chair. I want you to give him an exultant welcome.

NIGEL EVANS MP:

Mr Speaker, my Lords, ladies and gentlemen, as John said last night in his own rooms: after that introduction, I cannot wait to hear what I am about to say. Mr Speaker did say that last night, and it was very funny.

It has been a fantastic three years, I have to say. It has gone incredibly quickly—as has the past 26 years, if I am honest, with certain interruptions—but none the less, it has been incredibly eventful. I am extremely grateful for all the support I have had, not just from the Executive Committee, which has been tremendous, but from the people who have come forward and volunteered for all those delegations that Harriett and Fabian were talking about. I know that all the inwards and outwards can be incredibly time consuming, but if it were not for people coming forward, we would not be able to do those

delegations. We would not be able to play the full part that we play as the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

We have great involvement with parliamentarians all over the world, and we get to see some of the things that they do. I am absolutely certain that the British Group is a big hitter, way above some of the other IPU delegations throughout the world. I am proud of what we do, what we have done in the past, and what we will do in the future.

It has been mentioned that we are leaving the European Union, and one of the decisions that we took early on was to reorient ourselves. We do not take the EU countries for granted anymore: we now make an effort to go out and send delegations to them, which we have done on an increasing basis. I am sure that under your leadership, John, we will continue to ensure that the EU27 feel loved, and know that we want to engage with them—that we are not walking away from them. Thank you to everybody who gets involved in all of that.

John Whittingdale and I have worked very closely together over a long period of time. We both entered Parliament in 1992, and it is great for me to hand over to you, because I know it is going to be a safe pair of hands; not just in the areas of interest in which you have shone, like the Ukraine, but in a number of other areas as well. We have worked very closely together, John, and I look forward to carrying on that relationship in the future, as I do with James Duddridge—who was here a moment ago—as chair of the CPA.

I am not going to repeat all of the visits that we have done, inward and outward, because they are in this amazing, wonderful glossy document and also on the website. I encourage everyone to look at those things, but a number of other meetings have taken place throughout the world. A lot of those were UN-related meetings at the United Nations, and we are grateful to Lord McConnell for all the work he has done in engaging on global issues. We are also grateful to Ann Clwyd: I thank you for your amazing contribution, for the work that you have contributed, and not just over the past 12 months. I know you led a delegation to Iraq. You know when people say, “Oh, look, it’s MPs on a jolly”? Can you imagine the sentence, “MPs on a jolly to Iraq”? Thank you very much for all the work that you have done. You have been absolutely superb and brilliant.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been mentioned. Unfailing in our visits, its people have been absolutely superb, including high commissioners and ambassadors, who have turned their teams out for us, and those people from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who come over and brief us before we have delegation visits. Minister, please could you make sure that they know they are incredibly valued and that we are supremely grateful to them? If I could pick one, Jamie Bowden, our ambassador in Chile—Gloria Hooper, Lisa Cameron and I have just come back from a delegation visit; I do not know whether anyone else was on it—was absolutely unfailing in the dedication he showed our delegation over a period of four days. He was with us for most of it. You really cannot put a value on that sort of expertise and support, so please thank them very much for everything they have done for us.

Also, on the Assemblies we do—the two this year have been in Geneva—we do a lot of bilateral work. It is not just sitting in the hall listening to speeches—some of which, sadly, are very prepared speeches where people just drone on and are not very interested in what anybody else has to say. The bilats, where Members of Parliament get stuck in with others, are incredibly important. Their value could not be better exemplified than by our relationship with the Argentinian delegation, which just a few years ago was pitiful, if not woeful, whereas today it stands, I think, as one of the best relationships we have with any delegation. Some of that may be due to the change of leadership in Argentina, and a lot of it is down to our fantastic ambassador in Buenos Aires, but it is also down to the fact that we have met on a number of occasions both in Geneva and in Buenos Aires, and we have had the Argentinian delegation over here and a number of people have got involved in that. Of all the delegations in the world, that one has now proven to be incredibly fruitful. That shows you the value.

The delegation bilats in the past used to be the Argentinian delegation fairly well screaming at us and us just listening, and it really was unproductive. We would try to get them on to subject matters such as rugby, Malbec, fracking—anything—and it never worked. When any reference is made to the Falklands, it is mentioned just once and from then on they refer to “the islands”, which just shows you the progress that has been made, because they know there are so many other subject

matters where we can be productive in working together to the benefit of both Argentina and the United Kingdom. That just shows you the strength of our organisation.

We are also big hitters when we go to Geneva. As you know, the Middle East, Palestine and Israel come up time and again in the emergency motions, even though we have the Middle East Committee. It is an important subject matter, but we managed this year to ensure that climate change, which affects the entire world, was properly debated and we supported other countries to ensure that it was put at the very top of the agenda. I am really pleased with that. Also, against some opposition, I have ensured that we have debated the Rohingya in Myanmar/Burma—Mr Speaker, I know that issue is very close to your heart—and the refugees who have been forced through from Burma into Bangladesh and Cox's Bazar. With my other hat on, I have been with the International Development Committee to Cox's Bazar to listen to some of the harrowing, horrific stories that take place in the world in 2018. It is horrific that that happens today. We managed to make that very prominent in one of our Assemblies.

Venezuela has also been mentioned, and we have certainly supported the legitimately elected Members of Parliament of Venezuela against the illegitimate constitutional assembly that has been put in by the Government. I am really pleased that we have had that issue debated time and again. The illegitimate Members of Parliament, if we can call them that, do not like it and they shout, and they have friends in Cuba and what have you, but it does not matter. Legitimate Members of Parliament do not get paid, when they leave the country they do not know whether they will be allowed back into Venezuela and some of them have been arrested, some are in prison and others are now living in exile, which shows the sort of pressure parliamentarians have to live with in a country such as Venezuela, where the governance goes bad. We have raised those issues.

