



ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BRITISH GROUP
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
UNION
2021

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Contents

Activities of the Group

Chair's Report.....	9
Director's Report.....	15
Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the BGIPU.....	19
Officers and Executive Committee.....	36
Membership of the British Group.....	38

Financial Statements and Annual Governance

Statement

Annual Governance Statement.....	42
Statement of the Executive Committee's responsibilities.....	53
Report of the independent auditor to members of the BGIPU.....	54
Income and expenditure account.....	62
Balance sheet.....	63
Cash flow statement.....	64
Notes forming part of the financial statements.....	65

IPU Headquarters

Executive Committee of the IPU.....	74
Liaison with the International Secretariat.....	75
National Groups of the IPU.....	76
Associate Members.....	78

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

Details of funding granted in support of APPG Activities.....	80
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The Secretariat of the British Group IPU

Secretariat Staff	81
Contact details.....	81



BGIPU Chair, Harriett Baldwin MP speaking at the Parliamentary Meeting at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP

Chair's Report



**Harriett Baldwin
MP**

Chair, BGIPU

I am very pleased to provide my second report as BGIPU Chair, covering activities in the period since our Annual General Meeting on 2 December 2020 when I was re-elected and a new Executive Committee for 2021 was appointed. When I reported to you this time last year, I was hopeful we were beginning to see the world emerge from the unprecedented disruptions created by the COVID-19 global pandemic, including for the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and BGIPU. These impacts had resulted in the third significant pause in the IPU's work since the two world wars of the last century, creating just the third major disruption to the IPU's 132-year history with no IPU Assembly able to be held in anything but virtual format since October 2019.

I am delighted to be able to report that these hopes were partially realised with a return this year to some physical IPU meetings which remain so important to the effectiveness and core objectives of the IPU, albeit with all the necessary restrictions that have become part of the “new normal” we all now share. Indeed, as I write, I am preparing to lead my first UK delegation to the IPU's 143rd Assembly to take place in Madrid at the end of this month which will be my very first overseas visit as BGIPU Chair after some 20 months in office. I am sure we are all well and truly ready to engage actively with our global counterparts in an IPU Assembly format, even if delegation numbers must be limited initially in line with social distancing and health requirements.

For BGIPU, this has meant even more attention to maximising the impact of those few face-to-face meetings which have been possible, while also maintaining our new forms of “virtual” engagement with a continuation of online meetings, with key partners and stakeholders, and most importantly with our counterparts overseas.

BGIPU has continued through this period to innovate to adapt to these new requirements in our work, paying close attention to the new health and entry requirement for any overseas travel and utilising our now well-tested electronic alternatives for meetings, in full compliance with the necessary restrictions being applied internationally and here in Westminster on the Parliamentary Estate.

This list of bilateral inter-parliamentary exchanges done by “virtual” means since my last report has been extensive with direct contact with parliamentary counterparts from Israel, Croatia, Uzbekistan, Chile (twice), Belgium, Lithuania, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Austria, Iceland, France, Madagascar, Hungary and Panama. BGIPU also facilitated a return to a number of physical bilateral meetings at those IPU events which have occurred since the summer of 2021 such as the 5th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP) and the Rome pre-COP26 and Glasgow COP26. These included meetings with delegations from Vietnam, Georgia, Ukraine, Austria and Italy to name just a few. These wide-ranging bilateral meetings have been complemented by regular and very informative exchanges with UK Ambassadors and mission staff in DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Lebanon, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Liberia, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, Peru and Belarus.

Importantly, this has included my own engagement with a number of US counterparts, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi during the G7 Speakers’ Meeting in Chorley, as we campaign on the issue of US membership of the IPU which is a very high priority for BGIPU and the IPU alike.

Closer to home in the London-based diplomatic community, we have arranged virtual meetings with UK-based heads of mission and staff from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Denmark, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Germany, France, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Vietnam, Germany, France, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Vietnam as well as participating in

activities for new diplomats arriving in London hosted by the Embassy Network. Partnering with key external bodies, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the BBC World Service and the John Smith Trust, BGIPU have also delivered advocacy and outreach sessions on priority international relations matters, including media freedom and human rights, international trade and development issues, arms control and disarmament, as well as peace, security and conflict developments, including updates on political unrest in various regions. BGIPU has also supported UK participation in a large number of IPU-hosted virtual seminars and meetings across a wide range of UN-related and other multilateral issues. Detailed overview reports of these activities are published on BGIPU's website supplementing the contents of this Annual Report.

In the lead-up to the BGIPU/IPU co-hosted COP26 Parliamentary meeting in Glasgow, we also hosted two regional climate change roundtables with parliamentary counterparts from the Asia-Pacific and Latin America regions. This complemented a global consultation hosted by the IPU, Italy and the UK with over 100 parliamentarians worldwide on 24 June in the lead-up to Pre-COP26 meeting at the Italian Parliament in Rome from 8 to 9 October. This was the precursor to our own inter-parliamentary event co-hosted with the IPU at COP26 on 7 November which was the first official IPU event hosted in the UK in over 30 years.

I can assure you that BGIPU's event in Glasgow, in the superb surroundings of the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, was welcomed and applauded by the IPU leadership and participants from across the world as a significant success. The arrangements and contributions of speakers and delegates was truly first-rate, led by Mary Robinson, the Chair of the Elders in her powerful demands for executive governments to be held to full account by the world's parliaments and the heart-rending plea of the Speaker of Tuvalu to recognise that his country and its people will not even exist if we fail to

meet the challenge of this next “decisive decade” for climate change policy.

Of special note was the strength and resolve of the outcome document crafted with skill and authority by Alex Sobel MP, as BGIPU’s Co-Rapporteur with his Italian counterpart, Alessia Rotta. This document, already lauded by other bodies for the strength of its commitment and demands for accountability, represents a clarion call by the world’s parliaments for very ambitious and forward-looking commitments to net-zero and other policy measures required immediately to save the people of the world from a climate catastrophe. UK leadership in this inter-parliamentary process was key to its success, demonstrating just how influential BGIPU can be in the IPU in support of the UK’s global interests and as an effective agent for unifying global parliamentary opinion.

This IPU outcome document was a strong voice in a chorus of calls at COP26, demanding governments do not shirk their unavoidable responsibility for the environmental health of the planet and all its peoples. As we heard at the Parliamentary meeting in Glasgow, this was not just to address the significant challenges we face today, but for the sake of the well-being and survival of future generations. While the final Glasgow Climate Pact has some clear achievements and advances, not least in completing the Paris rulebook and keeping its targets alive, there were also some disappointments. Its unanimous adoption by all Parties did show, however, that the UK had taken the lead to unite all countries behind the urgent need for concerted and collective responses to the climate emergency, with a very strong contribution from all the UK parliamentarians who participated, including as BGIPU members.

