

**At Glasgow and within the Board Room of
the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on
Wednesday 4 December 2019 at 10:45am
being a meeting of the Board of Governors**

PRESENT	Andrew Butcher (AB) Morag Campbell (MC) Stuart Cross (SC) Tari Lang (TL) Prof Donald MacRae (DM) Carol Main (CM) Sharon Mair (SM) Jasmine Munns (President of the Students' Union) Susan Lee Kidd (SLK) - elected staff representative	Mark Leishman (ML) Agnes Robson (AR) Philip Rodney (PR) Caroline Roxburgh (CR) Jean Sangster (JS) Academic Board Representative Professor Jeffrey Sharkey (Principal) Aidan Teplitzky (AT) VP of the Students' Union (Music) Colleen Toomey (CT)
IN ATTENDANCE	Dr Lois Fitch Janette Harkess Jackie Russell Lindsey Shields Alan Smith	(Assistant Principal) (Director of External Relations) (Director of Human Resources) (Secretary) (Director of Finance and Estates)
IN THE CHAIR	Nick Kuenssberg	

The Chair welcomed all attendees and thanked them for attending the AGM earlier than morning.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from John Hylands, Dorothy Miell, Ed Monaghan, Maria Taylor and Sir Jonathan Mills.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting **were approved** as an accurate record. All actions agreed at the last meeting had been actioned or were in hand.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

There were no other matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT 2020-2025

The Strategic Plan papers were received and noted. The Principal thanked the Governors' Working Group comprising AR, DM, SM, PR and the President of the Students' Union, for their feedback and ideas and reported that the aim was to:

- (i) evaluate and mature the current curriculum;
- (ii) draw on research-led teaching and learning in the future curriculum;
- (iii) create an Innovation Hub for internal and external use, under which the future Institute would reside;
- (iv) develop a building plan focusing on Speirs Locks and the front of the main building to address current over-crowding and keep abreast with other Conservatoires' building projects; and
- (v) have a streamlined central strategic plan which utilises the subsidiary plans to identify and substantiate the KPIs.

The Assistant Principal introduced the papers and spoke about the Conservatoire's particular complexities, having numerous disciplines, the pressure of space and simplifying the Conservatoire's message in this strategic plan. It was emphasised in the draft Learning Teaching and Technology Strategy that the Conservatoire should be confident in what it chooses to articulate. The Assistant Principal drew attention to the Executive Summary and the aligned aims and outcomes being delivered through various project groups.

The Principal reported that the timeline for the consultation process of the overall Strategic Plan will continue up until approval at the June Board meeting in 2020.

There was general discussion around:

- (i) the decolonisation strand running through the papers;
- (ii) the hard work involved in winning hearts and minds across the Conservatoire for the evolution of the curriculum;
- (iii) the strategy delivery projects and focusing on:
 - specific items and enablers to prioritise the strategy and the deliverables;
 - an agile methodology;
 - key projects which people can identify and understand to sell this across the Conservatoire;
- (iv) providing an indication of the KPIs, both top and subsidiary levels to ensure that the strategies fit; and
- (v) more emphasis on the importance of digital strategy and what this can deliver for the Conservatoire. The Assistant Principal noted the implicit difference between technology-enhanced learning and the digital strategy.

There was further general discussion around:

- (i) the idea of an Innovation Hub, which met with approval, and:
 - moving the potential for increased commercial income higher up the agenda;
 - how this plays into the right environment component for the Research Excellence Framework; and
 - clarification around the Conservatoire's national role with an international reach.

The Principal reported that more detail of the above would be provided by the Director of Research and Innovation in the presentation on research/the Innovation Hub at the January Board meeting. The Assistant Principal drew attention to:

- (a) the constant battle in Higher Education to promote practice-based research as research;
- (b) how knowledge exchange/transfer is developing at a rapid pace;
- (c) the importance of Impact case studies (introduced in the Research Excellence Framework 2014) with Conservatoires doing well in this area; and
- (d) focusing on productive partnerships in the Institute; stepping outside the arts world for commercial partnerships; growing small projects with the NHS and the Prison Service;
- (e) the Innovation Hub being the locus for potential innovative partnerships, for example, in the video gaming industry in Scotland;
- (f) practice-led research and knowledge exchange and entrepreneurial endeavours all forming part of the Innovation Hub.

