



Public Affairs Cymru

Executive Committee Annual Report 2012-13

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1. Chair's Introduction

2013 has seen politics and the public affairs industry thrust into the limelight more than at any time in the last decade. This has raised questions in public about the role of lobbying, which has in turn sparked a renewed emphasis from the UK Government for the introduction of a statutory register of lobbyists.

PAC has consistently supported a 'made in Wales' approach to regulation and has engaged in this process since the start to ensure that openness and accountability underpin the role of lobbying in Wales. Particular thanks for this work must be paid to previous executives but also to our membership, particularly those that engaged on the working group and who have continued to help us drive this forward.

Throughout the year we have worked closely with the National Assembly, through the Standards Commissioner and the Standards of Conduct Committee, to feed in our members' and industry views on regulation here in Wales. We were pleased to see the outcome of this work in a report published by the committee in May which includes positive measures to help maintain and improve transparency. We have gained broad support for a separate, made in Wales approach to the regulation of the industry here which we have also conveyed to the UK Government as they consider how to improve transparency in Westminster.

This year has also seen PAC increasingly become a valuable and credible partner for organisations in Wales to work with. By working in partnership with other bodies such as the UK's Changing Union Partnership, Positif, the WCVA and the Bevan Foundation we managed to have a huge impact on all aspects of civic society in Wales through our Part Two Silk Event in April. This was an event where more than 120 organisations and PAC members came together to discuss the implications of Part Two of the Silk Commission; views that were also fed into the Silk Commission. We also used that voice to lead a call, along with other organisations, including many PAC members, for a reserved powers model in Wales.

This theme was also reflected in positive coverage around Baroness Randerson's speech to the PAC Annual Dinner in June. Every year, it's a challenge to make the Dinner bigger, better and a little bit different from the previous year, but this year we managed it again and for the first time in its history, the event was a sell out! We also attracted two sponsors and a further one for our Summer Reception and I would really like to, once again, thank Electoral Reform Society, News Direct and Positif for their invaluable support. Our ability to bring in sponsorship money to support our activities and give members more value for money reinforces PAC's credibility as a brand to be associated with.

The additional funds have allowed us to further professionalise the way we run the organisation. I'm particularly proud of some of the behind the scenes work we have managed to achieve this year. We had a huge administration task to sort out membership and finance from the previous year, we have successfully done this but gone a step further too: our legacy to the new and future executive and our members is a new integrated online payments and memberships system which reduces much of the administrative burden and improve accuracy on both sides. This new system also addresses a way of policing our Code of Conduct, as all new and renewing members will have to agree to it before being granted membership.

Each member of the PAC Executive is a volunteer, combining PAC responsibilities with their day-to-day jobs. I am incredibly grateful and touched by the continued support they have shown throughout the year. They work tirelessly to ensure that each event, briefing, press release is delivered to a high standard. Their commitment and passion are second to none and PAC's reputation is all the better for it. Many of this year's executive has expressed an interest in staying on for 2013/14 and I know you will be in safe hands.

It has been a great honour to sit on the executive for the last three years and an absolute privilege to be Chair this past year. PAC has an increasingly big role to play not just in Wales but also in influencing Westminster and I'm confident that the organisation is in great shape to take on the challenges ahead.

Lia Murphy
Chair 2012/13

2. The Committee

Eight members of PAC were elected to the Executive at the AGM in October 2012. As the only candidate, Lia Murphy was elected as Chair unopposed. We also received the exact number of nominations to the Executive Committee as there were places available so no election was necessary. The new Committee was made up of some PAC members who have served on the Executive before but also a number of new faces, and it was very encouraging to see members who had not served on the Committee before coming forward to play their part.

Unfortunately one of the original elected members, Luke Young, was unable to attend any meetings until late January. Given the increasingly demanding and busy workload the Chair took the decision to ask Luke to stand down from Committee, allowing different members who had expressed interest to join. Two members stepped forward, Llew Williams and Ceri Dunstan. Given their impressive skill sets, particularly in press writing and communications – a gap on the current executive, and the large volume of work facing PAC in 2013, the Committee took the decision to elect both members onto the Executive Committee, taking us to nine members. The membership was informed of this decision via an email from the Chair in February.

More than half of the Committee were returning to the Executive from the previous year and were therefore well placed to decide what roles would best suit them. The roles haven't changed significantly from the previous year, perhaps with the exception of policy; not surprising given the very important role that PAC has played in responding to media coverage and Government proposals for regulation of lobbying.

