

As Approved by the University Court at the meeting of 22 January 2021

UNIVERSITY COURT OF ST ANDREWS

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 23 OCTOBER 2020 AT A MEETING OF THE COURT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

Present: Mr Srdja Popovic, *Rector* (part only); Ms Catherine Stihler, *Senior Lay Member (presiding)*; Professor Sally Mapstone, *Principal*; Professor Stuart Monro, *Deputy Chair of Court*; Professor Lorna Milne, *Master of the United College & Deputy Principal*; Mr Adrian Greer, *Chancellor's Assessor*; Mr Papa Obeng, *Interim Rector's Assessor*; Mr Nigel Christie, Mr Jonathan Hewitt, *General Council Assessors*; Professor Sharon Ashbrook, Professor Mark Harris, Dr Derek Ball, and Dr Morven Shearer, *Senate Assessors*; Ms Donna Pierz-Fennell, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*; Mr Alex Duncan, Dr Malcolm Petrie, *Trade Union Nominees*; Mr Dan Marshall, *President, Students' Association*; Ms Amy Gallacher, *Director of Education, Students' Association*; Dame Anne Pringle, Mr Timothy Allan, Mr Frank MacInnis, Mr Nigel Morecroft, and Professor Sir David Wallace, *Non-executive Members*.

In regular attendance: Professor Brad MacKay, *Senior Vice-Principal International Strategy and External Relations*; Professor Graham Turnbull, *Acting Vice-Principal Research and Innovation*; Mr Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; Professor Clare Peddie, *Vice-Principal Education (Proctor)*; Dr Katie Stevenson, *Vice-Principal Collections, Music and Digital Content*; Mr Derek Watson, *Quaestor & Factor*; Mr Andy Goor, *Chief Financial Officer*; Ms Margaret Sinclair, *Executive Officer to the University Court and Senate*.

Apologies: Cllr Altany Craik, *Provost of Fife's Assessor*; Mr Ken Dalton, Ms Eve McCurrich, *Non-executive Members*; Professor Tom Brown, *Vice-Principal Research and Innovation*.

In attendance (advisory capacity): Mr Niall Scott, *Director of Corporate Communications*.

PRELIMINARIES

Due to the emergency situation created by the Coronavirus Pandemic, the meeting was convened remotely via Microsoft Teams.

With the agreement of the Rector, the Senior Lay Member presided.

STARRING OF ITEMS

Members noted those items currently starred on the Agenda. No additional items were starred.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were intimated.

FAREWELLS AND WELCOMES

The outgoing Rector

This was the final meeting for Mr Srdja Popovic who demits office as Rector on 31 October 2020. Mr Popovic joined the meeting from Colorado and, given the time difference, his attendance for this last meeting was particularly appreciated.

The Principal gave a vote of thanks: During his term of office, Mr Popovic had brought a unique skill set and perspective which the Court and the University had hugely valued and benefitted from. The role of the Rector was to help students to better represent themselves and Mr Popovic had undertaken this role to great effect and with utter conviction. His great strength had been to organise the student body and he had inspired, connected with, taught and mobilised the student body in a way which had generated significant energy and engagement. The University was all the better for this and owed him a debt of gratitude. The engaged student activism which the University now enjoyed was a direct consequence of his time in office. It was hoped that he would remain associated with the University which will now always be his institution too.

During his time as Rector, he had been supported by a superb students' committee. Jamie Rodney, Camilla Duke and Papa Obeng were all to be thanked, along with others too numerous to name.

Court joined with the Principal and the Senior Lay Member to express (with virtual applause), its warm thanks and appreciation to Mr Popovic for his time and service as Rector. The Senior Lay Member echoed the sentiments expressed by the Principal including the hope that Mr Popovic would remain part of St Andrews' rich tapestry. Members added to the appreciation expressed via messages of thanks to Mr Popovic via the chat function.

In response the Rector thanked colleagues on Court for what he described as a wonderful journey. Particular thanks were expressed to Dame Anne Pringle and to the Principal for their guidance; to the Vice-Principal Governance for his assistance in navigating University bureaucracy; and to colleagues on Court for advice and assistance as to process and presentation. Reflecting on his term he considered that his success had been to devise a way to make students work for themselves with the Rector as figurehead. In this regard there had been many areas of success: increased student engagement and participation; great teamwork; the empowerment of students to lead on issues and to form committees; the use of student focus groups to test ideas; and the Rector's series. He hoped that involvement and engagement would continue under Dr Hussein (the newly elected Rector). In his view however, there remained one area where success had been limited and work had not been completed. This was in relation to housing issues. Although much had been done, and efforts continued to address this perennial problem, no satisfactory solution had been

found. Work must continue to engage with Fife Council to find a way to enable affordable housing in St Andrews. Without this, it was the Rector's view that the goal of Diverse St Andrews could not fully be achieved.

The Rector (elect)

Following the recent election Dr Leyla Hussein OBE was elected as Rector on a turnout of 40%. The Rector's term of office will commence on 2 November and Dr Hussein will attend her first meeting of Court in January.

The new Rector will appoint a Rector's Assessor in accordance with the protocol agreed by Court, and that individual will also attend their first Court meeting in January.

Other

Court welcomed the incoming sabbatical officers, and the Trade Union Nominees who were attending their first Court meeting as members¹.

Professor Tom Brown, Vice-Principal Research and Innovation, was unable to attend Court due to illness. Court joined with the Senior Lay Member to wish him a speedy recovery following his recent emergency surgery. It was noted that Professor Graham Turnbull had taken over as Acting Vice-Principal Research and Innovation, and attended Court in this capacity.

I. OPENING BUSINESS

1. MEETING MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

i) Minute of the Court Meeting held on 12 June 2020

The minute of the Court meeting held on 12 June 2020 (on file, Minutes 2019-2020 No.4, pp38-50) was agreed as a correct record.

ii) RECC

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/01) which updated Court on the activities of the Reinforced Extraordinary Committee of Court (RECC) for the period 13 June to 7 September 2020. Court noted the update.

iii) Report on Court Away Day

Court approved the Report of the Court Away Day 15 and 16 September 2020 (on file, Court 20/02).

2. COURT MEMBERSHIP, 2020-21

¹ All had attended the Court Away Day in September.

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/03) which set out the current membership of Court for the Academic Year 2020-21. The membership would be updated in November to reflect the election of the new Rector, and the change of Rector's Assessor.

3. REPORT FROM THE RECTOR

Court noted the Rector's report (on file, 20/04), presented by the Interim Rector's Assessor. The report covered the Students' Association response to Covid-19; the In-Person Teaching Survey²; progress on Sexual and Gender Based Violence issues; and the Rector's farewell message.

As part of the Rectorial election process, the Rector's Committee had undertaken a survey of students which had identified that the vast majority of students appeared unaware not only of the role of Rector, but of the role and purpose of the University Court. To counter this the Rector's Committee proposed that an information campaign, "Know your Court", be initiated. This initiative was welcomed. The Principal requested that the Rector's Committee and the Students' Association work closely with Corporate Communications to formulate a user-led approach which would maximise meaningful engagement from the student body.

Having received the report, Members sought the views of the student representatives present as to the perceived impact of Covid-19 on student mental health. It was acknowledged that the pandemic had had a significant impact, and that some students were struggling socially and academically. Fatigue was also a factor, as students struggled with productivity in the changed climate. There was also concern amongst students as to the impact of the current climate on performance generally, and on the December exam diet specifically. Responding to Members' questions, the Director of Education, Students' Association confirmed that the Students' Association and the University were cognisant of these issues and concerns and provided detail of the numerous initiatives underway, led by the School Welfare Advisory Group. and the Students' Association, to co-ordinate the available sources of support and advice throughout the University, and to put appropriate resources in the hands of students. The Vice-Principal Education(Proctor) provided additional information as to the support mechanisms available.

The importance of communicating concerns was being emphasised to students as was the role of class representatives and School Presidents in identifying concerns and acting as a conduit to communication, and to relay information which would enable action. Online representatives had been added to these role holders, to support those students studying remotely.

The role of the Covid Rapid Response Team (CRRT) was highlighted. Students who were self-isolating were contacted on a regular basis (every 48 or 24 hours depending on perceived need) to ensure that all was well. Resources had also

² The Report on the Covid Survey Analysis annexed to the paper can be viewed on the Court Sharepoint site.

been allocated to recruit additional Counsellors to assist with mental health issues. Student Services had recently presented the current measures in place to support students to NHS Fife. These had been pronounced exemplary. As much as was possible had been and was being done, but there was no complacency, the University was always willing to do more.

Responding to the concerns which had been voiced to those Members who had attended the Pre-Court meeting with Lay assessors³ as to the expectations as to role to be played by academics in highlighting students who were struggling or experiencing difficulties, (arising out of a concern by academics that this would add to their responsibilities and workload at a time when they were already stretched), the Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) confirmed that the robust academic alert system already in place allowed staff to identify those students who were not engaging or struggling academically, and issues relating to this would be dealt with by the Welfare Officers in Schools, as was the usual process.

4. REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

(i) Written

Court received the Principal's written Report (on file, Court 20/05) which provided an update to Court on recent events, activities and general University news. Court noted its contents including the re-appointment of the Rev Dr Stephen Holmes as Head of the School of Divinity for a further period from 1 August 2021 until 31 July 2023.

(ii) Verbal report and update

The Principal provided a detailed verbal report to Court on a number of matters as detailed below:

- The University continued to function within a crisis situation but was learning all the time in the course of the pandemic and using this knowledge to endeavour to enhance the quality of the experience offered to students and staff during these times.

The Principal provided some high-level points and comment on the wider national and government situation.

- Over 10,000 students had been recruited this year due in considerable part to the late UK Government decisions in relation to A level grading arrangements. Over the course of this semester, 1000 or so of those students had been given permission to undertake their studies remotely. The buoyancy of recruitment, across Home, RUK and international

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students, and at both UG and PG levels, had not been reproduced at every Scottish university.

- These numbers had posed the University challenges in terms of accommodation and teaching arrangements, compounded by the restrictions imposed by risk assessment and social distancing requirements. These had been addressed for this year. Work was underway to review strategically their implications for following years, in terms of space, resource, and relevant support for Schools and units.
- Looking after and educating students remained the University's priority along with ensuring that the return to research and teaching for academic staff was as positive as it could be, and that professional staff were equally supported.
- Many staff continued to work remotely, but the majority of buildings were now open. This was necessary in a University with active research and where a phased-in quantity of in-person teaching was taking place.
- In St Andrews (as in universities across Scotland and the UK) there was to date no evidence of transmission of Covid-19 through the classroom. The risk assessments and refurbishing that had taken place made classrooms very safe places, but this did not always make them perfect vehicles for in-person teaching. The University continued to learn from what worked and what didn't, and to review arrangements and permissions both for the current semester and the next.
- A recent survey carried out by the Students' Association found that 90 per cent of students who had experienced in-person teaching at St Andrews this semester felt safe.
- Focus had also increasingly been given to what students 'Can Do'. This was the title of the initiative launched in Independent Learning Week. The flagship for the initiative was the marquee on Lower College lawn, divided into four large 'pods' which could be booked for activities. Members were invited to look at the events guide on the University website to see the variety of dance, screenings, crafts, society, and educational events that were taking place, in the marquee, across the campus and in the town. The Provost had been leading on this for the PO, ably assisted by a committed team from RBS. The initiative had already proved to be a huge success and would continue to be creatively promoted across this academic year.
- The pandemic was never forgotten. Preparations for the start of term had involved the creation of the CRRT which triages, contact traces, and follows up on all known cases in the University community, both staff and student. Its early introduction was one of the reasons why transmission numbers in the University had remained relatively low, and why the University had not seen the extensive outbreaks across residences of the sort that had been witnessed at some other Scottish universities.
- There were currently 5 active cases in the University, and since 1 September 60 positive cases had been recorded (53 students and seven staff). It was worth noting that the majority of the staff cases had originated outwith the University. Of the 60 cases, 55 were recovered and back in circulation.

- The Principal and the Vice-Principal Governance, the University's Covid lead, continued to be in regular contact with the Scottish Government. Formal meetings were supplemented by frequent informal contact with ministers and officials, often helpful, sometimes concerning. Attention was currently focused on three things: (i) The possibility of the introduction of asymptomatic testing, particularly for students; (ii) arrangements for the Christmas vacation, particularly in terms of student travel; and (iii) arrangements for the start of Semester 2.
- It was vital that the focus on the present academic year was accompanied by horizon scanning and modelling for the future. The PO was undertaking significant work on 'backcasting' - a strategic exercise which involved the full senior management team in an exercise to project ten years into the future, and project back. This work was complementary to the University Strategy and its four pillars but also involved specific workstream activity in relation to identity, finance, student numbers, collaborations, and digital. It also connected with the strategic planning of the University's Environmental Sustainability Board about which Professor Sir Ian Boyd, who chaired that Board, would speak later in the meeting. This work also took on board the broader challenges of the political situation in which the University operates. Factors including Brexit and the ongoing constitutional issues in Scotland were being kept firmly in view and factored into modelling.
- The Scottish Funding Council had published its report following the first phase consultation of its review of the Scottish tertiary sector⁴. Nothing radical had yet emerged but there were some potentially concerning pointers for the next phase, including a marked interest in a single funding model for the tertiary sector (something that could potentially benefit colleges more than universities) and a clear commitment to revisiting the learner journey and senior phase 'efficiency' focuses of a couple of years ago with potential curricular and structural implications for the four-year degree. In these circumstances it was all the more important that the University positioned itself as strongly as possible to broaden its income streams, and to continue to do what it believed in educationally and in terms of research.
- Fund-raising continued to go well. The strength of the stewardship work undertaken across the world in the past few years, and the additional capacity in the Development team in the US in particular, was bearing fruit as circumstances necessitated digital engagement.
- The Principal was pleased to report that there had been a recent anonymous alumni donation of £5m, which represented one of the largest donations received to date. It was intended to support in particular the Madras College project, a project which was garnering support relatively early on in its conception.
- Donations now totalling over £1m had come in from the Covid-19 appeal. These had enabled the University to support a range of student focused

⁴ Coherence and Sustainability; A review of Scotland's Colleges and Universities -Phase One Report: Insights to develop Further – Copy placed on Court Sharepoint site.

projects and activities including transport, childcare, Can Do, and crucial postgraduate research extensions.

