

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2019  
11:00 AM - 3:00 PM IN ROOM 13, SKINNER BUILDING

**Present**

Mr David Babb  
Dr Stephen Critchley  
Mrs Jackie Croft  
Rev David Dadswell  
Professor Scott Fleming (*for all except item 23*)  
Mr Alan Foster  
Mr Richard Hallsworth  
Professor David Head (Vice Chair)  
Mr Stephen Lawrence  
AVM Gavin Mackay  
Dr Sacha Mason  
Rev Dr Sally Myers  
Rev Canon Professor Peter Neil (*left the meeting at item ??*)  
The Right Rev Dr Nigel Peyton  
Mr Alan Stacey  
Mr Bob Walder (Chair)

**In attendance**

Rev Sonia Barron, Council member from 1 August 2019 (*arrived after item 5*)  
Mr Jonathan Batty, Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Communications (*for item 12*)  
Mr Stephen Deville, Chief Operating Officer (*for all except item 23*)  
Mr Jordan Fane, Students' Union Vice-President (*for all except item 23*)  
Ms Joanna Forbes, Shakespeare Martineau (*for item 6*)  
Ms Stephanie Gilluly, Registrar (Clerk)  
Rev Peter Green, Dean of Chapel (*for item 11*)  
Ms Rachel Gwynne, Shakespeare Martineau (*for item 6*)  
Mrs Rachel Harvey, Director of Strategy & Planning (*for item 9*)  
Mr Barrie Shipley, Director of Finance (*for items 13 & 14*)  
Mrs Emma Whiteley, Governance Officer (Minuting) (*for all except item 23*)

**1. Welcome**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all present to the sixth University Council meeting of the 2018/19 academic year. Alan Foster, Students Union President 2019/20 and Jordan Fane, Students' Union Vice-President 2019/20 were welcomed to their first meeting. It was also NOTED that Rev Sonia Barron would also be in

**Action**

attendance (she would be arriving after 12:00). Subject to Council's approval under item 19 Sonia would become a Council member from 1 August 2019.

## **2. The University Prayer**

2.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Rev Canon Professor Peter Neil led the University Prayer.

## **3. Apologies**

3.1 There were no apologies for absence received.

## **4. Declarations of interest**

4.1 It was NOTED that the Vice-Chancellor had declared his appointment as a Member of the Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust.

4.2 The Right Rev David Dadswell and Rev Dr Sally Myers declared that they were both employees of the Lincoln Diocesan Trust.

## **5. Strategy**

5.1 Professor Scott Fleming the Deputy Vice-Chancellor PRESENTED the Strategy to members REPORTING on what had been done, what was in progress and what was still to do. The following points were HIGHLIGHTED:

- Council had been involved in the consultation exercise and it was REPORTED that a staff consultation had taken place as well as a number of other meetings with collaborative partners and external stakeholders. Consultations had been further developed and a Staff Forum had taken place. SF NOTED that he had shared the ambitions of the Strategy with the Old Students' Association and had met with representatives of Lincolnshire County Council. It was also NOTED that some of the material had been presented at the BGU Learning and Teaching Conference.
- SF NOTED that the operational detail and portfolio review had been stripped back from the Strategy. A unique selling point, commercially sensitive information or any commentary on competitors had not been included. Some strapline suggestions were shared with members.
- Members NOTED that the Vice-Chancellor would report to Council against the measures of performance, internationalisation, cross-cutting themes and the Access and Participation Plan.
- A fully costed delivery programme, to embed within staff performance, liaison with BGSU, internal buy-in and ongoing communication and external engagement was NOTED as in development.