In other major IPU meetings, I lead the UK delegation to the first ever virtual IPU Assembly in May, convened under the new IPU President, Duarte Pacheco of Portugal. In addition to participating in this major IPU meeting which maintained continuity and continuation of the IPU’s key processes, I have been actively engaged in virtual meetings of the Twelve Plus geopolitical group, particularly in strengthening its

position on encouraging a return of the US Congress to the IPU and its response to sanctions by China against UK and other parliamentarians with the IPU President re-iterating in September that “...the use of political sanctions against parliamentarians legally representing their national parliaments and their people is unacceptable.” I will be following up to see what further steps might be possible on this issue under IPU auspices, including through its Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

As noted above, a key feature of our work in the last two years has been virtual meetings and I am grateful for the invaluable support we receive from UK Ministers and Her Majesty’s Ambassadors and Embassy staff overseas and FCDO officials at home and hope this cooperation will further strengthen as we move forward. I also want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of BGIPU Secretariat staff who continue to deliver to members an effective programme of inter-parliamentary engagement despite all the new challenges and ongoing uncertainty created by the global pandemic, as shown by the incredible achievement this small team made in delivering the recent COP26 event in Glasgow which was a credit to them all.

While I still enjoy, as I did last year, the unique distinction of being the only BGIPU Chair in history not to undertake a single overseas visit in this capacity, I look forward with hope and excitement to attending my first IPU Assembly in Madrid later this month and leading our inter-parliamentary engagement well beyond that. I am confident we will all emerge from these current times, wiser, stronger and more committed to the vital work of inter-parliamentary engagement as a force for good in the world with the UK voice in the IPU stronger and clearer than ever with our parliamentary friends and international partners across the world.

BGIPU’s work remains vital in its ability to amplify the actions and words of parliamentarians globally, through the IPU and in our key bilateral exchanges, in order to achieve better understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation in an increasingly complex and

contested world. I ask you to join me in this work following BGIPU proud legacy as a founding member parliament of the IPU. With your support, I remain confident of great success in the years ahead as we overcome any challenges we face today to make this work even more effective in advancing the parliamentary dimension of Britain's foreign relations for the future.

Harriett Baldwin MP
Chair, British Group IPU
16 November 2021

Director's Report



Rick Nimmo
Director, BGIPU

I am pleased to provide an overview of the most important management issues in what has been a second very challenging year due to the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic on our programme activities, preventing a full return to physical travel as entry and health restrictions continue to apply across much of the globe. BGIPU's programme was also suspended due to entirely necessary restrictions on UK parliamentary travel for much of the first eight months of 2021, but even when restrictions were eased after summer, many countries remained inaccessible for travel due to their own local requirements and pandemic prevention precautions. In total, just four UK delegations will have travelled in 2021, including to the upcoming 143rd IPU Assembly in Madrid at the end of this month.

Despite this continuing disruption, BGIPU successfully met all required governance procedures following the Annual General Meeting and election of our Executive Committee in December 2020 and continued to provide a busy programme of virtual meetings and other online interparliamentary activities for members, as well as a small number of physical delegation activities. Achievements included the successful conclusion of all financial and administrative requirements resulting in another clear external audit outcome, positive engagement with funding bodies in both Houses, and Executive Committee agreement of a new forward programme of virtual meetings, webinars and indicative forward programme (subject to global travel conditions allowing resumption).

While the visit exchange commitments of the current three-year 2019/20-2021/22 Strategic Business Plan could not be met due to global restrictions, the plan remained a guiding document in policy terms and a new Strategic Business Plan due in 2022 will need to

reflect the drastically changed world in which our future activities will take place. Responding to all applicable health and social distancing requirements in both Houses, BGIPU continued to operate effectively away from a centralised office on the parliamentary estate on a work from home basis and when a return to the office was implemented after summer recess, this was done on the basis of a “work from home” trial over the next eighteen months, mirroring a similar trial underway in the House of Commons. Recent rises in case numbers on the parliamentary estate are, however, worrying and BGIPU management is retaining flexibility to limit the numbers of staff required when necessary, on a business needs only basis.

In support of the 2021-22 Request for Funding submitted in September 2021, I undertook a detailed review of progress against objectives outlined in BGIPU’s Strategic Business Plan required by funding bodies. This review again reflected the severe impacts of the global pandemic and the suspension of many planned activities but was also able to highlight the significant successes of alternative virtual activities put in place to meet key programme objectives. Given lower levels of expenditure to support a less costly and largely virtual programme, BGIPU has continued to monitor closely its financial reserves, limiting its requests for funding to reflect actual activity needs rather than nominal budgets, avoiding any blowout in reserve levels. The efforts of Finance and Administration Manager, Ms Alexandra Milsom, to continue to operate an effective accounts system largely from home, was again featured in a successful audit process and her efforts are deserving of gratitude and recognition.

BGIPU’s workforce was unchanged at eight staff until 23 September 2021 when Megan Black left to take up a civil service position in the Ministry of Defence. Recruitment of a replacement International Programme Manager (IPM) has been delayed due to lower levels of delegation travel leaving staff numbers at just seven and will be pursued in early 2022. In what has been another incredibly difficult and challenging year for all BGIPU staff, Deputy Director, Dominique Rees MBE, has provided strong guidance and experienced oversight of

all bilateral programme activities to ensure IPMs remained active and busily engaged despite the disruption to regular exchange visits. She also oversaw complex arrangements for BGIPU's largest project during the last 2 years, jointly hosting the IPU Parliamentary Meeting at COP26 in Glasgow and lead-up consultations and a pre-COP26 meeting in Rome hosted by the Italian Parliament in October. The complete success of this ambitious hosting of the first-ever IPU meeting in the UK outside of Westminster at the prestigious Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery (which also hosted the COP26 world leaders' reception) on 7 November, depended heavily on her leadership and planning.

BGIPU saw strong interest and traffic on its website and twitter feed now reaching 3,500 Twitter followers and producing 31,600 tweets since starting in 2012. When possible and safe, BGIPU held membership promotion and advocacy events for the International Day of Parliamentarism on 30 June and the International Day of Democracy on 15 September, in both cases marked by the raising of the IPU Flag in close cooperation with Mr Speaker and his External Affairs Team.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The BGIPU Secretariat is grateful to all members of the Executive Committee for their support over 2021 and the entire period of the pandemic, particularly the leadership of the Chair, Harriett Baldwin MP, who has worked so incredibly hard to ensure BGIPU's leading engagement of the IPU, through the 12 Plus Geopolitical group and on the global stage, such as in Glasgow, shone so brightly in often dark and troubling times. I must also pay tribute to Ian Liddell-Grainger MP, a long-standing member of the Executive Committee, past IPU Executive Committee member and IPU Vice-President for two terms, who has now completed his three-year maximum term as Vice-Chair. With colleagues across the global interparliamentary community, BGIPU also mourn the tragic loss of our ExCo member Sir David Amess MP whose contribution to BGIPU is remembered in the pages of this report.