- Professor Graham Turnbull had been appointed to act as Vice-Principal Research and Innovation for the remainder of this semester. He undertook the role at a demanding time, but had already settled in extremely effectively.
- The Senior Lay Member and the Principal had had a useful Teams call with the new Rector Dr Hussein. The call had been to discuss practicalities, including the appointment of her Assessor and her installation, and to talk about some of her and the University's priorities - all of which very much intersected. The University looked forward wholeheartedly to welcoming the new Rector and to taking forward a change agenda with her

Members raised questions on topics which included continued limited capacity in lab spaces; the support offered to those students in accommodation in Leuchars and Dundee, and the policy for allocating this accommodation; and the potential changes to the NSS and the impact on these changes on league tables.

5. Covid-19

(i) Update to Court

The Vice-Principal Governance provided a verbal update to Court on the University's activities to manage the Coronavirus pandemic. Court was encouraged to refer to the paper presented to PARC at its September meeting (on file, PARC 20/04) which had been placed on the Court Sharepoint site as a supporting document. The paper detailed key developments since the last meeting of Court in June 2020; and set out the plans to manage potential outbreaks of Covid-19 in the Michaelmas Semester.

The Vice-Principal Governance confirmed the most recent Covid -19 figures. which had already been announced by the Principal (see above). Of the cases, none had been hospitalised. Almost all cases had been asymptomatic or had experienced very mild symptoms. There was no evidence of any transmission in the classroom setting, nor was there any evidence that conditions in halls of residence had been a factor in spreading the disease. The majority of cases – 60% - had been in private accommodation and all of the cases had either been imported into the University or had been transmitted through social settings.

Further detail was provided on how the University was currently managing cases and how to move forward. As a starting point the University had to rely on students' consent to, and compliance with, the restrictions placed on them. The vast majority of students had behaved well and borne uncomplainingly substantial impositions that had not been placed on other parts of the population.

The University's approach to the containment of Covid required constant vigilance and effort and the ability to contain Covid had been predicated on several factors:

- The CRRT – this dedicated 24/7 team had the capacity to move very fast and try to get upstream of any potential cases, combined with a centralised helpdesk to provide support and guidance, in particular to students self-isolating and who may be vulnerable. Tribute was to be paid to Dr Chris Lusk and her team for their combination of energy, commitment and good humour;
- working closely with key stakeholders in the NHS, local authority, and emergency services. Desktop exercise held with them in August had meant that the University had established relationships before they were needed operationally. A consequence of this had been to enable the University to lobby successfully for the Victory Memorial Hall walk-in testing centre. In addition, the CRRT continued to work hand in hand with Health Protection Scotland which had described the University's approach to handling Covid as 'exemplary';
- balancing proactively addressing security issues in halls and in the town – through enhanced security presence and swift follow up - with the Can Do initiative. This treated students as responsible adults and gave them the prospect of enjoyable things to do. The work of the Provost; the President of the Students' Association and of Corporate Communications in this regard was to be commended;
- supporting mental welfare and recognising the important part that in-person teaching played in that, as well as in the educational experience.

By way of background, Court was also given an explanation of what happened when the University was informed of a positive test. It was helpful to understand where responsibilities lay. The process was managed and controlled by the local Health Protection Team (HPT) in NHS Fife - not the University. The HPT took the decisions on whether to confirm a particular case, which of an individual's contacts may be at risk, and what information could be communicated more broadly. The University played a supporting role, particularly on contact tracing. The HPT would decide which of those potential contacts may be at risk, but the CRRT would move quickly to take precautionary steps in advance of formal decisions to save time and minimise risk. If someone had been identified as being at risk of infection from contact with a potential Covid case, they would be contacted either by the CRRT or by the NHS Contact Tracers, and advised on any precautions that should be taken.

In relation to the Christmas vacation, Government travel restrictions and policy and guidance on other issues such as asymptomatic testing remained in flux and subject to constant change. It was clear however that a significant number of students may be unable or unwilling to travel home during the Festive Break. The University would ensure these students were cared for and supported. It would also be necessary to ensure that those students who could go home could do so safely, and return safely at the beginning of the Candlemas

Semester. More information could not be provided until the Scottish Government had provided detail of the proposed Tier restrictions (due to come into effect on 2 November 2020), but the views and intentions of students would be taken into account in planning⁵, and the campus Trade Unions would be kept engaged as thinking developed.

Court noted the update.

(ii) Update on Student Numbers

The Senior Vice-Principal introduced the paper (on file, Court 20/06). A census of all registered degree seeking students in St Andrews was taken in Week 4 of Semester 1, to provide the Semester 1 Student Snapshot which was used as the official student population data for all requests including freedom of information requests. The paper provided an overview of the student population by level, fee, status school, and by selected cohorts. Figures relating to entrant turnout compared with targets were also provided in order to contextualise the overall student population. The Semester 1 Snapshot would also be used to inform initial target setting for 2021. Earlier iterations of the data had been used to inform the allocation of additional resources to Schools impacted by the higher than expected numbers at the start of the year.

The Senior Vice-Principal expanded on the detail of the paper and provided additional commentary on, and explanation of, the numbers contained in the report.

The overall student population was 10119.8 FTE which represented an increase compared with last year of 9.7%. Of these 748 students were remote learning. The current expectation was that by the end of Semester 1, 9893 FTE would be physically in St Andrews and engaged with in-person teaching. Section 3 of the paper provided detail of the overall student population broken down by degree level, fee status, domicile, gender balance, declared origin, and declared disability.

There had been no significant increase compared to last year in the number of students requesting a leave of absence, or withdrawing from their studies. In fact, leave of absence approvals and withdrawals were down by proportion of the overall population. Due to the potential for variation in the student body over the remainder of the Semester as a result of the pandemic, and to address additional requirements from the SFC, Planning would produce a regular overview of the student population and the PO would be kept apprised of any significant changes in the student population.

Members asked questions on the detail of the paper. These included the need for thinking around the gender split at UG and PGT/PGR level; funding of home UG; staff student ratios; the specific composition of the BAME UG figure; and

⁵ Students' views were being sought via the Students' Association – Student Christmas Intention Survey.

the reasons for the SIMD20 figure being lower this year. In relation to the SIMD20 figure it was noted that in addition to the difficulties in achieving conversion and engagement with this category, caused by the closure of schools, the increase of numbers across the board had diluted the SIMD proportion. This was consistent across the sector.

Court noted the overview of the student population for 2020-21 Semester 1 and the final entrant to target comparisons. The key date of 1 December was also noted, this being the date by which students could withdraw without paying fees. Once this date had passed, the year's student numbers would be confirmed, and these would provide a baseline for developing strategy and plans.

Following the presentation of the figures, the Master provided an overview (a) of the operational process to set targets for the coming year; and (b) of the work being done to develop the strategy for student number in the longer term.

For the current year

Schools bearing the greatest burden of increased numbers had already been given extra teaching resource – these included Psychology, Classics, CS, Maths, EC, GSD. This would be kept under review.

In addition some more modest top-ups from the Covid appeal fund had been allocated to some other schools, which had allowed them to employ PhD students to help with teaching – this generated the double benefit of employment for PGRs and slightly relieving workload for staff; the same would be done next semester.

For the future

Intensive work was underway to support target-setting for next year and beyond. The assumption was that, having reached 10,000, the aim would be to keep numbers in that region using a 'banded' approach that recognised the volatility which was likely to persist. The provisional target, pending further analysis, was a band of roughly 9,600 – 10,000.

There were four strands of work that would ultimately converge to produce targets for 2021/2 for immediate action by Admissions and Schools:

- Admissions were working on an analysis of markets and opportunities, bearing in mind the long-term aims for balanced numbers across Degree programmes and the University's ambitions for diversity;
- Planning were preparing figures on learning and teaching resources available through the timetable and staff-student ratios broken down by School;
- PO 'backcasting' workshops were exploring scenarios relating to the future more generally. Key topics within that relevant to the

planning process were the future shape and nature of learning and teaching; current and future research imperatives; and how those fed into strategic space requirements;

- the Student Numbers group would set strategy for the longer term for targets and Admissions, and would be revisiting the 'Accommodating Growth' strategy that Court saw in March 2020;
- short-term decisions would be in place by the middle of December, along with a more developed sense of longer-term strategy for numbers, resources, learning and teaching operations and the capital plan.

II. PARC BUSINESS

6. Minute of the Meeting held on 17 September 2020

Members received the minute of the meeting (on file, Court 20/07).

7. Indicative Entrant Numbers for September 2020 Entry

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/08) presented for information. The paper provided the annual update to PARC of indicative entrant student numbers for the academic session 2020-21.⁶

8. USS Pension Update

The Vice-Principal Governance introduced this item. The paper (on file, Court 20/09), provided an update on the 2020 USS revaluation. Court endorsed the overall approach to the Technical Provisions consultation as set out in the paper, and reflected in a draft response to the specific questions posed by the Trustee (available as a supporting document on the Court Sharepoint site).

9. Capital Projects Update for Information

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/10) which provided an update and high-level overview of the status of the projects identified within the University's capital plan.

10. Annual Report of the Investment and Treasury Assurance Group

Court noted the report (on file, Court 20/11) which provided an overview of the work of the Investment and Treasury Assurance Group over the last twelve months.

11. Annual development Update

⁶ The paper has been superseded by the Semester 1 Snapshot, see above.

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/12) which contained the annual Development Update relating to philanthropic fundraising to 31 July 2020.

12. Institutional Indicators Update

Members noted the report (on file, Court 20/13) which contained the annotated update on institutional performance indicators and accompanying commentary with indicator status and associated escalated risks.

13. Summary Financial report to 31 July 2020

Members received the report (on file, Court 20/14) which provided a summary of the University's financial position at 31 July 2020.

The Chief Financial Officer introduced the report.

Key issues:

The second half of the financial year had been dominated by estimating and tackling the consequences of Covid. The initial estimates of a deficit of £19m (as initially reported to Court) had been revised to a deficit of £10.1m at period nine and this continuation of improvement had persevered throughout the last quarter of the year, resulting in a managed operating surplus to 31 July 2020 of £4.9m (£10.3m ahead of budget) and an overall surplus of £7.9m. The biggest improvements reducing the impact of Covid over the last quarter were seen in research, with research councils offering funded extensions, coupled with significant savings in operational expenditure and further furlough income.

The managed operating surplus of £4.9m included material non-recurring items including capital donations of £3.1m and income of £4.0m relating to the BMS fire. Adjusting for these significant one-off items the underlying managed operating deficit was £2.2m.

At 31 July 2020, the Group held consolidated cash and short-term investments of £36.4m which was £21.8m lower than last year. Included within this was a £10m drawn down from the new four year £25m revolving credit facility (RCF) agreed with RBS in July 2020. This had now been paid back. Lower cash balances year on year were a result of investment in capital prior to Covid and ring-fenced cash being utilised for its specific purpose

Court noted the report.

14. Enabling Strategies Update

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/15) which reported to PARC on the progress of the University's five enabling strategies: People, Digital, Estate, Accommodation and Finance.

III DISCUSSION ITEM

15. Environmental Sustainability Board Strategy

(i) Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB)

Professor Sir Ian Boyd, Chair of the ESB, joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the ESB and on the development of its draft strategy.

His inspiring presentation provided an overview of the current work being undertaken by the ESB: its genesis, purpose, organisation, and role as an ideation platform; its responsibilities; the development of its strategy; and its vision aspirations and aims, including the bold aim of the University to be net zero as an institution by 2035. The importance of research and an interdisciplinary approach to tackling climate change and sustainability issues was also touched upon as was the need to develop the capability to tackle the big questions relating to sustainability, and to be perceived as an institution with the capability and resources to undertake the work necessary to develop the answers to these questions. The ESB would also, at an institutional level, provide information and guidance on sustainability issues which would facilitate better decision making and encourage an integrated approach. Sustainability was an issue which resonated with the entire University community. The potential was there to do great things.

During discussion, Professor Boyd answered questions from Members on the St Andrews Forest Plan and on steps already taken towards carbon reduction and carbon sequestration. There was also discussion around the challenges and timescale for achieving any form of system change; the importance of achieving attitudinal change; the importance of realistic timetable for meeting the targets set; the resources necessary to achieve the sustainability aspirations; the potential relationship with philanthropy; and the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the sustainability agenda. The key opportunities afforded by the Eden Campus in the development of combined academic and industrial strategy were also discussed.

Court noted that the ESB draft strategy was about to go to consultation and the intention was to bring a version of the strategy to Court for its approval in January.

IV REGULAR BUSINESS

16. AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Professor Sir David Wallace, Convenor of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), presented ARC business.

