

**MINUTE OF THE STATUTORY HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE GENERAL
COUNCIL HELD ON SATURDAY 27 JUNE 2009, 11AM IN PARLIAMENT HALL,
ST ANDREWS**

The Chancellor of the University, the Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell was in the Chair.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by the Principal of St Mary's College.

The Chancellor, Sir Menzies Campbell, welcomed 80 members to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to Dr Louise Richardson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, to her first meeting of General Council.

1. Minutes of the Council's last statutory meeting held on 22 November 2008

The minutes of this meeting, held in Edinburgh, were received and *agreed* as a correct record.

2. Business Committee

(a) Report of the Committee's meeting held on 21 March 2009

The Council considered and approved the report of the meeting held on 21 March 2009, taking particular note of the following items of business highlighted by the Convener:-

(i) Report of the Working Group regarding Statutory Meetings

The Business Committee had established a small working group to consider the most appropriate destinations for the Statutory Meetings of the General Council to be held in November 2009 and 2010. In consultation with the Convener, the group expanded its remit to consider how more people could be attracted to attend Statutory Meetings and it had been agreed that a clearer purpose for the meetings was required. This had led naturally to a more general look at the role of the Business Committee, the General Council and its relationship to the University Court.

It had been agreed that a greater dialogue with the University Court was desirable and there was a need to emphasise that the General Council was there to support the University Court wherever possible and thereby strengthen the link to the graduate community.

It had been agreed that the Statutory Meetings had improved in recent years and had been better attended. Following consideration of the concentration of graduates in areas of the United Kingdom, it had been agreed that the Statutory Meeting in November 2009 would be held in Belfast; in November 2010 the location would be Durham and in 2011 the meeting would take place in London (the working group agreed that every third winter meeting should take place in London, given the very high concentration of graduates in the area). The working group agreed to discuss the location of future General Council Meetings, with the Registrar of the General

Council, especially in regard to taking the General Council to the US during the period of the 600th Anniversary.

(ii) **Graduation Garden Parties**

Following a full discussion, the Business Committee agreed to continue to support the 2009 Graduation Garden Parties with a contribution of £20,000 to ensure all graduating students and their parents were given a free ticket to attend the Garden Parties. This continued support was agreed in recognition of the value in providing free tickets to graduates and their parents and promoting the General Council to its newest members.

(b) **Election of Members to the Business Committee**

General Council noted and recorded its thanks to the following members of the Business Committee who would complete their terms of office on 30 June 2009: Mr P A Blair; Mr C E Duthie and Mr M P L Strachan.

The Clerk to the General Council reported the results of the recent online election for three new members to serve on the Business Committee. Ten candidates had stood for election and 1,078 General Council members voted. The following were elected to serve on the General Council Business Committee for a period of four years from 1 July 2009: Dr M J B Lowe; Mr J M North and Mr M P L Strachan.

3. **Committee of the Alumnus Association**

- (a) **Report of the meeting held on 17 January 2009** – the Council received and approved the report of this committee's meeting held on 17 January 2009. The Convener reported on the Alumnus Chronicle 2008 edition which had been distributed to more than 38,000 alumni throughout the world. The Convener recorded her grateful thanks to all members of the Alumnus Association for their hard work in producing this publication, which had been very well received.

The Convener also reported on the 2009 Reunion which was underway with more than 300 alumni and guests registered to attend one or more of the events in the main programme.

The Convener reported on the new student led initiative *Legacy '09*, which was the University's first Graduating Class gift programme.

- (b) **Membership** – the Convener expressed her thanks to Ms R MacKenzie after five years of sterling work. The General Council was required to elect one individual to serve on the Alumnus Association Committee for the next five years. Voting took place online alongside the voting for the Ordinary Members of the Business Committee.

The Clerk to the General Council announced that two candidates had stood for election and as result of 1,026 votes being cast, Mrs A Ashton-Redlin had been duly elected to serve on the Committee for a period of five years from 1 July 2009.

4. Presentation on the 600th Anniversary

Mr A Day, Director of 600th Anniversary Campaign, gave a presentation to the General Council outlining the initial plans that are underway for the 600th Anniversary. These include a fundraising campaign and a multi-faceted events programme. The 600th Anniversary would be an opportunity to mark the University's past achievements and signal key aspirations for the future.

A series of key events are being planned for the 600th Anniversary from June 2011 to November 2013. A structured programme would be in place with a balance of celebration, ceremonial, and fundraising. Events would be built around various themes, including academic, cultural, sporting and musical. The purpose of the events would be to build goodwill, reunite alumni, form new relationships, and celebrate past successes, while building funds to support a legacy for the continued development of the University. Events would be located throughout the world but the focus would be in St Andrews, London, the US and Asia.

Mr Day reported that the 600th Anniversary website was now up and running and would continue to develop in the months and years ahead as the fundraising campaign was launched and the events calendar finalised. One particular area of the website of interest to alumni and where contributions from General Council members would be particularly welcome is the 'Your Story' section. This area is where alumni, staff, students and friends record their personal perspectives on the University of St Andrews.

Mr Day closed by encouraging members of the General Council to keep in close contact with the 600th Anniversary Campaign Office to keep up to date with developments and to put forward ideas.

5. Principal's Address

The Principal opened her first address to the General Council by indicating how delighted she was to have an opportunity to address members of the graduate community. Dr Richardson conveyed how enormously privileged she felt to have been invited to lead the University and explained that her decision to come to St Andrews had been strongly influenced by the University's excellent reputation across the board but especially in International Relations and Terrorism, areas about which she cared strongly. Dr Richardson also believed that the University is an ideal size – of a sufficient size to be able to compete for the best academics and students, but small enough to have an impact on the life of every single student and to undertake excellent interdisciplinary work. The opportunity to be part of a small, yet international community had also been attractive.

The Principal outlined her initial impressions following her first six months in post. Dr Richardson had encountered the most extraordinary, constructive and engaged student leaders who were working hard with the University's very committed and talented staff to the benefit of the students and the University as a whole. The Research Assessment Exercise 2008 results had been robust and enormously helpful in providing independent insight into the research strength of the University, with many of the University's subject areas ranked at 1 or 2 and with a very high (92 per cent) academic staff

participation rate, indicative of one of the most research-intensive institutions in the country.

The Principal proceeded to outline a number of key areas where significant work was required, including the need for major investment in the University's IT infrastructure and library provision.

Looking to the future, the Principal stated that she was aiming to unlock potential around the University through improved working relationships between Schools and Units; by changing the culture of philanthropy to reduce the proportion of funding received from Government sources (currently one third of the University's income); and by encouraging more interdisciplinary work and developing ways to diversify support for teaching and research. It would also be crucial for the University to continue to attract the best students and academic staff by creating an environment where all could thrive academically.

The Principal took questions from General Council members. Areas addressed included: plans for University student accommodation including the replacement of Fife Park; the relationship between the University and Scottish Government and in particular the discussions and lobbying required to ensure adequate support for the University and its students; the place of distance learning in education; the importance of the University engaging with secondary schools to address the unwarranted "elitist" view of the University; and the need to reduce administrative overload and remove the audit culture to free up time and money to support changes.

6. Any Other Competent Business

The Chancellor closed the meeting by thanking the Principal for her excellent contribution to the meeting of the General Council. The Chancellor also recorded thanks to the General Council for their ongoing support to the University which was greatly valued.

7. Next Meeting

The next statutory half-yearly meeting to take place on Saturday 21 November 2009 at 11am in Belfast.

The meeting closed with the pronouncement of the benediction.

Sir Menzies Campbell
Chancellor