



# HARTPURY

## Minutes of the Meetings of Hartpury University and Hartpury College Boards 10 am Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 Mercure Gloucester, Bowden Hall Hotel

### Members

Edward Keene  
Alison Blackburn  
Patrick Brooke  
Robert Brooks  
Sascha Bruce  
Barbara Buck -  
Andy Collop (Professor)  
Alastair Grizzell  
Amy Tranter  
Mary Heslop  
Henry Hodgkins  
Thomas Legge  
Melissa Orritt  
William Marshall  
Chris Moody  
Lucie Hammond  
Ian Robinson (Professor)  
Nick Oldham  
Rose Stephenson  
Helen Wilkinson

### In Attendance

Mick Axtell  
Rosie Scott-Ward  
Gillian Steels  
Claire Whitworth  
  
Lesley Worsfold  
Max David

### University Board

Present (Chair)  
Present (Co-opted Governor)  
-  
Present  
Present (HE Student Governor)  
-  
Present (Vice-Chancellor)  
-  
-  
Present  
Present (HE Staff Governor)  
-  
Present  
Present  
Present  
Present  
  
Apologies  
-

### College Board

Present (Chair)  
-  
Apologies  
  
Present (Vice-Chair)  
Present (Principal)  
Present  
Present (FE Student Governor)  
Present  
-  
-  
Present (FE Staff Governor)  
-  
Present  
-  
-  
Apologies  
-  
Present  
  
Present (Chief Operating Officer)  
-  
Present (Clerk to the Board)  
Present (Deputy-Principal Further Education)  
Present (Deputy-Principal Resources)  
Apologies (Deputy FE Student Governor)

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
01/03/24	<b>Welcome</b>  The Chair welcomed governors to the meeting, the start of the Away Days which would be important in shaping Hartpury's response to challenge and change.  The Deputy Principal FE and the staff were congratulated on the recent OFSTED inspection outcome – Outstanding in all categories and a strong contribution to skills.  <b>Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy</b> Apologies as detailed above.	

