

GB/1/24

**MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH 2024 AT 2.30PM IN SEMINAR ROOM 1, MAIN BUILDING**

Present: Mr Edgar Jardine (Chair);
Dr Lavinia Boyce;
Dr Maureen Bennett;
Dr Andy Brown;
Mr Matthew Cupples;
Mr Robert Drennan;
Mr Darren Feely;
Prof Jonathan Heggarty;
Ms Paula Leitch;
Ms Kim Scott;
Mr Peter Weil

In Attendance: Mr Andrew Irwin (Incoming Student President)
Mr Raymond DeLargy (Director of Corporate Services and Development) for
items 6, 7 and 14;
Ms Jo O'Boyle (Head of Finance) for item 6;
Mr Sam Snodden (Secretary to the Governing Body).

Apologies: Ms Heather Miller;
Ms Majella Corrigan;
Ms Una Nic Eoin;
Mr Aaron Diver;
Ms Wilma Fee.

AGENDA ITEM.

GB/1/24/1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

1/24/1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone and congratulated Mr Andrew Irwin on his recent election as Student President.

The Chair expressed condolences on the sad passing away of Ms Katya Watson and Ian Elliott since our last meeting. A minute's silence was observed.

Congratulations were expressed to Ms Kim Scott on her recent MBE which highlighted her dedication to education in various roles over a distinguished career.

The Chair thanked Committee Chairs for the work in supporting the Governing Body and noted that Members are expected to have read the various Reports and Papers and, while those presenting will report briefly, Members are welcome to raise any exceptional items of interest.

- 1/24/1.2 Apologies were noted as above.
- 1/24/1.3 There were no conflicts of interest to record.
- 1/24/1.4 There was no any other business not on agenda to include.
- GB/1/24/2 RESERVED BUSINESS**
- GB/1/24/3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS HELD 29 NOVEMBER 2023, ACTION POINTS AND MATTERS ARISING.**
- 1/24/3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 November 2023 were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.
- 1/24/3.2 There were no other action points or matters arising to consider.
- GB/1/24/4 COMMITTEE BUSINESS**
- 1/24/4.1 **Overview of Education Committee 6 March 2024**
- 1/24/4.1.1 The Committee Chair commented that the Committee were grateful for the number and range of reports that were presented and that this helped members understand the environment.
- 1/24/4.1.2 The Committee had received a presentation on Special Educational Needs and had expressed interest in a further session on this, in particular from those who were unable to attend the presentation, together with a discussion on how SUC is developing its offering to assist the profession in supporting SEN pupils.
- 1/24/4.1.3 The Committee Chair thanked staff for their good work around the recent Periodic School Review.
- GB/1/24/4.2 Overview of Finance and General Purposes Committee 14 February 2024.**
- 1/24/4.2.1 The Committee Chair noted that additional capital funding had been received and the committee had been presented with an encouraging report which was ahead of budget. Plans for the sports pitches were on the radar for the future but depends on funding arrangements. It was recognised that the Estates Department had a difficult job given the size and variety of the campus. The Committee chair also congratulated the HACS service.
- GB/1/24/4.3 Overview of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 20 March 2024**
- 1/24/4.3.1 It was noted by the Secretary in the absence of the Committee chair, that all internal audit reports were satisfactory with no Priority 1 recommendations and Staff in these areas should be complimented.

Adoption of Committee Minutes

On the proposal of the Chair all of the following Committee Meeting minutes which had been approved by the relevant Committees were unanimously adopted:

- 1/24/4.4 Education Committee Meeting on 25 October 2023.
- 1/24/4.5 Finance and General Purposes Committee on 15 November 2023.
- 1/24/4.6 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 22 November 2023.
- 1/24/4.7 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 31 January 2024.

GB/1/24/5 STUDENT PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1/24/5.1 The Student President thanked the Governing Body for their support over the year of his term of office and also paid tribute to his team for their work during the year. Members wished him all the best and also welcomed the incoming President.

1/24/5.2 The Student President outlined the many events, and clubs which were well supported during the year. Members suggested that some events in future might be organized on a geographical basis to cater for students who may have gone home over holiday periods and found it difficult to attend some events.

1/24/5.3 The recent student elections were noted and that they were well supported and contested.

1/24/5.4 The Student President thanked the college for the excellent support they offered following the untimely passing of Katya Watson, the counselling provided was much appreciated.

The Director of Corporate Services & Development and the Head of Finance joined the meeting.