There is one other issue that is dear to your heart, Mr Speaker, which is LGBTI issues. We have joined a number of other countries to try to talk about LGBTI issues, not with a motion that every country has to sign up to, because we know that some countries—particularly middle eastern countries and some African countries, and Uganda specifically—would find that incredibly difficult, but just with a side show at the next conference. At the Assembly we just had, they

actually changed the constitution of the Assembly in order to stop us talking about LGBTI issues in April. That was led by the Ugandans. However, I am pleased to say that I believe a growing number of countries are binding together to make absolutely certain that we will not let this go.

In 2018, gay people are being thrown off the tops of buildings, persecuted and beaten up, and are living in denial. We take joy in gay pride in London and various other capitals throughout our country, as do a number of other countries. I was recently in Sweden, where the gay pride flag—the rainbow flag—was flying from fairly well every building, as it does in London. While we were in Argentina, they were displaying the rainbow flag on traffic gantries and saying, “Let’s rejoice in diversity.” Yet in other countries, people simply live in fear and have to deny their very existence. We will not let that go. It is amazing how many Members of Parliament in our Assemblies talk about equality and human rights but do not see that LGBT is part of that. We are not going to let it go, Mr Speaker, and I know that you will be very supportive of that.

Nic mentioned a lot of the other activities we work on in all-party country groups. We will continue to do that and to encourage people to apply to the IPU for support for any of the activities they wish to do, either out of country or here in Parliament.

I now want to say a big thank you. Thank you to you, Mr Speaker, for the support you have given me. As you know, along with Gloria Hooper, I represented you at the Speakers’ G20 conference in Argentina. Thank you very much for the support you gave me. I also thank the fantastic team of nine who are the IPU. Without them, we would not be able to do anything, frankly—inwards, outwards or any of the activities we do. A huge thank you to all of them. Thank you, Rick and your amazing team, for the amazing quiz you do to raise funds for a couple of good causes, right through to all the other activities you do. That is absolutely superb. Thank you, Rick, for the dedication you show, which is way above the call of duty.

We are losing Anja. I only learned that today. Anja was with us in Argentina and Chile, and I have to tell you that she is absolutely superb, not only because she speaks more languages than anybody else I know, but because of her dedication. It cannot be easy for any of the staff when they take delegations out, because we parliamentarians

are all prima donnas and incredibly demanding, but you guys put yourselves out, and Anja, you certainly did in Argentina and Chile. We are going to miss you. Wherever you are going, it is a huge gain for them but a massive loss for us. We wish you incredibly well for the future.

Finally, Dominique.

MS DOMINIQUE REES:

I'm not leaving.

NIGEL EVANS MP:

No, but you've been here 20 years. You have shown amazing dedication. You have been here almost as long as me. Your involvement has been longer than the length of service of the founder, Randal Cremer, who is standing two across from you, on the plinth. It has been absolutely superb. It was, clearly, recognised in your MBE award, which is absolutely deserved. Thank you very much for your length of service and the dedication you have demonstrated throughout the entire time I have known you on the IPU. One has only to lift up the phone and you are there. Thank you very, very much.

I am not going to milk it any more. I have been preparing this speech for three years, you know. None the less, I will just say thank you for the friendships that have grown, whether I have been on delegations with you or I have worked with you closely here, and for all the support that you have given me. It has been absolutely superb. It has been a tremendous three years, so I say thank you for that. John, if you get the same level of support that I have received over that period of time, you are in for a fantastic three years too. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. John, would you like to say a few words?

RT HON. JOHN WHITTINGDALE MP:

Yes, but very briefly, because I do not want to detain colleagues. I first express my thanks to Mr Speaker for chairing and for granting me the urgent question this morning. I thank all colleagues for the support they have given me in taking over from Nigel as Chair.

I am delighted to have a very strong Executive and extremely experienced Officers in the form of Ann, Gloria Hooper, Ian Liddell-Grainger—returning to the Executive—and Nic Dakin. I wait to see who will be the Opposition members of the Executive, but I am

delighted that we have some very strong candidates and that my Conservative colleagues have been re-elected to the Executive.

Most of all, I am delighted that Nigel will continue to serve on the Executive. I will rely on him a lot. I promise him that we will continue to champion the causes that he has spoken out on so strongly, particularly LGBT rights. I have been to Geneva twice with him and seen how strongly he has advocated that cause against pretty strong opposition from some parts of the world. We will not let the matter rest; we will continue to champion it. I also have one or two causes that I would like to pursue, particularly in the area of the protection of journalists and media freedom.

I will finish by saying that I am not always a supporter of membership of international unions, but I promise that I see the British Group continuing to be an extremely strong voice in the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

MR SPEAKER:

Thank you, John. Huge thanks to you, Nigel, for an outstanding tenure. Thank you and good luck to John. Congratulations to those who are about to learn of their election.

Item 10: Any other business

MR SPEAKER:

I have already been advised that there is no additional business, and I do not wish to be late for my next meeting—no discourtesy intended—so, with your latitude, and even without it, I am going to declare that we have come to the end of the agenda of a truly memorable and excellent meeting.

Item 11: Closure of meeting

MR SPEAKER:

I declare the meeting now closed.

Officers and Executive Committee

Following the Annual General Meeting held on **Tuesday 27 November 2018**, the under-mentioned were elected as Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

BGIPU Honorary Presidents

Rt Hon John Bercow MP (The Speaker)

Rt Hon the Lord Fowler (The Lord Speaker)

BGIPU President

Rt Hon Theresa May MP* (Prime Minister)

BGIPU Vice-Presidents:

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP* (BGIPU President from 10 September)

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP

Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP

Ms Kate Osamor MP

Ms Mary Creagh MP

Rt Hon the Baroness Hayman

Rt Hon the Baroness D'Souza CMG

Rt Hon the Lord Owen CH

Meetings of the Executive Committee

Since the last Annual General Meeting on 27 November 2018 there have been five Executive Committee meetings: Tuesday 22 January, Tuesday 26 February, Tuesday 21 May, Tuesday 16 July and Tuesday 22 October.

Meetings of the Audit Committee

Since the last Annual General Meeting on 27 November 2018 there have been two Audit Committee meetings: Wednesday 13 February and Tuesday 2 July.

