

Minutes of Meeting
Court
7 February 2024, 2.15-3.15pm

Location: Online (Zoom)

Members present:

Jamie Agombar
Jimena Alamo
Ghazwa Alwani-Starr
Georgina Andrews
Dawn Bonfield
Richard Bonner
Robert Brain
Alan Bramley
Rob Branston
Pamela Chesters
James Davenport
Kate Ehrig-Page
Chris Eldridge
Trevor Elworthy
Helen Featherstone
Lynne Fernquest
Antonio Ferrer-Montiel
Tim Ford
Ruth Foreman

Eesha Ganesh
Sabina Gheduzzi
Barry Gilbertson
Felix Maria Goñi Urcelay
Sarah Hainsworth
Hanna Hajzer
Geoff Hammond
Titus Hiller
Wera Hobhouse
Aaron Horwood
Steve Huckvale
Alexandra Joseph
Jonathan Knight
David Lam
Calum Mercer
Justine Mercer
Jane Millar
Charlotte Moar
Sarah Moore

Bernie Morley
Adrian Price
Drew Ritchie
Chris Roche
Dine Romero
Elliot Rose
Simone Sharma
Jonathan Slack
Amber Snary
Jeff Thompson
Chloe Turner
Abigail Watkin
Steve Wharton
Ian White
Cassie Wilson
Geof Wood
Mahima Yadav

In attendance:

Martin Williams, Director of Finance

Secretariat:

Laura Andrews
Andrew Browning
Karen Gleave

Apologies:

HRH The Duke of
Edinburgh
Andie Barlow
Kimberley Bingham
John Buckingham
Teslim Bukoye
Penny Burke

Derek Brewer
Judith Brown
Pete Capener
Julian Chaudhuri
Vivien Ching
David Collard
Marian Curran

Gary Davis
Jayne Davis
Melissa George
Kevin Guy
Alan Hayes
Mark Hepworth
David Kelly

Professor Klopper
Hartmut Logemann
Dan Norris
Daniel Paul
Jura Neverauskaite

Peter Redfern
Ben Rhodes
Kiara Singh
Michael Storey
Jason Tudor

Ghehan Wanduragala
Chris Watts
Jane White
Snow Wu

Introductory items

28 - Welcome and Quorum

Pro-Chancellor, Ruth Foreman, welcomed members and attendees and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were noted.

29 - Declarations of Interest

Councillor Sarah Moore declared that her husband was an employee at the University.

30 – Membership and Terms of Reference - Paper CT23/24 - 01

Court noted the membership and Terms of Reference for Court.

Professor Georgina Andrews fed back their change in job title which was now Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost of Bath Spa University, to be updated on all correspondence.

31 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting - Paper CT23/24 - 02

Court approved the minutes of the previous meeting of Court held on 13 June 2023.

Due to the distance between meetings of Court, amends to the minutes would be requested within one month of today's meeting.

Part I: Main Business

32 – Update from the Vice-Chancellor and Annual Accounts

Pursuant to Statute 15.2(b), Professor Ian White, Vice-Chancellor, gave an update on the University's strategic activities, based on the [University Strategy 2021-2026](#). A copy of the presentation slides can be found in Appendix 1.

The following points were made in the question and answer session which followed the presentation:

- It was acknowledged that arguments existed that international rankings performance correlated with scale for some universities. However the performance of the University of Bath at departmental level showed that scale did not correlate so directly and that scope remained to improve the global rankings further.
- There were no current plans to resume historic conversations regarding the potential benefits of a merger between the University of Bath and Bath Spa University. There was a mutual respect between the two universities.
- Regarding international strategy, the University had a tiered set of international relations, many of which were very strong. There were major links with a modest number of other universities which were multi-faceted. The University had

developed MOUs with a second tier of universities which highlight specific subject areas. The University also had exceptional links with placement providers overseas.

There was a strong vote of thanks from Court members including the Mayor of Bath, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost of Bath Spa University and the Chair of the City of Bath World Heritage Site Advisory Board towards the Vice-Chancellor for his strong leadership and everything that he had achieved during his time in post. Partnerships between Bath Spa, Bath College and the Council had strengthened under his leadership and the University had become a stronger part of the Bath community.

Court received the University's [Annual Accounts](#) for the year ended 31 July 2023, as formally approved by the University Council at its meeting on 23 November 2023.

Treasurer, Calum Mercer, responded to two queries raised by Dawn Bonfield ahead of the meeting:

- UK Industry Research – The value in the University's accounts was £2.0m in 2022/23, down from £2.5m the previous year. IAAPS was key to increasing this number and the delayed opening impacted the 2022/23 number. The current IAAPS forecast for 2023/24 was £2.3m, so the University should see substantial growth this year and next.
- Building Maintenance – The University's maintenance budgets for 2023/24 amounted to £10.1m. It was expected that this cost would increase in the coming years, as the original parade buildings were at or beyond their design life. A piece of work was underway to address the on-ongoing maintenance need and to develop a replacement programme.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor, acknowledging his contribution to the significant positive trajectory on external rankings, his scrupulous recognition of the work of the University's staff and students, his clear and positive messaging and reassuring grasp of detail over the previous few years.

The Vice-Chancellor departed the meeting.

33 – Update on the appointment of the next Vice Chancellor

Pam Chesters, Chair of Council gave an update on the recruitment of the next Vice Chancellor, Professor Phil Taylor, who would join the University on 1st August 2024.

Council formally appointed Professor Phil Taylor as incoming Vice-Chancellor on the 8th January 2024. Professor Taylor would serve an initial 5-year term commencing 1st August 2024, with a structured transition commencing from May 2024.

The process for recruiting the Vice-Chancellor was clearly laid out in Section 5.1 of the [Statutes of the University of Bath](#). A Joint Committee had been formed consisting of the Chancellor, Chair of Council and two other members of the Council and three members of the Senate. The Students Union President and a senior representative from professional services had been co-opted. In addition Sir Peter Gregson, who had previously served as Vice Chancellor at two Universities had been invited to join the committee as an external advisor. Staff, students, alumni and bodies such as Court had been consulted about the desired attributes of a new Vice-Chancellor. The role was advertised extensively; 56 applicants were reduced to a longlist of 15 and then a final shortlist of 5 candidates was

invited to attend a 2-day engagement exercise which included a presentation and Q&A session with a group of staff and students, a mock roleplay as well as a conventional 'final interview'.

Committee members were unanimous in the decision to recommend Professor Phil Taylor to Council for the role, given his high academic standing and his extensive experience in working with industry. Professor Taylor was currently Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise at the University of Bristol and previously Head of the School of Engineering at Newcastle University, where he also led the Helix project, a new urban quarter collaboration between the University and the City. He was appointed to the Government's Net Zero Innovation Board and became Chair of the Board for the GW4 alliance of the universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter. Professor Taylor's knowledge and experience would build on the University's strong trajectory in taking Bath forward into the next chapter.

Part 2: Closing items

34 – Next meeting

Court noted that the proposed date of the next scheduled meeting of Court would be 5 February 2025 at 2.15pm.

35 – Any Other Business

A request was put forward by members for in-person meetings of Court in the future, with a hybrid element to allow the option for remote attendance. The Governance Team would consult with Court members regarding the logistics of future meetings.

The meeting closed at 3.25pm.