

Minutes of annual general meeting 2024

Saturday, 22 June 2024

- **207 full members** present and/or voting by proxy
- **Council members present:** Claire Louise Vaculik (Chair), Michèle Wood, Sinead Braiden, Sarah Challenger, Jacqui McKoy-Lewens, Liliana Montoya De La Cruz, Francesca Norouzi, Catherine Stevens, Caryl Sibbett, Simi Warah
- **In attendance:** Gary Fereday (CEO), Debbie Noel (minutes)
- **Council members apologies:** Jess Collier

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members to the AGM and outlined the agenda for the day.

The CEO introduced a prerecorded message of support from Bernie O'Reilly, the Chief Executive of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) – the regulator of Art Therapy / Art Psychotherapy in the UK.

2 Reflections from our regulator

Bernie O-Reily offered his thanks for the invitation to the AGM. He reminded members that the HCPC is the regulator for about 350,000 registrants across 15 different professions and all the associated modalities.

He spoke about how important the AGM was as a time for reflection and time for recognition as an organisation the work done through the past 12 months and plan for the next.

He spoke about how art therapists work with people often in the worst moment of their lives, in distress and in crisis, and how art therapy changes lives in an incredibly unique way.

He commented on the conversations he had had with Claire Louise Vaculik and Gary Fereday, and how those had enabled him to get a clear understanding of the role and work of art therapists.

He spoke about wanting to be a compassionate regulator; one that dealt with issues as

expeditiously and as quickly as they can and how the role of the HCPC and BAAT are complementary – all working to protect the public and improve standards and professionalism.

He concluded by wishing those present a good AGM and how he was looking forward to continuing a really good relationship with BAAT.

3 Minutes of the previous AGM on 24 June 2023

The Chair invited comments on the minutes of the previous AGM. No corrections were noted and no matters arising were declared.

Members approved the previous year's minutes.

4 Review of the year

The Chair and CEO took members through the highlights of the last 12 months which included:

- Continued growth of membership numbers
- A focus on member engagement, including member surveys and in-person meetings in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- BAAT NI celebrating its 21st anniversary
- Continued commitment and work on EDI to deliver our EDI strategy
- The ongoing success of the CPD offer – with 34 short courses and 4 free CPD events for members
- Our strong social media presence to promote the profession online
- The continued strong growth of the number of downloads and academic ranking of our journal, the International Journal of Art Therapy
- Publication of our magazine, Insight, increasing from two editions per year to four per year
- The regular member Bulletins continue to see high level of engagement
- Some 400 member queries responded to every month – supporting members in their professional life
- A developing public affairs / advocacy role – ensuring members are represented across the 4 nations of the UK
- Engaging in campaigns with the Centre for Mental Health, and around Climate Crisis and emerging work in specific areas such as hospices and end of life care
- Significant funding awarded by NHS England for BAAT to lead on a partnership with

our music therapy and drama therapy colleagues to promote the profession, particularly to help the diversity of people coming to train, helping develop the curriculum on the trainings, and develop a career framework

They noted that the next BAAT annual conference later in the year would be the first in-person conference since the pandemic.

They reflected that the association has undergone considerable change over the past few years and thanked Council members, the staff team and all our members who volunteer as coordinators of the SIGs and Regional and Country Groups to support our work.

They concluded that the work embarked on a few years ago, when Gary came into post as CEO, had significantly changed the organisation. This work included, modernising the way we work and are governed, improved transparency of decision-making, increased member engagement across the whole of the UK, the development of our website and online platforms, and improved member services. That work has provided a more sustainable and responsive organisation, better placed to promote the amazing work of members.

5 Annual Accounts

The CEO outlined the finances, taking members through the 2023 annual accounts. Full accounts were all online in the memberzone. <https://baat.org/download/7728/baat-full-accounts-31-dec-2023.pdf>

The Chair invited questions specifically on the accounts.

The Chair noted that there had been no questions about the accounts.

The CEO reminded attendees 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 decision to reappoint the accountants.

Members indicated that they were happy to receive the accounts and content with Council's decision to reappoint Higgisons as the Association's accountants for the 2024 financial year.

6 Questions

Hon. President, Professor Di Waller OBE, commented that she felt very happy and proud to have been a part of the organisation and acknowledged the hard work done, in what is still a grassroots organisation.

She added the momentum of the past few years had been extraordinary and that in terms of professional bodies, BAAT is quite remarkable. She was supportive of the comments made earlier about the membership being crucial to the work to get BAAT this far and thanked the CEO and Chair for their work to make BAAT a completely modern organisation. She congratulated everybody involved for being part of the organisation.

Members questions were then taken.

A number asked about strategic policy and the public affairs strategy.

