



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTE  
OF AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANTS HELD ON MONDAY 28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021 AT 11AM VIA VIDEO  
CONFERENCING DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS**

**PRESENT:** Tony Kernon (Chairman)(TK), David Meredith (Vice-Chairman) (DM), Adrian Cannon (Treasurer) (AC), Mike Greetham (CEO)(MG); George Cook (Chairman of Entrance & Disciplinary Committee) (GC), Mrs Victoria Bywater (Minutes, Administration) and 23 members.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Administration confirmed apologies had been received from 27 members.

**2. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> March 2020**

The President confirmed minutes of the meeting had been circulated to all members. The minutes were proposed as a true record by William Waterfield, seconded by Ruth Farrell and were approved unanimously.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

The Chairman confirmed that no member wished to raise any matters relating to the minutes of the AGM held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

**4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN, BIAC**

The Chairman confirmed a report had been circulated to all members (Appendix A).

In addition to the report, the Chairman added that he hoped Members agreed that BIAC had adapted well to the challenges of Covid-19 restrictions with conferences being held online and the introduction of Member Forum sessions and more recently Member Workshops all of which had been well attended.

The Chairman updated the meeting that the Members' Only Forum sessions would resume in September 2021 and continue over the autumn and winter.

The Chairman thanked all speakers, members and administration for their efforts in delivering the online events.

The Chairman reported the successful recent launch of a refreshed website.

The Chairman further reported the intention to use an external PR/ Marketing person to promote the Rural Planning Conference and in turn raise awareness of BIAC and BIAC members.

Finally, the Chairman thanked David Meredith for his contribution to BIAC Council over many years as he stands down from full Council.

No questions were raised.



## 5. REPORT OF THE CEO

MG confirmed a report had been circulated to all members (Appendix B) and there was nothing further to add.

No questions were raised.

## 6. REPORT OF THE ENTRANCE AND DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

GC confirmed a report had been circulated to all members (Appendix C)

GC reported the online only interview process and the online application process are now in full operation.

GC further reported that the updated specialisms now used as part of the interview process are available for all members to update via the Member log in on the website.

GC confirmed that the work on the CPD is in progress to bring CPD in line with other organisations and will focus on quality not quantity.

No questions were raised.

## 7. TREASURERS REPORT AND ADOPTION OF THE 2020 ACCOUNTS

AC confirmed a report from the Treasurer and the draft 2020 annual accounts have been circulated to all members (Appendix D).

AC reported a good year considering the Covid-19 restrictions on events. AC noted that whist event income was down, event expenditure had also reduced.

No questions were raised.

## 8. PROPOSAL FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2022

The Chairman confirmed that Council had discussed the rates for subscription for 2022 and had recommended that subscriptions remain unchanged for 2022.

## 9. PROPOSAL FOR A CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Chairman explained the recommendation from Council to change the Constitution to allow the Treasurer to serve in office longer than a 3 year term.

Discussion was held on the proposed change as follows;

54. The Council may co-opt an Honorary Treasurer who shall be a Fellow or a Member, appointed annually and who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Council for a maximum period of three years.

After discussion, MG proposed the following change to the Constitution, seconded by GC, all agreed;

54. The Council may co-opt an Honorary Treasurer who shall be a Fellow or a Member, appointed annually and who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Council ~~for a maximum period of three years.~~

**10. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman confirmed that Council's recommendation for nomination of Vice-Chairman is Simon Britton. GC proposed Simon Britton as Vice-Chairman, seconded by Simon Ward and this was approved unanimously.

**11. ELECTION OF TREASURER**

The Chairman confirmed that Council's recommendation for nomination of Treasurer is Adrian Cannon. AC confirmed he was willing to stand but would stand aside if another Council member would like to take over the role.

**12. ELECTION OF COUNCIL**

The Chairman reported that Graham Leaver and George Paton had offered their resignation from Council due to work pressure.

