

GOVERNING EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the five hundred and sixty-second meeting of the Governing Executive held on Friday 25 November 2011 at 11.00am at Stoke House, Headington (Alan Fisher Seminar Room)

<p>Present: Chris Baugh (part)</p> <p>Jane Dixon</p> <p>John Fray</p> <p>Des McDermott</p> <p>Roger McKenzie</p> <p>Audrey Mullender (Principal)</p> <p>Teresa Munby</p> <p>David Norman (Chair) (part)</p> <p>Carole Orgell-Rosen</p> <p>John Raftery</p> <p>Alan Shepherd</p>	<p>In attendance:</p> <p>Sally Courtney (Finance Director)</p> <p>Helen Jeffries (minutes)</p> <p>Chris Wilkes (General Secretary)</p>
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Part A

Item		Action
1	<p>Chair's introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that the meeting was being held in Headington in order to give the members of Governing Executive an opportunity to see how the building work was progressing, and that the transformation was quite remarkable. The Chair congratulated the Principal and staff on winning the Pearson Award for Widening Participation to Lifelong Learning at the Beacon Awards.</p> <p>The Principal echoed the congratulations to staff, partners and learners. She reported that the award certificate would be presented at Westminster and that a cheque for £5,000 was also part of the award.</p> <p>Roger McKenzie, the Assistant General Secretary of Unison, and Alan Shepherd, co-opted member were welcomed to their first meeting and introductions were made for their benefit.</p>	
1	<p>Apologies for absence and welcome new members</p> <p>Apologies were received from Mike Bradley, Wendy Dawson, Anne Hock, Jo Morris, Doug Nicholls, Pearl Ryall, Colin Taylor (received after the meeting) and Kieron Winters.</p>	
	<p>The Chair then invited Carole Orgell-Rosen to make a brief statement on a matter not on the agenda</p> <p>Statement by Carole Orgell-Rosen (Vice Chair)</p> <p>Ms Orgell-Rosen informed the Governing Executive that for some years she had been receiving letters from former student and Fellowship member Owen Murphy, which were unpleasant and questioned her academic qualifications. Ms Orgell-Rosen quoted</p>	

	<p>from the letters and from the Ruskin lawyer's letter to Owen Murphy.</p> <p>She explained that she was raising the matter so that the Governing Executive was fully informed and in the light of at least one member receiving a copy of the letter from Owen Murphy. Ms Orgell-Rosen said she had not been elected, and later co-opted on the basis of academic qualifications; however she did indeed hold a degree and a Labour Studies diploma and displayed both to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Carole and assured her of the continuing support of the Governing Executive</p>	
<p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Declaration of interests</p> <p>Noted: that no member present declared any interest, financial or otherwise, relating to any item on the agenda.</p> <p>Minutes</p> <p>Confirmed: as a correct record the minutes of Part A of the Governing Executive meeting held on 8 July 2011.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>Noted: that there were no matters arising.</p> <p>Election of new members</p> <p>Approved: the Search Committee's recommendation that Roger McKenzie (Unison) and Alan Shepherd (co-opted) be elected to the Governing Executive.</p> <p>Noted: Mike Bradley's resignation from Governing Executive as of the end of December 2011. Search Committee to nominate a replacement.</p>	<p>Search Committee</p>
<p>6</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Estates</p> <p>Project Board</p> <p>Received: minutes of the Project Board meeting held on 4 November 2011. The Principal explained that the development is on budget and that the time scale has slipped slightly, but that there was considerable leeway built into the project.</p> <p>Received: RSM Tenon's review of legacy accommodation in Stoke Place</p> <p>The Principal pointed out a mistake in the figures on page 14 of the report: the combined value of the two properties should read £805,000. The Principal then went on to give some background to the report, noting that the review of legacy accommodation had been requested at a previous Governing Executive. As a charity Ruskin must keep its assets under constant review, and Stoke House and the two cottages on Stoke Place had not been looked at for some time in the midst of the larger development. The Principal commented that the report speaks for itself and looks at all the options. She then went on to discuss Stoke House and the two cottages in Stoke Place. It was felt that any prospective sale of Stoke House should wait for a couple of years after the move and that it</p>	

