

Ruskin College

GOVERNING EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the five hundred and sixty-eighth meeting of the Governing Executive held at 11.00am on Friday 5th July 2013 in the Board Room at Ruskin College, Dunstan Road, Old Headington, Oxford, OX3 9BZ

Present:

Councillor Van Coulter (ordinary member)
John Fray (Vice-Chair) (ordinary member)
Anne Hock (ordinary member)
Roger McKenzie (ordinary member)
Jo Morris (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)
Alan Irwin (staff member)
Guy Langton (staff member)
Professor Audrey Mullender (Principal)(staff member)
Matthew Smith (student member)
Professor Miriam David (Academic Adviser) (part)

In attendance:

Sally Courtney (Finance Director)
Hannah Jones (Academic Registrar) (part)
Helen Jeffries (Clerk)
Dr Chris Wilkes (General Secretary)

PART A

The Chair paid tribute to Jim Mortimer, a former student at Ruskin College, who had died at the age of 92. Jim Mortimer was General Secretary of the Labour Party and Chair of ACAS, the author of several books on the trade union movement and a Visiting Professor at Imperial College, London.

The Chair also paid tribute to Brian Kelly, a former student at Ruskin College and member of Council, who died suddenly in April.

Alan Irwin noted that he was at Ruskin College with Brian Kelly, and that Mr Kelly had been a student who helped and inspired other students. His death was a very sad loss to the trade union movement. John Fray added that Brian Kelly had been an outstanding member of the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU), and that Jim Mortimer had been a great trade unionist and a great man at Ruskin and had gone out of his way to support the National Union of Journalists (NUJ). Matthew Smith noted that Jim Mortimer had encouraged him to go to Ruskin and that he was hoping it would be possible to install a memorial to Jim Mortimer on one of the benches in the Ruskin College grounds during September.

The Chair called for two minutes silence.

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- 1 Apologies for absence** Action
 Apologies were received from Jane Dixon, Doug Nicholls, Councillor David Norman, Professor John Raftery, Colin Taylor and Kieron Winters. Apologies were received after the meeting from Chris Baugh.
- 2 Declaration of interests**
Noted: that no member present declared any interest, financial or otherwise, relating to any item on the agenda.
- 3 Student Governor**
Noted: that this item was withdrawn until the next meeting. Mohammad Sharafat had left the College to take up a place at the University of Exeter for a degree in Law.
- 4 Election of Chair**
 The Clerk took the Chair for this item and reported that Councillor David Norman was not seeking re-election as Chair of the Governing Executive. The Clerk then asked for nominations for the post of Chair. Carole Orgell-Rosen was nominated and seconded.
Agreed: the election of Carole Orgell-Rosen as Chair of the Governing Executive of Ruskin College.
- 5 Election of Vice-Chair**
 The Chair asked for nominations for the post of Vice-Chair. John Fray was nominated and seconded.
Agreed: the election of John Fray as Vice-Chair of the Governing Executive of Ruskin College.
- 6 Minutes**
Confirmed: as a correct record the minutes of Part A of the Governing Executive meeting held on 17 May 2013
- 7 Matters arising**
Noted: that there were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 8 To ratify (due to inquorate GE/566A and GE/567A)**
Agreed: that the following items were ratified
- Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2012
 - Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2012
 - Internal audit annual report 2011/12
 - Audit Committee annual report 2011/12
 - Risk Management annual report 2011/12
 - Risk Management Plan
 - Minutes of the Search Committee held on 17th May 2013
 - Protocol for Excellence in Governance
 - Meeting dates for the academic year 2013/14
 - **Noted:** that the date of the meeting planned for 28th February 2014 had been changed to 7th March 2014. Clerk to send out amended meeting dates. Clerk
 - **Received:** a valuation of 5 Stoke Place from an independent chartered surveyor
 - **Noted:** that the Governing Executive had already agreed in principle

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to the sale of 5 Stoke Place, and that the valuation before the Executive was an official valuation. The College may choose to market the property at the official valuation price or above.