The Chairman thanked both Graham Leaver and George Paton for their contribution to Council.

The Chairman confirmed that nominations had been received for Anna Purser ABIAC of Savills; Wendy Jenkins FBIAC of CARA Ltd; Carol Johnson MBIAC of Hexham & Northern Rural and James Valentine ABIAC of Brown & Co. to stand for Council.

The Chairman proposed the election of Anna Purser, Wendy Jenkins, Carol Johnson and James Valentine en bloc, seconded by Ros Gough, all agreed.

The Chairman thanked Peter Walker and Simon Ward for their significant contribution in representing BIAC at the RPA meetings and preparing meeting notes for circulation to members.

The Chairman confirmed that whilst Peter Walker was due to stand down from full Council, he had indicated he is willing to be co-opted to Council to continue to represent BIAC at RPA meetings supported by Simon Ward.

Simon Britton proposed the co-option of Peter Walker to Council to continue to represent BIAC, seconded by MG, all agreed.

The Chairman thanked David Meredith for representing BIAC at the Defra Environmental Stakeholder meetings which would gradually now increase in volume as the focus turns towards the future environmental schemes.

The Chairman confirmed that whilst David Meredith was due to stand down from full Council, he had indicated he is willing to be co-opted to Council to continue to represent BIAC at Defra Environmental Stakeholder meetings and prepare meeting notes to be circulated to members. The Chairman confirmed that David Meredith would have the support of Peter Walker, Simon Ward and Simon Britton as required.



AC proposed the co-option of David Meredith to Council to continue to represent BIAC, seconded by Wendy Jenkins, all agreed.

### 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### Members' Only Events

The Chairman reminded members of the Member Forum meeting coming up and the Members' Only training workshops.

#### Administration Office

The Chairman updated the meeting that the address for the administration office for BIAC had been changed and the email address updated to .co.uk for the BIAC office contacts but the telephone number remains the same.

MG confirmed that the contract for the administration of BIAC is held with Cooksley & Co. Ltd and is reviewed annually.

The Chairman thanked the team at Cooksley & Co. Ltd for their work over the past year. The Chairman further thanked Richard Cooksley for all his contribution since 2010 and confirmed he had now stepped back from BIAC work.

The Chairman thanked members for their attendance and requested any ideas for training and or events to be forwarded to the office.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 11.44am

## APPENDIX A

### Chairman's Report

One year into my two-year term and I have yet to shake hands with any Members! Obviously this last year has had its challenges, but thank you for your continued membership and support of BIAC.

I hope that you have found your BIAC membership worthwhile despite our world-wide disruption. One of BIAC's strengths is the CPD events that we organise, and one of BIAC's benefits is the fellowship and sharing of ideas. We moved rapidly from face-to-face to online events and I hope that you have found them useful.

There have certainly been plenty of events over the last year, with well-attended national conferences from the Business Management, Rural Planning, Technology and Wales Event teams. These educate and provide useful CPD. They also showcase BIAC and all have been very professionally thought-out, structured and delivered. A huge thank you is deserved for the many who have volunteered time to organise, chair or speak at these events, and to Victoria and Alex for their organisational skills and for very slick technical skills in running these events.



We also ran a series of monthly Members' Forums from September to March, usually for an hour at the end of the day, with a short topical presentation and then break-out technical or purely social discussions. If you have not yet joined one, please do! They will start again in September and a programme will be circulated soon.

This summer and early autumn we have a number of training days for members, with agricultural dwellings (27/05), Class Q (01/07), report writing (07/07) and Net Zero (15/09) all to look forward to (at the time of writing).

BIAC is a members' organisation run by members and relies heavily on voluntary inputs. We will continue with our main conferences (Rural Planning is next on 7th October) and will return to face-to-face meetings when it is safe to do so. On behalf of all members, I give thanks to the many volunteers who have helped with events, served on committees, and those who serve on Council.

