



Honorary President HE The British Ambassador to Belgium

**Minutes to the Brussels British Community Association's
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Tuesday 24th May, 2022

**held at
The Brussels Women's Club
Rue au Bois 509, 1150 Woluwe-Saint-Pierre**

18:30 – 20:00

Attendees:

H.E. Martin Shearman, British Ambassador to Belgium	
Glenn Vaughan, Chairman BBCA	Heather Bathgate
Ron Aston	Bhevan Chandrasena
John Wilkinson	Jeffery Piper
Susan Mullen	Ray Mullen
Nick Compton	Martin Casey
Paul Atkinson	Michael Allen
Helen Lee	Sarah Crew
Elizabeth Williams	Nikki Hayes
Linda Delahay	Zoe White
Amanda Newell	Muriel Lowe
Chris Dalton	Christopher Thubron
Julie Huckle	Martin Blackwell
Tim Reynolds	Alan Davis
Vanja Markovic	

Apologies for Absence:

Malcolm Johnson
Steve Robinson
Peter Green – proxy given to Zoe White
Stuart Dowsett - proxy given to Nick Compton
Simon Pascoe - proxy given to Glenn Vaughan
Mary Staple – proxy given to Christopher Thubron
Kadamula Varghese
Lilian Eilers
Patricia Gerrie-Tompa

The Chairman welcomed all to the Annual General Meeting.



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1. Approval of Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting

Nick Compton presented the minutes to the 2021 Annual General Meeting that they be approved. Nikki Hayes proposed the approval of the minutes, Amanda Newell seconded the proposal and the minutes were approved. There were no matters arising.

2. Address by H.E. Ambassador Martin Shearman

H.E. Martin Shearman addressed the AGM and began his speech by explaining the role of the Embassy in Brussels. The 3 key functions are to manage the political relationship between the British Government and the Belgian Government, responsibility for consular affairs and managing special issues. There are around 50 persons employed by the Embassy of whom around 50% are locals. Management of the political relationship falls under the Foreign Office responsibility. Other departments include Defence, responsible for links with both Belgium and Nato; International Trade representing the interests of British business in Belgium as well as Belgian investment in UK. Belgium is the 5th largest investor in UK. The Embassy also has responsibility for Law Enforcement, working with the National Crime Agency, the Metropolitan Police, HMRC, the Crown Prosecution and Immigration enforcement.

Martin gave an update on the progress of the M-Card roll out. The continued dialogue between the Embassy and the Belgian Government has worked well and there do not seem to have been major issues. The Belgian Government's initial estimation of UK nationals living in Belgium may have been quite exaggerated and it seems those remaining in Belgium have broadly received the new M-Cards.

In the last 2 years, travel between UK and Belgium was complicated by the complex rules for COVID. Belgium was one of the first countries to match certification schemes between UK and EU. The Ambassador thanked the various British representation groups – the CHS Helpline, BBKA, BCF for spreading information.

Regarding the bilateral agreement, the 2 Prime ministers have issued a declaration of intent to cooperate in areas of Trade, Energy, Security and Life sciences, and building channels to strengthen bilateral relations. All the regions in Belgium are keen to push forward.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the UK has implemented a visa system to welcome refugees and over 100,000 visas have been issued. The UK continues to strengthen cooperation with NATO.

This year's Belgian Economic Mission to UK, presided over by Princess Astrid, was widely viewed as a huge success aiming to strengthen trade and investment between the 2 countries.



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Lastly the Ambassador expressed his pleasure to have been able to host the Spring Reception at the Residence after a long absence during COVID and thanked the BBCA for their coordination of the event.

Q&A: A member requested clarification on the rules for stamping of passports of UK nationals resident in Belgium. The Ambassador confirmed that passports should not be stamped for residents because the 90 day rule only applies to non-residents. However, there is no issue should the passport in fact be stamped.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Glenn Vaughan thanked the BBCA's Patron – the Fry Group and corporate members the British School of Brussels and Eurocity for their unwavering support, as well all the member group representatives and individual members for their collective support for BBCA initiatives. He explained the BBCA mission to connect people by connecting with groups which represent a wide range of interests. The BBCA communicates news by Facebook and its website. Glenn expressed thanks to Tim Reynolds for the sterling work he puts into these communications.

During COVID, unfortunately the BBCA were not able to host events and therefore the long-awaited Spring Reception at the Residence was hugely popular and well attended by the community. Glenn expressed the BBCA's thanks to H.E. Martin Shearman for hosting the gathering.

The BBCA also thanked Royal Brussels Cricket Club for hosting the Garden Party in 2021 which provided a welcome opportunity for the community to come together in a safe environment.

Glenn praised the hard work of the Events Sub-Committee to bring about these events, the more so for the charitable fund raising which they produced. He thanked the 4 charities which the BBCA supports for their cooperative spirit. In 2021 it was agreed amongst all that the lion's share of the proceeds from the fund raising be sent to the CHS who have been overwhelmed by the numbers contacting the helpline for support during the COVID Crisis, with the remainder donated to the Royal British Legion whose fundraising efforts were curtailed again by the COVID crisis.

