A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, The Carrington Building, on Monday 25 November 2013 at 2.15pm.

The President
The Vice-Presidents (Mr R Dwyer, Ms S M Woodman)
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor G Brooks)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor S J Mithen)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor C M Williams)

Ms K Ashford (alternate to Ms S Davies)
Dr B Cosh
Mrs B Edwards
Professor R H Ellis
Dr P E Erskine
Mr R E R Evans
Dame Moira Gibb
Mr S Hawker
Mr M Kelleher
Professor G Marston
Professor I Mueller-Harvey
Mr H W A Palmer
Dr P R Preston
Mr S C C Pryce
Mr S P Sherman
Mr J P Smith
Professor G H Tucker
The University Secretary

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

Apologies were received from Mr T Bartlam, Professor J Board, Ms S Davies, Sir John Sunderland and Mrs S L Webber.

The President welcomed Dame Moira Gibb, Mr Pryce and Mr Kelleher to membership and Ms Ashford to her first meeting of the Council.

The President reported the deaths of:

**Dr Simon Booth** who had been appointed Senior Lecturer in Management Studies in 1989 and had been Vice-Dean (International) of the Henley Business School at the time of his death.

**Emeritus Professor Bill Coupe** who had been appointed Lecturer in German in 1973 and had retired as Professor of German in 1994.

**Emeritus Professor Margaret Davies** who had been appointed Assistant Lecturer in French in 1965 and had retired as Professor of French in 1988.

**Dr Roland Fox** who had been appointed Lecturer in Horticulture in 1984 and had retired in 2007.

**Revd Dr David Lloyd** who had been appointed Assistant Lecturer in Agriculture in 1955 and had retired as Senior Lecturer in 1983.

**Emeritus Professor David Moore** who had been appointed Reader in 1968 and had retired as Professor of Botany in 1994.

**Mr Ian Wallace** who had been appointed Lecturer in the Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Centre in 1985 and had retired in 2000.

13/55 The minutes (13/34-13/53) of the meeting held on 8 July 2013 were confirmed and signed.

**Items of Report**

13/56 Terms of Reference (Item 2(a))

* The Council received a statement of its Terms of Reference.

13/57 Disclosure of Interests (Item 2(b))
* The Council noted a paper from the University Secretary in regard to Disclosure of Interests.

13/58 Report on the Exercise of Vacation Powers (Item 2(c))

13/59 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 2(d))
* The Council received the report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 14 October 2013 relating to items for report.

13/60 Delegation of Powers by the Council (Item 2(e))
* The Council received a paper on the Delegation of Powers by the Council.
13/61  Availability of Council papers (Item 2(f))

* The Council received, for its information, a paper relating to availability of Council papers.

Resolved:

“1. That the following reports, now submitted, be received:


“2. That the Record of Delegation of Powers by the Council be approved.”

13/62 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 2(g))

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."

Items for Discussion and Decision

13/63 Report of the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor reported:

(a) the appointment of Professor Keith Shine FRS to the Regius Professorship of Meteorology and Climate Science from a strong international field;

(b) the award of a National Teaching Fellowship to Dr Anne Crook (Centre for Quality Support and Development) and the overwhelming success of the University’s first Massive Open On-line Course (MOOC) which had originated in the School of Systems Engineering;

(c) the University’s achievement in being shortlisted for four Times Higher Education awards and two further THE leadership and management awards;

(d) the continual extension of the University’s global reach. He had recently led a delegation of colleagues to China where he had seen at first hand some the University’s activities and collaborations in that country and had identified further opportunities for future development. Meanwhile, the University’s campus in Malaysia was rapidly becoming a physical reality and remained on target to open in 2015;
the success of the University’s programme of public events which continued to attract large numbers of visitors to its campuses and had an essential role to play in promoting the University to both its locality and the region;

(f) the likelihood that the present regime which combined capped with uncapped student numbers would persist in its fundamentals for the foreseeable future.

Resolved:

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

13/64 Presentation on Research and Innovation at the University (Item 4)

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Williams) made a presentation to the Council on Research and Innovation at the University (copy inserted in Minute Book).

Professor Williams described the competitive context to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the steps that the University had taken to position its submission relative to the Research Assessment Exercise 2008 and the importance to the University’s reputation of a successful outcome in December 2014. In response to questions, Professor Williams explained the nature of the contribution to the REF that could be expected from those colleagues newly recruited under the Academic Investment Project; and believed strongly that preparations for the next such exercise, most notably around the impact of research, must begin without delay.

13/65 Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Council and the Vice-Chancellor for 2012-13 (Item 5(a))

* The Council received the Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Council and the Vice-Chancellor for 2012-13.

As Chairman of the Audit Committee, Mr Sherman reminded the Council of that Committee’s principal responsibilities and was pleased to report that the University’s arrangements had been found to be entirely satisfactory.