Officers & Executive Committee (As elected 27 November 2018)

Chair:

Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP

Vice-Chairs:

Ian Liddell-Grainger MP

Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP

Baroness Hooper CMG

Treasurer:

Nic Dakin MP

Executive Committee:

Conservative Party

Bob Blackman MP

Conor Burns MP*

James Duddridge MP*

Nigel Evans MP

Ranil Jayawardena MP

Mark Menzies MP

Laurence Robertson MP

Andrew Rosindell MP

The Lord Gilbert of Panteg

Rt Hon the Lord Jopling DL

Labour Party

Roberta Blackman-Woods MP

Wayne David MP

Diana Johnson MP

Kerry McCarthy MP

Seema Malhotra MP

Chris Matheson MP

Stephen Pound MP

Alex Sobel MP

The Lord Dubs

Scottish National Party

Dr Lisa Cameron MP

Cross Bench

The Earl of Sandwich

Rt Hon the Baroness D'Souza

CMG

(*Stood down following Ministerial
Appointment July 2019)

Other Party Peer

Rt Hon the Lord Dholakia OBE DL

Membership of the British Group

As a result of rule changes adopted at the AGM on December 3 2014, all members of both Houses of Parliament are deemed to be full members of the BGIPU. As at 5 November 2019, total membership of the group was 1,441.

UK/French delegates meet in Paris to celebrate 130th Anniversary of the IPU with Secretary General of the IPU Martin Chungong in June 2019.



BGIPU Parliamentary Seminar on Media Freedom participants in September 2019.

UK Delegation meeting Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs in Lithuania in September 2019.



Then Speaker, Rt Hon John Bercow MP, at the BGIPU 130th Anniversary Reception in June 2019.



UK Parliamentarians at the 140th IPU Assembly in Qatar in April 2019.

Rt Hon Baroness Anelay meeting the Speaker of the House of Federation in Ethiopia in February 2019.



Fabian Hamilton MP giving a tour to the visiting Slovakian Delegation in March 2019.

James Duddridge MP with African Ambassadors during FCO Leadership Week in June 2019.



**REPORT OF THE
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS,
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AND ANNUAL
GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

**Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement
Year ended 31 March 2019**

**Kreston Reeves LLP
Statutory Auditor & Chartered Accountants
Third Floor
24 Chiswell Street
London
EC1Y 4YX**

Annual Governance Statement

Governance framework

The British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) is an unincorporated association¹ comprising members of both Houses of the UK Parliament united in their support for the aim of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue. Because of an amendment to the BGIPU Rules in December 2014, all members of both houses of the UK Parliament are now deemed to be full members of the BGIPU with a right to participate in the Group's activities.

Governance of the BGIPU is exercised through a 26-member Executive Committee, appointed annually by its entire membership (with provision for up to four additional members to be co-opted annually). The Executive Committee approves and oversees the implementation of a Forward Programme of engagement with counterpart parliaments, the principal organs of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and other bodies as appropriate in pursuit of advancing the parliamentary dimension of Britain's foreign relations.

Aside from Honorary Presidential posts, the Officers of the BGIPU comprise the Chair, three vice-Chairs, Honorary Treasurer and the Director. The Officers exercise financial authority on behalf of the Executive Committee on a day to day basis. The Officers meet formally as required, usually in advance of any Executive Committee meeting. All decisions taken by the Officers are duly reported to the full Executive Committee at its next meeting. They are supported by a Secretariat, led by the Director and senior staff comprising a Deputy Director, Finance and Administration Manager and well-qualified and appropriately experienced international programme management and administrative support staff.

¹

Most small voluntary organisations and community groups are unincorporated associations. "Unincorporated" means not a company. An unincorporated association has been defined as:

"two or more persons bound together for common purposes, not being business purposes, by mutual undertakings, each having mutual duties and obligations, in an organisation which has rules which identify in whom control of it and its funds rests and on what terms and which can be joined or left at will."

Conservative and Unionist Central Office v Burrell, 1982

The Honorary Treasurer as Accounting Officer is responsible for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the aims and key objectives of the BGIPU whilst safeguarding its public funds and assets in a manner that is consistent with the Financial Memorandum (FM) issued by both Houses of Parliament for the use of the BGIPU's grant in aid. The Honorary Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring such internal control measures are fully implemented in compliance with relevant Treasury and other guidelines. In particular, the role seeks to ensure that all resources are used economically, efficiently and cost-effectively including that the Executive Committee take financial considerations into account in making operational and policy decisions.

The Director is responsible to the Officers and the Executive Committee for the implementation of their decisions and effective administration of the organisation and its Secretariat, observing appropriate personnel management policies. The position is also responsible to the Honorary Treasurer to ensure that effective procedures are in place to control the expenditure of the organisation, to maintain a record of losses, special payments or write-offs, to calculate the budget required to carry out the organisation's authorised activities and to submit the annual request for grant in aid.

The full Executive Committee considers the preparation of BGIPU's forward programme of activities and facilitates through Selection Committees, the identification of the most appropriately qualified delegates for IPU Assemblies and other inter-parliamentary activities. It also decides what action is to be taken on recommendations and resolutions of Assemblies and the Governing Council of the Union, promotes membership of the BGIPU and has overall control of the Group's funds. The Executive Committee is also responsible for formal correspondence with the Secretariat of the IPU, consideration and adoption of the BGIPU Strategic Business Plan and authorisation of the appointment of the Director.

Under the authority of the Executive Committee, the Audit Committee gives advice to the Honorary Treasurer on the adequacy of audit

arrangements and the implications of assurances regarding risk and control in the organisation. The Committee regularly reviews the organisation's Risk Register and, when necessary, draws to the attention of the Honorary Treasurer and the Executive Committee any additional measures needed to control risk or if the scope of the external audit needs to be adjusted.

Arrangements for funding inter-parliamentary groups in the UK Parliament have evolved over many years. While funding of the BGIPU originally came from member contributions, and later the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Treasury, in recent years the funding has been provided directly by both Houses of Parliament with 70 percent allocated from the House of Commons and 30 percent from the House of Lords.

