The list of members present at the meeting and submitting their apologies for absence is given in Annex A to these Minutes (appended).

435 WELCOME

The Chair of Council welcomed all those present to the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the University’s Court.

The Chair extended an especially warm welcome to the following:

The Lord Mayor of the City of Canterbury
Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce
Julian Brazier, MP for Canterbury and Whitstable
The Viscount De L’Isle MBE, Lord Lieutenant of Kent

The Chair introduced the officers who were to speak to the annual reports for the Court’s meeting and those others who would be taking part in the presentations:

Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow, Vice-Chancellor
Bob Scruton, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee
Jen Wyatt, Head of the Partnership Development Office

The Chair also reported that there would be an event after the meeting marking the completion of Phase 1 of the Templeman Library Project.

436 MEMBERSHIP AND BUSINESS OF THE COURT

The Court noted Papers CT2015/1, Ordinance 9 concerning the Court’s membership and business, and CT2015/2, its current membership.

437 MINUTES OF THE COURT’S MEETING ON 23 JANUARY 2015

The Minutes of the Forty Ninth Annual General Meeting held on 23 January 2015, Paper CT2015/3, were confirmed.

438 ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2014/2015

1. Presentation of the Annual Review

The Vice-Chancellor presented the Annual Review for 2014/2015 and highlights of the University’s activities. Copies of the Vice-Chancellor’s slides for her presentation were tabled at the meeting.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following areas of the University’s activities.
i) **A top 20 UK University**

The University’s highest ever rankings in national university league tables, including a rise to 16th in the UK in the Guardian University Guide 2016 and 22nd in the Complete University Guide 2015;

ii) **Exceptional student experience**

The University’s commitment to an exceptional student experience, with a major extension to and refurbishment of the Templeman Library, and a positive response to the National Student Survey;

iii) **Research excellence**

The innovations of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Philippe de Wilde, who instigated the University of Kent Research Prizes to celebrate outstanding research across the University;

Ongoing research partnerships such as the Eastern ARC, with the Universities of Essex and East Anglia, where the Digital Humanities research strand has seen 13 grant applications, received £1,319,000 in funding and generated 14 journal articles to date;

iv) **Shortlisted for the THE University of the Year 2015**

The University being one of six universities shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Awards University of the Year 2015. The University was also shortlisted in the Outstanding Support for Students category;

v) **Excellent students**

The excellence of the University’s students, highlighted at the Kent Student Awards 2015, where Billy Yu Lok Ng won both the Chancellor’s Employability Points Award and the Outstanding Fundraiser of the Year Award. April-Louise Pennant was Student of the Year having won the Outstanding International/Multicultural Initiative of the Year Award and being a runner up in the Outstanding Contribution to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity category, highlighting her commitment towards educating other students regarding cultural diversity;

vi) **Awards for Kent student media**

The quality of the University’s student media, with Kent TV, InQuire (the student newspaper) and CSRfm winning a record number of awards this year;

vii) **Kent Union**

The opportunities and assistance afforded to students by Kent Union, which was 15th in the Sunday Times 100 Best Not-for-Profit Organisations to Work For list 2015;

viii) **Outstanding staff**

The University’s outstanding members of staff, with eight internal professorial promotions and the shortlisting of both Kent’s campaign to raise money for new facilities at Kent Law School and the administrative team in the School of Arts, in the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards 2015;
ix) Building our estate

The launch of newer, larger premises for the Brussels School of International Studies, officially opened in October 2015 by Sir David Warren, Chair of Council;

The official opening of the University’s sixth College on its Canterbury Campus, Turing College, in November 2015;

New buildings opening at Medway, including the refurbished Sail and Colour Loft and the conversion of the Royal Dockyard Church into a flexible lecture theatre and performance space, on the Historic Dockyard Chatham;

Other building projects underway at Canterbury including a new academic building for the Kent Business School (KBS) and the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Science (SMSAS), and both the Templeman West library extension and the Templeman Library refurbishment;

x) National impact

The Vice-Chancellor's role as President of Universities UK and the Universities for Europe campaign, launched in July 2015;