		<b>ACTION &amp; ACTION DATE</b>
	It was confirmed the meetings of the University Board and the College Board were quorate.	
<b>02/03/24</b>	<p><b>Declaration of Interest</b></p> <p>The Clerk advised that members' interests would be taken as those disclosed in the Register of Members Interests.</p> <p><b>Standing Interests</b> – Chair, Vice-Chancellor/Principal and Chris Moody members of both University and College Boards</p> <p><b>Seach and Governance Appointment Recommendations</b> – Ian Robinson and Chris Moody declared an interest and to leave the meeting at the relevant time.</p>	
<b>03/03/24</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the meetings</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the University Board and the College Board meetings held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 were agreed by the respective Boards to be true and accurate records.</p> <p>The FE Board Agreed the Minutes of the Meeting of the FE Board 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 as a true and accurate record.</p>	
	The Written Resolution by the University Board approving the Veterinary Nursing – Milestone 3 Report was noted.	
<b>04/03/24</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>An action log had been provided updating on issues raised at previous meetings.</p> <p><b>The update was NOTED.</b></p>	
	<b>Part 1 Priority Agenda Items</b>	
<b>05/03/24</b>	<p><b>Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Update</b></p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor and Principal provided a presentation.</p> <p>The presentation covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External environment</li> <li>• Hartpury Highlights</li> <li>• 24/25 recruitment cycle</li> <li>• T-Levels</li> <li>• Priorities</li> </ul> <p>Key points from the Spring budget were outlined. It was noted that colleges continued to be liable for VAT. There had been no specific mentions for HE. The ongoing negative agenda toward going to university, most recently as displayed in the television programme "Is university really worth it", and the potential impact on recruitment was noted.</p> <p>News in relation to FE was outlined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DfE to pilot funding simplifications for colleges - 1-year trial 24/25</li> <li>• First FE Student Support Champion appointed - (Polly Harrow, Kirklees College)</li> <li>• 16-19 funding to rise by 1.9% from August 24</li> <li>• Concern over new 16-18 English &amp; Maths funding (+£375/student but min. hours, 0% tolerance)</li> <li>• Advanced British Standards (ABS) work continuing - 80-page consultation last year, £600m set aside for implementation, 40 civil servants currently working on ABS development – although this would not be introduced until 2030 and if there was a</li> </ul>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>change of government might not be progressed.</p> <p>Hartpury News:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> Christmas Lecture – Matt Bell – Big Data in Farming – well attended.</li> <li>• International Hedgehog Rehabilitators Conference 200 delegates at Hartpury</li> <li>• Horseback UK - Equine-assisted learning - Successful pilot in March 23 - 5 Gloucestershire schools – part of Hartpury's social license. It had worked well. Work was continuing.</li> <li>• Equine Carbon Calculator - Launched on 6<sup>th</sup> March - Hartpury, Derby College, Sparsholt, White Griffin. Part of Hartpury's developing sustainability agenda.</li> <li>• Inaugural Chancellor announced – Martin Clunes – excellent fit with Hartpury's values and areas of interest. He would be inaugurated at College Prize Day and then at the Friday Graduation Day in November. There had been a very positive response to the announcement.</li> <li>• Catering – the possibility of outsourcing was being explored, led by the Deputy Principal Resources.</li> </ul> <p>2024/25 Recruitment</p> <p><u>University</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continues to be extremely challenging.</li> <li>• Currently 4% down on number of applicants &amp; large cohort finishing this year (sector 1% down) – includes new programmes.</li> <li>• International seems to be doing well (later market)</li> </ul> <p><u>College</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of applications tracking similar to last year</li> <li>• Caveat that T Level conversion unknown.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted there was more encouragement for students to progress to FE rather than university currently.</p> <p><u>24/25 Budget</u></p> <p>Very significant on-going budgetary pressures. The first draft would come to the Strategy Finance and Resources meeting in May with the final version coming to the Board in July.</p> <p><u>Agricultural T'levels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available from Sept 24 (only option – Btecs would cease to be available.)</li> <li>• 3-year technical programme offering a blend of classroom-based learning, practical training &amp; industry placement</li> <li>• Equivalent to three A-levels.</li> <li>• T Level Livestock Production (inc. placement year)</li> <li>• T Level Crop Production</li> <li>• T Level Land-Based Engineering</li> <li>• £2.5m investment from DfE - Refurbishment of Ag. Eng. workshops &amp; purchase of industry-standard equipment to support practical teaching across all three T-Level streams.</li> </ul> <p>Governors asked how recruitment was going and were advised that to date it was positive, with a higher calibre of student applying to agriculture than for previous qualifications.</p> <p>Current priorities were also outlined.</p>	
	<p><b>The University Board and the College Boards NOTED the Update.</b></p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
06/03/24	KPIs – Confidential Commercial Sensitivity 3 years	
07/03/24	<b>Management Accounts - January</b> <p>It was noted that the operating result for the 6 months ending January 2024 was a deficit of £1,070k compared to a budgeted deficit of £1,334K. It was confirmed that a more detailed reforecast had been undertaken and included. This remained in line with the earlier reforecast and predicted an increased surplus of £1,423k compared to the original budget of £1,024k. It was noted that Cash balances at the month end were £2,487k. The University had an overdraft facility of £1m. It was confirmed that the University complied with its bank covenants and was forecast to continue to do so.</p> <p>Governors commented that transport costs were £500k higher than budget (and £100k additional income) and that this was being investigated with Zeelo. Concern was raised that this had been impacted by outsourcing. The Chief Operating Officer advised that it was currently mixed provision with Hartpury continuing to run the minibus fleet. It was confirmed Zeelo provided good information for students. Options for rationalisation without impacting student numbers were being considered. It was recognised this was a careful balancing process, and that it was important to maintain accessibility, and to look at student funding holistically. It was suggesting that transport costs should be one of the elements discussed with parents.</p> <p>It was confirmed Hartpury held sufficient cash. The option of investigating the benefit of a higher overdraft in the future was to be looked at. The importance of making best use of funds held was highlighted by governors and the Chief Operating Officer agreed to look further at Money Management options. The Chief Operating Officer advised that looking at the level of borrowing, and the timeline of paying back of borrowing was an area he kept under review. It was confirmed ESFA Funding included the TPS uplift, and this had been confirmed for 2024/25.</p> <p>A governor noted that staff costs were 56% and queried if sufficient focus was held on that figure. The Chief Operating Officer commented on the need to consider movement in relation to this statistic and confirmed it was an area carefully considered within the draft budget.</p>	COO May 24
	<b>The University Board and the College Board NOTED the Management Accounts.</b>	
08/03/24	<b>FE Report</b> <p>The Report covered:</p> <p><b>POLICY / EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT:</b> the external environment continued to evolve, and the key areas of focus included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 16-19 funding changes to take effect in 2024-2025. - The increase in overall funding of 1.9% was welcomed, although it was recognised that funding remained a challenge against ongoing cost increase. It was noted that funding for Maths and English had also been increased, but accompanied by additional time requirements – this was now 3-4 hours which was a significant increase to timetable, staff and maintain student motivation for.</li> <li>2. Ofsted updates – the new Chief Inspector was conducting “a big listen” to identify areas for change. Mental health training for inspectors and</li> </ol>	

