

## HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

### Board of Governors

#### Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held on 29 November 2016 in the Boardroom

Present: Mr Mike Lewis Chairman  
Mr Stephen Vickers Vice-Chairman  
Dr David Llewellyn Vice-Chancellor  
Mr Peter Cowdy  
Mrs Emma Folkes  
Mr Richard Hambleton  
Mr Fred Hammond President of the Students' Union  
Mrs Lavinia Moroz-Hale Staff Governor  
Dr Julia Pointon  
Mr Mark Roach  
Mrs Christine Snell  
Mr Martin Thomas  
Mr Dominic Wong

Apologies: Mr Colin Bailey  
Mr Tim Burnhope  
Dr John Donaldson Staff Governor  
Dr Moira Harris Staff Governor  
Mrs Heather Jenkins  
Mr Peter Nixon  
Professor Mark Ormerod  
Mr Campbell Tweed

In attendance: Dr Catherine Baxter University Secretary & Clerk to the Board  
Mrs Liz Furey Director of Finance  
Professor Peter Mills Deputy Vice-Chancellor

#### Register of Interests

Members were reminded to complete or update their entry in the Register of Interests as necessary.

#### 16/19 Oral Feedback on Governor Development Activities

Received: oral feedback from Mr Richard Hambleton on his experience as a 'Student for a Day' and feedback from Mr Mike Lewis on his attendance at recent HEFCE and LFHE meetings.

- Noted:
- i) that Dr John Donaldson would provide feedback on his engagement with the online governor development tool at the next meeting in April 2017; **JD**
  - ii) that Mr Hambleton had found the 'Student for a Day' to be very valuable. Students had commented favourably on their experience at the University including their appreciation of the excellent facilities and the commitment of staff. These comments confirmed the reports that were received by the Board about student satisfaction and clearly underpinned the awards made to the University in recognition of the high quality student experience that it provides. Only a small number of minor issues had been suggested during the day and these had been discussed with the University Secretary who would discuss these points further with relevant staff; **CEB**
  - iii) that, in summary, Mr Hambleton confirmed that the experience had been very useful and he would thoroughly recommend it to other Governors;

- iv) that the Chairman had attended the HEFCE Annual Meeting. A major focus of the day had been considering the ongoing transition of the role of HEFCE as a funding body to a regulatory body. There had also been discussion about risks with a particular emphasis on what had appeared, at first, to be an opportunity for visa regulations for international students to be improved with regard to the relaxation of rules. However, the following day, announcements had made clear that changes to visa requirements would not, in fact, be happening in the short term;
- v) that, of the institutions attending the meeting, about 50% were alternative providers for new institutions that were regulated by HEFCE but not funded by it;
- vi) that the Chairman had also attended, with the University Secretary, an LFHE briefing on PREVENT for members of governing bodies in preparation for the annual report that was an item later on the agenda. Discussion at the meeting had included consideration of whether or not there were any measures of success in relation to the PREVENT Duty. Feedback suggested that there were currently no clear measures, although PREVENT remained a key part of government strategy and it was expected that all HEIs would engage with the duty positively, whatever the level of risk in their particular circumstances might be. However, what was encouraging was that HEFCE was moving towards a risk-based approach and initial plans, such as an annual visit to all HEIs, had been revised in light of the decision to follow a more risk-based system.

**16/20 Minutes and Notes of the Planning Day held on 30 September 2016**

- Approved:
- i) the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 30 September 2016 (16/01-16/18);
  - ii) the notes of the Board of Governors/University Executive Planning Day held on 30 September 2016.

**16/21 Matters Arising**

Received: a matters arising report from the University Secretary.

- Noted:
- i) that the Chairman had almost concluded the annual one-to-one discussions with members. There were two remaining discussions, one of which had already been arranged and the other was being set up at the current time. Feedback had been very positive overall and Members had commented favourably on their experience at Board meetings. Although members were conscious of the relatively large size of the Board, they nevertheless felt that everyone did have an opportunity to contribute. The Chairman was keen to foster this and to encourage all members to speak and ask questions if they had any queries about any aspect of the items under discussion;
  - ii) that efforts were still being made to try and reduce the length of agenda papers, wherever possible and to make good and positive use of the Governors' document library, where appropriate, so that additional reading could be provided to support summary papers;
  - iii) that the Chairman thanked all members for their positive engagement and reminded the Board that the annual one-to-one discussions would continue each year, although members were more than welcome to

contact him or the University Secretary with any queries or comments at any point during each year.

