



# HARTPURY

## Minutes of the Meetings of Hartpury University and Hartpury College Boards 10 am Wednesday 1st March 2023 Bowden Hall, Gloucester

### Members

Mr Edward Keene  
 Ms Alison Blackburn  
 Mr Patrick Brooke  
 Mr Robert Brooks  
 Ms Sascha Bruce  
 Ms Barbara Buck -  
 Professor Andy Collop  
 Mr Alastair Grizzell  
 Ms Jennifer Garvey  
 Ms Mary Heslop  
 Mr Henry Hodgkins  
 Mr Thomas Legge  
 Mr Sean Lynn  
 Mr William Marshall  
 Mr Chris Moody  
 Ms Lucie Hammond  
 Prof. Ian Robinson  
 Mr Philip Robinson  
 Dr John Selby  
 Ms Helen Wilkinson

### University Board

Present (Chair)  
 Present (Co-opted Governor)  
 -  
 Present  
 Present (HE Student Governor)  
 -  
 Present (Vice-Chancellor)  
 -  
 -  
 Present  
 Apologies (HE Staff Governor)  
 -  
 Present  
 Present  
 Present  
 Present  
 Present  
 Present  
 -

### College Board

Present (Chair)  
 -  
 Present  
 Present (Vice-Chair)  
 Present (Principal)  
 Present  
 Apologies (FE Student Governor)  
 Present  
 -  
 -  
 Apologies (FE Staff Governor)  
 -  
 Present  
 -  
 -  
 -  
 -  
 Apologies  
 Present (Chief Operating Officer)  
 -  
 Present (Clerk to the Board)  
 Present (Vice-Principal Further Education)  
 Present (Vice-Principal Resources)

### In Attendance

Ms Lynn Forrester-Walker Present (Chief Operating Officer)  
 Mrs Rosie Scott-Ward Present (Pro-Vice-Chancellor)  
 Ms Gillian Steels Present (Clerk to the Board)  
 Ms Claire Whitworth -  
 Ms Lesley Worsfold Present (Vice-Principal Resources)

APPROVED MAY 2023

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
01/03/23	<p><b>Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy</b>            Apologies as detailed above.</p> <p>It was confirmed the meetings of the University Board and the College Board were quorate.</p> <p>Philip Robinson was welcomed to his first meeting.</p>	

		<b>ACTION &amp; ACTION DATE</b>
<b>02/03/23</b>	<p><b>Declaration of Interest</b> The Clerk advised that members' interests would be taken as those disclosed in the Register of Members Interests.</p> <p>Declarations relating to Membership renewals were noted.</p>	
<b>03/03/23</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the meetings</b> The Minutes of the University Board and the College Board meetings held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, subject to some minor amendments were agreed by the respective Boards to be true and accurate records.</p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting of the FE Board 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>The Ofsted Inspection Residential Action Plan which had been discussed in detail at the FE Board meeting was <b>NOTED</b>.</p>	
<b>04/03/23</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b> An action log had been provided updating on issues raised at previous meetings. It was formally confirmed, as had been previously advised to the Boards in January, that Hartpury University had not been successful in its submission for Specialist Funding.</p> <p>Sustainability – an appointment process for a new Sustainability Manager was on going. Once they were in place there would be a report to the November SFR Committees. This would also be the opportunity to commence a discussion with the Board on its vision for sustainability.</p> <p>Classification of Colleges as within the public sector – it was agreed the update paper on this, which had been discussed at the FE Board would also be circulated to the HE Board members.</p> <p>Chancellor Nomination Process – this would go live imminently.</p> <p><b>The update was NOTED.</b></p>	<b>Clerk March 23 (Complete)</b>
	<b>Part 1 Priority Agenda Items</b>	
<b>05/03/23</b>	<p><b>Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Update</b> The Vice-Chancellor and Principal provided a presentation.</p> <p>The presentation covered: <b>External environment</b> – the further change of Ministers was noted. It was noted that Maintenance loans in England were rising by 2.8%, that there was a poor industrial relations climate within the HE and FE sector and within the wider public sector. The ongoing disquiet in the sector relating to the operation of OfS, and in particular its position relating to the Designated Quality Body – and the implications for governance and independence were discussed. It was noted the Lifelong Learning Bill was at 2<sup>nd</sup> reading stage – there was concern that this might lead to greater government intervention in the shaping of courses. The financial pressure on FE colleges and their requests for</p>	