As with previous years, we didn't want to be too prescriptive with Committee roles as it was felt that Executive members had a very broad range of skills and varying availability to fit this voluntary work around their day jobs. The titles below are neither comprehensive nor limiting to the roles that each member has fulfilled throughout the year.

Lia Murphy – Chair with additional responsibility for Policy and Events.
Bobbie Davies – Vice Chair with responsibility for Policy and Membership benefits
Sali Davis – Treasurer
Matt Williams – Digital Communications
Owain Llyr ap Gareth – Policy
Lowri Jones – Membership and Secretariat
Rhodri ab Owen – Events
Clare Bath – Events
Ceri Dunstan – External and Digital Communications
Llew Williams – External Communications

3. Membership

At last year's AGM there was a lengthy discussion around the non/late payment of membership fees after it transpired that more than 40% of the membership had not paid, thus meaning that PAC had technically made a loss and could only account for 87 fully paid members.

This was a serious issue and one which the new Executive tackled head on and with high priority. An enormous administration exercise ensued to chase members for fees, archive persistent non payers and re-do all the systems for holding our information. Particular thanks must go to Sali Davies, Lowri Jones and Bobbie Davies for their hard work here.

We created new structures to deal with non/late payments and are confident that we now have a robust system in place, but one which still allows members flexibility where appropriate. Typically, members are given three chances to pay, through reminders from the Executive, after which their membership is cancelled and their record archived.

As of 3rd October 2013, PAC has a total 149 active members. This includes 36 new members who have joined since the last AGM. This is a figure to be proud of; especially given we didn't have time to run any specific membership drives this year as administrative jobs were prioritised. We believe this can be attributed to some very high profile, high quality events this year (Silk Conference, Dinner and Summer Reception) and also our work on regulation of the lobbying industry.

While new structures were introduced to handle the accuracy problems with last year's membership, we still felt that this was a system that could be improved further. Having sought some advice from some members, the Exec took the decision to purchase an integrated online payments and membership system.

New Membership System

Membership System

Horizon was asked to create a Membership System for PAC that will initially allow for:

- New members to register and pay subscriptions
- Existing members to login and pay subscriptions

But the system developed and implemented has some additional benefits too. Some will need to be integrated by the next exec at a minimal cost.

- Protected pages – i.e only members who have paid can see them
- Group allocation of members
- Different fee rates
- Reminder and automatic renewal of payments for subscriptions
- Protected Digital downloads
- Paypal integration
- Transaction history and reporting output for emailing

The system works under Wordpress and are integrated into the site as a plugin so, these can easily be taken out, styles and changed at a later date if required.

Member Survey

54 members responded to our survey this year (10 more than last year), which has again been conducted via Survey Monkey to make it as accessible and easy to use as possible. The results and analysis will be presented at the AGM.

4. Events

At the start of the PAC year, when we were deciding what events to put on, we were careful to not only look at the results of our membership survey but also to take time to speak with our members and find out what they would like. Events in previous years have traditionally taken on a more social nature, but given the pressure of work on professionals throughout the public affairs sector these networking events have not been as popular this year. The Executive decided early on therefore, to lead with events on specific policy / industry topics to provide variety and balance in our events programme vary the programme.

We took on board feedback provided to last year's Executive to hold events at different times of the day, ensuring that all members had the opportunity to attend at least a couple. It seems this two pronged strategy worked, and we're very proud to say that, as a Committee, we have put on more events than any previous Executive and also attracted record numbers to boot!

But we didn't just stop there. We have purchased an event management plugin for our website which will allow members to register for events online, pay online, download directions to venues, speaker biographies etc. This will reduce the admin burden on the Events Officer and Treasurer, particularly when dealing with large events such as the Annual Dinner, and provide a more accurate, professional and accessible service to members.

Event System features

- Advertising of Events
- Add Calendar to website to show events
- Paid for and free events to be bookable
- Add in locations to make it easier to administer (with google maps)
- Recurring Events
- Export booking features
- Coupons and Discount manager
- Transaction history and reporting

November 8th2012–Annual Lecture with Professor Roger Scully

Professor Roger Scully from the Wales Governance Centre gave this year's lecture. Unfortunately due to the cross over with Committees and poor communication during this process, this event wasn't as well attended as it deserved to be. Those that did attend found it to be a very illuminating and valuable lecture, and the Executive was extremely grateful for the Wales Governance Centre's support.