(i) Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 September 2020

Members noted the report of the meeting (on file, Court 20/16). The Convenor highlighted the work being done throughout the sector on the issue of 'going

concern' (paragraph 2 of the minutes refers). The attention of Court was also drawn to paragraph 7 of the minutes which recorded the discussion with the External Auditors which had taken place at the meeting of ARC, and in particular the efforts of the committee to obtain reassurance that in considering the issue of going concern, St Andrews would not be subjected to a broad brush, sector wide approach but viewed as a distinct institution. The Committee had also challenged the External Auditors to justify their review and assessment of materiality, which had seen the planned materiality figure halved. The Committee considered the adjustment to be harsh and greater than should be expected if it was being made based on an assessment of institution specific factors including gearing and revenue. The Committee had encouraged the auditors to keep this adjustment under review particularly when final student numbers, which were currently predicted to exceed all targets for all cohorts, became known.

ii) Academic Assurance Group Annual Report

Court noted the annual report of the Academic Assurance Group for the Academic Year 2019-20 on the University's monitoring and review activity related to maintaining standards and ensuring and enhancing the quality of its provision (on file, Court 20/17).

iii) Statement to SFC of Internal Subject Review (Court 20/18)

The Scottish Funding Council requires an annual statement on the University's monitoring and review activity related to maintaining standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of its provision. Court approved the annual statement (on file, Court 20/18), and the quality statement to be signed by the Senior Lay Member as evidence of Court's Approval.

iv) Risk Management Update

The Convenor of ARC commended the Risk Management Update (on file, Court 20/19) to Court. The crucial role of Mr Brian Kennedy in the management of risk was commented upon.

17. GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Professor Stuart Monro, Convenor of the Governance and Nominations Committee (GN) presented GN business.

Professor Monro provided a brief verbal update on the progress of the ongoing recruitment exercise to appoint 2 non-executive members of Court and a General Council Assessor.

A further recruitment exercise would be required in Spring 2021 to appoint replacements for those members of Court who demit office at the end of July 2021. In this regard, Court noted the intention of Professor Sir David Wallace to step down at the end of this academic year.

18. The People and Diversity Assurance Group (PDAG)

Mr Nigel Morecroft, Convenor (until 31 December 2020) of the newly formed People and Diversity Assurance Group gave a report on the first meeting of the group which had taken place on Friday 16 October 2020. The group planned to meet on at least three occasions during the year and would produce an annual report to Court at its June 2021 meeting.

19. SENATE**i) Minute of the meeting held on 23 September 2020**

Members noted the report of the meeting held on 23 September 2020 (on file, Court 20/20).

20. COURT OFFICE BUSINESS.**i) Rectorial Election Results**

Court noted the results of the recent election.

The election used the Alternative Vote System. There were three candidates Mr Ken Cochran, Dr Fiona Hill and Dr Leyla Hussein and the result was achieved after two rounds of counting. Mr Cochran was eliminated after the first round and Dr Hussein elected on the second round of voting having secured 2268 of the votes cast. 4497 total votes were cast by students which represented a 40% turnout.

V DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Court will take place on Friday 22 January 2021 via Teams.

Catherine Stihler Senior lay Member (Presiding)

Margaret Sinclair,

Executive Officer to the University Court & Senate
Clerk to Court

As approved by the University Court at the meeting of 16 April 2021

UNIVERSITY COURT OF ST ANDREWS

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 22 JANUARY 2021 AT A MEETING OF THE COURT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

Present: Dr Leyla Hussein, *Rector* (presiding); Ms Catherine Stihler, *Senior Lay Member*; Professor Sally Mapstone, *Principal*; Professor Stuart Monro, *Deputy Chair of Court*; Professor Lorna Milne, *Master of the United College & Deputy Principal*; Mr Adrian Greer, *Chancellor's Assessor*; Ms Stella Maris, *Rector's Assessor*; Cllr Altany Craik, *Provost of Fife's Assessor*; Mr Iain Anderson, Mr Jonathan Hewitt, *General Council Assessors*; Professor Sharon Ashbrook, Professor Mark Harris, Dr Derek Ball, and Dr Morven Shearer, *Senate Assessors*; Ms Donna Pierz-Fennell, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*; Mr Alex Duncan, Dr Malcolm Petrie, *Trade Union Nominees*; Mr Dan Marshall, *President, Students' Association*; Ms Amy Gallacher, *Director of Education, Students' Association*; Mr Tim Allan, Lord Duncan of Springbank, Mr Frank MacInnis, Ms Eve McCurrich, Ms Jenny Stewart, and Professor Sir David Wallace, *Non-executive Members*.

In regular attendance: Professor Brad MacKay, *Senior Vice-Principal International Strategy and External Relations*; Professor Tom Brown, *Vice-Principal Research and Innovation*; Mr Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; Professor Clare Peddie, *Vice-Principal Education (Proctor)*; Dr Katie Stevenson, *Vice-Principal Collections, Music and Digital Content*; Mr Derek Watson, *Quaestor & Factor*; Mr Andy Goor, *Chief Financial Officer*; Ms Margaret Sinclair, *Executive Officer to the University Court and Senate*.

Apologies: Mr Ken Dalton, *Non-executive Member*.

In attendance (advisory capacity): Mr Niall Scott, *Director of Corporate Communications*.

PRELIMINARIES

Due to the continuing emergency situation created by the Coronavirus Pandemic, the meeting was convened remotely via Microsoft Teams.

FAREWELLS AND WELCOMES

The Rector opened the meeting and welcomed Members and attendees to what would be her first Court meeting since her election.

Court joined with the Rector:

- to welcome Stella Maris who had been appointed as Rector's Assessor to her first meeting of Court;
- to thank Pappa Obeng (Interim Rector's Assessor) who had demitted office at the end of October;
- to note that Dame Anne Pringle, Nigel Morecroft and Nigel Christie had demitted office as Non-executive Members on 31 December 2020, and to record the thanks of Court for their invaluable service; and
- to welcome the three new members of Court - Iain Anderson, appointed as General Council Assessor; and Lord Duncan of Springbank and Jenny Stewart, appointed as Non-executive Members of Court. The new members had taken up office on 1 January 2021 and this was the first Court meeting for them all.

STARRING OF ITEMS

Members noted those items currently starred on the Agenda. No additional items were starred.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were intimated.

I. OPENING BUSINESS

1. MEETING MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING

i) Minute of the Court Meeting held on 23 October 2020

The minute of the Court meeting held on 23 October 2020 (on file, Minutes 2020-2021 No.1, pp1-17) was agreed as a correct record.

ii) Noting of Endorsement by Correspondence

Court noted for the record (on file, Court 20/22) the endorsement by correspondence of paper (on file, Court 20/21 - Appointment of General Council Assessor and Non-Executive Members of Court).

2. REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

(i) Written

Court received the Principal's written report (on file, Court 20/23) which provided an update to Court on recent events, activities and general University news.

Court noted its contents including the return of Professor Tom Brown to the role of Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (VPRI); the thanks extended to Professor Graham Turnbull who had acted as VPRI during Professor Brown's absence; and the new decanal arrangements agreed by the Principal's Office

which included the initiation of a recruitment process for the reconfigured posts of Deans of Arts and Divinity and Science, and the establishment of a post of Dean of Learning and Teaching reporting to the Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) and the appointment of the current Dean of Arts, Professor Frank Müller to this post.

(ii) Verbal report and update

The Principal provided a verbal report to Court on a number of matters as detailed below:

The global Covid-19 pandemic and its many types of impact continued to dominate the life of the University. The Vice-Principal Governance would speak to the handling of the pandemic as institutional Covid lead (see Agenda item 4 below).

The Principal provided an update on a number of other major developments in aspects of University, educational, and political business which had arisen since the written report was submitted:

- Paragraph 61 referenced the University of St Andrews Degrees in Medicine Bill. This Bill would enable the University to award primary medical qualifications, a major development for the University. The Principal had given evidence to the Health and Sport Committee which was considering the Bill on 1 December. The Health and Sport Committee's Stage 1 Report had now been published. The committee had endorsed the proposals and was unequivocally supportive of them. Further Parliamentary procedural steps remained (Stages 2 and 3) but the University was securely on course to have these completed before Parliament was prorogued.
- The Scottish budget would be delivered to the Scottish Parliament on Thursday 4 February. Although the University's proportional share of the funding was less than that of most other HEIs, it remained important in the current constrained circumstances. The sector had been chronically underfunded for the last ten years and the Scottish Funding Council had previously estimated that public funding of university teaching was £157m per year below the full cost of provision. In the same year research was funded at 80 per cent of cost, a deficit of £340m. The risk was that the Scottish Government was presiding over the managed decline of one of its star assets. The Principal in her capacity as Vice-Convener for Universities Scotland was part of the small team engaging with Government which continued to make the case for the needed uplifts in teaching, research, and capital funding. Court would be kept updated on developments but, given the pressures on Government spending across the board, there was little reason to be especially optimistic.
- There had been a recent sweeping series of announcements with respect to higher education from the Westminster Government. Many of them were with specific reference to provision in England, but many of

them also had direct or indirect implications for Scotland and potentially for the University. The skills for jobs white paper, and the lifelong learning entitlement and modularisation plans were focused on England, but represented a significant shift in the post-pandemic tertiary agenda which would be felt in Scotland too.

- A 14-week consultation on Post-qualification admissions had been announced. The Principal was deputy chair of the UUK admissions review which fed into that, and would be leading on the response work in Scotland.
- The idea of subject level TEF had been discontinued, and the whole TEF exercise was to be streamlined and rationalised in ways that on the face of it looked sensible.
- Tuition fees were frozen and confirmed for one year, but there was more to come in that regard.
- Although it did not immediately affect the University, it was also worth noting that the teaching grant was refocused on STEM and health care.
- The Scottish Government had announced that the fee status of Republic of Ireland students henceforward had been finally confirmed as RUK.
- The University continued to deal with major business on top of pandemic business; this differed from the previous lockdown when there was a sense that everything but essential activity had really halted.
- The decision had been taken not to reconstitute the RECC as all Court Committees were meeting regularly in accordance with the usual Committee cycle. The Principal and the Senior Lay Member had agreed that she and the Deputy Chair of Court should meet on a weekly basis with the Quaestor so that they could be updated and kept sighted on major pandemic-related business.
- Financially, matters overall remained very serious and under constant review, and the University was preparing for a substantial loss of income, in the order of several million, once more in respect of student accommodation during this semester but the actions taken last year to constrain cost, and the improvements to the management of the University's cash situation meant that although this year would be bumpy there was confidence that the University was in a position to come through it, and to continue with some planned investment in areas, including staff and student provision, where needed.
- The University had implemented the operational decision to follow through on starting the deduction of strike pay in respect of those members of UCU who took industrial action on pensions last year. The University had indicated at the outset of the pandemic that deductions scheduled to be taken last spring would be deferred and the decision had now been taken that these deductions should be spread over 6 months, rather than recovered over three months which is what most other universities have done. All monies recovered are paid into the student support and hardship funds.
- Weekly updates continued to be published every Friday on Covid cases in the University community. Currently there were 2 active cases associated with the University. This low number was a function of the

careful measures to restrict transmission, and of the smaller student population - currently estimated at about 2000 - in the town.

- The University once again found itself in the situation in the pandemic living through and having to manage an extremely uncertain situation, where advice from government was frequently short term and not infrequently contradictory. The senior team continued to meet three times a week and as the aim was to give staff, students, and the wider community as much clarity and certainty as possible.
- The University was working hard to deliver a quality education, to keep research going as far as possible, to inform its alumni, and to protect the community.
- Members of Court may have seen recent announcements from a number of Scottish universities in respect of their plans for the delivery of in person teaching (IPT), with the headline message being online for the rest of the semester. It was important, however, to note that there was considerable nuance beneath these headline announcements. Those were universities that in large part had started their semester a couple of weeks before St Andrews. Provision of IPT was discussed at every SMT, and the Vice Principal Education (Proctor) was in daily dialogue with Directors of Teaching. The Scottish Government would be reviewing this element of provision in the week beginning 1 February and there would be an extended SMT on 8 February to consider the outcome of the review, after which further update would be issued to the University community.
- Everyone was affected in some way by this situation. These were tough times, and everyone had to do the best they could in the circumstances and to recognise that it can be hard to keep activity going. The BAME staff network have been collecting testimonies of their experience as BAME members of the University community that they wished to share with Court; they were pausing that activity at present because there were so many demands on everyone's time, but they wished Court to know that it will be resumed when the situation permits.
- One of the areas given the greatest consideration by the PO over the past weeks had been the situation of staff and students who had caring and childcare responsibilities during this time, particularly those who were necessarily involved in time-sensitive work. This was a situation reproduced across the sector and the country and it was especially hard to address during lockdown, but a very valuable thing that could be done was to show recognition and understanding of that situation and make allowances for it where and when possible.
- The PO and SMT continued to horizon scan and to benefit from discussions that the Principal was having with the Senior Lay Member and Deputy Chair of Court in that regard. Court could be assured that the management team under the leadership of the Principal, and with external support where helpful, was scenario planning and looking ahead to the post-pandemic world, particularly in terms of the digital revolution and its wider implications. The current University Strategy continued to inform that profoundly, but work had already begun on a post 2023 strategic plan.

Following the update, questions were asked and answered on Barnett consequentials; diversity training; plans relating to World-leading St-Andrews; student numbers; and funding support for PGR students.

3. REPORT FROM THE RECTOR

Court noted the Rector's Report (on file, 20/24), presented by the Rector's Assessor. The Rector thanked the Rector's Assessor for the report, and for their work together to date, and commended the report to Court.

The Rector's Report usually presented an update to Court on the coordinated work of the student representatives on Court (the Rector's Assessor, the Students' Association President and the Students' Association Director of Education). The President of the Students' Association confirmed that they had agreed that, exceptionally, on this occasion, the report would be presented solely by the Rector's Assessor to update Court on the work carried out by the Rector, and her since the Rector's Election in October 2020.

The report provided information on the new Rector; the restructured and expanded Rector's Committee; the Rector's priorities and vision; the continuing work to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV); Covid-19 and mental health; widening access; and building the Rector's online social and media presence.