A new FM was negotiated in February 2017, cleared by the BGIPU Executive Committee on 20 March 2017 and after final approval by the administration of both Houses, signed in September 2017. The FM provides the basis for the continued financial support by the UK Parliament of BGIPU. This latest iteration followed directions set in past memoranda agreed in 2009, 2012, and 2014 respectively outlining the arrangements governing the funding and institutional relationship. The current FM requires the preparation of a detailed annual business plan, including estimated costs of programme and non-programme expenditure, regular quarterly reports of outturn figures and an overall commitment to follow recommended limits on reserves. BGIPU is also required to follow broadly a range of administrative, financial and human resources policies, analogous to in the House of Commons, albeit proportionate and relevant to BGIPU's own unique character and circumstances.

Internal risk and audit oversight is exercised by the Audit Committee selected from members of the Executive Committee. The BGIPU also has an annual external audit, with authorised financial statements, an explanatory commentary, and key audit findings presented to the Audit Committee in mid-year for consideration and referral to the Executive Committee. In accordance with the Rules of the Group (last reviewed and amended in December 2014), the BGIPU produces an Annual

Report in advance of the Annual General Meeting. In response to the findings of an audit undertaken by the funding bodies in early 2016, the Risk Register was streamlined, and a new Procurement Policy was adopted by the start of 2017. Some suggestions from this audit outcome were also addressed in negotiating the current FM and there were also subsequent updates in late 2017 to the Guidance for Members' Travel to address some reputational and operational risk issues.

Work of the Executive Committee

The BGIPU Executive Committee met on five occasions during the 2018-19 Financial Year being convened on Tuesday 1 May 2018, Tuesday 3 July 2018, Tuesday 23 October 2018, Tuesday 22 January 2019 and Tuesday 26 February 2019. The Audit Committee was convened on Tuesday 26 June 2018 to recommend approval of final accounts, and on Wednesday 13 February 2019 to consider the auditors' Letter of Engagement and supporting documents, and the Risk Management Strategy, including the Risk Register. The Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday 27 November 2018 to elect a new Executive Committee for 2019.

Under the guidance of the Executive Committee, the Director has continued efforts to improve the organisation's effectiveness through a sharper focus on BGIPU's strategic priorities and regular review of planning and implementation procedures. Consistent with the requirements of the FM, the Director submitted to the funding bodies in September 2018 the annual review of the Executive Committee-approved 3-year Strategic Business Plan adopted in February 2016. BGIPU also submitted detailed forward planning budgets for the next three financial years in support of BGIPU's 2019/20 Request for Funding. In addition, the Executive Committee approved a detailed Forward Programme for 2019/20 drawing upon a new three-year Strategic Business Plan adopted on 26 February 2019. The Secretariat has also continued to utilise a framework for evaluation and monitoring to collect quantitative and qualitative data to better inform internal review mechanisms and objective-setting based on self-assessment and feedback from participants.

Under the day-to-day management of the Director, and with the assistance of a specialist human resources expert working on a contract basis, the Executive Committee has taken all appropriate steps to ensure staff members are employed on terms broadly in line with those of the House of Commons as required in the FM, including following the appropriate pay-bands and salary levels applying to House of Commons staff. The BGIPU Secretariat also maintains a comprehensive Staff Handbook, updated regularly in line with any relevant changes to House of Commons policies or practices.

As directed by the Executive Committee, the Secretariat has continued to provide comprehensive activity reporting through its website, in addition to using social media and electronic newsletters to make the Group's work more accessible while ensuring its outreach remains cost-effective. Recognising the need for professional and personal development, there has also been an emphasis on staff training including boosting information technology, communications and design skills, ongoing financial management and budget training, team-building activities and further development of international relations policy skills with support for specialised language training.

Risks

BGIPU's mechanisms and procedures are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the policies, aims and objectives of the organisation. In doing this, it can provide only reasonable, not absolute assurance of effectiveness. This involves identifying and prioritising the risks for the achievement of the organisation's objectives, evaluating the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact in that event, so best to anticipate and manage risks effectively.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The process of risk management in the BGIPU is based on the judgement and authority of the Executive Committee, including

drawing on the experience and advice of the Director and other Secretariat personnel. As far as possible, BGIPU employees are encouraged to take full ownership of their work and be responsible for their part of the risk control process. Members of staff are appropriately informed, guided and trained to manage aspects of risk relevant to their responsibilities. This includes close attention to ensuring due probity and care in the responsible expenditure of public monies.

A working environment which encourages teamwork and dialogue, convenes regular staff meetings and opportunities for individual consultation. The Secretariat also ensures effective processes for the identification and dissemination of best practice and lessons learned. Feedback to the Secretariat on its overall effectiveness and performance is provided by the Officers and Executive Committee and by open report back meetings following completion of projects, attended by the MPs and Peers who have participated in them and other interested stakeholders, including government officials.

Risk Control Framework

A Risk Register has been compiled and approved by the Executive Committee and forms the focus of the organisation's risk management strategy (last reviewed in February 2019). The Director also undertook specialist Risk Management training in 2014 in relation to House of Commons procedures. The Executive Committee has delegated authority to the Audit Committee to regularly monitor and scrutinise the Risk Register and to take appropriate action where necessary. The Audit Committee reports back to the Executive Committee as required to ensure any issues are fully discussed. Risk management is embedded in the organisation through all activity being approved by the Executive Committee, by regular staff reporting and commenting upon good practice, through close review of expenditure and regular scrutiny of the Risk Register by the Audit Committee.

Greater clarity around BGIPU practices and policies has been ensured through circulation of the BGIPU Staff Handbook which is regularly updated. In addressing key reputation, financial and operational risks,

the Executive Committee has reviewed and updated in early 2018 the travel and subsistence policies for BGIPU Members titled “Guidance for Members Travelling Overseas on BGIPU Delegations”. This now includes strong language establishing high expectations of Members’ overall conduct abroad including highlighting BGIPU’s policies regarding harassment and discrimination.