December 4th2012 – Tables at the Wales Politician of the Year dinner

PAC again had a presence at the Wales Politician of the Year dinner at City Hall. Our longstanding partnership with FBA secured us a handsome discount which ensured that enough PAC members came forward to fill two tables.

December 5th2012 – Christmas Social

Bar One played host to the Christmas Social this year, with entertainment supplied by the Wales Millennium Centre. The supply of mulled wine, mince pies, a delicious buffet and warm atmosphere ensured that all guests soon forgot the December cold and rain outside. More than 60 guests were in attendance, including AMs and party staff, as well as a cross-section of PAC members.

January 15th2013 – Annual PAC Quiz

Unfortunately our quiz venue this year closed shortly after the Christmas period. However, thankfully the Terra Nova bar accommodated us at short-notice again this year. Beryl Wichard and Rhodri ab Owen from Positif, as last year's champions, hosted the quiz, passing the crown to Sustrans as 2013 PAC Quiz champions. More than 25 guests took part in the quiz and all enjoyed a curry and a pint too.

February 4th2013 – Chapter Cinema Trip to see Lincoln

Another newbie event for the PAC calendar, we felt this was easy to organise and a good opportunity to catch up friends whilst indulging the political geeks within us. We were only expecting an intimate group for this but unfortunately on the evening there was only a handful of folk signed up.

March 13th 2013 – Cheese and Wine evening, Madame Fromage

A different offering for the PAC annual calendar had members quickly rushing to book out the limited places for this cheese and wine evening at Madame Fromage Delicatessen at the Castle Arcade. More than 40 people attended and enjoyed a varied selection of cheese and wine and an impressive buffet. Following our tasting session, Professor Richard Sambrook from Cardiff University gave a talk on the future of broadcasting in Wales. A thoroughly enjoyable evening was had by all and a new cornerstone of PAC events was born.

April 17th2013 – Silk Part Two Conference, Pierhead

PAC partnered with various other organisations including the Bevan Foundation, the UK Changing Union Project, Wales Council for Voluntary Action and Positif to host a Silk Part Two conference at the Pierhead. The conference was very well attended, with more than 120 people, and the breakout sessions fed into the evidence gathering of the Silk Commission.

May 22nd 2013 – Breakfast Seminar with Meri Huws, Mimosa

We were delighted to welcome the Welsh Language Commissioner, Meri Huws, to speak at our breakfast seminar this year, giving the audience an opportunity to debate the new Welsh Language regulations. More than 35 members, including AMs, came along to enjoy an interesting discussion over bacon rolls, coffee and pastries Mimosa, making it the most popular breakfast seminar to date.

June 13th2013 - Annual Dinner

Undoubtedly the pinnacle of the PAC calendar, this event has continued to go from strength to strength, and this year was no exception. With a sell-out attendance of more than 130 guests, this year's dinner was once again hosted by our friends, the Park Plaza Hotel, with Baroness Jenny Randerson as our guest speaker. The event kicked off with a sparkling reception sponsored by Positif and continued with a very classy dinner sponsored by the Electoral Reform Society. Once again we were able to host an 'after dinner' party in the KuKu Club.

July 17thReserved Powers campaign event

Given the success of our partnership approach demonstrated earlier in the year at the Silk Conference, PAC was very happy to lend its support once again and team up with various other organisations, including the Bevan Foundation, the UK Changing Union Project, Wales Council for Voluntary Action and Positif, to call for a reserved powers model for Wales. After discussing a few options on the best way to publicise our support, a photo call was held on the steps of the Senedd. Organisations and individuals turned up en masse.

July 17th 2013– Summer Reception

Not only was the temperature a record high on this day but so was the attendance at this annual event! Back in its rightful home of the Senedd, the reception was attended by well over 100 members, AMSS, AMs, Ministers and even the First Minister popped in to say hello! The event was kindly sponsored by Byron Davies AM, and although plenary over-ran the reception was well attended and proved a fantastic networking opportunity for members and a well-deserved end of term party for all. The evening was kindly sponsored by News Direct.

September 19th 2013 – Out of the Bubble event, Cowbridge.

This year we tried to do something new by hosting an ‘out of the bubble’ event for our members. The idea was to allow members the opportunity to relax and network before the start of the new political year. Unfortunately, we were unable to pull together a date for August and the event slipped into September; as such people were already in full swing in their jobs by this time and struggled to take time out for this event. We are still hopeful that the idea would work at another time, and would urge next year’s Exec to try and do something similar, perhaps timed towards the end of July /early August.