Section 3 of the report relating to dealing with SGBV in St Andrews expressed a view that there was a lack of mental health support offered to the individuals working to overcome the effects of their experiences and address a perceived culture permitting SGBV in St Andrews. The report highlighted the creation of a SGBV working group with 15 student representatives formed by the Rector's Committee. This intended to work with members of staff from Student Services and the wider University Community to support the work that was being done to address SGBV and assist survivors affected by traumatic experiences of sexual violence. The report (Section 4) also referenced the provision of mental health support to students impacted by the pandemic.

The Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) presented a detailed response to provide reassurance that these issues were a matter of priority for the University; and to make Court, and the Rector, fully aware of the provision currently available to support students, and of the continuing work to develop this provision and provide additional support options and resources.

SGBV

All students who disclosed SGBV were offered a comprehensive package of support. The University's wellbeing, counselling and mental health services were accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and British Psychological

Society. The staff had been trained in trauma, and in addition received specific sexual violence response training provided by Rape Crisis Scotland.

Student Services support for all students was cooperatively determined; this meant that the student and adviser would discuss the types of support which would be most helpful to the student and the student could then choose.

Efforts continued to improve the provision of, and provide additional options for, support. Student Services continued to engage St Andrews Survivors in conversations concerning support services, and were additionally partnering with Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre to provide a direct referral pathway, creating options for priority attention at a dedicated external body.

Student Services had worked alongside the Students' Association for the last 4 year to develop the *Got Consent* activities addressing cultural concerns about SGBV. These included the development of an online training module in consent and sexual misconduct that was a compulsory element of matriculation in 2020. In addition, focused consent workshops had been delivered remotely to other student groups.

The University would welcome representation from the newly formed SGBV working group referenced in the Rector's Report to the University wide Equally Safe committee, where they would participate alongside the other student groups within the Students' Association working in this area.

Responding to a question from Members, relating to the broad definition of SGBV, and the numbers reported by the St Andrews Survivors group, the Rector observed that Court should be mindful that the numbers of incidents reported reflected raised awareness of the issue and the safe space created by the University, which allowed people to feel confident and safe enough to come forward and seek support.

Covid 19-Mental Health

The Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) provided the following information:

Resources:-Over 6000 students had accessed support from Student Services in Semester 1 of this academic year; this represented a 22% increase compared with the same semester last year. In response to this increase, the University had recruited additional counselling staff, mental health staff and critical responders.

Waiting times:-Part of the appointment booking process included asking students when they needed to be seen. Students in crisis could always get same day support, with resources offered to support those who indicated they were able to wait. Under the unprecedented increased demand, the waiting time for a standard appointment to see a specific named adviser, had exceeded the normal standard for one week this semester, at the peak of requests.

Relationship with the Students' Association

The University looked forward to the collaboration of the Rector's Committee with the demonstrably valuable and active work of the Students' Association in the areas mentioned, supported by and in partnership with the University.

The Senior Lay Member asked for clarification as to how the work of the reconfigured Rector's Committee would relate to the Students' Association, to ensure that it fed into the official student representative body. The Rector's Assessor confirmed that discussions were underway to form a partnership with the Students' Association. The President of the Students' Association also confirmed the intention to work with the Rector's Committee, to integrate its views.

4. Covid-19

(i) Update to Court

The Vice-Principal Governance provided a verbal update to Court on the University's activities to manage the Coronavirus pandemic. Court was encouraged to refer to the paper presented to PARC at its December meeting (on file, PARC 20/16) which had been placed on the Court Sharepoint site and detailed key developments in the University's management of Covid since Court's meeting of 26 October 2020.

The University was currently working through the implications of the latest lockdown and trying to clarify complex and contradictory Scottish Government guidance and policies.

Reported cases in University remained low (1 student and 1 member of staff in past week).

In part this reflected low student numbers in town. Halls of residence were around 25% full, somewhat lower than most other universities, and substantially less than the big national accommodation providers were reporting. Together with students in private accommodation, there were around 2000 students in St Andrews, which included, as well as those returning for essential in-person teaching, those who had remained over Christmas, postgraduates, a small numbers of international students who were unable to alter travel arrangements and students who had returned for significant welfare reasons.

All students in the town or returning were strongly encouraged to have LFD tests as soon as possible after they arrived. The Testing centre continued to operate at reduced capacity reflecting relatively small numbers on campus. At the date of the meeting, 750 tests had been carried out covering 413 students. Up to 5 February just over 2000 tests in total had been booked, for 917 individual students. So far there had had been no positive results.

The UK government had recently moved to encourage twice weekly testing of staff and students. The Scottish Government had however, indicated that it did not intend to follow suit, and would not extend existing testing regime to include staff.

Discussions continued with Public Health Fife about their plans for community testing and the University had offered support with training of their staff at the Asymptomatic Testing Centre.

All non-essential university buildings had been closed, and the University was ensuring that wherever possible staff were working from home. The process was underway to identify staff eligible for furloughing, and to make maximum use of the flexible furlough option.

In relation to staff welfare, specific guidance had been made available for BAME staff and students, and consideration was being given as to how best to respond to the pressures being experienced by those staff members who faced the challenge of caring responsibilities and home schooling.

The Education Strategic Management Group was looking at mitigation processes for students progressing to honours and degree classification to provide additional support for students whilst ensuring academic standards were maintained.

The Vice-Principal Governance also indicated that weekly meetings continued with the Campus Trade Unions to monitor the situation and inform staff. In this regard, Mr Alex Duncan, Non-academic Staff Trade Union Member, asked that the Court minute record the Trade Unions' appreciation of how well the University had handled the pandemic. That the case numbers were so low was testament to all involved, and reflected the leadership provided, including by the Vice-Principal Governance whose efforts and approach had been particularly appreciated; the importance placed by the University always to do what was best for the University and to do everything possible to maintain a safe working environment and preserve terms and conditions during the pandemic; the efforts of all non-academic staff across the institution including those in Estates, EHSS, and RBS; and in particular, the collaborative approach adopted to working with the Trade Unions representing all staff groups. It was hoped that this positive and effective approach would be maintained post Covid.

Court noted the update.

The Senior Lay Member took the chair for the consideration of PARC business.

II. PARC BUSINESS

5. Minute of the Meeting held on 18 December 2020

Members received the minute of the meeting (on file, Court 20/26).

6. USS Pension Update

The Vice-Principal Governance directed the attention of Court to the paper presented to PARC at its meeting of 18 December (on file PARC 20/14(b)) and available as a supporting document on the Court Sharepoint site. This paper had provided an update on the 2020 USS revaluations; there had been no further significant developments to report.

7. Brexit Update

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/27,(updated since PARC)) which set out the latest political and sector information regarding Brexit and the next steps for operational resilience planning in relation to the UK withdrawal from the EU following the conclusion of trade negotiations in late December 2020.

Court noted the update.

8. Byre Theatre Update

The Vice-Principal Collections, Music and Digital Content presented the paper and commended the proposals, as approved by PARC to Court.

This paper accompanied a fully revised Byre Theatre Business Plan and provided a PO-level assessment of the future role of the Byre in the University and the level of ongoing investment required by the University in the Byre. The paper had been presented to the December meeting of PARC for approval.

The new business plan represented a substantial change of direction for the Byre, moving towards a performing arts centre which catered in a substantial way to the needs of University staff and students, and made supporting the University's research culture, teaching and the student experience a core priority.

The coronavirus pandemic provided considerable opportunity for the Byre to develop activity which placed it at the heart of the University's cultural offering. As such, the new strategic approach by the Byre placed developing young audiences and upskilling students as a core focus and this was central to the business plan presented.

Following consultation with the Students' Association, the decision to consolidate student performing arts activity at the Byre Theatre has been taken in a manner that also addresses the ongoing health and safety situation at the Barron Theatre, with closure of the North Street venue.

After a constructive discussion, PARC had endorsed the proposals in the papers and the business plan.

Court noted the report, the business plan and the decisions taken by PARC in relation to the Byre as recorded in the minutes of the meeting of PARC (on file, Court 20/26), including the rationalisation of theatre provision through the closure of the Barron theatre, and the transfer to and consolidation of student performance activity at the Byre Theatre. Court additionally, discussed and noted the qualification placed by PARC on the option set out in paragraph 8.1.1 of Court 20/28 whereby PARC had agreed to reject the option of closure of the Byre Theatre and return of the building to Fife Council **SUBJECT TO** the renegotiation and approval of the lease on terms deemed satisfactory by the University and on the rationalisation of the Byre and Barron Theatres.

9. Annual Update Entrepreneurial St Andrews

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/29) which contained the annual update relating to the process of implementation of Entrepreneurial St Andrews.

10. Environmental Strategy

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/30- The Environmental Sustainability Strategy) now presented by PARC to Court for endorsement.

The Quaestor introduced the paper. The environmental strategy set out a vision for St Andrews to be 'Net Zero by 2035'. This ambition was aligned with the University's commitment to addressing climate change and creating a sustainable future articulated in the Social Responsibility statement in the University Strategy 2018-2023.

Once adopted, the vision would be supported by a roadmap which would share the key actions and timescales necessary to become net zero.

Court welcomed the strategy, which was received with enthusiasm. Topics raised in discussion included opportunities presented by COP-26; the need for a clear roadmap when possible; how to effect cultural and behavioural change; reputational risk of not achieving the goal; accounting for carbon; cost; impact on travel; and implications for the Estate.

Court endorsed the environmental strategy and vision that the University be Net Zero by 2035; and noted that the Environmental Strategy Board (ESB) would report to PARC on the University's performance towards the strategy. The challenges posed were not be underestimated and much work remained to be done, but the environmental strategy was brimming with ideas and provided an excellent starting point.

11. Summary Financial report to 30 November 2020

Members received the report (on file, Court 20/31) which provided a summary of the University's financial position at 30 November 2020.

The Chief Financial Officer introduced the report.

Key issues:

Results for the first four months of the year had been positive principally due to the additional income generated from student fees above expenditure incurred.

The intention was to move to reporting a summary Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) position, which concentrated on the importance and generation of cash for the University through its operational activities. Depreciation and other costs would continue to be reported on as required by external bodies and to form part of the overall Financial Plan of the University). The EBITDA to 30 November was £8.6m which was £3.7m ahead of expectation. The more traditional Total Managed Operating Surplus showed an operating surplus of £2.3m compared to a budgeted deficit of £1.5m giving rise to a positive variance of £3.8m.

An early forecast outturn had been included reflecting the increase in student fees offset by lower other income, additional investment in staff costs and other expenditure as a result of additional Covid-19 costs. A net surplus of £2.8m was currently forecast for the year and consideration was being given as to how to utilise this to maximise strategic benefit.

At 30 November 2020, the Group held consolidated cash and short-term investments of £57.7m. Higher student income and lower capital spend, through delays due to Covid-19, had resulted in cash balances being £15m higher than originally forecast this year.

The positive forecast outturn results in an estimated closing cash balance of around £29.0m, subject to the on-going capital plan review.

Court noted the current position.

12. BMS Reinstatement

The Quaestor introduced this item.

The paper presented to PARC (on file, PARC 20/22), and now presented to Court (on file, Court 20/32) provided an update of the actions arising from the serious fire in the Biomolecular Science Building (BMS) and attached the Full Business Case for reinstatement.

PARC had reviewed and discussed the paper presented and the FBC (on file, Court 20/26, PARC Minutes, page 56/57 of Court Pack refers) and agreed to recommend to Court that it approve the proposal for reinstatement and modernisation of the BMS building.

Court endorsed PARC's recommendation that the main contract for the BMS internal reinstatement and modernisation should be awarded to Taylor and Fraser in the amount of £11.61m (equating to a gross project cost of £18.2m), and noted the other approvals made by PARC, as detailed in the minutes of the PARC meeting.

13. Projects for Information

Court received the Projects for Information paper (on file, Court 20/33) which provided a summary of in-train and planned capital projects. The Appendices to the summary included updates on the following:- Laidlaw Music Centre; Eden Campus Professional Services Relocation; Wardlaw Museum; St Andrews West; Eden Campus; Younger Hall Refurbishment; Town Centre Building Strategy; Student Residences Albany Park; Student Residences – Gap Site 3; Grange Road; BMS Reinstatement; North Haugh Hub; and Kenly Windfarm.

14. Accommodating Growth

The Master and Deputy Principal introduced the paper, (on file, Court 20/34) which provided an update on the work underway to adjust planning for future student numbers and accommodating the volume of students who plan to be in St Andrews at any one time.

The 2020/21 entry cohort had led to increased numbers of students in every School across the University, with particular spikes in subjects that were popular both as Degree pathways and as 'third' subject choices, for example Geography and Sustainable Development and Economics. Extra resources had been agreed where the need was greatest, and the current cohort was being fully accommodated in the timetable.

It had been decided that the aim should be to maintain the student cohort as close as possible to 10,000 from now on, rather than deliberately pulling back to a lower number only to grow again. This would result in a reasonably stable entrant cohort while maintaining clarity in relation to admissions markets and academic schools.

A priority aim was to spread entrant numbers more smoothly across subject areas in line with School strategic plans, so that Schools remained able to provide an excellent education and student experience and could operate at a scale that was right for their subject area. Modelling was also being undertaken of the shift in student numbers to those Schools specifically targeted for growth.

A further goal of the admissions strategy would be to set targets for a consistent number of entrants every year, in order to maintain balance in overall numbers, allow for more informed forward planning, and match the aspirations and capacity of different Schools.

In this context, work was now underway to set targets for each School for the coming academic year and build the framework for a longer-term plan to smooth student numbers.

The paper also outlined the steps being taken in relation to space management; and capital projects including those related to accommodation, in the context of increased student numbers.

Questions were asked on accommodation and staff student ratio; the allocation of additional resources; and the general resilience and approach of staff to coping with the increased numbers.

Court noted the paper and asked to be kept apprised of developments in relation to this topic, commenting that the complexity of the modelling was not to be underestimated, and the risks around student and staff satisfaction and research should continue to be recognised and monitored.