**ACTION &  
ACTION  
DATE**

additional government support was highlighted. It was noted there were also additional pressures on landbased colleges. LANDEX was working to raise this at ministerial level. It was confirmed that Hartpury would continue to seek legal advice in relation to the ONS reclassification. It was noted T'levels in Equine were delayed, with Hartpury going ahead with land based T'levels in 2024.

The government debates on International students, and particularly in terms of dependents was considered. It was recognised that the increasing recruitment of students from Nigeria and India, in line with previous promoted government policy, who tended to be older and have dependents, had led to an increase in dependents which was now being highlighted by the Home Office. The impact on the UK university international recruitment of this debate, and concern the UK was not perceived as a welcoming environment was reflected on.

**Business development** – it was noted a full team was in place and operating successfully, bringing significant funds to Hartpury from a range of government, local government and other funds. A prospectus of shovel ready projects was being developed to continue this progress was planned. This would be shared with governors when complete. It was confirmed the Business Development Team worked with other specialist staff, for example such as the farm team, when developing bids.

**Gloucester-Hartpury rugby – women** the planned revised external structures were discussed. It was noted that funding was still to be clarified by RFU. Joint-Venture agreements were in development.

**Cost of living support** – the range of support, direct, and indirect – such as work opportunities were outlined. The need to offer a range of support in these challenging times was recognised.

**Farm committee** – an update was provided, at this stage a small surplus was expecting at year end, in line with the budget. The need to ensure that the farm was in line, or ahead of the experience students would get out on placement stressed, it was noted that a need for further investment would need to be considered. Governors asked if the farm was progressing the sustainability agenda, this was confirmed, although it was recognised still more could be done. This would be an area of activity for the new Sustainability lead to input on. It was highlighted that measures would need to be taken before and after changes were made so impact could be measured. The Deputy Principal Further Education advised she believed these were being undertaken. The Chair noted that LANDEX had flagged the potential for a network of sustainable farms and queried whether Hartpury was involved. It was confirmed that Hartpury was progressing increased sustainability in relation to the farm.

**Expanding excellence in England** – the progress already made in relation to Research was highlighted and an expression of interest in relation to a potential Hartpury Institute for Equestrian Research was outlined. Hartpury was now waiting to see if this would be successful, if so a fully costed bid would need to be submitted in September. Awards would be made in December 23 with funding distributed in 2024.

The success of the first Public Lecture was highlighted.

