



## **Public Affairs Cymru AGM, Wednesday 1st November 2017**

### **End of term report from the PAC Chair on behalf of the 2016 – 17 Executive**

#### **Introduction**

2016 - 17 has been another busy and successful year for the PAC Executive. We have achieved everything that we set out to do when we were first elected in November 2016, as highlighted in our Business Plan in Annex 2, and responded to all the recommendations put forward by the previous Executive (Annex 1).

This report provides an overview of the work that we have done for, and on behalf of, members this year and also puts forward a number of recommendations for the next PAC Executive to consider.

Since the Executive Board was elected in November 2016 it has been a very busy time for us and our members. We have updated our membership database, introduced new communication platforms, reviewed and launched the Code of Conduct and responded to the Standards of Conduct Committee inquiry into lobbying on behalf of members, including setting up a working group to support us drafting our response, a lobbying event and providing oral evidence. In addition, we have held at least one event for members every month, either informal social events such as the tapas and sherry night, or formal events such as the joint event that we organised with Assembly staff and the Wales Governance Centre. Even though we had a membership freeze for the first 6 months of this Executive, our accounts remain in a very healthy state for the next Executive Board.

As Chair of PAC I would like to thank all members of this year's Executive for their hard work, commitment and support. I have thoroughly enjoyed being on the PAC Executive for the last three years and I wish the organisation continued success in the future.

Nesta Lloyd – Jones  
**Chair of PAC, 2016 – 17.**



### **Members of the PAC Executive 2016 – 17**

- Nesta Lloyd – Jones (Chair)
- Morgan Griffith – David (Membership)
- Daran Hill (Policy)
- Aaron Hill (Events)
- Calum Higgins (Events)
- Julia McWatt (Communications and Secretary)
- Nia Lloyd (Communications)
- Steve Cush (Deputy Chair) between November 2016 – August 2017
- Alexander Phillips (Finance) between November 2016 – September 2017

### **Membership**

The PAC membership system has always been complicated, and fraught with technical difficulties. Before this year, PAC operated through a Wordpress site which wasn't able to properly record when people joined and lapsed, whether they'd signed the old Code of Conduct, and was full of bugs that meant people weren't receiving our e-mails. Early on this year's Executive decided that it was not fit for purpose.

As recommended by the last Executive, we have overhauled the membership system. We moved to a simpler Excel spreadsheet which supports our new Mailchimp platform for e-mails. This records far more data, in a more user friendly format, and integrates well (if manually) with the e-mail distribution list.

To facilitate this changeover, we took the decision to freeze membership applications due to issues with the technical difficulties we were facing, the need for updating the Code of Conduct and the healthy financial situation we inherited from the previous PAC Executive. From the end of 2016, anyone who applied for membership was added to our e-mail system but membership was deferred until April onwards. This gave us the space to implement the new system but it also means that we were able to move to coordinated membership renewal periods. Part of the previous issue was that people didn't know when their membership renewed – now we can be sure that people will either renew in May or in November each year, based on when they joined or renewed last. This will hopefully provide more certainty and security for members, and a simplified period for invoicing for renewal. We have also revamped our existing membership form (including appending the Code of Conduct to it for ease of signing) and developed a whole new online sign up process through Mailchimp, which has already had over 60 sign ups.

Due to previous problems, over several years, we felt it was important to audit our membership – we discovered that actual members of PAC who had paid their subscription of £35 had dropped to just 82 members, all of whom had paid in 2016. All other members had lapsed. There was no way to tell who had signed the Code of Conduct or not. Now we're looking at 107 fully paid up members, with a further 27 recently invoiced where we are awaiting payment. We have a total of 73 members who have signed up to our new Code of



Conduct in the last three months, only 23 of whom are fully paid up but for many we are awaiting invoices to clear.