The University being designated as an Academic Centre of Excellence for Cyber Security Research under a scheme which is jointly sponsored by GCHQ and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC);

xi) Building our global reputation

The University’s recent place among the top 100 universities in the world for its high percentage of international students and staff (from the QS World Rankings 2015/2016) and its place in the top 10% of the world’s leading universities for international outlook in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (October 2015);

The global impact of Kent’s research, ranging from refugee tales to the detection of potentially illegal eBay sales of elephant ivory;

xii) Goodbye and thank you

The University’s thanks and farewell to Professor Keith Mander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who retired in 2015 after sixteen years at the University, and to Tony Quigley, who was a longstanding member of the University Council and completed his term as Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee in 2015;

Thanks were also given to the other outgoing lay members of the University’s Council in 2015; John Bowers, Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Ashley West and Her Honour Judge Adèle Williams;

xiii) Welcome to new members of Council

That 2015 had been a year of new faces on Council, with incoming lay members Dame Ursula Brennan, Martin Coleman, Sarah Gibson, Angela McNab, Andrew Newell, Heather Norton and Stevie Spring; new staff member, Mark Ellis; and new student member Megan Wells;
xiv) 50th Anniversary legacy – going forward

The climax of the University’s 50th anniversary celebrations, the 50th Festival, attended by more than 1500 alumni and friends worldwide, current staff and members of the local community;

The Beacon Projects, which illustrate some of the University’s distinctive strengths and provide a platform for future activities and aspirations, including Tensegritree, an innovative new architectural structure that will form the heart of an outside teaching resource and social space, and the Beacon Observatory, which will strengthen the University’s astronomical practice and allow local schools, interested local amateur astronomy groups and members of the public to make observations to improve our knowledge of the solar system;

xv) Planning for the future

The University’s objectives for 2015/2016 had been set out in the new Institutional Plan; to secure the University’s position as a top 20 UK university and be a globally recognised research institution by 2020.

2. Questions

Professor Gerry Rubin, Emeritus Professor from Kent Law School, asked about the University’s Access to Higher Education course which had been closed down and asked whether the University would reconsider its decision to offer an Access course. Professor Rubin asked if it would be possible to investigate the likelihood of providing Access courses in east Kent.

The Vice-Chancellor responded that part-time provision at Kent had reduced as the government had stopped funding for equivalent or lower qualifications and that there were still a variety of routes for students. It was subsequently confirmed by Jen Wyatt that the University ran Access to Higher Education courses at the Brompton Academy in Medway, for adult learners (aged 19 and above), and that this was taught in the evenings, to provide a more mature environment.

Dr Christopher Gay, former member of the University Council, stated that Court members who were not members of staff at the University could see themselves as ambassadors for the University in the local area, and so it would be helpful to have a regular item on the Court Agenda regarding town and gown relationships, not just in Canterbury but around the University’s other locations.

The Vice-Chancellor responded that this was particularly important in Canterbury where there were so many schools, colleges and universities. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Director of Student Services and his team worked very closely with Canterbury Christ Church University and with local groups, and that Kent Union was also an important part of this.

Julian Brazier, MP for Canterbury and Whitstable, confirmed that the universities, student unions and the Council had worked hard to improve relations between students and the local community.

Professor Richard Norman, Emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy, endorsed the work of the Director of Student Services and his team and confirmed that there had been an improvement in the past few years, highlighting the Canterbury Street Marshall Scheme, the community groups and the work of Suzanne Ridley, the University’s Community Liaison Officer. Professor Norman raised a concern about the size of the student population, which he said should be closely monitored.
The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University had provided 800 further study bedrooms on the Canterbury Campus with the opening of Turing College and that it was aware of the importance of providing living accommodation for students on its Campuses where possible.

The Reverend Peter Sherred, an alumnus of the University, requested a Court Minute to express his appreciation and thanks to the Vice-Chancellor, the members of staff and the students of the University for the 50th Anniversary programme of events and engagement, as it had been very well received by former students, staff and members of the public.

