

**Approved**



## **UNIVERSITY COURT**

### **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the University Court held on 23 April 2016 at 2pm in the Dunkeld Hilton Hotel, Dunkeld.

Chair: Mr E Frizzell

Mr M Batho	Mr R Fletcher	Right Rev Dr N Peyton
Mrs L Baxter	Ms G Ghafoor	Mr C Rae
Ms A Boyle	Mr M Grossi	Mrs S Scott
Mr J Burt	Dr M Hinfelaar	Professor N Seaton
Ms A Cameron	Mr G MacDougall	Mr M Shaw
Dr A Cornish	Mr C Marshall	Dr S Waiton
Mr D Dorward	Professor S Olivier	

Secretary: Mrs S Stewart  
Clerk to Court: Dr A Ramsay

In attendance: Mr D Reeves  
Mr B Yuksel

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr C Macdonald, Mr I McDonald, Dr J Rees and Professor E Wilson.

### **NON-RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS**

#### 76 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and, on behalf of Court, thanked the University officers for a most informative Court conference.

#### 77 DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to indicate if they had, or could be perceived to have, a conflict of interest in relation to the items for discussion. None was declared.

#### 78 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIR'S COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 APRIL 2016

Court noted the above minutes, submitted for information as Enclosure 46.

79 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2016 – UNRESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS

Court approved the above minutes, submitted as Enclosure 47, as an accurate record.

80 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

The University Secretary, on behalf of the Director of Operations, apprised Court of recent developments in relation to the disposal of Alloway Halls of residence. Mrs Stewart advised members that the closing date for offers had been Friday 22 April and that the University had received offers from six bidders. Within these were a number which contained more than one offer structure and which would therefore require further scrutiny to fully assess all options.

Court noted that, whilst the detailed analysis remained to be undertaken, 2 bids appeared promising.

Mrs Stewart advised members that the University would conclude the evaluation of offers and produce a summary of recommendations over the next fortnight.

Thereafter, Court noted that there were no other matters arising which were not already on the agenda.

81 SFC OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2016/17

CT/0414/48

The Vice-Principal (University Services) introduced the above paper, intended to provide Court with an update on the University's 2016/2017 Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Members noted that, as a result of a delay in the SFC indicative funding announcement for 2016/2017, the University had agreed with the SFC that the outcome agreement would be submitted following the April meeting of Court rather than in February as originally planned. Members noted that agreement constituted the final iteration of a 3-year cycle and that the University expected significant changes to the guidance for the next cycle, particularly in the light of the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access.

Mr Batho advised Court that the final funding announcement for 2016/2017 had not yet been received and that the Principal & the Chair of Court would not sign the final outcome agreement until the funding was confirmed. Members noted that the draft agreement had been considered by the Finance & Corporate Performance Committee at its meeting on 6 April. In line with SFC requirements, the trade unions and the Students' Association had had opportunities to comment and Senate had considered the proposed targets at its meeting in December 2015.

Mr Batho apprised members of minor changes which had been made at the request of SFC, including a commitment to 20 places for the MProf in Food Innovation. In discussion, Court noted that the University had held very positive discussions with SFC, which meant that Abertay's targets were both stretching and realistic. Members sought clarification as to how the University would proceed if the final funding settlement were significantly different to the anticipated figure and were advised that the outcome agreement would be brought to the June meeting of Court.

Thereafter, Court approved the 2016/2017 Outcome Agreement in principle and delegated authority to the Principal and the Chair of Court to sign the agreement on behalf of Court, provided that the final funding settlement were in line with expectations.

82 QAA ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW: PROVISIONAL OUTCOME

Oral Report

The Vice-Principal (Academic) provided Court with a report on the provisional outcome of the recent Enhancement-Led Institutional Review of the University by the QAA. Members were advised that the University had received an overall judgement that the University's management of the academic standards of its awards was 'effective', the highest judgement possible.

Professor Olivier advised members that the full report was yet to be received but that the provisional findings had commended practice in 6 areas and identified 2 possible areas for development.

The Chair, on behalf of Court, congratulated the Executive and commended the work of staff.

83 AUDIT COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 APRIL 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 49, were approved.

The following matters were noted:

83.1 Internal Audit: status report (paragraph 55 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of the internal auditors' summary of progress against the 2015/2016 internal audit plan.

83.2 Internal Audit Review of Governance & Compliance with the Financial Memorandum: report (paragraph 55.2 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of an internal audit report on a review of Governance & Compliance with the Financial Memorandum, which had identified 5 low-risk recommendations as well as areas of good practice.

