

## MINUTES OF THE 226<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup> 2025 AT NFTS BEACONSFIELD

**Present:** Sophie Turner Laing (Chair), Paloma Baeza, Julian Bellamy, Angus Blair, Paul Clark, Polly Cochrane, Scott Forrest, Andy Harries, Andrew McDonald (Zoom), Ollie Madden, Pukar Mehta, Charlotte Moore, Laurent Samama, Caroline Silver, Hilary Strong, Jon Wardle

**Apologies:** Cécile Frot-Coutaz, Stephen Louis, Patrick Fuller, Adil Ray, Sue Vertue, Geoffrey Crossick, John Lee

**In attendance:** Trevor Hall, Eleanor Wheal, Gillian Carr, Mark Readman, Chris Bird

**Clerk:** Karen Mitchell

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

### 1. Board Briefing – Academic Governance Review

#### 1.1 Board Presentation

The Board welcomed Sharon Tuersley who carried out the recent Academic Governance Review by Advance HE. She presented her report to the Board, confirming that governance at the NFTS is strong.

She outlined the recommendations and suggestions to enhance academic governance and for the Board to consider in the areas of governance and induction, stakeholder engagement and communication, diversity and composition.

#### 1.2 Action Plan

The Board discussed and considered the recommendations and actions within the plan including member's attendance at the Academic Standards Committee and the minutes from the meetings to come directly to future Board meetings, in line with other committees.

The Board thanked Eleanor Wheal for leading on this work.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

#### 2.1 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous Board of Governors meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

#### 2.2 Matters arising

The Chair's Action to approve the 2025/26 MA fees is dealt with in agenda item 3.3.

### 2.3 Actions

It was noted that the following action was on the agenda (item 5.5):

*Trevor Hall to present the updated Business Continuity Plan to the next Board of Governors.*

## **3. Strategy**

### 3.1 Expanding the Beaconsfield Studios

Jon Wardle provided an update on the expansion of Beaconsfield Studios with the good news that the anticipated Government funding had been announced as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy (June 2025) and a joint communication released. Match funding targeted up to June 2025 had been met by the deadline and the focus remains on raising the rest of the funds with a plan in place to December 2025.

There was further good news that planning permission had also been granted and the expectation is that building will start in December 2025, ready to welcome students in January 2027.

The Board celebrated the news and congratulated Jon and the team, recognising the effort and commitment to get to this stage.

The report was **noted**.

### 3.2 Vision, Objectives and Goals (VOG)

Jon Wardle presented the annual goals and tasks against the 2023-28 Corporate Plan that the School's management team will work to deliver in 2025/26 noting the following: the longer term strategic plan with key stakeholders to grow the Sean Connery Talent Lab, the development of innovative curriculum programmes under the Expanding the Beaconsfield Studios project, growth of apprenticeships and the opening of the CoSTAR facility at Pinewood for January 2026.

The Board discussed the goals and tasks including the alumni mentor programme and Mental Health Charter.

The Board **agreed** the VOG 2025-2026

### 3.3 Five Year Financial Forecast

Trevor Hall presented the proposed five-year financial forecast August 2025 to July 2030.

He outlined the key assumptions including the planned positive impact of the purchase and operation of the new building under the Expanding Beaconsfield Studios project by January 2027. The Board inquired about the potential impact if the building was not ready by January 2027. Management indicated that, in the short term, they could manage by reducing the number of bookable seminar rooms or repurposing course-based rooms. However, they noted that a significant delay would present challenges. The build programme will be monitored closely and a plan B developed in Summer 2026 if the programme is off track.

Jon Wardle discussed the proposed staff pay award for 2025/26 aligned to the Union agreement, providing context and planned communication to staff.

After extensive discussion, including contingency plans for the new building and curriculum delivery in January 2027, international student recruitment and the changes to MA/MFA's it was agreed to **approve** the paper.

**RESOLVED:**

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

- **The increase to staff salaries for 2025/26 by the May 2025 RPI**
- **The tuition fee for the two-year MFA**
- **Endorse the tuition fee for the one-year MA (approved under Chair's Action, April 2025).**

#### **4. Updates from Committees**

##### 4.1 Minutes from Audit Committee

Caroline Silver presented the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025. She highlighted the continuing 'substantial assurances' from recent internal audits with the proposed plan for 2025/26 to reduce internal audits from seven to five and a reduction in the number of the days from 51 to 42. She drew attention to the risk register, which will come to the Board in September 2025 with the additions of cybersecurity risk, expansion of Beaconsfield Studios risk, and the consideration of AI within the risk register. The Single Comprehensive Source of Information to meet OfS Condition of Registration E6 was noted.

Following discussion, including plans to inform students and staff on the Single Comprehensive Source of Information, the report was **noted**.