Most residual risks are low. The main risk priorities for the organisation are in the areas of effective project management, which in turn depends upon the professionalism and motivation of staff and the promotion of best practice. A staffing structure weakness, in having one staff member occupied with finance and administration tasks, was originally addressed in early 2013 by the recruitment of a Finance and Administrative Assistant although the incumbent of this post left in November 2017. Future recruitment was held off while BGIPU’s ongoing office accommodation issues was settled during 2018, with temporary cover provided by the HR Consultant. A recruitment campaign commenced in March 2019 (albeit the post remains unfilled at time of writing). Potential compliance risks, including regarding the taxation status of the BGIPU, were addressed fully and resolved through accessing specialist advice and effective remediation action by the Executive Committee. The Secretariat has also worked to address compliance risks associated with General Data Protection Regulation legislation, proposed new harassment and bullying policies in Parliament and completed the office relocation and major upgrades to IT software on the parliamentary network in late 2018.

Review of Effectiveness

It is a significant enhancement to the Group’s overall corporate governance that the Executive Committee adopted in February 2019 a multi-year Strategic Business Plan, governing the period 2019/20 to 2021/22, the third such strategy since 2012. This document provides a long-term planning process combined with appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms which allows BGIPU to be in a stronger position to assess its effectiveness against key objectives. The inclusion of an indicative annual programme also allows BGIPU, including both the Executive Committee and the Secretariat, to better judge the scope

and level of inter-parliamentary activity, in addition to ensuring the impact of key outcomes in meeting its stated goals.

While notionally independent of the management arrangements of both Houses of Parliament, the fact that the BGIPU is entirely dependent on external funding from Parliament requires it to maintain the full confidence and support of its funding partners. This requires close attention to the provisions of the FM and appropriate transparency and probity to ensure that funding levels are sufficient for implementation of the programme activities being planned. If funding is reduced or withdrawn, there could be insufficient resources available to meet core elements of the Forward Programme and this would put the BGIPU's ability to meet its key objectives at risk. A close, consultative and effective relationship with its funding bodies in both Houses is essential, requiring BGIPU to fully comply with the FM in all its aspects, including through the most prudent management of its reserves.

Based on the feedback of members through formal meetings and informal channels, the support and regular exchanges with the Group's key funding partners, and other key stakeholders, including the IPU Secretariat in Geneva, the FCO and other relevant UK government bodies, I assess that the Executive Committee and Secretariat are undertaking the key roles and responsibilities of the BGIPU to an appropriate level of effectiveness. This includes its cost-effective use of public monies, its employment responsibilities to staff and the management of its major risks.

Mindful of the key monitoring role played by both the BGIPU's funding bodies in the Houses of Parliament, I assess the BGIPU's governance mechanisms to be robust, allowing for appropriate management oversight by the Executive Committee, including through the combined audit scrutiny and risk management roles of the Audit Committee. Combined with independent external audit mechanisms, I am confident there are sufficient measures in place to ensure the Group's inter-parliamentary activities are well-targeted and they represent effective use of the public monies provided for this purpose.

As Honorary Treasurer, I am assured by reports from the Audit Committee and through witnessing the deliberations of the Officers and the Executive Committee that the current BGIPU governance structure is sustainable and sufficiently robust in all aspects. On this basis, I have every confidence in concluding that the governance of BGIPU adequately addresses the expectations of its membership, can be responsive to changes in its operating environment, fulfils the expectations of its funding bodies and fully meets all its financial, administrative and programme obligations in a fully satisfactory manner.

(Signed)

N Dakin MP

Honorary Treasurer

16 July 2019

Statement of the Executive Committee's responsibilities

Under the BGIPU's rules, the duties of the Executive Committee of the BGIPU include the control of the organisation's funds. It is also required to ensure that financial statements (duly audited) are prepared. The Executive Committee of the BGIPU has accepted responsibility for the preparation of these financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 which are intended by it to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organisation and of the surplus for that period. The Executive Committee has accepted that the financial statements shall be prepared in accordance with UK Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In preparing these financial statements, the Executive Committee has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- stated whether applicable accounting standards have been followed; subject to any material departures being disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis as it believes that the organisation will continue to function for at least 12 months from the date of approval of the balance sheet.

The Executive Committee has general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to it to safeguard the assets of the BGIPU and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Disclosure of information to auditor

The Executive Committee confirms that, so far as it is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the organisation's auditors are unaware; and that it has taken all the steps that it ought to have taken to make itself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the organisation's auditors are aware of that information.

Report of the independent auditor to the members of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (the 'organisation') for the year ended 31 March 2019 which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102. The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the organisation's affairs as at 31 March 2019, and of its surplus for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the organisation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Executive Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Executive Committee has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the organisation's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The Executive Committee are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained during the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a

material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Report of the independent auditors to the members of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the organisation and its environment obtained during the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Executive Committee's responsibilities.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters, where we are required to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of the Executive Committee's remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the Executive Committee

As explained more fully in the Executive Committee's responsibilities statement set out on page 54, the Executive Committee are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Executive Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Executive Committee are responsible for assessing the organisation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Executive Committee either intend to liquidate the organisation or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. 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), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We 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 our 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 organisation's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the members.

Report of the independent auditor to the members of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Executive Committee'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 organisation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the organisation to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We 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 we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the organisation's members, as a body, determined by the rules of the organisation. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the organisation's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the organisation and the organisation's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

(Signed)

Kreston Reeves LLP

Statutory Auditor & Chartered Accountants

London

Date: 16 July 2019

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2019

	Note	2019 £	2018 £
Income			
Grant in aid	1	1,326,500	1,247,730
Donations / Subscriptions received from members	1	53	55
Interest receivable	1	702	123
Other		-	5
		1,327,255	1,247,913
Expenditure			
Subscriptions		360,516	374,787
Conferences, IPU seminars and outward delegations		229,656	295,288
Inward delegations, BGIPU seminars and days in Parliament		154,867	102,552
All party groups		27,979	4,252
Salaries, national insurance and other staff costs	3	439,281	445,197
Printing, stationery and publications		1,701	1,659
Postage and telephone		59	120
Publishing and public relations		23,754	4,869
Audit fee for the audit of these financial statements		7,372	7,303
Insurance		5,461	5,298
General hospitality		4,212	1,441
Sundry expenses		7,099	4,398
Legal fees		-	420
Depreciation of fixed assets	5	1,345	2,011
Loss on disposal		-	148
		1,263,302	1,249,743
Surplus/(Deficit) or the year	10	63,953	(1,830)
Opening reserves		729,384	731,214
Closing reserves	10	793,337	729,384

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that all activities are continuing activities.