The Secretariat is thankful for the assistance of the budget holders in both Houses, Ms Lynn Gardner and Mr Jake Vaughan, as well as the support of Mr Speaker's Office, especially Helen Wood, David Clarke and his External Affairs Team, and also Patrick Milner and Zana Paul in Lord Speaker's Office. The Secretariat enjoys close solidarity during these uncertain times with other inter-parliamentary bodies, particularly the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (UK Branch), as well as Committee Clerks and specialists, members' staff in both Houses and HM Ambassadors and UK missions overseas, I also pay tribute to our President, Duarte Pacheco and the staff of the IPU Secretariat in Geneva led by Secretary General Martin Chungong with our cooperation going from strength to strength despite the trials and tribulations and the COP26 Parliamentary Meeting in Glasgow representing a proud high-water mark in cooperation between our Secretariats. To close I thank the brilliantly talented BGIPU Secretariat team for their hard work and good humour in what has sometimes been the very toughest of times.

Rick Nimmo
Director, British Group IPU
16 November 2021

**Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the British Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union
Wednesday 2 December 2020**

The Annual General Meeting of the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union was held in a virtual meeting format by video conference on Wednesday 2 December 2020. Mr Deputy Speaker, The Hon. Mr Nigel Evans MP, was in the chair.

Item 1: Opening remarks by the Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, The Hon. Mr Nigel Evans MP

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I start by sending apologies from the Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir Lindsay Hoyle. Sadly, he is unable to be here at this Annual General Meeting. You can only imagine the pressure of the work that he has to do. He has asked me to step in, and I am of course delighted, as a former Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to take this particular role today at the AGM, having presided earlier this year over the delayed 2019-20 AGM held in March. This is slightly differently from our traditional format and venue in the IPU Room, but it is great to see everybody gathered here virtually on the screen in front of me.

Looking at that screen has, I am afraid, become an all too familiar part of our routine now, seeing people in some form or variant of Zoom calls. It has tested the limits of inter-parliamentary co-operation and dialogue, but it is pleasing to see that, despite the challenges, BGIPU has maintained its long-standing traditions, and indeed has added to its functions by adopting this new virtual means of achieving its objectives.

I extend a very warm welcome to everybody on behalf of the Speaker, and I hope that you have had some time to review the 2020 Annual Report, which was published on the BGIPU website on 11 November 2020. Please note that there will be no need for an election ballot this year as all positions will be filled unopposed, and the matter of the new Executive Committee will be dealt with under item 8.

Item 2: Apologies for absence

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Rick, do we have any apologies?

RICK NIMMO, DIRECTOR:

We received 16 absence apologies.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

We will take those as read. I assume that they will be published later.

Item 3: Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2020

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

We are now required to adopt the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2020. These are printed on pages 17 to 27 of the 2020 Annual Report. May I have a proposer and seconder that the minutes are adopted as a true record of the meeting?

(Proposed by Christian Matheson MP and seconded by the Rt Hon. the Baroness D'Souza.)

All those in favour please raise your hand. Thanks for that, everybody. I shall now sign the minutes, on behalf of Mr Speaker, as a true record.

Item 4: Matters arising from the minutes

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Are there any matters arising from those Minutes?

RICK NIMMO, DIRECTOR:

I can confirm that the Secretariat received nothing in writing in that regard, but we will take them today if we need to.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I cannot see any hands raised.

Item 5: Adoption of the Annual Report for 2020

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I now invite the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Africa, Mr James Duddridge MP, to propose the adoption of the 2020 Annual Report.

JAMES DUDDRIDGE MP:

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. It seems only a hop, skip and jump away that we were both on the Executive Committee. In the phrase “poacher turned gamekeeper” I do not know which we are now, and which we were before, but it is a great pleasure to be here, and I am happy to formally propose the adoption of the 2020 Annual Report.

The Government, and I specifically, are very committed to the BGIPU, and congratulate you on everything that you have achieved this year, which I think has been one of the most challenging years ever. We have a glimmer of light today that we should all celebrate in relation to the vaccine.

I am very aware that the IPU work is global, but as the Minister for Africa I would like to give you particular thanks for the work that you do on that continent. It makes my job, and has made my predecessors’ jobs, all that much easier to do because of the strong relationship that the IPU and CPA have with African nations. Over the years, I have personally started new relationships across the African continent, and talked up those relationships with countries like Senegal, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Angola. The group really does provide a vital role in supporting the broader diplomatic engagement of the United Kingdom, well beyond the FCDO.

I remember personally visiting Sudan a couple of years ago on an IPU trip. It was quite a challenging trip. Actually, I was one minute late for this call because I was speaking to the Sudanese Foreign Minister about regional matters, and matters in his own country. I was able to do that with much more confidence based on the work that I have done through the IPU, which I think just demonstrates why having strong parliamentary relationships is so important.

I understand that this year you squeezed in some visits, including to Liberia, before COVID restricted travel. Hopefully that restriction will be removed quickly. We have made use of the available technology for briefings internally. Also, I have been very impressed by the work that various organisations have done on bringing the

lessons learned to smaller countries across the IPU and CPA, bringing best practice.

I think the FCDO has been able to support this in a number of ways, specifically making ambassadors and high commissioners much more available to do virtual briefings, similar to that which we are more used to during Leadership Week. I was particularly happy to see the ambassadors for Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Djibouti briefed by parliamentarians on COVID and other developments. Our new ambassador to Tunis joined the bilateral meeting that you hosted only last month.

Thank you for all the work that you have done—all the parliamentarians—particularly your Chair, and particularly Rick. I think both of us confused this meeting with a silly beard of the year competition. Over COVID, it has gone completely mad. Thank you all for your work and I look forward to 2021, and to spending a lot more time physically with all of you. Thank you, friends.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thanks for that, James. Rick does win that competition, but you came a very close second. Do not worry; the prizes are on their way.

Can I reinforce what James said? I remember, when I was Chair of the IPU, the incredible work that we did as parliamentarians, particularly with the Argentinians. I remember how we started our relationship. It was awful. There would be lots of shouts and screams, and we were getting absolutely nowhere; yet we built a relationship with them. In the end, they were visiting our country and we were visiting theirs. We built up some incredibly strong relationships.

It is fantastic, James, that you are now in that role, particularly with the baggage from the IPU and CPA that you take with you. It has now paid back hugely in the way that we are operating, and what the IPU has been able to do using this new technology is fantastic. I cannot wait until we are all able to step on planes properly and go somewhere perhaps more exotic than Manchester. At least then we will be able to start building those roles again, but I suspect that there will always be a role now for this sort of technology to further enhance the work that we are doing physically on the ground. Congratulations, and thanks, James, for proposing the Annual Report. I now invite the shadow

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, Ms Lisa Nandy MP, to second the 2020 Annual Report. Over to you, Lisa.

LISA NANDY MP:

Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to have the chance to speak to you today and a privilege to be asked to second the adoption of this year's Annual Report. What a year 2020 has been! As we look back on it, I have a lot of reflections about this year, but I strongly suspect that I am the first shadow Foreign Secretary to address the Inter-Parliamentary Union without having visited a single foreign country during my time in post. The furthest I have managed so far is Chorley, although given that Mr Speaker has had to send his apologies, perhaps I should make it clear that we view Chorley as a foreign country here in Wigan.

I have also had the unique opportunity to host ambassadors, Foreign Ministers and world leaders, but from my spare room, which has been quite an interesting experience. Perhaps one of the highlights of my short time in post has been witnessing a heated debate between a party leader, who will remain nameless, and his teenage son over why he could not use the PlayStation while Zoom calls are taking place with fellow world leaders.

