

University of St Andrews

MINUTE OF THE STATUTORY HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL HELD ON 30 JUNE 2007, 11.00AM IN PARLIAMENT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

The Chancellor of the University was in the chair.

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

1. Clerk to General Council

The Chancellor paid tribute to Mr Ian Wright who had recently retired as Clerk to General Council. The Council's gratitude to Mr Wright for diligent service was duly recorded.

The Chancellor welcomed Mrs Lorraine Fraser, Academic Registrar who had taken over as Clerk to General Council and the University Court.

2. Minutes of last Statutory Meeting of the General Council, 25 November 2006

The minutes of the Council's last statutory meeting, held in London, were received and *agreed* as a correct record.

3. Business Committee

(a) Report of Meeting held on 31 March 2007

The Council considered and approved the report of the meeting held on 31 March 2007, taking particular note of the following items of business highlighted by the Convener:-

- (i) **Forthcoming Council Meeting** - it was confirmed that the next statutory half-yearly meeting of the Council would be held at the University of Manchester at 11 am on Saturday 24 November 2007.
- (ii) **Projected Income and Expenditure** - the Business Committee had considered a paper on the General Council's projected income and expenditure from the University's Director of Operations and Donor Relations. A modest operating surplus was forecast for each year until 2010; however this could be eroded if any special projects were undertaken. Key factors included the level of the Registration fee and expenditure on the *Alumnus Chronicle*. Dialogue with the University about future policy would continue and the ad hoc budget groups would report back to the committee's next meeting.

- (iii) **Graduation Garden Parties** - the General Council's sponsorship of the garden parties had been reviewed for 2007 as a means of promoting General Council to the new graduates. The Business Committee had received a report on the success of the 2006 events and had succeeded in achieving the aim of raising the profile of General Council. Early reports confirmed that the success had been repeated in 2007.
- (iv) **On-line voting** - the use of on-line voting for the first time to elect members of the Business Committee had proved to be very successful. As a result considerable interest in both the General Council and the election had been generated with over 1400 Council members participating in the voting.
- (v) **Senior Governor** - thanks were recorded to Mr William Berry for his services as he demitted office as Senior Governor. The Committee noted that Mr Berry would remain a member of the Committee in the role of Chancellor's Assessor on Court.

Members noted that Mr Ewan Brown, one of the Council's assessors on Court had been elected to succeed Mr Berry as Senior Governor.

- (vi) **Retirees** - on behalf of the Council, the Convener thanked Mrs Jean MacDonald, Mr James North and Mr Eliot Wilson for their contribution to the work of the Committee and for giving generously of their time and expertise

(b) Membership

The Clerk to General Council proceeded to announce the results of the on-line voting to elect three members to the Business Committee.

Five nominations had been received and the results of voting were as follows:

Mr Marcus Booth	685
Mr Alan R Frith	861
The Rev. Dr Robin Hill	832
Mr Roger T Knox	656
Mr Robert F MacInnis	725

The total number of members who voted was 1474, being 11% of those eligible to vote for whom contact details were held.

Accordingly Mr Alan Frith; The Rev. Dr Robin Hill and Mr Robert F MacInnis were duly elected to serve as members of the Business Committee of the General Council for four years from 1 July 2007.

4. **Committee of the Alumnus Association**

- (a) **Report of meeting held on 20 January 2007**– the Council received and *approved* the report of this committee’s meeting held on 20 January 2007. The Convener recorded her thanks to the staff of the Development Office for their considerable efforts in putting the “Alumnus Chronicle” together. There had been a considerable number of favourable comments and requests for further information as the result of the featured articles.

The Convener also reported on the successful reunion weekend which had taken place the weekend before. Over 300 graduates had attended a number of events throughout the three days of activities

- (b) **Membership** – it was confirmed that Council required to elect two individuals to serve as members of the committee; one for a period of four years and one for a period of five years. Mrs Jane Watkinson was retiring as a member of the committee although she would continue to attend meetings in her capacity as Vice-Chair of the Business Committee. Mr James Douglas had also indicated he wished to stand down due to his forthcoming retirement from the University staff.

Three nominations were received as follows: The Rev. Dr Robin Hill, Mr James North and Dr Bartholomew Tobias Joss. Following a show of hands, Mr North was elected to serve for a period of five years and the Rev. Dr Robin Hill for a period of four years.

5. **Principal's Address**

Dr Brian Lang addressed the Council. The University continued to flourish with continued high performances in league tables and the National Students Survey. In addition Research Grant income was at an all time high. This was of critical importance as the University prepared to submit the entry for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise – the UK Government run quinquennial assessment of the research quality in all of Britain’s universities. This was not only of great reputational importance to the University but also had significant financial implications due to funding received from the Scottish Funding Council for Research being directly related to the University’s results from the RAE. In 2000 the University submitted 85% of its academic staff into the survey – which meant 85% of the staff were research active. It was anticipated that this would rise to over 90% for this next submission.

The University had completed a successful week of graduations with around 1400 students receiving their degrees. The loyalty of the student body to the University was demonstrated through 97% of the students attending the ceremonies to receive their degrees in person.

As the University looked to the future the Scottish National Party's announcement of their policies for Higher Education were awaited. While students domiciled in Scotland, who were being educated in Higher Education, would continue to receive education it remained unclear how the Government intended to adequately fund the cost of Higher Education. The University had called on the Scottish Funding Council to differentiate between the funding of students and the funding of universities as these were not the same issue.

The Principal concluded by paying tribute to Jim Douglas who had acted as Bedellus for the final time at the recent graduation ceremonies. Mr Douglas was wished a long, happy and active retirement by Council members present.

6. Other Business

(a) Student Accommodation

In response to a question regarding student accommodation and the need for a supply of affordable student accommodation, the Secretary & Registrar provided reassurance that dialogue with Fife Council was ongoing. In particular steps had been taken to support those students affected by the business of a local landlord being placed in administration. The University was committed to ensuring that students had access to a range of affordable accommodation available to them locally through private and public providers as well as the University.

(b) Attendance of elected members

Council members urged that members elected to the Business Committee were made fully aware of the expectations with regard to participation and attendance at meetings.

The meeting closed with the pronouncement of the benediction.

SIR MENZIES CAMPBELL
President