University of Bristol

Annual General Meeting of Convocation

– Minutes –

Saturday 5 July 2014, 11.15 am to 12.30 pm

Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building

The President of Convocation, The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Hale of Richmond DBE PC (Hon LLD 2002) presided over the meeting. Also in attendance was Mr Bill Ray (BSc 1975), the Chairman of Convocation, and Mrs Tania Jane Rawlinson, the Acting Clerk to Convocation.

The AGM was attended by 79 members of Convocation and was quorate.

Mr Faik Abdul Aziz (BSc 1957); Dr Martin Addy (MB ChB 1958); Dr Ian Ashwell (BA 1950 Certificate in Education 1951 MA 1956 PhD 1964); Mr Thomas Bailey (BA 1964); Rev Stanley Barker (BA 1981 MA 2003); Mr Roy Barlow (BSc 1962); Mr Cavus Batki (BSc 2002); Mr Alan Beal-Forbes (LLB 1961); Mr John Binsted (BA 1954); Mr Sumit Biswas (BSc 1984); Ms Ann Bradford (BSc 1964); Mrs Lilian Brown (BA 1951 Certificate in Education 1952 Honorary MA 2005); Mrs Chrisselle Brown (BA 2005); Mr Christopher Burns (BSc 1977); Dr Jennifer Burston (MB ChB 1962); Mrs Sheila Carr (BA 1954); Mr David Clarke (BA 1965); Dr Anthony Codd (MB ChB 1958, MD 1972); Dr John Cook (BSc 1959); Mr Robert Cross (BA 1984); Dr Martin Crossley Evans (BA 1978, PhD 1990); Mr William Davies (BSc 1971); Dr Helen Donoghue (BSc 1967 PhD 1971); Mr John Drew (BA 1956); Mr Robert Dufton (LLB 1983); Dr Murad El-Bakry (EngD 2012); Mr David Ewart (BSc 1977); Colonel Jonathan Frere (BA 1974); Mr Roger Griffin (BA 1964); Mr Charles Gunter (BSc 2006 Certificate in Education 2007 MSc 2009); Mr Alan Ingham (MEng 1999); Mrs Margaret Jaggar (BSc 1955); Mr Trevor Jaggar (BSc (Hons) 1946 Certificate in Education 1952); Mr Michael Jeans (BA 1964); Mrs Janet Kirk (BSc 1968 Certificate in Education 1970); Mr Norman Lindeman (BSc 195 ); Dr Edward MacKay (MB ChB 1964); Alderman William Martin (Honorary LLD 2007); Mr Paul Miller (BSc 1955); Mr Graham Mullan (Medicine 1971-72); Mr Clive Owen (BSc 1975 Certificate in Education 1977); Mr Owen Peachey (BSc 2008); Mrs Nicola Press (BA 1975); Mr Philip Quick (BA 1956); Mr Richard Rossington (MA 1994 Diploma 1995 Diploma 1998); Mr Christopher Row (BA 1968); Professor George Sanford (BA 1964); Dr Peter Sansom (BSc 1964); Mr Timothy Scaife (BSc 1976); Mr Alastair Scott (BSc 1965); Mr Clive Scowen (LLB 1980); Dr Michael Sheard (MB ChB 1957); Mr Leon Smith (BA 2005); Ms Victoria Stace (BA 1971); The Ven Jeannette Stigger
Item 1: Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from:

- Bob Churcher (BA 1972)
- Andrew Franks (MEng 2010)
- Dr Stuart Goldsmith (BA 1966, Hon LLD 2007)
- Brian Holden (BA 1952)
- Julia Wathen (BSc 1972)
- Lakkana Yalagala (BEng 1997)

Item 2: Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 6 July 2013

The Minutes were adopted as a true and correct record (proposed by David Clarke, seconded by Bill Ray, and adopted).

There were no matters arising.

