



**MINUTE OF THE STATUTORY HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL
HELD ON SATURDAY 29 JUNE 2013 at 10:30 IN PARLIAMENT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS**

The Chancellor of the University, The Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell CBE QC MP, was in the Chair and welcomed 62 members and guests to the meeting. The Principal's apologies were noted.

1. Minute of the last Ordinary Half Yearly General Council Meeting Held on 23 November 2012

The minute of this meeting, held in Glasgow, was received and agreed as a correct record.

2a. Report of the Business Committee Meeting

The Council noted the full report of the meeting held on 16 March 2013, which was contained in the billet and which was subject to formal approval by the Business Committee at its next meeting in October.

The Convener, Mr Martyn Strachan, reflected on the thirty years since his own graduation and the work of the General Council during that time, including the seventeen years he had served on the Business Committee, the last nine as its Convener. He also considered the role of the General Council and its Business Committee, the importance of which he stressed with reference to the Review currently underway. The Convener also commented on the importance of the twice yearly meetings of the General Council which afforded members the opportunity to make representations on activities of the University.

2b. Membership 2013-2014

The Convener expressed his thanks to the retiring members of the Committee, Mr Alan Frith, Mr James North and Mr Jai Popat, the latter having resigned in June 2013 due to his relocation overseas. He also thanked the members of the Development staff who had given such generous support to the work of the General Council during his time on the Committee and particularly, as Convener.

The Clerk to the General Council reported that 573 General Council members had voted in the recent Business Committee election. The results were as follows: Ms Gillian Woolman – 481 votes, Mr Anthony Bellhouse – 399 votes, Mr Alan Frith – 363 votes and Mr Michael Buchanan – 210 votes. Accordingly Ms Woolman, Mr Bellhouse and Mr Frith were elected to serve four-year terms and Mr Buchanan to serve a three-year term. All terms of office were to start on 1 July 2013. Clarification was sought on the percentage of General Council members taking part in the election (*0.9% of all members / 1.3% of all contactable members*).

The Chancellor recorded his sincere thanks for the work carried out by the retiring Convener, which was supported by other members who were present.

3 Report of the Committee of the Alumnus Association

The Council considered and approved the report of the Committee of the Alumnus Association taking particular note of the following items highlighted by the Convener, Miss Kathleen Patrick.

The Convener reported that the 2013 edition of the *Alumnus Chronicle* had been distributed to nearly 44,000 people in May and positive feedback had been received. The Convener commended Mrs Rachel Hart and Ms Lesley Lind for the work that they put into the compilation of the historical supplement. Thanks were also expressed to Ms Lind and Mrs Elaine Cartwright and the members of the Committee who had collaborated so well in recent years providing committed and effective input into achieving the high quality of the publication.

The Convener reported that approximately 250 alumni and guests from all over the world were in St Andrews to attend the annual Reunion Weekend with graduation dates ranging from 1943 to 2011.

The Convener provided an update on the recent changes to the editorial control of the *Alumnus Chronicle*, noting the historical context to the formation of the Alumnus Association by the University Court. The Convener reported that two of the three main functions of the Association undertaken by the Committee (careers mentoring or advisory service and the fostering of alumni activities) had been taken over in recent decades by the Careers Centre and Development Office respectively. The remaining function of the committee was forming the editorial board of the *Alumnus Chronicle* which was first published in 1927. The Court had now agreed that editorial responsibility for future editions of the *Alumnus Chronicle* should be transferred to Development which meant that all the functions of the Alumnus Association and its Committee had now become the responsibility of University Departments. In re-assigning responsibility for the *Alumnus Chronicle*, including editorial control, to Development, the Court did not intend to establish or make use of a formal committee or group to advise that Department, as their aim was to create maximum flexibility and informality in the way(s) in which it would obtain input from alumni for future editions of the publication. In the circumstances the Committee, as a discrete body, no longer had any remaining functions and the Convener reported that it should therefore cease to exist.