##### 4.2 Minutes from F&GP Committee

Laurent Samama presented the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025. He advised the Committee had scrutinised in detail many of the items on the Board agenda including the expansion of Beaconsfield Studios, the five-year financial forecast, and the VOG. He also drew attention to the approvals of the Student Fees Policy and Student Scholarship Policy, highlighting the changes.

Following discussion, the report was **noted**.

##### 4.3 Report from GAR Committee

The Chair verbally reported on GAR's discussion and drew attention to the following:

The skills and experience matrix of all governors and the agreement that new governors with the following skills would be considered as and when seats became available. These skills were: gaming (creative leader), AI (particularly around post production) and fundraising. Following the last Board meeting and agreement to hold a vacancy for a

governor to represent disability, the Chair and Charlotte Moore are proactively working on this.

The Chair invited members to recommend suitable candidates who may address the skills gaps identified.

The Chair reported on the proposal for an external Board Effectiveness Review, to support the annual internal reviews held over the last three years. The Chair and Clerk are in discussion with Advance HE and will advise the Board of arrangements in due course.

*Management and the student rep withdrew before the next discussion took place*

The Board discussed and **approved** the proposal from GAR for the remuneration package for the Finance Director.

Caroline Silver led the discussions on the proposal from GAR for the remuneration package for the Director and **approved** the proposal with one amendment.

The report was **noted**.

## **5. Reports**

### **5.1 Director's Report**

The Director reported on his activities since the last meeting. He reviewed the progress of the VOG for 2024/25, highlighting the achievements and areas that were still in progress. It was agreed to include the Mental Health Charter to the Board Strategy Day agenda in October 2025.

He also reported on the Gala preparations taking place that evening and the renewal of partnerships with key sponsors and progress with one further partner.

After discussion, the paper was **noted**.

**Action: Management to include the Mental Health Charter application on the Strategy Day agenda in October 2025**

### **5.2 Finance Director's Report**

Trevor Hall reported on the School's finance performance for the nine months to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025, which is behind budget, as advised at the February 2025 Board meeting.

The factors impacting on the performance was discussed by the Board. The performance of the closed pension defined benefit scheme was also discussed and assurance given that it was on track to recover the funding deficit by the planned date.

Following this, the Board **noted** the financial performance

### **5.3 Student Union Report**

Angus Blair presented to the Board the Student Union activities since the last meeting, and the focus on events to encourage a rich and dynamic social community between the students. These included different social events, student film screenings at the end of term and encouraging students to take ownership of their social space. He also reported on the recent Student Representative elections.

Following discussion and confirmation that there was nothing needed from the Board at this present moment, the Board **noted** and thanked Angus for his report.

#### 5.4 Curriculum and Short Course Report

Mark Readman presented his report on key curriculum activity since the last meeting. He highlighted the significant, successful shift to the MA/MFA programme and described the development behind these. He also explained the importance of these changes to the Grosvenor House development. Mark provided an update on the regional hubs and confirmed that the hubs are operating well and integrated into the School's activities

After discussion, the Board **noted** the report and congratulated Mark Readman and the team on the development of the MFA's.

#### 5.5 Business Continuity Plan

Trevor Hall presented the Board with the new streamlined Business Continuity Plan. He explained the scenario testing the plan and team had gone through, with key learning points taken from each test including communication and social media channels.

Following discussion, the Board **noted** and **agreed** the plan to be made available to members on BoardEffects

**Action: Clerk to upload Business Continuity Plan to BoardEffects**

### **6. AOB**

#### 6.1 Company House Changes

Trevor Hall advised the Board that all members need to verify their identity with Company House. This is a legal requirement under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 to help prevent people using companies for illegal purposes. His paper outlined the process for verification and members are requested to verify their identity with Companies House following the meeting.

**Action: Trevor Hall to email members with the link and process for identity verification**

**Action: All members are requested to verify their identity with Companies House following this meeting and confirm completion with Trevor Hall**

#### 6.2 Proposed NFTS Calendar of Meetings Dates 2026

The proposed calendar of meetings for 2026 was **approved**

**Action: Clerk to send calendar invites for 2026**

**Thank you**

The Chair informed the Board that this was Ollie Madden's last meeting and thanked him for his valuable contribution.

**7. Board Briefing****7.1 Graduate Impact Report**

OC&C presented the Board with the draft report on the impact of NFTS graduates in high-end TV and film. The report will be finalised and published in September.

After discussion, the Board agreed this was a very positive impact report and thanked OC&C.

**Action: Jon Wardle requested that members review the report and provide feedback before it is finalised.**

**8. Date of Next Meeting:**

This was confirmed as Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 10.30am at the NFTS, Beaconsfield.

It was noted that the Strategy Day is Wednesday October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025, 13.30-20.30, venue to be confirmed.