Now the BBCA is eagerly awaiting the Summer Party which will take place again at Royal Brussels Cricket Club on Saturday 25th June and be open to all. This year there will be a Jubilee theme.

In December the BBCA will seek to host a Christmas Party for all.

With fewer British people arriving in Belgium, the number of volunteers is reduced and many groups have suffered as a result. Next year we can



expect this to continue and Glenn urged members to support those organizing events to ensure their success.

Finally, Glenn thanked the BBBCA Committee for their hard work over the year and bid them 'Take Courage' facing the year ahead.

4. Treasurer's Report and approval of Accounts

Christopher Thubron presented the Accounts for 2021 informing the meeting that the net asset value of BBBCA stands at 16,605 euros. There was a net surplus of 442 euros from activities and donations. In 2021 the net income after expenditure and before donations was 5,442 euros, up from 4,152 Euros in 2020. This was due to the events which could proceed in 2021 but cancelled in 2020 due to COVID. The lockdown quiz raised 412 euros from participants and the 2021 Summer party raised a net surplus of 2,102 euros after costs.

The income from subscriptions was 3,970 euros against 4,990 euros in 2020. The principal reason was the withdrawal of sponsorship from ING who have announced that they will not continue as Patron from 2021. However, alongside our principal Patron, the Fry Group, the BBBCA continues to enjoy the support of BSB and Eurocity who each contributed 350 euros in 2021.

Christopher explained that the BBBCA will end its association with ING due to the high bank charges of around 400 euros/year and will switch to BNP ParibasFortis bank. He urged all members to be alert for their subscription direct debits with the new bank details.

The BBBCA made donations to the CHS of 3,900 euros and 600 euros to the Royal British Legion. The other Charities agreed to forego any funds in 2021. The BBBCA made an additional one-off donation to the Belgian Red Cross after the devastating floods last Summer.

Tim Reynolds proposed that the 2021 accounts be approved and Alan Davis seconded the proposal. There were no matters arising.

5. Approval of the Budget for 2022

Christopher presented the Budget for 2022 with an expected total income of 7,970 euros resulting in a projected net income after expenses of 7,160 euros.

Martin Blackwell proposed that the 2022 Budget be approved, Chris Dalton seconded the proposal and the Accounts were approved.



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6. Resignations & nominations and changes to the Conseil d'Administration

Christopher Thubron explained that this would be his last presentation of the financial report at the AGM since he had decided to step down as Treasurer which he announced to the committee at the September 2021 meeting and introduced Bhev Chandrasena as his proposed successor to be effective from 1 January 2022, which was accepted by the committee. He explained that he had had the honour to be Treasurer of the BBBCA since 2004 during which time the BBBCA raised around 250,000 euros for Charity of which around 170,000 euros came from the D.O.R.B.

He explained that Bhevan Chandrasena will be a worthy successor. He is a British Chartered Accountant with a strong financial background, currently employed as C.F.O. of EuroControl and has been working with the Committee as an ex-officio member since September 2021 in a hand-over period.

Christopher explained the role of the BBBCA is principally to bring communities together and to retain enough funds to be able to be an incubator for future events and take calculated risks which will benefit the community in the long term. He expressed his view that the BBBCA should seek to always keep at least 16,000 euros in net assets.

He paid tribute to Barbara Blackwell who sadly passed away in October 2020. She had given over 50 years of service to the British Community and was one of the founding members of the BBBCA in its current form for which she served as a 'Membre Effectif' until her passing, together with Mary Staple.

Christopher Thubron explained that he is not cutting ties completely with the BBBCA and has agreed to fill the position of 'Membre Effectif' left vacant following the death of Barbara Blackwell.

Glenn Vaughan expressed the heartfelt thanks of the BBBCA Committee for his great contribution to the Association over many years.

Steve Robinson passed on his congratulations to Christopher for his great work on the BBBCA Accounts over many years.



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7. Election of the Conseil d'Administration

The **BBCA Executive Committee** of 2022 is elected as follows:

Members

Glenn Vaughan (GV)	Chairman
Tim Reynolds (TRe)	Vice Chairman
Bhev Chandrasena (BC)	Treasurer (incoming)
Nick Compton (NC)	Secretary
Amanda Newell (AN)	Member
Simon Pascoe (SP)	Member
Nikki Hayes (NH)	Member
Tracie Ryan (TR)	Member
Sarah Crew (SC)	Member
Chris Dalton (CD)	Member
Alan Davis (AD)	Member
Sara Leventhal (SL)	Member

Advisers to the Conseil d'Administration

Zoe White (ZW)	Adviser, Charities' Representative
Jonathan Falck (JF)	Adviser, Charities' Representative
Malcolm Johnson (MJ)	Adviser, Charities' Representative

Resignations

Christopher Thubron (CT)	Resignation
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Elected as 'Member effectif'

Christopher Thubron

8. Re-Election of the Independent Reviewer of the Accounts

Glenn Vaughan proposed the approval of Steve Robinson as the Independent Reviewer of the Accounts. Amanda Newell seconded the motion and it was approved.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 19:45