

# CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIRS COMMITTEE:

WEDNESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 12:30 PM

IN THE FREDERIC MASON ROOM AT ST MARTIN'S PRIORY AND VIA TEAMS  
TELECONFERENCE

**Confidential**

**Present:** Ms Judith Armit (Chair of the Governing Body)  
Sir Ian Johnston (Deputy Chair, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and Chair of the Remuneration Committee)  
Mr Philip Fletcher (Chair of the Audit Committee)  
Professor Rama Thirunamachandran (Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the Academic Board)

**In attendance:** Ms Alison Sear (Clerk to the Governing Body)

### 1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Philip Fletcher declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item 8, Membership of the Governing Body, insofar as the discussion concerned his term of office. Mr Fletcher did not attend the meeting discussion for the duration of the relevant part of this item.

### 3. Chair's Communications

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said that following the Finance and Resources Committee meeting prior to the meeting, there was increased confidence regarding the Modernising our Student Information (MOSI) project.

### 4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Chairs Committee held on 3 June 2021 and action log

The minutes of the meeting of the Chairs Committee held on 3 June 2021 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record. The action log was noted.

### 5. Matters Arising not Appearing elsewhere on the Agenda

The Chair said that it would be beneficial if the 2021/22 Governor Skills Review process took place well in advance of the Governor Informal Reviews. This would allow the outcome to be taken into account, together with attendance and all other relevant matters, during the informal review conversations.

**NOTED**

**6. Strategic Discussion Item: Government Spending Review outcomes and Augar Review; Covid-19 Response; Recruitment; League Tables Position; MOSI; Estate Master Plan – sales and Verena Holmes Roof**

The Vice-Chancellor reported there was nothing additional to what was anticipated in the Spending Review in terms of financial commitment from a higher education perspective. The Chairs discussed the Government's commitment to fund its lifelong learning initiative and the likely timing of the future consultation on Research and Development. A white paper covering Further Education, Higher Education and the Augar Review was an option being considered by the Government. The likely effect of inflation on the current level of tuition fees per student was noted.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University continued to respond to national and local developments in terms of Covid-19. The University was delivering face to face teaching in respect of, on average, approximately 80% of its teaching commitments. The remainder was being delivered online. It was expected that face to face teaching would continue in the event a 'Plan B' was rolled out by Government to mitigate rising cases of Covid-19. The University campuses and student accommodation would be likely to remain open. Staff who were not 'front facing' could potentially be asked to exclusively work from home temporarily if required and, as previously, that would be managed in an orderly and productive way. The University continued to keep its guidance in relation to face coverings under review.

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the latest student recruitment position as reported to Governors in his last e-bulletin. He said that the University was currently working through the implications of the shortfall against its forecast target for new students and returning students. He anticipated the shortfall would be partly offset by the successful recruitment to courses delivered through the University's partners, which had exceeded target. Once the financial forecasts had been modelled from the current position it would be more straightforward to determine where savings would need to be made. He said that the Strategic Savings Initiatives initiated previously would continue. In response to a question about when the rising numbers of student age population would peak, the Vice-Chancellor said that this was predicted to take place in 2025 and to remain high until 2030. The Chair asked for more information on the current situation in terms of returning students. The Vice-Chancellor said that the University had expected more deferrals compared to last year given the external context. In terms of recruitment for 2022/23 entry, the Vice-Chancellor reported that a recent external consultant's report had identified a number of actions to maximise the University's current recruitment initiatives. The offer to prospective students during Open Days and Student Applicant Days would be enhanced immediately and the University would hold an additional Open Day in January 2022.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that a similar approach would be taken to improve the University's NSS scores, which were currently below the national average. A workshop would take place in December for the University's senior leaders to determine next steps. The Chairs agreed that it was important to set the target of being ranked within the top 100 universities. The importance of working on this in conjunction with the Students' Union was noted by the Chairs. The Vice-Chancellor said that in addition to the enhancement of the student experience by successfully implementing the student record system, the complaints and appeals student processes would be reviewed by the Clerk to ensure their fitness for purpose within the academic year. Improving NSS

scores and league tables would be a high priority for the incoming new Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alison Honour.

The Vice-Chancellor said that a fresh approach would be taken by the newly formulated MOSI leadership team to successfully complete the MOSI project. He gave a brief overview of the changes in approach and said that the Finance and Resources Committee had considered the proposed new approach in detail and that, on 8 November, the Audit Committee would discuss the risks to the University of not having gone live; resources (people) and data quality. Although it was a University wide responsibility, the University's Chief Financial Officer would own that risk as he had recently taken back leadership responsibility for the University's Planning Team.

In terms of the Estate Master Plan, the University's agreed property disposal programme was progressing satisfactorily. The University, City Council's planning team and Historic England continued to discuss the views of the Cathedral from St Martin's Church, following the construction of the Verena Holmes building, to find an amicable way forward.

#### **NOTED**

#### **7. Chairs' Committee Terms of Reference and Work Plan 2021/22, Compliance Statement 2020/21 and Committee Work Plan (Paper O31)**

The Clerk presented paper O31, the draft Chairs Committee Terms of Reference and Committee Work Plan for 2021/22 for approval. There were no proposed substantive changes to the Terms of Reference which had been updated to reflect the new Chairship, amended membership and quorum to reflect the slightly reduced number of committee members. The Committee approved the Terms and Reference and noted that it had been fully compliant with its 2020/21 Work Plan. The Committee noted this together with the 2021/22 Work Plans for the Finance and Resources and the Audit Committees.