There are no other items to be recognised in other comprehensive income.

Notes 1 to 15 form part of the financial statements.

Balance sheet

at 31 March 2019

	Note	£	2018	£	2017
					£
Fixed assets	5		10,192		5,806
Current assets					
Debtors	6	979		2,471	
Prepayments and accrued income	6	323,580		299,935	
Cash at bank and in hand	7	507,809		485,868	
		832,638		788,274	
Current liabilities					
Creditors	8	(49,223)		(64,696)	
Net current assets			783,145		723,578
Net assets			793,337		729,384
Financed by:					
General fund	10		793,337		729,384
			793,337		729,384

Notes 1 to 15 form part of the financial statements.

These financial statements were approved by the undersigned and authorised for issue on 16 July 2019.

(Signed)
N Dakin MP
Honorary Treasurer
16 July

(Signed)
J Whittingdale MP
Chair
16 July

Cash flow statement

at 31 March 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
Cash flow from operating activities		
(Deficit)/Surplus for the financial year	63,953	(1,830)
Adjustments for:		
Interest received	(702)	(123)
Decrease/(Increase) in debtors	(22,152)	17,068
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	(15,474)	27,929
Depreciation charge	1,345	2,011
Loss on disposal	-	148
Purchase of fixed assets	(5,731)	(198)
Net cash flow from operating activities	21,239	45,005
Cash flow from investing activities		
Interest received	702	123
Net cash flow from investing activities	702	123
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	21,941	45,128
Cash at the beginning of the year	485,868	440,740
Cash at bank and in hand at the end of the year	507,809	440,740

Notes forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 31 March 2019

Accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the organisation's financial statements.

1.1 Legal form

The BGIPU is an unincorporated entity, acting as an autonomous body within Parliament and is an independent parliamentary association. The Group is domiciled in the United Kingdom and the address of its registered office and principal place of business is the Palace of Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA. Details of the principal activity of the BGIPU are included in the Annual Governance Statement on page 1.

1.2 Basis of preparation

The BGIPU is not required by law to comply with the requirements of the Companies Act and generally accepted accounting principles. However, as explained in the Statement of Executive Committee's responsibilities, the Executive Committee has accepted that these financial statements shall be prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and under the historical cost convention.

The preparation of the financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the accounting policies (see note 2).

The following accounting policies have been applied:

1.3 Fixed assets and depreciation

All assets over £100 are capitalised. Depreciation is provided to write off the cost less the estimated residual value of tangible fixed assets by equal instalments over their estimated useful economic lives as follows:

Office equipment	-	15% per annum (10% in the 7 th year)
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Computers and software - 25% per annum

No depreciation is provided on paintings or the commemorative bell. There is no available market value but it is thought that the current market value would exceed the carrying amount.

1.4 Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment.

1.5 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours.

1.6 Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

1.7 Pension costs

The organisation makes payments to both defined contribution pension schemes and personal pension plans for the benefit of its employees.

Contributions payable to the schemes are charged against income in the period in which they fall due.

1.8 Financial instruments

The Company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other accounts receivable and payable.

Debt instruments that are payable or receivable within one year, typically trade and other payables or receivables, are measured, initially and subsequently, at the undiscounted amount of the cash or other consideration, expected to be paid or received. However if the arrangements of a short-term instrument constitute a financing transaction, like the payment of a trade debt deferred beyond normal business terms or financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate or in case of an outright short-term loan not at market rate, the financial asset or liability is measured, initially, at the present value of the future cash flow discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument and subsequently at amortised cost.

1.9 Foreign currency translation

Functional and presentation currency

The company's functional and presentational currency is GBP.

Transactions and balances

Foreign currency transactions are translated into the functional currency using the actual rate of exchange used when either converting currency, making payments by bank transfer or making payments by way of credit card. Any reimbursement to delegates or staff will be at either the actual rate suffered or up to 3% above the rate prevailing at the time of the transaction to account for standard bank and credit card charges. At each period end foreign currency monetary items are translated using the closing rate. Non-monetary items measured at historical cost are translated using the exchange rate at the date of the transaction.

1.10 Grant in aid

Grant in aid is recognised as income in the financial statements in the period to which the grant relates.

Grant in aid for the year ended 31 March 2019 of £1,326,500 (2018: £1,247,730) has been provided by the House of Commons and the House of Lords; contributing 70% and 30% respectively.

1.11 Conference, delegation and all party group expenditure

Expenditure in respect of conferences, inward and outward delegations and seminars is charged against income in the period in which the event occurs.

1.12 Interest receivable

Interest earned on all bank accounts is recognised in the income and expenditure account on an accruals basis.

1.13 Donations / Subscriptions received

On 1 February 2011, the Executive Committee voted to suspend the annual membership fees. At the AGM in November 2011, the BGIPU Rules were formally amended abolishing the requirement for membership fees. However, there would be no refunds of unnecessary payments, which will be treated as donations in the future.

2 Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

No significant judgements have had to be made by management in preparing these financial statements.

3 Staff costs

The total emoluments paid to employees during the year, including pension contributions are disclosed in the income and expenditure account. Staff costs include all independent consultancy fees.

The average number of employees of the BGIPU during the year was 8 (2018: 9).

Staff costs, including director's remuneration, were as follows:

	2019	2018
	£	£
Wages and salaries	324,963	330,195
Social security costs	36,069	36,121
Pension costs	43,860	45,113
Other costs	34,389	33,768
	<u>439,281</u>	<u>445,197</u>

4 Tax status

The BGIPU acts as an autonomous body within Parliament and as such is treated as an independent parliamentary association and accordingly is not chargeable to tax.