## 16/22 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: a report by the Vice-Chancellor on recent developments of note.

- Noted:
- i) that undergraduate applications to the University were currently around 21% down compared to the same point in 2015. A very slight improvement had been seen in recent weeks but, nevertheless, the position remained concerning. The HE sector, overall, was down 10-11% and competitor institutions were also down 15% compared to 21% at Harper Adams at the current time. A special University Executive meeting had been held and departments had already put in place proposals to try and address the current application cycle and to encourage more appropriately qualified students to apply and accept places at Harper Adams;
  - ii) that two major possible barriers had been identified. One of which was the current requirement for students to attend an interview. A review of competitors had confirmed that most institutions no longer required an interview and, therefore, academic departments had put forward proposals to make offers to students who appeared to meet the academic qualification requirements and to offer a guided session, instead of requiring them to attend an interview prior to receiving an offer. It was also possible that a requirement to attend interview might disproportionately affect students coming from widening participation backgrounds and the University was keen to try and address this wherever possible. The second area which was currently being reviewed, related to work experience requirements. In particular, ideas around offering an alternative route to achieving work experience for widening participation students had been shared and was currently under discussion. One idea, for example, was that a student who was unable to access work experience could be allowed until the start of their second year of studies, in order to complete relevant work experiences. The Rural Skills programme at the University, together with its contacts in agri-food businesses could help young people, without appropriate contacts in the agri-food sector, to secure relevant work experience;
  - iii) that the Marketing Team was also ensuring that it was working hard to promote the University's achievement as Modern University of the Year and also to promote the six new full-fee scholarships that were being offered to students from widening participation backgrounds. The Marketing Team had also made a short video which focused on the careers which were being undertaken by recent graduates. Of the 165 employers who had attended the recent careers and placement fairs the previous week, a significant number had included, on their stands, staff who were Harper Adams alumni and this group had been willing to speak on the video about their experiences in a very positive manner;
  - iv) that the senior management team intended to undertake further financial planning in anticipation of not hitting undergraduate targets prior to the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting which would be held on 20 January 2017. Notwithstanding this, it was hoped that the recruitment cycle would, as in the previous year, continue throughout the year and every effort would be made to ensure that the University engaged with the cycle actively, including Clearing;
  - v) that it was also possible that the expected downturn of demographics was starting to particularly affect the rural sector. It was also the case that farm incomes had generally been down over the last three years and this was very likely to have an impact on decision-making. Furthermore, young people were also being targeted for lower level apprenticeship schemes as an alternative to attending university, although their qualification would be at a lower level. The

Vice-Chancellor had been discussing these issues with the NFU and had asked whether or not they would be able to help the promotion of the need for higher level skills in the agri-food industry;

