

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021**

**Present:** Mr H Adam (Chair), Dr M Allison, Ms N Cadinanos Gonzalez, Dr P Cowell, Prof J Donaldson, Mr K Fraser, Ms S Gordon, Prof P Hancock, Mr G Hastie, Mr D Kearney, Ms A MacKay, Mr G MacLeod, Prof M MacLeod, Ms B McKissack, Ms C Morrison, Prof H Nehring, Rev M Roderick and Councillor C Simpson.

**In Attendance:** Mr G Duff, Ms C Gallagher, Ms J Harrison, Ms K Lawson, Mr L McCabe, Mr C McNally, Ms J Morrow, Prof J Phillips, Dr J Rogers, Ms E Schofield, Prof L Sparks, Mr L Spillane, Dr David Telford, Mr M Nichol (Clerk), Prof N Wylie and Dr L Zhuang.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Ms P Crawford,Mr H Grossart and Prof G McCormac.

**Welcome**: The Chair congratulated Ms Susan Gordon on her appointment as Vice Chair of University Court.

 The Chair offered his deepest condolences to the family of Dr Robert Black who died on 15 October 2021. The Chair paid tribute to Dr Black’s work and members expressed their appreciation of his contribution and commitment as a Lay Member of University Court and Chair of Remunerations Committee.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES UC(21/22) Minutes 1**

Court approved the minutes of the meeting of University Court held on
20 September 2021.

**3. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**

 There were no matters arising as actions had been completed and reported elsewhere or were underway.

**4. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT UC(21/22) 14**

Members received a paper on recent developments in the External Environment that included coverage of:

* UK Government Spending Review and associated matters
* Covid-19 landscape, including spring semester planning
* Scottish Government’s response to the Scottish Funding Council’s Review of Tertiary Education and Research
* COP26 and wider sustainability developments

 Members discussed the Scottish Government’s response to the Scottish Funding Council’s Review of Tertiary Education and Research. Updates would be reported to future meetings on progress with the development of the ‘National Impact Framework’ that would outline the overarching outcomes and impact colleges and universities will be expected to deliver on and be assessed by.

 Court noted the recent developments in the external environment.

***PLANNING & BUDGETING***

**\*5 UNIVERSITY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2020/21**

Members received an overview of the University’s 2020-21 Financial Statements and the following associated papers that had been endorsed for Court approval by the Audit Committee on 15 November 2021 and the Joint Policy Planning and Resources Committee on 23 November 2021:

1. The Financial Statements for 2020/21 as recommended **UC(21/22) 15(i)**

by the Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee and

Audit Committee.

1. Audit Highlights Memorandum from the External Auditors **UC(21/22) 15(ii)**
2. Letter of Representation from the University **UC(21/22) 15(iii)**

It was confirmed that the Financial Statements were given an unqualified audit report and that the Financial Statements had been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP): Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2015 and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard FRS102. The Financial Statements also conformed to the Accounts Direction and other guidance published by the Scottish Funding Council.

Members discussed the accounting surplus of £10.7m for the year 2020-21 generated by the University group and the beneficial impact to this position by pension provision movements totalling £7.7m specifically related to the movement on the USS pension provision (£1.3m favourable) and the release of allowance for discretionary increases on the USPS pension (£6.4m favourable). It was confirmed the underlying operating position for 2020-21 was a £3.0m surplus when pension movements were set aside to allow like for like comparability, a positive movement of £6.6m.

Members discussed income from both tuition fees and one-off funding from the Scottish Funding Council that offset reductions in other income incurred due to the challenging operating environment. It was confirmed that income growth and cost control ensured that the University returned a financially healthy position for 2020-21. Overall, the Balance Sheet remained robust with increased reserves by £22.3m to £154.8m.

Court approved the Financial Statements 2020/21 and noted the Letter of Recommendation from the University and the Audit Highlights Memorandum from the external auditor, KPMG.