5.2 SF INVITED questions from members. The following was NOTED:

5.3	DB raised the issue of the name of the University and the fact that the location was not included. It was AGREED that the word Lincoln should be included on the front page of the Strategy, even if not officially part of the name. AF NOTED that when he applied he did not know where we were initially until he came to recognise that we were a small, specialist university in Lincoln. He discovered a community centred university where you were not just a number but a person.	SF
5.4	A theme of the Strategy was to increase income, however the question was by how much and by when. Connectivity to groups, including alumni generally, was NOTED.	
5.5	Members NOTED that it was a great start and the importance of making sure that the Strategy was deliverable. It was NOTED that the University was autonomous and it was misleading to suggest that we were not. It was AGREED that the wording would be amended so that it does not suggest that we need one particular partner to sit above us. It was also AGREED that we were not in the business of acquiring new land and only did this for a purpose, the wording would be altered to reflect this.	SF
5.6	The two expressions for delivery of the Strategy were NOTED; Delivery Plan or Business Plan. With a Business Plan, medium term forecasts would be refreshed on a more frequent basis, however, whichever one we went for we needed to use it consistently. Members AGREED that the term Business Plan would be more suitable, providing an important message in itself and would provide a more regular review. The necessity of unpacking acronyms consistently was also NOTED.	SF
5.7	Council NOTED that they were very pleased with the document and asked for some of the timings to be included/tweaked. It was AGREED that an amended version would be circulated to members and would be brought back to Council at its next meeting in October. It was NOTED that by next year we would have both; the Strategy and a Business Plan. The five-year financials, Estates Strategy and Portfolio Review would be required to pull it all together.	SF/ Gov Office/ Next meeting
5.8	The need to look at partners was raised, with possible collaborations with other Cathedrals Group Members.  <i>Joanna Forbes and Rachel Gwynne from Shakespeare Martineau, and Rev Sonia Barron, were welcomed to the meeting.</i>	
6.	<b>Company Status update including Articles of Association incorporating the Instruments and Articles of Government – Schedule of Delegation and Terms of Reference</b>	
6.1	SD thanked JF and RG for attending Council to present this item. It was NOTED that a summary of where we were at with certain documents had been provided and staff had been informed of the changes. There was a list of key items that were ongoing and we were on target to incorporate on 1 August 2019.	
6.2	Clause 2 of the Council/Trustee Resolution that accompanied the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 15 May 2019 was NOTED. A member	



	asked whether there was a risk of signing without approval in advance and that the response was to clarify the basis of the delegation. It was AGREED that this would be amended to give clarity (see separate document).	SM/ Gov Office
6.3	RG PRESENTED the documents to Council NOTING the scheme that dealt with assets and property, which was not endowment land and could therefore be transferred. The trustees of the scheme were the trustees of the charitable company. It was NOTED that the terrier plan was an additional document and was intended as a reference.	
6.4	The school property, i.e. a small area of land contained in the brown area of the terrier map was NOTED. RG referred to the Reverter Act which would have kicked in once the land was not used for what it was intended. It was NOTED that a legal advice note would be issued; Council CONFIRMED that they were content for the Chair to sign this.	BW
6.5	It was NOTED that The Property Trust Scheme would supersede the 2012 scheme and transfer the property and non-permanent endowment land to the charitable company. DD NOTED that he had comments from the Diocese to pass on following the meeting. Members NOTED the importance of our solicitors and the Diocese solicitors getting this right.	DD
6.6	Members NOTED that essentially it was subject to final communication from the Charity Commission and feedback from the Diocese on the three schemes and then we were in a position to complete the transition on 1 August 2019. SD CONFIRMED that insurances would renew on 1 August.	
6.7	It was NOTED that the Transfer Agreement referred to the full names of trustees, however, they were not listed. This would be amended.	SD
6.8	Council CONFIRMED that they were CONTENT with the position and NOTED the completion of the documentation with delegated powers. Thanks were formally recorded to Steve Deville, Chief Operating Officer, for all his work.	
6.9	The two document packages for the new company; the Schedule of Delegation and the Terms of Reference were also NOTED.	
6.10	Council AGREED the Schedule of Delegation, discussed at Governance and Nominations Committee and recommended for approval, and the revised Committee Terms of Reference align with the new Articles of Association of the Company incorporating the Instruments and Articles of Government of the University to be implemented from 1 August 2019.	
	<i>Joanna Forbes and Rachel Gwynne left the meeting</i>	
	<i>Council broke for lunch until 1:30 pm</i>	

**7. Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 March 2019 and minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 15 May 2019**

7.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 20 March 2019 were CONFIRMED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was AUTHORISED to sign them following the meeting.

BW/  
Gov Office

7.2 The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 15 May 2019 were CONFIRMED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was AUTHORISED to sign them following the meeting subject to the following:

- The amendment of Clause 2 of the Council/Trustee Resolution as under item 6.2 above.
- The action against item 4.4 would be amended to SD and the question marks would be removed.

SG/  
Gov Office

**8. Matters arising**

**8.1 Action table**

Council RECEIVED the matters arising action table produced by the Governance Office and NOTED the progress against actions.

**8.2. Any other matters**

There were no other matters discussed.

