

# NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

## COURT

**5 MAY 2023**

Present: Mr Paul Walker, Chair of Council (in the Chair), The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Caroline Austin, Ms Mady Baugh, Emerita Professor Katie Bushby, Ms Lil Collingham-Clark, Ms Hilary Florek, Ms Sarah Glendinning, Dr Stacy Gillis, Mrs Olivia Grant, Professor Nigel Harkness, Mr A J Khindria, Professor René Koglbauer, Dr Jo Matthan, Mr Richard Maudslay, Ms Lorna Moran, Emeritus Professor Ian Postlethwaite, Ms Sanjee Ratnatunga, Mr Nick Richardson, Professor Jane Robinson, Professor Maggie Roe, Mrs Angela Russell, Sir George Russell, Sir Nigel Sherlock, Ms Sarah Stewart, Professor Ruth Valentine, Professor Brian Walker and Mr Paul Woolston.

In attendance: Dr Colin Campbell (Registrar), Mr Justin Cole (Executive Director of External Relations), Mr Nick Collins (Executive Director of Finance), Dr Simon Meacher (Head of Executive and Governance Office), Ms Sian Breen (Executive Assistant) and Mrs Yvonne Lee (Executive Assistant).

The Chair welcomed Nick Richardson, who was attending his first meeting as Chair of Convocation virtually.

The Chair welcomed Emerita Professor Katie Bushby (new lay member from August 2022) to her first meeting of Court and Professor Ruth Valentine to her first meeting of Court as Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education.

The Chair thanked the following members of Court, whose term of office comes to an end on 31 July 2023 after nine years' service: Ms Sarah Green, Rt Rev Christine Hardman, Ms Fiona O'Connor and Ms Sarah Stewart, outgoing Chair of Court Steering Committee. The Chair noted that all have been great supporters of the University and hoped that the University will continue to remain in contact and benefit from their advice and support.

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting attended by Professor William Maloney (Academic Board appointed member) after serving for 9 years and thanked him for his contribution during this period.

The Chair noted that thanks be recorded to Mady Baugh for her service as President of the Students' Union and member of Court 2022-23.

## MINUTES

### 1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2023 were approved as correct record.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Document A)

## 2. REPORTS FROM COURT STEERING COMMITTEE

Considered the following reports from Court Steering Committee:

- (a) A report on the membership of Court Steering Committee.
- (b) A report on the membership of Court.

(Circulated with the Agenda as Documents B and C)

### Membership of Court Steering Committee

Noted that:

1. Sarah Stewart's term of office on both Court Steering Committee (currently Chair) and Court is due to end on 31 July 2023. At that time Sarah will have reached 9 years of service and would not normally be eligible for re-appointment. N.B. The Chair of Court Steering Committee is also a member of Honorary Degrees Committee and Nominations Committee.
2. A new member of Court Steering Committee, and Nominations Committee is required in succession to Sarah Stewart.
3. A new Chair of Court Steering Committee, who will become a member of Honorary Degrees Committee, is required in succession to Sarah Stewart.

Resolved that:

- i. Sarah Glendinning be appointed to serve on Court Steering Committee from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2025, when her current term of office on Court is due to end.
- ii. That Hilary Florek be appointed Chair of Court Steering Committee and as a member of Honorary Degrees Committee from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 initially, when her current term of office on Court is due to end.

### Membership of Court

Noted that:

While Honorary Membership is not offered to retiring members routinely, it was felt that Nick Forbes would be a good candidate, due to his long service and partnership working with the University as leader of the City Council.

Resolved that:

- i. The following members be re-appointed to serve on Court from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2026, subject to their willingness to continue to serve:

Mr David Flory CBE  
Ms Jacqui Henderson CBE  
Mr Mark l'Anson MBE  
Mr Ajay Khindria

- ii. The following be appointed to serve on Court from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2026, subject to their willingness to serve:

Henri Murison, Chief Executive, Northern Powerhouse Partnership  
Rt Rev Helen-Ann Hartley, Bishop of Newcastle  
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay  
Giselle Stewart OBE, Director of UK Corporate Affairs, Ubisoft  
Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs  
Lucy Robson, Audit Partner, RSM UK  
Clare Talbot-Jones, Deputy Chair of Convocation

iii. The following members be thanked for their long and valued service to Court:

Ms Sarah Green  
The Rt Rev Christine Hardman  
Ms Fiona O'Connor  
Ms Sarah Stewart

iv. That Nick Forbes be offered Honorary Membership of Court.