13/66 Management Letter and Audit Highlights Memorandum from KPMG for the year ended 31 July 2013 (Item 5(b))

* The Council received the Management Letter and Audit Highlights Memorandum from KPMG for the year ended 31 July 2013, which had been submitted previously to the Audit Committee and to the Strategy and Finance Committee.

The Director of Finance reported that KPMG anticipated issuing unqualified audit opinions on the University, its subsidiaries and trusts and there had been no uncorrected audit differences. Discussions had taken place in regard to the accounting treatment of investment properties and of ongoing transactions with
UPP, and KPMG had pronounced itself satisfied with the judgements that had been made.

**13/67 Draft Letters of Management Representations to the University’s Auditors (Item 5(c))**

* The Council received the Draft Letters of Management Representation, which had been submitted previously to the Audit Committee and to the Strategy and Finance Committee.

**13/68 Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2013 (Item 5(d))**

* The Council received the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2013, which had been submitted previously to the Audit Committee and to the Strategy and Finance Committee.

The Director of Finance explained that the surplus recorded for the University Group had resulted from an exceptional item, that being the final tranche of payment from UPP in respect of the Halls Transfer Project, and served to mask a significant operating deficit in the Academic Group, albeit as forecast. In response to a question from Mr Hawker, the Director of Finance explained that tax advice to the University was provided by either KPMG or Deloitte on terms agreed previously by the Audit Committee.

**13/69 Annual Assurance Return to HEFCE (Item 5(e))**

* The Council received a copy of the Annual Assurance Return to HEFCE, for its information in relation to Part 1 and for its approval in relation to Part 2.

**13/70 Report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 12 November 2013 (Item 5(f))**

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 12 November 2013.

The Council was reminded that it was to receive the outcomes of the Annual Review of Risk Management and Internal Control incorporating a proposed Risk Register for 2013-14 at its meeting on 24 January 2014. For its part, the Audit Committee has pronounced itself content with both the Review and the Risk Register subject to the addition of a new risk relating to failure to achieve anticipated savings and secure additional revenue from the strategy work that is newly underway. The University Secretary undertook to draft a formal proposal to this effect.

**Resolved:**
1. “That the Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Council and the Vice-Chancellor for 2012-13 now submitted, be approved;”

2. “That the Management Letter and Audit Highlights Memorandum from KPMG for the year ended 31 July 2013, be received;”

3. “That the President be authorised to sign the Letters of Management Representation to KPMG and that the Director of Finance be authorised to sign the letters of support for the University’s subsidiary companies.”

4. “That the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2013, now submitted, be approved and adopted;”

5. “That it be confirmed that in all material respects the University has conducted its affairs during the year ended 31 July 2013 in accordance with its status as a charity and that the Vice-Chancellor be authorised to sign the Annual Assurance Return to HEFCE to this effect”;

6. “That the quorum for the Audit Committee henceforth be three members”;

7. “That the Report of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 12 November 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

13/71 Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 14 October 2013 relating to items for discussion and decision (Item 6)

* The Council received reports from the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 14 October 2013 relating to items for discussion and decision.

In regard to item 4(a), LIMITLESS: A Vision, Ambition and Strategy for 2026, the Vice-Chancellor explained that a series of specific propositions and projects would emanate from the overarching strategic plan was now set out. In response to a question from Dame Moira Gibb, the Vice-Chancellor suggested that the University’s place within its community was fundamental to each of the strategic themes and would be further accentuated where appropriate.

In regard to item 4(b), Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions 2013, the Head of University Administration explained that more Home and EU undergraduate students with A Level grades of ABB+ had been recruited than in 2012 but still fewer than the target than the University had set for 2013; that the University, having consciously exceeded its Student Number Control (comprising Home and EU undergraduate students with A Level grades of lower than ABB) as one means of demonstrating its enduring popularity had incurred a fine from HEFCE; and that the target for Overseas undergraduate students had been exceeded. Postgraduate Taught student admissions had fallen well short of target in line with the national trend. The President noted the revenue implications of this situation and the Vice-Chancellor assured that Council that steps were in hand to restore the budgetary position for the year ending 31 July 2014 to break-even.
In regard to item 4(c), **Higher Education ‘League’ Tables**, and in the immediate context of the National Student Survey, the Vice-Chancellor outlined a number of improvements to facilities that had either been completed or were in train and explained the intention to draw these together in such a way as to demonstrate that student views had been heard and acted upon. The President of the Students’ Union expressed his full support for the University’s initiative to drive up response rates to the National Student Survey and the Vice-Chancellor confirmed, in response to a question from Dame Moira Gibb, that all related promotional activities and communications would operate in accordance with strict guidelines.