<p>6.3</p>	<p>could be left as an open question. In respect of the two cottages, one was currently in use by a resident tutor, whilst the second was leased commercially, but had been rented by students in the past, which had occasionally proved problematic at the end of the lease. Old Headington prices were healthy-therefore the Principal was confident of a good sale price for number 3 Stoke Place which would impact positively upon the loan the College was taking to conduct the redevelopment.</p> <p>The Chair explained that the paper recommended that the College proceed to sell 3 Stoke Place, which has an estimated value of £350,000 and opened the floor to comments and questions, during which the following points were raised.</p> <p>The resident tutor at number 5 Stoke Place had been kept informed of the review and its recommendations <i>(11.20 Chris Baugh joined the meeting)</i></p> <p>John Fray enquired if the college needed the money gained from any sale. The Finance Director explained that any money raised would ease the cash flow situation next spring. It was noted that the property would become vacant on 30th April 2012.</p> <p>Carole Orgell-Rosen enquired if the money from the sale would be allowed to go into revenue. The Finance Director confirmed that it could be used as revenue in the short term.</p> <p>Des McDermott was worried about the loss of family accommodation and queried if it would be easier to consider any sale after the move to the Headington site. The Principal replied that the College would still retain three flats, about which there had been low levels of enquiry, and that two of the units were commercially leased at the moment. On the timing issue, she pointed out that any potential sale would ease the cash flow prior to receipt of the last tranche of revenue from Exeter College which would be paid at the end of the summer.</p> <p>John Raftery pointed out that Old Headington maintained a micro-climate of its own with regard to house prices, and that there was an issue with the College managing small items of property that distract from the core business. He felt that the sale was a sensible way forward.</p> <p>The Chair asked for a show of hands to vote on the sale. Approved: the recommendation to sell 3 Stoke Place.</p> <p>Received: the masterplan for Headington Meads (formerly known as Ruskin Fields).</p> <p>The Principal introduced the document, noting that the Governing Executive had approved the expenditure because of the window of opportunity offered by the City Council's plans for land across the bypass from the Headington Meads site, in Barton West.</p> <p>Ruskin had been fortunate that the City Council had included the land in the formal consultation process, and therefore the masterplan before the Governing Executive had been drawn up. The Principal pointed out that the plan balanced much needed new housing (at least 50% would be affordable) and environmental considerations.</p>	
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<p>7</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Finance and Risk Annual report and accounts</p> <p>Received: the financial statements auditor's management letter for the year ended 31st July 2011, including the regularity audit. The General Secretary introduced the letter; by noting that the external auditors had felt that they did not need to attend the meeting and that they had given an unqualified regularity opinion. He pointed out that the auditors had noted the expenditure on the Ruskin Fields development in the financial year 2010/11, and that any on-going spend must be recorded. Teresa Munby asked how much of the £100k budgeted had been spent so far. The Finance Director replied that the spend to date was just over £90k, and was as expected.</p> <p>Approved: the financial statement auditor's management letter.</p> <p>To recommend: to the AGM the annual report and accounts for the year ended July 31 2011 and the audit representations letter. The Principal commended the accounts to the committee and noted some items. The accounts were not a glossy statement because the College traditionally put its resources into the prospectus, rather than an annual report. The Principal also drew the Executive's attention to the equality objectives on page 12 of the report, noting that under the 2010 Equality Act, it is the College's duty to publish these and that equality and diversity constitute the College's core work. The Chair asked for questions and/or comments. Alan Shepherd praised the report and asked if the figure on page 6 showing the success rate on SFA-funded long courses at 60% was low? The Principal replied that it was in the region of national expectations, but that the College was working to improve it.</p> <p>Approved: the annual report and the audit representations letter.</p>	

8	Audit Committee	