November 12th 2013– A Conversation with Ian Hargreaves, hosted by Lee Waters and in association with IWA, Future Inns, Cardiff Bay

Not wanting to turn down the opportunity of an excellent speaker, this year’s Exec decided to put preparations in place for this event. Cardiff University’s Ian Hargreaves will discuss recent developments in digital media and issues arising about the regulation of the internet in the light of the Wikileaks/Bradley Manning/Edward Snowden affairs. At this event he will explore the risks and opportunities involved in an open approach to media and public affairs. Numbers are already looking encouraging and this promises to be another quality PAC event.

5. Finance

The PAC accounts are in a healthy position this year. This is largely due to the costs recovered from some of the previous year’s unpaid members and the fact that we secured £1500 of sponsorship for our events.

Slow payment of subscriptions remains a problem although we are now in a much stronger position than last year with more streamlined processes. Typically, we’re always about 25% behind on our accounts because we invoice quarterly; we have just invoiced for October, November and December subscriptions.

There was one legacy issue suggested by the previous year’s Treasurer this was:

- Introducing a Standing Order to reduce the time burden on volunteers who sit on the PAC Executive and process payments.

We decided not to proceed with this option because the issue will be addressed through the new membership and payments system. The new event plug-in will also greatly reduce administration time for the treasurer and membership (particularly around the annual dinner) and reduce financial risk for PAC since payments will be made online in advance of the event.

This new software system will cost £1550 including VAT and includes training for the executive. This purchase has been signed off by the current executive but we won’t be invoiced for the work until November 2013.

We are particular proud of the money we have raised for charity this year and would like to thank members for their efforts in raising these funds. We would like to see the next executive continue these efforts.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CYMRU - TREASURER'S REPORT OCTOBER 2012 - OCTOBER 2013

Carried forward from 2012 **1,885.80**

Income

Membership subs **4,095**
107 current members are up to date with fees. We also recovered late payments from last year and the remainder has been invoiced recently (Usually 25% behind ourselves for invoicing)

Gala Dinner (tickets sold) **4,455**

Welsh Politician of the Year Table **890**

PAC Quiz **200**

Cheese and Wine event **1,000**

Annual Dinner Sponsorship **320**

Summer Reception Sponsorship **500**

Total Income **11460.00**

Expenditure

Gala Dinner / Cinio blynyddol **5,096.39**

Welsh Politician of the Years Table x 2 **888.00**

AGM Costs (October) **458.96**

Annual Lecture **69.12**

Christmas Social (December) **536.00**

PAC Quiz Night (January) **383.25**

Cheese and Wine Event **650.00**

Breakfast Seminar **220.00**

Annual Reception (July) **1296.01**

Silk Part 2 Conference **132.60**

Translation **216.00**

Web Hosting **5.99**

Membership Survey **48.00**

Vineyard Deposit **162**

Total Expenditure **10,162.32**

Surplus this year **1297.68**

Balance **3183.18**

Balance in reserve account

I commend these accounts to the PAC membership

Sali Davis, PAC Treasurer

2012-2013

Signature _____ **Date** _____

6. Digital

2013 saw PAC move to a system that will archive all email contact received by Exec members to provide continuity between Executives. In the past email had been forwarded directly to members' work accounts which meant there was no means of accessing messages received by previous Exec members once they had left the Exec or moved on to other employment. This will no longer be the case, providing greater clarity and efficiency for both future Execs and PAC members.

The past year has also allowed PAC to make some improvements to the function of its website and general online presence. This work will need to be continued by the incoming Exec and a general overhaul of the content on the PAC website is required with the move towards being able to accept new memberships and payments for membership online.

Statistics

The PAC website had particularly heavy traffic on the date of the Silk Part Two conference, held in April, with over 900 unique visitors in that one day alone; vastly outstripping our normal monthly traffic!

In general activity spikes around the time in which we run events. A short write up of the event, alongside tweets we captured on the day can be found on our website.

Our general statistics over the year are as follows (from 1st October 2012 to 13th September 2013):

Total Visits: 9,429

Unique Visitors: 3,621

Page Views: 30,182

2.6% of visitor's browsers are using Welsh.

96% of visitors are based in the UK.

34% of visitors are based in Cardiff, 28% in London and 5% in Swansea.

Cardiff University and the Welsh Government are our biggest sources of traffic.

In the last year we have attracted more than 1,000 new twitter followers and this has been a fantastic tool in helping us to publicise and gain recognition for our work.

