

**At Glasgow and in the Board Room of
the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on
Friday 22 April 2022 at 10:00am being a
meeting of the Board of Governors**

- PRESENT**
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|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Andrew Butcher (AB) | Ed Monaghan (EM) |
| Morag Campbell (MC) | Prof Mark O’Thomas (MOT) |
| John Craig (JC) (SUP) | Nacim Pak-Shiraz (NCP) |
| Ken Fairbrother (KF) (SU VPM) | Agnes Robson (AR) SIG, Vice-Chair |
| Dr David Hare (DH) | Philip Rodney (PR) |
| Elizabeth Jenkinson (EJ) | Prof Matthew Rooke (MR) |
| Carol Main (CM) | Caroline Roxburgh (CR) |
| Sharon Mair (SM) | Jean Sangster (JS) |
| Prof Dorothy Miell (DXM), Vice-Chair | Prof Jeffrey Sharkey (PJS) (Principal) |
| | Dr John Taylor (JT) |
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- IN ATTENDANCE**
- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Lydia Demaison (LD) | (Director of Human Resources) |
| Prof Vicky Gunn (VG) | (Academic Registrar and Board Secretary) |
| Janette Harkess(JXH) | (Director of External Relations) |
| Alan Smith (AS) | (Director of Finance and Estates) |
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- IN THE CHAIR** Nick Kuenssberg (NK) (Chair)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND OPENING COMMENTS

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Jo Buckley, Ruth McGowan, Professor Stuart Cross and Dr Lois Fitch.

The Chair acknowledged the effective and smooth running of the Strategy Away Day [brief notes attached] and expressed gratitude to all involved in making it such an enjoyable and useful event.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting **were approved** as an accurate record. Previous actions were reviewed and updated as follows:

Meeting	Item No.	Person(s)	Action	By/when	Status/Update
Jan22	5	Principal and Chair	to prepare communications to the Chair of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Board and the Director of the SFC raising the Conservatoire’s concerns and report back to the Board in April	April Board (22/4/22)	JS reported invitation received to meet with Karen Watt

Jan22	5	Principal and Chair	to arrange to meet with the SFC to stress the Conservatoire's role as a national institution which was building creative cross-HE collaborations both within and outwith Scotland	April Board (22/4/22)	JS reported invitation received to meet with Karen Watt
Jan22	5	Principal and Chair	to consider organising a parliamentary reception that platformed the work of the Conservatoire to MSPs with the ultimate aim of influencing the cabinet.	April Board (22/4/22)	Reception at Holyrood (2 November 2022, Garden Lobby, sponsored by Michelle Thompson MSP)
Jan22	5	Academic Registrar & Secretary and Director of External Relations	to consider how best to implement regular communications with governors regarding events and updates as part of a plan to build the community of governors	June Board	VG & JH to meet 27.04.22 to discuss
Jan22	5	Academic Registrar & Secretary and Director of HR	to organise and disseminate appropriate training opportunities for the governors in conjunction with the Conservatoire's EDI team.	June Board	On-going

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

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

5. REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal's report was received and noted. JS highlighted the following:

- Appreciation for the Strategy Away Day and recognition of the work put in by Lois Fitch, Janette Harkess, and the team for ensuring the day went smoothly.
- The shifting sands that Higher Education inhabits and the key theme we seem to be attending to of needing to reset how best to relate to one another effectively. As well as the challenges touched on in the minute of 220422, there were additional aspects of the current geopolitical and cultural circumstances to accommodate, particularly those underscored in the article (in the papers). Thus, the converging trends of expressed thymotic desires and their fissiparous effects, social inequality, nationalism, and authoritarianism from which our students cannot escape thanks to the ubiquity of 24/7 social media are reflected in areas related to the social cohesion of our student body and associated conflicts in the realms of social solidarity.
- The pride that staff, students and governors could take from the RCS QS World Rankings [No 5 in the World] and the successes outlined in the fulsome media report
- Rachel Drury and Jenn Butterworth were both nominated as was the Music For Scotland campaign: <https://newsquestscotlandevents.com/events/heawards/>