**RESOLVED:** that the draft Chairs Committee Terms of Reference and Committee Work Plan for 2021/22 be approved.

#### **8. Membership of the Governing Body including Governor Safeguarding Champion (Paper O32)**

The Chairs' Committee received Paper O32 which was presented by the Clerk to the Governing Body.

*The Chair of the Audit Committee left the meeting.*

Chairs noted that the initial term of office of the Chair of the Audit Committee would expire on 31 December 2021. Chairs agreed that given his skills, expertise and considerable contribution to the Governing Body, including taking on the newly created Senior Independent Governor role, a recommendation be made to the Governing Body to extend Mr Fletcher's term of office for a second term of four years.

*The Chair of the Audit Committee re-joined the meeting.*

Chairs noted that the initial term of office of the Archbishops' Council appointee and Audit Committee member, Mrs Pam Jones, would expire on 10 January 2022. Chairs also noted that co-opted member ('Independent Assessor') of the Remuneration Committee, Lord Alastair Colgrain's initial term of office would expire on 31 July 2022. Given their considerable contribution to the Governing Body and willingness to continue for a second term, Chairs agreed that a recommendation be made to the Governing Body that the initial terms of both Mrs Jones and Lord Colgrain be extended for a second term of four years.

Chairs noted that Sir Ian Johnston would step down from the Governing Body on 31 July 2022. It would be necessary to appoint a replacement Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and Chair of the Remuneration Committee in due course. In terms of succession planning Chairs noted that Professor John Wood would commence his term as a new Governor on 1 August 2022.

There was a discussion about the membership of the Remuneration Committee. The Clerk said that following the adoption of the new Articles on 23 September, the Student Governor would be a member of the Remuneration Committee as already approved by the Governing Body. It was noted that the Independent Assessor (co-opted) member of the committee consulted with Staff Governors each year about their perceptions of the overall performance of the University, the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Management Team. The Chair of the Remuneration Committee said that inclusive model of engagement had worked well to date.

The Chairs discussed the new post of Governor Safeguarding Champion. They considered and approved the draft role description as presented by the Clerk. The Vice-Chancellor said that Professor Graeme Dewhurst had kindly indicated his willingness to take on this role. The Chairs considered that given his medical background, Prof. Dewhurst would make an excellent Governor Safeguarding Champion and agreed to make this recommendation to the Governing Body.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to the Governing Body at its meeting on 23 November 2021, for approval:

- Philip Fletcher's term of office be extended for a second term, with effect from 1 January 2022 to expire on 31 December 2025;
- Pam Jones' term of office be extended for a second term, with effect from 11 January 2022 to expire on 10 January 2026;
- Alastair Colgrain's term of office as co-opted member of the Remuneration Committee be extended for a second term, with effect from 1 August 2022 to expire on 31 July 2026; and
- Graeme Dewhurst's appointment as Governor Safeguarding Champion for a term ending 31 July 2025 to coincide with the end of his first term.

## **9. Refreshed Schedule of Delegation (Paper O33)**

The Chairs received paper O33, Refreshed Schedule of Delegation. The Clerk said that the Schedule had been prepared by the Governance and Legal Services Manager following the adoption of the new Articles of Association on 23 September 2021. The Chair commented that the document was an excellent Schedule of Delegation. The Clerk said she would discuss with Finance colleagues to determine whether the document would be even more user friendly following the additional of a brief section

referencing the delegations pursuant to the Financial Regulations. Chairs agreed that subject to any comments from the Governing Body, that the draft Schedule of Delegation be recommended for board approval at the next meeting on 23 November 2021.

**RESOLVED:** to recommend to the Governing Body for approval the draft refreshed Schedule of Delegation.

**10. Governing Body Strategy Day 2021 and next steps for the development of the Strategic Framework; Outcomes and Feedback including the timing of the New Strategic Framework 2023 – 2030 (Paper O34)**

The Chairs received Paper O34. The Vice-Chancellor said that the paper would be shared with the Governing Body at its next meeting and would be helpful to those Governors who had been unable to attend the Strategy Day in September. Chairs endorsed the summary of the Strategy Day set out in the paper subject to a slightly greater emphasis being placed on the University's target to improve its position in the 'League Tables'.

Chairs agreed that the Strategy Day had been incredibly productive in terms of kicking off the new Strategic Framework. They noted that the executive would progress the new Strategic Framework within the current academic year under the leadership of the incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alison Honour. The Vice-Chancellor described the stakeholder engagement process that had taken place to inform the current framework prior to 2015. Work had commenced to scope out a similar engagement process for the forthcoming framework. The Vice-Chancellor would brief the new incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor following her commencement in post in early January. Chairs noted the expectation that a draft Strategic Framework would be submitted to the board for consideration at its first meeting in academic year 2022/23 and a final version submitted for board approval in November 2022.

**11. Register of Interests Summary (Paper O35)**

The Clerk presented Paper O35. The Committee members noted the summary of Governors' registered interests for publication on the University's website subject to the additional, still pending submission of interests from one Governor.

**NOTED**

**12. Any Other Business**

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the anticipated graduation ceremony dates on which several honorary awards, previously approved by the Committee but still pending due to covid, would be presented to recipients.

The Vice-Chancellor reported his intention to propose one additional honorary doctorate be presented at the graduation ceremony scheduled for September 2022 and a room naming proposal, both of which would be presented for Chairs' approval by email.

**NOTED**

**13. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Chairs Committee was scheduled to take place on 2 March 2022 at 12.30pm.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.15pm.