8.1	<p>Received: the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 11 November 2011</p> <p>Carole Orgell-Rosen (Chair of Audit Committee) introduced the minutes. She drew item 4 of the minutes to the attention of the executive. This related to the management report for the year ended 31 July 2011. RSM Tenon had pointed out that, though they were comfortable with the capital project spend so far, it would be wise to obtain an indicative value of the property at the end of the build. She also pointed out that the internal auditors felt that the project was being well managed</p> <p>The Finance Director noted that the probability was that the total project cost would not remain capitalised, due to the value of the estate and the high level of professional fees. She noted that impairment could be between £1m and £2m and explained that impairment is a downward valuation of a property. The whole estate would be revalued in May or June 2012 on project completion.</p> <p>Teresa Munby queried the connection between capitalisation and impairment. The Finance Director replied that to date the capitalisation had been relatively high and that when the project was finished it must be valued in real terms, hence impairment. Teresa then enquired if that led to the implication that the building was security on the loan? The Finance Director replied that security was based on property around the estate, not the Rookery or the new Academic Building.</p> <p>Des McDermott queried the request for a confidential session under item 12 in the minutes. Carole Orgell-Rosen replied as Chair of the committee, that the Audit Committee terms of reference recommend that the committee should meet periodically without staff of the college in attendance.</p> <p>Approved: the minutes of the Audit Committee, and the recommendation of RSM Tenon as external auditors and Knox Cropper as internal auditors for 2011/12</p>	
8.2	<p>Received: the internal audit annual report for 2010/11</p> <p>Approved: the internal audit annual report for 2010/11</p>	
8.3	<p>Received: the Audit Committee annual report for 2010/11</p> <p>Noted: that attendance at the committee meetings had been poor and that Search Committee was to look at membership</p> <p>Approved: the Audit Committee annual report for 2010/11</p>	
8.4/5/6	<p>Received: the risk management annual report for 2010/11, the risk management plan and the risk register for phase 2.</p> <p>The Chair proposed to take these three agenda items together, and pointed out that they were in a new format and the range of risks had been expanded. Comments and questions were welcomed, and the following points were discussed.</p> <p>Attendance: Alan Shepherd queried the absence of attendance as a risk. Carole Orgell-Rosen responded that this had been seen as a risk</p>	

	<p>in previous years and had been picked up by the auditors. However it was no longer seen as a risk as it had been worked on.</p> <p>The Principal added that it was normally subsumed into retention and achievement and that students are sent a letter if they missed one or two classes. Des McDermott commented that there are several built-in supports around attendance including the register, which was important for health and safety, and the observation of teaching and learning.</p> <p>Teresa Munby questioned the recording of 'Medium' under 'Likelihood' against the risk of 'delay in timescale for project', and also requested that someone take the Executive through the risk register for phase 2 to explain how the risks were being managed.</p> <p>The Chair declined this request, noting that the purpose of the RAG chart format was to enable the Governing Executive to focus on the chief risks.</p> <p>The Principal noted that the language used did not always convey that risks were not predictions and that they were being well managed</p> <p>The General Secretary commented that the report was written on the basis of the plan approved last year and that events had moved on.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the report should therefore be seen as an historical document and not the current situation.</p> <p>John Raftery added that the sociology behind the compilation of a risk management report meant that certain items were highlighted as high or medium risks in order to make sure that they were not missed and that management paid attention to them.</p> <p>The Chair thanked John Raftery for his comment.</p> <p>Carole Orgell-Rosen assured the Executive that the report had been closely interrogated at Audit Committee and looked at by the auditors. The Chair thanked Carole for her helpful comments.</p> <p>Approved: the risk management annual report 2010/11, the risk management plan and the risk register for phase 2.</p> <p>The Chair then proposed a change to the agenda due to the possibility of inquoracy after lunch.</p>	
<p>17</p>	<p>Learning and Teaching</p>	
<p>17.1</p>	<p>Academic Quality and Standards Committee Received: the minutes of Part A of the meeting held on 23 September 2011. Noted: the minutes of Part A of the meeting held on 23 September 2011.</p>	
