A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, The Carrington Building, on Monday 28 January 2013 at 2.15pm.

Present: The President
The Vice-President (Mrs J M Scott)
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor G Brooks)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor S J Mithen)

Mr T Bartlam
Professor J Board
Mrs J Coope
Dr B Cosh
Professor R H Ellis
Mr R E R Evans
Mr J Fletcher
Professor S Hawker
Professor G Marston
Dr I Mueller-Harvey

Mr H W A Palmer
Dr P R Preston
Dr A P Reed
Mr S P Sherman
Mr I P Smith
Ms K Swift
Sir John Sunderland
Professor G H Tucker
Ms S M Woodman

In attendance: The Chief Operating Officer
The Head of University Administration
The Director of Finance

Apologies were received from the Vice-President (Mr R Dwyer), Mrs B Edwards, Dr P Erskine, Mrs S Webber and Professor C M Williams

The President reported the deaths of:

**Emeritus Professor Sir Colin Spedding, CBE** who had been appointed Professor of Agricultural Systems in 1975. He had subsequently served as Head of the Department of Agriculture and Horticulture, Director of the Centre for Agricultural Strategy, Dean and Pro-Vice-Chancellor and had retired in 1990.

**Mr Fraser Smith** who had been appointed Lecturer in Education in 1978 and had retired as Senior Lecturer in 2007.
13/02 The minutes (12/51-12/71) of the meeting held on 23 November 2012 were confirmed and signed.

Arising on the Minutes:

**Minute 12/68: Report of the Senate**

It was reported that the President, acting on behalf of the Council, had agreed that the title of Honorary Fellow be conferred upon Dr S J Hibble with effect from 13 December 2012 for a period of five years.

**Items of Report**

13/03 **New Year Honours (Item 2(a))**

It was reported that the following appointment had been made in the New Year Honours List:

MBE – Anna Watkins, PhD student in Mathematics and Distinguished Fellow of the University, for services to rowing.

13/04 **Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 2(b))**

* The Council received the report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 23 November 2012 relating to items for report.

The President drew the attention of the Council to the presentations that had been made to the Strategy and Finance Committee by the Deans of the Faculties of Life Sciences and of Science; and to the future capital building projects that were currently envisaged.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 23 November 2012 relating to items for report be received.”

13/05 **Museum of English Rural Life and Special Collections Review 2011-12 (Item 2(c))**

* The Council received the Annual Review of the Museum of English Rural Life and Special Collections 2011-12.

Resolved:

“That the Annual Review of the Museum of English Rural Life and Special Collections 2011-12 be received.”

13/06 **Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 2(d))**

* The Council received a list of documents sealed and to be sealed.
Resolved:

“That the Council approve the action taken by the Officers and Members in affixing the University Seal to documents sealed since the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council and authorise the Seal of the University to be affixed to the documents to be sealed as now reported.”

13/07 Freedom of Speech: Annual Report (Item 2(e))

* The Council received the Annual Report on Freedom of Speech.

Resolved:

“That the Annual Report on Freedom of Speech, now submitted, be received.”

Items for Discussion and Decision

13/08 Report of the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor:

(a) reported that undergraduate applications to the University had again increased but that the focus was now on converting offers into acceptances in the context of a wider marketing and communication exercise. The University's Student Number Control, recently announced, was lower than in the previous year and this, allied to a change in the free market for undergraduate students from those securing AAB+ at A Level to those securing ABB+ introduced further unpredictability to the scene;

(b) noted that a University-wide consultation exercise in relation to the structure of the academic year was underway. The proposals under consideration had at their heart a change from three Terms of ten weeks apiece to two Terms of eleven weeks apiece and one of eight, with the intention of allowing students to enter the employment market somewhat earlier than at present and better enabling staff to discharge the full range of their responsibilities in a more efficient and effective way. The President commented - and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks) agreed - that, whatever compensating factors might be applied elsewhere in the year, care must be taken to avoid a reduction in the length of the Summer Term being equated with a diminution in value for money;

(c) suggested that the arrival (from the United States) of Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs) had the potential fundamentally to alter certain aspects of the traditional business model of UK universities. As such, the University was monitoring developments closely;

(d) updated the Council on progress with the Academic Investment Project. Forty-four new Academic Staff had so far been recruited and there was every prospect that, by September 2013, this number would have risen to fifty-three (48.5 FTE). Technical considerations bearing upon the Research Excellence Framework in 2014 were the subject of much discussion across
the sector but the University retained confidence in its policy of prioritising quality over quantity. In response to a question from Mrs Scott, the Vice-Chancellor assured the Council that the University had a good record for not only attracting colleagues from a wide range of other institutions but also for retaining valuable staff in what had become an aggressive market;

(e) confirmed that, as announced to members in December 2012, the University had withdrawn from membership of the 1994 Group. Alliances with different institutions for particular purposes were actively being pursued and the University continued to engage on a regular basis with policy setters and opinion formers in the Research Councils and from Government;

(f) explained that external consultants were working with the University to help fashion its medium- to long-term strategy and that, as this work progressed, it would be shared with the Council later in the Session.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Vice-Chancellor, now submitted, be approved.”