*Rachel Harvey joined the meeting*

**9. To receive the Vice-Chancellor's Report**

9.1 The Vice-Chancellor PRESENTED his Report to Council, HIGHLIGHTING the following:

- Learning, Teaching and Student Engagement – Portfolio Review and portfolio summit.
- We were down by 1% overall on the National Student Survey, scoring 82% compared to 83% last year.
- Major staffing challenges were ahead, with the departure of the Director of Finance, Director of IT and the Director of Planning at the end of July. The appointment process had begun for two of the posts and interim arrangements were in place. It was NOTED that the Director of Human Resources would be looking at performance reviews.
- The buzz around the Learning and Teaching Conference was NOTED.

- It was REPORTED that generally CUAC (Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion) were very impressed by the way we treated our students.
- 9.2 PN REPORTED that the challenge with staffing changes was keeping everything running. The level we pay and succession planning was in the HR Strategy and exit interviews would take place. SD NOTED that it would be a pressured period but we were in the process of looking to replace the roles. Handover periods were hard as even with a three-month notice period the incoming person often had to give the same amount of notice. It was NOTED that all Directors were ensuring that everything was in order before they left their roles. Council NOTED that we may have to look at finance levels for the roles in the future. PN REPORTED that all Heads had been brought into the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group, providing them with a much broader experience. Members agreed that we would always be vulnerable to staff moving on due to the size of the institution.
- 9.3 The Director of Planning, Rachel Harvey attended to present the KPIs and Risks. The following was NOTED:
- We would not know the position of student recruitment until all students were enrolled.
  - The Vice-Chancellor's report outlined the actions that we were taking quickly for the Portfolio.
  - There was a KPI linked to budget management.
  - The data risk had been reduced.
  - Partnership risks had been added.
  - The removed risks were NOTED.
- 9.4 It was AGREED to explore the possibility of the risk assessment being brought forward to the end of May rather than as at 1 April. If a date was set a verbal update beyond that could be provided to Council at the meetings.
- 9.5 RH NOTED that all scores around feedback on the National Student Survey had increased by 3% from the last time. The feedback was timely with it being an area we have improved in and this needs to continue. The Chair thanked RH for all her work.
- Rachel Harvey left the meeting*
- 10. To receive the Students' Union President's Report**
- 10.1 Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Students' Union President's REPORT. AF NOTED that this had not been written by him but by the previous Student's Union President, Craig Ferguson.

RH



- 10.2 AF REPORTED that a full review of the constitution, policies and by laws had taken place and they were all now fit for purpose. It was REPORTED that the SU had been to the FE&GP Committee for an increase in the block grant, however, the Committee suggested the SU look how their budget is linked to staffing. The SU were currently working towards Fresher's Week and looking for better engagement in the Students' Union, seeking to bring back sports and societies.
- 10.3 The Chair REPORTED that he was part of the Students' Union Board and was very impressed by the work put in by all and appreciated the work that had been done. AF CONFIRMED that they were working to finalise the report on staffing for the FE&GP Committee.

*Peter Green joined the meeting.*

# **11. To receive the Chaplain's Report**

- 11.1 Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Chaplain's Report. The University Chaplain, Peter Green attended for this item, REPORTING that he recently come to realise why Chaplaincy had an appeal to those with no religious affiliation. It was perceived to have a duty to care for all students regardless and not for the purpose of recruitment, retention and completion. Members AGREED that this was one of the things the University stood for and it was important to care and help students to succeed. PG also NOTED that part of BGU's history specifically targeted working class women who could not afford the fees to study.

*Peter Green left the meeting.*

*Jonathan Batty joined the meeting.*

# **12. To receive an update on student recruitment**

- 12.1 Members RECEIVED and NOTED the update on student recruitment. The Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Communications, Jonathan Batty attended to present the update NOTING no drastic changes and undergraduate applications levels being down. It was hoped that the introduction of Foundation Year programmes would help. The offer rate was static across all levels and the acceptance rate for Foundation Degrees was down. Members NOTED that there were fewer Primary and Secondary applicants in England with more acceptances in PGCE Primary and Secondary, however the decline in undergraduate numbers would hit at PG level in a few years.
- 12.2 JB REPORTED on the money invested into marketing NOTING that people were using the bits of the website designed for recruitment. The question was raised as to whether there were parts of the product that could be better. It was REPORTED that people were staying on the website for longer, viewing more pages and exiting on anticipated pages. There was a need to improve to improve the organic search.
- 12.3 It was NOTED that we were slightly behind for enquiries and we would find out in July if the incentive of a hoodie for coming to Open Day was working.