The Convener offered her support in the transfer of the responsibility of the *Alumnus Chronicle* to the Development Office and offered good wishes to all involved in the endeavours to produce a magazine of quality that would continue to be enjoyed by its readership.

Members highlighted the need for the *Alumnus Chronicle* to continue to provide an intimate connection between the University and its alumni and to have strong alumni input into the publication.

The Chancellor thanked Miss Patrick for the report and for outlining the changes with such clarity. He also expressed appreciation for the sterling work she had carried out as Convener of the Committee, in particular in respect to her role in producing such a high quality publication for alumni over many years.

4. General Council Review

Professor Ron Piper formally reported to the General Council that a review of the General Council, both with respect to its effectiveness and its efficiency, was currently underway. The hope was for a report to be produced in advance of the next meeting of the General Council. Professor Piper confirmed that recommendations would be sent to the General Council, transmitted in the first instance via its Business Committee.

Professor Piper provided the context of the review outlining other reviews the University Court had commissioned in recent years in line with good governance in the sector. These included a review of the University Court Committees structures, Senate and an ongoing review by the Students' Association of its own governance structures.

A Review Group was formed comprising five General Council members: two General Council Assessors (Mr Ewan Brown and Mr Nigel Christie), two other representatives from the Business Committee (Ms Heather MacMillan and Mr Graham Wynd) and Professor Piper. Professor Piper outlined that the remit of the group was fourfold: i. to conduct the review of the workings of the General Council, the committees of the General Council and other related bodies (such as the Alumnus Association), ii. to make proposals to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of these bodies, not only with respect to their statutory duties but also with respect to furthering the mission of the University, iii. with regard to the non-statutory duties to consider where existing activities might be more effectively and/or efficiently performed elsewhere and where new opportunities for engagement might fruitfully be developed amongst the General Council, the Court and the offices of the University and iv. to consider other (that is, new) models for the workings of the General Council, its committees and related bodies.

The members of the Review Group had agreed that it would be premature at this stage to advance any initial observations or conclusions, and this report was presented for information that such a review has begun. A full discussion and debate on proposal or options would be expected when the Review Group reported.

The Chancellor thanked Professor Piper for this update.

The Chancellor noted that two motions had been received by a member of the Business Committee and General Council member, Ms Heather MacMillan, MA 1970. The Chancellor invited Ms MacMillan to address the meeting on the following motions:

1. Ms MacMillan invited the General Council to reaffirm that the standing orders of the General Council state that “the business of the Council is to take into consideration all questions affecting the well-being and prosperity of the University, and to make representations from time to time on such questions to the University Court, who shall consider the same, and return to the Council their deliverance thereon. Members may raise any matter bearing upon the University”. Ms MacMillan called upon the University and officers to work with the Business Committee to discharge this obligation effectively.
2. Ms MacMillan called upon the University and the Business Committee to set up effective email communication between the Business Committee and General Council members, and to update communication methods in the future and in accordance with current practice.

Following a lengthy discussion about the Review that had begun and the appropriateness of the motions being considered and voted on in advance of the Review Group reporting its recommendations, the Council members voted in favour of continuing both motions to the next meeting of the General Council. The next meeting would take place in St Andrews on Wednesday 27 November at 6.30pm.

Mrs Jane Watkinson, Vice-Convener of the Business Committee (and Acting Convener until a new Convener was elected at the next meeting of the Business Committee in October 2013), offered to accept any comments from members. These were to be submitted by email or letter to the Clerk at the address on the front of the billet.

5. University Address by the Vice-Principal (External Relations) and Registrar to the General Council

The Vice-Principal, Mr Stephen Magee, opened his report by paying tribute to the career and achievements of Professor Struther Arnott, Principal of the University from 1986 to 1999, who had recently died.

