



COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING Saturday 30th September 2023

In attendance

Council members: Claire Louise Vaculik (Chair), Sarah Challenger, Jess Collier, Francesca Norouzi (item 11 only), Catherine Stevens, Simi Warah.

Officers: Gary Fereday (Chief Executive).

1. Apologies for Absence, Declaration of Conflicts of Interest and Introduction of New Members

a) Apologies: Sinead Braiden, Sophia Cowx, Liliana Montoya de la Cruz, Caryl Sibbett (Vice-Chair), Michele Wood.

b) Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

The Chair reminded members that the conflict-of-interest forms are completed annually and that they should update forms if circumstances changed. The CEO noted that not all forms had been received in the office. Members present indicated that they had recently submitted their forms.

c) Introduction of New Members: The Chair welcomed Jess Collier and Simi Warah to their first meetings of the Council. She noted that training was available for new members, provided by a specialist in the governance of professional bodies, and confirmed that existing members were welcome also to attend the training. The training required a half day, and timing would be flexible to suit the participants.

ACTION: CEO to circulate potential dates for the training to all Council members.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Chair noted that the minutes of the last Council meeting on 30 May 2023 had been circulated to those who were members of Council at that time for corrections; she thanked members for their responses. The approved minutes will now be uploaded onto the website. The Chair also noted that matters arising would be dealt with under the appropriate

agenda item. She asked whether there were any questions or points requiring clarification; none were raised.

The Chair asked the CEO whether he wanted to raise any matters arising at this point. The CEO referred to Item 2, Matters Arising, and said that more data was now available from HCPC and being shared with professional bodies. BAAT's Membership Officer was now liaising monthly with HCPC. A member inquired if there were up-to-date membership numbers for Wales and noted that the data had been requested by Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW). The CEO explained that it had not been straightforward for the HCPC to compile accurate data specifically for Wales, but the situation was now improving.

3. Chair's Report

The Chair reflected on the past few months and looked at some of the priorities for the coming year. Now that the new Articles of Association have been approved, there are new byelaws to be developed. She noted that it is important to think about how BAAT works across the four nations and to ensure similar levels of support in each of them - in respect of their own devolved structures.

The Chair noted that, in addition to her regular drop-in meetings, she and the CEO had begun a series of visits, and the first had been to Scotland, where in addition to a visit to the Scottish Parliament and the art psychotherapy training at Queen Margaret University, they had also met with the BAAT Scotland Council and a larger group of Scottish members. Further visits were planned for Northern Ireland in early March 2024 and Wales, probably in June 2024.

The Chair welcomed the planned launch on 19 October of the "Race is Complicated" Toolkit, which BAAT had played a role in developing as part of the Coalition for Diversity and Anti-Oppressive Practice. She also referred to two upcoming training events (one for all art therapists, the other for BAAT members only) on the new *Standards of Proficiency for Art Therapists*. BAAT has been liaising with HCPC on the implementation of the new standards since the Spring, to ensure that members have the support needed to meet the new Standards. Our Professional Adviser is collecting information on issues that members might be facing, in respect of implementing the standards.

The Chair referred to the BAAT Conference in November on the climate crisis, which promises to be an important and interesting event. She reminded Council members to share links for this with colleagues and in all their networks.

Finally, the Chair noted that she was optimistic about the year ahead. A great deal of work had been done to put the right foundations in place and there was now an opportunity for BAAT to become more outward-looking; the CEO will report on this when introducing the draft public affairs and communications strategy (item 9).

4. Vice-Chair's Report

There was no report.

5. Chief Executive's Report

The CEO introduced his report by setting out progress made on the five agreed priorities for 2023:

- *Developing public affairs* (he said he would return to this under agenda item 9).
- *Improving member engagement and networking* – there had been a significant improvement in the working of the forums and groups; different sets of legacy data were being combined into one database; where groups had no co-ordinator, the team was following up to establish whether they remained viable.
- *Supporting the development of research and better presenting the evidence base for art therapy* – a research strategy was being developed in the second half of the year; briefing papers on the evidence base were being developed by the Research Officer and these would start to appear on the website soon.
- *Relaunching Newsbriefing as InSight* – has been relaunched and now quarterly, rather than six-monthly; the volume of articles being submitted had increased and feedback from members had been positive.
- *Reviewing the Articles of Association* – now complete following their adoption at the recent AGM.

The Chair invited members to ask any questions to the CEO about his report, which had been distributed in advance.