- **Noted:** that the College will still retain all the land and property on the Dunstan Road site, and on the Stoke House site.
- **Noted:** it was hoped that the money from the sale could eventually be used to reduce the loan, but that the College must also consider its covenants with regard to the bank loan and the cash position.
- **Noted:** that, in response to a query about the reasons for selling now, the Finance Director pointed out that it was important to ensure that cash reserves were appropriate plus the property was not in good repair and would require investment.
- **Noted:** that in response to a query regarding the possible use of the money for marketing purposes, the Principal reported that the money raised would be part of capital, and that the marketing budget was revenue and was increased year to year. The money would be required to reduce borrowing and thus increase sustainability.
- **Approved:** by unanimous vote to dispose of 5 Stoke Place.

The Vice-Chair took the Chair at this point in the meeting so that the Chair could present the agenda items on the Audit Committee, of which she was the outgoing Chair. The Chair of the Audit Committee asked that the Executive take items 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 together

9 Audit Committee

9.1 Received: the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 10 June 2013

9.2 Received: the revised Terms of Reference for Audit Committee.

9.3 Received: the recommendation of the Audit Committee on the Internal Audit Function

Noted: that the revised Joint Audit Code of Practice (JACOP) will be introduced on 1st August 2013 and that it will change audit arrangements for FE Colleges. It will give colleges a freer hand when dealing with internal audit.

The Audit Committee had decided not to remove Internal Audit altogether, but had agreed to look at what was needed in order to assure Governing Executive regarding the regularity, propriety and efficiency of the College's plans and actions. This may include employing appropriate professionals (other than auditors) to review certain areas of the work of the College.

Hannah Jones joined the meeting at 10.00am

Noted: that the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee had been revised to align with the new guidelines, and to ensure that the Audit Committee could carry out assurances and oversee the management of risk on behalf of the Governing Executive.

Noted: that it was important not to leave the College open to abuse and to tighten up as regulations changed.

Noted: that the Audit Committee would hold a special meeting on 23rd September to draw up an internal audit plan for Ruskin College based on the needs of the College.

Noted: that some specialist advice may be needed for the internal audit, but that the Audit Committee does not expect the process to cost any more than it has in the past.

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Approved: the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

Approved: the recommendation of the Audit Committee on the Internal Audit Function.

The Vice-Chair proposed thanks to the Chair of the Audit Committee for all the work involved in the above.

The Vice-Chair handed the meeting back to the Chair.

10 Finance Committee

10.1 The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 21 June would be brought to Clerk the next meeting of the Governing Executive.

10.2 **Received:** a report on the financial position to the end of May 2013

The Finance Director introduced the report.

Noted: that at the time of the report the forecasted loss was £102k, but this was mainly down to timing, and that by the end of the year the College should be reporting a surplus.

Noted: that the Finance department had been working on ways to improve reporting on the receipt of tuition fees. The Finance Director showed a chart that indicated how income was derived.

Noted: that the 'self-funding' students were of most concern. Approximately 60% of money (approx. £60k) was still to be collected. This was money that came directly from students to the College and not via a third party, even though much of it was public money, e.g. student loans. The majority of students were unable to pay the full £7.5k at the beginning of the academic year and may find it difficult to pay later for a variety of reasons.

Noted: that this was not debt that would be written off but money that was harder to collect.

Noted: that Councillor Coulter offered to help the College with a piece of work on helping students to identify where funding and help is available from. This could form part of induction or the pre-course application procedure.

Noted: that the Ruskin Student Union (RSU) proposed to hold a session on budgeting for students at the Freshers' Fair.

Noted: that members of the Governing Executive felt strongly that this issue was important and focused on what Ruskin stands for as a College: providing access to opportunities. It was suggested that trade unions could work on the issue as well, being clear about what help was available and how it linked to other areas of assistance.

The Principal warmly welcomed any offers of help to help fill funding gaps and congratulated the Finance Director and her team on the work that had been done to identify and collect the debt.

10.3 **Received:** the draft budget for the year to 31 July 2014

Noted: that the budget before the Governing Executive was a cash budget, and that depreciation would show below the line.

