

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2015  
1:45 PM IN HARDY TEACHING ROOM 1

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**Council members present:**

Mr David Babb  
Dr Kevin Brown  
Mr David Clements  
Mr Richard Corn  
Bishop David Court  
Ms Angela Crowe  
Mr Jack Downey  
Professor David Head  
Dr Tony Hill  
Mr Stephen Lawrence  
AVM Gavin Mackay  
Mr Graham Meeson  
Professor Jayne Mitchell  
Mr Roger Mosey (Chair)  
Rev'd Sally Myers  
Rev Canon Professor Peter Neil  
Mrs Jasmit Phull  
Mr Christopher Robertson  
Dr Jim Smith  
Mrs Bridget Starling  
Professor Mark Thompson

**In attendance:**

Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources  
Mr Rob Jones, Director of Enterprise  
Dr Ruth Sayers, Executive Dean, Learning, Teaching & International  
Mr Jamie Caress, Students' Union Vice President 2014/15  
Mr Luke South, Student Council Member from 2015  
Dr Grahame Killey, Planning and Performance Manager (for item 13)  
Dr Anne Craven, Registrar and Secretary  
Mrs Katie Skilton, Clerk to the University Council

**1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and in particular welcomed Dr Anne Craven, Registrar & Secretary to her first University Council meeting.

**2. The University Prayer**

Rev. Canon Professor Peter Neil led the University Prayer.

**3. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Sandra Grattrick.

**5. Minutes of the last meeting held on 19 November 2014**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 November 2014 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

**6. Matters arising**

**(i) Action points**

The action table from the last meeting was RECEIVED and the progress against each item was NOTED.

**(ii) Any other matters**

There were no other matters raised.

**7. Vice Chancellor's report**

The Vice Chancellor presented his report and drew particular attention to the following items:

- Research Excellence Framework – The University's research submissions had been regarded as world leading and internationally excellent. BGU would receive additional funding for this outcome; the exact amount would be announced on 24 March 2015.
- Ofsted – The imminently anticipated inspection was NOTED by the Council along with the strategic and focussed work taking place within the University. The correlation between the QAA Higher Education Review and the Ofsted inspection was highlighted as the timings of these two inspections meant the two would likely feed into each other.

Action

- Widening Participation – Money had been secured from HEFCE following bids to undertake work to widen participation in higher education.
- Social Enterprise – The institution had been awarded the ‘Social Enterprise University’ kite mark.
- Data – Improvements on data reporting were highlighted, with all submissions to external bodies being worked on in a timely manner. Extensive training sessions were in place for staff across the institution. It was REPORTED that a HESA trainer in his recent visit to the institution spoke very highly of the institution’s data.
- Business Planning Cycle – The business planning cycle has started and staff on the Corporate Leadership Team of BGU were attending an Away Day the following week in order to engage in a more focussed, critical and systematic monitoring approach to planning.

## 8. Chair’s business

It was formally RECORDED that Stephen Lawrence had been appointed as Chair of the Disbursement Committee.

## 9. Students’ Union

### (i) President’s report

The President of the Students’ Union outlined his report to Council and drew particular attention to the following:

- BGSU had achieved independent charity status. When questions, the President clarified the report by assuring the Council that the SU did not fear reprimand for campaigning and lobbying and had not held such a fear in the past either, and that the new charitable status of the institution sustained further confidence within this area.
- The SU had acquired a function room above the Student’s Union and had committed £20K for renovation following the first AGM of the Trustee Board held in November.
- The SU were actively involved in encouraging engagement in the forthcoming General Election, including National Voter Registration Day and a Parliamentary Hustings on 13 April 2015.

### (ii) Byelaws

In view of the Students’ Union becoming an independent charity the Council APPROVED the Byelaws and Constitution, NOTING that in future, the Council would review and monitor BGSU business but not directly approve it.

(iii) Constitution

As reported above under 9(ii).

**10. Instrument & Articles of Government**

The Instrument & Articles of Government had been reviewed by the Governance & Nominations Committee in the current Council cycle and any changes requested by the Committee had been incorporated. The Instrument and Articles would be sent to the Privy Council following the Summer Term Council meeting so that any further changes could still be incorporated.