GB/1/24/6 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FEBRUARY 2024

1/24/6.1 The Head of Finance highlighted the key points from the Management Accounts for the period to 29 February 2024 and referred to the detailed report provided to Governing Body.

1/24/6.2 Total Income at February 2024 is £368k ahead of budget while total spend is some £125k behind budget with non-staff and staff costs behind budget by £38k and £87k respectively. This has resulted in a reported surplus at February 2024 of £983k compared to a budgeted surplus of £490k – a positive variance of £493k.

1/24/6.3 A re-forecasting exercise, to predict the revised year-end position, has recently been undertaken. This predicts a revised surplus for the year to 31 July 2024 of £502k compared to a budgeted surplus of £14k.

The main contributors to this change in estimated year-end position include:

- the positive impact of Skill Up income, which is expected to be £340k ahead of budget in 2023-24, on Tuition Fee Income (overall +£70k at February 2024),
- higher than estimated Investment Income (+£100k at February 2024),
- higher HACs income (+£99k at February 2024),
- expected savings in respect of energy costs offset by higher repairs and maintenance costs.
- It is planned to undertake a painting project within one of the Halls of Residence blocks over the summer of 2024. It is expected that more than half of the estimated £130k cost will be incurred before the University College 31 July 2024 year-end, with the balance to be funded in 2024-25.
- In addition, 20 bids totaling in the region of £231k, for additional unbudgeted expenditure were received from Budget Holders. These bids range for upgraded resources, equipment and repairs as well as some additional activities. The bids were considered at Corporate Planning Committee on 12 March and all bids were approved. The related paperwork is being completed and procurement expected to start shortly.

1/24/6.4 The college is working on its budget for the 2024/2025 year taking into account the increase in minimum wage and an increase in teachers pensions costs of 4%.

Members thanked the Head of Finance for the excellent and positive report.

The Head of Finance left the meeting

GB/1/24/7 PRESENTATION ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

1/24/7.1 The Director of Corporate Services and Development gave an informative presentation on the roles and responsibilities around health and safety within the college and the wider impacts of failures in good practice. A copy of document IND417 to be circulated.

1/24/7.2 In answer to members questions, the Director of Corporate Services and Development further advised about changes in legislation and reporting requirements. Members queried the responsibilities for health and safety of students on placement. It was advised that students had to comply with school policies and should make themselves aware of these.

The Director of Corporate Services and Development left the meeting

Dr Andy Brown left the meeting

GB/1/24/8 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

1/24/8.1 The Principal outlined the actions taken following the deaths of Katya Watson and Ian Elliott, he also commented that the death of a student was thankfully a rare occurrence and had been a challenging pastoral experience for the college.

1/24/8.2 The Principal referred to now having two new Ministers and as such we could expect new policies to be issued by Departments. The Health Minister had recently visited Stranmillis UC in the context of an external event. It is anticipated that the Education and Economy Ministers will visit Stranmillis UC in due course which will provide an opportunity to raise the issue of Special Educational Needs.

1/24/8.3 The Principal outlined the other areas in his submitted written report.

GB/1/24/9 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

1/24/9.1 The Principal presented an updated Corporate Risk Register which had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee who were content to recommend its approval by the Governing Body.

1/24/9.2 It was noted that the Risk Register included Green rating for KPIs but there were many Amber issues. A note explaining this would be beneficial in future reports.

1/24/9.3 It was noted that Cyber Security was now a separate risk CR4 so should now be removed from previous CR7.

1/24/9.4 The Principal suggested the Risk Register be linked more to the new Strategic Plan with relevant horizon scanning. Risk and Health and Safety should be on every agenda.

GB/1/24/10 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

1/24/10.1 The Chair noted the temporary committee changes following Mr Sam Snodden's temporary appointment as Secretary. This included Ms Majella Corrigan being appointed as temporary chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. In addition, Ms Paula Leitch had agreed to temporarily join ARAC to ensure that the Committee remained quorate.

GB/1/24/11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1/24/11.1 There were no items of any other business to be included.

GB/1/24/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1/24/12.1 The next meeting of the Governing Body will be Wednesday 26 June 2024 and will start at 10:00am with a review of Board Effectiveness followed by lunch at 1:30pm. The Meeting will reconvene at 2:30pm to deal with the routine business.

RESERVED BUSINESS

The Staff and Student President left the meeting.

GB 1/24/ RESERVED BUSINESS held in a separate minute

Signed:
Chair

Dated: