

NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 2022 AT NFTS BEACONSFIELD.

Present:

In person: Sophie Turner Laing (Chair), Ian Lewis (Deputy Chair), Geoffrey Crossick, Leto Meade, Caroline Hollick, Oli Hyatt, Andrew Macdonald, Charlotte Moore, Adil Ray, Laurent Samama, Bal Samra, Hilary Strong, Sue Vertue, Jon Wardle, and Mary Stiasny by Zoom.

Apologies: Joe Bradbury-Walters, Phil Edgar-Jones, Patrick Fuller, Sara Geater, Pukar Mehta.

In attendance: Gillian Carr (Director of HR), Trevor Hall (Finance Director), Eleanor Wheel (Registrar), Mark Readman (Director of Curriculum).

Clerk: Chris Wensley

Declaration of Personal Interests: None declared.

The Chair welcomed Charlotte Moore attending her first meeting.
It was noted that Georgia Brown & Rose Garnett had resigned from the Board.

Sophie Turner Laing reported on her meetings with individual Board members and the suggestions that had been discussed – including the use of data, curriculum content, academic partnerships, fundraising, and relationships with industry.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

1.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous Board of Governors Meeting held on 21st June 2022 were approved as an accurate record after the amendment of a phrase in 4.2 to read 'Draft Audit Planning Report.'

1.2 Actions

It was noted that both actions were on the agenda.

1.3 Matters Arising.

There were none.

2. Reports and Updates.

2.1 Director's Report

The Director reported on his activities since June, including a positive outcome from the OfS 'Specialist Institution Funding' application; a successful Gala; new staff appointments and student recruitment; and the implications for the NFTS of a new BFI Five-Year Strategy.

The Board noted the report.

2.2 Finance Director's Report

Trevor Hall updated the Committee on the School's financial performance since the last meeting, and confirmed that the School met its budget for the year and that the School's finances remained robust and sustainable.

The Board discussed future sustainability, including the implications of the significant rises in energy and other costs.

2.3 Student Union Report

Leto Meade was pleased to report a positive atmosphere in the student body. He also advised of student social events, both recent and planned, and diversity

awareness sessions, sometimes celebrated through cultural events. He added that the SU had arranged more 'townhall' meetings to better communicate with more students.

The Board thanked Leto for his report.

2.4 Minutes from F&GP Committee

Laurent Samama presented the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2022. He drew attention to the planned increase in the Student Hardship Fund, and he advised that the Committee could provide assurance to the Board that the School is a Going Concern. F&GP also recommended approval of the five-year budget. He further advised that the Committee had considered the NEOM contract which was up for renewal.

The Board discussed the NEOM contract in detail, and agreed that the distance learning component could be renewed for another year, but asked the Ethics Group to consider the matter again during the academic year when more information on outcomes would be available.

ACTIONS:

- **Ethics Advisory Group to review the NEOM contract and the data from the first cohort of students and report back to the Board.**
- **Jon Wardle to circulate to members the advice that had been provided by the British Council concerning NEOM.**

2.5 Minutes from Audit Committee

Chris Wensley presented the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2022. He advised that the meeting had been inquorate, but it had been decided to continue the meeting and receive reports, and to confirm decisions when other members of the Committee had been consulted.

He advised that the Internal Auditor's draft Annual Report had reported substantial assurance of the School's processes, a rare accolade.

ACTION: GAR to add an additional Board member to the Audit Committee.

2.6 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

2.7 Annual H&S Report

Jon Wardle reported on Health & Safety over the last year. He advised that there had been no reportable incidents or accidents.

2.8 Annual report on compliance with the OfS Conditions of Registration

Eleanor Wheal presented a mapping document demonstrating how the Board could be assured that the School was compliant with those OfS Conditions of Registration with which the Board might not have direct involvement.

2.9 OfS Institution-Specific Funding Update

Jon Wardle advised that the NFTS had qualified for OfS Specialist Institution Funding for an additional five years, and that the School was awaiting confirmation of the exact amount.

The Board congratulated Management on an excellent outcome.

2.10 Degree Awarding Powers Update (EW)

Eleanor Wheal advised that the DQB (formerly known as the QAA) had judged that the NFTS had fully met all the criteria for full degree-awarding powers. The School now awaited the final decision from the OfS.

2.11 2021/22 KPI Update

Trevor Hall updated members on performance against the School's Key Performance Indicators for 2021/22.

The Board discussed the recruitment of students from from low socio-economic backgrounds, particularly how to attract more applicants and then how to support them through their courses and stressed the need to develop a new strategy for fund raising.

2.12 2021/22 Vision, Objectives, Goals Update

Jon Wardle presented an update on performance against the key goals and tasks that the management team had worked to deliver in 2021/22.

2.13 Annual Review of Board Terms of Reference

The Board reviewed its terms of reference and was confident that they were fit for purpose.

2.14 Remuneration of Senior Staff

Chris Wensley reported on the process followed by the GAR Committee to determine senior staff remuneration, and the decisions taken this year.

3. Strategy and Discussion.

3.1 Budget 2022/23 update

Trevor Hall presented the proposed five-year budget for the period August 2022 to July 2027 and detailed the key assumptions adopted in the forecast., Members noted that future years beyond 2022/23 may be subject to revision as the new corporate plan beyond 2022/23 is formulated over the next 12 months, The Board confirmed budget assumptions, contingency funding, and discussed priorities for any additional funding that may be generated.

RESOLVED: To approve the budget for submission to the OfS.

3.2 Staff Survey Results

Gillian Carr presented the results of the 2022 Staff Survey, conducted in partnership with BECTU. She advised that the results were encouraging, with an increase in participation rates, pride in working at the School and employees reporting that diversity and inclusion were valued at the School.

The Board discussed the bullying and harassment data and the impact of the Covid pandemic and subsequent online working upon staff.

3.3 Curriculum and Short Course Report – Periodic Review

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 agreed to circulate new curriculum proposals to relevant Board members.

3.4 NFTS Fellowship 2023

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, and he outlined the proposed procedure for determining the 2023 recipient.

It was agreed that members should contact the Director with names of those they wished to support. GAR Committee would then consider all those nominated, and produce a short list for the November Board.

3.5 Commercial Property Valuation

Jon Wardle updated the Board on the outcome on the newly-commissioned red book valuation of a commercial property the School was considering purchasing to support future expansion. It was agreed that this should be considered further at the Board Strategy Day.

3.6 Board Strategy Day & New Corporate Plan

The Chair provided details of the Strategy Day which would be held at Somerset House on October 25th. There was discussion about the priorities for the agenda, and it was agreed that a background reading list would be provided to members before the event.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 Creative Council

The Chair provided details of a new Creative Council (working title) that would be established to provide industry advice and support for the Board. She advised that it would be chaired by Sue Vertue and would comprise creative industry colleagues. She invited members to propose names of potential members to Sue Vertue.

5. Date of Next Meeting:

This was confirmed as Tuesday 22nd November 2022 at 10.30am at the NFTS, Beaconsfield

6. Board Briefing

Robert Bradbrook, Head of Department of Animation, explained the operation of the Graduate Animation MA programme, and Lisa Kenney, a Year 2 student, described her project and showed extracts of work in progress.

The Board thanked both for a very interesting presentation.