Secretary

Members NOTED the following amendments:

Secretary

- All references to 'Governors' should be amended to 'Council Members'
- Instrument and Articles should be bound separately and provided to Council Members after the Instrument and Articles have been sent to the Privy Council

Instruments

- Para 6.1 – Clarification was required on the procedure surrounding terms of office
- Para 6.3 – Should be amended to be plural, i.e. 'Bishops of Lincoln should hold their...'
- Para 10 – Title should be amended from 'Allowances' to read 'Expenses'

Articles

- Para 10 – Should be amended to read, 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland'

Council APPROVED the updated Instrument & Articles subject to the changes above. It was NOTED that there may still be further amendments during the next Council cycle and Council Members were invited to contact the Registrar and Secretary ahead of the next meeting with any further suggestions. After the next cycle the Instrument & Articles would be sent to the Privy Council for approval.

**11. Higher Education Review presentation**

Andrew Tofts, Regulatory & Compliance Manager gave a presentation to Council on the QAA HER which was to take place in the week of 18 January 2016.

It was reported that a mock review would take place in September 2015 and the University was also looking into consultancy during preparations.

## **12. Student recruitment**

Council NOTED the student recruitment figures presented. It was REPORTED that the figures were currently promising but final results for 2015/16 would depend on the success of conversion activities.

Following a discussion of the Report, the following items were NOTED in discussion:

- The competitors against which the University benchmarks its recruitment activity are identified by UCAS.
- An Academic Coordinator had been appointed for the Team Entrepreneurship programme in order to increase applications for this course.
- Staff resourcing would follow numbers and temporary measures had been identified to develop and deliver courses

## **13. Strategic planning**

The Planning & Performance Manager attended for this item. Council NOTED that the updated planning framework, KPIs and risk management efforts were of particular significance to the current planning round and, for the first time, BGU would be directly engaging the Corporate Leadership Team and other budget holders in a supportive 'budget challenge' discussion scheduled for 24 March at an Away Day event.

### **(i) KPIs**

The Register of KPIs was presented in the existing format as the new approach to reporting would be coordinated with developments in planning and risk management later in the year.

The Planning and Performance Manager outlined the register highlighting key areas of importance. It was NOTED that financial health was broadly positive across the indicators and was performing better than predicted for the current point in the financial cycle.

(ii) Risk management

The approach to risk management had been formed as part of a consistent approach to business planning.

The narrative accompanying the Risk Register explained the method of calculating risk, likelihood and impact. The risks were prioritised by gross risk and also reported the net risk following mitigation.

The register presented to Council members was intended to be an honest account of the risks faced by the institution and it was REPORTED that even with mitigation, some risks presented still remained high. It was NOTED however that there should be some change in all net scores to reflect mitigation as impact might not change but probability should ideally be at least slightly reduced.

P&P  
Manager

It was also suggested that the Planning and Performance Manager should consider identifying the key individual who is responsible for each particular risk within the register. This would be done together with SLT.

P&P  
Manager

The Planning and Performance Manager would also consider whether the three risks concerning recruitment should be amalgamated. This would be considered together with the Registrar and Secretary.

P&P  
Manager

(iii) Planning framework

Council Members NOTED the planning cycle timescales including the revised structure of the Corporate Leadership Team.

**14. Overview of regulatory and reporting requirements**

The paper and reports presented HIGHLIGHTED the myriad of reporting requirements that all universities, big and small, need to manage.

(i) University regulatory returns and reporting requirements

- (ii) - Quality Assessment Review
- Regulatory Partnership Group Operating Framework for Higher Education

**15. Committee of University Chairs (CUC)**

It was NOTED that the new CUC guidance was reviewed by the Governance & Nominations Committee in February 2015. The guidance would have great significance for the work of Council over time; for instance, the review of the Instrument and Articles of Government was informed by the new guidance. The Council adopted the new Code.

**16. Senate**

- (i) Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2015

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 March 2015 were RECEIVED and NOTED by the Council.