Despite the challenges that this year has presented—it has been a challenging year—and, indeed, as a direct consequence of those challenges, our international engagement and dialogue with global partners has never been more important and has never been more accepted. There will have been few moments in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 131-year history where its work will have been as important as it is now. As the world continues to grapple with the pandemic, we have seen the value of global co-operation, as scientists and medical researchers have continued to co-operate across borders in an often-difficult global political environment. Today's welcome news about the vaccine has only been made possible due to the researchers and scientists across the world who have continued to co-operate, sometimes in the face of opposition from their own Governments. I place on the record my thanks to them for their work, which is very much in the spirit of the IPU's work.

It is organisations like the IPU that continue to provide opportunities for us parliamentarians to engage with partners around the world to better understand how we can square up to the common challenges and advance our democratic values across the globe. Those relationships have never been so important.

Despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19, it has been inspirational to see how the BGIPU has continued its work in maintaining and strengthening those ties. That could be through facilitating bilateral meetings with our counterparts, everywhere from Croatia to Colombia and from Norway to Nicaragua, or in providing support for parliamentarians to go out and stand up for our values on the global stage. We heard bad news overnight from Hong Kong, where democratic freedoms and norms are being eroded, for example. However, we have parliamentarians hosting discussions on the defence of vital press freedoms around the world and the humanitarian crises facing some of the world's most vulnerable. This is surely Britain at its best. Despite these trying circumstances, I have been proud to see how the IPU helps to ensure that Britain's voice continues to be heard on these vital issues.

I finish by thanking the Chair and all the staff who have worked, and will continue to work, so hard to strengthen our relationships with, and further our understanding of, our partners around the world. It is a privilege to have this opportunity to recognise your work and to thank you.

Earlier this year, the director general of the World Health Organisation said that the biggest challenge we face now is not the virus itself, but the lack of solidarity globally and locally. That ability to reach out and to understand one another is something many of us have felt has been lost in many ways, both in Britain and around the world, in recent years. However, that ability runs through the work of the IPU like a silver thread back through its 131-year history. I am therefore very pleased to second the adoption of the 2020 Annual Report, and to have the opportunity to join you to say these words today.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Brilliant, Lisa. Thank you very much for that. I offer well-deserved plaudits to the team at the IPU. . I know that they are all

listening. These have been massively challenging times, so thank you, Lisa, for pointing that out—and also for pointing out that Chorley is a foreign country. I know that they have their own Chorley cakes, but that is about the only difference between Chorley and the neighbouring Ribble Valley. It may be the same with Wigan; I do not know.

The 2020 Annual Report has now been proposed and seconded. Is it agreed that we adopt the Report? All those in favour please raise your hands. Is anybody opposed? No. We can consider the 2020 Annual Report adopted.

Item 6: Presentation of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 by Alex Sobel MP, Treasurer

ALEX SOBEL MP:

First, I thank all the staff at BGIPU, in particular Alex Milsom, the finance manager, who have had to deal with extraordinarily difficult circumstances this year, with COVID and remote working. They have had to show flexibility in terms of the BGIPU's finances. At the previous AGM, I had not yet taken my position, so Rick gave the presentation—I can actually see myself in the audience behind Rick's shoulder on his Zoom background—so I apologise in advance for the downgrading of the quality of this presentation.

I present the Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020, shown at s 33 to 61 of our 2020 Annual Report, which covers the 2019-20 financial year. Kreston Reeves LLP conducted the audit and they are represented here today. On page 45 of the 2020 Annual Report, our auditors report their unqualified opinion of the Financial Statements. The Audit Committee deliberated via a Zoom meeting on 2 July 2020 and recommended that the Executive Committee approve the Financial Statements, which the Chair and Treasurer signed at the Executive Committee on 9 July 2020.

The income and expenditure account appears on page 51. Income decreased from £1,327,255 to £1,206,985. The Group received £1,205,820 of grant-in-aid—90% of the available amount—compared with £1,326,500 500 in the previous year. Bank interest increased from £702 to £1,116, due to higher returns in the period. Overall expenditure

decreased by £86,075 from £1,263,302 to £1,177,227.

The IPU subscription fee increased, however, to £379,483 compared with £360,516 in the previous financial year. The annual subscription to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva, charged in Swiss francs, increased significantly to 521,700 in 2020. This was due to changes in the UN scale of contributions which is the basis for the IPU's scale of assessments.

The IPU subscription was paid as soon as funds permitted in January 2020. The annual subscription relates to a calendar year and therefore only one quarter of the 2020 payment is recognised in the 2019-20 income and expenditure account, while the remaining three quarters is treated as a prepayment consistent with prior years.

The Twelve Plus group subscription cost of £1,374—it was £1,282 in 2019—increased slightly but was small in comparison. It was the same amount in Euros as the two previous years—€1,544—the change in sterling being due to a variation in the exchange rate.

Plans for outward delegations during the 2019-20 financial year were severely affected by Brexit-related votes in both Houses, Prorogation for the general election in December 2019, the formation of a new Parliament and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, which we are obviously still seeing.

The aggregated costs of conferences, IPU seminars and outward delegations consequently fell from £229,656 to £197,205. Despite that, there were seven IPU conferences in the year, compared with 12 the previous year, with overall expenditure being significantly less at £55,665. Three outward delegations were held to Lithuania, Brazil and Liberia at a total cost of £69,093.

As with the outward delegation programme, the inward delegation programme was also severely affected by circumstances beyond our control due to parliamentary events and the global pandemic. Successful parliamentary delegation visits from Kosovo, Italy and Lebanon were achieved, however. The total spend on inward delegations was £22,779 at an average cost of £7,593. Parliamentary delegation visits from Croatia and Colombia had to be deferred, a small amount having been spent on each visit.

The very well-received annual international parliamentary seminar on media freedom cost £33,116. This was at a significantly lower cost

than the annual seminar on the Western Balkans in 2019 due to much reduced interpretation costs. Funding was claimed by eight all-party parliamentary country groups at a total cost of £13,949. Groups from a wide geographical span, ranging from Thailand, Armenia and the polar regions were able to carry out parliamentary exchanges due to funding from the BGIPU. There was, however, an overall decrease in demand for funding this year compared with 2018-19 due to the need for APPGs to be re-established following the general election, leading to little APPG activity in the last few months of the 2019-20 financial year.

The cost of staff salaries and related expenses increased slightly from £439,281 to £455,333. Staffing levels remained constant at eight members, with one staff member returning from a year's maternity leave in January 2020. Two staff member promotions also came into force in January—one at B1 level and the other at a permanent B2 level.

General hospitality costs decreased due to a lower number of outreach events taking place, while depreciation costs increased slightly. Audit fees remained flat while insurance increased marginally. Sundry expenses, including bank charges and other office costs, have increased, mainly due to the purchase of giftware.

The balance sheet on page 52 shows that net assets have increased from £793,337 to £823,095. The overall surplus for the year was £29,758. Fixed assets have decreased marginally, with a full summary of changes to these appearing in note 5 on page 58.