83.3 Internal Audit: Review of Selected IT Risks: revised report and management responses (paragraph 55.3 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had taken assurance from revisions to the review of selected IT risks. Court was apprised of the positive engagement of management and KPMG in reviewing the implementation dates for two of the high-graded recommendations and one moderate recommendation.

83.4 Internal Audit: management report on implementation of recommendations (paragraph 56 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a report on progress made by management in implementing previously-agreed internal

audit recommendations, noting good progress had continued to be made in the number of recommendations now implemented.

83.5 Value for Money Evaluation Report

(paragraph 57 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of an interim update report on Value for Money (VfM) evaluation prepared by officers of the University.

84 FINANCE & CORPORATE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 APRIL 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 50, were approved.

The following matter was approved:

84.1 Scottish Funding Council 2016/2017 Outcome Agreement

(paragraph 41 refers)

Court noted that the above matter had already been considered as a substantive agenda item and that Court had approved the 2016/2017 Outcome Agreement in principle and had delegated authority to the Principal and the Chair of Court to sign the agreement on behalf of Court, provided that the final funding settlement were in line with expectations.

The following matters were noted:

85.2 FRS 102

(paragraph 40 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received a presentation on the implications for the University of FRS 102 and the new Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). Members were advised that FRS 102 was intended to harmonise UK and International accounting standards and that the SORP would introduce the application of FRS 102 to the HE sector. This would constitute a fundamental change to the Annual Report & Financial Statements and would introduce significant volatility to the annual figures.

85.3 University Finance Report

(paragraph 42 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a Finance Report which provided the Committee with an integrated view of the University's current financial position, including the anticipated 2016 outturn, an examination of future outlook, debt management and treasury management.

85.4 Estates Development works: update

(paragraph 44 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered a report on progress with the Level 4 laboratories and associated external cladding works. Members had taken assurance from the arrangements to keep the Committee apprised of progress during the summer recess.

86 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2016

The minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 51, were approved.

The following matters were approved:

86.1 Statement of Primary Responsibilities: proposed amendments (paragraph 38 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve minor amendments to the Statement of Primary Responsibilities, which had arisen from the recommendations made in the report of the review of compliance noted already by the Audit Committee subject to one further amendment.

86.2 Court Membership (paragraph 41 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee to approve an appointment to the membership of the Committee.

The following matter was noted:

86.3 Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill (paragraph 36 refers)

Court noted that the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill had been passed by the Scottish Government on 8 March 2016. Once Royal Assent had been given, the University would be required to respond to the Act by making major changes to the governing order (which would require Privy Council approval) and by making other changes to the Standing Orders, the Role of the Chair of Court and to the remits of committees. This would constitute a major programme of work to be led by the Governance & Nominations Committee.

87 PEOPLE, HEALTH & EQUALITY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MARCH 2016

Court received and approved the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as Enclosure 53.

The following matter was noted:

87.1 Staff Engagement Survey update (paragraph 58 refers)

Court noted that the Committee had received and considered an update on management actions taken in response to the results of the staff engagement survey.

88 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2016

Court received and approved the minutes of the above meeting, submitted as enclosure 54.

The following matter was approved:

88.1 2015/2015 Annual Report on Severance Statement plus internal audit recommendation

(paragraph 15 refers)

Court endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the definition of 'Senior Management Team' be extended to include the senior management group in relation to severance but not to remuneration.

The following matter was noted:

88.2 Pension allowance changes: briefing

(paragraph 11 refers)

Court noted the Committee's consideration of a presentation from the University's internal auditors, KPMG, on pension tax changes taking effect from April 2016 and their potential impact on the ability of the University to recruit and retain staff. Members were advised that the Committee would revisit this matter at its meeting in September 2016.

89 OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEETING

Oral Report

The Chair invited members to give observations on the weekend, including presentations and the quality of discussions. In general, members commended that calibre of the presentations given at the Court Conference. One member raised concerns that the presentations had not accurately represented the views of staff.

In discussion, members noted that a lack of consultation with staff had emerged as an area for improvement and were assured that work was underway to address and ameliorate the responses to the staff engagement survey. Court also considered the ways in which staff could have greater dialogue with the governing body and noted the importance of engagement in the tours of schools and services, to which staff would be invited in future.

Thereafter, the Chair reiterated Court's full support for the Principal and thanked members for their comments.

90 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

The Chair noted that the non-reserved business of Court was concluded and thanked members for their contribution.

91 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Court noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 22 June 2016 in the Boardroom of the University.

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**CHAIR**

***The meeting concluded at 14:50***