Members asked for clarification about the roles and intended audiences of the two BAAT publications - IJAT (International Journal of Art Therapy) and InSight. The CEO said that IJAT, which worked alongside sister publications in Canada and the US, was a peer-reviewed, academic journal; while InSight was more like a magazine that enabled members to write less formally about a wider range of topics, e.g. a new area of their practice. The CEO added that InSight was aimed at a wider audience, including non-BAAT members; it also had a commitment to include an article by a trainee in each edition.

a) Operational Plan

The CEO presented an update on the Operational Plan. He explained for new members present that the Plan and its use of colour coding was designed to help Council members to understand the different areas of BAATs work, increase transparency, and highlight any specific areas of interest or concern for them to focus on.

He drew attention to a recent drop in income from courses, which would be discussed further under item 5 c). He also noted the challenge of delivering a range of services to members, with only 6 FTE staff and voluntary input from members. It was important to manage the workload of staff carefully.

Finally, he noted that more than 100 tickets had been sold for Conference 2023, which was on target. He reported that he'd been told that BAAT was the first comparable organisation to focus on the climate crisis in this way; the Chair reminded those present that the idea had emerged from a member's proposal at the AGM two years before.

Questions about the report followed. A member asked how it was decided which courses should be offered. The CEO explained that the aim was to present a balanced programme, considering past attendances, relevance to CPD needs, suggestions from regions, SIGs, Council and other members that were always welcome. The Chair noted that there is a survey in the e-bulletin, which asks members to propose any topics for courses that they'd like to see included. A member shared that some organisations were cutting back on the CPD they would fund. The Chair reminded members that Council had chosen to continue to offer two hours of free CPD per quarter to support members in their professional development. These had originally started during the pandemic and had proven popular with members.

b) Dashboard

The CEO presented the Dashboard, which had been distributed in advance. This is used to share activity across BAAT service areas with Council. He thanked the Membership Officer for her work in updating this.

Some key areas were identified:

- He noted that BAAT was beginning to see an upward trend in membership. He pointed to the gap that there is between registered art therapists and BAAT members; the objective was to reduce the gap. Increasing membership would reduce reliance on other sources of income.
- He explained that there would be an increase in CPD events next year. Some which attracted relatively small numbers were continued because they were important for new members who were joining.
- He noted that BAAT is seeking ways to measure its social media impact more effectively.
- He also highlighted that the answering of enquiries was now much better handled, and a library of FAQs was being developed on the website.

Members then commented on the data or asked questions. A member said that click-through numbers on hyperlinks in the Bulletin seemed to be relatively low; the CEO provided more context about standards of engagement in the sector and noted that BAAT has a high response and engagement rate. Members also asked whether there was any information available on how many members engaged with BAAT and whether there was a breakdown of the practice areas of those members who were engaging with BAAT. The CEO said that he hoped that it would be possible to generate more information like this in the future. They also asked whether BAAT could identify HCPC-registered art therapists, who were not BAAT members. The CEO said that unfortunately that was not possible because of data protection considerations.

The Chair noted that responses were awaited from the member survey sent out over the summer. The CEO would feed back on the survey at the next Council meeting. Responding to a question, the CEO confirmed that member surveys would be sent out to Council members, so that they could review these.

c) Management Accounts

Introducing the management accounts, the CEO noted that income was below expectations: revenue from CPD courses was down on budget. Membership income was also down, though that was believed to be largely because of delays in direct debit payments due to the later scheduling for the collection of payments. This was likely to be a one-off effect.

Expenditure was also below budget, and the CEO thanked the staff team for holding down expenditure. He noted, however, that there might also be an element of delay in incurring expenditure, and website and database costs in the second half of the year would probably reduce the underspend.

In questions, members asked whether it would be possible to reduce the shortfall in the second half. The CEO said that some of it would be clawed back and there were reserves to cover it if needed. At the next meeting, the budget for 2024 would be presented, which would need to include a membership fee increase. It was also important to acknowledge that significant investment, particularly in the website, had been necessary to make up for previous under-investment. This should now suffice for several years.

