

**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**

**University Council**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
at 2.30pm in the Boardroom**

**Present:**

Mr Jonathan Day	Chair
Dr John Carlisle	
Mr Mark Davies	
Reverend Canon David Evans	
Ms Deirdre Finucane	
Mr Stephen Kenny	
Archbishop Bernard Longley	
Professor Peter Lutzeier	Vice-Chancellor and Principal
Mrs Rosemary Thorp	
Mr James Westwood	Students' Union President
Mr John Westwood	Council Member Designate

**In Attendance:**

Ms Andrea Bolshaw	Registrar and University Secretary and Clerk to the Council
Professor Peter Childs	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship)
Professor Duncan Lawson	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Formative Education)
Mr Tony Sharma	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Mrs Lysandre de-la-Haye	Deputy Registrar and Minute Secretary

The meeting of the Council opened with prayers led by Archbishop Bernard Longley.

**1 Work of the Council**1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Shale Ahmed, Dr Mark Goodwin, Mr David Harris, Mrs Sarah Parkes and Mr Nathan Richards.

1.2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015**Resolution 1/16**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were received and confirmed as an accurate record.

### 1.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

#### 2.1 Outline of Future Issues

In response to a question raised about the consultation on the Green Paper, it was confirmed that this had been an open consultation. The University submitted its own response, and provided further comment in the responses made by the Cathedrals Group, the CBI and Guild HE.

It was also reported that Universities West Midlands had held a meeting with Minister Joe Johnson, Minister for Universities and Sciences, confirming that the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) would be implemented and that universities would be given financial incentives by allowing them to raise fees contingent on TEF outcomes. The main concerns expressed by universities were acknowledged by the Minister, in particular the suggested timing of TEF implementation and fee differentiation based on TEF results. The Minister did not respond to these concerns but concentrated on the technical consultation.

It was further reported that the pro-Vice-Chancellor Formative Education would be meeting with BIS at the end of the week to explore the thinking around the technical consultation which had yet to be released.

In response to the issue of the Autumn Statement and the cuts to the Student Opportunity Funds, the Minister was adamant that HEFCE would be required to fund HEIs with a good track record in widening participation, such as Newman, but that there some desire to see why institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge were not meeting their widening participation targets; as a result, some funding may go to them.

The annual letter from BIS to HEFCE had yet to be received and therefore HEFCE were not committing themselves as to when individual letters to HEIs would be provided; this would most likely be in the second week of April. It was noted that this would cause some issues with universities' planning rounds.

It was noted that it had not been the tradition in the past for Council to be involved in consultations and that there was a need to consider the appropriate relationship between Senate and the Council on these matters, with this to be considered during the year. It was noted however that individual Council members were able to increase their knowledge by their involvement with individual areas within the University, and this would also be taken further forward this year.

Council were informed that the University had not been successful in its bid for higher and degree apprenticeships, but would be pursuing other opportunities with regard to apprenticeships.

### 3.8 Presentation on Estates Strategy implementation, including Chapel and Psychology and Counselling refurbishment

Council noted the need to ensure that appropriate canonical procedures were followed in relation to any changes within Chapel; Canon David Evans would be keeping these aspects under review.

## 1.3 Reports from the Committees

### 1.4.1 Nominations Committee

Council received the minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February 2016. It was highlighted that the current year would provide a big challenge for the Council in recruiting new members needed.

### 1.4.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Council received a verbal report from the Chair of Council of the meeting held on 2 February 2016.

It was noted in the update on Bournville College that the University would not go forward with the financial request made by the College in light of the FE Area Review. It was reported that Bournville was to merge with South and City College Birmingham, with continued delivery at the Longbridge campus. The suggested move of Cadbury Sixth Form College to Bournville was now doubtful. However, the concerns that another University would move to Bournville were assuaged and it was confirmed that the University would continue its current partnership with Bournville.

In considering other colleges affected by the FE Area Review for Birmingham, it was noted that both Solihull College and Birmingham Metropolitan College had not been required to change their working partnerships or merge with another institution.

It was highlighted that the FE Area Review for the Black Country would include Halesowen College whose Principal, Mr Keith Bate, had confirmed that the College had no interest in further work with the University of Wolverhampton.

It was reported to Council that the People and IT strategies had been provided to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and were formally ratified by the Senior Management Team. It was confirmed that the strategies would be made available by the Registrar and University Secretary.

Whilst it was noted that the Newman Management Group regularly considered issues of succession, the Chair did not see clearly where

succession issues were identified in the People Strategy and this would be highlighted to the Director of Human Resources.

The Chair reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee was then inquorate and whilst there were discussions on the estates strategy costs, it was agreed that there would be a further update at the next meeting of the committee on 10 March.

There was also a request that all papers be circulated at least five days in advance of the relevant committee.

#### 1.4.3 Audit Committee

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported to the Council on the discussion of the Prevent Strategy as this was a new responsibility for the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee had received the University's self-assessment and felt it was making excellent progress. Much of the discussion was around culture and the positive involvement of staff and students with the essence of the strategy for the University to look out for each other and to take staff and students along with the institution.

