



Council

Date and time	Thursday 29 September 2005 at 5.00 pm
Place	The Council Room, George Thomas Building
Present	Dame Yvonne Moores (<i>in the Chair</i>), Ms B Barker, Professor I T Cameron, Ms H Chadwick, Dr S J Deuchar, Professor A D Fitt, Professor A P Hamlin, Professor J K Hammond, Ms K Harper*, Mr A J Jukes, Professor J D Kilburn, Mr M S Killingley, Professor J Labanyi, Professor P A Nelson, Mr B Purkiss, Dr M P Read, Mr M J Snell, Dame Valerie Strachan, Professor C A Thomas, Professor W A Wakeham, Mr A J Walker, Professor A A Wheeler, Professor D M Williams and Mr A Wilson*
By invitation	
With	The Secretary and Registrar, Director of Estates and Facilities, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources and Ms C J Gamble

(* Members not present for the restricted section of the agenda.)

Unrestricted

Welcome

Dame Yvonne welcomed to the meeting: Mr Mike Killingley, a new lay member of Council; Professor Phil Nelson, who was attending Council for the first time as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor; and Ms Katie Harper Vice-President (Education), Students' Union.

Dame Yvonne reminded members that the September meeting of Council, introduced for the first time this year, would concentrate primarily on strategic issues and that the agenda has been changed to reflect this.

1 Obituary

Dame Yvonne announced with regret the death of the following member of staff and asked Council to stand as a mark of respect:

Dr Daren Bowness, Senior Research Fellow in the School of Civil Engineering and the Environment: 17 July 2005

2 Minutes (unrestricted) of the meeting held on 7 July 2005

Dame Yvonne reported that the Director of Finance had requested a modification to Minute 53.2: the second sentence of the second paragraph should read:

'He confirmed that *the only recognition of surplus from a capital transaction* that had been included in the budgetary forecasts was the 'asset swap' *between the University and King Edward VI School in respect of sports facilities.'*

Resolved That, subject to the above amendment, the Minutes (unrestricted) of the meeting held on 7 July 2005 be approved and signed.

3 **Matters arising**

3.1 **Dates of main committee meetings during 2005/06** (Minute 63)

The Secretary and Registrar reiterated the reasons for amending the *Almanac* and reported the changes: the September 2005 meeting of PRC had been brought forward and the July 2006 of Council had been moved to 13 July. (Members had been informed in writing during the summer. The full list of principal committee meetings would be forwarded to members again with the Minutes of the meeting.)

3.2 **Financial monitoring statements, 2004/05** (Minute 52)

Referring to the new procedures for the collection of tuition fees, the Treasurer said that at a recent meeting the Finance Policy Committee had considered the detail of the arrangements and had concluded that their introduction would help improve debt collection. The Director of Finance commented that a number of the measures had been designed to encourage prompt and early payment of fees. Others included securing the payment of instalments and the sending of regular reminders at the beginning of the academic year. If fees continued to remain unpaid, more serious action would be undertaken and although this was a step that would be taken reluctantly, it was a necessary one given the level of revenue involved. There were emergency funds available to students who were experiencing financial difficulties, and, as had been the case in the past, they would be advised to apply for support as soon as it became apparent that they were having financial problems. The Director of Finance emphasized that the new procedures had been discussed at length with the President of the Students' Union, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Thomas and others involved.

4 **The Chair's report**

Dame Yvonne announced that Dr Bruce Smith, the Vice-Chair of Council, had decided to step down because he had felt in recent months that the pressure of other commitments was preventing him from fulfilling his duties at the University in the way that he wished. Dame Yvonne said that she had accepted his resignation with regret. Dr Smith had however indicated that he would be willing to remain involved with the work of the governing body in a different capacity. Dame Yvonne said that she would like to propose to the Nominations Committee that Dr Smith be reappointed as an ordinary member of Council and she hoped that a recommendation to that effect would be forthcoming in due course.