A member noted that feedback from colleagues had been that advertising rates were believed to be too high. The CEO noted that adverts were now free for BAAT members.

d) Risk Register

The CEO said that it was important for Council members, as company directors, to be aware of potential risks facing the organisation. The Risk Register sets out the possible risks to the organisation and how these may be mitigated against. He noted that there were no longer any red flags in the right-hand column (post-mitigation) and that the overall levels of risk had gradually reduced over the past two years. He believed the amber assessment under 'Insufficient understanding of role of committees etc.' would reduce to green shortly. The highest risk score related to income from courses, which had already been discussed. He also noted that while the risk rating for loss of staff was only low, the reality was that there was only one person for each function, and it was important not to burn out staff and to try to develop cover for certain functions.

e) IJAT

The CEO said that the Journal continued to be a success story. It had moved into the top quartile for ranking by citations, and the publishers believed that IJAT outperformed their expectations, especially covering a relatively small profession. The outgoing Editor-in-Chief (Alex McDonald) and newly appointed (after an open

competition) Editor-in-Chief (formerly deputy – Dr Zoe Moula) deserved praise for what they had achieved.

In answer to a question from a member, he confirmed that an honorarium was paid to the Editor and Deputy Editor, in return for a minimum commitment of one day per week. He also confirmed that the figures for downloads referred to those that had been downloaded in that year, but the articles could have been published at any time prior to the download being made.

The Chair highlighted the number of downloads (over 150,000 a year) compared to the number of full BAAT members. This suggests that art therapists from across the world and other professionals were accessing the articles. She noted the how important the journal is in providing an evidence base for our profession. She also explained that templates for writing articles are available on the website, as well as a mentorship programme to encourage new authors to submit for special editions. She hoped Council members would encourage others to submit articles. Writing for InSight could be a stepping-stone to submitting an article to IJAT. A member observed that the emotional content of practice was so valuable and that it was important to include the former, when seeking to communicate the benefits of art therapy. This can sometimes be lost in a peer-reviewed article, so it is important to have these different ways to share practice.

f) Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy

The CEO reported that a short statement confirming BAAT's commitment to the principles of the MoU on Conversion Therapy had been submitted. A member asked whether the original draft had been much changed; the CEO explained that a brief statement of intent was all that was required. The Chair suggested that the longer version of the statement might form the basis of an article for InSight. Members welcomed the fact that BAAT had made the commitment to the MoU. The CEO said that he would inform members once they had received approval.

6. Find a therapist

The CEO reported that Council had voted in a previous meeting for technical means to be explored to enable members who chose to be visible to be seen on the external website. BAAT Members had been surveyed about this at the AGM; they were overwhelmingly in support of this. It was evident that there were several technical issues to consider, including the effect of the GDPR.

Member would need to opt in to having their members' area details included on the public-facing site. They would then have to decide separately whether to include contact details, which might be an issue for some members. For the private practice and supervisor categories on the website, currently BAAT checks documentation. In future, although the details had to be worked through, the plan was that members would make a self-declaration, as this seems more appropriate as they are all HCPC-registered professionals.

BAAT would reserve the right to audit and could conduct spot checks but would not automatically check all documentation.

The Chair said that examples of the self-declaration would be shared with Council members by email. In answer to a question, she said that trainees would not be included in the public-facing site, only those who were full members and were HCPC-registered.

ACTION: Example of possible online self-declaration form (and how the declaration is presented to the public) to be shared with Council members.

7. Career Structures and Progression

The Chair explained that BAAT supported members in their professional development, through providing CPD. There are also courses that support career progression by providing training, for example in supervisory skills or more clinically focused trainings. She noted that career structures were set out for some sectors, but that others did not have these yet e.g., art therapists working in education.

A member shared how challenging it is to progress beyond Band 7 and still maintain a focus on clinical practice. From then on practitioners had to go into management, leading to a loss of skilled clinicians; a member noted that some art therapists left the NHS for that reason. It may be helpful to review consultant roles across the UK for examples of the different types of responsibilities that these included. A member noted that a role at Band 8b had recently been advertised; BAAT could consider discussing the opportunities for clinical work at higher levels with HEIW. The Chair asked whether Council believed it would be helpful for BAAT to provide guidance about career pathways, and to provide leadership training. Members responded that it would be helpful to enable trainees to understand how career pathways work and that training in being self-employed would be useful.

As Council appeared to be keen for BAAT to explore ways to support career progression, how to support the retention of clinical expertise in senior NHS roles, and how to manage the business aspects of independent practice.

ACTION: CEO to consider how BAAT can best support career structures and progression and bring the issue back to Council in due course with a further paper.

8. Student advisors / recent graduates

These roles, which hold responsibilities that sit across IJAT and BAAT, are now being advertised. The Chair asked members to encourage interested trainees and new-graduate colleagues to apply. The experience can provide a useful way to understand more about the art therapy across the UK and to build networks as one is starting out in the profession. Those appointed are able to provide a helpful, fresh perspective on the journal, on Insight and as coordinators of the Trainee SIG, a valuable support for fellow students.