7. Media and Partnerships

As part of last year's Committee's suggestion, PAC entered an exciting partnership with the UK's Changing Union project, Positif, WCVA and other bodies to hold a conference on Part Two of the Silk Commission on Devolution in Wales. This half day conference looked to engage over 100 civil society organisations on the key issues of the Commission's work in 2012.

The conference heard from Professor Nick Bourne from the Silk Commission, as well as a range of policy experts on issues in certain fields in a devolved context. The conference also received an analysis of the legal view from Emyr Lewis (Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University) before Professor Richard Wyn Jones closed the conference with his five theses of Welsh devolution.

This event was a roaring success and formed part of what we hope will be the start of future partnerships between PAC and other organisations in Wales.

Media—Regulation of Lobbyists

At a time when the lobbying industry has been under such media and public scrutiny, PAC made several representations to the media on behalf of public affairs professionals in Wales. The National Assembly for Wales' Standards of Conduct Committee report on lobbying (in which PAC made

several representations) gave PAC the opportunity to set the record straight in terms of the nature of lobbying in Wales.

As part of the wider media work in relation to this, Executive members conveyed that PAC had always supported an open and transparent democratic process in Wales, and that we welcomed the Assembly's report. We also made it clear in several media interviews that PAC had engaged in any process from the start to ensure that openness and accountability underpin the role of lobbying in Wales. Our views were covered widely, including in the Western Mail, BBC Cymru and Wales outlets and political affairs programme CF99.

8. Policy

The ongoing debate around the regulation of the public affairs industry has been a key focus for the PAC Executive over the last year, supported strongly by members of the working group who should be particularly thanked.

Following PAC's response to the UK Government's consultation on a statutory register of lobbyists under the previous Executive, this year's Exec has worked hard to continue to communicate the industry's views as part of the Assembly's consideration of how the industry should be regulated here in Wales. The issue has remained high on the news agenda right across the UK, which we have responded to pro-actively to represent our members in the Welsh media.

The Executive liaised closely with the National Assembly, through the Standards Commissioner and the Standards of Conduct Committee, to feed in the industry's position on regulation. The outcome of the Committee's work on this matter was their report on Lobbying and Cross Party Groups, published in May, which includes positive measures to improve transparency whilst recognising the difficulties of defining lobbyists through the creation of a register. (The full report is available [here](#)).

PAC welcomed the debate in June on the Standards Committee's Report on Lobbying and Cross-Party Groups, and was particularly pleased that the Assembly endorsed the Committee's guidance. (The full transcript of the debate is available [here](#)). Our work was recognised and welcomed, with a number of positive mentions of PAC in the debate, references to our Code of Conduct, and an expression of thanks from the Committee's Chair, Mick Antoniw AM, for our contribution to their work. Next year will be key in supporting the delivery of the Committee's recommendations to ensure that the political system in Wales continues to be considered as open and transparent. In relation to the recommendation on the independent regulation of the Ministerial Code, the First Minister rejected this and it will remain the gift of the First Minister. However, he did clarify that it was not a policy of the Welsh Government for Ministers to meet individually with commercial lobbyists.

Our consistent position that there should be "made in Wales" approach to regulation, one which gained the support of partners such as the Presiding Officer, was recognised in the publication of the UK Government's proposed measures to regulate lobbying under the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill, which did not encompass engagement with the Welsh Government.

Whilst it is not proposed that the statutory register apply to engagement in Wales, this year's Executive has started the important work of briefing members on the possible implications of proposals to regulate 'non-party campaigning' on charities and campaigning organisations, which will no doubt be the subject of ongoing work for the new Executive.

9. Legacy Issues

We wish the new Executive every success for the coming year. In handing over to next year's Committee, the Exec 2012-13 would like to outline the following recommendations and 'legacy issues':

Membership

- Membership drive / event for associate members
- Refresh member benefits

CIPD

- Help people to achieve their CPD credits through PAC events

Events

- Contact and positive relations already fostered with ASPA in Scotland. Look at coordinating an exchange event between the two organisations
- Keep the Quiz in Terra Nova... it's like the kiss of death to any other Bay venue (Harry Ramsdens and Spice Merchant)
- Review the code of conduct as the Lobbying Bill progresses

Website

- Refresh in line with new payments and membership system
- Enhance website's capability to display job adverts and member notices on PAC website
- Offer members opportunity to write a column / insight piece for the website. (something interesting that they're working on / commentary)

Welsh Translation

- Formal arrangement needed with a translation company, as volunteers are not always able to help