Current Assets have increased from £507,809 to £525,392. Prepayments decreased slightly from £323,580 to £312,352. The figure for debtors is £924, which is the balance owed on a season ticket loan. The cash flow statement on page 53 reflects this modest decrease in cash of £17,583. The financial memorandum concluded in September 2017 was in effect throughout the 2019-20 financial year. The Annual Report is made public on the BGIPU website prior to the AGM.

Here concludes my report to the AGM. Thank you.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Alex, for a thorough Report. I do not know whether anyone has any questions to ask of Alex. If you could raise your hand, either electronically or physically, then I can see you. Shall we start with Richard Balfe?

LORD BALFE:

I am sorry, Nigel. There has been a bit of a mistake. I thought you were asking people to raise their hand if they agreed with the Report.

ALEX SOBEL MP:

Not yet.

LORD BALFE:

I wasn't trying to ask a question; I was applauding our treasurer and agreeing with his Report.

ALEX SOBEL MP:

That is the sort of question I like!

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Does anyone else want to ask a question?

BARONESS D'SOUZA:

I thought the Report was extremely thorough. Could you say anything about whether the annual membership is likely to change one way or the other in the coming year? It seems pretty high, but I do not know whether that is an increase on last year or a reasonable figure. I would be grateful if you could let me know about that. Forgive me for not knowing.

ALEX SOBEL MP:

We had the IPU Global Council recently, which Harriett, Baroness Hooper and I attended, and the subscription was an item on the agenda. I raised this internally within our group. But there are other

countries that pay much higher subscriptions than ours; you can look at the spread.

Obviously, the US is not part of the IPU. Normally the US takes a heavy part in other global bodies, but not in the IPU. We pay a proportionate amount, and it is, as I said, on the UN scale. I do not know whether Rick wants to add any more to that—as well as the Honorary Treasurer's angle, there is obviously a slight geopolitical angle to this. But I do think the subscription is fair compared with other rates, and I did look at all the other rates of the other countries—particularly China, which is the biggest member of the IPU. Countries such as Norway do not pay as much as us, but proportionately pay more.

DIRECTOR:

I can confirm that our subscription went down by about 100 Swiss Francs—so, very little. But it is based on a UN scale, which is very much mandatory. We pay under 5%—I think it is about 4.6%—of the total IPU subscription budget. The IPU also receives a number of extra budgetary funds from different aid agencies, particularly from the Chinese and the Swedes.

But this is simply a subscription, set on the UN scale. That changes on a three-year cycle and reflects the capacity of countries to pay within the UN system. Although the IPU is not a UN body, the scale was adopted by the IPU as a fair and equitable scale in about 2011. It is seen to service our needs—and indeed, our subscription reduced significantly after the adoption of the scale. It reflects the relative wealth of Britain in the world against others.

There has been rising reference to China and Brazil—those countries pay more over time and Britain's subscription will be less. At one point, the high point, we were paying over 6%, depending on the UN scale; we are down now at under 5%. The scale changes and it is reviewed regularly, but it is a set scale that the IPU follows.

BARONESS D'SOUZA:

Thank you both very much indeed.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Any other questions? No. Thank you very much for that report, Alex; we are extremely grateful.

Item 7: Re-appointment of Auditors

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

We are now required to appoint auditors for the current year. It is proposed that our current auditors, Kreston Reeves LLP, be reappointed. May I have a proposer and a seconder?

(Proposed by the Rt Hon. the Baroness D'Souza and the Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate.)

Is anybody against the proposal? I see no one. I thank everybody at Kreston Reeves for all the work they have done in the past and all the work that they are about to do. They are duly reappointed as the group's auditors for the current year.

Item 8: Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee for 2020/21

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I now move on to the BGIPU's elections. I take it that the AGM is willing to confirm the election of the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Group, as published on the website and notified to all members by the Secretariat in an all-member e-mail sent on 25 November. Is everybody happy with that? As there are no objections to that outcome, the President and Vice-Presidents are confirmed in accordance with those arrangements.

Regarding the composition of the BGIPU Executive Committee, I am advised by the Secretariat that nominated members are all standing unopposed, as I said at the beginning of the meeting. I am very pleased to confirm that the following Officers and the Executive Committee members are elected as nominated: Ms Harriett Baldwin MP will be returning as Chair; continuing as Vice-Chairs will be Dame Diana Johnson MP and Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger MP; and returning as Honorary Treasurer is Mr Alex Sobel MP.

I am also very pleased to congratulate Baroness D’Souza—Frances—as the new Vice-Chair for the House of Lords, replacing Baroness Gloria Hooper, who has just completed her three-year term and deserves our thanks. Frances, please pass on our grateful thanks to Gloria, who did amazing, sterling work when I was Chair and clearly continues to do so.

Also standing unopposed as Committee members for the Government party are Sir David Amess MP, Bob Blackman MP, Pauline Latham MP, Mark Menzies MP, Maria Miller MP, Andrew Rosindell MP, Gary Sambrook MP and Henry Smith MP. Opposition party positions are confirmed for Wayne David MP, Chris Matheson MP, Kate Osamor MP, Lisa Cameron MP and Chris Law MP.

I am also pleased to confirm the election of the unopposed Peers: The Lord Gilbert of Panteg, The Baroness Hooper, The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate, The Baroness Verma, The Earl of Sandwich and the Rt Hon. The Lord Dholakia.

I congratulate all returning Members on their election and pay tribute to their ongoing commitment to the Group. We also welcome new members elected today.

Item 9: Speech by the Chair

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

I invite the re-elected Chair of the BGIPU, Harriett Baldwin, to take the floor.

HARRIETT BADLWIN MP:

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is wonderful to have a former Chair chairing the first part of the meeting today. I really appreciate your involvement. Please send our very best to Mr Speaker—we appreciate how incredibly busy he is.

You demonstrated your commitment to the BGIPU as Deputy Speaker when you represented Mr Speaker at the opening session of the World Speakers’ Conference this summer. It was a great conference, I understand. On the historic day when the UK is able to announce the roll-out of the first approved vaccine, it is very pleasing that Professor Sarah Gilbert from the Jenner Institute at Oxford University was a lead speaker at that conference. Thank you, Mr

Speaker, for doing that.

I thank the Minister for Africa for his supportive words. It is great that he is such a strong friend of the BGIPU. In his work as Minister for Africa, he has been able to draw on that experience. We are very grateful for his engagement with us in his new role—well, it is not so new now—as Minister for Africa.

I also thank Lisa Nandy, the shadow Foreign Secretary, for her powerful remarks and for the emphasis she put on the importance of the BGIPU's work. We appreciate her seconding the Annual Report.

I congratulate everyone on their unopposed re-election to their various posts today. I am particularly grateful to everyone who did not stand against me! Thank you very much for re-electing me unopposed.

May I add particular thanks to Baroness Hooper, who has stood down at the end of her term. As Mr Deputy Speaker said, she has been a dedicated and informed Vice Chair over her term. We are very grateful that Baroness D'Souza has stepped forward to take over that role—it is a wonderful choice.

