

NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2024 AT NFTS BEACONSFIELD.

Present: Sophie Turner Laing (Chair), Paloma Baeza, Julian Bellamy, Chris Bird, Paul Clark, Polly Cochrane, Geoffrey Crossick, Scott Forrest, Cécile Frot-Coutaz, Andy Harries, Eloise Jenninger, John Lee, Ollie Madden (until 12.15), Caroline Silver, Hilary Strong, Jon Wardle.

Apologies: Patrick Fuller, Oli Hyatt, Stephen Louis, Andrew Macdonald, Pukar Mehta, Charlotte Moore, Adil Ray, Laurent Samama, Eleanor Wheel.

In attendance: Sue Vertue, Gillian Carr, Trevor Hall, Mark Readman, Ijeoma Akigwe, Louise Robertson

Clerk: Chris Wensley by Zoom

Declaration of Personal Interests: There were no new declarations.

The Chair welcomed Paloma Baeza, Chris Bird and Andy Harries to their first meeting. She also reported on the very successful launch of the Sean Connery Talent Lab.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

1.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was noted that 2.3 *Five Year Forecast* should refer to the Corporate Plan 2023-2028. The minutes of the previous Board of Governors Meeting held on 18th June 2024 were then approved as an accurate record.

1.2 Actions.

It was noted that all actions had been completed, were on the agenda, or had been deferred.

ACTIONS CARRIED FORWARD TO NEXT MEETING:

1.2.1 Management to report on progress with communication initiatives.

1.2.2 Management to present a review of scholarship strategy.

1.3 Matters Arising

It was noted that two reports had to be submitted to OfS before the next Board meeting.

RESOLVED: Because the next Board meeting was later than normal, it was resolved that the School Director would sign off the 2023/24 OfS Annual Financial Return by 2 December 2024 and the Audit Committee Chair would sign off the 2023/24 PREVENT Return, following due scrutiny by F&GP and Audit Committee respectively.

2. Strategy

2.1 Expanding the Beaconsfield Campus

Jon Wardle and Louise Robertson provided an update about ongoing negotiations to develop the NFTS Beaconsfield campus, including the appointment of architects and a Project Management Team to deliver the project.

After detailed discussion about the government grant and the associated fundraising, the Board formally noted the paper.

RESOLVED: To approve the use of contingency funds to enable the project to progress whilst we await the Government grant.

2.2 Strategy Afternoon Planning

Jon Wardle provided details of the Strategy Afternoon which would be held on 15th October from 1.30pm. He outlined the priorities for the agenda and keynote speakers.

2.3 Report on 2024 Staff Survey

Gillian Carr presented the results of the 2024 Staff Survey, conducted in partnership with BECTU. She advised that the results were encouraging, with an increase in overall satisfaction, and improvements in key areas of focus from last year. She also reported on staff comments about the teaching challenges posed by some students. There was also a discussion about how best to engage all staff with the Corporate Plan.

The Board congratulated Management on pleasing results.

2.4 2023/24 KPIs update

Trevor Hall updated members on performance against the School's Key Performance Indicators for 2023/24.

The Board noted the paper.

2.5 New OfS Conditions of Registration – sexual harassment

Jon Wardle updated the Board on the requirements of the OfS's new Condition of Registration relating to sexual harassment, Condition E6, which involves significant requirements in respect of staff and student training; the development of a single comprehensive source of information detailing how they meet the condition; and a ban on non-disclosure agreements.

The Board noted the paper.

3. Updates from Committees

3.1 Minutes from Audit Committee.

Caroline Silver presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024.

3.2 Minutes from F&GP Committee.

Hilary Strong presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024.

Hilary highlighted that after due scrutiny F&GP considered the School to be a Going Concern and also that no assets of the School needed to be impaired.

3.3 Report from Creative Industries Liaison Group – CILG

Sue Vertue advised that the Group was meeting on 25 September to discuss two main items – transition from the NFTS into employment, and Masters of Fine Arts.

3.4 Anti-Discrimination Group Progress Report

Gillian Carr described progress made by the Anti-Discrimination group, and outlined the updated action plans and targets, its trans awareness work, and five dedicated bursaries for disabled students.