**\*6. INTEGRATED PLANNING AND BUDGETING UC(21/22) 16**

Members received an update on Quarter 1 Integrated Planning and Budgeting, considered the Quarter 1 management accounts as of 31 October 2021 and considered the University’s cash position. It was confirmed that based on the Quarter 1 management accounts and progress with the capital plan, the University was forecast to end financial year 2021-22 with a net operating cash inflow of £12.8m.

Members discussed in particular the University’s access to £30m of working capital facilities of which £20m was drawn and placed on ring fenced deposits (i.e. the Lloyds Revolving Credit Facility of £10m and the HSBC Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) of £20m). It was confirmed that the University was covenant compliant in 2021-22.

Court considered and commented on the content of the paper including the Quarter 1 2021/22 financial forecast.

Additionally, Court:

* Approved the variation to the Lloyds Revolving Credit Facility as laid out in Appendix 2, paragraphs 14 and 15.
* Approved the recommendation that the additional draw down of £10m due under the CLBILS facility in December 2021 was not made as laid out in Appendix 2, paragraphs 10 to 13.

**7. CAMPUS MASTER PLAN PRESENTATION**

Court received a presentation from Colin McNally, Executive Director of Estates and Campus Services on the Campus Master Plan. The presentation set out the context and progress with the development of the University’s physical estate.

**\*8. CAPITAL AND MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN UC(21/22) 17**

Members received anintroduction to the Capital and Major Infrastructure Plan that included an update of the 2020/21 capital expenditure out-turn, the 2021/22 Quarter 1 forecast and the indicative infrastructure expenditure for the five-year period to 2026.

It was confirmed that the approved capital and major infrastructure budget for 2021-26 of £36.5m taken together with a rephased £4.8m, provided an updated comparable planned spend over the period of £41.3m.

Members discussed an increase in the indicative plan for 2021-26 by £6.2m to £47.5m. It was confirmed this was mainly due to the inclusion of a budgetary provision (£3.3m) for several limiting factors, such as a shortage in the supply of project management staffing, supply chain issues, the unprecedented increased cost of construction materials and construction industry inflationary increases.

Members discussed other notable forecast changes to the Main University Entrance, Queens Court Link Bridge and acquisition costs for Kingarth. It was confirmed that the acquisition would be in continuance of the University’s strategy to recover and control land and property within its Campus boundary, previously demonstrated with the acquisition of Wallace View and Scion House.

Members discussed the proposed disposal of Milnholm. It was confirmed that theUniversity concluded that Milnholm held no future vision in the development of the Aquaculture strategy.

Members discussed future priorities in the Capital and Major Infrastructure Plan and noted the importance students placed on the areas used most frequently by them and the need to ensure these facilities were maintained to a high standard.

Court approved the updated Capital and Major Infrastructure Plan.

Additionally, Court:

* approved the continuation of Queens Court Link Bridge and Main University Entrance as laid out in paragraphs 17 to 26; and
* approved the purchase of Kingarth property and sale of Milnholm, as laid out in paragraphs 30 to 37.

**\*9. CITY DEAL UC(21/22) 18**

Members received an update from the University’s City Region and Growth Deal Programme Board, discussed Scotland’s International Environment Centre, formally launched on 11 November 2021 and noted that Professor Andrew Tyler, Scotland Hydro Nation Chair, had been invited to present an update on Scotland’s International Environment Centre at the next meeting to be held on 28 March 2022.

Members noted the Strategic Outline Case for the Marine Aquaculture Programme and Machrihanish Innovation Campus and discussed the importance of a large scale marine facility for the University.

Court noted the report from the University’s City Region and Growth Deal Programme Board.

***GOVERNANCE***

**\*10. AMENDMENTS TO STATUTE 9 UC(21/22) 19**

Members were provided with an update on proposed amendments to Statute 9.

Court made a Special Resolution to amend the Statute 9, subject to further amendments as the Lords of Her Majesty’s Privy Council may require and as are agreed by the University.

