

NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 22nd NOVEMBER 2022 AT NFTS BEACONSFIELD.

Present:

Sophie Turner Laing (Chair), Ian Lewis (Deputy Chair), Phil Edgar-Jones, Geoffrey Crossick, Leto Meade, Ollie Madden, Andrew Macdonald, Pukar Mehta, Charlotte Moore, Laurent Samama, Bal Samra, Jon Wardle, Miranda Wayland – and Mary Stiasny by Zoom.

Apologies: Joe Bradbury-Walters, Patrick Fuller, Sara Geater, Caroline Hollick, Oli Hyatt, Adil Ray, Hilary Strong.

In attendance: Trevor Hall (Finance Director), Eleanor Wheal (Registrar), Mark Readman (Director of Curriculum), Sue Vertue (Chair, the Creative Industries Liaison Group).

Clerk: Chris Wensley

Declaration of Personal Interests: None declared.

The Chair welcomed Miranda Wayland and Ollie Madden attending their first meeting. It was noted that Sue Vertue's term on the Board had expired, but that she would continue to attend as an observer representing the Creative Industries Liaison Group.

The Chair was pleased to advise that the NFTS had received details of its funding from the OfS Specialist Institution Fund, and that it had also been granted degree-awarding powers. The Board congratulated the management team on the excellent outcomes for both OfS funding and degree-awarding powers.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

1.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was noted that the renewal of the NEOM contract, referred to in item 2.4, only applied to the distance-learning component, and that the Health and Safety minute, item 2.7, should state that there had been no reportable incidents or accidents. The minutes of the previous Board of Governors Meeting held on 27th September 2022 were then approved as an accurate record.

1.2 Actions

1.2.1 Ethics Advisory Group to review the NEOM contract and report back to the Board.

The Group's meeting was scheduled for January

1.2.2 Jon Wardle to circulate to members the advice that had been provided by the British Council concerning NEOM.

This had been done.

1.2.3 GAR to add an additional Board member to the Audit Committee

The Chair advised that this was in hand.

1.3 Matters Arising.

There were none.

2. Reports and Updates.

2.1 Student Union Report

As he approached the end of his year of office, Leto Meade reported on achievements during the year, particularly all the initiatives to create spaces for students to share ideas and express their voice to the School.

The Board thanked Leto for his report, and for all his valuable contributions during the year.

2.2 Director's Report

The Director reported on his activities since September. He took the Board through the operation of the new degree-awarding powers, and it was agreed that he should write to the RCA advising that, with DAPs awarded, their validation arrangements could now be wound down. He also advised that he was checking the funding opportunities and restrictions in the new OfS funding.

He also reported on key partner funding agreement renewals; student recruitment; the risks and opportunities for the NFTS of the new BFI Five-Year Strategy; a staff disciplinary issue; and an invitation from the Saudi Film Commission to work with them in Saudi Arabia.

ACTIONS:

- **Management to produce a report for the next Board on the implications of receiving degree-awarding powers.**
- **The Director to write to the RCA regarding Degree Awarding Powers**
- **The next F&GP meeting to review the new OfS funding plan.**
- **The Director to decline the Saudi Film commission offer.**

2.3 Finance Director's Report

Trevor Hall updated the Committee on the School's financial performance since the last meeting, and confirmed that the School was on track with the budget. He also outlined the current position with bank loans and investments, and advised that the year-end financial audit was now complete

2.4 OfS Annual Accountability & Prevent Returns

Trevor Hall advised that OFS Annual Accountability Return 2022 was due for filing by the 1 December 2022, and that the necessary documents had been reviewed by the Audit Committee and/or the FGP Committee and were recommended to the Board for approval.

He also advised that the OFS Annual PREVENT Return 2022 was due for filing by the 1 December 2022, and that it had been reviewed by Audit Committee and was recommended to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED:

- **To Authorise the Deputy Chair and Chair of Audit Committee to sign the financial statements and letter of representation for the year ended 31 July 2022 on behalf of the Board;**
- **To approve the submission of the 2022 OFS Annual Financial Return and commentary;**
- **To authorise the Chair of F&GP Committee to sign the OFS Annual PREVENT Return for the year ended 31 July 2022 on behalf of the Board.**

2.5 OfS B3 Outcomes & Threshold Data

Eleanor Wheal presented the data published by the OfS for student outcomes. She explained that the OfS thresholds were Continuation- 80%; Completion- 80%; Progression- 70% (85% for diploma courses); and she added that the School's performance in respect of each indicator had comfortably exceeded the threshold in respect of each indicator, other than in respect of progression for students on full time and part time diploma courses. She also showed the NFTS performance against comparator institutions. She explained that the Progression figure for

Diplomas was distorted by a single year sample and had also been adversely affected by Covid.