### 3. **POLICY ENGAGEMENT**

Received a presentation from Professor Jane Robinson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Engagement and Place on the University's Policy Engagement. The presentation slides are appended to these Minutes.

#### Noted presentation:

1. Changes in the regional/national ecosystem have highlighted capacity gaps, and lead to increased focus and funding opportunities for policy and impact.
2. The University is involved with four main strands of work in this area: the Policy Academy, which focuses on skills development and provides a pipeline for future policy activity; Insights NE, a partnership bridging the divide between research and place-based policy making; focus on Specialist Policy Strengths including Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, the work of the University's National Innovation Centres, National Institute for Health and Care Research Policy Networks; Public Affairs work to convert strategic research into policy engagement.
3. The Policy Academy was launched in 2016 and has provided 1,095 staff and postgraduates with a skills development programme with partners. In addition, the Newcastle University Centres of Research Excellence (NUCoREs) and the Global Challenges Academy are exploring a programme of support to Doctoral Training Centres and the Doctoral College. This work has led to a growing policy community of practice and mentoring support.
4. Insights NE is a partnership comprising Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, the City Council, the North of Tyne Combined Authority and the NHS with the aim of connecting policy makers with research expertise.
5. The University is hosting a Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre funded by the RSA and the Arts and Humanities Research Council which will address industry and government's current priorities for the creative industries, while at the same time advancing research into the longer-term challenges and opportunities facing the sector.
6. We seek to increase the University's visibility in Parliament and Whitehall by developing new dialogues with parliamentarians and policymakers aimed at positioning Newcastle

University as a source of evidence based, solutions focussed expertise for policy-makers, demonstrating to government how our areas of research strength align with their objectives.

7. We will focus on our five key areas of internationally leading research strength as outlined in the University's Vision and strategy: Ageing, Cities and Place, Culture and Creative Arts, Data, One Planet.
8. One recent example to highlight is Professor Sara Walker's work on Energy which has a regional, national and global reach.
9. Looking ahead we are exploring how we can work with the North East Mayoral Combined Authority and other regional partners. In particular, the National Innovation Centre for Data will be able to provide information which the NoT Combined Authority will be able to use in policy making for the region. We are also building global networks and reputation lined to place-based policy making and our partnership with the University of Pittsburgh is a good example of this.

#### Noted discussion:

1. The University's work in this area is about making a difference and extending the University's influence, drawing on connected partnerships.
2. There is an overlap with our core business of education and research and it is crucial to link our expertise with policy makers.
3. A key issue for many students and academics is to have an idea of what their work might lead to and it is important to consider how we ensure colleagues are aware of our excellence in specific areas so that they can tap into further opportunities. It was confirmed that there is a Policy Engagement Group, whose work is supplemented by e-bulletins for internal colleagues. Policy Support Funding is available to support appropriate colleague projects.
4. There are further opportunities for students to become involved in policy projects. The existing student exchange with Pittsburgh is a good example of this. Student projects should also be linked to Insights NE initiatives.
5. Strategic partnerships may help charities to join-up with funding opportunities and it will be important to ensure the charity sector forms part of the University's wider policy work. It was confirmed that the work of the Social Justice Advisory Group includes consideration of charity sector issues.
6. The Impact Accelerator Account was cited as an example of a regional project focussing on how to maximise the impact of our research; NIHR funding has been received by the local authority for research into the impact of health indeterminates and there is a need to join up all of the work in this space.
7. As international students will be more interested in issues affecting their home countries, there is a need to focus on international policy, e.g. the decolonisation skills required by colleagues. As part of our global facing obligations in this area global challenge research projects are underway with Pittsburgh and NUMed, Malaysia.
8. Poverty and exclusion remain major issues in our region. Organisations working in this area would be a good partners with whom to explore granular-level data. Many small organisations gather data and universities could have a greater role in pulling this information together. The University has academic leads on both health inequality and child poverty and Insights NE will be able to facilitate communication with appropriate organisations.

9. It will be important for the Business School to be involved in the University's Policy Engagement work and it was confirmed that the North of Tyne Combined Authority is working with the Business School on inclusive growth. In addition, the Policy and Evidence Centre is led from the Business School.

Resolved:

That Professor Robinson be thanked for a most informative presentation.