### **Recommendations for 2017/18**

- The first task for the new Exec is that all members who paid in 2016 are due to lapse in November - they must be invoiced and have to sign the new Code of Conduct. This will put our overall membership on a healthy footing. The next Exec must also keep on trying to get the many lapsed members to re-join through raising awareness of what PAC does and the benefits of being a member.
- As dictated by the new Code of Conduct, and fitting in to the Standard Committee's inquiry into lobbying and the possible recommendations that come from their report, the new Exec should publish a membership database and list of members, including corporate clients.
- The last Executive recommended a corporate membership scheme for multiple memberships from the same organization – this was deemed too complicated this year because of the all the other work on membership, and the need to change membership levies at an AGM to make this an attractive proposal. This should be explored further by the next Exec.
- The next Exec should look to improve membership benefits by looking at options for discounts.
- The next Exec should explore moving from biennial to quarterly renewal/invoicing.
- The next Exec should look at inviting more AMSS to join as Associate Members of PAC and the benefits that we can offer them.

### **Finances**

As with previous years PAC have had some difficulty with Lloyd's Bank regarding our account and changing and adding the names on the bank mandate. Luckily our Treasurer, Alex Phillips, remained treasurer during most of this year so we did not have any problems with paying invoices.

This year's Executive inherited a healthy balance of 4,360.97. The current balance, as of the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, is £2,999.65. We are still waiting for the invoice for the translation for the Annual Lecture, which will be £210, and we have recently sent an invoice for 30 places for the Annual lecture which will bring in £495 to the account so once these payments have been made/ added the next Executive should have a balance of over £3,200.

### **Recommendations for 2017/18**

- Due to continuing problems with Lloyd's Bank it would be beneficial for the new Executive to discuss who else should be included as a signature because this can take a bit of time.
- The new Executive should consider producing a finance strategy setting out the likely incoming income and also expenditure for events, translation and any other possible expenditure that could occur. The Strategy should be clear about what PAC fund centrally (for example translation) from Membership fees.



## Events

PAC has held a range of events throughout the year, some of which have been successful and numbers were up on last year. Overall, we have held more formal and informal event this year than last and our outcomes for events have been less than in previous years.

The implementation of Eventbrite this year has helped us manage payments more effectively and meant that payment for events, such as the annual dinner, were taken in advance. This ensured we were not left out of pocket (as has happened in previous years).

Some of our key events this year included

- **Christmas drinks (December)** – The Christmas drinks this year was held in the Dock with a good turnout from Members, Assembly Members and AM Support Staff (Over 50 people in attendance).
- **PAC event to discuss NAW inquiry into lobbying (January)** – Event with over 50 members to finalise PAC response to Standards Committee enquiry into lobbying
- **Tapas and sherry tasting evening (February)** – This was a new event for this year and while those who attended enjoyed the event we lost money on this event because only 15 members attended the event when the minimum which we had to pay for was for 20 places.
- **Event to support the NAW Digital Taskforce (February)** – We supported the Digital Taskforce to hold a session with PAC members around how the National Assembly can improve communication. The event was well attended with over 20 PAC members and NAW officials.
- **NAW session, preparing to give evidence to Assembly (April)** – We organised a development session for PAC members with the National Assembly Clerking and research team in the Small Bar. The event was sold out with over 30 members in attendance.
- **Annual Dinner (May)** – Over 100 members attended with highest number of AMs attending in many years. Y Llywydd, Elin Jones AM, was guest speaker.
- **Joint event with Wales Governance Centre (May)** – The event in the Pierhead discussed the predictions for the General Election. The event was sold out with over 80 members.
- **Joint event with Wales Governance Centre (July)** – Looking at the general election, what happened and why in the Life Science Hub with Roger Scully and Laura McAllister. The event was again sold out with over 60 members in attendance.
- **Summer drinks (July)** – We held the reception in the Oriel for the first time in five years which meant that it was a record number of AMs and members in attendance. Paul Davies AM sponsored the event.
- **Trip to Westminster (September)** – A dozen members of PAC attended a tour of Parliament hosted by Anna McMorrin MP, herself a former member of PAC.
- **Annual Lecture (October)** – For the first time this event was done as a sit-down meal. Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM delighted members with his reflections on governing in a minority setting.
- **Informal networking events** – Number of informal drinks and the cricket.



