



# BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF ART THERAPISTS

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023 online

### Present

**Elected Council members:** Claire Louise Vaculik (Chair), Dr Caryl Sibbett (Vice Chair), Em Inman\*, Clare Boyd\*, Mandy Leonard\*, Sophia Cowx, Michele Wood, Catherine Stevens, Francesca Norouzi, Sarah Challenger, Sinead Braiden.

\* stepping down at this AGM

**In attendance:** Gary Fereday (CEO, BAAT}, Daniella (Events Officer, BAAT}, Louise Nazir (Senior Membership Officer, BAAT}, Nicola Greaves (UK Engage), Andy Burman (consultant).

**Apologies:** Liliana Montoya De La Cruz

### 1. Chair's welcome

The Chair welcomed delegates to the AGM which was once again being held online. The Chair advised that Liliana Montoya De La Cruz would not be present as she was ill and therefore would not be available to respond to Robert Rowland Smith's afternoon lecture. The Chair thanked Council, members, Caryl Sibbett, Michele Wood and Francesca Norouzi for agreeing to step in at short notice. The Chair said that the afternoon session would be recorded.

The Chair explained how delegates would be able to vote online, to respond to online polls, and how questions and comments could be made using the Zoom chat function or verbally. It was noted that the meeting was quorate through the combination of proxy votes received and the members present. Delegates were also advised that certificates of attendance would be issued after the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive and the staff team for their hard work in the past year and in their preparation for today's AGM. She said that it was a joy to see so many members coming together, to reflect on the excellent progress made, and to look at the challenges and opportunities ahead.

## 2. Review of the year

The Chair and CEO presented the highlights of the previous year. The CEO said that the period had been a year of considerable change for the Association. He said that there had been a comprehensive overhaul of operational systems and processes and a re-organisation of staffing, designed to improve the support provided to members. A new website and database had been introduced to improve members' online experiences, and to create an attractive shop window to the world. There had been increased engagement with members, including consultation on the development of a strategic plan.

It was noted that, at June 2023, BAAT membership stood at 2066 full members, 567 trainees and 244 associate members.

### **Supporting members**

The CEO said that as a member organisation, a key priority was to maximise the support for, and involvement of, members. He listed some of the ways that this was being achieved:

- through the Council,
- the IJAT Editorial Board,
- member consultations,
- Chair's monthly drop-ins,
- Special Interest and Regional Groups and regular meetings of their coordinators with Council leads for SIGs and Regions,
- calls for members to present at events and to contribute to publications,
- invitation to SIGs to support the development of professional guidance for members,
- commitment to engage across all four nations.

The CEO showed the meeting the new Member search function on the website. The Chair said that this created a wonderful sense of community which would enable members to contact each other locally to discuss local concerns and issues as well as areas about which they were passionate. Members need to opt in if they wish to appear on the public search function. The CEO also presented the online forums available and suggested that members should check to ensure that they were a member of forums in which they were interested.

Members were invited to take part of an online poll which asked:

- Would you opt-in to choose to be visible to the public in their search for an Art Therapist?
- Would you choose to show your photo (or another image such as your artwork) on your profile in the public search function?
- Do you think there is value in BAAT identifying where Art Therapy services are available in different organisational settings?

The results were as follows:

- Would you opt-in to choose to be visible to the public in their search for an Art Therapist?
  - Yes 80%
  - No 7%
  - Don't know 13%
- Would you choose to show your photo (or another image such as your artwork) on your profile in the public search function?
  - Your photo 67%
  - Another image 22%
  - Don't know 10%
- Do you think there is value in BAAT identifying where Art Therapy services are available in different organisational settings?
  - Yes 87%
  - No 3%
  - Don't know 10%

### **Training courses and publications**

The CEO outlined the comprehensive and growing range of CPD available to members free or at discounted rates, and the range of publications which were free to members (including the International Journal of Art Therapy). He said that there had been over 1000 course bookings in 2022 and feedback had been overwhelmingly good. The CEO added that courses continued to be added and improved following member input, with 7 new courses added in the coming year.