I know that the Inter-Parliamentary Union has experienced worse shocks over its 131-year history than this year, but it has been a substantial shock. Like the shadow Foreign Secretary, as Chair of BGIPU, I have yet to step overseas. Clearly, the health and wellbeing of our colleagues and the Secretariat has been paramount this year. I am very glad that, in the 21st century, technology has remained important and allowed us to stay in touch and, importantly, stay well connected with other Parliaments around the world. So I ask everyone to give a virtual round of applause to the BGIPU Secretariat, who have been so able to adapt to working from home, yet still deliver for us. Thank you all very, very much.

The Secretariat has managed to put together the most incredible programme of virtual delegations and bilaterals this year. It has been a role model for many other inter-parliamentary delegations. It has done a tremendous job. We were also able to take a full part in the Twelve Plus meetings of our geopolitical group and of course, in the three days of virtual meetings of the IPU Governing Council, with Alex Sobel and Baroness Hooper joining me as our voting representatives there.

As colleagues know, it is a principle of the IPU that there is a geographical rotation of the Presidency of the organisation. With the

end of the term of the previous President, it was the turn of our group—the Twelve Plus Group. In the end, there were two candidates from the Twelve Plus Group as well as two from other geographical areas. I am very pleased that the principle of geographical rotation was well supported. I think both the candidates from our group gave a strong showing and Duarte Pacheco from Portugal, whom I think many of you know, sailed through to the Presidency on the first ballot and had wide-ranging support from all regions. It will be important to see him now implement the pledges he made, particularly to improve the working relationship between the IPU Secretariat and the Presidency.

We have also had a lot of joint events this year. We carried on with events in conjunction with the Human Rights Group, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the BBC World Service, other international parliamentary groups and the John Smith Trust. Through the Minister for Africa, I would like to send thanks to the ambassadorial network. They have engaged very energetically with us. They have been very helpful in sharing updates with parliamentarians from all corners of the globe. We would very much like to thank them for their time.

Of course, we want to start inward and outward delegations as soon as possible. Today's historic news about the vaccine gives us real hope that it will not be long before we see our overseas counterparts again. I think that delegations in person can be much more in depth and lead to stronger, longer and better bilateral relationships between parliamentarians. In the meantime, I want to put on record again my thanks to everyone for their virtual involvement in these meetings, their engagement and their enthusiasm. Thank you again, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your support.

I commend the Annual Report to colleagues.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you very much, Harriett, and thank you for your warm and kind words. I worked closely with the former President, Gabriela, and I am so sorry that her term was hit, as everybody else has been, in that she lost nearly a whole year in her job to COVID. We congratulate her on her work.

We also congratulate Duarte, who I worked closely with when I was on the Twelve Plus. All I can say is that I hope, with the vaccine, we can all get back to some sort of normality early next year. I guarantee to each of you who can go to the Assemblies that the pastéis de nata—those fantastic desserts that Portugal is famous for—will not be wanting. Duarte used to bring them to Geneva for our Twelve Plus meetings and also copious amount of port. You are in for a feast over the next three years with Duarte, and I wish him well.

Item 10: Any other business

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

May I confirm with the Secretariat that there has been no written notification, in accordance with the rules, of any other matters of business to be raised?

DIRECTOR:

I confirm that there has been no written notification of other matters of business.

Item 11: Closure of meeting

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you very much, everybody. It has been an incredible year. Rick, I know that your team are listening to this. You had plaudits from everybody for the way that you have performed over the past 12 months, particularly the nine months since March when things altered dramatically.

As both James and Lisa pointed out in their contributions, it is a very uncertain time geopolitically. We are leaving the European Union at the end of this month. I remember when I was on the Exec that Donald Anderson asked whether we could use the IPU to start visiting European countries. We started to do that, but clearly that went on hold at the end of March. It just shows the sort of pivotal role that parliamentarians can play. Lisa also mentioned Hong Kong and the

uncertainty there, and Alex mentioned the United States of America. We tried a little push to see if we could get the US to rejoin or get some interest from them in the IPU. Perhaps, with the new President taking up his position at the beginning of January, that may happen.

I thank LJ and Sam. You can't see them in the room, but they are both here, just in case I fluffed something, or the equipment went down. They were on stand-by and I thank them personally for their contributions today.

Thanks once again, Rick, to you and your team—absolutely fantastic. We have now come to the end of the agenda. I now declare this meeting closed. Thank you all for your participation today.

Officers and Executive Committee

Following the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday December 2 2020, the under-mentioned were elected as Officers and Members of the Executive Committee.

BGIPU Honorary Presidents

Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP (The Speaker)

Rt Hon the Lord Fowler (The Lord Speaker)

BGIPU President

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP (Prime Minister)

BGIPU Vice-Presidents:

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP

Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP

Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP

Rt Hon Theresa May MP

Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP

Rt Hon Keir Starmer MP

Lisa Nandy MP

Preet Gill MP

Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP

Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

Dan Carden MP

Kate Osamor MP

Rt Hon Diane Abbott MP

Rt Hon the Baroness Hayman GBE

Rt Hon the Baroness D'Souza CMG

Rt Hon the Baroness Boothroyd PC OM

Rt Hon the Lord Hague of Richmond PC FRSL

Meetings of the Executive Committee

Since the last Annual General Meeting on 2 December 2020 there have been five Executive Committee meetings: Thursday 21 January (by video conference), Thursday 18 March (by video conference), Thursday 10 June (by video conference), Thursday 15 July (by video conference), and Thursday 21 October (in person meeting).

Meetings of the Audit Committee

Since the last Annual General Meeting on 2 December 2020 there have been two Audit Committee deliberations: Thursday 25 February (by video conference), and one subsequent meeting on Thursday 8 July (by video conference).

Officers & Executive Committee (As elected 2 December 2020)

Chair:

Harriett Baldwin MP

Vice-Chairs:

Ian Liddell-Grainger MP

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP

Rt Hon the Baroness D'Souza

Treasurer:

Alex Sobel MP

Executive Committee:

Conservative Party

Sir David Amess MP

Bob Blackman MP

Pauline Latham MP

Mark Menzies MP

Maria Miller MP

Damien Moore MP* (co-opted)

Andrew Rosindell MP

Gary Sambrook MP

Henry Smith MP

The Lord Gilbert of Panteg

The Baroness Hooper CMG

The Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate

The Baroness Verma

Labour Party

Wayne David MP

Kerry McCarthy MP

Seema Malhotra MP* (co-opted)

Chris Matheson MP

Kate Osamor MP

The Lord Dubs* (co-opted)

Scottish National Party

Dr Lisa Cameron MP

Chris Law MP

Cross Bench

The Earl of Sandwich

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 16 November 2021, total membership of the group was 1,430.



**In memory of
Sir David Amess MP
1952-2021**

**Recalling his distinguished parliamentary service and contribution
to the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
1983-2021**



Virtual Meeting with UK Parliamentarians and Danish Parliamentarians in March 2021.

BGIPU Chair Harriett Baldwin Speaking at the Virtual 142nd IPU Assembly in May 2021.



BGIPU Executive Committee Members and Mr Speaker with IPU Flag On International Day of Parliamentarism in June 2021.