12.4 Members NOTED that the conversion rate was fantastic with the marketing team continuing to convert people. JB was asked if there was anything not in the marketing toolkit that would be of value. JB REPORTED that some of the things the marketing team had been doing over the past few years would hopefully come into fruition.

12.5 Members NOTED that it was rare for students to have other universities to compare the student experience to and we should use the fact that we are a small university as a positive.

*Jonathan Batty left the meeting.*

*Barrie Shipley joined the meeting.*

### 13. Financial forecast and 2019/20 budget (Redacted)

### 14. Fees Register, Charges and Student Debt Policy 2019/20 & 2020/21

14.1 BS presented this item NOTING that following an internal audit around nine months ago, it was agreed that it would be good process for this policy to come through Council for approval. The fee increases were NOTED and APPROVED, including the ITT resit fee increase.

*Barrie Shipley left the meeting*

### 15. Office for Students

SG presented the following items to Council.

#### 15.1 • Access and Participation Plan

Council NOTED the Access and Participation Plan which had been considered by the Academic Advisory Group and circulated to members for comments prior to its submission on 1 July. SG thanked Council for their participation with the document.

#### 15.2 • Student Protection Plan

Council RECEIVED the proposed draft Student Protection Plan and RECOMMENDED the Plan for submission to the OfS this summer.

#### 15.3 • Reportable events

SG provided a verbal update on reportable events NOTING the revised Instruments and Articles of Government and the change of partnerships to be reported to the OfS.

#### 15.4 • Prevent return response

Council NOTED the OfS response to the Prevent Accountability and Data Return which concluded that the University demonstrated due regard for



the duty, and that the institution was not at higher risk of non-compliance with Prevent.

**16. Senate**

- 16.1 Members RECEIVED and NOTED the Senate minutes from the meeting held on 12 June 2019. The Equality Objectives Annual Plan that was approved by Chair's Action was also NOTED.

**Key items from sub-committees**

**17. To note the FE&GP Committee minutes of 6 June 2019**

- 17.1 Member RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the FE&GP Committee meeting held on 6 June 2019. The following was NOTED:

- Land update and signing of the documents;
- Access and Participation Plan;
- Student Fee Policy;
- Staff Survey; and
- Hate Crime Policy.

**18. To note the Audit Committee minutes of 17 June 2019**

- 18.1 Member RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 17 June 2019. The following was NOTED:

- Charity Commission Annual Return based on 2017/18 results; and
- External audit planning arrangements for the next 12 months.

**19. To note the Governance & Nominations Committee minutes of 15 May 2019**

- 19.1 Member RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the Governance & Nominations Committee meeting held on 15 May 2019.

- 19.2 • To consider University Council appointments

Council CONFIRMED the appointment of Rev Sonia Barron to the Diocesan nominee position from 1 August and Professor Marianne Howarth as a co-opted member of Council from 1 August.

- 19.3 • To consider sub-committee appointments

Members NOTED that an independent co-opted member with accountancy skills for FE&GP Committee would be recruited.

*Rev Sonia Barron left the meeting*

Council APPROVED the RECOMMENDATION for Rev Sonia Barron to join the Governance & Nominations Committee.

*Rev Sonia Barron re-joined the meeting*

**20. Academic Advisory Group/Link Governors**

- 20.1 The Vice-Chair reported on the work of the Academic Advisory Group NOTING that they had looked at the Access and Participation Plan in some detail.

**21. Agenda management and review**

- 21.1 Members were content with the management of the meeting NOTING that it was weighty but effective.

**22. Any other business**

- 22.1 There was no other business to discuss

*Steve Deville, Jordan Fane, Scott Fleming and Emma Whiteley left the meeting*

**23. To note the Remuneration Committee minutes of 20 June 2019**

- 23.1 Member RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 20 June 2019.

- 23.2 • Executive targets and pay

The Chair of Remuneration Committee recommended the following based on a reviews of performance and benchmark data:

- VC pay to be increased in line with the award across the academic base.
- COO to be awarded a bonus of £2,500 and a pay increase in line with that across the academic staff.
- DVC salary to be increased to the level of the COO.

The Council AGREED the proposal.

**24. Date of next meeting**

- 25.1 The next meeting of University Council would be held on Wednesday 9 October 2019 from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm in CSH11, with lunch from 1:00-1:30 pm in CSH12.

Signed Bob Walder Date 9th Oct 2019