Turning to the subject of her chairmanship, Dame Yvonne reminded members that her term of office would expire on 31 July 2006. She had discussed with members of the Nominations Committee who should take on the role at the end of the academic session. It had been proposed that it be recommended to Council that Dame Valerie Strachan take on the role of chairmanship. The Secretary and Registrar said that it was appropriate at this juncture to invite members to approve the recommendation that Dame Valerie succeed

Dame Yvonne for an initial period of three years. Members approved the recommendation with acclamation.

In conclusion to her report, Dame Yvonne said that she had further agreed to hand over the chairmanship immediately after the Council meeting on 23 March 2006 in order to provide a smooth transfer of the role to Dame Valerie who was involved later in the year in a major public enquiry. Finally, she added that there remained a Pro-Chancellorship vacancy. Nominations in respect of this post, the Chancellorship – Lord Selborne would reach the end of his term of office in July 2006 – and the Vice-Chair of Council would be presented in due course.

- Resolved**
- (i) That Dr Bruce Smith be thanked for his valuable contributions to the work of the governing body as Vice-Chair of Council.
 - (ii) That the recommendation that Dame Valerie Strachan take up the chairmanship of Council for an initial period of three years from 24 March 2006 be approved with acclamation.

5 **The Vice-Chancellor's report**

The Vice-Chair reported on the following:

New universities in the region

The Vice-Chancellor said that the University had extended its congratulations to two higher education institutions that had successfully applied to the Privy Council for University status recently: Southampton Institute had become Southampton Solent University and University College Winchester had become the University of Winchester.

Possible collaborations

There were two possible collaborations in the offing:

- one with the University of Auckland, among others, in the area of epigenetics. This particular area of research was one in which the School of Medicine (Developmental Origins of Health and Disease) was very active.
- In 2003 Lloyd's Register had agreed to provide substantial funding to establish a marine-oriented technology centre, based at the University, as part of a major programme of sponsorship of education, training and research. More recently the organization had started to consider relocating its head quarters out of London and this had provided an opportunity for Lloyd's and the University to discuss the development of the relationship that had been established some years previously.

The Vice-Chancellor said that he would keep Council informed of the developments in the two areas.

Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF)

The University had responded to the consultation on the third round of HEIF funding while Universities UK had contributed to the process through its membership of the Confederation of British Industry.

National Student Survey

In the recently conducted National Student Survey, carried out on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the University had performed well overall. (The aim of the Survey was to gather feedback on the quality of students' courses, to help inform the choices of future applicants to higher education, and to contribute to public accountability.) The information that had been returned for the School of Nursing and Midwifery had inadvertently included the number of students funded by the NHS when only the HEFCE-funded numbers had been requested. These numbers had distorted the results, ranking the University's courses in this subject at the bottom of the HEIs which offered such programmes. (Of the 80 institutions that offered nursing courses only eight had been included in the survey's results.) The University had requested HEFCE to withdraw the information from the website because it was misleading.

Update of student numbers

Professor Thomas reported that the current position on student numbers was better than last year's intake in terms of the overall number of enrolled students and their qualifications. The postgraduate numbers were slightly below the target figures for both research and taught courses, although the position for international students on the latter group of courses was not yet finalized.

Accommodation

The Secretary and Registrar reported that there had been a very unfortunate error with a new IT system which registered students' requests for accommodation. Data had been lost, which had resulted in a failure to allocate residence places to a significant number of early applicants. This had caused considerable difficulties for those students who had arrived at the University expecting to be allocated a place in Hall. Places had been secured with a third party provider in Southampton City centre and South Stoneham Tower had been recommissioned. The Secretary and Registrar said that the cause of the problem, and the steps taken to deal with it, were being investigated as a matter of urgency. He would report back at the December meeting of Council.

