

## NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024 AT NFTS BEACONSFIELD.**

**Present:** Sophie Turner Laing (Chair), Julian Bellamy, Paul Clark, Polly Cochrane, Geoffrey Crossick, Cécile Frot-Coutaz, Patrick Fuller, Oli Hyatt, Eloise Jenninger, John Lee, Ollie Madden, Pukar Mehta, Charlotte Moore, Adil Ray, Laurent Samama, Caroline Silver, Jon Wardle.

**Apologies:** Scott Forrest, Stephen Louis, Andrew Macdonald, Hilary Strong, Sue Vertue.

In attendance: Ijeoma Akigwe, Trevor Hall, Mark Readman, Eleanor Wheal.

Clerk: Chris Wensley

**Declaration of Personal Interests:** There were no new declarations.

The Chair welcomed Cécile Frot-Coutaz, Julian Bellamy and Paul Clark to their first meeting.

#### **1. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

##### 1.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous Board of Governors Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

##### 1.2 Actions.

It was noted that the following actions were on the agenda:

- *Management to consider how best to gather, present and use application data, and report to a future meeting.*
- *Ijeoma Akigwe to produce for the June Board a proactive NFTS communications strategy to grow the visibility of the School*

##### 1.3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

#### **2. Strategy**

##### 2.1 Expanding the Beaconsfield Campus

Jon Wardle provided an update about ongoing negotiations to develop the NFTS Beaconsfield campus, including fundraising initiatives.

After extensive discussion about the nature and scope of the project, the Board congratulated Management on developing so effectively the application documents for a government funding application.

##### 2.2 Vision, Objectives, Goals 2024/25

Jon Wardle described the specific objectives and goals the School management team will work to deliver in the second year of the 2023 – 2028 Corporate Plan.

For each of the six areas of the Corporate Plan, the paper defined what it was aimed to achieve in year two of the plan, together with the tasks that needed to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025.

The Committee noted the paper.

**ACTION: Chris Wensley to send the Strategic Plan summary to new Board members.**

##### 2.3 Five Year Forecast

Trevor Hall reported on the proposed five-year financial forecast aligned to the Corporate Plan.

After detailed discussion, particularly about how to treat fundraising monies to avoid distorting the School's accounts, it was agreed to approve the paper.

**RESOLVED:**

**To approve the five-year financial forecast, including:**

- **The agreed MA Home and MA overseas fees for 2025;**
- **The agreed increase in staff salaries for 2024/25.**

**ACTION: Management to present a paper on the treatment of fundraising monies at the September Audit Committee.**

#### 2.4 Communication Strategy

Ijeoma Akigwe proposed a new communications strategy to expand efforts to raise the public profile of the School by introducing a '4 Pillars of Communications' plan. She explained that the aim was to assist with fundraising and obtaining industry support. She advised that because of limited internal resources to achieve the new strategy a PR agency should be retained.

The Board agreed that an agency could reach new audiences, but that it was important to be able to measure results rather than agency activity, and that yearly targets should be set, identifying which target stakeholders to reach and why. The Board also recommended using alumni more effectively, and drawing on NFTS research and innovation to provide thought leadership in areas of the creative industries.

**RESOLVED: To go out to tender for a PR agency.**

**ACTION: Management to report to a future meeting on progress with communication initiatives.**

### **3. Updates from Committees**

#### 3.1 Minutes from Audit Committee.

Caroline Silver presented the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024. She drew attention to the continuing 'substantial assurances' achieved by the School in recent internal audits, and the Board congratulated those involved. She also advised that the Audit Committee had discussed risk appetite and had carefully scrutinised the Internal Audit annual plan.

Geoff Crossick queried the number of days allocated to each internal audit review.

#### 3.2 Minutes from F&GP Committee.

On behalf of Laurent Samama, Polly Lindley presented the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024. She advised that the F&GP had scrutinised many of the items on the Board agenda, including VOG, five year forecast, scholarships and Gala preparations.

#### 3.3 Report from GAR

The Chair reported on GAR's discussion of the generally very positive Board survey results, and drew attention to the following:

- Board members should be proactive in engaging with wider NFTS staff, and initiate contacts via the Director;
- The relatively large size of the Board was required to represent the range of disciplines and to incorporate major funders;
- There was a continuing need to increase Board diversity, particularly disability.

The Board agreed with GAR's proposal to invite the following to join the Board from September:

- Andy Harries from Left Bank Productions;
- Paloma Baeza, an alumna of the School, to replace Oli Hyatt as an animation specialist when he steps down in September.

