

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2014  
2:00 PM IN ROOM 103, SKINNER BUILDING

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**Present**

Mr David Babb (Chair)  
Dr Kevin Brown  
Rev. Professor Peter Neil  
Dr Jim Smith

**In attendance**

Mr Stephen Deville  
Mr Jamie Caress (for item 13)  
Mr Richard Corn (for item 13)  
Mrs Sandra Grattrick (for item 13)  
Mr Rob Jones (for item 8(ii) & 13)  
Mr Stephen Kirby  
Mr Graham Meeson (for item 13)  
Ms Hâf Merrifield  
Rev'd Sally Myers (for item 13)  
Mr Nick Roberts (for item 13)  
Dr Ruth Sayers (for item 13)  
Ms Emma Smeaton, Minuting Secretary  
Mrs Bridget Starling (for item 13)  
Mr James Turner (for item 13)  
Ms Katie White, Clerk to University Council

**1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Professor Mark Thompson.

The Head of Estates and the Head of HR would normally be in attendance but were unavailable; as such the Director of Resources would report on their items.

**Action**

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting held 13 November 2013

The minutes of the last meeting held on 13 November 2013 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

### 4. Matters arising

- Percentage estimate fee

The action to include a rough percentage estimate fee in the budget before actual costs were submitted would be implemented in future reports to the Committee.

- Health and Safety Annual Report

The action to structure the Health and Safety Annual Report in terms of priority would be implemented in the next report to the Committee.

### 5. Human Resources

- (i) Staffing report from HR

The staffing report from HR was RECEIVED. The following points were AGREED:

- For the first year of reporting, Limited Company staff figures would continue to be included as a cumulative figure for comparability with previous years.
- The staff costs target of 'less than 60' should be amended to a banded target, stating 'no less than' and 'no more than' as its parameters. It was felt that the current target gave an inaccurate impression of the way in which budgets were expected to be used. The Director of Resources was asked to report on this issue at the next Committee meeting.

The diversity and equality statistics reported annually were RECEIVED within the staffing report.

- (ii) Key HR issues

The Committee NOTED the work in progress on the appraisal review which would be implemented during the next academic year. Findings and recommendations on the process would be reported back to the Committee at the next meeting.

**SD (next meeting)**

**Next meeting**

## 6. Estates & University Services

### (i) Building works update

The Committee RECEIVED an update on building works and expenditure against budget for major capital items. It was AGREED that the planned upgrade of the bathroom facilities in Constance Stewart Hall would be brought forward to commence in June 2014; as such the payment for this would come out of the budget for the current financial year.

## 7. Mileage rates

The Committee AGREED that the University will increase the mileage rate allowance for staff from 40p to 45p in line with HMRC approved rates.

## 8. Finance

### (i) Mid-year financial update and summary variance notes

The Committee RECEIVED the mid-year financial update and summary variance notes.

Members noted that:

- Overall the forecast was generally on target
- Although it should be assumed that budgets would be spent, vacancies recruiting later than planned and other issues meant that it was likely there would be around £227k surplus by the end of the financial year.

It was AGREED that the visiting tutors would be split into the two Schools for future reporting.

SD/SK

### (ii) Limited Company update

Members RECEIVED an overview report from the Director of Enterprise on the current state of progress and the financial summary.

It was reported that:

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- BG Venues was performing in line with budget projection.
  - BG Retail was not expected to achieve its 2013/14 targets due to time delays in the opening the Refectory and staffing issues.
  - Sales were lower than expected and labour costs were also slightly higher than previously hoped, though the position was improving on a weekly basis.

- It was still hoped that the business plan and budget for 2014/15 would meet the previously agreed target to breakeven though to meet this, income would need to grow significantly.

The Committee raised the following point in discussion:

- The balance of operating commercially in a student facing environment was noted and it was suggested that if this could not be achieved, then there may be a requirement in the future to make explicit that the University would be prepared to subsidise loss in order to ensure an appropriate student experience.

The Chair thanked the Director of Enterprise for his continued work and members AGREED to keep the Limited Company under close review.

**9. Agenda suggestions**

- Targets for staffing.
- Student recruitment.

**10. Any other business**

There was no other business to discuss.

**11. Key items for the University Council**

- BG (Lincoln) Ltd.
- Maximum and minimum target range (financial KPIs).

**12. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Finance, Employment & General Purposes Committee will take place on Tuesday 10 June 2014 at 2:00 pm.

**13. University Strategy (open to all Council members)**

The invited Members of Council joined the meeting.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor informed Members that the purpose of the discussion was to note the emerging proposals and endorse the propositions set out in the paper. To supplement the papers, an update on progress since the last report to University Council was provided:

- Though there had been an announcement by HEFCE to remove the cap on student numbers, the allocations for the School of Teacher Development would remain tightly controlled.

- Consultations with BG staff, students and senior stakeholders had taken place and the proposed direction of travel had been positively received with encouragement from University Court members.

Members RECEIVED the BGU Strategy 2014-19 summary of emerging proposals and NOTED the following:

- A strategically focussed approach would be taken. All new academic appointees would be expected to have a PhD and all academic staff expected to engage with research.
- The balance between research credibility and maintaining the current entry requirements was considered.
- Properly designed Bachelor's degrees broadening the University's portfolio and the move towards health and social care were accepted with the suggestion that connections with charitable bodies could be sought.
- Maintaining BGU's community feel would remain a priority.
- The word 'vocational' still held negative connotations with some members and it was agreed this would be stripped out of the paper.

Members ENDORSED the propositions set out in the Strategy paper and AGREED that the Vice Chancellor should have the authority to commit up to a total of £400k during the current and following academic year to work up these propositions to the full business planning stage subject to regular reporting to the FE&GP Committee. The full Strategy business plan will be presented to University Council at its June meeting.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Vice Chancellor and all colleagues for the work that had gone into the Strategy so far.

Signed .....  ..... Date 10/6/14 .....