Thanks are also due to our Chief Executive Mike Greetham for his continued considerable input and assistance, and to Cooksley and Co for keeping the ship not only floating but shipshape.

Over the next year we hope to continue with as many CPD events as possible and, with the new website now operational, to have a drive to increase membership.

I look forward to chairing this organisation for another 12 months and hopefully I will have an opportunity to shake some of your hands at an event near you, sometime soon!

### **Chief Executives Report**

What a difference a year makes!

Like it or loathe it we have all become very familiar with the virtual media. As I write this it remains our hope that the 2021 AGM will take place at Southill, Bedfordshire, courtesy of the Whitbread family. However, we are forced to have in place contingency plans in the event of further lockdowns.

We have encouraged members to engage in on-line activities and we have been very pleased with the autumn and winter 2020/ 2021 series of monthly Member Forums which have brought together members and facilitated discussion on a wide range of subjects. The plan is to reintroduce these in autumn/ winter 2021/ 2022 and members should feel free to suggest topics.

BIAC is in a good position financially with a healthy reserve. This helped when lockdowns were announced as we were confident that BIAC would survive. Income has continued to flow through on-line events and there have been cost savings meaning that we have been able to maintain profitable trading. While a cash reserve is helpful BIAC recognises that we should continue to develop and explore new ideas and provide new and innovative services to members. Again we ask members to make suggestions in this respect.

The on-line Business Management Conference and the on-line Rural Planning Conference were both very successful events. We have been very pleased with the technology and we thank Cooksley & Co Ltd. for their support in this respect, they have invested in additional software to enhance the member experience.



I continue to explore opportunities to introduce BIAC to wider audiences. BIAC is well received especially as members engage with the CPD program and evidence PI cover. Some members have found CPD a difficulty in 2020 but most have found it possible to provide more than sufficient CPD points using the written word and on-line events. Members should also be aware that BIAC is prepared to consider CPD points registered with other suitable organisations. Any members with CPD issues should contact Alex using [membership@biac.co.uk](mailto:membership@biac.co.uk)

Certain bodies have had to put on hold forums previously held to discuss important matters affecting our industry. This is important given the change that we are experiencing and the demands being made by clients for answers and direction. I hope that we get some certainty in June as plans for future support are published. As I write there are initial announcements in the press but most are a rewrite of promises and threats already made.

The BIAC Foundation Courses will resume this autumn providing a training opportunity for consultants, young and old. We are reviewing the venues to ensure maximum safety to attendees!

I remain committed to taking the Institute forward in a dynamic and an innovative way and remain open to new ideas. Members should continue to feel free to forward suggestions for the consideration of Council.

Sadly I have to formally record the passing of two members who over time worked with BIAC to enhance its role and reputation. Last year we lost Richard Tustian. Richard was Chair at a time of change for BIAC. He was well known to all attendees of the AGM's and Business Management Conferences and will be remembered as someone who was always positive and always had a smile on his face. In May I was advised of the passing of David Whalley. David was Chair of the Publicity Committee and a long standing member of Council. As one of the early members of BIAC he was instrumental in getting BIAC known and respected. He was also a renowned horticulturist and was always happy to discuss client issues with BIAC members. I extend BIAC's sympathy and good wishes to Richard and David's families and also to those of other BIAC members who have passed away in the last year or who have lost family.

As ever I am indebted to Richard, Victoria and Alex in the support team for their assistance. Richard Cooksley has decided to retire from Cooksley & Co. Ltd and has handed the business to Victoria Bywater. We thank Richard for his support and assistance since 2008 and welcome Victoria who has, for some time been the lead at Portbury in the matter of BIAC. Finally I would like to thank all of Council for their valued support particularly to Tony Kernon, David Meredith and Adrian Cannon who have worked hard to ensure that BIAC has had a presence over the last 12 months.