Professor Ted Parker, Emeritus Professor of Radio Communications, noted the importance of the University’s image, particularly with the range of choice that prospective students now have, and drew attention to a recent article in The Times newspaper about a “plagiarism epidemic” at British universities, which claimed that the University of Kent had the most cases of academic misconduct. Professor Parker stated that it had subsequently been pointed out that some universities had detected more cases because they were better at detecting plagiarism than others and asked what the University’s consideration was on this issue.

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the article in The Times had originated in a Freedom of Information request and that universities collected the data in different ways and so could not be used for reliable comparisons. The University of Kent was particularly vigilant and would not tolerate academic misconduct. The University was concerned to ensure that student work was of a high standard and that the figures for Kent would include a range of academic misdemeanours such as inadequate citation of sources.

Joanna Griffiths, an alumna of the University, noted the decrease in students studying languages nationally and asked how the University could encourage young people to study languages, particularly by engaging with schools. Ms Griffiths also stated that she was very impressed with and proud of the development of the University over the past 30 years.

The Vice-Chancellor responded that the University’s School of European Culture and Languages taught European languages and engaged in outreach and that the Centre for English and World Languages offered international learning opportunities, including language courses, to all Kent students. The Vice-Chancellor also noted that the later presentation by Jen Wyatt would include the University’s outreach work with schools.

Rani Perinparaja, former President of Kent Union, asked about the University’s strategy for attracting overseas students.

The Vice-Chancellor replied that the University had a multi-faceted approach to recruiting overseas students including the use of recruitment groups, partnership groups, agents, staff visits and the development of international links.

3. Resolution

The Court resolved to receive and note the Annual Review for 2014/2015.
1. **Presentation of the Financial Statements**

Bob Scruton, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, presented the Financial Statements for 2014/2015. Copies of Mr Scruton’s slides for his presentation were tabled at the meeting.

Mr Scruton started by giving the credit for the good news regarding the 2014/2015 Financial Statements to the previous Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, Tony Quigley, the Executive Group and members of the University staff. Mr Scruton also stated that the External Auditors had commented on the high quality of the University’s accounts.

Mr Scruton highlighted the strong surplus made in the 2014/2015 financial year, which was nearly £12m against the budget of £7.5m, particularly as it was in the third year of the £9,000 tuition fees. This surplus was achieved in spite of the cuts in HEFCE teaching funding. Mr Scruton pointed out that scholarships, bursaries and fee waivers had amounted to just under £19m, including £13.5m from University funds, and that a £2.5m surplus raised by the University’s residences and catering would be reinvested to improve accommodation and catering outlets. Staff costs were 6.9% higher than last year and 53.1% of income, and tuition fees were up £24.4m (21%).

Mr Scruton confirmed that the balance sheet was strong, although the cash position (132 days) was slightly misleading as this was due to the receipt of the first £50m tranche of the EIB (European Investment Bank) loan not yet having been fully expended on major capital projects. Debt levels had increased to 41% of income but this remained reasonable and not unusual.

Mr Scruton noted the increase in capital expenditure, up to almost £44m from £31m. This had been used for the Templeman Library extension and improvement works, the KBS/SMSAS academic building and the completion of Cornwallis East, as well as for refurbishing and improving other areas of the infrastructure and estate.

Mr Scruton confirmed the University’s plans to invest in the future, with an expenditure of £238m planned over the next five years, to include the completion of existing major projects, a further new academic building, the Law Clinic/Mooting Chamber and a student administration building.

Regarding the University’s financial outlook, the budgeted surplus for 2015/2016 was £6m, which Mr Scruton considered challenging. The home undergraduate tuition fee had not increased since 2012 and its value had fallen in real terms. With added cost pressures such as increased pension costs, National Insurance changes and HEFCE teaching funding cuts, there would be a need for efficiency savings and a review of the academic portfolio. There would be a planned reduction in the cash reserves but the University intended to continue to invest, with a planned £84m capital expenditure. It was noted that cost pressures being seen in 2015/2016 were likely to continue in 2016/2017.