6. REPORTS FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL AND DIRECTORS

As well as the impressive amount of activity represented in the reports, Governors reflected on four themes that came through from the Deputy Principal and Director's reports:

- Dealing with complex complaints and the question of resetting relationships and policy in response to the growth and demand of such cases. The Board were asked to note that complaints procedures and case-loads had increased exponentially in the last three years across the higher education sector. The effect of this was seen in the 11-month waiting list for SPSO appeals to be undertaken.
- Engaging with practices that enabled fuller understanding of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion aspects of the RCS at all levels, with a recognition that some of the interpersonal conflicts that the RCS was witnessing required external input to enable conflict mediation and resolution.
- Refreshing overarching principles and values as part of curriculum reform which emphasise professionalism tempered by humanity.
- Acknowledging the emerging tensions between post-pandemic fatigue, inflation, and the latest pay rounds.

Governors also recognised the strength and enthusiasm of work being undertaken at RCS, as reflected in the reports of the various Directors, with the opportunity and quality of the new Psychology and Art programme being singled out for praise (CM).

The developing RCS research community was also discussed, with a request for more information to be shared with the BOG on this. Additionally, MR questioned whether, as the depth of the research community grows, some of the research could be directed to issues that RCS and the Conservatoires more generally are grappling with, such as pipelines into the disciplines, civic regeneration through performance and associated cultural vitality, audience generation, looking towards ways of managing the current disjunctions between the various different governmental funding bodies in Scotland.

[Secretary's note: a previous project in which RCS was a partner explored some of these issues as a quality enhancement theme. Papers from this project can be located here: [The creative disciplines - Evidence for Enhancement \(enhancementthemes.ac.uk\)](https://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk)]

7. REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS' UNION

An oral report was delivered by the President of the Students' Union. The SUP drew particular attention to:

- Outcome of the Student elections: Ken Fairbrother was elected as next session's SU President; Ulysse Tonnelé, SUVP Music. At the time of the Board meeting there were no formal candidates for SUVPDDPF.
- SU collaboration with senior managers in policy development and student support, including their involvement in a student-led Concert for Ukraine
- Excitement about potential of the SU in the future of the RCS
- Commitment of the SU to work with the Academic Registrar and Secretary on a review of all the student learning journey related policies with an aim to make them more accessible.
- Summer Ball planned, July 9 Radisson Blue
- Special thanks to Lois, Helen, Gordon, Gemma for their role in resolving the range of conflicts that have been coming from the student context

8. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

- 8.1 The summary report of the meeting of 9 March was received and noted.
- 8.2 The Board reflected on the previous day's Strategy event and on the progress being made in respect of the strategic plan and the development of the Conservatoire's upcoming curriculum review. [*Day's notes attached to the minute*]

As part of the Board's reflections on the day before the possibility of developing a risk-based periodic professional services review (PPSR) approach was noted. CR asked that a presentation be brought to the Audit Committee regarding his.

ACTION: VG & LF to prepare a briefing paper outlining a risk-based PPSR and present to the first Audit Committee of the next academic session

9. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

- 9.1 The summary report of the meeting held on 18 March was received and noted. Areas highlighted included the changes to the projected budget deficit; the importance of cybersecurity, and the review of current investment policy and directives.
- 9.2 The management accounts to end January were received and noted.
- 9.3 BOG **approved** the management accounts as recommended by FGP.
- 9.4 An additional item was highlighted regarding how RCS would move forward in offering support to Ukrainian students applying to RCS through host and super host humanitarian sponsorship. BOG were asked to note that the SFC had now established a funding agreement for fees and hardship as well as a fee waiver for currently enrolled Ukrainian students who might be unable to access relevant sources of finance. With that in mind, BOG also noted that RCS was making sure Russian students were also supported as they too would be unable to access funds.

10. REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

- 10.1 The summary report of the meeting held on 18 March was received and noted. CR drew particular attention to:
- The risk associated with events in the Ukraine and their direct effects of the RCS, especially those related to current and future students. Risks associated with sanctions, investments, and supply chains were also outlined. BOG, however, heard that these were not currently giving cause for concern.
 - Live and dynamic risk management process for RCS (particularly in response to current debates around freedom of academic speech, reputational risks and importance of principles and values)
 - Delivering net-zero carbon emissions/ embodied carbon. BOG recognised the scale and scope of impact likely to affect the Conservatoire as the institution moved forward with the higher education regulations associated with the net-zero agenda.
- 10.2 The revised Money Laundering Policy was received. BOG **approved** this policy

11. REPORT FROM THE BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

The summary report of the meeting held on 14 January was received and noted. EM highlighted the potential for a shift in the RCS estates strategy to take up opportunities that might arise from the availability of commercial property in the vicinity of the RCS. BOG **approved** the proposal that EM would make initial exploration into these

possibilities.

12. REPORT FROM THE FAIR ACCESS COMMITTEE

The summary report of the meeting held on 8 February was received and noted. DXM reported on the plenary on building resilient learning communities as well as updates on actions in the operational plan, particularly the new VLE for access and pre-HE students.

DXM also noted challenges in recruitment to the Transitions programme and the difficulties posed for strategic planning in the annualised nature of the funding of this agenda by the SFC. Otherwise, good progress was noted. BOG commended the work of the Transitions team and emphasised the work's importance in demonstrating the Scotland-wide nature of the RCS' work in this area.

ACTION: JS to raise the Transitions funding process with Karen Watt (SFC) when he meets with her.

13. REPORT FROM THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

The summary report of the meeting held on 16 March was received. CM highlighted that mental health and wellbeing remained a key feature in the committee's discussions. Also noted were the development of a new Health and Safety Strategy and the continued and seemingly intractable problems with raising the completion rate of training required to be undertaken by part time staff. LD noted that HR were devising a range of modes of delivery for the training in the hope that this would improve uptake.

Following note of the latest Child Protection report to the Board, Board members requested that the reporting be at a level of detail that oversight of key issues could be ensured, whilst anonymity was maintained.

ACTION: LD to provide key data in future Child Protection Reports to BOG

14. REPORT FROM THE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The summary report of the meeting held on 7 February was received and noted. PR noted that progress was being made following the appointment of Chris Wynn, that an Alumni manager was being recruited, and that the IAB had been revitalised. As a result DFC would be moving from strategic direction to action/ operationally focused. In this it would be looking to identify systematic ways to harness and secure opportunities related to fund-raising and moving beyond the serendipitous and opportunistic approaches.

The board noted that PR would like to bring a document to BOG outlining the potential social networks and relevant connections that each Governor had with the 'giving' agenda in mind, recognising that this need not be just financial giving. Key to these connections would be an offer that encouraged engagement with RCS performances and events beyond the productions put on within Renfrew Street. One identifiable funding priority was being able to take RCS performances to members of these networks as well as inviting members of the networks into the campus. Governors were encouraged to let PR know of relevant networks

15. GOVERNANCE

Nothing to note

16. REPORT FROM THE APPOINTING COMMITTEE

AR assured the BOG that the whole process that was followed was compliant with the HEG(2016).

BOG thanked AR for her thorough approach to the process and management of it.

17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Board:

24 June 2022

Graduations:

Wednesday 6 July 2022 [*catch-up ceremonies for lockdown cohorts*]

Thursday 7 July 2022

Thursday 27 October 2022

Academic Year 2022/23:

Board:

28 October 2022

7 December 2022 (following AGM)

27 January 2023

21 April 2023

23 June 2023

AGM: Wednesday 7 December 2022

Graduations:

Thursday 6 July 2023

Thursday 26 October 2023

18. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.