### **Recommendations for 2017/18**

- To look again at how members, engage with our events and to review events that may have passed their sell by date such as the PAC quiz.
- Look at producing an events calendar for the year.
- To stage an event on the outcomes of the Laura McAllister working group on the electoral system for the National Assembly which is likely to be published in the next couple of weeks.
- A number of events have already been booked and the information needs to be shared with Members:
  - Seminar: Providing evidence to National Assembly Committee inquiries with NAW staff on the 27 November Pierhead seminar room - 14:00-16:00
  - Breakfast meetings with Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive of the National Assembly 29<sup>th</sup> of November, 8.30 – 10 in media briefing room, Senedd. This event is sponsored by Adam Price AM.
  - To stage a visit to the Scottish Parliament (tentatively booked for 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> February)

### **Communications**

Communication with members has improved this year as a result of the updated membership lists.

Mailchimp has proved to be an extremely useful way of getting correspondence out to members and the analysis tools allow the exec to conduct some evaluation around the impact of this communication. Data collected can be used by the Exec membership officer to identify what email campaigns have been successful and what the open rate has been. This could be used to replicate successful campaigns and learn from what worked and what didn't.

More than one member of the exec is able to send out emails via the Mailchimp system, which has helped with maintaining communications with members, particularly in the run up to events. The continued consistency of this gives PAC a clear communication identity making sure all information is clear and in the same template.

We have made a conscious effort to try to inform members of dates of events as far ahead as possible through 'save the date' emails. This has saved us bombarding members with emails about several different events and given them as much information about upcoming PAC activities as possible. We also created an 'upcoming events' flyer to hand out at events and emailed this to members. This is also posted regularly on social media.

The Facebook group also continues to be a good way of communicating with members. During issues with the membership lists in the first few months of this exec, posts via the Facebook group allowed many PAC members to be made aware of PAC activities when they were missing out on emails. It has also allowed us to identify members who might have been missed off some of the new membership lists.



The Facebook group has become more of a tool for imparting information rather than for discussion. The next PAC exec might want to give consideration to whether they want to make the Facebook group more interactive. Creating events on Facebook could drum up interest and produce data on what interest there is in the wider public sector.

Twitter also continues to be useful, particularly in the promotion and covering of events. We would recommend the next exec continues with the PAC twitter account. Using Twitter lists and scheduling posts via Tweetdeck is an effective way to keep communication during event promotion. Using Twitter during events for questions and answer session can also be an effective way to increase Twitter engagement.

The PAC website has been updated regularly with job vacancies, which continues to be popular with members. Events were also added to the website, however with a greater emphasis placed on email and Facebook communications, not all activities were uploaded to the website. The next exec might want to consider how to make better use of the events section of the PAC website. The event section could promote members events more, showing the value of a up to date calendar via PAC. The website could be used for showing the success for previous events while promoting the benefits of membership. Making sure all communication is directed to the PAC website can increase traffic while making sure the content is up to date.

There has been discussion to update the website design. User experience of the website could be improved by using images on the homepage, and making sure that all content and images are responsive (work on any device.) Pictures from PAC events and socials can show the membership benefit. Keep the Twitter feed while show regularly updates from PAC and asks people to follow PAC Twitter. The website would benefit from a redesign and also a content cutting/clearing to make sure that documents are archived properly while keeping the website fresh and light.

### **Recommendations for 2017/18**

- We would recommend that the next exec continues with the mailchimp system and ensures that several members of the exec are in a position to send out emails.
- The next PAC exec might want to give consideration to whether they want to make the Facebook group more interactive.
- Consider new ways of increasing communication with members through the Facebook account and also twitter.
- The new Executive may want to consider whether there is a need to redesign the website.
- It would be beneficial to have historical information on the website to highlight PAC successes over the last 11 years e.g. list of previous PAC Chairs, past Annual Dinner and Annual Lecture speakers.