Mr Scruton noted the following challenges for the future:

- the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review;
- the demographic reduction in the age group 18 to 24;
- the increased compliance burden and competition for overseas students;
- the impact of graduate debt level on postgraduate recruitment;
- the tough research environment;
- the increasing cost of construction;
the further financial pressures on pension schemes;
the changes in the accounting standards from 2015/2016;
the impact of the Green Paper and the introduction of the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework);
the forthcoming referendum on EU membership.

Mr Scruton reached the conclusion that the University had completed another strong financial year in 2014/2015 with a healthy balance sheet and high cash reserves. Mr Scruton drew attention to the challenging economic and competitive environment but confirmed that the University would continue to invest in the future and was well placed to meet future challenges.

2. Questions

Tony Quigley, former Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee, raised questions about specific future challenges; the EU referendum and the pension scheme liabilities.

Mr Scruton responded that the University had plans to offset the pension liabilities, which were now going to be brought onto the balance sheet due to the required changes in accounting standards, by a revaluation of the University’s land. Mr Scruton stated that Brexit would be difficult for the University, as the UK’s European university, but that the University was engaging in the debate and would consider how to enhance its reputation if Brexit should be the outcome.

Rory Murray, Kent Union Vice-President (Welfare), asked a question about student budgets and implored that the University should not pass on higher costs to its students.

Mr Scruton responded by confirming that the University was very conscious of the position of students but still had to make difficult judgements. The residences were run on a commercial basis as efficiently as possible to give the best deal to students.

Stephen Phillpott, former student representative on the University Council, added another future challenge for the University, which was that large national and international companies were removing the requirement that their employees be graduates.

The Vice-Chancellor responded to this by stating that the University planned to increase the employability of all of its students by increasing the availability of both academic and non-academic experiences for students, including work experience and studying overseas.

3. Resolution

The Court resolved to receive and note the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2015.

440 PRESENTATION ON PARTNER SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1. Presentation

Jen Wyatt, Head of the Partnership Development Office, gave a presentation on the University’s engagement with Partner Schools and Colleges which included the following points:

- the University’s engagement with 40 partners schools, mainly in the most deprived areas of Kent, and three partner colleges;
that the University had originally identified non-selective schools which were underperforming with no or very few individuals progressing to higher education;

that based on seven years of tracking the data of over 16000 participants, students were 10% more likely to go to university if they had engaged with the University’s outreach programme;

that the University of Kent led in the tracking methodology used (HEAT – higher education access tracking) and was awarded £3m by HEFCE last year to roll this out to other English universities;

the University’s outreach programme to partner schools combined creativity, the arts and science and highlighted the importance of debate and thought;

that the University ran Summer Schools in many subjects to engage school students and to raise aspirations;

the University’s continued sponsorship of the Brompton Academy, in one of the most deprived areas in Kent, which was now the most oversubscribed school in Medway, and last year the most popular school in Kent and Medway;

that the Brompton Academy had been awarded the Artsmark Platinum award in 2015, one of only three schools nationally to achieve this;

that the Access Programme had been running for four years at the Brompton Academy and that currently 52 adult learners were enrolled;

the flourishing Student Ambassador Scheme, with 340 current University of Kent students helping to deliver curriculum and events at local schools this academic year;

that the University was currently trying to develop a pilot PhD, a five year programme towards both a PhD and qualified teacher status in partnership with Brompton Academy.

2. Questions

Andreas Payne, current student and President of Eliot College Committee, commented on the Student Ambassador Scheme and asked whether it was University-wide.

Ms Wyatt responded that currently nearly all academic Schools were actively engaged with the Student Ambassador Scheme. Each School was responsible for developing its own outreach programme.

441 DATE OF THE COURT’S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN 2017

The Court noted that the proposed date for its next Annual General Meeting would be at the end of January 2017. The Secretary would confirm the detailed arrangements for the Court’s meeting nearer the time.

ACTION: Secretary

Any queries about the above should be directed to Dr Keith Lampard, Secretary of the Court [K.J.Lampard@kent.ac.uk].

KJL/hap/JLP

Attachment: Annex A: Attendance and Apologies for the meeting