The Chair added that the range of CPD and professional articles aimed to help members at every stage in their careers to ground themselves in emerging thinking. She said that the readership of IJAT was steadily growing. The content and high quality was evidenced by the fact that there had been 155,000 downloads of articles in the past year. Access to the American and Canadian journals added valuable new perspectives and ideas from different contexts. The CEO said that the regular members bulletins were being accessed by an average of 50% of members each month which showed a healthy membership engagement.

### **Advice and guidance**

The Chair went on to outline the types of advice and guidance given to members by email and telephone in a typical month. She said that the analysis of these enquiries helped the staff team to focus on and quickly respond to current concerns.

### **Promoting art therapy**

The CEO then spoke of the Association's important work in promoting art therapy. He said that the new website presented art therapy considerably more professionally and

had received very positive feedback. Alongside this the Association has a large and growing following on various social media platforms. The CEO then summarised policy and public affairs work, giving as examples engagements with Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England, with the Scottish Parliament, and the new apprenticeship through Teesside University. The CEO also spoke of work with over 40 other professional bodies in highlighting staffing issues in the NHS.

### **Priorities for 2023**

The CEO and Chair outlines the priorities for 2023:

- To continue to improve member engagement and networking, particularly through Special Interest and Regional Groups and associated online forums.
- Review and update the Association's Articles of Association and byelaws.
- Develop advocacy and public affairs activity across all four nations of the UK.
- Relaunch Newsbriefing as a more engaging online magazine, renamed 'InSight', with both members-only and public content.
- Review how the Association supports the development of research and presents the evidence base for art therapy.

### **Conclusion and questions**

The Chair ended by thanking the staff for providing so much more for members than might be expected from such a small team. She thanked: the volunteer Special Interest and Regional Group coordinators for their work in bringing members together; Council members, especially those stepping down at this AGM; and everyone involved in the growth and development of IJAT. Finally, she thanked all BAAT members saying that the shared community effort ensured the growth and development of a rich and rewarding profession which provided much needed support to service users across the UK.

The Chair invited questions or reflections from members.

- There was a suggestion that there would be value in having reports from the four nations. The Chair and CEO agreed and said that they looked forward to visiting and engaging further. The CEO said that there certainly were important differences between the four nations, which would be explored further.
- There was a discussion about pay grades. The Chair highlighted that art therapists are often employed under a range of job titles and descriptions, which can make it difficult to compare bondings. She said that the breadth of work done across sectors, and the range of employers involved, added to the complexity. Diane Waller (Honorary President) said that a great deal of work had been done in the past to establish that Band 7 was an appropriate entry grade, and this had been widely accepted. The CEO said that links with the Psychological Professions Network would help boost the standing of BAAT members.

### **3. Minutes of AGM 16<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

The draft minutes of the previous AGM had been provided in advance. There were no corrections and members approved the minutes as an accurate record of the previous AGM. There were no matters arising. Em Inman was thanked for her diligence and attention to detail in preparing the minutes.

### **4. Annual accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

The annual accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 had been provided in advance and were presented by the CEO. He explained that BAAT was a not-for-profit organisation, with all funds expended on achieving benefits for members. Looking at Income and Expenditure in the year, the CEO highlighted that there had been total income of £680,663 and a small deficit of £13,279 at the end of the year. The CEO explained that this had been due to a need to invest in the new website and member database; this was necessary as the old website, databases and IT infrastructure had not been invested in for many years and was very dated.

The Balance Sheet at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 showed that Members' Funds stood at £224,839. The CEO said that this represented about 4 months' turnover, and that between 3 and 6 months was about right for a members' organisation like BAAT. The CEO also drew members' attention to a detailed schedule of income and expenditure, pointing out that staff and IT costs were the main cost elements, again as would be expected for an organisation like BAAT.

There was a question regarding the extent to which members should be consulted on specific expenditures. For example, it was suggested that some members would prefer to receive a printed copy of IJAT. The CEO explained that members' views are always considered by the CEO and Council. The Chair said that the decision to publish IJAT online only had been made partly on cost grounds, but there had also been environmental accessibility reasons. She said that the online version allowed users to vary the font size, to choose the articles required, and to print them if desired. The CEO added that BAAT was very conscious of environmental impact; for example, its internet provider used a carbon-neutral server.

Members accepted the annual accounts for the year to 31st December 2022, and indicated they were happy with the Council decision to reappoint the accountants.

