

## Ruskin College

### GOVERNING EXECUTIVE

#### Minutes of the five hundred and seventieth meeting of the Governing Executive held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 11.00am in the Board Room (G.01), Ruskin College, Dunstan Road, Old Headington, Oxford, OX3 9BZ.

##### Present:

Councillor Van Coulter (ordinary member)  
 Wendy Dawson (ordinary member)  
 John Fray (Vice-Chair) (ordinary member)  
 Rob Hancock (ordinary member)  
 Anne Hock (ordinary member)  
 Roger McKenzie (ordinary member) (part)  
 Jo Morris (ordinary member)  
 David Norman (ordinary member)  
 Carole Orgell-Rosen (Chair) (co-opted member)  
 Pearl Ryall (ordinary member)  
 Alan Shepherd (co-opted member)  
 Marva Small (co-opted member)  
 Dr Peter Dwyer (staff member)  
 Dr Bridget Ng'andu (staff member)  
 Guy Langton (staff member)  
 Dr Chris Wilkes (Acting Principal) (staff member)  
 Kieron Winters (staff member)  
 Rowan Padmore (student member)

##### In attendance:

Sally Courtney (Finance Director)  
 Paul di Felice (Vice-Principal)  
 Helen Jeffries (Clerk)

### PART A

- 1      **Congratulations to David Norman on his award in the New Year's Honours list**      Action  
 The Chair offered the Governing Executive's congratulations to David Norman on the announcement of an MBE for services to the promotion of education and life chances for working people through lifelong learning, the trade union movement and local politics.
- 2      **Apologies for absence**  
 Apologies were received from Jane Dixon, Doug Nicholls, John Raftery and Miriam David.
- 3      **Declaration of interests**  
**Noted:** that no member present declared any interest, financial or otherwise, relating to any item on the agenda.
- 4      **Minutes**  
**Noted:** that there should be no upper case O after the hyphen in Co-op  
**Confirmed:** as a correct record the minutes of Part A of the Governing Executive meeting held on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013, with the amendment noted above.

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### 5 Matters arising

**Noted:** a query regarding the marketing strategy as noted on p. 4 of the minutes.

**Noted:** that this would be discussed in the Acting Principal's report, and that new written marketing material had been tabled. The Governors would also have an opportunity to view new videos from the College's website later in the meeting.

**Noted:** that a page for Conferences was now live on the website.

*11.10 Chris Wilkes left the meeting*

Agenda items 6-8 were discussed in Part B of the meeting

*12.15 Chris Wilkes re-joined the meeting*

### 9 Finance Committee

**9.1 Received:** the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 7 February 2014

**Noted:** that the Governing Executive wished to express their appreciation of the large donation of £100k to the College by an anonymous donor, in order to establish new scholarships.

**Noted:** that a meeting had been held with Programme Co-ordinators who expressed interest in forming a fund-raising working party, and that it had been agreed to meet again after Easter. It was hoped that Council and Governing Executive members would join the working party.

**Noted:** that Jane Dixon had resigned from the Finance Committee, leaving a vacancy for Chair as well as within the Committee. Anyone interested in joining the Finance Committee should talk to the Acting Principal. Those already on the Audit Committee were not allowed to join the Finance Committee.

**9.2 Received:** a report on the financial position to the end of December 2013

The Finance Director noted that the report had been updated since it had been presented to the Finance Committee.

**Noted:** that a small surplus was now forecast.

**Noted:** that since the report had been written, the College had been able to assess its draw down from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), and that there had been a 50% draw down in relation to Cert HE students.

**Noted:** that the College was looking at a shared services arrangement with Activate Learning (formerly Oxford and Cherwell Valley College Group) for a new management information system. The current system was not performing well. It was hoped to keep down capital costs via a shared arrangement.

**Noted:** that a language school would be using the College's facilities in the summer, paying £75k for the period of use.

**Noted:** that the Finance Director and one of the governors had recently visited the GFTU facility at Quorn Grange to review their catering. Staff from Quorn Grange met with catering staff from Ruskin, and a report would be prepared on possible changes to the catering operation for presentation to the next Finance Committee.

**Noted:** that the College had accepted an offer in excess of £440k for the property in Stoke Place.

**Noted:** that the College had discussed an overdraft facility with the bank.

**Noted:** that the SFA wished to discuss the financial position with the College, and that the Finance Director had prepared a two year forecast for this.