It was confirmed that further reports would be made to PARC and ARC as appropriate.

15. Institutional Indicators Update

Members noted the report (on file, Court 20/35) which contained the annotated update on institutional performance indicators and accompanying commentary with indicator status and associated escalated risks.

16. Museums Strategic Plan

Court received the University's Museums Strategic Plan covering 2020-25 which had been approved by PARC as a formal requirement of Museum Accreditation, and was presented to Court for information.

17. University Collections Annual report

The Joint Collections report from library Special Collections and the University Museums (on file, Court 20/37) was presented for information.

18. Enabling Strategies Update

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/38) which reported to PARC on the progress of the University's five enabling strategies: People, Digital, Estate, Accommodation, and Finance.

III DISCUSSION ITEM

19. ELIR – Update

The Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) introduced the paper (on file, Court 20/39) which attached the early Draft Outcome Report following the Review Visit which had taken place in October 2020, and provided Court with a presentation on the review process and the Outcome Report including its commendations, recommendations and next steps.

Court noted the report and the next steps and commended the Vice-Principal Education (Proctor) and her team, in recognition of the achievement of what had been an exceptional and outstanding result, with a remarkable set of commendations. Court also noted the observation by the Principal that the report represented strong external validation of the student experience at the University.

IV REGULAR BUSINESS

20. AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Professor Sir David Wallace, Convenor of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), presented ARC business.

(i) Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 November 2020

Members noted the report of the meeting (on file, Court 20/40).

ii) Audit & Risk Committee Annual report, 2019-20 Annual Report

Court received the annual report of the Audit & Risk Committee (on file, Court 20/41) which was approved by the Committee for submission to the University Court and to the Scottish Funding Council.

iii) Annual Internal Audit Report

Court received the Report of the Internal Auditors dated 3 September 2020 (on file, Court 20/42).

iv) Financial Statements 2019-2020

The Convenor presented the Financial Statements (on file, Court 20/43).

Members of Court would recall that the approval of the Financial Statements had been deferred from the October meeting of Court because of the pandemic and the extra financial and audit work that it had imposed. This had been an

extremely challenging time for the Chief Financial Officer, the Deputy Finance Director, and the Finance team, and thanks should be extended to them for their efforts.

The Convenor highlighted a number of key points:

- Outturn was very impressive, in the context of the pandemic and much better than anticipated. Court should extend its thanks the work of the PO team and colleagues in the University.
- The External Auditors had done a very thorough job.
- The External Auditors intended to issue an unqualified opinion with no issue of going concern.
- The cost of the External Audit this year would be very high, and would reflect the additional work necessitated not only by the pandemic, but also by the need for an audit for US GAAP which was required every three years.

Secretary's note: *A Member requested that the figures at page 421 of the meeting pack (on file, Court 20/43 External Audit Report) be clarified as the figures in the prior year column did not compute. This was subsequently corrected by EY and the report reissued with the addition in the column corrected. A copy of the reissued report has been included in the Court record.*

- The precise amount of the fee variation had yet to be agreed, but was likely to be significant. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that fee negotiations were ongoing, and the outcome would be reported to ARC.

ARC had reviewed the Financial Statements at its meeting of 25 November, having spent several hours prior to the Committee meeting scrutinising the detail of the statements with the Finance team. ARC members had also met privately with the External Auditors.

The Chief Financial Officer had no additional comments to add other than to thank all concerned for the hard work which had resulted in a clean bill of health.

ARC had (i) reviewed the accounts and received the report of the external auditor which summarised the audit conclusion in relation to the University and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 July 2020; (ii) noted the intention of the auditors to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the consolidated, parent and subsidiary entity Financial Statements for the year ending July 2020; and (iii) noted the Management Representation Letter and Letters of Support, recommended the Financial Statements to Court for adoption and approval.

Court noted the comments and the recommendation of ARC, and approved and adopted the Financial Statements.

(v) Annual report Health and safety Assurance Group

Court received the Annual Report of the Health and Safety Assurance Group (HSAG) (on file, Court 20/44).

The Convenor confirmed that the ARC continued to be impressed by the work of the Director of EHSS and colleagues, and considered HSAG to provide valuable comfort to Court.

iv) Risk Management Update

Court received the Risk Management Update (on file, Court 20/45). This paper provided the quarterly risk report for Q4, 2020 (risk dashboard and narratives) and was presented for information. The Convenor confirmed that ARC had found the report to be thorough and fit for purpose.

21. GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Professor Stuart Monro, Convenor of the Governance and Nominations Committee (GN) presented GN business.

i) Minute of the meeting held on 26 November 2020

The minute of the meeting on 26 November (on file, Court 20/46) was presented for information. The Convener asked court to be aware that there were still some decisions to be taken relating to succession planning, but the summary provided in the minute at paragraph 6.2 was broadly correct.

ii) Approval of Spring recruitment exercise

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/47) which provided an update to Court on the recent steps taken in order to initiate the recruitment process necessary to fill the forthcoming vacancies for two Non-executive Lay Members. These vacancies would be occasioned when Professor Sir David Wallace and Ken Dalton demit office on 31 July 2021.

Court (i) noted the update; (ii) noted the appointment of WittKeiffer to assist in the recruitment exercise; (iii) noted the proposed timetable; and (iv) approved the commencement of the recruitment exercise in accordance with the manner to be agreed by G&N by correspondence.

Court also noted that the Rector had agreed to be a member of the selection panel, and that the panel would comprise the Convenor of GN as Chair, the Rector, the Principal, the Senior Lay Member, and Tim Allan, Non-executive Member of Court.

22. Remuneration

(i) Remuneration Committee – Annual Report to Court 2019-2020

Adrian Greer, Convenor the Remuneration Committee, presented the Committee's Annual Report to Court 2019-2020 (on file, Court 20/48).

In discussion, Members raised a question on the operation of exceptional circumstances process set out in the report (paragraph 4.4); and requested that consideration be given as to whether more information on gender breakdown and peer group comparators could be made available.

In response, the view was expressed that the exceptional circumstances provision worked well and was implemented only intermittently and in cases of a particularly sensitive and delicate nature. Nonetheless, the exceptional circumstances process would be reconsidered.

The Convenor confirmed that the Committee at its November meeting had given consideration to the inclusion of additional information relating to gender in the report, and to whether this information could be appropriately supplied by the Committee without breaching confidentiality and identifying specific individuals. Much work was ongoing across the University to provide information both on gender parity issues and on remuneration comparators. These issues would be discussed further by the Committee at its meeting in May.

23. People and Diversity Assurance Group

i) Minute of the Meeting held on 20 October 2020

Court noted the minute of the first meeting on the group (on file, Court 20/49).

24. SENATE

i) Minute of the meeting held on 23 September 2020

Members noted the report of the meeting held on 23 September 2020 (on file, Court 20/50).

25. COURT OFFICE BUSINESS.

i) Temporary change to timings of Court meetings

Court approved the proposal (on file, Court 20/51) to change the timings of the Court meetings in April and June 2021 to start at 12 noon.

V ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Court noted that Dr Karen Stewart, Administrative Officer to the University Court & Senate, had left the Court Office to take up a new appointment elsewhere in the University. Court joined with the Senior Lay Member to warmly applaud Dr

Stewart in acknowledgement of her work on behalf of Court Members, and to wish her well in her new post

VI DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Court will take place on Friday 16 April 2021 via Teams. The meeting will start at 12 noon.

Dr Leyla Hussein, Rector (Presiding)

Margaret Sinclair,

Executive Officer to the University Court & Senate

Clerk to Court

10/02/2021

As approved by the University Court at the meeting of 11 June 2021

UNIVERSITY COURT OF ST ANDREWS

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 16 April 2021 AT A MEETING OF THE COURT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

Present: Ms Catherine Stihler, *Senior Lay Member*, (presiding); Professor Sally Mapstone, *Principal*; Professor Stuart Monro, *Deputy Chair of Court*; Professor Lorna Milne, *Master of the United College & Deputy Principal*; Mr Adrian Greer, *Chancellor's Assessor*; Ms Stella Maris, *Rector's Assessor*; Cllr Altany Craik, *Provost of Fife's Assessor*; Mr Iain Anderson, Mr Jonathan Hewitt, *General Council Assessors*; Professor Mark Harris, and Dr Morven Shearer, *Senate Assessors*; Ms Donna Pierz-Fennell, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*; Mr Alex Duncan, Dr Malcolm Petrie, *Trade Union Nominees*; Mr Dan Marshall, *President, Students' Association*; Ms Amy Gallacher, *Director of Education, Students' Association*; Mr Tim Allan, Mr Ken Dalton, Mr Frank MacInnis, Ms Eve McCurrich, Ms Jenny Stewart, and Professor Sir David Wallace, *Non-executive Members*.

In regular attendance: Professor Brad MacKay, *Senior Vice-Principal International Strategy and External Relations*; Professor Tom Brown, *Vice-Principal Research and Innovation*; Mr Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; Professor Clare Peddie, *Vice-Principal Education (Proctor)*; Dr Katie Stevenson, *Vice-Principal Collections, Music and Digital Content*; Mr Derek Watson, *Quaestor & Factor*; Mr Andy Goor, *Chief Financial Officer*; Ms Margaret Sinclair, *Executive Officer to the University Court and Senate*.

Apologies: Dr Leyla Hussein, *Rector*; Professor Sharon Ashbrook, Dr Derek Ball, *Senate Assessors*; Lord Duncan of Springbank, *Non-executive Member*.

In attendance (advisory capacity): Mr Niall Scott, *Director of Corporate Communications*.

In attendance (observer capacity): Ms Ester Ruskuc, *Director of Strategy and Policy*.

PRELIMINARIES

Due to the continuing emergency situation created by the Coronavirus Pandemic, the meeting was convened remotely via Microsoft Teams.

DEATH OF HRH THE PRINCE PHILIP DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Court joined with the Senior Lay Member to observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect, and to offer its condolences to the Royal Family on the death of His Royal Highness Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh and in particular to her Majesty the Queen and the University's two alumni, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Court noted that the Principal had written to all three on behalf of the University.

WELCOME

The Senior Lay Member formally opened the meeting and made all necessary Health and Safety and administrative announcements.

STARRING OF ITEMS

Members noted those items currently starred on the Agenda. No additional items were starred.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were intimated.

I. OPENING BUSINESS

1. Meeting minutes & matters arising

i) Minute of the Court Meeting held on 22 January 2021

The minute of the Court meeting held on 22 January 2021 (on file, Minutes 2020-2021 No.2, pp18-36) was agreed as a correct record.

ii) Noting of Interim Update- by Correspondence

Court noted for the record the paper (on file, Court 20/52) which provided an interim update to Court on Additional Reporting. This update had been circulated to Court members, for noting by correspondence, on 18 March 2021.

2. Report from the Principal

(i) Written

Court received the Principal's written report (on file, Court 20/53) which provided an update to Court on recent events, activities and general University news.

Court noted its contents, which included the thanks expressed to Professor Ruth Woodfield who will step down from the position of Assistant Vice-Principal Diversity to return to her academic position at the end of June. Professor Woodfield had provided inspirational leadership to Diverse St Andrews and had overseen the successful launch of the People Strategy and was to be thanked for her service on behalf of the University.

(ii) Verbal report and update

The Principal provided a verbal report to Court on a number of matters covered as detailed below:

- The Principal began by briefing Court on the steps which had been taken by the University in relation to the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh: Flags were flying at half-mast on University buildings and would do so until after the funeral had taken place; the Principal had written to Her Majesty the Queen, and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, both from herself and the Chancellor and on behalf of the University; the Alumni weekend scheduled for the weekend of the 16 April, had been reorganised with all events scheduled for the Saturday either being postponed or moved. This included the annual stakeholder event (Public Meeting) which had now been rescheduled for Saturday 24 April.
- On 23 March, the University held a service to commemorate the 125,000 lives lost in the UK alone to Coronavirus. Reflecting on the past year, the Principal emphasised that, although there was a sense that things were improving, the risk to the community, to families, and friends was not over, and the University still faced major challenges. Court could be assured that the University remained as vigilant as ever, and that preparations for the next year would be no less scrupulous than those for this year.
- Referencing the financial position of the University, the Principal indicated that (as detailed in the Financial Summary Agenda Item 12), the University's financial situation was both stable in terms of the current cash situation and volatile in terms both of continuing uncertainties in the sector around movement of students, arrangements for the next academic year and the fact that Government support, though welcome, had been dominated by one year arrangements and one-off payments. The profile of income and spend in the University at present continued to be uncharacteristic and another significant loss was anticipated this semester, in income from residences, for example.
- The aftershocks of Covid had manifested themselves recently in a series of worrying developments in the UK government research funding landscape. The University was managing the impact of these, but the cuts in ODA funding raised real concerns about the security of previously guaranteed funding streams. Although the University was in a better place than this time last year, continuing prudence and caution had to be exercised, particularly given the extremely challenging situation in respect of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (Agenda Item 7 refers).
- The Principal's Office had held three well-attended open fora this term, for staff and, on occasion, for students.
- The University had announced that there will be a further rest day for staff on 30 April in acknowledgement of the continuing demands on wellbeing of the long year which had been endured by all.
- In-person Graduations had been cancelled this year with much regret, but in line with the rest of the sector in Scotland, and after lengthy deliberations with the Students' Association representatives, to whom thanks were extended. Court was invited to note that plans were well underway already for the triple-decker three weeks of graduations for the cohorts of 20, 21, and 22, next summer, and for the virtual ceremonies that would be run this summer for those who needed to graduate this year. With regard to these students, the Principal made it clear that they would not be precluded from returning next year and attending a ceremony to mark their graduation. The

- Virtual Graduations this year would include a guest address from the University's alumna Hazel Irvine, the well-known television sports presenter.
- The first cohort of ScotGEM students will graduate from the University of St Andrews in 2022: the first group of medically qualified St Andrews students for 50 years. This was as a result of the passing of the University of St Andrews Degrees in Medicine and Dentistry Bill which won unanimous parliamentary approval (122-0) in the Scottish Parliament on 10 March 2021. This reversal of an anachronistic and prohibitive arrangement had been a hard-fought battle and was an excellent outcome for the School of Medicine and for the University.
 - In relation to the management of Covid-19, the University had entered a transition phase. (i) Buildings will be start to be reopened with a carefully phased return over the next few months; (ii) teaching was being concluded and revision and examinations would be delivered online; (iii) extensive planning continued, including at sector and government level, for what the in-person teaching and research experience can look like next year; (iv) the University was picking up momentum on capital projects that take forward the thematic priorities of the University Strategy, and bringing through projects that started pre-Covid and were now reaching maturation; a classic example being the new financial framework for Schools (see Agenda Item 15 below); (v) the University continued to prioritise the things that matter to the institution, its people, its students, in the short term but also in the medium-longer term, and that in itself had commenced the revision process for the next iteration of the Strategy. More information regarding the strategy refresh would be provided to Court on future occasions.