The Committee also received the first two internal audit reports from the new internal auditors. Finance received a very positive report whilst the IT services report was more challenging. The audit team had raised a number of moderate recommendations, some of which management viewed as unnecessary. The audit team had highlighted the dependence on the small team in IT services, but the Audit Committee noted that there were no immediate risks.

The Risk Management Tables were also reviewed and the Audit Committee were pleased to note that the changes showed that overall risks were decreasing.

#### 1.5 Role of the Council: Vice-Chancellor Search and Appointment Process

The Chair introduced the paper to the Council noting that the Council could not delegate the recruitment of a future Vice-Chancellor. He highlighted that this was a task which Council was to undertake, with the help of both management and an outside search agency.

The Chair also reported that, as time is of the essence, some actions had already been put in place. Soundings had been taken around the sector and the paper reflected common custom and best practice.

It was noted that a Search Committee would be established to provide appropriate information to the Council to enable the Council to make decisions and that the search consultants would support the process. It was confirmed that an invitation to tender had already been sent out by

the University, with the deadline for submitting a tender on Monday, 29 February and the decision to be made in the week commencing 7th of March. It was agreed to ensure that there were email updates for the Council on the appointment of the search consultants. It was also suggested that it would be useful for some governors to have the opportunity to meet with the appointed search consultants before the council away day.

The Search Committee would comprise the Chair of Council, the Vice-Chair of Council, two independent Council members and three members of the Newman Management Group.

In discussions it was noted that the role description for a future Vice-Chancellor would be considered at the Council away day in April. The need to ensure however that timescales did not slip was highlighted as the advert would need to go out in May.

It was noted that the current Vice-Chancellor of Winchester University, Joy Carter, had agreed to be involved in the later stages and to be a member of the final interview panel. Bishop Robert Byrne from the Archdiocese would also join the final interview panel. The Council reflected on the term 'suitably qualified and Catholic' and noted that in the renewal of the Instruments and Articles in 2012, it had been confirmed that it was appropriate to hold, as a genuine occupational requirement, that Newman's Vice-Chancellor be a practising Roman Catholic.

In considering the potential risk of not recruiting in time discussions had taken place regarding potential interim arrangements and the Council would be kept well informed.

Council asked how the Town Hall strategy would be woven into the process particularly to ensure the involvement of all members of the University. Council were reassured that there would be further Town Hall meetings and an e-mail address for staff to express their views would be set up. It was agreed that Council would be able to access the comments made on the e-mail address on a read only basis, with the Chair of Council, the Registrar and University Secretary, and the Search Committee having full access.

### **Resolution 2/16**

The Council agreed for a search committee to be mandated, and approved the proposal to appoint search consultants via a tender process and to approve the summary process and indicative timescale for the recruitment.

The Council formally commended the work already undertaken by the Registrar and University Secretary.

## 1.6 Council Away Day

The Chair proposed that the away day be mainly focused on the way forward in terms of leadership of the University. The day would be an opportunity for blue sky thinking.

As well as considering the role of the Vice-Chancellor and leadership of the University it was also suggested that the away day consider the question of being Catholic University in a multicultural environment, which was seen as an incredible challenge; assessment of where the University was in regard to its strategic plan; the challenge of recruiting members to the Council and the skills audit of members for the next five years; the future of Initial Teacher Education for the region and the University and the results of the Governor Effectiveness Meeting.

## **2 The Current State of the University**

### 2.1 Introduction by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

The Vice-Chancellor provided a copy of the new Faith in Education brochure, produced during his tenure as Chair of the Cathedrals Group. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the stark differences between the Cathedrals Group institutions and higher education generally, with far more positive metrics provided by the Cathedrals Group. The brochure had been produced to raise the profile of the church-related HEIs and had been sent to all heads of secondary faith schools relevant MPs, the Catholic Education Service and the Church of England.

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the British Council scheme for universities in Palestine and that, as a complement to the university's Article 26 work and in line with the University's mission of service, Newman had signed a partnership to provide a scholarship, through remission of fees, to an academic from a university in Palestine, and had highlighted in the partnership that the University would welcome applicants from the Catholic University in Bethlehem.

As part of the University's global citizenship work, the dual degree with the Protestant University of Ludwigsburg was also highlighted as a way to help widen the horizons of students.

The Vice-Chancellor also reported to the Council that Mr James McMillan, who had received a knighthood, and who had composed a piece of music for the University's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2018, had been named as Catholic of the Year by the magazine *The Catholic Herald*.

In considering the UCAS End of Cycle Report, which was focused on full-time undergraduate student, the Vice-Chancellor reported that there was an overall rise in acceptances across the sector but that this was unevenly distributed with the trend for more applicants at higher tariff providers.

The University had increased acceptances by 5.5% however this was largely due to School Direct, part-time and postgraduate students.

Over the last 3 years, all Birmingham universities have grown consistently however this would have been at the expense of other institutions. The Vice-Chancellor also highlighted the drop in demographics until at least 2020 and noted that there had been no clear pattern on where the increases took place and the report presented a complex picture.

## 2.2 Recruitment for September 2016

Council considered the paper presented and discussed the charts provided. The steady decline in undergraduate initial teacher education numbers was noted.