		<b>ACTION &amp; ACTION DATE</b>
	<p>A fly through of the UCL building was shown. There was some concern that the imagery did not depict a breadth of students, in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability. It was confirmed the building was fully accessible.</p> <p>Future priorities were noted.</p>	
	<b>The University Board and the College Boards NOTED the Report.</b>	
<b>06/03/23</b>	<b>KPIs – Confidential Commercial Sensitivity 3 years</b>	
<b>07/03/23</b>	<b>Management Accounts – January 2023</b>	
	<p>It was noted that the operating result for the six months ending January 2023 was a surplus of £68k compared to a budgeted deficit of £797K. The favourable variance was mostly resulting from higher HE income, FE high needs funding from Local Authorities together with lower than budgeted staffing costs mostly as a result of vacancies. A full reforecast had been carried out and showed a projected surplus of £1,474k compared to an original budget of £1,054k.</p> <p>It was noted Cash balances at the month end were £1,859k. It was confirmed that the University has an overdraft facility of £1m and complies with its bank covenants and was forecast to continue to do so.</p> <p>Governors queried whether the staff vacancies were impacting on the student experience. The Chief Operating Officer advised that agency staff were being used to meet catering vacancies so this was not impacting on the wider student experience. The Deputy Principal FE advised that recruitment and retention of FE Agricultural staff had been challenging, but vacancies had been covered through sessional staff. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised that the review of HE staff salaries had improved the position, but there were some specialist areas which were proving difficult. Further recruitment was ongoing, and there were some issues with staff absence with medium term periods. Governors queried if exit interviews were indicated any themes. The Chief Operating Officer advised that reasons varied. Changes to career, impact of Covid on life choices, salaries in industry were some of the issues. A governor flagged the amount of cash projected to be held at year end. The Chief Operating Officer advised this reflected the timing of capital projects.</p>	
	<b>The College and University Boards NOTED the Management Accounts.</b>	
<b>08/03/23</b>	<b>FE Report</b>	
	<p>The following aspects were highlighted by the Deputy Principal Further Education:</p> <p><b>Policy / External Environment:</b> the external environment continued to evolve and the key areas of focus included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New statutory requirements for Governors - Skills Review and Accountability Agreements</li> </ol>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p>2. Engagement with the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) 3. Qualification Reform 4. Strategic Development Funds</p> <p>It was confirmed Good progress continued to be made with consultation and collaboration with the LSIP and a first draft of our Accountability Statement (part of the Accountability Agreement) was currently being reviewed by SMT and would then be reviewed by external stakeholders prior to a final draft being presented for FE Board to consider for approval in early May. It was noted we were keeping a watching brief on other aspects that would impact Hartpury such as the qualification landscape, particularly in relation to T-Levels and defunding. We were planning to deliver all Landbased T-Levels from 2024 although we heard last week that the Equine T-level has been delayed. Confirmation on funding bands was awaited. Funding relating to Uniformed public services was not yet resolved, lobbying was ongoing. It was confirmed sport would continue to be funded. The impact of the change to T-levels was unknown. Parents were often wary of alternatives to A-levels.</p> <p><b>Recruitment: 2023-2024</b> applications were strong and we need to continue to work hard to convert to target in all areas. Governors queried if Hartpury had a recognised conversion rate for applications. The Deputy Principal Further Education advised that conversion rates at course level were known, and that some offers were being phased to reflect this. Applications in equine were down and a marketing campaign to myth bust potential concerns was ongoing.</p> <p><b>Continuous Improvement:</b> we continue to drive forward further improvements as reflected throughout the report. Good progress was being made with the actions on our Quality Improvement Plan overall. QuESt reviewed the detailed progress and did not raise any concerns.</p>	
	<p><b>The FE update was NOTED.</b></p>	
<p>09/03/23</p>	<p><b>HE Report</b></p>	
	<p>Key elements were highlighted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor:</p> <p><b>Student recruitment:</b> While recruitment was currently below original targets, we were currently predicting 2% up on last year (compared to a 4% decline nationally). A campaign relating to sport was ongoing successfully, similar campaigns were to be enacted for other departments over the summer. It was noted conversion had dropped last year and work was ongoing to improve this for 2023/24. Concern was expressed at Equine applications which had fallen, work to address this was ongoing. It was noted the Hartpury course offered the most variety, had unique curriculum and strong facilities. Horse welfare and wellbeing were also areas students used in their consideration of courses. Governors queried if it was a sector issue. The Deputy- Vice Chancellor advised this was the case and advised she was meeting with key sector bodies, and highlighting the need for events to be more accessible.</p>	