The CEO gave an update about the planned public affairs work to develop the profile of the profession and raise awareness. He said we need to be thinking locally as well as nationally, re-engaging stakeholders across the four nations.

A member asked for an update about special interest groups and the review of the SIGs and regions.

The Chair and CEO explained that the review is a comprehensive look at the number of SIGs, levels of activity and how they are functioning. There is now a new process for setting up new Special Interest Groups and the team will be reviewing which groups are inactive. The staff team has been very active in supporting coordinators to use the online forums and the SIGs and Regions appear to be coming back to life after the Covid pandemic.

A member highlighted concerns about career prospects in the NHS, noting that some posts are not getting filled. Another shared concerns that art therapists appear to have a lower profile in the NHS than other professions.

The Chair and CEO agreed that awareness raising is a large piece of work, and that BAAT is seeking to address this through our growing public affairs and advocacy work, including our membership of the NHS Psychological Profession's Network for example. The Chair noted how the CEO is currently the Vice Chair of the Allied Health Professions Federation giving BAAT another forum to advocate for smaller professions and raise awareness. The

CEO added that the NHS England funded project will further support that aim.

7 Lifetime achievement award

The Chair announced that Joan Woddis is the recipient of the first ever BAAT lifetime achievement award. Unfortunately Joan was unable to attend the AGM but the Chair, CEO and Council member, Catherine Stevens, had travelled to Joan's home to present her with the Award.

The Chair outlined how Joan is an extraordinary art therapist who qualified in the early 1980s and has done an enormous amount to help people as a lecturer, supervisor, teacher. In her work for BAAT she has done an extraordinary amount of work with Di Waller and other colleagues to build the structures of our professional body, to achieve statutory regulation and to help people to understand what we do.

Hon President, Di Waller, also spoke of Joan's work and passed on her best wishes. She remarked that Joan's wisdom and shared experiences made her a wonderful loyal friend and colleague. Di shared some memories of her friend and expressed her heartfelt appreciation.

8 BAAT's commitment to the MOU on conversion therapy

Full member, Jessie Holder, gave a short statement to reaffirm and reinforce BAAT's position against conversion therapy and commitment to the MOU on conversion therapy, which BAAT signed in November the previous year. They stressed the importance of creating a supportive environment for queer and trans colleagues and clients by recognising the complexities and varied perspectives. The ability to inclusively hold these viewpoints, while remaining committed to the idea that conversion therapy is inexcusable, is essential to maintaining a supportive stance for the trans and queer communities addressing their concerns. They added that it is vital to show support for LGBTQ+ communities in a clear, consistent manner.

Claire Louise thanked Jessie and asked members for any comments or questions. There were no questions from delegates and Claire Louise thanked Jessie again for bringing their statement to the AGM.

9 Short statements from Council members

The Chair advised that there were 8 candidates for the 8 Council vacancies: Caryl Sibbett, Catherine Stevens, Francesca Norouzi, Jacqui McKoy-Lewens, Sarah Challenger, Sinead Braiden, Liliana Montoya De La Cruz. There was one candidate for the Vice Chair role, Michele Wood

She invited each candidate to make a short statement

She noted that Sophia Cowx was stepping down having served four years on Council (the maximum permitted two terms). She thanked Sophia for her work on Council. She also noted that Caryl Sibbett was stepping down as Vice Chair and she thanked her for her work and support but noted that Caryl, subject to the election, was looking to stay as a Council member.

Each of the candidates made a short statement about their candidacy.

10 Voting results

The CEO noted the results of the poll, with 207 full members taking part, a turnout of 9.12% of full members of the association, which meant the voting was quorate.

At the election for members to become Members of Council and so Directors of the company:

- Caryl Sibbett 191 for 2 against 14 abstained.
- Catherine Stevens 171 for 19 against 16 abstained
- Francesca Missouri, 187 for 4 against 13 abstained
- Jackie McCoy, Lewins, 180 for, 8 against 15 abstained.
- Leona Montoya de la Cruz. 179 for, 6 against 18 abstained
- Sinead Braden, 178 for, 7 against 17 abstained.
- Sarah Challenger, 176 for 6 against, 19 abstained.

All elected to Council.

At the election for Vice Chair:

Michele Wood 191 for, 2 against, 14 Abstained.

Michele was elected as Vice Chair



The CEO congratulated all the members elected, said how he was looking forward to continuing working with them all and looking forward to working with Jackie as the new member of Council.

11 Any other business

No other business was raised.

- 12** The Chair thanked Council members, the CEO and the staff team for their work and support throughout the year, and all the SIG, Regional and Country coordinators and committee members for their contribution to the work of BAAT, and everyone for attending and participating at the AGM. She drew the Annual General Meeting to a close.