- vi) that the Government had made an announcement on funding for research although it was understood that this was likely to be drawn from existing funding rather than new funding. Nevertheless, the cuts to HE funding in the Autumn Statement were not quite as great as had been anticipated;
- vii) that, at the recent GuildHE conference, discussion had focused on BREXIT and the fact that many HEIs were already looking beyond the European Union for new partnerships. The Minister, Jo Johnson, had attended and he had talked about his wish that Tier 4 visa requirements might be reviewed, although it was unclear whether or not this would happen in the short to medium term. The Vice-Chancellor had engaged with him on this agenda by letter in recent weeks;
- viii) that the Government remained committed to 'challenger' institutions such as the Hereford proposal and the new Dyson University. They also remained committed to degree level apprenticeships funded from the new levy and the Minister had made it clear that he wished to see more degree level apprenticeships offered in higher education. This remained a concern for Harper Adams with respect to placement providers;
- ix) that the University's engagement with Wolverhampton in relation to food engineering was starting to gain momentum as part of a wider consortium, including the national skills group that was looking at this area;
- x) that the Chief Executive of HEFCE, Madeleine Atkins, had spoken to GuildHE about a number of financial challenges that were facing the sector and it was important, therefore, that the University continued to focus on cash generation and monitoring performance measures as set out in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) later on the agenda, particularly those that had been adjusted in light of FRS102;
- xi) that the Vice-Chancellor had been in Zambia during the previous week to engage with partners in the Future Farm project. Partners included Zara, AGCO, SeedCo and other key partners. He had also met with the University of Zambia and progress was being made with advertising and securing a new lecturer in Sub-Saharan Agriculture who would be able to contribute to this project;
- xii) that the AGCO Farm in Zambia was very impressive and included advanced forms of sensor technology and monitoring of yield production etc. The allocation of work was carefully controlled through data and efficiency was key to all systems. AGCO was currently looking to extend this initiative to another African country and was also considering developing a farm in the European Union. It was hoped, in due course, that a bid might be made to the Department for International Development (DfID) for work in Africa in conjunction with the University of Zambia;
- xiii) that the agreed investments to be funded from the Institution Specific Funding (ISF) allocation had started, although a number had been held back in light of concerns around recruitment issues. This would be reviewed in January;
- xiv) that the Careers and Placement Fair, as mentioned earlier in the report, had been a very positive event;
- xv) that the TEF metrics had been shared in confidence by HEFCE. Details of the metrics for other HEIs were not available. However, the metrics for Harper Adams looked positive with only one area of 'blue' which related to highly

skilled employment for other undergraduates. There would be an opportunity to explain this in the narrative and still potentially gain a 'gold' rating. The Academic Registrar had been appointed as one of the 60 assessors out of an application field of 1200 applications;

- xvi) that UCAS had introduced a grade matching service which had been aimed at advisors. Unfortunately, an early version of the software had been made available openly on the UCAS website. It contained a number of inconsistencies and incorrect information. A number of universities had already complained and UCAS had now made the system available to advisors only, and it was hoped that they might, in due course, address the issues that had been raised;
- xvii) that the University had been delighted that Dairy Crest had been awarded the Times Higher Award for the most innovative university collaboration for its work with Harper Adams at the THE awards the previous week.

Agreed: that the Board wished to delegate to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the authority to make decisions as necessary to respond to any proposals that might come forward to respond to the undergraduate application rate following the first 'on time' application deadline of 15 January 2017.

#### 16/23 **HEFCE Annual Accountability Return 2015/16**

Received: a briefing note on the documentation required for the HEFCE Annual Accountability Return and the process that was to be followed to seek approval of the various documents required from the Board and its sub-committees.

#### 16/24 **Audit and Risk Management Committee**

Received:

- i) a report on the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2016;
- ii) the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee for the 2015/16 financial year that will be submitted to HEFCE by 1 December 2016;
- iii) the Value for Money Report 2015/16.

Noted:

- i) that the Audit and Risk Management Committee's role around assurance remained key at this particular time of year. The Committee had carefully considered the reports of both internal and external auditors. Members were also reminded that the Committee's role was to consider its opinion with regard to assurance, not just at year end but up to the date of signing the accounts. The advice received from the internal auditors was key to informing this opinion and to inform the Corporate Governance Statement, including the Statement of Control;
- ii) that the overall opinion of the internal auditors had been positive, although there were some enhancements that needed to be taken forward and the auditors had also provided specific comments related to a purchase ledger matter. The auditors had confirmed that the existing systems of controls would have identified and prevented the issue, although they did not function as designed due to operator error. Following this, a detailed review of controls had taken place and the implementation was being taken forward by the University;
- iii) that the overall opinion of the external auditors was a positive unqualified opinion with no major issues raised. The recommendation relating to the Development Trust had been addressed;