Council were informed about the challenges faced by PGCE application processes particularly with the changes brought in by the National College of Teaching and Leadership which was closing applications on subject basis, based on a first-come first-served process. This had affected the University, since when the PE applications were closed overnight by the NCTL, the University had not been able to make any offers due to the Ofsted inspection taking place. The Council were however reassured that the NCTL had now partially reversed their decision and were allowing universities to make at least 50% of the number of offers they made last year but that they could not go beyond 95%. The importance of offers accepted was noted and that the University was somewhat ahead in this respect but that lower numbers would be expected. The undergraduate initial teacher education had not however been reduced in the same way as the PGCE.

The success in School Direct applications for 2015 was not replicated for 2016 with applications down from last year. The success of the School of Education as being the University partner of choice for School Direct was noted. Countrywide, however, the numbers made available have been reduced. It was highlighted that a number of School Direct places across the country had yet to be filled and people may well come into the system later in the year and the number of applications may go up.

On HEFCE programmes it was noted that applications were slightly ahead of last year, apparently due to new programmes including Accounting and Finance, Computing for Education and Mathematics.

Council having discussed the report and in particular having considered the graphs provided, asked that in future block graphs or histogram presentations be used within the report.

## 2.3 Financial Expectations for 2015/16

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reported to the Council that there were no particular concerns to report. Recruitment had been a

little higher than expected and so more tuition fees had been received with a lower number of withdrawals. He noted that costs would go up due to the significant increase needed for the work on the halls of residence. At present estates costs were looking to be around £1 million higher than expected but that these were expected to be reduced by £500,000 and the Finance and General Purposes Committee would review the figures after the tendering process.

Reserves and cash were higher than forecast but not as high as the previous year.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee would review the position in April and also consider the loan position the Council to consider and approve.

Council queried the presentation of some of the figures and it was noted that the focus was on where the University will be at the end of year. It was agreed, as the system used to manage finances was not entirely transparent from the figures provided, that a dashboard of information be provided to the Council which would correspond more clearly on how finances were actioned.

### **Resolution 3/16**

It was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee consider the presentation of the financial update to ensure the paper could be used fully as a performance management tool.

The Council also raised a question regarding the VAT recovery proposed through Newman Firm Trust and the need to ensure that the University has received appropriate advice to confirm this would be allowable.

#### **2.4 Report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship)**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Scholarship) highlighted to the Council progression on Research Degree Awarding Powers work including the 12 research studentships endorsed by the Council which were spread out between different subjects University and with the final 2 starting in October 2016.

In terms of PhD completions 13 had been successfully completed, with 23 projected to complete by 2020. In order to meet the numbers required for RDAP, the University needed 30 successful completions. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor noted that not all would be expected to complete but that two thirds could be reasonably expected to complete and further studentships were also expected to commence.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor was also able to confirm that professional doctorates such as the EdD could now be included in the number of



completion for RDAP and that the University had an EdD starting in September with between six and eight students expected to enrol.

Council were informed of the launches of research centres in Humanities and for the Templeton Project (Centre for Science, Knowledge and Belief in society). There were now six research centres and these provided a shop window for research and an external eye University research.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Council of the proposal of a Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations; this was timely as it reflected the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul's paper on the relationship of the church with both Muslims and Jews. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the rationale which included historical threat, national issues, present tensions, refugees, British identity and the demographics of the West Midlands. He noted that it was the university's mission to make a strong contribution to the development of interfaith dialogue. With 23% of Newman's students identifying themselves as Muslim, with research already being undertaken and given the University's work with Citizens UK, Newman sought to exploit its unique presence through global collaboration on research; to act as an open forum; to provide a trusted resource; to make a major contribution to cohesion; and to enhance the University profile.

Council was informed that funding would be sourced externally to the University and that current leads through the Chancellor would be investigated. The Vice-Chancellor had also met with a partner tuition, Markfield Institute of higher education, a Western-facing Islamic studies centre, who were keen to be involved as well as holding talks with the Head of Sharia and Islamic Banking in Birmingham who also wished to be very supportive.

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the proposal had been discussed internally including at Senate, and it was agreed for the paper which had been discussed at Senate, to be circulated to all members of the Council.

The Archbishop noted that there would be lots of enthusiasm both locally and nationally and that the Bishops conference in particular would be very interested. The Archbishop also suggested that when it was appropriate timing, he would like the Faith Leaders Group to meet at the University and for the Vice-Chancellor to present to them on this proposal.

## 2.5 Internal Reports

It was agreed to defer the reports detailed below to the next meeting of the Council.

2.5.1 Student Discipline

2.5.2 Complaints

2.5.3 Environmental Committee Annual Report

### **3 Future Issues**

#### **3.1 Outline of Future Issues - Vice-Chancellor and Principal**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting of the Council.

### **4 Any Other Business**

#### **Resolution 4/16**

It was agreed to include an item on the agenda of the next meeting to provide an opportunity for the new Registrar and University Secretary to give her first impressions of the University.

### **5 Date of the Next Council Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the Council was confirmed as 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016.

The meeting of the Council closed with prayers led by Archbishop Bernard Longley.