The Principal reported that partnerships emerging from the Royal Society of Edinburgh and work with Scottish Enterprise may help provide funding into the Innovation Hub.

- (ii) the Vision and Mission statements being further explored once the SWOT analysis is completed and the strategic plan unfolds; it was noted that linking the components of the SWOT analysis, in a similar way to the three perspectives of People, Place & Promise, would make it clearer to derive the opportunities and threats and inform the approach to KPIs;
- (iii) space and planning, the research from the space utilisation audit/group and whether the right solution to the Conservatoire's space issue is to build at Speirs Locks or a longer term capital development at the main building;
- (iv) how the curriculum would be monitored to make it efficient and sustainable. The Assistant Principal reported that the curriculum is monitored through quality assurance, external audits, programme committees and an interconnected shared responsibility in the

- Conservatoire; and
- (v) obtaining input from Alumni about their experience and whether the curriculum has delivered for the real world; and

It was agreed that some Governors would be keen to:

- (i) act as sponsors to bridge collaboration and be involved in the digital strategy and
- (ii) assist in the development of the Research Hub/Institute.

It was further agreed that the Assistant Principal could circulate more information to the Board as the strategic plan evolves outwith the normal circulation of Board papers.

6. REVIEW OF RCS POWER TO APPOINT TRUSTEES TO RCS TRUSTS UNDER THE TRUST DEEDS

The note regarding feedback and proposal was received and **it was agreed** to:

- (i) proceed with the Side Letter in perpetuity ensuring that both existing and new Trustees sign up to this arrangement;
- (ii) retain the Principal as a Trustee so long as he recuses himself whenever a funding decision on the RCS is concerned; and
- (iii) have both parties sign the three Deeds of Renunciation (circulated with the February Board meeting papers).

The Principal and the Director of Finance and Estates would liaise with Lord Gill and report back at a future Board meeting.

There was general discussion regarding the Board's conflicts of interest position and the Secretary reported that Pinsent Masons considered this, as set out in the Statement of Primary Responsibilities, to be "perfectly adequate".

7. BLUE SKY THINKING

There was general discussion around:

- (i) teaching music in Scottish schools and youngsters becoming disadvantaged in the admissions process. The Principal reported that the Conservatoire has been active in this area by testifying at Parliament and lobbying Ministers and local authorities not to cut music programmes but the ultimate problem is the separation of responsibilities between local authorities and national government. The Principal advised of the value of the Conservatoire's geographical hub approach, for example at Holyrood Palace and how the future Innovation Hub may help in this area. It was noted that:
- (i) the Conservatoire has not lobbied the Scottish Qualifications Agency and that there may be scope in doing this;
- (ii) at the recent Cross-Party Group in music at Parliament, it was emphasised again that the Local Authorities are the ones with the power in teaching priorities;
- (iii) the Conservatoire struggles to meet the recruitment targets on its Bachelor in Education (Music) course which results in fewer students progressing to teach in schools;
- (iv) the Conservatoire is feeling the effect of "music for all" in schools and the problem of how to bridge this gap to find BEd students with the standard to teach music across the spectrum; and
- (ii) The development of the geographical hubs: it was acknowledged that there was not enough local authority support for the Fraserburgh hub but the one in Ayrshire is working well; the one in Abbey Strand, Edinburgh has potential through the support of the Princes Foundation and Edinburgh City Council, and if this is supported the plan is to go north again, potentially in Aberdeenshire.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Board
31 January 2020
24 April 2020
26 June 2020

30 October 2020
9 December 2020 (after AGM)
29 January 2021

23 April 2021

25 June 2021

AGM

Wednesday 9 December 2020

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other competent business.

Graduations

Thursday 2 July 2020

Thursday 29 October 2020

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING OF 4 DECEMBER 2019

Item No.	Person(s)	Action	By/when
6.	Director of Finance and Estates and the Principal	Discuss the agreed proposal with the Chair of the RCS Trusts and report back to the Board.	To report to the Board meeting in April.