

Council

18 November 2020



M20/405 – M20/439

Minutes

Present:	Dame Margaret Hodge (Chair)	Ms Sarah King
	Ms Ann Ewing (Vice Chair)	Professor Paul Layzell
	Professor Sarah Ansari	Mr Gerry O'Hagan
	Ms Alissa Chohan	Miss Kate Roberts
	Professor Michael Farthing	Mr Peter Saraga
	Professor Bob Fitzgerald	Mr Nick Perryman (Vice Chair)
	Mr John Gregory	Mr Balram Veliath
	Mrs Christine Goodyear	Mr David Walker
	Mrs Tina Harris	Mr David Williams
	Ms Denise Keable	Mr Ian Wilson
Apologies:	Mrs Chris Shoukry	
Secretary:	Dr David Ashton	Deputy Principal (Operations) and Secretary to Council
In attendance:	Professor Ken Badcock	Senior Vice Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources)
	Professor James Knowles	Senior Vice Principal (Education)
	Professor Katie Normington	Deputy Principal (Academic)
	Mrs Mary White	Chief Financial Officer
	Mrs Hazel Jessop	Deputy Secretary to Council
	Mrs Pauline Martin	Executive Officer for Council, Minutes
	Mr Rob Cutting	Secretariat Assistant, Secondary Minutes

1. Apologies

NOTED apologies received from Mrs Chris Shoukry. M20/405

2. Declaration of interests

NOTED the president of RHSU declared an interest in item 8.1 due to the risk to funding in the Students' Union. M20/406

3. Minutes of the Previous meeting

APPROVED minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020 (M20/350 – M20/404) M20/407

4. Matters arising

There were none. M20/408

5.	Un-starring of items	There were none unstarred	M20/409
6.	Covid-19 update	RECEIVED an update on the current situation with regard to case management, College operations and the work to address two government policy announcements on students returning home for Christmas and asymptomatic testing at universities.	M20/410
		NOTED there continued to be a small number of confirmed student cases and approximately 50:50 face to face and online teaching continued to be delivered. This was the result of excellent staff collaboration and effort to put blended learning in place and to sustain the delivery of teaching and learning in the new, difficult operating environment.	M20/411
		NOTED the DFE Guidance for safe return home of students at Christmas and the College arrangements. All teaching would be moved on line by 9 December, the last week of the College term, and the campus would remain open, with appropriate levels of service, except for the normal Christmas closure.	M20/412
		NOTED that students were advised to take a test prior to travel home but this was not a prerequisite to travel.	M20/413
		NOTED the arrangements for setting up the asymptomatic testing facility, the role of NHS Test and Trace which addressed data protection issues, and the College responsibility for the operation of the facility on campus using the lateral flow tests. Funds have been set aside in the budget for testing and tests would be available for students and staff and expected to be operational by 30 November.	M20/414
		NOTED that the government was currently expected to support testing until Easter 2021 and this should help to increase confidence in the safety of the operating environment for returning students and for the January intake of PGT and overseas students.	M20/415
		NOTED the goodwill gesture of a credit, equivalent to one week's rent, against next terms residential fees for all students in College accommodation who were not able to occupy the room during the whole of the autumn term.	M20/416
		NOTED thanks to the College operations team involved in setting up the testing facility and to staff involved in the delivery of teaching and learning for students, for their hard work in setting up and responding to the ongoing challenges.	M20/417
7.	Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee	Annual report to be addressed at the next meeting.	M20/418
8.	Finance		
8.1		RECEIVED the 2020/21 College Budget prepared following the student number census on 15 October and scrutinised by Finance Committee and Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee. Both committees recommended the final budget to Council for approval.	M20/419