In regard to item 4(d), **Final Report of the Academic Investment Project**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Williams) noted that the Project had been concluded to time and within budget.

In regard to item 4(e), **Membership of the Strategy and Finance Committee**, the Council was reminded that, in the course of his valedictory remarks to the to its meeting on 8 July 2013, the outgoing President of the Students’ Union had suggested that consideration be given to including the President of the Students’ Union in membership of the Strategy and Finance Committee. On the recommendation of the Strategy and Finance Committee, the Council agreed that the student interest would be better served by the President of the Students’ Union and his fellow officers first exploiting the potential offered by the newly formed Student Experience Committee and then maximising the opportunities afforded by student membership of the Council. It thus agreed that the status quo prevail in regard to membership of the Strategy and Finance Committee.

**Resolved:**

“**That:**

(a) the paper entitled **LIMITLESS: A Vision, Ambition and Strategy for 2026**, now submitted, be received;

(b) the paper on Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions 2013, now submitted, be received;

(c) the paper on Higher Education ‘League’ Tables, now submitted, be received;

(d) the Final Report of the Academic Investment Project, now submitted, be received;

(e) the paper on Membership of the Strategy and Finance Committee now submitted, be approved.”

13/72 **Report of the Appointments Committee**  (Item 7)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Appointments Committee held on 14 October 2013.

**Resolved:**
“1. That:

(a) Ms S.M. Woodman be appointed Chair of the Committee Appointed to hear appeals against decisions of the Faculty Promotions Groups (vice Mrs J.M. Scott) for the period to 31 July 2014;

(b) Dr P.R. Preston be appointed an alternate member of the Standing Disciplinary Committee (vice Dr A.P. Reed) for the period to 31 July 2014;

(c) Mr R. Dwyer, being a Vice-President, be appointed Chair of the Student Experience Committee for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2015;

(d) Mrs S.L. Webber be appointed to the Student Experience Committee for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2015;

(e) the President be authorised to act on behalf of the Appointments Committee and of the Council to approve such other appointments as were necessary fully to populate the Student Experience Committee with effect from 1 January 2014”

“2. That Dr A.P. Reed and Mrs J.M. Scott each be appointed to membership of the University Court in the category Former members of the Council of the University.”

“3. That the Report of the meeting of the Appointments Committee held on 14 October 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

13/73 Report of the Support Services Policy Committee (Item 8)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Support Services Policy Committee held on 14 October 2013.

As Chairman of the Committee, Mr Dwyer explained that this final meeting had considered the usual range of reports from services across the University. The newly configured Student Experience Committee would come into being on 1 January 2014 and would meet on the dates originally scheduled for meetings of the Support Services Policy Committee in the remainder of Session 2013-14.

Resolved:

“1. That the terms of reference and membership of a Student Experience Committee be approved for implementation with effect from 1 January 2014, subject to the addition of the Director of Student Experience and Access to those routinely in attendance at its meetings;”

“2. That the Report of the meeting of the Support Services Policy Committee held on 14 October 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

13/74 Report of the Senate (Item 9)
The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 16 October 2013.

Resolved:

“1. That, with reference to item 1, Professor Susan Breau be appointed as Head of the School of Law for the period from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2018;”

“2. That, with reference to item 2, under the provisions of Ordinance XXIV the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on each of the following with effect from the date indicated:

Professor Mary Bryden (1 November 2013)
Professor Geoffrey Mitchell (9 October 2013)
Professor Ian Rowland (1 January 2014)
Professor Bruce Traill (1 January 2014).

“3. That, with reference to item 3, the following be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years from the date indicated:

Mr Timothy Holt (1 September 2013)
Mrs Julia Shepherd (1 October 2013)
Mrs Jane Standley (1 July 2013)
Dr Margaret Yates (1 October 2013).”

“4. That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 16 October 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

13/75 Alterations to Ordinances (Item 10)

The Council received a paper from the University Secretary which proposed alterations to Ordinances consequent upon the Review of the Effectiveness of the Council.

Resolved:

“That alterations to Ordinance XXIII (Conferment of the Personal Title of Professor or Associate Professor) be approved.”

13/76 Report of the Grievance Committee (Item 11)


Resolved:

“That the Report of the Grievance Committee, now submitted, be approved.”

13/77 Remarks by the President of the Students’ Union
At the invitation of the President of the Council, the President of the Students’ Union (Mark Kelleher) set out three key priorities for the Students’ Union in the coming year, those being:

(a) to ensure the effective implementation and promulgation of newly agreed guidelines for the provision of feedback to students on their academic work;

(b) to focus on employability, initially by considering the fitness for purpose of existing career development modules; and

(c) to seek an increase in block grant from the University, principally on the premise that an increasingly diverse student body demanded a wider range of services from the Students’ Union.