Deputy Speaker Rt Hon Dame Eleanor Laing and former MP and Deputy Speaker of Afghanistan Fawzia Koofi at the IPU Fifth World Speakers Conference in Vienna in September 2021.





Roundtable to mark International Day of Democracy in the IPU Room in September 2021.

Co-Rapporteurs Alex Sobel MP and Italian Member of Parliament Alessia Rotta at the Pre-Cop Meeting in Rome in October 2021.



Group photo of Delegates to the Parliamentary Meeting at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021.

IPU Secretary General , BGIPU Chair and IPU President Parliamentary Meeting at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021.



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

**Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement
Year ended 31 March 2021**

**Kreston Reeves LLP
Statutory Auditor & Chartered Accountants
Second Floor
168 Shoreditch High Street
London
E1 6RA**

Annual Governance Statement

Governance framework

The British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (BGIPU) is an unincorporated association 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). Meeting virtually for the time being due to social-distancing requirements, 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 virtually 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, temporarily operating on a work from home basis since mid-March 2020.

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.

An updated FM was negotiated in March/April 2020, cleared by the BGIPU Executive Committee on 21 May 2020 and after final approval by the administration of both Houses, signed in October 2020. 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 2012, 2014 and 2017 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 the House of Commons, albeit proportionate and relevant to BGIPU's own unique character and circumstances, making financial calls in an exceptionally challenging time when all physical and travel-related activities have been suspended for over a year due to the global pandemic.

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 a key issues memorandum 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 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 in early 2017. Some suggestions from this audit outcome were also addressed in negotiating the 2017 FM and the Guidance for Members' Travel was strengthened in subsequent years addressing reputational and operational risk issues to declare a zero-tolerance policy on bullying and harassment, setting clear expectations on members' behaviour in relations to BGIPU activities.

Work of the Executive Committee

Due to the unprecedented conditions created by the COVID-19 global pandemic, the BGIPU Executive Committee met in a virtual format on five occasions during the 2020-21 Financial Year being convened on Tuesday 21 May 2020, Thursday 9 July 2020, Thursday 22 October 2020, Thursday 21 January 2021 and Thursday 18 March 2021. The Audit Committee convened in a virtual format on Thursday 2 July 2020 to recommend approval of final accounts and met again on Thursday 25 February 2021 to consider the auditors' Letter of Engagement and supporting documents, and consider the 2021 Risk Management Strategy, including updating the Risk Register. Meeting virtually for the first time in its history, the Annual General Meeting took place on Wednesday 2 December 2020 to elect a new Executive Committee for 2021.

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 2020 the annual review of the Executive Committee-approved 3-year Strategic Business Plan adopted in February 2019. BGIPU also submitted detailed forward planning budgets for the next three financial years in support of BGIPU's 2021/22 Request for Funding. In addition, the Executive Committee approved a detailed Forward Programme for 2021/22 drawing upon the Strategic Business

Plan and making judgements regarding operational requirements reflecting upon the programme impacts of the global pandemic.

Under the day-to-day management of the Director, supported by the specialised human resources role of the Finance and Administration Manager, 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. In October 2019 recognising differing constraints on staff recruitment and retention, the Executive Committee enhanced these employment conditions with a performance appraisal-based bonus scheme for all BGIPU employees following a detailed review of the causes of a spike in resignations in late 2018/early 2019. 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. While unprecedented events like the COVID-19 outbreak which has blocked all global travel and international meetings could not be reasonably anticipated, BGIPU's existing plans and business continuity arrangements were very effective in allowing all operations to continue to be carried out on a "work from home" basis. Significantly, this occurred at just a few days' notice, without any significant financial costs or productivity losses.

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. In light of significant disruption to the availability of office holders to act as financial signatories, due to elections, changes to banking requirements (and subsequently office closure and social distancing), severe impacts on BGIPU's ability to meet its financial responsibilities to staff and suppliers were anticipated early and raised with the Executive Committee for action. Appropriate changes were made in October 2019 to maintain payment functions by granting higher level signing rights to senior staff in place of office holders. This creates risks but they are reasonable given the otherwise insurmountable problem of officers being unavailable to approve bank payments.

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 March 2021). 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.

In this regard, at its 25 February 2021 meeting, the Audit Committee considered risks created by a degree of legal ambiguity and resultant third-party errors regarding BGIPU's official standing as an arms-length bicameral body of Parliament. Audit Committee members requested a paper from the Director reaffirming the key elements and antecedents of BGIPU's legal standing and formal status. The paper also outlined how a more pro-active approach to outreach might work to pre-empt misunderstandings or errors, including by moving quickly to correct matters when parliamentary or external bodies misinterpret BGIPU's role or consider it erroneously to be external to Parliament. This paper was adopted by the Audit Committee in approving the Risk Management Strategy for 2021/22 and circulated to all Executive Committee members following consideration at its 18 March 2021 meeting.

As this effort showed, risk management is embedded in the organisation through Executive Committee oversight, by regular staff reporting and pursuit of best practice, through close review of expenditure and regular scrutiny of the Risk Register by the Audit Committee. Flexibility and responsiveness were always strong guiding principles in risk preparedness. The rapid deployment of business continuity plans in mid-March 2020 to maintain the full and

effective operation of the Secretariat for more than a year now in the face of unprecedented disruption remains ample demonstration of the effectiveness of planning and the high adaptability of staff.

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 throughout 2017 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. While the Finance and Administration Manager carries the key responsibility for financial accounts management, the decision was taken in April 2019 to employ the services of a trained accountant to provide professional accountancy advice, support and training on a monthly basis. This was deemed a more effective use of resources and replaced the planned position of a Finance and Administrative Assistant at a significantly lower cost to the organisation for a higher service outcome.

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 diligently to address compliance risks associated with a variety of regulatory and employment conditions changes, including in Parliament’s response to the global pandemic.

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, albeit the unparalleled events of 2020 and 2021 have placed significant constraints around achieving many activity and programme goals. 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 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.

Notwithstanding the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak across two full years, 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 regarding its cost-effective use of public monies, its employment responsibilities to staff and its management of its major risks.

Mindful of the key monitoring role played by BGIPU's funding bodies in both 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 appropriate measures in place to ensure the Group's inter-parliamentary activities are well-targeted and 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 reasonably anticipated 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. Indeed, having proved itself effective in dealing with the current impacts of COVID-19 on its activities, adopting a comprehensive programme of virtual events in place of other activities, I am assured that BGIPU remains a robust and responsive body in meeting the requirements of its members in current unusual circumstances and well into the future.

(Signed)

A Sobel MP

Honorary Treasurer

Date: 15 July 2021

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 2021 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 2021 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 2021, and of its deficit 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

the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Executive Committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the organisation's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Executive Committee with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

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 53, 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.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Based on our understanding of the organisation, and through discussion with the Executive Committee and other management (as required by auditing standards), we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to health and safety and employment law. We considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements. We communicated identified laws and regulations through out our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to posting inappropriate journals, management bias in accounting estimates and judgemental areas of the financial statements. Audit procedures performed by the organisations engagement team included:

- Discussions with management and assessment of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud; and
- Assessment of identified fraud risk factors; and
- Identifying and assessing the design effectiveness of controls that management has in place to prevent and detect fraud; and
- Review of cash and credit card expenditure to confirm no evidence of personal benefit; and
- Checking and reperforming the reconciliation of key control accounts; and
- Confirmation of related parties with management, and review of transactions throughout the period to identify any previously undisclosed transactions with related parties outside the normal course of business; and

- Reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

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.