*Management and the staff and student reps withdraw before the next discussion took place.*

The Board discussed and approved the proposal from GAR for the remuneration package for 2024/25 for the Director and the Finance Director.

## 4. Reports

### 4.1 Director's Report

The Director reported on his activities since the last meeting. He drew particular attention to progress with the 2024 Gala, the CoStar project and the establishment of the Sean Connery Talent Lab in Scotland.

Finally, he reported on a small student group protesting over the Palestine Israel situation, and he shared with the Board their three demands, namely that the School commits to no longer buying equipment from companies on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) list; that the School updates its Ethics Policy committing to no new partnerships with institutions on the BDS list; and that one of the proposed Humanitarian Scholarships (see 4.7) should be ringfenced for a Palestinian student.

### 4.2 Finance Director's Report

Trevor Hall updated the Committee on the School's financial performance for the nine months to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024, which was slightly better than budget.

The Board noted the financial performance.

It was noted that Sky UK Limited were proposing to waive the requirement on the School to repay the £1m previously loaned to the School under a facility agreement dated 16 December 2016.

The School, via its solicitors, is seeking clearance from HMRC in order to ensure that charitable tax reliefs will apply to any deemed credit that arises in respect of the loan being waived.

A copy of a proposed waiver letter with Sky UK Limited had been made available to the trustees in advance of the Board meeting (the "Waiver Letter").

Subject to clearance being provided by HMRC (as noted above), it was:

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- **approve the terms of, and the transactions contemplated by, the Waiver Letter;**
- **execute, deliver and perform the Waiver Letter;**
- **authorise Sophie Turner Laing to execute the Waiver Letter on behalf of the School;**
- **authorise Sophie Turner Laing, on behalf of the School, to sign and/or despatch all documents and notices to be signed and/or despatched by it under or in connection with the Waiver Letter.**

### 4.3 Student Union Report

Eloise Jenninger reported on activities that the SU had organised or supported, including support for the Green Collective and plans for the end-of year summer party.

She also explained that the SU had held its new Student Representatives' election for an increased number of Reps with more specialist areas to cover, and a ring-fenced budget for each specialisation.

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 the range and reach of the activities in the nations and regions hubs.

The Board noted the report.

**ACTION:**

- **Management to ensure that the operation of the hubs is on the agenda for the next Board strategy day.**
- **Management to present a review of scholarship strategy to the November Board meeting.**

**4.5 Apprenticeships**

Eleanor Wheal reported that the School's first apprentices were on placement and she advised of another apprenticeship scheme in development with the BBC, as well as reporting on preparations for an Ofsted monitoring visit.

The Board congratulated Eleanor Wheal on her hard work developing and launching the apprenticeship programme.

**4.6 Application Data Update**

Eleanor Wheal presented analysis of data on the background of NFTS students, including detailed consideration of:

- Socio-economic background (UK students only)
- Ethnicity (UK students only)
- Nationality
- Regionality (UK students only)
- Intersectionality between ethnicity and socio-economic background

The Board discussed the report in detail and noted the breadth of courses the School offered, the work of the hubs and the number of scholarships, all of which contributed to the positive diversity statistics.

**ACTION: Chris Wensley to distribute a paper which defines the range of NFTS awards, eg Certificate and Diploma.**

**4.7 Humanitarian Scholarship**

Jon Wardle proposed that the School should establish three new Humanitarian Scholarships.

He explained that options for the scholarships had been discussed with the Students' Union which had suggested that eligibility for the scholarships could change from year to year to allow the scholarships to be refined and adapted according to need. However, the student action group on Israel/Palestine had proposed that one award should be earmarked for a Palestinian student. The Board agreed that applicants must first demonstrate excellence in their chosen discipline and that the awards should be open to all who met the criteria for consideration for a Humanitarian Scholarship and not be restricted to one group only.

There was also discussion about how to communicate the scholarships to relevant parties, and how to judge applications. It was agreed that Management should liaise with other HEIs offering such scholarships.

**ACTION: The Chair to invite volunteers from Board members to establish a small working party to work with Management to develop the Humanitarian Scholarships.**

**5. Board Briefing**

Rhys Aaron Lewis and Shakil Mohammed from the Prime Video Directors Workshop described the programme and showed work which had been produced.

The Board thanked them for a very interesting presentation.

**6. Date of Next Meeting:**

This was confirmed as Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 10.30am at the NFTS, Beaconsfield.