- iv) that the external auditors had confirmed that they were supportive of the internal audit opinion and that the arrangements for key financial controls at Harper Adams reflected those of other universities in their considerable experience of the sector;
- v) that the Committee had conducted a careful review of the performance of the internal and external auditors and had agreed to recommend re-appointment of both audit firms for a further year;
- vi) that the Committee had noted, in particular, that it had been very useful to have the considerable experience of Mike Rowley as the KPMG audit partner and they had also noted the role of the new internal audit partner, Lisa Randall, during the past year and the fact that an independent member of the RSM team had been allocated to undertake consideration of the matter in relation to the purchase ledger matter;
- vii) that the Audit and Risk Management Committee report set out the work that had been completed during the year and concluded with a positive assurance opinion. The Audit and Risk Management Committee had also considered the HEFCE Accounts Direction and was content that the University was operating in accordance with this;
- viii) that the Committee had also reviewed the Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2016/17, together with the Value for Money (VFM) report;
- ix) that the University's Annual Value for Money report for 2016 was presented in the same format as in 2015. In August 2016, HEFCE had published a consultation on the future format of value for money report, although this would not come into place until the December 2017 reporting. In the meantime, VFM reporting was now compulsory for the December 2016 return. During 2016/17, the Finance Team would be working on the 2017 VFM report and would keep the Audit and Risk Management Committee informed on progress with this matter;
- x) that the Committee had reviewed the annual report and financial statements and was content to recommend these to the Board for its approval. This was an item later on the agenda.

- Approved:
- i) the annual report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee for the 2015/16 financial year and up to the signing of the accounts that would be submitted to HEFCE by 1 December 2016;
  - ii) the Value for Money report 2015/16 for submission to HEFCE as part of the annual assurance return;
  - iii) the re-appointment of RSM as internal auditors and KPMG as external auditors.

#### **16/25 Finance and Annual Report and Financial Statements**

- Received:
- i) a report on matters considered at the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 8 November 2016 (including a report on Board Level KPIs);
  - ii) that the Charity Commission regulations on the Reporting of Public Benefits had been represented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee at their recent meetings as an aide memoire when considering the University's Annual Report and Financial Statements;

- iii) a briefing note from the Director of Finance on the draft audited accounts;
- iv) the 2015/16 audited accounts for Harper Adams University incorporating the External Auditors' opinion, Vice-Chancellor's Report and Corporate Governance Statement for recommendation to the Board of Governors
- v) the 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts for Cedar Energy Limited
- vi) the 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts for Harper Adams University Development Trust and the Letter of Representation
- vii) the Letter of Support for Cedar Energy Limited from Harper Adams University
- viii) the Letter of Representation for the Harper Adams University Group.

Noted:

- i) that, at its recent meeting, the Finance and General Purposes Committee, had considered the University's progress measured against the criteria for the University bonus scheme. Although the University had not fully met the student number criteria, it had met the other targets and the University had succeeded in having a very successful and exceptional year reflected in the prestigious awards that it had secured. In light of this, the Committee wished to recommend to the Board that drawing upon the University's bonus scheme framework, a separate and exceptional one-off award should be made to all staff, with the exception of the senior management team, of £100 payable in December 2016;
- ii) that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had noted and agreed the revised format of the ASSUR report noting that this had been updated to reflect the changes that were necessary under FRS 102. A minor change had also been made to the chosen research KPI that was recommended to the Board for its approval;
- iii) that the Committee had considered, in detail, the annual report and financial statements for the University Group and Cedar Energy Limited together with letters of support and representation and wished to recommend these to the Board for its approval;
- iv) that the Committee had been pleased to receive the outcome of a detailed review of the KPI dataset that had been requested during the year. The dataset had been refined into a board level KPI dataset together with a number of PIs that had been made available to the Board on the Governors' document library. The Committee wished to recommend to the Board, the Board level KPI report for its approval and adoption for future reporting;
- v) that the Committee had also reviewed the capital carry forward and had approved this as noted in the report on the agenda;
- vi) that both the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee had received and considered the Charity Commission advice on the reporting of public benefits. This document had also been uploaded to the Governors' document library for the attention of all members of the Board. The external auditors had confirmed that they were content that the University reporting was in accordance with the reporting of public benefits;