Following the update, questions were asked on student numbers; social distancing measures; ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government; planning assumptions for the return of students, including international students; the work of the admissions team; and the additional funding announced as Covid consequentials (Paragraph 58 of the Principal's report refers).

3. Report from the Rector

The Rector's Assessor and the President of the Students' Association presented the Rector's Report (on file, 20/54). The report prepared on behalf of the student representation to Court (the Rector's Assessor, the Students' Association President and the Students' Association Director of Education) updated Court of the coordinated work undertaken by them so far this Semester.

The report provided information on the Students' Association response to Covid-19; the Sarah Everard Vigil; Student Theatre (Byre and Barron); Accommodation Benchmarking and affordability; and Students' Association elections.

Court noted the election of the new sabbatical officers including Lottie Doherty as Association President and Leonie Malin as Director of Education.

Court congratulated Ben McAuley on being awarded Nightline Volunteer of the Year Award (out of over 3000 volunteers nationwide), and commended all student volunteers for their remarkable work during this most difficult of years.

The President of the Students' Association thanked those members of Court who had participated in the recent student focus groups. These had been well received by students who had particularly appreciated the open nature of these groups. This had facilitated a comfortable environment which had encouraged open conversation.

Noting the report, members (i) suggested that the accommodation survey might be extended to encompass private accommodation (noting the difficulties in obtaining data in this regard). The President of the Students' Association agreed to explore this further; and (ii) received confirmation that that work was ongoing to find solutions to address the concerns, raised by some students, in relation to the closure of the Barron Theatre and the refocusing of student theatre activities to the Byre.

4. Covid-19

(i) Update to Court

The Vice-Principal Governance presented the update to Court on the University's activities to manage the Coronavirus pandemic (on file, Court 20/55). The paper provided information under the headings of cases and control measures; testing; travel restrictions and quarantine; and looking ahead.

In addition, the Vice-Principal Governance provided a verbal update on developments since the paper had been circulated to Court members, which included an update on case numbers; ongoing discussions with Scottish Government about testing; quarantine; planning for the vaccination of returning students; and the guidance relating to revised tier levels. More detail was also given on the planning for a phased return to the Estate, which would include continued social distancing measures and the full range of required Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPI).

Court noted the update and expressed a degree of frustration at the apparent slowness of decision making at government level which made planning for the next Academic Year so difficult.

Court noted the continuing efforts of the University and other institutions, through the Covid leads group, to keep these key matters on the national agenda, and to continue scenario planning to ensure that the University was best placed to respond to whatever decisions were made at government level, and to any guidance issued or restrictions imposed.

II. PARC BUSINESS

5. Minute of the Meeting held on 12 March 2021

Members received the minute of the meeting (on file, Court 20/56).

6. BMS Claim Update

Court received the update (on file, Court 20/57) presented for information.

7. USS Pension Update

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/58). The paper provided an update on the 2020 valuation of USS, updated to include developments since the PARC meeting on 12 March 2021.

After a three month delay, the USS Trustee had finally published its position on contribution rates for the 2020 valuation. This represented a significant hardening of the Trustee's position, reflecting engagement with the Pensions Regulator. Agreement on the covenant support package had yet to be reached, and the Trustee had set out three scenarios: a 42% contribution rate based on the Trustee's "ask" for Covenant Support (which would include restrictions on borrowing that many institutions could not accept as well as a rule change to prevent members leaving the scheme); a 49% contribution rate based on the covenant support package that UUK proposed before Christmas; and a 56% contribution rate based on current levels of covenant support.

Even the most optimistic of the Trustee's scenarios would be unaffordable for institutions and members alike. It would undervalue and undermine the collective and enduring financial strength of institutions; and would price even more members out of the scheme (whilst in St Andrews, opt-out rates remained low, at around 6%, nationally, the figure had risen to around 18% which was of significant concern). The current contribution rate was 30.7%, due under the 2018 valuation to rise to 34.7% from October 2021. Each 1% increase in USS contributions costs the University around £750k each year. The University's financial plan had factored in the anticipated increase from 30.7% to 34.7% this October (a cost of just over £2m representing an increase in employer contributions from 21.1% to 23.7%). Based on the 65:35 cost-sharing rule for contribution increases, an increase to 42% would cost an additional £3.8m; to 49% £7.44m; and to 56% £13.85m.

Compared to the current cost of USS in AY20/21, the increased cost to the University would be £5.8m; £9.44m; and £15.85m respectively. These calculations did not reflect the increased cost to scheme members, whose contribution rates would also rise exponentially.

UUK wrote to the Trustee and the Regulator, asking for further talks and issued a media statement challenging the assumptions used by the Trustee, and calling on it to review and publish clear reasoning for the level of contributions it says are required. The Trustee responded to the UUK letter at the end of March. The response was disappointing but appeared to have the backing of the Pensions Regulator. Whilst offering to continue discussions the Trustee was

clear that it would only revisit the Indicative Outcomes if employers put forward alternative proposals on the key issue of covenant support.

UUK had now issued a consultation document to employers which included a new package of potential covenant support measures and seeks employer's views on contribution levels; future benefit structures; scheme governance, and introducing greater flexibility to address the worryingly high levels of opt-outs from the scheme, currently 15-20% nationally, and heavily biased towards younger members of staff (at St Andrews, however, the opt out rate is only 6%). Suggestions around this last include the possibility of tiered levels of contribution (with higher paid staff paying a higher contribution); and opportunities for lower cost saving measures to appeal to younger staff.

The University continued to call for the provision of an attractive, affordable and sustainable pension scheme with a meaningful element of defined benefit. In this context, it would be important to understand what levels of benefit could be provided within the current limits of affordability, and to engage with scheme members in the University. The USS Pension Communications Group would meet to review the UUK consultation and associated documentation and to discuss how best to engage and inform Scheme members and ensure that their views were taken into account in shaping the University's input to the next consultation. The consultation closes on 24 May and PARC will be provided with an update outlining a proposed response to it at PARC's meeting of 20 May.

The topic was discussed at some length with questions being asked and answered on the subjects of opt out rates; the general affordability of the Scheme; current financial provision; the role of the Trustee; the position of the UCU; the possibility of continuing industrial action on this issue; the current status of the JEP; and the implications for early career academics .

Court noted the update and the extremely challenging emerging situation in relation to the USS valuation.

8. Review of Infrastructure performance

Court received the review (on file, Court 20/59) presented for information. The review provided an update to PARC on the current state of the ICT Infrastructure.

9. Capital Investment Plan

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/60), presented for information. The paper provided PARC with an updated Capital Investment Plan.

10. Projects for Approval

The Quaestor presented the paper (on file, Court 20/61) which presented an overview of projects seeking approval to proceed.

Court noted (and endorsed) the decisions of PARC in relation to:

- (i) **New North Haugh Building** (on file, Court 20/61(a)). The paper detailed proposals for the new building at North Haugh which will create space to house Mathematics and Statistics and provide for aspects of Computer Science, and the availability of which would respond to the continuing and pressing requirement for more, and more efficient, space and create space both to expand growth in STEM subjects and provide decant space for other critical refurbishments in the North Haugh.

Court noted that the space initially allocated to the School of Biology in an earlier iteration of the project to support the growth STEM subjects was now included in the refurbished BMS building.

- (ii) **Creation of a Learning and Teaching Commons - Butts Wynd/ODU refurbishment** (on file, Court 20/61(c)). This project has the strategic aim of delivering a much needed town centre 24 hour student Learning Hub, multi-function spaces future proofed to meet shifting learning and teaching demands, and the creation of several large flat-floored interactive teaching spaces.
- (iii) **Younger Hall refurbishment.** Having received confirmation that the timescales set out in the paper for the delivery of Phase 2 were considered to be realistic, Court noted and approved the recommendation of PARC in relation to Phase 2 of the Younger Hall as detailed in the paper (on file Court 20/61(b)) and recorded in the minutes of the PARC meeting as follows:

“PARC reviewed the attached Full Business Case and (i) approved the recommendation to award the main contract to Taylor and Fraser and approve Phase 2 of the project at a gross value of £9.47m (bringing the gross project budget to £13.42m; and (ii) agreed to refer this recommendation to the University Court for approval.”

11. Projects for Information

Court received the Projects for Information paper (on file, Court 20/62) which provided a summary of in-train and planned capital projects. The Appendices to the summary included updates on the following:- Laidlaw Music Centre; Eden Campus Professional Services Relocation; BMS Reinstatement and Modernisation; Eden Campus; St Andrews West; Town Centre Building Strategy; Student Residences Albany Park; Student Residences – Gap Site 3; Grange Road; Main Library Additional Study Spaces; Kenly Windfarm; Madras; and North Haugh Hub.

12. Summary Financial report to 28 February 2021

Members received the report (on file, Court 20/63) which provided a summary of the University's financial position at 28 February 2021.

The Chief Financial Officer introduced the report.

Key issues:

Results for the first seven months of the year had been positive principally due to the additional income generated from tuition income offsetting lower residency and other income, together with underspends in other operating expenditure.

The EBITDA for period 7 was £52.4m. This was £40.6m ahead of expectation principally due to a large capital focussed receipt relating to the BMS Fire settlement (net impact £18.7m) and the recognition of Tay City Deal income of £10.8m. The additional income generated from student fees was more than offset by lower residency and other income, whilst supported by underspends in operating expenditure.

A forecast outturn had been included reflecting the decision taken to complete Semester 2 teaching online in line with Scottish Government guidance. This had resulted in a significant drop in residency and conferencing group income from that previously estimated. The gains made on tuition fees, and the savings on operational costs after achieving the non-recurring savings target, significantly contributed to covering this loss. The inclusion of Tay City Deal income of £12.5m and the gain to the income and expenditure account of £18.7m in relation to the BMS fire insurance settlement, resulted in an overall managed operating forecast surplus of £29.0m, and a forecast EBITDA of £49.4m by the year end.

At 28 February 2021, the Group held consolidated cash and short-term investments of £72.2m. As a result of the forecast changes to the income and expenditure position and a slight slowing of capital spend to date, the closing cash balance was estimated to be £36.8m with the TCD and BMS insurance cash effectively covering the working capital loss suffered from the impact of the loss of Semester 2 and summer accommodation income.

Court noted the current position.

13. Institutional Indicators Update

Members noted the report (on file, Court 20/64) which contained the annotated update on institutional performance indicators and accompanying commentary with indicator status and associated escalated risks.

14. Enabling Strategies Update

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/65) which reported to PARC on the progress of the University's five enabling strategies: People, Digital, Estate, Accommodation, and Finance.

III DISCUSSION ITEM

15. New Financial Framework for Schools

The Master and Deputy Principal, the Chief Financial Officer and Professor Mark Harris (in his Head of School capacity) delivered a presentation which provided Court with an overview of the new approach to Schools' strategic plans and budgets.

The presentation set out (i) the principles underpinning the new framework and approach; (ii) its vision and ambition; to facilitate forward planning in the 5-year School strategic plans and develop greater budgetary responsibility at School level; (iii) the proposed financial and operational framework; and (iv) steps taken and work done so far. Professor Harris provided the perspective of a Head of School on the new approach, including both perceived advantages and concerns.

Court commended the presentation and indicated its support for this project, acknowledging that it required a significant culture change, but endorsing its ambition and scope which would create a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for financial matters, give considerable flexibility to Schools, and encourage strategic thinking at School level, accompanied by increased transparency as to budgets and the allocation and utilisation of resources.

IV REGULAR BUSINESS

16. Audit and Risk Committee

Professor Sir David Wallace, Convenor of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), presented the minutes of the ARC February meeting and summarised the main business considered at the meeting.

(i) Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 February 2021

Members noted the report of the meeting (on file, Court 20/66). The Convenor highlighted the following:

- ARC was in the process of undertaking a self – assessment exercise the result of which would be considered at the meeting of the Committee in May. A short-form self- assessment questionnaire had been developed which might be of interest to other Committees.
- Court was asked to note the reference in the minutes of the meeting to the Internal Auditor's report on Governance and Risk management:
"The Committee commended the University's management of the pandemic. The results of the audit were testament to the way the crisis had been handled, and a credit to the work of the Vice-Principal Governance, and all concerned, who had produced outstanding results under incredible time pressure."

(ii) Annual Report of the Ethics and Research Integrity Assurance Groups

Court received the Annual Report of the Ethics and Research Integrity Assurance Groups (on file, Court 20/67).