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	<p>clarifications within the handbook had already been put in place.</p> <p>3. Local Skills Improvement Fund progress update – a bid for a smart farming hub with the Gloucestershire Colleges and Universities Group had been successful.</p> <p><b>RECRUITMENT:</b> to date applications were strong across most areas; the main focus was conversion activity. Next year would be the first year of delivering T-Levels and whilst applications were strong at 300, we do not have any historic conversion statistics to use so will need to tread with caution here.</p> <p><b>CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:</b> we continued to drive forward further improvements as reflected throughout the report, focusing on our Quality Improvement Plan actions. The OFSTED Report was due shortly and would be published at the end of April. Governors queried whether PR plans were in place for this, and this was confirmed.</p>	
	It was noted that the DfE had now combined the Accountability Statement with the Skills Review requirements. This was being progressed and a further update would come to the FE Board in May.	
	Governors noted that the T'level included a 45day placement and questioned whether Hartpury could access sufficient placements of the right quality and had the assessors to support the process. The Deputy Principal FE advised that government funding had been received to build capacity in the Innovation Careers and Enterprise team to aid with this. She advised that agriculture placements were available, agricultural engineering could be more challenging, but that her main concern related to animal where more work needed to be done. Governors queried if the placements were funded. The Deputy Principal advised the student might be paid or unpaid for a placement, but would be paid for an apprenticeship. A governor queried whether there was a database for potential apprentices/ companies to use to access opportunities. The Deputy Principal FE advised that there was a database of placements, but more work needed to be done. The need to ensure employers understood the opportunities available through apprenticeships was stressed.	
	A governor queried whether degree apprenticeships were being explored, particularly recognising the pressure against going to university which had built up. It was confirmed the Deputy Principal FE and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor HE were discussing options on this.	
	<b>The FE Report was NOTED.</b>	
09/03/24	<b>HE Report</b>	
	<p>It was highlighted that:</p> <p><b>Student recruitment</b> for next academic year continued to be challenging. At this stage Hartpury was down against the rest of the sector, which was also down. Currently home applicants were 3.8% down. Non-EU international students were 24% up. Applicant days were being actively promoted, and the most recent day had been attended by the highest number of potential students ever. Questions from potential applicants were focused on future earning, wellbeing support, safety, value for money, timetabling and travel. Communications were being developed to respond to these ahead. It was noted that sport and agriculture were currently up, equine was slightly down and animal was lower and a cause for concern.</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>Governors recognised that nationally declining numbers in HE made this a volatile market, which made forward planning difficult. It was confirmed that a lot of time had been spent on the budget, with modelling being repeated on a monthly basis. Two consultants /critical friends had been engaged to help identify future potential issues, for example the move way from B'tecs and considering where Hartpury was losing students to. Employment was the key area.</p> <p><b>Student retention</b> had improved on last year, although we continued to monitor student engagement indicators such as attendance and assessment submission closely. The number of students not engaging had decreased against last year. Signs were positive but it was recognised it was important this continued to worked on through the rest of the year, and particularly the summer break.</p> <p><b>Curriculum developments</b> included work on validating a number of new programmes, complementing our existing provision. Dentistry and business management were progressing well. Biological science was taking longer. Work also continued on options for 2025.</p> <p><b>Research and knowledge</b> exchange continued to make progress and attract additional funding.</p> <p>The recent reaccreditation by the RCVS was noted and staff congratulated. It was noted it had been a challenging process with 6 inspectors.</p>	
	<b>The HE Report was NOTED.</b>	
10/03/24	<p><b>Student &amp; Staff Voice</b></p> <p><b>Student Governor</b>  <i>University Student Governor</i> – 3rd years were at dissertation stage. There had been feedback students wanted more events and a calendar of events had been developed. A “home” had been developed for Hartpury SU in the loft and students were regularly calling in. Student Representation meetings had happened – a key issue raised had been transport and action had been taken to resolve the issues, which had received positive feedback. A SU strategy was being developed.  <i>College Student Governor</i> – students were focused on assignments. Feedback was positive.</p> <p><b>Staff Governors</b>  <i>University Staff Governor</i> – staff were pleased to have been able to contribute to the 2030 Strategy, and that it was soon to be published. Staff were proud to be at an institution with TEF Gold and OFSTED outstanding. Staff were aware of the recruitment challenges and were actively promoting current and new curriculum. The need to ensure the locality was aware Hartpury was a University as well as a College was a point highlighted.  <i>College Staff Governor</i> – staff were very proud of having achieved OFSTED Outstanding and it was recognised they had all pulled together.