**17. Chaplain's report**

The Chaplain's report was RECEIVED.

**18. Diversity & Equality Annual Report**

The Diversity & Equality Annual Report was RECEIVED for information. It was NOTED that some headlines in the 2013-14 report stated that there was a small percentage of BME staff at BGU; a large percentage of academic staff were over 50 years of age and therefore succession planning would be important moving forward; and there continued to be a higher percentage of female students and more female students attaining first class honours. Issues detailed in the report would be addressed by the University's Equality Objective Action Plan.

**19. Key items from sub-committees**

- (i) Governance & Nominations Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 12 February 2015 were RECEIVED and the Chair of the Committee highlighted the following areas:

- Honorary Graduands - It was NOTED that the paper for this item was restricted. The names of the Honorary Graduands and the Distinguished University Fellow were reported to the Council by the Chair.
- Instrument & Articles of Government – This was an item on the main agenda.
- CUC guidance – This was also an item on the main agenda.
- Effectiveness review form – The exercise that took place during the Council lunch was NOTED. A more detailed effectiveness review would follow throughout the next Council round and going forward into the next academic year.

- (ii) FE&GP Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2015 were RECEIVED and the FE&GP Committee Chair highlighted the following:

- Mid-year accounts – It was NOTED that:

- The Head of Finance had left the institution and the Director of Resources had taken over preparation of the accounts in the interim;
- The mid-year update indicated an improved financial position of circa £1.1million. These savings were largely due to delays in the appointment of staff members, notably in the area of Research (savings in business aligned to the Strategy and the general day to day business of the University);
- The gain was reported to be temporary, however, with future expenses aligned to the Strategy predicted to arise within the current and subsequent financial years;
- The school transport budget spend was improving with an estimate from the department of £420k - £450k at year end, compared to last year's annual spend of £650k. Work would continue in the area to reduce costs.

- BG (Lincoln) Limited loan agreement – The following extract from the minutes was NOTED:

‘The Committee AGREED in principle to draw down up to £150k to take the company through to the 2016/17 financial year. The exact figure would be subject to the Director of Enterprise’s calculations and HMRC’s approval of the Loan Agreement. This would be REPORTED to the University Council at the next meeting in March.’

- Students’ Union Byelaws and Constitution – This was discussed under item 9 of the main agenda.

- Riseholme Road **\*\*RESTRICTED BUSINESS\*\***

(iii) Sponsor Board

The minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2015 were RECEIVED and the Chair NOTED that the minutes indicated progress in BGU strategy work. In the main the work was on track.

(iv) Audit Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 5 March 2015 were tabled and the Chair of the Committee highlighted the following:

- Risk management – This was an item on the main agenda.
- Internal audit reports – It was NOTED that these were prepared by Uniac and indicated that BGU’s validation schedule processes enjoyed considerable assurance from the part of the internal auditors and also that there had been significant developments in the University’s data quality and data processes in recent months.



- Treasury Management Policy – Council RECEIVED and APPROVED the policy that had come via the FE&GP and Audit Committees.
- Regulatory and reporting requirements – This was an item on the main agenda and members RECEIVED and NOTED the paper and reports.

(v) Remuneration Committee **\*\*RESTRICTED BUSINESS\*\***

**20. Agenda suggestions for future meetings**

Members were asked to suggest any items to be included on the agenda for the next meeting in June aside from the usual business via the Clerk. It was NOTED that items for future meetings were likely to include items relating the updated CUC Code such as a further review of Council effectiveness and a Schedule of Delegation.

**21. Any other business**

There was no other business raised.

**22. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the University Council would take place on Wednesday 24 June 2015 at the slightly earlier time of 1:15 pm in Hardy Teaching Room 1. An updated schedule for this day would be circulated to members.

Secretary

**23. BG (Lincoln) Ltd.**

- (i) Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held on 10 February 2015  
**\*\*RESTRICTED BUSINESS\*\***

**24. Riseholme Road **\*\*RESTRICTED BUSINESS\*\*****

Signed ..... Date 24/6/15