	NOTED the changes from the interim budget, the key risks for financial sustainability and possible mitigating actions required. Caution was being applied with regard to final student numbers and accommodation occupancy levels:	M20/420
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application of a 5% reduction to the 1 October numbers and 7.5% reduction on the 15 October count compared to the normal dropout rate of <1% • No January student intake was included despite acceptances indicating greater confidence • Since 1 October student numbers have increased by C300 but the income was not included in the interim budget. • A 72% occupancy rate of the residencies was included in the final budget and for two terms only. Compared to the normal occupancy rate of 98%. 	
	NOTED the capital budget spending priorities with the main spending directed to the online demands.	M20/421
	DISCUSSED that continuing close monitoring of the £1.2m clearance on the cash flow covenant would be required.	M20/422
	APPROVED the 2020/21 budget with a final budget deficit of £15.1m.	M20/423
8.2	RECEIVED a paper addressing the requirement for Council to evaluate and agree, at the time of signing the financial accounts, a statement that the College is able to continue as a going concern for at least 12 months from the date of signature of the financial statements.	M20/414
	NOTED that the evaluation was discussed at Finance Committee and at Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee and that it was AGREED by those committees that, subject to no significant events occurring up to signing of the accounts, it would be appropriate to adopt the going concern statement.	M20/424
	CONSIDERED the detailed evaluation of the key risks to the continuing operation of the College and the actions that could be taken to mitigate any impact and noting that there had been no significant matters arising since the Audit, Risk and Compliance committee meeting of 9 November.	M20/425
	AGREED that the statement "there are no material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the College's ability to continue as a going concern" should be included in the Representation Letter from Council to the College Auditors and signed by the Chair of Council.	M20/426
8.3	RECEIVED the consolidated financial statements for the academic year 2019/20.	M20/427
	NOTED the financial statements were considered at meetings of Finance Committee and Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee. Both committees recommended them to Council for approval and signing, along with the letter of representation.	M20/428
	NOTED that the underlying financial position of the College remained sound with a £1.8m surplus despite the actions taken in the final term of the year arising from Covid-19. The cessation of some capital projects contributed to a net inflow from operating activities and a positive cash position of £17.6m.	M20/429
	APPROVED for signature the financial statements and letter of representation.	M20/430
8.4	NOTED the Management Accounts to end of September 2020.	M20/431

STRATEGY

9. RECEIVED the three year strategic plan statement including the schedule to add details on resourcing, staff environment and environmental sustainability. The draft plan, since review by Council in October, had been discussed by Academic Board, Executive Board and the Joint Committee with the RHSU. M20/432

NOTED that the longer term ambition for the size of the College, in terms of student numbers, would be considered during the Strategy session. M20/433

APPROVED the three year strategic plan statement. M20/434

STARRED ITEMS

NOTED the following items, 10-13, to be addressed at the next meeting of Council. M20/435

10.* Principal's Update

To RECEIVE a report from the Principal (18 November 2020).

11.* To APPROVE the annual Modern Slavery Statement.

12.* To APPROVE the appointments and re-appointment of trustees and to NOTE the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Hilda Martindale Trust.

13.* To NOTE the report of the Founder's Endowment Fund.

OTHER MATTERS

Prevent Duty

NOTED the Annual Report on Compliance with the Prevent Duty for the Annual Accountability Statement to the Office of Students would be forwarded to the Chair of Council for APPROVAL by correspondence and fully reported at the next meeting. M20/436

THE EXHIBITION BOOK

M20/437

NOTED the following minutes were provided in the Exhibition Book as a separate document:

EB1 Minutes of Council Committee Meetings

Finance Committee 24 September 2020

Strategy & Governance Committee 24 September 2020

Students, Education and Research Committee 15 October 2020

Strategy & Governance Committee 29 October 2020 (*Meeting cancelled*)

Finance Committee 29 October 2020

Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee 9 November 2020 *Not yet available*

People Committee 12 November 2020 *Not yet available*

14. Other Business

There was none.

M20/438

15. Dates of next Council meetings

MS Teams unless otherwise stated:

M20/439

- **Thursday 18 February 2021, 17:00**
- **Thursday 6 May 2021, 17:00**
- **Thursday 1 July 2021, 17:00**



Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP
Chair of Council

Date 18 February 2021