### **5. Member proposal**

Diane Waller (Honorary President) had submitted a written proposal, which had been provided to members in advance. She said that the work of members was often innovative and ground-breaking. Other professional groups such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists were more accustomed to putting their members forward for awards and prizes. She proposed that BAAT should start to do so too. In response to a question on where awards were available, she suggested the Chief Allied Health

Professions Officer's Awards as an example. Members were asked to email suggestions for other professional awards that might be relevant.

The CEO and Chair said that they and the Council were very supportive of the proposal. The Chair noted that BAAT might also consider creating its own award system.

The result of the vote on the proposal was:

For - 185 (96.9%); Against - 6 (3.1%); Abstained - 9.

The member proposal was supported by members and will be considered by Council.

## **6. Short statement from candidate for Chair**

*Caryl Sibbett as Vice Chair chaired this section of the meeting.*

Delegates were aware that Claire Louise Vaculik had come to the end of her three-year term as Chair and that she was eligible to serve for a further term. Dr Caryl Sibbett advised that the only candidate for Chair was Claire Louise Vaculik and invited her to make short statement.

Claire Louise said that she had come to the role three years ago aiming to put members' voices at the centre of the Association, and to ensure that the grass roots informed all that the Association did. She said that it was special to have the opportunity to play a part to the best of one's ability in helping the organisation grow. She said that COVID had dramatically changed things for everyone. She said that she had very much enjoyed working with the different Council members and believed that a lot of building had been done now, which would serve the Association well into the future. As an art therapist with over twenty years of experience, she felt passionate about the opportunity to engage with members and to advocate on their behalf.

The result of the voted on the election of Claire Louise Vaculik was:

For - 182 (95.8%); Against - 8 (4.2%); Abstained - 10.

Claire Louise Vaculik was re-elected as Chair for a second term.

## **7. Short statements from candidates for Council**

The Chair advised that there were two candidates for the three Council vacancies: Jess Collier and Simi Warah. She invited Jess Collier to make a short statement.

Jess thanked Claire Louise Vaculik and Mandy Leonard for nominating her. She said that her clinical work and research focused on marginalised women, who often felt consistently let down by establishment organisations and individuals. She noted that art therapists were often in a position of power and authority, and needed to be reflexive and humble in dealing with clients.

The Chair explained that although Simi Warah had been at the first part of the meeting, she was not available to speak - due to an emergency with her child. However, delegates had received written statements from both candidates in advance.

The result of the votes on the candidates for Council membership were:

Jessica Collier: For - 181 (97.8%); Against - 4 (2.2%); Abstained - 15.

Simi Warah: For -183 (97.9%); Against - 4 (2.1%); Abstained - 13.

Jessica Collier and Simi Warah were both elected on to Council.

#### **8. Special Resolution: to adopt new Articles of Association**

Draft new Articles of Association had been provided to delegates in advance.

Diane Waller (Honorary President) gave some contextual background to this item. She said that the Articles of Association might not be a prime interest for many delegates. However, they were key to how the Association was run and it was important that they be revised from time to time to ensure that the Association stayed compliant with changing laws and regulations. The Articles of Association had last been reviewed in 2019.

The CEO explained that the Association was a company limited by guarantee, which protected members from any unlimited liability. He said that there was a requirement to comply with the Companies Act and with other statutes such as the Data Protection Act. These requirements needed to be reflected in the Articles of Association. He said that this was a tidying exercise to keep the Association safe.

The Chair said that she was grateful for the professional guidance provided by Andy Burman an expert of professional association governance, which had included three one-hour webinars with members. Andy Burman said that his review had found several areas that needed to be updated. For example, the Association needed to establish more explicit powers to hold meetings by video conference. He said that the fundamental structures of the Association were not changing. He explained that a suite of byelaws had been created, which would assist the Association in managing routine business.

Delegates indicated that they appreciated the expert guidance and said that the process had been fully transparent. They added that the review added to the Association's solid foundations which would allow the Council, staff and members to get on with the work.

The Special Resolution was passed with the following result and the Articles of Association adopted.

For - 156 (93.4%); Against - 11 (6.6%); Abstained - 33.

#### **9. Any other business (raised in advance)**

No other business had been raised.

The Chair thanked members again and invited people, to return after lunch for the lecture with Robert Rowland-Smith