5 Tangible fixed assets

	Paintings	Commemorative bell	Office equipment	Computers and software	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost					
At beginning of year	3,183	890	631	23,565	29,553
Additions	-	-	-	5,731	198
Disposals	-	-		(473)	(473)
At end of year	3,183	890	631	28,823	33,527
Depreciation					
At beginning of year	-	-	593	21,870	22,463
Charge for year	-	-	38	1,307	1,345
Disposals	-	-	-	(473)	(473)
At end of year	-	-	631	22,704	23,335
Net book value					
At 31 March 2019	3,183	890	-	6,119	10,192
At 31 March 2018	3,183	890	38	1,695	5,806

6 Debtors: amounts receivable within one year

	2019 £	2018 £
Trade debtors	-	-
Prepayments	323,580	299,935
Other debtors	979	2,471
	324,559	302,406

7 Cash at bank and in hand

	2019 £	2018 £
Interest earning bank deposit accounts	487,607	475,438
Non-interest earning bank current account	10,000	10,000
Cash in hand	202	430
	<u>507,809</u>	<u>485,868</u>

8 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2019 £	2018 £
Trade creditors	5,837	18,420
Accruals and prepaid income	34,714	36,409
Social security and other taxes	7,549	9,867
Other Creditors	1,123	-
	<u>49,223</u>	<u>64,696</u>

9 Financial instruments

	2019 £	2018 £
Financial assets		
Measured at fair value through profit or loss	832,368	788,274
	<u>832,368</u>	<u>788,274</u>
Financial liabilities		
Measured at amortised cost	41,674	54,829
	<u>41,674</u>	<u>54,829</u>

(i) Risk Management

The company's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks, including foreign exchange risk:

Foreign exchange risk

The organisation operates internationally and is exposed to foreign exchange risk with respect to the Swiss Franc and various other currencies, depending on events taking place overseas. Market risk arising from movements in foreign exchange rates is identified and monitored.

(ii) Fair value

The company's financial assets and liabilities comprise debtors, creditors and cash at bank. The book values and fair values of the company's financial assets and liabilities are identical and are disclosed on the balance sheet and within related notes.

10 Reserves

General fund

This reserve comprises all current and prior period retained surplus and deficits.

	General Fund
	£
Balance at 31 March 2018	729,384
Surplus for the year	63,953
Balance at 31 March 2019	793,337

In accordance with HM Government accounting rules, the annual grant in aid income awarded to the organisation is not paid to the BGIPU until the funds are actually required to meet expenditure budgeted for the year. The BGIPU submits returns to the funding providers covering income and expenditure, cash position and adjusted reserves for the previous period and forecasts for the year, before quarterly instalments of grant in aid are agreed and paid. The funding provider advances cash to the organisation when it is required to meet expenditure.

The General Fund balance is carried forward into the next financial year and is unaffected by the change in funding arrangement of the grant in aid.

11 Pension commitments

Contributions payable by the company relating to both defined contribution pension schemes and personal pension plans for the year amounted to £43,860 (2018: £45,113). At the year end, £3,452 (2018: £3,694) remained unpaid.

12 Published financial statements

The approved financial statements will be made publicly available on the website of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at www.bgipu.org.

13 Related party transactions

During the year persons who were members of the Executive Committee at any time during the financial year incurred reimbursable expenditure while participating in delegations on behalf of the organisation totalling £10,170 (2018: £4,856). At the year-end, £nil (2018: £985) was outstanding and is included within creditors in note 8.

14 Controlling party

The entity is under the control of the Executive Committee and the Director.

IPU

HEADQUARTERS

Executive Committee of the IPU

The IPU Governing Council is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU. Oversight of the administration and advice to the Governing Council is provided by an Executive Committee composed as follows;

Members	Expiry of term
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President:

Ms G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico)	October 2020
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Members:

Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba)	October 2020
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Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt)	April 2021
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Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada)	October 2021
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Ms. M. Kiener-Nellen (Switzerland)	October 2021
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Mr. G. Chen (China)	October 2022
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Mr. G. Gali Ngothé (Chad)	October 2022
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Mr M. Grujic (Serbia)	October 2022
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Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan)	October 2023
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Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda)	October 2023
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Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile)	October 2023
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Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden)	October 2023
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Mr. P. Krairiksh (Thailand)	October 2023
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Mr. J. Mudena (Zimbabwe)	October 2023
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Mr. R. Rabbani (Pakistan)	October 2023
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Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Suriname)	October 2023
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Ms. A. Al-Basti (UAE) Ex Officio	October 2022
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Mr M. Bouva (Suriname) Ex Officio	April 2021
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Liaison with the International Secretariat

The BGIPU Secretariat has maintained regular and constructive contact with the IPU Secretariat in Geneva on a wide range of issues on the IPU agenda. In May, International Project Manager Megan Black attended the Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at IPU Headquarters. In June, the Secretary General Martin Chungong joined UK and French MPs at a meeting to celebrate the 130th Anniversary of the IPU in Paris. In September, International Project Manager Lucy Nash went to the Headquarters for orientation and to assist Thomas Fitzsimmons, Director of Communications, in advance of the 141st Assembly in Belgrade, where she also provided support.

At IPU Assemblies, Geneva-based IPU meetings and in our regular daily work, the British Group continues to enjoy excellent relations at all levels and maintains a strong record of cooperation with the international Secretariat. The contact details for the Secretary General of the IPU are:

Mr Martin Chungong
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
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National Groups of the IPU

As of October 2019 there are 179 Members and 13 Associate Members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Afghanistan	Comoros	Guyana
Albania	Congo	Haiti
Algeria	Costa Rica	Honduras
Andorra	Côte d'Ivoire	Hungary
Angola	Croatia	Iceland
Argentina	Cuba	India
Armenia	Cyprus	Indonesia
Australia	Czech Republic	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Austria	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Iraq
Azerbaijan	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Ireland
Bahrain	Denmark	Israel
Bangladesh	Djibouti	Italy
Belarus	Dominican Republic	Japan
Belgium	Ecuador	Jordan
Benin	Egypt	Kazakhstan
Bhutan	El Salvador	Kenya
Bolivia	Equatorial Guinea	Kuwait
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Estonia	Kyrgyzstan
Botswana	Eswatini	Lao People's Democratic Republic
Brazil	Ethiopia	Latvia
Bulgaria	Fiji	Lebanon
Burkina Faso	Finland	Lesotho
Burundi	France	Libya
Cambodia	Gabon	Liechtenstein
Cameroon	Gambia	Lithuania
Canada	Georgia	Luxembourg
Cape Verde	Germany	Madagascar
Central African Republic	Ghana	Malawi
Chad	Greece	Malaysia
Chile	Guatemala	Maldives
China	Guinea	Mali
Colombia	Guinea-Bissau	