**Noted:** that the issue of 'going concern' had been discussed at Audit Committee and that with the confirmation of the sale of the property in Stoke Place, liquidity at 31<sup>st</sup> July should be fine.

*Roger McKenzie left the meeting at 12.40pm*

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- 9.3 Received:** a verbal report on funding for 2014/15  
**Noted:** that the College understood that there may be a 10% cut in funding from the SFA, and that the expected allocation would be notified in the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> March. The funding allocation from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) would not be known until the end of March. The College would be cautious in its projections at the meeting with the SFA.
- 9.4 Received:** the tuition fees and charges for 2014/15 and the HE tuition fees for 2015/16  
**Noted:** that some universities were now offering a reduction in fees on a four year full time course, and that the Chair urged the management team to consider this.  
**Noted:** that the paper showed the remains of the old fee regime vs the new fee regime.  
**Noted:** that a costing exercise had clarified the actual average cost of an HE student at £9,058. The College would move to full £9k fees from 2015/16. This would not affect current students.  
**Approved:** the tuition fees and charges for 2014/15 and the HE tuition fees for 2015/16
- 9.5 Health and Safety Annual report**  
**Received:** the Health and Safety annual report as prepared by the Health and Safety manager.
- 10 Policy Review**
- 10.1 Received:** the un-changed Financial Regulations  
**Approved:** the Financial Regulations
- 10.2 Received:** the un-changed Risk Management Policy  
**Approved:** the Risk Management Policy
- 10.3 Received:** the updated Finance Committee annual schedule of business  
**Approved:** the updated Finance Committee annual schedule of business
- 10.4 Received:** the revised Public Interest Disclosure Policy  
**Noted:** that a draft of this policy went to a meeting of JNC, and was not yet agreed.  
**Approved, subject to agreement with JNC:** the revised Public Interest Disclosure Policy
- 10.5 Received:** the Policy Review Schedule
- 10.6 Received:** submissions from governors on improving efficiency in Executive meetings  
**Agreed:** to add to the agenda for the next meeting.
- 11 Academic Quality and Standards Committee**
- 11.1 Received:** the minutes of Part A of the meeting held on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2013

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**12 Acting Principal’s report**

**Noted:** that the College had celebrated 115 years of existence on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. A two-page article had appeared in the Oxford Mail, and the occasion was used to launch the new prospectus.

**Noted:** that the Acting Principal had been reviving local relationships and the College had continued to work with Oxford Brookes University and Activate Learning. The College had been invited by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to make a proposal for taking on some of the work of the Oxfordshire Skills and Learning Service from 2015/16. The College had since heard from OCC that they wished to retain the service as a whole, but they would like Ruskin to be part of the delivery arrangements.

**Noted:** that the Acting Principal had been working with other Specially Designated Institutions (SDI’s) to develop a common brand in order to raise the profile of the SDI’s nationally. A Parliamentary launch party will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> April from 12.30-2.30. The College had been allocated ten invitations for governors. The Clerk would e-mail regarding this early next week. The Acting Principal would report back on the event.

Clerk

**Noted:** that two of the other Residential Colleges were planning to enter into federation arrangements, This was a growing model in education and the Acting Principal would report back on further developments. Northern College was in the process of reviewing its governance arrangements and this would be reported on at a later date.

**Noted:** that the work of TUC Organising Academy had grown, and that this could potentially generate £200kin 2013/14. It included offering diploma programmes to individual unions. This was subject to the SFA review of trade union funding for 2014/15.

**Noted:** that the staff were all fully engaged and contributing towards promoting the College. One example of this was the Ruskin Theatre Platforms, which were a great opportunity to show off the building and the College.

**Noted:** that the College had developed its Facebook page, and that governors who used Facebook were encouraged to take a look at the pages <https://www.facebook.com/?sk=welcome#!/RuskinCollegeOxford> and to ‘like’ them. The pages were shown on the interactive white board for governors to see.

**13 Student representative’s report**

There was no student representative’s report at this meeting

**14 Dates of meetings for 2013/14**

**Noted:** dates of remaining meetings for 2013/14

- 16 May 2014 11.00am
- 4 July 2014 **9.30am**

*There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.04pm*

Signed by the Chair of the meeting succeeding that to which these minutes pertain

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