The Vice-Principal’s report covered many areas including the importance of maintaining and enhancing the University’s academic reputation on the national and international stage. The University continued to perform well in domestic league tables but it was proving challenging to maintain a top 100 place in the international league table, partly due to the development of universities in Asia which had invested heavily to improve their research standings. The upcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) return would provide a snapshot of the University’s research which was important in determining how well the University was performing and subsequently how much funding would be awarded.

An Economic Impact Study had been carried out recently which demonstrated that the University contributed c.£0.5 billion to the economy of Fife. For every £1 of government funding the University received through direct grants approximately £12 was generated. It was calculated that around 9,000 jobs were dependent directly and indirectly on the University, 2,000 within the University itself.

The St Andrews student population is now comprised broadly speaking as: one third of students from Scotland and the EU (other than the rest of UK), one third from the rest of the UK (RUK) and one third from overseas. Undergraduates made up 80% of the student body, taught postgraduates 10% and research postgraduates the final 10%. These proportions have evolved over the past 25 years and have been stable for some years now.. The University was working towards a new target of increasing research postgraduate numbers to 12-13%. The main challenge to meeting this target was availability of postgraduate funding.

In terms of local issues, a housing survey had been carried out in St Andrews and the results would be known later in the year. The St Andrews Botanic Gardens continued to feature as a key issue and the University Court had

recently agreed to grant a five-year lease for a peppercorn rent. While not what the Friends of the Botanic would have ideally wanted, it was hoped that this could enable an agreement to be reached for the cultivated part of the gardens.

Finally the Vice-Principal reported on a number of forthcoming events to mark the University's 600th Anniversary, including an academic celebration in September and community events in November. Further information about the events would be available from the University website in the near future.

The Vice-Principal took questions/comments from members on the Botanic Gardens, Madras College and the proposed use of the Guardbridge site.

The Chancellor thanked the Vice-Principal for providing an interesting and detailed report and for his responses to questions from the floor. The Chancellor expressed his best wishes to both Vice-Principals as they retired later in the year and thanked them for their work in support of the General Council over the years.

6. Presentation on the Students' Association Redevelopment by the President of the Students' Association

Mr Freddie fforde thanked the Council for providing this opportunity to update members on the Students' Association, including the redevelopment work on the Association building which was underway.

Mr fforde expressed his congratulations to the 80 students who had recently been awarded Life Membership of the Association in recognition of the exceptional contributions they had made to the extra-curricular life of the University and to the benefit of their fellow students. Students were rewarded for activities including theatre, student journalism, society leadership, charitable work and sporting endeavour. These awards also reflected the importance of these activities in equipping a number of graduates with the skills that could lead to careers in these areas.

The redevelopment of the Students' Association building was badly needed. The building opened in 1973 to service a student population of 2,500-3,000 and could no longer cope adequately with the 200 registered student societies and many more unofficial groups using the facilities. By improving the facilities in the Students' Association such groups could even more effectively enrich the student experience and undertake charitable and other good works. The University Court granted funding for the redevelopment earlier in the year. The first phase, currently underway, includes a new façade, a renovated shop at the front of the building, and a café. These commercial activities were important for the Students' Association to generate a significant part of its own funding. Three additional phases of work would be undertaken to refurbish the entire building.

Mr fforde concluded by thanking the University Court, the permanent members of staff in the Students' Association and the various Presidents of the Students' Association Board who had helped to plan and initiate the redevelopment, four of whom were at the meeting as General Council members.

The Chancellor thanked Mr fforde for this insight into the ongoing redevelopment work and congratulated him for the quality of his leadership over the last year in carrying out the role as President of the Students' Association.

7. Any Other Competent Business

An invitation was extended to all members to join the Chancellor at the unveiling of a statue to mark the founder of the University, Bishop Wardlaw, in St Mary's Quadrangle later in the day.

The Chancellor brought the meeting to a close by thanking the speakers for their contributions and the Council members for their attendance and questions.

Chancellor of the University
The Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell CBE QC MP