- vii) that, with regard to the annual report and financial statements, the University had chosen not to take forward the valuation of residences as previously agreed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting. This was a change from the July forecast and had reduced the valuation surplus by £7.8m. Through discussion, it had been agreed that this was a more prudent position and reflective of the University's Estates Strategy. This had also reduced the depreciation charge, and residences had been retained at cost with carefully apportioned costs across fixtures and fittings and buildings so that fixtures and fittings, for example, were depreciated more quickly than other aspects of the building. This had resulted in a further depreciation charge of approximately £120k;
- viii) that impairments had also been included in Cedar Energy relating to the fact that the CHP engine would now be sold as it had been proved to be more efficient to do this and to procure a new one for the STEP project. The Finance and General Purposes Committee working group had agreed this approach earlier in the year;
- ix) that, following discussion, it had also been agreed not to transfer the slurry tanks from Cedar Energy to the University. Rather, Cedar Energy would provide the facility to the farm and it had, therefore, been valued on a facilities management basis recognising the investment that Cedar Energy was making in the bund to enhance the service and to make it sustainable going forward for farm use. The auditors had been content with this approach;
- x) that the liability with respect to the Local Government Pension Scheme had increased by some 76%, due to the fact that corporate bond rates had been greatly affected and had fallen following BREXIT. There were also changes under FRS 102 in how this was reported. The forecast by the actuaries was that a further £1m might be added to the HAU proportion of the scheme's overall deficit the following year. Careful monitoring of the LGPS pension remained a particular focus for the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- xi) that the letters of representation presented in the papers were standard and included, where necessary, reference to the valuation exercise completed by Gerald Eve.
- xii) that the Committee had agreed that salary point 1 should be removed from 1 April 2017 in accordance with a UCEA recommendation

Agreed: to approve:

- i) the 2015/16 audited accounts for Harper Adams University, incorporating the External Auditors' opinion, Vice-Chancellor's Report and Corporate Governance Statement for recommendation to the Board of Governors, subject to a number of minor typographical points proposed by the Chairman;
- ii) the 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts for Cedar Energy Limited;
- iii) the 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts for Harper Adams University Development Trust and the Letter of Representation;
- iv) the Letter of Support for Cedar Energy Limited from Harper Adams University;
- v) the Letter of Representation for the Harper Adams University Group;

- vi) to endorse the Committee's agreement that salary point 1 should be removed with effect from 1 April 2017.

**16/26 Academic Board, Academic Developments and Annual Assurance Reports on the Management of Quality and Standards**

- Received:
- i) a report on the meeting of the Academic Board held on 9 November 2016;
  - ii) the three assurance statements on academic quality and standards which were to be submitted to HEFCE by 1 December 2016;
  - iii) the Report of Key Student Indicators (KSI) 2015/16 together with a commentary on any areas for improvement or enhancement arising from the KSI Report provided by the Head of Educational Development and Quality Enhancement;
  - iv) The Academic Overview Report 2014/15 (approved by Academic Board 2016);
  - v) the summary of External Examiners Reports for 2015/16;
  - vi) Course Monitoring Data Overview reports had been made available on the Governors' document library.

- Noted:
- i) that the Board had found the briefing on academic quality matters in relation to its new role in providing assurance on academic quality and standards to be very helpful. The reports included on the agenda were those that had been requested by the Board following consideration of these reports by Academic Board and/or its sub committees either during Autumn 2016 or earlier in the year, as appropriate;
  - ii) that, as indicated in the report of the Academic Board, detailed consideration had taken place of the report on key student indicators. The Board had also considered an update on the University's compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority requirements. Members of the Board had also been briefed on this during the September 2016 planning day;
  - iii) that the Academic Board was continuing its focus on the Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy and would receive a further update at its next meeting in 2017. In particular, it was understood that the Research Excellence Framework (REF) was likely to be streamlined in future and changes might be introduced around the portability of staff and grant awards etc. Further information was awaited;
  - iv) that, with respect to the academic overview report for 2014/15, it was noted that the copy provided was that considered by Academic Board during 2016 and, where items had been noted as requiring further action, this had been monitored carefully during the year. Nevertheless, it would be helpful for the Board to receive detailed confirmation of this and the Vice-Chancellor would ask relevant staff to provide that information. This would be circulated as soon as possible following the Board meeting. **DGL**
  - v) that the summary of external examiner reports for 2015/16 confirmed that external examiners were content that the standards at Harper Adams University remained appropriate;

- vi) that the report of Key Student Indicators 2015/16, together with the commentary provided by the Head of Educational Development and Quality Enhancement, provided the Board with assurance that these matters were taken seriously and that action points were followed up as necessary;
- vii) that the assurance statements on academic quality and standards were presented in the papers as an aide memoire to members. In discussion, members confirmed that they were content that the Vice-Chancellor could act on their behalf to confirm that the Board was fully assured on the University's management of academic quality and standards.