Newspaper reports on students' attempted suicides

A recent newspaper article on rates of suicide in HEIs, comparing data from different institutions, had stated that 29 students at the University had attempted suicide during the last year, the highest in the country. The University had investigated the claims and discovered that the data had been inaccurately presented. The definition of suicide had included those who had had thoughts about suicide, a process known in psychological terms as 'ideation'. There had been one actual suicide at the University during the year specified. The article had been published in a broadsheet and repeated in the local press with a headline designed to shock the public.

Extremists on campus

On the subject of newspaper articles, Mr Snell commented on one that he had read on a report by the Social Affairs Unit into extremism on campus. 24 UK universities had been named as institutions at which groups of extremists were based. The University was not mentioned in the article and he was interested to know what particular steps the University took to ensure that such individuals did

not study at Southampton. The Vice-Chancellor said that he would look into the matter and report back.

Strategic Health Authority (SHA)

The boundaries of the regional SHA would be extended in the future thus increasing the size of the primary care trusts.

Salary negotiations

At the annual salary negotiations the employers' association (UCEA) and the Trade Unions had agreed an uplift of three per cent with effect from 1 August 2005.

6 **Towards an Estate Strategy: Boldrewood campus** (Agendum 11)

Received Two papers which set out the background to a presentation on the Boldrewood site in the context of the development of the Estate Strategy and an appraisal of a series of hypothetical building options.

A presentation on Boldrewood and the Estate, given by Professor Wheeler.

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the subject, explaining that the purpose of the presentation was to engage members in the discussion on this vital and crucial element of the Estate Strategy and to encourage debate about the options for the Boldrewood site. He said that he hoped that members had been able to join the tour of the campus as it would help them understand the detail of the options contained in the paper and the scale of any building work that might be undertaken. The lay officers of Council and other members of the Policy and Resources Committee had visited Boldrewood in July and had had a preliminary discussion of a range of building options.

Professor Wheeler gave his presentation which outlined the following aspects:

- the detail of the site, its development as a University campus, the academic groups it housed and the teaching and research facilities it offered.
- the history of the maintenance work and the current state of the infrastructure, in particular the work to deal with asbestos in the fabric of the building. The first phase of the work to encapsulate the asbestos had been completed in November 2004, and not 2005, as stated on the slide.
- five building options which ranged from a complete transformation of the site to undertaking only maintenance work. The capital costs together with the life cycle and energy costs were detailed. It was emphasized that, given the expenditure involved in carrying out any of these options, the options were long-term ones that stretched far beyond a five-year period. The development of the site could be phased with the aim of presenting a series of architecturally well-designed and striking buildings at the north west entrance to the University.
- five academic visions, of which two in particular were highlighted: a biosciences complex and a Fraunhofer-type institute which envisaged

collaborations with outside organizations, such as government and charitable bodies.

Dame Yvonne thanked Professor Wheeler for the presentation and invited members to discuss the options that had been outlined. A number of points were raised:

- If the capital costs were spread over a period of, for example, twenty-five years, how would this affect the affordability of the schemes presented? The Director of Finance responded that the rate of the outlay of the capital costs was an important factor in determining the overall cost. Under the first building option – transformation of the site – there would be no opportunity to generate any returns to offset the capital cost while the work was carried out. With regard to the Fraunhofer-type institute, the collaboration with outside partners would help defray some costs while the relocation of the academic activities to the Highfield campus would involve considerable capital spend.
- Professor Wheeler stated that, whatever option was finally chosen, maintenance costs would be incurred because of the need to take fire precaution measures.
- The Treasurer observed that the challenge that presented itself was to find the most appropriate solution, in terms of cost and academic activity, to the problems of Boldrewood – the fabric and infrastructure of the building – and to promoting the life sciences interface. The work done on drawing up the academic options indicated that moving the School of Biological Sciences to the Highfield campus would accelerate the release of the site for the development of a new complex for the School of Management. Professor Wheeler said that by working through the basic logistics of such a move confirmed that it would be possible within the next three years, although the detailed aspects of such a plan required further thinking.
- When the different academic visions had been drawn up, had account been taken of the needs of both undergraduate and postgraduate groups? The Vice-Chancellor said that the options did serve both communities. Academic benefits would flow from collocating the School of Biological Sciences with the Schools of Chemistry, Electronics and Computer Science, Engineering Sciences and Physics and Astronomy. The new build options would benefit taught postgraduate students in particular.
- Professor Williams said that, from the point of view of the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Biological Sciences, the development of the Boldrewood site would help improve the alignment of the Estate Strategy with strategic academic priorities in research and education. The links between medicine, science and engineering were crucial to future developments.
- Dame Valerie suggested that as the options were worked up it would be useful to receive information on the schedule of progress, expected completion dates, and greater detail of the costs and benefits.