4. Reports

4.1 Director's Report

The Director reported on his activities since the last meeting. He drew particular attention to NFTS successes at student awards ceremonies, progress with the CoStar project and the establishment of the NFTS Academy, (formerly the BFI Film Academy), an Easter residential programme for young people, supported by Disney. Finally, he outlined the process for selecting this year's NFTS Fellowship and he invited nominations from Board members.

Action: Jon Wardle to circulate a list of former Fellows and nominees to members.

4.2 Finance Director's Report

Trevor Hall updated the Committee on the School's financial performance for the year to 31 July 2024, which was better than budget, primarily due to a donation from Sky.

He also advised members of the accounting treatment of monies raised through major fundraising campaigns and a proposed system to reduce the volatility these created to the School's reported annual results.

There was discussion about the role of the NFTS Foundation with regard to fundraising moneys.

The Board noted the report.

Action: Trevor Hall to highlight in the Management Accounts the potential impact on the 2024/25 results should the development of the NFTS Beaconsfield Campus not proceed.

4.3 Student Union Report

Eloise Jenninger reported on activities that the SU had organised or supported, including the very successful Summer Party.

She also explained that the SU was actively involved in the University Mental Health Charter (UMHC) steering group, which was preparing an application to recognise NFTS's holistic approach to mental health support.

The Board thanked Eloise for her report.

4.4 Curriculum and Short Course Report

Mark Readman updated the Board on key curriculum activity since the last meeting, including updates on short courses, the operation of the full-time curriculum, development of new courses, academic standards, complaints and appeals, partnerships and recruitment. He drew particular attention to course reviews and the annual awayday for senior staff to review pedagogic practice. He also reported on preliminary discussions about creating a suite of Master of Fine Arts degrees.

The Board discussed the relationship between MAs and MFAs, and the School's qualifications framework, and recommended market analysis be carried out on the appeal of MFAs to potential students and employers.

Geoff Crossick reported on the annual Academic Standards Committee meeting, which he had chaired, and assured the Board that it could have confidence that NFTS academic standards were fit for purpose.

The Board noted the report.

4.5 Apprenticeships Update

Jon Wardle reported that the School's first apprentices were progressing well and he advised of other apprenticeship schemes either about to start or in development, as well as reporting on preparations for a potential future Ofsted monitoring visit.

4.6 Humanitarian Scholarship Update

Jon Wardle reported on the School's three new Humanitarian Scholarships.

He explained that it had been agreed that initially for the MA/Diploma Scholarships, applicants would need to have already been granted either asylum or Humanitarian Protection and be living in the UK. However, since the Certificate Scholarships were delivered either wholly or substantially online, students who had refugee or humanitarian protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, but who lived outside the UK, would also be eligible.

4.7 Annual Risk Register Report

Trevor Hall updated members on the change of risks to the School, as monitored by Audit Committee on behalf of the Board, over the last 12 months.

4.8 Annual H&S Report

Jon Wardle reported on Health & Safety over the last year. He advised that there had been no major issues, and provided details of training activities, risk assessment, site safety and student and staff wellbeing.

The Board discussed the report, and was pleased to note another relatively safe

year of operations.

4.9 Annual Review of Board Terms of Reference

The Board reviewed its terms of reference and noted the minor changes to the Matrix of Board Responsibilities delegated to sub-committees. It was agreed that the ToR were fit for purpose.

4.10 Annual report on compliance with the OfS Conditions of Registration

Jon Wardle presented a mapping document demonstrating how the Board could be assured that the School's complies with the OfS Conditions of Registration.

4.11 Updated OfS B3 student outcomes data

Jon Wardle explained that the OfS Regulatory Framework contained a Condition of Registration that required that each provider '*must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study*'. HEIs must reach thresholds for continuation, completion and progression.

He reported that the NFTS MAs had comfortably exceeded the threshold for each indicator. He also advised that some female students on F/T Diplomas struggled to describe specific production roles, for example Production Assistant, in appropriate professional terms, and that the importance of doing this would be discussed with students as they prepared to leave the School.

5. Board Briefing

Harpal Mudhar from the Composing MA degree described his experience and what he had learnt from the programme, and provided examples of work which had been produced.

The Board thanked him for a very interesting presentation.

6. Date of Next Meeting:

This was confirmed as Thursday 5th December 2024 at 10.30am at the NFTS, Beaconsfield.