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
	<p><b>Quality and Enhancement:</b> An update was provided on recent Examination Boards and OfS activity. The first exam board had taken place with positive external feedback. Online marking had been implemented for the Exam Board and this had worked well. Governors congratulated the team on this significant development.</p> <p><b>Curriculum Development:</b> An update was provided on both validation and accreditation activity. Animal and Agriculture had revalidated aspects of their provision after the recent strategic review. Governors queried whether the fact that Hartpury had not received Small Specialist status meant other options were available for development. It was confirmed this was a matter for further consideration. A governor queried whether sustainability was built into the curriculum and this was confirmed.</p> <p><b>Research and Knowledge Exchange:</b> The additional RKE related funding this year was highlighted as a great achievement by the team.</p> <p><b>Teaching Excellence Framework:</b> Following submission, initial outcomes were expected in July / August.</p> <p><b>External Developments:</b> Hartpury's staff were involved in a number of external activities. Governors congratulated staff on their involvement in work with QAA and AdvanceHE.</p>	
	<p><b>The HE Report was NOTED.</b></p>	
<p>10/03/23</p>	<p><b>Student &amp; Staff Voice</b></p> <p><b>Student Governors</b> - Issues of concern to students were cost of living, housing, mental health &amp; wellbeing. These were being responded to by the SU. An accessibility focus group was being held and a Respect Campaign was ongoing. Equine Research Programme had been issued – this had student as well as staff involvement.</p> <p><b>Governor Link Feedback</b> The following involvement in Hartpury life was noted: College Open Day – 21 Jan 2023 – Alastair Grizzell</p> <p><b>Link Governors Activity – Visits Since 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022</b>  <b>23<sup>rd</sup> November – Sport FE – Chris Moody</b>  <b>3<sup>rd</sup> February – Estates &amp; Facilities Ian Robinson</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 – Research – Alison Blackburn</b>  <b>23<sup>rd</sup> February – Health &amp; Safety attendance Health &amp; Safety Forum – John Selby (Link Report to Follow)</b></p> <p><b>Students feeling safe</b> - No issues were raised in relation to students feeling safe.</p> <p><b>Staff Morale</b> – No common points made, staff generally positive.</p> <p><b>The Updates were NOTED.</b></p>	

		<b>ACTION &amp; ACTION DATE</b>
	The Chair thanked governors for their feedback which helped to triangulate the information provided at the meetings.	
<b>11/03/23</b>	<b>Capital Projects – Commercial Confidentiality – 5 years</b>	
<b>12/03/23</b>	<p><b>Strategy Finance and Resources Committee</b>  <b>Minutes of the meeting 7<sup>th</sup> February 23 – were noted.</b></p> <p>The Chair updated on key discussion points from the meeting, noting the Capital Projects had already been considered. Residency Occupancy had been considered. The developments relating to Football 1 were progressing, the Committees had flagged the need to be mindful of location in relation to residential accommodation, and it was confirmed SMT were mindful of this and would keep under review. It was noted that number of spectators was currently minimal and was not expected to rise significantly, at this time. There had been discussions about the alternative pension provision of some education providers in Gloucestershire, but recognising the need to ensure pension liabilities did not crystallise at this stage further exploration of these options was not planned, although the SMT would keep the option under review.</p> <p><b>Policy Update</b></p> <p><b>Financial Regulations - APPROVED by the University and College Boards.</b></p> <p><b>Noted University and College SFR had Approved the Following Under Delegated Authority:</b></p> <p>Slavery &amp; Human Trafficking Statement</p> <p>Refunds Policy - FE &amp; HE</p>	
<b>13/03/23</b>	<p><b>HE Quest Committee</b>  <b>Minutes of the meeting 16<sup>th</sup> February 23 – NOTED.</b></p> <p>The HE QuEST Chair thanked the Clerk for providing the minutes from the meeting to the Board, recognising the close scheduling of the meetings.</p> <p>Key points highlighted were:</p> <p><b>Unconditional Offers</b> – confirmed that these were not used by Hartpury who had in place Contextual Offers which ensured the process was appropriately controlled to ensure quality. The Committee would continue to monitor the impact and use of Contextual Offers.</p> <p><b>HE KPIs</b> – all on track except undergraduate withdrawal rates which were being kept under review, with reasons for withdrawal monitored.</p> <p><b>TEF</b> – submitted. HE QuEST Committee welcomed the opportunity to be involved and commented positively on the quality and work undertaken in both the Hartpury and the student submissions. Noted that Hartpury had used alternative data, as previously explained, and that OfS's view on this would determine the rating.</p> <p>Noted Mary Heslop had also attended the meeting.</p>	