<p>17.2</p>	<p>Received: the self-assessment report grades The Principal noted that it is normal to put through the self-assessment report grades this term as they require the approval of the Governing Executive. The Principal explained the reasoning behind the outstanding grades for CertHE in Law (excellent progression rate, provides true social mobility), TUC Centre and Skills</p>	

	<p>for Life (both have won national awards). She also sought the committee's approval of a change to the grade listed on the paper for Lifelong Learning for Work and Skills from good to outstanding, having now seen the report behind this new area of work.</p> <p>Alan Shepherd commented that it would be useful to see more data underpinning the grades. The Principal requested a separate meeting with Alan at which his advice on detailed reporting could be sought.</p> <p>Approved: the self-assessment report grades. <i>(Jane Dixon left the meeting at 12.27)</i></p> <p>Finance and Risk</p> <p>9 Finance Committee</p> <p>9.1 Received: the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 4 November 2011</p> <p>The Principal introduced the item before the Governing Executive for agreement, the MA ILTUS fee for 2012/13, by saying that the college wished to keep the fee as low as possible to assist trades unions to fund their members and staff on this valuable programme. The Finance Director and the MA ILTUS tutor had worked very hard to reduce the costs by considering staff and also changing the blend of learning. The Finance Director clarified that the proposed fee for the MA ILTUS programme over two years from 2012/13 was £6,800.</p> <p>Approved: the MA ILTUS fee of £6,800 for 2012/13</p> <p>Received: a verbal report on the Access Agreement for 2012/13.</p> <p>It was noted that the College will not be bidding for core and margin numbers as they are not required and would be heavily in demand this year but the College had taken the opportunity to put through an Access Agreement on which it was awaiting a formal response. This should have been received by Friday 2nd December and the Principal and the General Secretary were confident that the lower fees would be approved.</p> <p>Noted: the verbal report</p> <p>9.2 Received: report on the financial position to the end of September 2011</p> <p>The Finance Director introduced the report and noted that the situation was now panning out in a clearer manner. She reported that the College may be slightly under budget as the intake of bursary funded first years had been lower than expected and there were a number of deferred students during the first half of term,</p> <p>Approved: the report on the financial position to the end of September 2011.</p> <p>9.3 Received: the financial management and control evaluation return for 2010/11</p> <p>The General Secretary told the committee that the self-assessment form had changed slightly from last year and that there were a few additional questions. The return had been through both Finance and Audit Committees. The self-assessment was 'good' for all areas,</p>	
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	<p>which was an improvement on the last return. The return had been completed in full as the college had been expecting an OFSTED inspection and, if that occurred, a full SFA audit would also happen at the same time.</p> <p>Alan Shepherd noted that as per question 3b on the return regarding governor training, he would appreciate some training as a new member.</p> <p>The General Secretary and the Clerk to look into training available and inform Alan and other new members.</p> <p>Approved: the financial management and control evaluation return for 2010/11</p> <p>10 Received: the funding agreement between the SFA and the College in relation to the Adult Education Bursary scheme.</p> <p>The General Secretary commented that in previous years this had been agreed between the Residential College Committee (RCC) and the SFA. This year the SFA required Ruskin to agree this because the RCC is not a formally constituted body. This is leading towards a review of the Adult Education Bursary scheme.</p> <p>Approved: the funding agreement between the SFA and the College in relation to the Adult Education Bursary scheme</p> <p>11 Policy reviews</p> <p>The Chair introduced this agenda item by noting that it was the Governing Executive's responsibility to review existing policies and to agree any new ones.</p> <p>The Principal informed the committee that the College had a policy calendar, which included a policy on safeguarding adults at risk to be reviewed at the same time as the other policies reviewed here. However as the policy had been considerably reviewed in the Spring and seen by Governing Executive twice at that stage, it was felt that it should carry over for the full year.