Court noted the Convenor's comments as to the usefulness of the Assurance Groups in providing comfort to ARC and Court. The way in which procedures had been adapted to meet additional risks resulting from working arrangements during the pandemic was impressive and to be commended.

iii) Risk Management Update

Court received the Risk Management Update (on file, Court 20/68). This paper provided the quarterly risk report for Q1, 2020/21 (risk dashboard and narratives) and was presented for information, the information supplied related to *escalated risks* only. The Convenor indicated that it was important for Court to be aware that ARC's oversight of risk management, was broader than the remit of a traditional Audit committee. The provision of the risk management information continued to be a valuable update for ARC and Court, and to provide a valuable asset available for use by other committees, senior officers, and management.

17. Governance and Nominations Committee

Professor Stuart Monro, Convenor of the Governance and Nominations Committee (GN) presented GN business.

i) Minute of the meeting held on 11 March 2021

The minute of the meeting on 11 March (on file, Court 20/69) was presented for information. The Convener updated Court on the progress of the Spring recruitment exercise which was progressing in line with the agreed timetable.

ii) Updated Protocol for Remote Meetings

Court noted the revised Remote Meeting Protocol (on file, Court 20/70). The protocol, originally introduced in March 2020, had been updated to reflect the experience of holding meeting on TEAMS over the past year.

iii) Cyber Security Protocol

The paper (on file, Court 20/71) which updated G&N on recent reminders issued to Court members relating to Cyber Security and detailed some revised arrangements for the circulation of Court papers was presented for information. Court noted (i) the reminders; (ii) the revised arrangements; and (iii) that a Cyber Security Protocol is to be drafted for inclusion in the Court Members' Handbook for the next academic year.

18. People and Diversity Assurance Group

Iain Anderson, Convenor of the People and Diversity Assurance Group (PDAG), presented the minutes of the meeting of PDAG in March and summarised the main business considered at the meeting, and updated Court on recent initiatives.

- The Deputy Director of Corporate Communications had been invited to attend the group and a communications ‘huddle’ formed to develop a strategy to disseminate information about the progress of the People strategy. As part of this, work was underway to develop a communications ‘dashboard’ which would provide an understandable, visual, and easily accessible way of demonstrating progress. The intention was to share a draft of this with Court at the next Court meeting.
- The Convenor confirmed his view that Court could be assured that the People strategy was being rolled out effectively. In particular the AVP Diversity and the Director of HR were to be commended for their leadership and the work done to date.

19. Senate

i) Minute of the meeting held on 17 March 2021

Members noted the report of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 (on file, Court 20/73).

20. Court Office Business.

i) Magna Charta Universitatum

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/74) which sought the approval of Court to the proposal contained in paper SENATE/20/53, approved by Senate by correspondence on 2 April 2021.

Court (i) noted the approval of Senate to the proposal, and (ii) approved the proposal and next steps as detailed in the paper SENATE/20/53.

V ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

None intimated.

VI DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Court will take place on Friday 11 June 2021 at **12 noon**, via TEAMS.

In accordance with Court policy, the President (Elect) and the Director of Education (Elect) of the Students’ Association will be invited to attend this meeting of Court in an Observer capacity.

Catherine Stihler, Senior Lay Member (Presiding)

Margaret Sinclair,

Executive Officer to the University Court & Senate

Clerk to Court

23/04/2021

Draft Subject to Approval by the University Court at the meeting of 22 October 2021

UNIVERSITY COURT OF ST ANDREWS

VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 11 JUNE 2021 AT A MEETING OF THE COURT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

Present: Ms Catherine Stihler, *Senior Lay Member*, (presiding); Professor Sally Mapstone, *Principal*; Professor Stuart Monro, *Deputy Chair of Court*; Professor Lorna Milne, *Master of the United College and Deputy Principal*; Mr Adrian Greer, *Chancellor's Assessor*; Ms Stella Maris, *Rector's Assessor*; Cllr Altany Craik, *Provost of Fife's Assessor*; Mr Iain Anderson, Mr Jonathan Hewitt, *General Council Assessors*; Professor Mark Harris, Professor Sharon Ashbrook, Dr Derek Ball, and Dr Morven Shearer, *Senate Assessors*; Ms Donna Pierz-Fennell, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*; Mr Alex Duncan, Dr Malcolm Petrie, *Trade Union Nominees*; Mr Dan Marshall, *President, Students' Association*; Ms Amy Gallacher, *Director of Education, Students' Association*; Mr Tim Allan, Mr Ken Dalton, Lord Duncan of Springbank, Mr Frank MacInnis, Ms Eve McCurrich, Ms Jenny Stewart, and Professor Sir David Wallace, *Non-executive Members*.

In regular attendance: Professor Brad MacKay, *Senior Vice-Principal International Strategy and External Relations*; Professor Tom Brown, *Vice-Principal Research and Innovation*; Mr Alastair Merrill, *Vice-Principal Governance*; Professor Clare Peddie, *Vice-Principal Education (Proctor)*; Dr Katie Stevenson, *Vice-Principal Collections, Music and Digital Content*; Mr Derek Watson, *Quaestor and Factor*; Mr Andy Goor, *Chief Financial Officer*; Ms Margaret Sinclair, *Executive Officer to the University Court and Senate*.

In attendance: *The Chancellor*, the Rt Hon Lord Campbell of Pittenweem CH CBE PC QC.

In attendance (part only): Professor Ruth Woodfield, *AVP Diversity*.

In attendance (advisory capacity): Mr Niall Scott, *Director of Corporate Communications*.

In attendance (observer capacity): Lottie Doherty, *President of the Students' Association (Elect)*, Leonie Malin, *Director of Education of the Students' Association (Elect)*; Dr Lorna Dargan, *Non-Staff Assessor to Court (Elect)*.

Apologies: Dr Leyla Hussein, *Rector*.

PRELIMINARIES

The Senior Lay Member formally opened the meeting and made all necessary Health and Safety and administrative announcements.

WELCOME

The Senior Lay Member welcomed all attendees and observers.

REMARKS FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Before turning to the business of the meeting, the Senior Lay Member invited the Chancellor to make some opening remarks.

The University deserved credit for its performance during the pandemic, which had been outstanding. The Chancellor commended Court for its success with coping with a demanding agenda; no Court had faced problems of such an extent and nature before. Thanks were also to be extended to the Principal, the executive team, and all staff (academic, administrative, and service support staff) for their contribution which had enabled the University to cope with the challenges faced.

FAREWELLS

Court joined with the Senior Lay Member to bid farewell to Professor Sir David Wallace and Ken Dalton *Non-executive Members of Court*, Donna Pierz-Fennel, *Non-Academic Staff Assessor*, and the outgoing Sabbatical Officers, Dan Marshall and Amy Gallacher. Court expressed its warm thanks to the departing members for their service to Court and to the University and wished all well for the future.

Court also expressed its thanks to Professor Ruth Woodfield, *AVP Diversity*, due to demit office at the end of July, for her work in the AVP Diversity Role and noted that the AVP Diversity would be in attendance for the PDAG items (Item 14 (i)-(iii)) and to provide some reflections on her time in office.

STARRING OF ITEMS

Members noted those items currently starred on the Agenda, including PARC item 12- Institutional Indicators Update which had been starred pre meeting at the request of a Court Member.

No additional items were starred.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were intimated.

I. OPENING BUSINESS

1. Meeting minutes and matters arising

i) Minute of the Court Meeting held on 16 April 2021

The minute of the Court meeting held on 16 April 2021 (on file, Minutes 2020-2021 No.3, pp 37-49) was agreed as a correct record.

2. Report from the Principal

(i) Written

Court received the Principal's written report (on file, Court 20/75) which provided an update to Court on recent events, activities and general University news.

Court noted its contents,

(ii) Verbal report and update

The Principal provided a verbal report to Court on a number of matters as detailed below:

- The Principal referenced the recent royal visit. This had been a great way of re-establishing good contact with the University's distinguished alumni, and it was a particular pleasure that, at their Royal Highnesses' request, the majority of their time was spent hearing directly from students about what the past year has been like, and seeing some of both the spirit and the activity that has gone into the Can Do initiative. The Principal paid particular tribute to Dan Marshall, who had handled his co-hosting duties with impeccable aplomb and diplomacy. The University was very grateful to Dan and to his fellow students for showing the University in such an honest and a positive light. The Principal also acknowledged the supreme efforts of her private office who were involved in six weeks of organisation with Kensington Palace, and the estates, grounds and security staff too, who went to such efforts in terrible weather to make the quad, the marquee, and University House, look in such good order.
- A large proportion of PO time remained focused on pandemic related business, with particular attention now to the start of the academic year. The University continued to be highly engaged with government on this, including with both new ministers in the Scottish Government Shirley Anne Somerville and Jamie Hepburn.
- The Principal would be recording an interview with the BBC in respect of planning arrangements for the start of the next academic year, as part of a deliberate attempt on the University's part (and that of Universities Scotland) to get focus on the timelines to which universities are working and the importance of getting timely clarity of decision making in Scottish Government in respect of physical distancing arrangements in particular. Engagement with government was both regular and escalating.
- The QS 2022 world university rankings had been announced and the University had moved up from 96 last year to 91 in these rankings. Court was invited to appreciate what an achievement this was for the University and how difficult achieving it actually was for a University of this size in this international context, and with the well-resourced competition that the University faced. The fact that this improvement had been achieved owed a lot to the activity of staff and students, but also to the expert analysis of the

Planning unit and the strategic interventions taken forward by the Academic Reputation Action Group, led by the Senior Vice-Principal. Different ranking engines use slightly different methodologies and metrics, which the Planning unit analyses, and the PO regularly discusses.

Within the QS the universities overtaken included Rice, North Carolina, Western Australia, Leeds and Sheffield, and St Andrews ranked ahead of 9 Russell group universities.

Domestically the Complete University Guide had ranked the University fourth in the UK; however, some issues with data and ranking calculations have subsequently come to light in relation to some of the data utilised nationally and so this ranking, like those of other universities, was currently under review.

- The School of Biology was to be commended for attaining a rare Gold award in the Athena Swan scheme.
- The Principal paid fulsome tribute to the AVP Diversity who was demitting office to return to academic life in the School of Management. Professor Woodfield had been a brilliant AVP and had transformed the University's Diversity engagement and evidence base. The intention had been to replace the AVP Diversity with an expanded role of Vice-Principal People and Diversity. However, having run that recruitment exercise recently it had now been stayed with no appointment as the selection committee, which included two non-executive Court members, and an external member, were not satisfied with the quality of the field of applicants. The Principal was taking the opportunity to reconsider the disposition of roles to be filled in relation to HR and Diversity, and making contingency arrangements for the summer, and would report back to Court further in due course.
- The Scottish Funding Council review of the coherent provision and stability in the tertiary sector was due to report at the end of this month and Court members would receive a resumé of its recommendations and the University's view of them as soon as reasonably possible after the publication of the report.
- Court's attention was drawn to the important announcement that Sir Andrew Mackenzie FRS, a distinguished alumnus of the University, was the government's preferred candidate as the chair of UKRI.
- Development work had continued throughout the pandemic. Fund-raising for the Madras project was in a quiet phase, with the first phase of the project due to commence when the University takes over the South Street building in September. Currently a total of £6.7m had been raised and this included a very recent pledge donation of half a million dollars from an alumnus. Fund-raising was so often about relationship building and trust, and this was another very cheering example of that.
- At the end of this academic year the Principal took time to acknowledge the work of the PO team observing that, although everyone in the University has had a very tough 15 months, the senior team were frequently at the receiving end of all the issues that no one else could or wanted to resolve. They had remained creative, constructive, and energetic throughout, and were to be commended for that.

- In conclusion, the Principal added a few words of warm personal thanks to Ken Dalton and Professor Sir David Wallace, and reiterated the thanks expressed to the other departing members of Court.

Following the update, questions were asked on settled status numbers; student numbers, admissions and the ongoing work of the admissions team; the St Andrews Forest project's scope and purpose (in relation to which the suggestion was made that collaboration with the National Forest (which has Lord Duncan of Springbank as Chair) might be worth exploring, particularly in the field of carbon measurement); research funding; and planning for accommodation provision for the next academic year.

3. Report from the Rector

The President of the Students' Association presented the Rector's Report (on file, Court 20/76). The report prepared on behalf of the student representation to Court (the Rector's Assessor, the Students' Association President and the Students' Association Director of Education) updated Court of the coordinated work undertaken by them so far this Semester.

The report provided an update on the Students' Association; the Rector's Committee; the recent project concluded by PG Interns to create a snapshot of current PG Experience; end of year celebrations; and plans for the development of the Students' Association 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

The President of the Students' Association indicated that the handover to the new Sabbatical Officers was well underway and the current focus of activity was to ensure a comprehensive and cohesive welcome back for all returning students; and to ensure that there was a clear appreciation and understanding of what the St Andrews experience would look like in September. This would ensure that student expectations were managed and met.

The President also, on behalf of himself and the DoEd, thanked the Vice-Principal Education (Proctor), the AVP (Provost) and the Principal's Office for their open and constructive approach and generosity of time in support of the student representatives and student body.

Court noted the report, comments, and the thanks expressed, both to the PO and her team and reciprocally by the PO to the outgoing Sabbatical Officers on Court, both of whom had been extraordinary leaders through this most difficult and challenging year.

4. Covid-19

(i) Update to Court

The Vice-Principal Governance provided a verbal update to Court on the University's activities to manage the Coronavirus pandemic and recent developments.