Dame Yvonne suggested that, if members were content, the second of the highlighted options – the Fraunhofer-type institute – could be investigated further by the senior management team who would present reports on the matter to Council at regular intervals. Members endorsed the proposal. The Vice-Chancellor asked members not to discuss the options outside the meeting.

Although the subject of the development of Boldrewood was not confidential, there had not yet been an opportunity to present the detail of the proposals to other members of the University or outside bodies.

Resolved That the preferred option for the Boldrewood site be developed further by the senior management team and that Council be informed of their progress.

7 **Bid for new School of Dentistry** (Agendum 12)

Received A copy of a report to the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 15 September 2005 which described the bid for a new school of dentistry, together with a cover note which explained the process and the current position.

A copy of the summary bid, entitled 'Increasing Undergraduate Dental Numbers in England', which was tabled.

Professor Williams summarized the content of the papers, describing the main features of the bid. Full bids would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 17 November 2005 whose recommendations would be submitted to the Funding Council.

Resolved That the second-stage bid for a new School of Dentistry be noted.

8 **Vice-Chancellor's Annual Health and Safety Report** (Agendum 13)

Received The Vice-Chancellor's Annual Health and Safety Report for the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004, together with an extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 15 September 2005 which set out the discussion on the Vice-Chancellor's Report.

In introducing his report, the Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the statements that had been made during the presentation on Boldrewood on matters of safety and the substantial risks that existed. He reminded members that the governing body and the senior officers of the University carried the responsibility for health and safety in the University.

Mr Snell asked whether the Vice-Chancellor could confirm that his report enabled members of Council to discharge their responsibilities. The Vice-Chancellor said that he could reassure Council that his report was adequate in this regard, and that a report would be submitted to the December meeting of Council on the measures that had been taken at Boldrewood in respect of the fire safety improvements. He added that the reorganization of the University in 2003 had strengthened the management structures while a process to achieve enhanced support services had been put in train. He was confident that the institution was better equipped to deal with problems that large organizations invariably had to face.

Resolved

- (i) That the Vice-Chancellor's Annual Health and Safety Report be noted.
- (ii) That the Vice-Chancellor should arrange for a report to be submitted to Council at the December 2005 meeting on the health and safety measures taken at Boldrewood, and any management issues that had had to be addressed.

9 **Valediction**

Dame Yvonne announced that this was the last meeting of the governing body that Professor Hamlin, the Dean of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, would attend as he was leaving the University in the near future to take up the post of Professor of Political Theory at the University of Manchester. On behalf of Council, Dame Yvonne thanked Professor Hamlin for his contributions to the work of the governing body, and for his academic involvement with the University over a long period which spanned thirty years. She wished him well in the next stage of his career.

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Restricted

9 **Minutes (restricted) of meeting held on 7 July 2005**

Resolved That the Minutes (restricted) of the meeting held on 7 July 2005 be approved and signed.

10 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the restricted Minutes of the July meeting.

11 **The Vice-Chancellor's report**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the Review Group, established to consider the position of the School of Biological Sciences, had commenced its work and that it was likely that it would present recommendations at the December meeting that included the setting up of a Redundancy Committee.

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The meeting finished at approximately 7.15 pm.

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