- Include 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.

Kreston Reeves LLP

Statutory Auditor & Chartered Accountants

London

Date: 15 July 2021

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Income			
Grant in aid	1	879,580	1,205,820
Donations / Subscriptions received from members	1	44	49
Interest receivable	1	282	1,116
		879,906	1,206,985
Expenditure			
Subscriptions		419,490	379,483
Conferences, IPU seminars and outward delegations		-	197,205
Inward delegations, BGIPU seminars and days in Parliament		1,515	60,179
All party groups		-	13,949
Salaries, national insurance and other staff costs	3	507,069	455,333
Printing, stationery and publications		237	1,420
Postage and telephone		104	5
Member services and events in the UK		8,016	42,937
Audit fee for the audit of these financial statements		7,320	7,220
Insurance		5,210	5,730
General hospitality		163	1,164
Sundry expenses		5,443	10,665
Legal fees		-	-
Depreciation of fixed assets	5	2,429	1,937
		956,996	1,177,227
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	10	(77,090)	29,758
Opening reserves		823,095	793,337
Closing reserves	10	746,005	823,095

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 14 form part of the financial statements.

Balance sheet

at 31 March 2021

	Note	£	2021 £	£	2020 £
Fixed assets	5		11,647		9,386
Current assets					
Debtors	6	-		924	
Prepayments and accrued income	6	335,735		312,352	
Cash at bank and in hand	7	432,336		525,392	
			<hr/>	<hr/>	
		768,071		838,668	
Current liabilities					
Creditors	8	(33,173)		(24,959)	
			<hr/>	<hr/>	
Net current assets			734,358		813,709
			<hr/>	<hr/>	
Net assets			746,005		823,095
			<hr/>	<hr/>	
Financed by:					
General fund	10		746,005		823,095
			<hr/>	<hr/>	
			746,005		823,095
			<hr/>	<hr/>	

Notes 1 to 14 form part of the financial statements.

These financial statements were approved by the undersigned and authorised for issue on 15 July 2021.

(Signed)
A Sobel MP
Honorary Treasurer
15 July 2021

(Signed)
H Baldwin MP
Chair
15 July 2021

Cash flow statement

at 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flow from operating activities		
(Deficit)/Surplus for the financial year	(77,090)	29,758
Adjustments for:		
Interest received	(282)	(1,116)
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	(22,459)	11,283
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	8,755	(24,264)
Depreciation charge	2,428	1,937
Purchase of fixed assets	(4,690)	(1,131)
Net cash flow from operating activities	<u>93,338</u>	<u>16,467</u>
Cash flow from investing activities		
Interest received	282	1,116
Net cash flow from investing activities	<u>282</u>	<u>1,116</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(93,056)	17,583
Cash at the beginning of the year	525,392	507,809
Cash at bank and in hand at the end of the year	<u>432,336</u>	<u>525,392</u>

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

1 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 43.

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:

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 2021 of £879,580 (2020: £1,205,820) 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 (2020: 8).

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

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and salaries	387,001	345,694
Social security costs	43,182	40,053
Pension costs	52,931	46,724
Other costs	23,955	22,862
	<u>507,069</u>	<u>455,333</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	29,954	34,658
Additions	-	-	125	4,565	4,690
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At end of year	3,183	890	756	34,519	39,348
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Depreciation					
At beginning of year	-	-	631	24,641	25,272
Charge for year	-	-	7	2,422	2,429
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At end of year	-	-	638	27,063	27,701
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net book value					
At 31 March 2020	3,183	890	118	7,456	11,647
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 March 2019	3,183	890		5,313	9,386
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

6 Debtors: amounts receivable within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Prepayments	335,735	312,352
Other debtors	-	924
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	335,735	313,276
	<hr/>	<hr/>

7 Cash at bank and in hand

	2021 £	2020 £
Interest earning bank deposit accounts	421,329	514,385
Non-interest earning bank current account	10,000	10,000
Cash in hand	1,007	1,007
	<u>432,336</u>	<u>525,392</u>

8 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	2,357	1,073
Accruals and prepaid income	15,208	7,672
Social security and other taxes	15,793	16,156
Other Creditors	355	58
	<u>33,713</u>	<u>24,959</u>

9 Financial instruments

	2021 £	2020 £
Financial assets		
Measured at amortised cost	768,071	838,668
	<u>768,071</u>	<u>838,668</u>
Financial liabilities		
Measured at amortised cost	33,713	24,959
	<u>33,713</u>	<u>24,959</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 2020	823,095
Surplus for the year	(77,090)
Balance at 31 March 2021	746,005

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 £52,931 (2020: £46,724). At the year end, £4,412 (2020: £4,584) 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 £1,375 (2020: £8,508). At the year-end, £nil (2020: £ nil) was outstanding.

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

President:

Mr Duarte Pacheco (Portugal) November 2023

Members:

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) November 2021

Ms. L. Fehlmann Riell (Switzerland) November 2021

Mr M. Grujic (Serbia) October 2022

Mr. G. Chen (China) October 2022

Mr. G. Gali Ngothé (Chad) October 2022

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) April 2023

Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan) October 2023

Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda) October 2023

Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile) October 2023

Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden) October 2023

Mr. P. Krairiksh (Thailand) October 2023

Mr. J. Mudena (Zimbabwe) October 2023

Mr. R. Rabbani (Pakistan) October 2023

Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay) October 2024

Dr. Ali Rashid AlNuaimi (UAE) April 2025

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) Ex Officio April 2023

Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt) Ex Officio April 2023

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. There were also good relations at meetings including the virtual 142nd Assembly, the virtual E-Parliament Conference, in person at the World Speakers Conference in Vienna in August 2021, Pre-COP26 meeting in Rome in October and at the Parliamentary Meeting at COP26 in Glasgow in November which the IPU and BGIPU co-hosted. 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
5, Chemin Du Pommier
Case Postale 330
CH-1218 Le Grand Saconnex
Geneva
SWITZERLAND

Telephone: +41 22 919 41 50 Fax: +41 22 919 41 60

E-Mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org

Website: www.ipu.org

National Groups of the IPU

As of November 2021 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 2020 to November 2021

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 2020-21 was £30,000. For the Annual Report, the period of focus is between Annual General Meetings, rather than the Financial Years. Due to the global pandemic, all officially supported parliamentary travel was restricted by Speakers from mid-March 2020, requiring the suspension of all BGIPU funding support for APPGs until September 2021 although no funding was claimed prior to the time of publication.

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	Head of Multilateral Programme	July 2008
Ms Rhiannon Edwards	International Project Manager	September 2016
Ms Fiona Burnet	International Project Manager	April 2019
Ms Lucy Nash	International Project Manager	August 2019

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