**\*11. OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2021/22 UC(21/22) 20**

Members received an overview of the Outcome Agreement 2021/22. It was confirmed that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) requested that institutions submit Outcome Agreements to demonstrate their respective contributions to the Scottish Government’s priority outcomes and impact for public investment.

Members discussed the Self-Evaluation Report and noted the 2021/22 Outcome Agreement was to represent a ‘transitional year’ agreement ahead of the SFC’s development of a new *Outcome Agreement and Impact Framework* as signalled within their Coherent Provision and Sustainability Review.

Members discussed digital poverty as a barrier to education and noted in particular that the University invested in a bank of laptops which students facing financial hardship were able to borrow on a short-term or long-term basis for the full academic year.

 Court approved the Outcome Agreement 2021/22

***COMMITTEE REPORTS***

**\*12. UNIVERSITY COURT UC(21/22) 21**

Court considered theannual reflective report on the effectiveness of Court on activities during 2020/21.

**\*13. ACADEMIC COUNCIL UC(21/22) 22**

Courtconsidered the Annual Report on Academic Council Effectiveness for 2020/21 and the report from the meeting held on 1 December 2021.

**\*14. JOINT POLICY, PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE UC(21/22) 23**

Court considered the Annual Reflective Report from JPPRC for 2020/2, noted the report from the meeting of 23 November 2021 and approved the Annual Safety, Security and Continuity Report.

**\*15. AUDIT COMMITTEE UC(21/22) 25**

Court considered the Annual Report from Audit Committee 2020/21, the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2020/21 and the report from the meeting of 15 November 2021. Court noted the revised timeline for the tender and appointment process for the external audit contract.

**\*16. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE UC(21/22) 26**

 Court considered the Annual Report from the Remuneration Committee for 2020/21.

**\*17. GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE UC(21/22) 27**

Court considered the Annual Report from GNC 2020/21 and the report from the meeting of 21 October 2021.

**\*18. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE UC(21/22) 28**

Court considered the annual report from the University Research Ethics Committee for 2020/21 and noted the annual report on Research Integrity.

***ACTIVITY UPDATES***

**\*19. STUDENTS’ UNION UPDATE UC(21/22) 29**

Court received an update on activity from the Students’ Union including academic representation, the Movember campaign in Stirling that raised over £20,000 and 16 Days of Action against domestic abuse and gender-based violence.

**\*20. UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING STUDENTS’ UNION ACCOUNTS UC(21/22) 30**

Members received an overview of the University of Stirling Students’ Union Accounts, discussed the challenging operating environment, noted the letter of support provided by the University and the importance placed on a strong and vibrant Union.

Court noted the annual report and financial statements for the University of Stirling Students’ Union for 2020/21

**\*21. EQUALITY UPDATE** **UC(21/22) 31**

Members received an overview of progress on key aspects of the University’s work pertaining to equality, diversity and inclusion. It was confirmed that, as part of the work towards retaining an institutional Athena Swan award, a staff culture survey would be undertaken to gain a better understanding of the institutional culture and to identify priority areas for action to enhance equality and inclusion, and to advance gender equality, in line with the goals of the Athena Swan framework.

Court noted the update on equality, diversity and inclusion matters.

**\*22. STAFF AND EMPLOYMENT UPDATE UC(21/22) 32**

Members received an update on staff and employment matters. It was confirmed that UCU achieved a mandate for industrial action related to proposed USS changes and the 2021/21 pay award. Members discussed the work and commitment to see sustainable solution to UK-wide disputes and the plans in place to mitigate, as far as possible, the impact of industrial action on students.

 Court noted an update on staff and employment matters.

***OTHER ITEMS***

**\*23. RISKS ARISING**

Court considered risks associated with items discussed in the context of the agreed risk appetite statement.

**24. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

 There was no other competent business.

**25. NEXT MEETING**

 Court noted the next full meeting of Court was scheduled for 28 March 2022.

**Policy & Planning**

**December 2021**