The Finance Director brought to the Executive's attention the budgeted cash requirement for 2013/14, and noted that the bottom line cash requirement would show a deficit of £40k at year end, allowing for work on the perimeter walls and repayments of the capital on the loan.

Approved: the draft budget for the year to 31 July 2014

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11 Policy Review

11.1 Received (as draft): the Admissions Policy

11.2 Received (as draft): the Learning and Teaching Strategy

Noted: that updated versions of these two documents would be brought to the Governing Executive meeting of 22nd November.

Noted: that members of the Executive found it useful to be able to see amendments as in the 'track changes' view of MS Word.

11.3 Received: the draft revised Whistleblowing Policy (now called the Public Interest Disclosure Policy)

Noted: that the policy would need to return to the Governing Executive at the next meeting as it was to be referred to the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). The policy was based on the policy of a sister college.

Noted: that the students have their own complaints policy, under which complaints are sent directly to the Principal's office whereas staff require a direct line that can by-pass line management in very serious circumstances.

11.4 Received: the Records Management Policy

Hannah Jones (Academic Registrar) introduced the policy.

Noted: that the amendments suggested at the meeting of 17th May 2013 had been made.

Noted: that the records from 1950-1960 were still in the process of being logged and put onto the Web Alumnus system.

Noted: that the wording of paragraph 5e was important, and that Alan Shepherd should pass his suggested amended wording to the Clerk and to the Academic Registrar.

To add the following:

'Consultation will take place, with appropriate individuals and groups, as deemed necessary to aid this process.'

Noted: that a small percentage of the College's records would be selected for permanent or long-term preservation.

A discussion followed during which the following points were made:

- That there appeared to be tension between data protection and continued social and political research for future generations.
- That the policy follows JISC guidelines, which are national guidelines on record-keeping in academic settings.
- That Ruskin College was not like other institutions and that the amendment noted above was welcomed.
- That Ruskin College should celebrate its history.
- That a full discussion had already been undertaken at earlier meetings and that the policy was subject to the review timetable.
- That a photographic record could potentially be made each year of life at Ruskin (subject to student and staff permission), which could build a different kind of archive.
- That a key point of the discussion was defined in the amendment suggested above, i.e. consultation.

The Principal replied that the College was not averse to continued discussion, but that the College would be the same as any other institution if fined for illegally retaining records. A wider discussion was needed on how to celebrate the College's

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history, while also promoting its future and that perhaps this could be discussed at the next meeting of Council.

Approved with the amendment as suggested: the Records Management Policy
Hannah Jones left the meeting at 11.00am

12 Annual Governing Executive Self-Assessment Exercise

Received: the self-assessment form for completion by Governing Executive members.

Noted: that the form was to be completed and passed to the Clerk at the end of the meeting.

Noted: that Peter Dwyer argued that to complete the self-assessment form at this point of the meeting would be premature as a discussion had not been held on the agenda item in Part B of the meeting that related to the component of the Staff Survey that pertained to the Governing Executive.

13 Draft Access Agreement 2014/15

Received: the draft access agreement for Academic Year 2014/15

Noted: that the agreement had been submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and returned from them with comments and queries. The recommended amendments were included and the agreement was signed off.

Noted: that the Foundation Degree in Business and Social Enterprise was not included as it would be funded through Oxford Brookes University.

Noted: that in response to a query from the student governor it was noted that the College may look at increasing fees further from 2015/16.

Noted: that the student governor requested that the College involve an equality impact assessment in their deliberations and look at the cost of living in Oxford.

Miriam David joined the meeting at 11.05

14 Meeting dates for 2013/14

Noted: the meeting dates for the next academic year

- 22 November 2013
- 7 March 2014 (change from 28 February 2014)
- 16 May 2014
- 4 July 2014

The Chair proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor David Norman for the amount of (often unseen) work and the years that he had given to the College. The vote was passed unanimously.

Agreed: that a collection should be organised and a presentation made at the next meeting of Council.

There being no further business part A of the meeting closed at 11.15am

N.B Permanent Wi-Fi access accounts for use by Governors when in College can be made available. Please let the Clerk know if you would like to set up an account and if you would like a Ruskin College e-mail address.

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

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