</p> <p>11.1 Received: the Single Equality Scheme</p> <p>The Principal commented that the college had been ahead of the sector with this policy and that it captured the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act.</p> <p>Teresa Munby queried the absence of sexual orientation in the list of data about the student body to be monitored. She pointed out that in the context of teaching and students it was a key issue for some professions.</p> <p>The Principal suggested that training after the Council meeting on 2nd December would present a good opportunity for discussing this and other issues.</p> <p>The Chair agreed.</p> <p>Approved: the Single Equality Scheme</p> <p>11.2 Received: the Policy and Procedures on Sexual, Racial and Personal Harassment. No changes were proposed.</p>	Gen Sec/Clerk
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	<p>The meeting broke for lunch at 1.00pm. David Norman left the meeting at 1.00 pm</p> <p>The meeting re-convened at 1.45pm. Carol Orgell-Rosen took the chair</p> <p>14 Received: feedback from the annual self-assessment exercise.</p> <p>15 Received: Governor's register of interest forms to be completed and returned to the Clerk.</p> <p>16 Received: a letter from the Association of Colleges on the draft Foundation Code of Governance. The Principal noted that the Code showed how the sector was seeking to become more self-regulatory. The General Secretary commented that it may be worthwhile auditing the college's current code in order to plug any gaps.</p> <p>18 Standing items</p> <p>Principals' report Received: a report from the Principal. The Principal reported a positive start to the year and that she was particularly pleased that, in terms of curriculum and quality things were going very well. The QAA report had been very good, and in the National Students Survey (in which only a few Ruskin students are eligible to vote), the college had come top in student satisfaction for learning and teaching in Social Work. Under Property Strategy, the Principal reported that a subcontractor on the building project had ceased trading, but that this had only resulted in a small loss of time and that a replacement had been found very quickly. Liz Mathews commented that the contractors had exhibited a high level of professionalism on site. The Principal also noted that managing the move to the new building was commencing and would be complex for example all library volumes were to be electronically tagged in order to allow self-issue by users. The Principal reported on examples of Ruskin's external engagement, including the recent Beacon Award which celebrated the outreach work of the college and incorporating the work with Crisis Skylight where the college offered a unit of level 2 provision off site. She was also happy to report that Billy Bragg had been persuaded to join Peggy Seeger for a fund-raising concert next year. Funds would be used to digitise the MacColl/Seeger archive. Chris Baugh and John Ord were both assisting with this venture. The Principal concluded by saying that this was a very exciting time, and that the college was planning ahead to re-launch the college itself and not just the new building. She added that Ruskin needed to be identified with the current situation and to be seen as part of the</p>	
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	<p>movement for change. The Chair invited comments and questions Chris Baugh commented that it was remarkable that Ruskin was responsible for the MacColl/Seeger archive and that it was important to consider how it could be used once digitised. He suggested that it would be useful to add an item to a future agenda outlining fund-raising initiatives. The Principal agreed. Agreed: to add fund-raising initiatives to a future agenda Des McDermott noted that Mark Serwotka had confirmed that he would be happy to be part of the launch ceremony and that he would need to confirm the date in his diary. The Principal confirmed the date as Saturday 27 October 2012 and noted that Mark Serwotka could take his choice of time.</p> <p>19 Noted: no report available from the student representatives. The RSU would hold a ballot for new officers on 7th December.</p> <p>20 Noted: meeting dates for the academic year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 March 2012 • 11 May 2012 • 6 July 2012 <p>The Principal proposed that the July meeting be held at the earlier time of 9.30-11.30, with Council following at 11.30-1.00 and the summer buffet after. The change was to remove the problem that some members found in attending two meetings in consecutive weeks. The Chair was happy for the meetings to be held in this way as long as they were held in two different room Agreed: that the July meeting be held before the Council meeting.</p> <p>There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.00pm</p>	
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