Agreed: that the Vice-Chancellor should take action to confirm that the Board wished to give full assurance on the University's management of academic quality and standards as follows: the governing body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This included evidence from the our periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer or professional review. The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate and the standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained.

#### 16/27 Risk Management/PREVENT Duty

- Received:
- i) an update on risks monitored by the Board of Governors;
  - ii) updates to the Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2016/17 as set out in the attached summary;
  - iii) a mapping of the University's approach to meeting the PREVENT Duty against the recently published Committee of University's Chair's Illustrative Practice Note on Counter Terrorism and Prevent had been shared with the Chairman;
  - iv) a mapping of the University's approach to meeting the PREVENT Duty against the Updated Framework for the Monitoring of PREVENT Duty in HE in England, published September 2016 had been shared with the Chairman;
  - v) the draft annual report on the University's compliance with the PREVENT Duty due to be submitted to HEFCE by 1 December 2016.

- Noted:
- i) that the risks monitored at Board level continued to be managed appropriately;
  - ii) that the Audit and Risk Management Committee had reviewed the Risk Analysis and Action Plan and recommended changes for 2016/17 in detail at its recent meeting as reported earlier on the agenda;
  - iii) that the suggested change to the rating of the risk in relation to Tier 4 would be monitored carefully during the year in light of any further changes that may emerge;
  - iv) that the Board had received a number of reports on the University's compliance with the PREVENT Duty during the year. In particular, in July 2016 it had received confirmed from HEFCE that the latter was content that Harper Adams had provided appropriate documentation in relation to the actions that it had taken to address the PREVENT Duty;

- v) that the annual report had been drafted based upon the most recent guidance and on the University Secretary's attendance (as PREVENT Lead at the University) at a briefing session provided by HEFCE. The Chairman of Governors was also required to provide a declaration with respect to PREVENT monitoring as set out on page 184 of the agenda.

- Agreed:
- i) to approve the draft annual report on the University's compliance with the PREVENT Duty due to be submitted to HEFCE on 1 December 2016 and to authorise the Chairman to sign the declaration confirming the following: that Harper Adams University has had due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent Duty) and had provided to HEFCE all required information about its implementation of the PREVENT Duty and had reported to HEFCE, in a timely manner, all serious issues relating to the PREVENT Duty (in the case of Harper Adams University no such issues had arisen during 2015/16 or to date);
  - ii) the updated Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2016/17.

**16/28 Annual Accountability Return to HEFCE 2015/16**

- Received:
- i) the draft financial commentary for submission to HEFCE on 1 December 2016;
  - ii) the Annual Assurance Return template ('Annexe A') for submission to HEFCE;
  - iii) a report prepared to meet the requirements of the ASSUR process introduced by HEFCE as an optional element of the Annual Accountability Return.

- Approved:
- i) the draft financial commentary for submission to HEFCE on 1 December 2016;
  - ii) the Annual Assurance Return template ('Annexe A') for submission to HEFCE;
  - iii) a report prepared to meet the requirements of the ASSUR process introduced by HEFCE as an optional element of the Annual Accountability Return.

**16/29 Management Accounts**

Received: the management accounts for the period to 31 October 2016.

- Noted:
- i) that forecasts had been adjusted for Quarter 1 reflecting the fact that undergraduate student numbers were seven below those anticipated. Further assumptions had also been adjusted from withdrawal rates based on the previous year's data. The University remained on track with the budget overall. Some savings had been achieved, due to staff vacancies, and later in the year re-forecasting would also include pension adjustments once the outcome of the re-valuation was known;
  - ii) that the format of the management accounts had been reviewed and welcomed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Members of the Board also welcomed the revised presentation and thanked the Finance Team for their assistance in this regard.

16/30 **Corporate Planning Statement**

Received: a progress report on the Corporate Planning Statement 2016/17.

Noted: that appropriate progress was being made against the actions set out in the report.

16/31 **Marketing and Communications**

Received: a report from the Director of Marketing and Communications.

Noted: that, as discussed earlier in the meeting, a number of changes were being made to the format of the open day and more activity was planned during forthcoming months.

