

# **Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2025**

**Saturday, 21 June 2025**

**Draft minutes - subject to approval at 2026 AGM.**

- Full members present (including proxy votes) 157 (6.68% of full members)
- Council members present: Claire Louise Vaculik (Chair), Simi Warrah, Michele Wood, Caryl Sibett, Sinead Braiden, Sarah Challenger
- Council members apologies: Catherine Stevens, Francesca Nazouori, Jess Philips, Jacqui McKay-Lewens, Liliana Montoya De La Cruz
- In attendance; Gary Fereday, CEO

## **Welcome**

The Chair, Claire Louise Vaculik, Vice-Chair Michelle Wood and Chief Executive Gary Fereday welcomed Members to the 2025 AGM.

The Deputy Chief Allied Health Professions Officer (England), Beverley Harden, joined the meeting via a pre-recorded address that provided members with a welcome and supportive message of the value of art therapy.

## **Working as a community**

The Chair shared an organisational chart to help Members better understand the structure and functioning of the Association, and explained the roles of Council members, members and the staff team.

## **Remembering Joy Shaverein**

A few moments of silence were taken to remember the life and contribution of renowned art therapist Joy Shaverein

## **Review of the year**

The Chair, Vice-Chair and CEO took members through the highlights of the last 12 months which saw the continued development of the Association. Working

collaboratively with members across the UK the Association has continued to work to improve member services and the promotion of art therapy to policy makers, commissioners and the public. The year saw:

- improved the find-a-therapist search function
- introduced the member's events calendar
- improved the online forums for Special Interest and Regional Groups
- increased InSight publications to quarterly
- more CPD events, including free CPD events for members
- our first in-person annual conference since Covid-19, that sold out
- increased activity across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure BAAT was more active across all the UK
- introduced the BAAT Awards for innovation, diversity and the lifetime achievement award,
- the NHS Commission, led by BAAT, to support the development of the art, drama and music therapy professions, through the development of several short films and animations, a career framework document, and curriculum guidelines for the trainings
- during the year overall membership numbers increased by 5%

### **Minutes of previous AGM, 22nd June 2024**

The Chair invited comments on the minutes of the previous AGM from those present in 2024. No corrections or matters arising were raised and the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

### **Annual accounts**

The CEO outlined the finances, taking members through the statutory annual accounts for year-end 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. Full accounts were all online in the memberzone:

<https://baat.org/download/11222/baat-full-accts-december-2024.pdf>

The CEO outlined how the Association was financially stable although increasing financial pressures mean finances had to be monitored carefully. Some key pressures included

- increases in National Insurance contributions for employers, particularly for organisations with a large proportion of part-time staff like the Association
- increasing costs of IT and need for increased IT security
- the demand for the longer courses level 6 diploma courses didn't appear to be as high as previous years.

The Chair invited questions on the accounts, there were no forthcoming.

The CEO reminded Members that the accounts had been approved and signed by the Board, which is legally responsible. In the interests of transparency, he invited Full Members to receive the accounts and indicate they were content with Council's decisions to (a) approve the accounts (b) reappoint the current accountants, Higgisons Chartered Accountants, and (c) to market test the accountants services, prior to preparation of next year's statutory accounts.

Members indicated they were content with these decisions of Council.

### **Short statements from candidates standing for Council**

The full members standing for Council each presented a short statement to support their candidature. The members were:

- Kate Pestell
- Melissa King
- Simi Warah
- Simon Hackett

A short break was then taken to allow online voting to take place for those members who hadn't already cast their vote.

### **Lifetime Achievement Award**

The Chair introduced the Lifetime Achievement Award, which is Awarded by Council. In 2025 the Award had been awarded to Eileen McCourt. This had taken place a few months earlier at the BAAT Northern Ireland annual all members meeting in Belfast, where the Chair, Chief Executive and Council member Caryl Sibbett had presented the award in-person to Eileen

Caryl Sibbett, spoke about why she nominated Eileen McCourt, and Eileen's significant contribution to art therapy in Northern Ireland and her longstanding support to BAAT Northern Ireland that spanned many decades.

Eileen McCourt responded, saying how honored she was to receive the award and thanked Caryl for the nomination and Council for making the award.

### **Discussion forums**

Members were invited to join breakout rooms to discuss their aspirations for the profession and issues that they were concerned about. Breakout sessions were facilitated by Council members

Council members fed back points from their discussion groups, including:

- Challenging Eurocentric perspectives
- The need for art therapy to be better understood and respected
- Lack of secure jobs and funding cuts
- Need to focus not just on the NHS but in all areas where art therapists practice
- How BAAT might help improve the employability of art therapists, particularly in their early career
- Training placements providing a service but not developing into jobs
- Importance of art therapists accessing PhDs
- Private health insurers not always recognising art therapy

The Chair offered some final remarks, highlighting how BAAT is looking to produce a revised strategic plan, with engagement with members to support its development.

## **Voting results**

The CEO announced the results of the voting for Council. Voting had taken place electronically using the online voting platform provided by UK Engage. The results were:

- The total number of possible votes (i.e. Full Members) was 2,398
- The number of votes cast was 157 – representing 6.55% of the possible votes. This meant the vote was quorate as Articles of Association require 5%
  - Simon Hackett 97 votes
  - Melissa King 98 votes
  - Kate Pestell 88 votes
  - Simi Warah 105 votes

Simon Hackett and Melissa King were appointed to Council for their first term and Simi Warah was appointed to Council for her second term.

The Choir congratulated those joining and rejoining Council, Kate Pestell for standing, and Jess Phillips who had stood down.

## **Any other business**

Vice-Chair, Michele Wood, encouraged members to reach out to each other for mentoring opportunities. There was a suggestion to add 'open to mentoring' as a feature on member profiles.

## **Closing remarks from the Chair**

The Chair thanked members for attending the AGM and noted that her term of office on Council will come to end at the next AGM in June 2026

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