</p> <p>It was noted that the Chair and Vice-Chancellor and Principal had written to thank all staff for their part in Hartpury’s success at TEF and OFSTED and given an additional day holiday. This had been well received.</p> <p><b>Governor Link Feedback</b></p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>The following link governor visits were noted:  <b>Alastair Grizzell</b> - college open day on 24th February and also the AgriTech advisory group meeting on 18th January.  <b>Two Meetings with OFSTED Inspectors</b> – Edward Keene, Mary Heslop, Chris Moody, Barbara Buck, Alastair Grizzell.</p> <p><b>Department Visits</b></p> <p>Skills – Mary Heslop – Sept 23  Equine – Helen Wilkinson 22 Nov 23  English &amp; Maths – Sue Blake 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024  Student Union – Bill Marshall – 22/11 and 6 Feb 24  Animal – Alastair Grizzell – 3 visits - 20<sup>th</sup> September, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (open morning visit)</p> <p><b>The Updates were NOTED.</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked governors for their involvement in the link governor scheme which helped to triangulate the information provided at the meetings.</p>	
11/03/24	<p><b>Strategy Finance and Resources Committee</b>  <b>Minutes of the meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 24</b>  The minutes were NOTED.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Committees had discussed the December Management Accounts which had now been superseded. There had been a discussion about ULH which would be discussed further shortly. The other capital projects were progressing. The Financial Regulations had been updated, and there were plans for a wider review later in the year.</p>	
	<b>Confidential Item – Commercial Sensitivity 3 years</b>	
	<p><b>It was Noted that the following had been Approved Under Delegated Authority:</b></p> <p>Financial Regulations  Slavery &amp; Human Trafficking Statement  Refunds Policy - FE &amp; FE  Public Interest Disclosure  EDI Policy  Harassment &amp; Bullying</p>	
12/03/24	<p><b>HE QuEST Committee</b>  <b>Minutes of the meetings 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>  The Clerk was thanked for having got the minutes issued so promptly</p>	
	<p><b>The minutes were NOTED.</b></p> <p>The Chair highlighted the following points from the meeting:  <b>Contextualised Offer Update</b> – the report had provided assurance that this was supporting widening participation without impacting on quality or leading to a reduction in standards. It was noted that the grade profile of students coming through this scheme was actually slightly higher than students coming through the standard offer process. Governors were pleased with the assurance provided.  <b>Access and Participation Plan</b> – a further plan would need to be submitted in the summer.</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>OfS had significantly changed the metrics from the previous requirements, the focus was now on underperforming groups such as male students and lower socio-economic groups. <b>SU</b> – the continuing growing vibrancy and range of activity was highlighted.</p> <p><b>Terms of Reference</b> - these were being updated to align more closely to the Conditions of Registration to support assurance being provided to the Board. These would go to Search and Governance in June and then to the July Board.</p>	
13/03/24	<p><b>FE QuEST Committee</b> <b>Minutes of the meetings 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b></p>	
	<b>The minutes were NOTED.</b>	
	The Chair highlighted the following points from the meeting:	
	<b>OFSTED</b> - staff and the SMT had been congratulated on the successful inspection.	
	<b>Attendance</b> – this had improved on last year and was very strong.	
	<b>Quality Improvement Plan</b> - this had been discussed in detail. There were no significant points of concern.	
	<b>Employer Links</b> – all departments were engaging well with employers.	
	<b>Accountability Statement</b> – this was being progressed.	
	<b>Level 1 Animal Provision</b> - this development had been supported.	
	<b>Staff CPD</b> – the breadth of this had been recognised.	
	<b>Aspire</b> – a presentation outlining the support provided to students with additional needs had been provided. This was a very informative presentation and had been added to the governor website.	
14/03/24	<p><b>Search and Governance Committee</b> <b>Minutes of Meetings 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b> - The Committee Chair highlighted key issues discussed at the meeting.:</p> <p><b>External Governance Review</b> – a light touch approach using AdvancedHE for consistency was planned for autumn 2024.</p> <p><b>Codes of Governance – HE and FE</b> - Hartpury practice had been reviewed against the codes and no areas of concern highlighted.</p> <p><b>Board Vacancies</b> – it was planned to meet candidates.</p>	
	<b>Chris Moody left the meeting.</b>	
	<b>Chris Moody – Proposed Extension to Term of Office</b>	
	<p>Chris Moody's term of membership was considered. It was noted that he would have completed three terms in August. His significant knowledge and experience and commitment was recognised. It was noted that work was ongoing to bring on a new member who had a similar breadth experience to Chris (FE, landbased and FE leadership experience) and a potential individual had been identified but would not be available until 2026. On this basis recognising the particular skills, knowledge and experience Chris Moody brought to the University and College boards, and that succession planning was ongoing, <b>it was recommended by the Search and Governance Committees to the FE and HE Boards that he was appointed for a further two-year term of office, to end 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026.</b></p>	
	<p><b>The University and College Boards AGREED that Chris Moody be appointed for a further two-year term of office, to end 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026.</b></p> <p><b>Chris Moody returned to the meeting.</b></p>	