Item 3: Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor spoke about the University’s recent history of investment in infrastructure. Highlights included the new Life Sciences Building, the development of the Vet School and the increased capacity of Hiatt Baker Hall. He spoke about the increase in student numbers and how higher education had moved from a supply side economy to a demand led economy following the introduction of student fees. The Vice-Chancellor said that the University is an intellectual powerhouse which must have outstanding facilities to match its world-class quality of teaching and research, and that investment puts Bristol into a strong position to address future challenges.

The Vice-Chancellor’s report was received with gratitude.

Item 4: Report from the Chairman of Convocation and Convocation Representative on Council

The Chairman of Convocation (Mr Bill Ray, BSc 1975) reminded the meeting that Convocation has a voice on Council and asked members to contact him to discuss issues which they feel should be raised.
He referred to the slides, produced by Finance Director Mr Andy Nield, which had been circulated in papers prior to the meeting. The Chairman drew attention to the fact that Bristol was one of only two UK universities to have expanded successfully when the Government lifted the cap on student numbers two years ago – and noted that this achievement was down to outstanding foresight and planning by the University’s senior team. Despite student number growth, however, costs continued to be a significant area of focus: pay agreements had been challenging over the years but the collective sense of restraint had helped ensure financial probity. The ambitious capital programme described by the Vice-Chancellor, and the attendant investment required to make it happen, led to particular financial pressures. Further, the Chairman commented on the importance of the new “market economy” for students in which all universities now operate, and within this context he highlighted the increasing importance of income from international students. Though the University is running an operating surplus, this is not the same as a “profit” since the surplus is re-invested in capital programmes and debt payments. Growing the surplus is of paramount importance and needs to reach a level of £20m/year or more in order to ensure a robust ability to manage cash-flow and debt – particularly as Bristol is currently one of the UK’s most indebted universities. The overall context is one of prudent management and forward planning, and Convocation members can be assured that Bristol is steering a careful course through challenging waters.

The Chairman thanked the Convocation Committee who are undertaking a great deal of work on behalf of the alumni community, and highlighted particularly alumni branches in London, Bristol, Cambridge and Hong Kong. He stated that the development of branches is a core part of engagement and a focus for the Committee going forward, particularly in areas including international student recruitment, and careers, especially assisting recent graduates. The continued growth of LinkedIn is another success for the alumni body, and the Chairman noted that numbers in the private alumni network have now reached 16,349.

The Chairman also noted that he wishes alumni to support more strongly university student clubs and societies. He mentioned a personal goal of supporting the Alumni and Student Golf Society in coming years – and of ensuring that alumni are triumphant in future!

The Chairman highlighted the work of several individuals on behalf of Convocation, noting that Linda Wilson (LLB 1982) and Dick Willis (BSc 1974) had done particularly stellar duty this year; and congratulated Convocation Medal winners David Clarke (BA 1965) and Alan Ingham (MEng 1999). The Chairman thanked members of the Convocation Committee who are stepping down, Dr Martin Lunnon and Dr Martin Crossley Evans, for their work.

The Chairman’s report was received with gratitude.

Item 5: Report from the Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations

Mrs Tania Jane Rawlinson, in her capacity as Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations, announced to the meeting that the Centenary Campaign goal of raising £100M had been achieved with 6 months to go. This news was met with applause
from those present. Mrs Rawlinson illustrated the benefits the money raised had already made including supporting research to help prevent brain damage in newly born children, Alzheimer’s disease and climate change.

Mrs Rawlinson provided the meeting with information which illustrated “Who are Bristol Alumni?” Notable points highlighted were:

- Bristol is now in touch with 112,000 alumni by mail, email and/or phone.
- The average age of alumni is 42 and is slowly going down as student numbers rise.
- Currently there are more men than women but current trends will reverse this.
- Three quarters of alumni did their undergraduate degree at Bristol.
- Alumni who studied an undergraduate degree are more likely to engage with the University.
- Young alumni are more likely to use electronic media to keep in touch with the University than older alumni.
- Overseas alumni are more likely to have studied postgraduate courses.
- One third of contactable alumni live in the wider London area, and 20% of contactable alumni live in Bristol and the wider southwest.