9. Developing a Public Affairs and Campaigns strategy

The CEO introduced a discussion paper on developing a public affairs and campaigns strategy, which had been distributed in advance. He noted that it was now important for BAAT to become more outward-looking and to engage with commissioners, politicians and opinion-formers. He reminded members that our work needs to fall within our objects. He set out five tests that could help us to consider if BAAT should engage on a particular issue: is the issue important for members; is it a good use of resources; is there a clear target audience; are there others who could lead on the issue; and what would success look like?

He then set out three areas of potential activity, as examples: the capacity of art therapy to change lives; a sustainable career structure for art therapists; engaging in appropriate societal issues (e.g., mental health). When resources allowed, he noted that it would be important to employ a public affairs professional to provide dedicated support to delivering the plan.

A member explained said that the third area of activity would require careful thought, particularly in Wales. Another member commented that there was no mention of patients in the five tests; she also said that it was important that the strategy was effective for all client groups, including those not necessarily popular with the wider public (e.g., offenders). The Chair suggested that patient focus should be added to the first test, as this was such an important focus for our profession.

ACTION: Members to send additional comments to the CEO by 20 October; CEO to revise and develop plan to bring to next meeting.

10. Updates

- a) SIG network co-ordinator: there was no update. Michele Wood would restart network meetings and report back in December.
- b) Regional network co-ordinator: Sarah Challenger tabled the report, explaining that the meetings to take place bimonthly, for an hour. Several regions were currently without a co-ordinator. She noted that the regions varied widely in geographic size and population, which could be a challenge. The CEO suggested that at some point it may be helpful to review the regional boundaries to ensure a more even distribution. Sarah Challenger noted that coordinators had raised the issue of Associate Members attending SIGs; it was agreed that attendance was not appropriate in all circumstances.

ACTION: CEO to check the guidelines.

- c) Wales: A report had been tabled. Sarah Challenger said that Region 7 / BAAT Cymru was thriving. The current coordinators are able continue in their roles as regional co-ordinators.

Scotland: A report had been tabled. The CEO reported that discussions were taking place with BAAT Scotland on how best to support them. He noted that standards for art therapists had recently been issued. The employment of counsellors in schools may be having the effect of reducing opportunities for art therapists.

N. Ireland: A report had been tabled. There was a wish to see N Ireland having a more visible profile on the BAAT website. The Happy Healthy Minds counselling project had abruptly had its funding withdrawn.

11. Members representing BAAT.

(Note: this item was taken before item 10 owing to the availability of Francesca Norouzi.)

Council members currently represent BAAT on external bodies and professional network meetings across a range of different sectors:

- Liliana Montoya De La Cruz – NHSE/AHP Education and Training Group
- Caryl Sibbett – AHPFNI
- Francesca Norouzi – Office for Health Improvement: Two specific actions were necessary by 6th October: feeding into the national descriptors for allied health professionals and updating that relating to art therapy; linking into the Office for Health Improvement's strategic aims. Members were invited to email comments to the CEO.

ACTION: Chair / CEO to respond.

The CEO explained that stakeholder mapping would form an important part of the public affairs plan. A member emphasised the importance of liaising with other related professions, e.g., music therapists. The Chair also noted that it was important to consider how BAAT could add value in meetings, through its specialist expertise. Mapping would enable time to be used wisely to benefit our members and the profession.

12. Any Other Business

The CEO reported that a request had been received from a member for BAAT to support a mental health campaign in Palestine. He noted that members may take different views on issues and that it is not always easy to ascertain how best to use the limited resources we have available, as there are many issues and campaigns. He suggested that one way of assessing requests like this could be to apply the 'five tests', which were set out in the public affairs and campaigns strategy paper. Following these, we would consider what could BAAT achieve by supporting this campaign, if it was about art therapy, and so on. Members used this approach to discuss the issue. After in-depth reflection and discussion, it was agreed that it would not be appropriate for BAAT to support the campaign.

Dates of future meetings:

The Chair provided dates for upcoming meetings:

- 2 December 2023
- 3 February 2024
- 11 May 2024
- 22 June 2024 (AGM)
- 21 September 2024 and
- 7 December 2024.

It was noted that it would be helpful to reflect on when meetings are held and to consider if this planning takes account of days of religious observance that might be important for some members.