		<b>ACTION &amp; ACTION DATE</b>
14/03/23	<p><b>FE Quest Committee</b>  <b>Minutes of the meeting 16<sup>th</sup> February 23 – NOTED.</b>            Key points highlighted were.  <b>Quality Improvement Plan (QUIP)</b> – key report to provide assurance on commitment to continuous improvement.  <b>Rapid Improvement plan for Apprenticeships</b> – positive progress.  <b>Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) Engagement</b> – Hartpury engaging effectively with this work.  <b>Teaching and Learning Update</b> – confirmation deep dive process working well. Landex Report providing additional assurance.  <b>Btec Exam Results</b> – being kept under scrutiny.</p>	
	<p><b>Grading Skills Contribution</b>            The Committee had debated the grading of the Skills contribution rigorously, reflecting on the approach during 2021/22 and developments during 2022/23 and agreed that it should be graded as Strong Contribution. It was agreed that the focus on ensuring students were work ready should be additionally emphasised. It was recognised that Hartpury made a local and national contribution to skills. It was agreed the breadth of Hartpury's offer – from FE to HE supported its skills contribution. The Deputy Principal Further Education confirmed that the curriculum plan covered Hartpury's local, regional and national skills contribution.</p>	Dep Principal FE
	<p><b>The College Board APPROVED the Rating of the Skills Contribution as Strong.</b></p>	
13/11/22 13.1	<p><b>Search and Governance Committee</b>  <b>Minutes of the meeting 16<sup>th</sup> February 23 – NOTED.</b>            The Chair advised that the Committees had considered the updates on the Advance HE Governance Effectiveness Review Action Plan and the Diversity Action Plan. These were both progressing. There had also been discussions concerning potential reappointments, recommendations were provided. <b>R&amp;E Terms of Reference</b> – noted to come for approval with clarification over policy in July.   <b>Recruitment</b> – Recruitment process to be set in place to recruit one university and one college governor with work to increase diversity to be incorporated.</p>	
	<p><b>Membership Recommendations:</b>   <b>The University Board:</b>            (i) <b>AGREED</b> Alison Blackburn had considerable knowledge and made a significant contribution to the University Board and was therefore <b>APPROVED</b> for <b>RE-APPOINTMENT</b> to the University Board for a further four years from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023- 31<sup>st</sup> August 2027.            (ii) <b>RECOGNISED</b> the contribution John Selby had made to the Board and the University, and thanks formally recorded, noting he would step down in September 2023.</p>	



		<b>ACTION &amp; ACTION DATE</b>
	<p><b>The College Board</b>            (iii) <b>AGREED</b> Mary Heslop had a wide range of knowledge and made a significant contribution to the College Board and was therefore <b>APPROVED</b> for <b>RE-APPOINTMENT</b> to the College Board for a further four years from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023- 31<sup>st</sup> August 2027.</p>	
	<p><b>S&amp;G Committee Terms of Reference</b> had been amended to include reference to responsibilities relating to Chancellor.</p> <p><b>The Updated Terms of Reference for the College and University Search and Governance Committees</b> were <b>APPROVED</b> by the College and University Boards respectively..</p>	
<b>16/03/23</b>	<p><b>Application of Hartpury Seal*</b>            Noted the Seal had been used in relation to:            Shared Prosperity Fund Grant            Forest of Dean District Council and Hartpury University</p> <p><b>The Seal had been used in line with agreed parameters.</b></p>	
<b>17/03/23</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b>            None</p> <p>The Chair thanked all governors and staff for their work.</p> <p><b>The meeting closed at 12.15 pm</b></p>	

APPROVED MAY 2023