Item 6: Questions and Answers

The Chancellor invited the meeting to ask questions of the Vice-Chancellor, the Chairman of Convocation and the Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations.

Mrs Lillian Brown (BA 1951) noted that overseas student fee income has become an important income stream to the University, and asked whether – as many overseas nations develop their own higher education provision – there is a risk that demand from overseas students might diminish in time, and an attendant urgency about preserving Bristol’s reputation abroad? The Vice-Chancellor responded, noting that the University’s largest overseas source of students is currently China and that while “dependency” on any one market is not desirable, there are two comforting factors: first, the University is diversifying into emerging markets (such as Mexico); and second, it is calculated that the global demand for student places will remain strong for the medium-term – at least twenty years. In reputational terms, the Vice-Chancellor said that potential students will be attracted to Bristol by the good experience they hear about from alumni, and encouraged alumni to be ambassadors and champions for the University.

Mr Christopher Burns (BSc 1977) asked about financial challenges facing the University. The Vice-Chancellor responded that controlling costs is important alongside developing plans to increase income streams. He said that the University has a plan to build a sustainable model and that it will not be easy to borrow any further.

Mr Robert Dufton (LLB 1983) asked about the value of an alumni network to encourage students to choose Bristol. Mrs Rawlinson responded, noting that alumni networks can be critical in encouraging the brightest and best to apply to Bristol. The Vice-Chancellor said that students and graduates are now connected through the
web and virtual networks. The Chancellor said that Bristol is known for engaging alumni and that this is a strong selling point for the University. The Vice-Chancellor stated that 6.4% of alumni give to the University making Bristol similar in participation to state universities in the USA.

Mr John Drew (BA 1956) commented on the need to have up to date amenities in halls and noted he had been surprised by the lack of a shaving point in Clifton Hill House. The Vice-Chancellor gave examples of how the University is investing in student accommodation and said that refurbishment is ongoing across existing student housing. He apologised for Mr Drew’s personal experience and said he expects those rooms will be targeted for refurbishment in years to come.

The Chancellor thanked the Vice-Chancellor, the Chairman of Convocation and the Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations for their reports and answers to questions from the floor.

Item 7: Report from the Treasurer of Convocation

The Treasurer, Mr David Clarke (BA 1965) presented and explained the accounts for the year 2013/14. Mr Clarke indicated that funds were available to assist with developing branches. The meeting was asked if there were any questions for the Treasurer. There were no questions. The Chancellor thanked Mr Clarke for his report.

The meeting accepted the accounts.

Item 8: Elections and appointments

a. Election of the Treasurer of Convocation for the period 2014-17

The meeting was asked to note that Mr David Alan Clarke (BA 1965) was elected unopposed.

b. Election of four members of the Convocation Committee for the period 2014-17

The meeting was asked to note that Mr Luke Aikman (LLB 2006) Mr Clive Richard Scowen (LLB 1980) Mr Dick (Richard) Willis (BSc 1974, PGCE 1975) and Mr Tomas Zalys (BSc 2011) were elected unopposed.

The Chairman of Convocation informed the meeting that a vacancy on the committee has been filled by the co-option of Mrs Sylvia Wilson (BVSc 1980).

The Chancellor thanked Dr Martin Crossley Evans (BA 1978, PhD 1990) for his outstanding service to Convocation as firstly as Clerk to Convocation (a post he was appointed to in 1989) and as the University’s first alumni officer, and in recent years as a member of the Convocation Committee, and as a Convocation Representative.
on Court. Now that he is stepping down from the Convocation Committee it would be
good to find a way to thank him. However, she noted that Dr Crossley Evans had
received the Convocation medal some years ago, and that Convocation had also
presented the University with a ceremonial baton commemorating his service as
Clerk to Convocation when he stepped down from that role. It gives the Chancellor
great pleasure that Dr Crossley Evans carries the Convocation Mace at graduation
ceremonies when the Chairman of Convocation is present. Thus there is little more
that Convocation can give to Dr Crossley Evans except its heartfelt thanks, gratitude
and good wishes.