- After over a month without any reported cases of Covid, the end of May saw a small but sharp spike in reported cases, coinciding with the lifting of governmental restrictions. Following discussion with Public Health Scotland a Mobile testing Unit had been deployed to DRA. The pattern of transmission appeared to be through distinct social groups and there remained no incidence of transmission in any learning environment or between staff and students.
- The latest spike appeared to have been contained and numbers had plateaued. Public Health Scotland had no evidence that the Delta variant was involved, although genetic sequencing on some of the test samples was awaited.
- The Asymptomatic Testing Centre was due to close on 30 June, when the DHSC contract comes to an end. The Scottish Government policy was shifting towards self-testing and the University expected to be involved in distribution of self-test LFD kits as part of preparations for new the academic year. The centre had conducted over 6100 tests since January, on 2630 students and 78 staff.
- 18-30 year olds had been encouraged to register on the Scottish Government website to receive details of vaccination availability. International students would also be eligible for vaccination. As yet there were no details of how the system will work; the University remained in close contact with the Scottish Government and with Public Health Fife and had offered support for logistics.
- The University also remained in discussion with the Scottish Government about the University's offer to pilot quarantining students from red list countries in University accommodation rather than airport hotels. Discussions on this had been frustratingly slow. For it to be legal, the Scottish Government would have formally to designate residences as authorised facilities and there was reluctance from both the Scottish Government lawyers and clinicians to deviate from a near-exact replication of the terms of commercial contract; notwithstanding the fact that the University alone expected around 500 students arriving from red list countries; and the Scottish Government contract nationally only provided for 1000 hotel beds in total.
- The emergence of the Delta variant as the dominant strain showed that the pandemic was far from over. The race between vaccination and virus would continue over the summer. Numbers of cases country-wide were increasing, and there was a general recognition of a third wave emerging, but cases were now predominantly amongst the younger age group, with fewer seriously ill. There were still grounds for optimism around planning for the next academic year.
- Fife was currently in Level 1. The Scottish Government's ambition remained to move to Level 0 by end June. The Scottish Government's new Covid Recovery Group was looking "beyond phase 0" for September. A key change for the University would be reduction in physical distancing requirements in labs, study spaces and classrooms. This was currently 2m, which was at odds with the 1m rule in pubs and restaurants, and the absence of any physical distancing in schools.

Contingency planning was underway to review risk assessments to ensure that the University was able to respond swiftly.

Court noted the update and asked questions on planning for quarantine (both generally and specifically); the proposed pilot scheme for student arrivals from red list countries; student transport arrangements to St Andrews; and communications, including communication with the local community.

II. PARC BUSINESS

5. Minute of the Meeting held on 20 May 2021

Members received the minute of the meeting (on file, Court 20/77).

6. USS Pension Update

Court received the paper (on file, Court 20/78). The paper had provided an update to PARC (meeting of 19 May) on the 2020 valuation of USS and on the University's proposed response to the UUK Consultation. The Vice-Principal Governance provided a verbal update on developments since the PARC meeting

- The University had responded to the UUK consultation in the terms agreed by PARC. The publication by UUK of its analysis of responses received was awaited;
- discussion appeared to be continuing in the JNCC and with the Trustee;
- it was now impossible for the 30 June deadline on the 2020 valuation to be met and, in the absence of an agreed way forward, therefore inevitable that the October 2021 increases would be implemented, at least in the first instance;
- Scheme members remained appreciative of the University's efforts to communicate; and
- as soon as there was further news to report the USS Pension Communications Group would be reconvened to continue to discuss how to involve scheme members in shaping the University's approach.

Points covered in discussion included the limits to the guidance/advice that could be given on the University website; the continuing level of risk posed by the USS Pensions issue; and the role of UUK as employers' representative in negotiations. Appreciation was expressed for the University's approach to engaging with scheme members on this challenging issue.

Court noted (i) the update; and (ii) that the emerging situation in relation to the USS valuation remained extremely challenging and thus continued to be categorised as a 'Red' risk on the Risk Register.

7. Project for Approval

The Quaestor presented the paper (on file, Court 20/79) which presented the revised Outline Business Case for the North Haugh Hub (OBC). The OBC

included updated proposals to incorporate an additional workshop; a Security Hub; sustainable energy proposals; and an updated capital project budget. This project had been scrutinised during extensive discussion at the recent PARC meeting, following which PARC had recommended that it be approved.

Court noted the recommendation of PARC and approved (i) the Outline Business case; and (ii) the progression of design work on that basis.

A Full Business Case will be presented to PARC in December 2021 for a final investment decision.

8. Projects for Information

Court received the Projects for Information paper (on file, Court 20/80) which provided a summary of in-train and planned capital projects. The Appendices to the summary included updates on the following:- The Laidlaw Music Centre; Eden Campus Professional Services Relocation; BMS Reinstatement and Modernisation; Eden Campus; St Andrews West; Younger Hall Refurbishment; Learning and Teaching Commons Butts Wynd/OD Refurbishment; Student Residences – Gap Site 3; Grange Road; Kenly Wind Farm; Madras; New North Haugh Building; and Student Residences Albany Park.

9. StAAR Update Strategic Approach

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/81) presented for information which set out the long-term strategy (Purpose, Vision and Approach) and 3-year business plan agreed for StAAR by the Principal's Office.

10. Summary Financial report to 30 April 2021

Members received the report (on file, Court 20/82) which provided a summary of the University's financial position at 30 April 2021.

The Chief Financial Officer introduced the report.

Key issues:

The EBITDA for period 9 was £58.3m. This was £41.8m ahead of expectation principally due to a large capital focused receipt relating to the BMS Fire settlement (net impact £18.7m) and the recognition of Tay City Deal income of £10.8m. The additional income generated from student fees was offset by lower residency and other income, with the remaining balance being generated from underspends in other operating expenditure.

The overall forecast managed operating surplus is £32.7m, and a forecast EBITDA of £53.0m by the year end.

At 30 April 2021, the Group held consolidated cash and short-term investments of £65.3m. As a result of the forecast changes to the income and expenditure position and a slight slowing of capital spend to date, the closing cash balance was estimated to be £40.2m with the Tay Cities Deal and BMS insurance cash effectively covering the working capital loss suffered from the impact of the loss of semester 2 and summer accommodation income.

Members asked questions on levels of borrowing and financial planning, following which Court noted the report and the current position.

11. Draft Financial Plan Including Capital Investment Plan

The Chief Financial Officer presented the Financial Plan for the years 2021/22 through to 2023/24, including the latest Capital Investment Plan (on file, Court 20/83)

This Financial Plan presented a positive picture looking forwards, following a tumultuous period due to the Covid pandemic; benefitting from the growth in student numbers and delivery of substantial savings over the last twelve months and enabling planned investments to support delivery of the University Strategy.

Whilst it was recognised that risks remained, positive feedback from current students, high student retention numbers and strong application numbers across all cohorts of students all supported confidence in putting forward this Financial Plan as a deliverable and sustainable view.

The Financial Plan delivered a small recurring surplus across all three years, based on a set of assumptions across both income and expenditure headings.

The CFO answered questions on the assumptions being made for inflation.

Court noted the Financial Plan and approved it for implementation.

12. Institutional Indicators Update

Members noted the report (on file, Court 20/84) which contained the annotated update on institutional performance indicators and accompanying commentary with indicator status and associated escalated risks.

It was agreed that this item would be routinely starred for discussion on the Court Agenda. The Institutional Indicators Update was a key document for Court Members to review (and discuss as necessary) as it provided a summary of institutional performance against agreed KPI's.

It was noted that the content of the report would be reviewed over the summer months to ensure that all indicators remained valid and appropriate. The opportunity would also be taken to incorporate some suggestions made during the recent meeting which had taken place between the Convenor of PARC, Court member Jenny Stewart, and the Director of Planning. This meeting had facilitated

a deeper dive into the detail of the work being undertaken in relation to the development and reporting of the information available in this area.

13. Enabling Strategies Update

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/85) which reported to PARC on the progress of the University's five enabling strategies: People, Digital, Estate, Accommodation, and Finance.

III DISCUSSION ITEM

14. People and Diversity Assurance Group

The AVP Diversity joined the meeting for this item.

i) Minute of the meeting on 12 May 2021

Court noted the minute of the meeting (on file, Court 20/86) presented for information. The Convenor of PDAG provided a summary of the main items considered by PDAG at this meeting.

- This had been the last meeting of PDAG to be attended by the AVP Diversity and the Convenor echoed the thanks already expressed to her for her work on the Diversity agenda, for her exceptional efforts to develop the People Strategy, and for her immense contribution to the Group.
- The Group had received updates on the return to in person working and the ongoing work to develop policies on hybrid working.
- Work to develop a communication strategy (in conjunction with colleagues in Corporate Communications) continued;
- PDAG had received the report prepared by the BAME Staff Network - Members' Testimonies. This had been submitted as a late item; received by the Court Office for circulation to the Group on 11 May 2021, the day before the meeting. As reflected in the minutes, the late receipt of the document had meant that, beyond the contextual covering paper, that had been little opportunity to analyse the report and consider its initiatives.

PDAG had acknowledged the need to give full consideration of the report and it was agreed that the Group would inform Court that the report had been received, and indicate that PDAG would have a full discussion of its content at its next meeting of September with a view to providing a further update to Court at its meeting of October. The Vice-Principal Governance, AVP Diversity and Director of HR had been asked to consider the report in more detail to provide additional information and context which would allow the Group to discuss the report in a structured and effective way, and to assess what response and action (including

any operational action) was required to address it. They would report back to PDAG at its September meeting.

An individual Court Member who had seen an early draft of the BAME Staff Network report asked for confirmation that the report itself would be made available to all members of Court to allow them to have the experience of reading the accounts of personal experience contained therein, some of which made uncomfortable reading. The Convenor of PDAG confirmed that this was the intention, but it was necessary to undertake due diligence on the report in order to provide a contextual framework to aid understanding of what was a significant snapshot of the personal experience of some individuals.

ii) First Annual Report To Court

Court received and noted the first Annual Report of PDAG (on file, Court 20/87).

(iii) Reflections from the AVP Diversity

The AVP Diversity provided reflections on her time in post commenting on some key achievements. These included advances in the areas of communication, including the provision of multiple avenues for people's voices to be heard and the importance of listening; metrics and data provision; transparency; consistency of process; access to information; access to support; and engagement.

The implementation of the People Strategy had effectively changed the profile of St Andrews in relation to Diversity both internal and externally. Conversations had been started and issues of Diversity and Inclusion were now embedded in all staff and student related matters and perceived as 'business as usual' rather than a marginalised issue. There was widespread engagement with the agenda which was aimed at delivering enduring and meaningful culture change rather than simply responding to headline events. Going forward the systematic and purposeful implementation of change would continue, as would efforts to address evidence of inequality and lack of inclusion.

Court thanked the AVP Diversity for her summary and warmly applauded the huge progress made in this area and her achievements in the role.

During discussion, the importance of hearing about staff and student experiences and being open to uncomfortable conversations was affirmed. In addition, some insight was offered into initiatives which had been deployed in the business world to assist with spreading understanding of 'lived experiences', and the importance of language in conveying messages and tone appropriate for the context.

IV REGULAR BUSINESS

15. Audit and Risk Committee

Professor Sir David Wallace, Convenor of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), presented the minutes of the ARC May meeting and summarised the main business considered at the meeting.

(i) Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 May 2021

Members noted the report of the meeting (on file, Court 20/88).

Court thanked the Convenor for his stewardship of ARC. Responding, the Convenor confirmed that he had found his time on ARC interesting and enjoyable and requested that his thanks be recorded to the Vice-Principal Governance, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Executive Officer to Court and Senate for their support

Court noted that Jonathan Hewitt will take over as the Convenor of ARC from 1 August 2021.

16. Governance and Nominations Committee

i) Minute of the meeting held on 20 May 2021

Professor Stuart Monro, Convenor of GN, presented the minutes of the May meeting (on file, Court 20/91) and summarised the main business considered at the meeting.

ii) Court Effectiveness Review

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/92) which provide an update on the actions taken to improve Court effectiveness. The Convenor requested that members of Court note that planning for the quinquennial review of Court effectiveness would begin next year. The exact nature of the review was yet to be decided and the Convenor invited Court members to send any comments or opinions on the conduct of this review to himself or to the Vice-Principal Governance.

iii) Recommendations for Appointment ¹

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/97) and approved:-

(i) The recommendation for appointment of Court Non-executive members (on file, Court 20/97(a)), approved by GN by correspondence on 7 June 2021, that Professor Anu Ojha OBE and Ms Alison Johns be appointed as Non-executive members of Court for an initial term of 4 years from 1 August 2021.

Court noted that these appointments will mean that the overall membership of Court is gender balanced from 1 August 2021 and that the numbers of members of Court identifying as BAME will increase to 3.

¹ This item had been tabled as AOCB but was dealt with under GN business.

(ii) The recommendation (on file, Court 20/979b), approved by GN by correspondence on 4 June 2021, that the term of office of the current co-optees on ARC *viz* Nicola Catterall and Jane Pearce, be extended for a further 2 years from 1 November 2021-31 October 2023.

17. Senate

i) Minute of the meeting held on 26 May 2021

Members noted the report of the meeting held on 26 May 2021 (on file, Court 20/93).

18. Court Office Business.

i) ScotGEM -Draft Resolution for Promulgation

Court approved the promulgation of Draft Resolution 2021 No.1 (on file, Court 20/94) which will give effect to the provisions of the University of St Andrews (Medicine and Dentistry Act) 2021 and will allow the conferral and award of the conjoined degree of MBChB.

ii) Athletic Union Revised Constitution

The revised AU Constitution (on file, Court 20/95) was presented for information, noting and approval.

iii) Administrative Arrangements

Court noted the paper (on file, Court 20/96) which detailed the administrative arrangements for the summer period. Court noted the arrangements for and approved a change of timings to Court meetings for semester 1 of academic year 2021/22.

V ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

See item 16(iii) above

VI DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Court Away Day will take place on Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 September with further details to be issued in due course.

The next Ordinary meeting of Court will take place on Friday 22 October 2021 at **12 noon**, via TEAMS.

Catherine Stihler, Senior Lay Member (Presiding)

Margaret Sinclair,

Executive Officer to the University Court & Senate

Clerk to Court

Draft 21 June 2021