## APPENDIX C

### Treasurers Report - Adrian Cannon

#### 2020 Accounts

The past year has been odd, not to say the least, however the Institute has fared well financially, by adapting and using technology to maintain contact with its members.



The P&L shows turnover was significantly down by 30%, however the cost base has been similarly reduced leaving a small profit for the year of £1682 with the bank balance showing the Institute in a strong financial position.

Turning to income, subscriptions are down but the increasing success of the regional events in 2020 and the successful 2020 BMD conference provided a good income. Unfortunately, the rural planning conference was unable to run in a conference style, but the online format still produced a small profit. Additionally, training courses such as the Foundation courses which were unable to proceed due to COVID have contributed less.

Looking at the expenditure, fixed costs remain similar to that of 2019. Note the CEO increase is a timing of payment, not any fundamental revision of terms, and remains good value for the input received from Mike, for which our thanks are given. Perhaps the biggest investment is that of the website, which is being improved to meet GDPR requirements, and this development will continue through 2021 where investment will help drive the efficiencies of the running of the organisation.

COVID has allowed us to learn some useful lessons with remote contact, an ever-important tool within our organisation, which we are now embracing. Ultimately the online world has actually allowed increased efficiencies which has provided a positive effect to the Institute and one which I am confident will be seen further in the 2021 accounts.

Plans for 2021 are to develop and support future events and the office is looking at increasing advertising for public awareness. Moreover, BIAC will be investing in technology to improve the website and communications within the organisation thus improving member experience and enrolment. For 2021 a few compliance issues are arising due to legislative changes which will lead to the way in which card payments will be received and this should lead to further cost savings over the current supplier.

Going forward we need to consider how best to invest funds. Should members consider any areas that BIAC could improve then please pose these opportunities to council.

Of course as ever I would like to thank Victoria and her team who manage the day to day bookkeeping and who prepare the accounts. I would also like to thank council for their guidance and input, particularly for their time which goes unremunerated, for the benefit of other members. Similarly we thank our accountants James Cowper Kreston.

## APPENDIX D

### Report from the Entrance & Disciplinary Chairman

An interesting year!

My report falls into 3 main sections:

- Interviews
- Application process
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD)



## Interviews

As with most BIAC activities we have resorted to online for all interviews conducted in the virtual world. In most cases this has probably been a move for the better. Arranging the necessary interview timetables to get 3/4 people in the same “place” at the same time has been more straight forward.

Thanks to the BIAC office for their efforts distribution the necessary documents and sorting out the zoomy stuff!

Thanks also for Ros Gough for her time and content input for the interviews. The process has been well received by all those interviewed (I think!) and less daunting than applicants were expecting.

I would therefore urge all those who have been Associates for some time to apply for full membership.

This year BIAC has welcomed Philip Cooper, Farm Consultancy Group; Jonathan Crimes, CARA Ltd; and Iwan Price, CARA Ltd as full members of BIAC. Alan Stannett from CARA Ltd was interviewed recently and awarded Fellowship of BIAC. We are also pleased to welcome Cate Barrow, ADAS UK Ltd.; Benjamin Corbett, Berrys; Charlie Davies, Kelly Farm Consulting; and Paul Mason, Phillips Antiques as Associate members of BIAC.

## Application Process

The BIAC website has been updated and all applications can now be handled through the membership portal; online. Part of the detail required includes individuals selection specialisms from a wide menu of options. Going forward the interview process will include discussion on the applicants knowledge within some of those specialisms.

This will reduce the requirement for submitted work to one main project (rather than 2).

I would urge all members to log on to the new website to check and where necessary update their specialisms as there are some new fields for data entry.

## Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is the other topic under review and at present our plans are to shift the focus from quantity of hours to more of a focus on quality of content and action. This will start to move BIAC more in line with other professional bodies.

The plan is to introduce changes for the start of the next year (01/01/22) and there will be more details circulated later in the year. In the meantime and suggestions would be welcome by email to the BIAC office. Again thanks to Victoria and her team.