Warm applause from those present confirmed these sentiments.

c. Election of 25 Convocation representatives on Court for the period 2014-
2018

The meeting was asked to note that Mr James Ashton-Bell (BSc 2009), Mr Roy
Barlow (BSc 1962), Mr Edward Beech (BSc 2012), Mrs Chryselle Annamarie Brown
(BA 2005), Mr Christopher Terence Burns (BSc 1977), Mr Paul Coombs (BSc 1986),
Mr Robert Adam Brisbane Cross (BA 1984), Mr Benedic Davis (MEng 2009), Mr
Thomas Flynn (BSc 2013), Ms Sarah Gilbert (BA 1980, Diploma 2000, MSc 2002),
Mr Robert Harding (MEng 2006), Professor Peter John Francis Henderson (BSc
1965, PhD 1968), Mr Vishal Katariya (LLM 2000), Mrs Janet Mary Kirk (BSc 1968,
Cert Ed 1970), Mr Tony Lynch (BSc 1987), Mr Jacek Antoni Miotla (BSc 1986, MSc
1988), Dr Hannah Nazri (MB ChB 2013), Mrs Claire Nuttall (BSc 1983), Professor
Andrew David Randall (BSc 1987 PhD 1991), Dr Robert Rawlinson-Smith (BEng
1986), Mr Brian David Nicholas Toll (BA 1977), Mr Stephen John Vause (BSc 1983),
Mr Matthew Wilkes (MEng 2008, DipHE 2012), Mr Dick (Richard) Willis (BSc 1974,
Cert Ed 1975), Mr Nicholas Wright (BSc 2001) have been duly elected unopposed.

d. Appointment of an Independent Assessor of Convocation’s Accounts
2014-15

Mr David Eastham Ratcliffe FCA (BA 1965) was appointed as independent assessor
of Convocation’s accounts for the year 2014-2015.

Item 9: Discussion of appropriate use of the terms “Convocation” and
“Alumni”

The Chancellor asked the meeting to consider the paper, ‘Appropriate use of the
terms “Convocation” and “Alumni”, and asked for any questions to be addressed to
the Chairman of Convocation. There were no questions.

The meeting agreed to adopt the proposed terminology.

The Chancellor thanked the Chairman and Convocation Committee for their work on
this.
Item 10: Update on the appointment process for the University of Bristol’s next Vice-Chancellor

The Chairman of Convocation described the thorough process of consultation which has taken place across stakeholders at the University including staff, students and alumni. He showed how the consultation has been used to develop a brief for the recruitment process. The planned timeline for recruitment is for the first advertisement to go out in July with applications to be reviewed in September. Interviews to take place in October. The Chancellor said that she was grateful to all those who had responded to the surveys. This will be an interesting yet challenging time and that it will prove exceptionally difficult to replace Sir Eric who has done such an outstanding job for the University.

Item 11: Any other business

The Chancellor asked if there was any other business.

No matters were raised.

The Chancellor thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 12.15.

Papers for the following items were referred to during the AGM and are published at www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/convocation/agm. They are also available by request from the Campaigns and Alumni Relations office.

Item 2  Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 6 July 2013

Item 4  Report from the Chairman of Convocation and Convocation Representative on Council

Item 5  Report from the Director of Campaigns and Alumni Relations

Item 7:  Report from the Treasurer of Convocation

Item 8:  Elections and appointments

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b. Election of four members of the Convocation Committee for the period 2014-17
c. Election of 25 Convocation representatives on Court for the period 2014-2018

Item 9:  Discussion of appropriate use of the terms “Convocation” and “Alumni”