## **Policy**

The main policy focus this year has been on the lobbying inquiry undertaken by the Standards Committee. PAC welcomed the inquiry by the Standards of Conduct Committee into lobbying in Wales. We believe the inquiry was timely and recognises that the climate is different from the last time a review was held in 2013. With direct criticism of lobbyists by the First Minister and other, occasional criticism, of individual lobbying campaigns, more powers at an Assembly level leading to, more commercial interests and significant changes to lobbying governance legislation in different parts of the UK. PAC therefore worked proactively with the Committee to try and develop a system for lobbying in Wales which is not legislatively cumbersome, open to all public affairs practitioners (full or part time, paid or unpaid) and is of a high standard which would command confidence and respect.

In developing our response to the inquiry, we surveyed our membership and staged a discussion event on 19 January 2017, which was attended by over fifty people including the Chair of the Standards Committee, Jayne Bryant AM; Jonathan Thomas from the Standards Commissioner's office; and also the Clerk of the Standards Committee. This response has been agreed by both the Executive of PAC and a working group of interested members which included: Kate Cabbage, British Medical Association Cymru Wales; Owain ap Gareth, Electoral Reform Society; Daran Hill, PAC Executive/Positif Politics; Mark Hinge, Bay Communications; Nesta Lloyd Jones, PAC Executive/Welsh NHS Confederation; and Rev Gethin Rhys, Cytun. At the same event in January we heard from Alastair Ross from ASPA (Association of Scottish Public Affairs), who explained the basis for recent legislation on lobbying in Scotland. We have maintained a close interest in the new register in Scotland and have provisionally organised a visit there for February 2018 to discuss this and other issues.

Having consulted with our membership, PAC's response to the inquiry expressed strongly that the system by which the public affairs industry in Wales is regulated should be decided solely on a Wales level. We believe that the unique nature of the public affairs industry in Wales means that a 'Made in Wales' solution is essential. We do not believe that a good model for statutory regulation of lobbyists exists anywhere in the UK. We therefore advocated a voluntary register which would be enforced through a process worked up in conjunction with the National Assembly for Wales. We made the case for this in the written evidence, in oral evidence and in also at face to face meetings with Standards Committee members. We do not know the view of the Standards Committee to this suggestion as they have yet to report, though that is expected imminently.

In the meantime, PAC has strengthened our Code of Conduct anyway in response to international consultation and consensus, and has also introduced a process that every member has to sign the Code.

## **Recommendation**

- Continue to engage with the Standards Committee on the lobbying inquiry and respond to the inquiry report once published.
- Work with members to respond to the Electoral Reform review.



## **Conclusion**

PAC remains a useful networking organisation for public affairs professionals in Wales and this year especially we have been able to represent members through our policy work. The work carried out by PAC includes regular events, seminars, job advertisements, Facebook peer-to-peer support and responses on behalf of the industry to debates and consultation. The feedback from members throughout the year has been very positive, with many members highlighting that they are clear in relation to the role of PAC and where we want to go in future years with the organisation. For me personally I have found the organisation extremely valuable and it has supported me during my roles working in Welsh public affairs.

## **Full Recommendations for the 2017 – 18 Executive**

- Having a Business Plan at the beginning of the Executive term helped this year's Executive have a clear focus on what they wanted to achieve so would recommend that the new Executive produce something similar.
- As well as a Business Plan a financial plan should be produced for the Executive in relation to foreseeing how much money will come into the account, how much money is likely to be spent on each event and how much the Executive wants to keep in reserves.
- The first task for the new Exec is that all members who paid in 2016 are due to lapse in November - they must be invoiced and have to sign the new Code of Conduct. This will put our overall membership on a healthy footing. The next Exec must also keep on trying to get the many lapsed members to re-join through raising awareness of what PAC does and the benefits of being a member.
- As dictated by the new Code of Conduct, and fitting in to the Standard Committee's inquiry into lobbying and the possible recommendations that come from their report, the new Exec should publish a membership database and list of members, including corporate clients.
- The last Executive recommended a corporate membership scheme for multiple memberships from the same organization – this was deemed too complicated this year because of the all the other work on membership, and the need to change membership levies at an AGM to make this an attractive proposal. This should be explored further by the next Exec.
- The next Exec should look to improve membership benefits by looking at options for discounts.
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- Continue to engage with the Standards Committee on the lobbying inquiry and respond to the inquiry report once published.
- Work with members to respond to the Electoral Reform review