13/09 Reports of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 23 November 2012 relating to items for discussion and decision (Item 4)

* The Council received reports from the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 23 November 2012 relating to items for discussion and decision. In regard to item 4(a), the Financial Report October 2012, the correction of “….returned surplus….” to read “….retained surplus…..” was noted. The Director of Finance explained that the present position remained much as set out in the Report and that the results of the half-year re-forecasting exercise, currently underway, would be relayed to the Strategy and Finance Committee at its next meeting.

In regard to item 4(b), the Report of the Health and Safety Committee, Dr Mueller-Harvey asked if the statistics relating to work-related mental health disorders had been benchmarked against the sector. The University Secretary undertook to enquire of the University’s occupational health provider.

In regard to item 4(c), Campaign Governance, the Council approved the establishment of a Campaign Strategy Group in succession to the Development Board, subject to the addition of a second member of the Council to membership and to a requirement that the Group report annually to the Council.

Resolved:

“That:

(a) the Financial Report: October 2012, now submitted, be received;
(b) the Report of the Health and Safety Committee, now submitted, be received;
(c) the paper on Campaign Governance, now submitted, be approved.”
The Council received a report on the Effectiveness of the Council.

Introducing the report, Mr Palmer acknowledged the assistance that his review group had received from the University Secretary and identified four key areas for discussion, namely the overall size of the Council, the efficacy of its principal committees, the induction arrangements and development opportunities for members of the Council and the extent to which members were enabled, both through the presentation of papers and the structure and style of meetings, constructively to challenge proposals emanating from management.

In regard to the size of the Council, members pronounced themselves generally content with the status quo and the view emerged that, given a clear reluctance to reduce overall numbers dramatically to single figures or a little above, fine-grained adjustment at the upper end of the present range was something of an irrelevance. Against this background, the President of the Students’ Union suggested that a specific proposal to reduce the number of student members from two to one with a corresponding reduction in the lay membership was inopportune and his view attracted support.

In regard to the principal committees of the Council, it was agreed that each such committee, together with the Investments Committee and the Students’ Union Liaison Committee, be consulted as to the future possibilities identified for each of them within the report and invited to relay a considered view to the University Secretary.

In regard to the induction and further development of members, the Council welcomed the suggestions contained within the report and, taking as an example the well-received visit to the University Library that had been arranged earlier in the day, urged that opportunities actively be sought to expose members of the Council to the daily life of the University and vice versa.

In regard to facilitating a culture of constructive challenge, discussion suggested that the Council would welcome purpose-built papers which clearly set out the decisions that, in every such instance, it was being asked to take and the debate that, on certain occasions, it was being encouraged to enter into. To this end, it was suggested that the statement of those matters which the Council reserved to itself and those which it had determined be delegated to its principal committees be refreshed.

In conclusion it was agreed that:

(a) members having further views on the effectiveness of the Council be invited to relay these in writing to Mr Palmer, copied to the University Secretary;

(b) those views, together with the comments of such principal committees of the Council as will by then have met, form the basis of a further report to the meeting of the Council on 25 March 2013; and
Resolved:

“That the Report on the Effectiveness of Council, now submitted, be received.”

13/11 The University’s global engagement

At the invitation of the President, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Mithen) made a presentation to the Council on the University’s global engagement (copy inserted in Minute Book). Professor Mithen concluded his presentation by reminding the Council that the global landscape for higher education was changing fundamentally and rapidly; that the University’s capacity for research intensity and student recruitment depended upon its international reputation; and that international reputation came neither for free nor from marketing alone – it must be continuously earned over the long term and have substance.

In subsequent discussion, Professor Mithen explained the means by which the quality of the University’s overseas offerings was assured and described the various ways in which its international ventures were staffed. In particular, it was noted that the potential existed for Henley Business School (South Africa) to expand independently of the financial pressures currently bearing upon the equivalent UK operation. In response to questions, Professor Mithen explained that perceptions of the University around the world varied from, for example, its longstanding expertise in Agriculture to its fast advancing reputation in Business and Education and believed that the University must capitalise on this strength by partnering not only with other universities overseas but also with local businesses. In his view, a key measure of success would be for Reading to secure and maintain a position within the top 150 of all university rankings worldwide.

13/12 Report of the Development Board (Item 6)

The Council received a Report from the Campaigns and Supporter Engagement Office on work conducted under the aegis of the Development Board in 2012.

The Vice-Chancellor noted with pleasure the sustained levels of annual giving by alumni and explained that figures relating to philanthropic research income within the Campaign scoping document were, at this stage, purely indicative. The President observed that the ninetieth anniversary of the granting of the Charter fell in 2016 and that this provided a clear focus for fundraising effort.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Development Board, now submitted, be received.”
Report of the Senate (Item 7)

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 5 December 2012.