2.6 Creative Industries Liaison Group

Sue Vertue advised that the name of the group would be the Creative Industries Liaison Group (CILG) and the first members had been appointed. She explained that the group would meet twice a year, with the first meeting in January 2023, to focus on how the School was responding to creative change in the industry and how well it prepared students for employment. The Board discussed how better to utilise the School' alumni, and the range of genres and sectors represented on the group.

2.7 Quality Assurance Evaluation Report

Eleanor Wheal presented to the Board the recommendations and minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the School's Academic Standards Committee on 27th July 2022 which had considered the annual Quality Assurance Evaluation Report.

Geoffrey Crossick advised that he had chaired the meeting, with three other Board members in attendance. They confirmed that they were satisfied with the QA processes and that the Board could be assured of the quality of the student academic experience, student outcomes and the standards of the School's awards.

The Board discussed the report and asked for clarification of certain comments in the report, for example improving the sharpness of fiction storytelling. There was also discussion about ensuring all HoDs completed the Higher Education Academy Fellowship for teaching and supporting learning in higher education.

2.8 Minutes from F&GP Committee

Ian Lewis presented the minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2022.

2.9 Minutes from Audit Committee

Pukar Mehta presented the minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2022. He drew attention to another 'substantial assurance' internal audit report.

2.10 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 preparations for the School's six-year Periodic Review of its MA courses, reporting on HoD involvement, the role of external panel members and the opportunities for Board members to contribute to the review. He added that liaison with the new CILG members would also be very valuable.

2.11 Board Governance Report

Chris Wensley presented his report on governance with regard to the Board and its sub-committees. He considered there were no significant issues, and advised that this had been confirmed by a recent Internal Audit Report which reported that 'the control framework for the School's arrangements for the governance framework in place provides 'substantial assurance that associated risks material to the achievement of the School's objectives are adequately managed and controlled.'

2.12 NFTS Fellowship 2022

Jon Wardle advised that annually the NFTS Board of Governors awarded an NFTS Honorary Fellowship in recognition of outstanding contribution to the British film, television and games industries.

He advised that it had been proposed that Jack Thorne was awarded the fellowship, and that he had subsequently replied that he was greatly honoured to accept.

3. Strategy and Discussion.

3.1 Anti-Discrimination Group Progress Report

Jon Wardle reported that the Group had widened its remit from seeking to address the inequalities and disadvantages that black and ethnically diverse people face within the film and television industry to also include how the School could do more to support the increased representation of people with disabilities within the sector.

The Group which included three Board members was an extremely useful source of advice and support to the Management team, and he invited Board members to encourage appropriate colleagues to apply to become VLs at the School.

3.2 UKRI Co-Star Application

Jon Wardle reported on the School's application with other partners to host national research and development facilities to drive innovation and creativity in the UK's screen and performance industries.

ACTION: Management to continue to develop the full application.

3.3 NFTS Valuation

ACTION: This item to be carried forward to the next meeting.

4. Preparation for new Strategic Plan

4.1 Report on Board Strategy Day

The Chair reported on the Strategy Day held at Somerset House on October 25th, and Jon Wardle outlined a first draft of the new NFTS Corporate Plan following the Somerset House discussions and wider consultation with School staff.

There was discussion about including a Vision statement as a bridge between the Purpose and Objectives sections. It was also proposed that a vision and strategy for developing Games should be included, especially drawing upon the strengths in storytelling at the School.

It was agreed that the aims and objectives of the Strategy should be finalised at the next Board, with other matters such as KPIs and funding to be approved at the June Board.

Action: Management to revise the Corporate Plan and circulate to members in January 2023 with the aim of seeking approval at the February meeting.

5. Any Other Business

There was none.

6. Date of Next Meeting:

This was confirmed as Tuesday 21st February 2023 at 10.30am at the NFTS, Beaconsfield

7. Board Briefing

Parham Sorooshian, a Year 2 Games student, described his projects and showed extracts of work in progress.

The Board thanked him for a very interesting presentation.