16/32 **Report of the President of the Students' Union**

Received:

- i) a report from the Students' Union President on the recent activities of the Students' Union;
- ii) the audited accounts of the Students' Union for year ended July 2016, including the Trustee's report, external auditors' opinion and Students' Union management responses to any actions arising from the external auditors report;

Noted:

- i) that the re-structuring of the Students' Union was continuing with a change to the Web Co-ordinator's role. This would be replaced, in due course, by a new role which would be taken up by a placement student from another university;
- ii) that the Students' Union was currently reviewing its branding guidelines with the aim of professionalising its communication and branding image;
- iii) that the Students' Union was actively embracing widening participation activities and was pleased that a number of clubs, including the Rowing Club and the Motor Sports Club was starting to make significant progress, including attracting sponsorship;
- iv) that the Students' Union shop had been re-branded and would be opening the following day;
- v) that, with regard to the annual accounts, the external auditor's opinion was currently awaited although the key management actions were highlighted in the Students' Union President's report. In particular, measures were now in place to manage the deficit that had arisen the previous year. Further work around stocktaking in the bar was also ongoing;
- vi) that the Students' Union remained committed to providing the best possible sporting opportunities as well as a wide range of other clubs to all students. It was recognised that, although the University was intending to focus its estate investments around refurbishments and maintenance, there was, nevertheless, a need to commence fundraising in relation to the provision of further sports facilities and this had been discussed with the Development Trust as a future fundraising priority.

## 16/33 Committees

- Received:
- i) a report on the meeting of Farm Strategy Committee held on 13 October 2016;
  - ii) a report on the meeting of Health and Safety Committee held on 27 October 2016;
  - iii) a report on the meeting of Staffing Committee held on 8 November 2016.
  - iv) a note on Chairman's action in agreeing updates to the membership of the GM Ethics Committee

- Noted:
- i) that the Farm Strategy Committee had recommended a minor change to its terms of reference. The Committee had also noted that progress with discussions with the potential commercial partner were ongoing, although the outcome of these was not yet certain. In the meantime, the Vice-Chancellor reported that some local land might become available in the Spring and it may be appropriate, if the Board agreed, for this to be discussed with the Finance and General Purposes Committee in due course. The Board was asked to consider whether or not it was happy for Finance and General Purposes Committee to take delegated action to agree that the University might express an interest in this land in due course;
  - ii) that Colin Bailey had arranged for Mark Simister from Tesco to visit the University during the previous week. This had been a positive engagement and it was hoped that placement opportunities and other activities might result from this visit;
  - iii) that the Staffing Committee, in common with the Finance and General Purposes Committee, had wished to recommend to the Board that the exceptional one-off £100 bonus be paid in December 2016; and that salary point one should be removed in accordance with UCEA recommendation following the outcome of the recent national pay negotiations

- Agreed:
- i) to approve the change to the terms of reference of the Farm Strategy Committee; **CEB**
  - ii) that the Finance and General Purposes Committee could act on the delegated authority of the Board to progress an expression of interest and/or purchase, in due course, local land should it become available at an appropriate price;
  - iii) that the Board accepted the recommendation of the Staffing Committee that the £100 bonus should be paid as an exceptional one-off reward as noted earlier in the meeting; **DGL/LF**
  - iv) that the Board had endorsed the removal of salary point 1, as noted earlier in the meeting;
  - v) that the Board endorsed the Chairman's action in agreeing updates to the membership of the GM Ethics and Safety Committee. **CEB**

## 16/34 Harper Adams University Development Trust

- Received: a report on the meeting of the Development Trust held on 12 October 2016.

**16/35 Modern Slavery (CEB)**

- Received:
- i) a briefing note on the University's plans to address the Modern Slavery legislation;
  - ii) The University's Statement on the Modern Slavery Act.

Noted: that the University was required to provide an annual statement explaining its actions on what had been done to address its obligations with respect to modern slavery.

Agreed: that the Chairman should sign the University's statement on the Modern Slavery Act. **MJL/LF**

**16/36 HEFCE and Other Circulars**

Received: a list of HEFCE and other circulars received by the University since the last meeting of the Board

**16/37 Meeting Dates 2017/18**

Received: proposed 2017/18 meeting dates for the Board of Governors and its committees.

**16/38 Date of Next Meeting**

7 April 2017 at 1000