#### 4. **VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS**

Received a report from the Vice-Chancellor and President.

(Circulated with the agenda as Document D)

Noted:

1. There is some positive news to report on Industrial Action with the recent re-evaluation of the USS pension fund indicating a better position. The strikes relating to the pensions dispute had been suspended following this news. The remaining industrial action is focussed on the pay award, casualisation, the gender pay gap and workload issues. The pay award of between 5% and 8% was rejected narrowly and there was a mandate for industrial action in the form of a marking and assessment boycott, to September. This remained a national dispute and mitigation measures will be put in place to minimise the effect on students as much as possible.
2. Re-accreditation for Initial Teacher Training was successful. We are working with Durham University to enable them to continue their own teacher education with final accreditation from this University.
3. The region has been awarded Investment Zone status with around £80M funding available. There will be a focus on electrification and green energy, so the University will be well-placed to bring together opportunities in this area.
4. Congratulations to Team Newcastle who scored a comprehensive victory (99.5 points to 33) in the annual Varsity sports contest with Northumbria University on 24 March 2023.
5. Turner Prize nominated artist; Dr Ingrid Pollard (Visual Artist Fellow) was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours for services to art. Awards were also received by Emerita Professor Kim Reynolds, formerly of the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics (OBE), Miss Sally Ingram, Director of Student Health and Wellbeing (MBE), Emeritus Professor Roy Taylor (MBE), former Director of the Newcastle Magnetic Resonance Centre, and Eugene Milne, former Director of Public Health for Newcastle (MBE).
6. The Chair congratulated the Vice-Chancellor on his CBE in the New Year's Honours List.

## 5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE UNIVERSITY STATUTES

Reported that:

- (a) Proposed changes to the University statutes resulted from an independent review of university governance that took place during 2022. Any proposed changes to the University Statutes require scrutiny across the University and, by the time of the Court meeting in May, will have already been considered by Academic Board, Convocation (by circulation), Senate and Council.
- (b) Following Court's approval of the proposed changes they will be submitted to the Privy Council for final approval.

Received and considered:

A paper from the Registrar.

(Circulated with the agenda as Document E)

Noted that:

1. Most of the recommendations made from the independent review did not require a change to statutes. The University had, however, received a recommendation to consider an increase in the number of ex officio members of Senate to reflect the very specific role they have in helping the University to achieve its strategic academic aims.
2. The proposed changes were confirmed to members of Court as follows:

Statute 12 Pro-Vice-Chancellors and University Deans

It is proposed that we formalise the appointment process for University Deans who are responsible for helping the University to achieve its strategic academic aims. At present, there are seven University Deans and the proposed change would allow Senate and Council to define and appoint these roles.

Statute 26 The Senate

It is proposed that University Deans become ex officio members of Senate. The number of ex-officio members should not exceed the number of appointed members who should be in the majority for a meeting of Senate to be quorate. The members elected by Senate to serve on Council in Statute 26(3) would be additional to the 20 members elected by and from the academic staff.

Statute 58 Amendment of Statutes

To request approval from the Privy Council to change wording to reflect the accession of the King.

3. While not included within the current the proposed changes, it was noted that consideration of future candidates for the Chancellorship should explore willingness to chair Court in accordance with Statute 16(2). If they did not wish to perform the role of Chair of Court, then arrangements for an alternative independent Chair could be considered although this may require a subsequent change to the Statutes.

Resolved:

That Court approve the recommendations for changes to Statutes 12, 26 and 58.

6. **PAST COURT PRESENTATIONS: UPDATES FOR MEMBERS**

Received for information a document updating Court on the presentation received in April 2021 on 'The University's Role in the Newcastle Net Zero Initiative'.

(Circulated with the agenda as Document F)

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None raised.

8. **MEETINGS 2022-23**

Reported that:

- (a) There will be a joint meeting of Court and Senate from 17:00-17:30 on 20 September 2023. This will be a virtual meeting with only one topic, a proposal to re-appoint the Chancellor.
- (b) The next meeting of Court will take place at 10:30 on 24 October 2023.
- (c) Court Steering Committee has agreed that the topic for the main presentation at the October meeting will be Electrification.
- (d) The Spring 2024 meeting of Court will be held at 10:30 on 3 May 2024.
- (e) The date of the 2024 Honorary Fellowships Ceremony will be confirmed in due course.

Members were asked to note these dates for their diaries.