Resolved:

“1. That, with reference to item 1,
   (a) Dr B. Cosh be re-appointed as Head of the School of Systems Engineering for the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2017;
   (b) Professor A. Ghobadian be re-appointed as Head of Leadership, Organisation and Behaviour within the Henley Business School for the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2017;
   (c) Professor A.M. Rugman be re-appointed as Head of International Business and Strategy within the Henley Business School for the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2017.”

“2. That, with reference to item 2, the following be accorded the title of Visiting Professor:

   School of Systems Engineering
   Professor A. Adams (Meiji University) for the period to 31 December 2015

   Henley Business School
   Professor L. Peng (Beijing Foreign Studies University), for the period to 31 December 2015
   Professor M. Prokopczuk (Zeppelin University), for the period to 31 December 2015
   Dr D. Rosenorn-Lanng (Royal Berkshire NHS Trust), for the period to 31 December 2015

   School of Construction Management and Engineering
   Professor Baizhan Li (Chongqing University), for the period to 31 December 2015
   Professor R. Sacks (Israel Institute of Technology), for the period to 31 December 2015.”

“3. That, with reference to item 3,
   (a) alterations to Ordinance III (Degrees Diplomas and Certificates) and to Ordinance LIV (Degrees of Integrated Master) to provide for the introduction of a degree of Master of Science (Integrated) (MSci); and

   (b) alterations to Ordinance III (Degrees Diplomas and Certificates) and to Ordinance LIV (Degrees of Integrated Master) to provide for the introduction of a degree of Master of Science (Integrated) (MSci); and
(b) alterations to Ordinance XVII (Conduct and Discipline Student Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study Academic Misconduct and Performance in Examinations and Fitness to Practise) to provide for the introduction of explicit student academic engagement and fitness to study procedures for postgraduate research students.

be approved.”

“4. That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 5 December 2012, now submitted, be approved.”

13/14 Report of the Students’ Union Liaison Committee (Item 8)

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Students’ Union Liaison Committee held on 28 November 2012.

Resolved:

“1. That, with reference to item 4, alterations to the Students’ Union Constitution and a consequential alteration to Ordinance XLVI (University Board for Research and Innovation) be approved;”

“2. That the Report of the Students’ Union Liaison Committee, now submitted, be approved.”

13/15 Major Capital Projects (Item 9)

* The Council received a report on Major Capital Projects.

In response to a question from Dr Preston, the Chief Operating Officer explained that the ‘amber’ notation applying to the construction of the University’s campus in Malaysia was likely to persist and that the level of risk attaching to the project was neither greater nor less than had originally been anticipated.

Resolved:

“That the Report on Major Capital Projects, now submitted, be received.”

13/16 Charter and Statutes (Item 10)

* The Council received a paper from the University Secretary on alterations to the Charter and Statutes.

Resolved:

“That, in accordance with Ordinance XLVIII (Charter and Statutes), proposed alterations
(a) to Statute VII (The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors) to provide for the possibility of appointing a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors from outside the University rather than, as at present, from wholly within;

(b) to Statute XVI (The Senate) to provide for replacing the title of Faculty Director of Teaching and Learning with that of Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning);

(c) to Article III (Powers) of the Charter and to Statutes I (Preliminary), XV (Powers of the Council), XVII (Powers of the Senate), XX (The Deans of the Faculties), XXIX (Ordinances), XXX (University Examinations) and XXXIII (Academic Staff) to provide for replacing the titles of Reader and Senior Lecturer with that of Associate Professor;

(d) to Statute XXXII (Removal and Retirement of Officers and Members) to remove reference to a statutory retirement age; and

(e) to Statute XVI (The Senate) to reflect changes in the titles of certain senior administrative officers,

having been approved by the Council at its meeting on 23 November 2012 and having been communicated to the Senate and to the Standing Committee of Convocation, now be confirmed for submission to the Privy Council.”

13/17 Establishment of a Grievance Committee (Item 11)

It was reported that the Vice-Chancellor had referred a grievance from three members of the Academic Staff, to a Grievance Committee in accordance with Statute XXXIII (34); and it was proposed that Mrs J M Scott (Chair), Dr P R Preston (a member of the Council not being a person employed by the University) and Professor P R Ghandhi (a member of the Academic Staff nominated by the Senate) be appointed to membership thereof.

Resolved:

“That the establishment of a Grievance Committee comprising Mrs J M Scott (Chair), Dr P R Preston (a member of the Council not being a person employed by the University) and Professor P R Ghandhi (a member of the Academic Staff nominated by the Senate) be approved.”

13/18 Dates of further meetings of the Council in the Session 2012-13

Further meetings of the Council in the Session 2012-13 are scheduled for Monday 25 March 2013 at 2.30pm (following a meeting of the Court in the morning), and Monday 8 July 2013 at 2.15pm.