## **Appendix 1**

### **Recommendation from the PAC Executive 2015 - 2016**

- Recommendation: The next Exec should look at simplifying the membership system, possibly returning to an Excel spreadsheet or updating the WordPress system. The next Exec should also look at a once a year renewal system where everyone renews at the same time. It would also be useful to introduce a corporate membership scheme because a number of members come from the same organisation.
- Recommendation: In order to avoid the debilitating problems of switching the bank mandate, PAC should look at an alternative account with an easier system or amend the constitution to require the role of treasurer to be a minimum of 2 years. More continuity would be helpful because we began the year dealing with outstanding unpaid invoices from the previous year.
- Recommendation: I believe that the Facebook group is a valuable asset and should be promoted, maintained and encouraged next year. For emails, the next Exec should ensure that more than just the chair is fully trained in using the Wordpress mailing system. Although Naomi Williams has been excellent at providing Welsh translation throughout the year, the Exec should explore other options in addition so that not just one person was responsible for translation. The Exec could also look at the Twitter account and use analytics to improve social media content. Increased awareness should also be raised with members around how the PAC website can be used to advertise jobs and events.
- Recommendation: The next Exec prioritises events based on members' feedback, although it would be difficult for PAC to become a regulatory body for lobbying activities. It is also worth noting that only around 10-15% of members participated in the survey. Any significant changes to the constitution of the organisation, which in itself is ambiguous and open to interpretation in some areas, would require approval by the AGM.



**Appendix 2**

**PAC Executive Business Plan 2016 – 2017**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Executive Members</b>	<b>Date</b>
Review PAC website and consider whether it is fit for purpose.	Comms	Completed August
Draft comms plan to improve internal and external comms;  Increase twitter followers, members posts on facebook and review best ways to engage with members.	Comms	Completed throughout the year
Member's spreadsheet produced with all members contacts.	Membership	Completed in February and updated throughout the year
Members list on website updated.  Members that are pending included on the spreadsheet and the campaigns list. Removal of the number of spam members in the pending list.	Membership	Completed throughout the year
Engage with members to respond to the inquiry on lobbying; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with comms to produce a survey;</li> <li>- Organise an event to discuss the lobbying inquiry;</li> <li>- Set up a working group to respond to the inquiry;</li> <li>- Respond to the lobbying inquiry.</li> </ul>	Policy and Chair	Completed January and February
Produce briefings for relevant Assembly debates.	Policy and Chair	Completed when relevant
Review all the members that have expired, invoice all members in April, and remove all members off the campaign list who have not paid.	Membership and Finance	Completed August and ongoing



Events programme produced for the year.	Events and Chair	Completed
Review Code of Conduct and ways of promoting with members.	Whole of the Exec	Completed February
Review PACs constitution.	Whole of the Exec	Ongoing
Engaging with relevant bodies to assist in the safeguarding and enhancing the reputation of the public affairs profession e.g. the chair of the Association for Scottish Public Affairs and Chair of the APPC.	Chair	Ongoing
Respond to and initiate statements on policy and process issues affecting the Welsh public affairs sector where appropriate.	Comms, Policy and Chair.	Ongoing
Publish an annual report.	Chair	Completed for AGM in November
Produce a document to highlight the benefits of being a PAC member and share with members (including increasing number of Associate Members).	Comms/ Membership	Completed