Malta	Serbia	Uganda
Micronesia (Federated States of)	Seychelles	Ukraine
Marshall Islands	Sierra Leone	United Kingdom
Mauritania	Singapore	United Republic of Tanzania
Mauritius	Slovakia	Turkmenistan
Mexico	Republic of Korea	Tuvalu
Monaco	Republic of Moldova	Uruguay
Mongolia	Romania	Uzbekistan
Montenegro	Russian Federation	Vanuatu
Morocco	Rwanda	Venezuela
Mozambique	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	Viet Nam
Myanmar	Samoa	Yemen
Namibia	Sierra Leone	Zambia
Nepal	Singapore	Zimbabwe
Netherlands	Slovakia	
New Zealand	Slovenia	
Nicaragua	Somalia	
Niger	South Africa	
Nigeria	South Sudan	
North Macedonia	Spain	
Norway	Sri Lanka	
Oman	St Lucia	
Pakistan	Sudan	
Palau	Suriname	
Palestine	Sweden	
Panama	Switzerland	
Papua New Guinea	Syrian Arab Republic	
Paraguay	Tajikistan	
Peru	Thailand	
Philippines	United Arab Emirates	
Poland	Timor-Leste	
Portugal	Togo	
Qatar	Tonga	
San Marino	Trinidad & Tobago	
Sao Tome & Principe	Tunisia	
Saudi Arabia	Turkey	
Senegal		

Associate Members

Andean Parliament

Arab Parliament

Central American Parliament

East African Legislative Assembly

European Parliament

Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the
Commonwealth of Independent States

Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and
Monetary Union

Latin American and Caribbean Parliament

Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community

Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Details of funding granted in support of All Party Parliamentary Group Activities in the period November 2018 to November 2019

Each year, BGIPU approves financial assistance to a range of All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) which apply for support.

APPGs eligible for BGIPU support consist of informal cross party groupings of parliamentarians from both Houses with an interest in the affairs of a specific country, including exchanges with parliamentary counterparts in that country. Funding for this activity is included within grant in aid received from the two Houses.

The approved budget for assistance to APPGs in 2018-19 was £30,000. For the Annual Report, the period of focus is between Annual General Meetings, rather than the Financial Years. Detail of support given since November 2018 until time of writing follows:

APPG Poland

Assistance totalling £182.30 was provided to the Poland APPG for a welcome lunch for a Polish Parliamentarian and members of the APPG in January 2019.

APPG Norway

Assistance totalling £275 was provided to the Norway APPG for a welcome lunch for the new Norwegian Ambassador and members of the APPG in February 2019.

APPG Finland

Assistance totalling £188 was provided to the Finland APPG for a goodbye lunch for the departing Finnish Ambassador and members of the APPG in May 2019.

APPG Liechtenstein

Assistance totalling £119.92 was provided to the Liechtenstein APPG for a welcome lunch for the Liechtensteiner Parliamentarians and members of the APPG in May 2019.

APPG Finland

Assistance totalling £185 was provided to the Finland APPG for a welcome lunch for the new Finnish Ambassador and members of the APPG in June 2019.

APPG Indonesia

Assistance totalling £2,738.17 was provided for a part funded outward delegation to Indonesia, consisting of five parliamentarians Richard Graham MP, Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP, Stephen Metcalfe MP, Dawn Butler MP and Kate Hollern MP in August 2019.

APPG Thailand

Assistance totalling £4336.55 was provided for a part funded outward delegation to Thailand, consisting of four parliamentarians Roger Godsiff MP, Lord Astor, Sir David Amess MP and Sir Graham Brady MP in September 2019.

APPG Polar Regions

Assistance totalling £4,898.77 was provided for a part funded outward delegation to Iceland, consisting of 6 Parliamentarians James Gray MP, Stephen Hepburn MP, Mark Menzies MP, Mike Gapes MP, Lord Cromwell and Baroness Neville-Jones in September 2019.

APPG Armenia

Assistance totalling £208.58 was provided to the Armenia APPG for a welcome lunch for visiting Armenian MPs and members of the APPG in September 2019.

APPG Georgia

Assistance totalling £210.86 was provided to the Georgia APPG for a welcome lunch for Georgian Parliamentarians and members of the APPG in October 2019.

APPG Kosovo

Assistance totalling £519.63 was provided to the Kosovo APPG for a welcome lunch for the Prime Minister Elect of Kosovo and members of the APPG in October 2019.

THE SECRETARIAT OF THE BRITISH GROUP IPU

	Position	Commenced
Mr Rick Nimmo	Director	May 2012
Ms Dominique Rees MBE	Deputy Director	April 1998
Ms Alexandra Milsom	Finance & Administration Manager	January 2019
Ms Gabriella Liberotti-Harrison	International Project Manager	July 2008
Ms Rhiannon Edwards	International Project Manager	September 2016
Ms Megan Black	International Project Manager	February 2019
Ms Fiona Burnet	International Project Manager	April 2019
Ms Lucy Nash	International Project Manager	August 2019

STAFF MOVEMENTS

With acknowledgement and gratitude to BGIPU Secretariat staff who left our employment following the last Annual General Meeting.

	Position	Left Employment
Ms Jackie Rhodes	Finance & Administration Manager	December 2018
Ms Anja Richter	International Project Manager	December 2018
Ms Emily Davies	International Project Manager	March 2019
Ms Lauren Tait	International Project Manager	May 2019

Due recognition and thanks to Alison MacDonald who was BGIPU's Human Resources Consultant from July 2012–March 2019.

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