		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	Ian Robinson left the meeting	
	<b>Ian Robinson – Proposed Extension to Term</b>	
	Ian Robinson's term of office was considered. It was noted that in August 2024 he would be at the end of his second term of office. It was recognised that he brought considerable academic expertise to the University Board and that he continued to be active in relation to quality and regulation in a number of areas. Recognising Hartpury was now embarking on RDAP the Committee considered whether it would be helpful to maintain his expertise to support this next stage of Hartpury's development. The Committee considered when an RDAP application was likely to be made, noting it was likely to be after REF in 2028. The need to stagger terms of office to ensure continuity and renewal was noted. <b>It was agreed by the University Search and Governance Committee to recommend Ian Robinson to the HE Board for a further 4-year term of office to August 2028.</b>	
	<b>The University Board AGREED that Ian Robinson be appointed for a further four-year term of office, to end 31<sup>st</sup> August 2028.</b>	
	Ian Robinson rejoined the meeting	
	<b>Honorary Degree Committee Membership</b> <b>The University Board AGREED the appointment of Robert Brooks to the Committee with membership in line with his Board membership.</b>	
	It was agreed the updated Terms of Reference would be brought to the May Board meeting.	<b>Clerk May 24</b>
<b>15/03/24</b>	<b>Audit and Risk Management Committee</b> <b>Minutes of the meeting 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 - NOTED</b> <b>Risk Update - NOTED</b>  The Chair Updated that: <b>Cyber and IT Risks</b> – a comprehensive report had been received providing assurance in this key area. <b>Risk</b> – additional risks relating to sustainability had been added. <b>VFM Annual Report</b> – revisions for future reports to cover students more explicitly were planned.	
<b>16/03/24</b>	<b>Application of Hartpury Seal*</b> No uses.	
<b>17/03/24</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> Noted that because of ongoing building works Hartpury would not take part in open farm Sunday this year.	
	<b>The meeting closed at 12noon</b>	