Minutes of the Fifty-third Annual General Meeting held on 25 January 2019

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

456 WELCOME

The Chair of Council welcomed all those present to the 2019 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, Cllr. Colin Spooner
- The Chair of Kent County Council, Mike Angell
- The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce

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 Karen Cox, Vice-Chancellor and President
- Bob Scruton, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee
- Professor Chris Holland, Dean of the Kent and Medway Medical School

457 MEMBERSHIP AND BUSINESS OF THE COURT

The Court noted Papers CT2018/1, Constitution and Membership, CT2018/2, Current Membership and Paper CT2018/3, Standing Orders.

458 MINUTES OF THE COURT’S MEETING ON 26 JANUARY 2018

The Minutes of the Fifty-second Annual General Meeting held on 26 January 2018, Paper CT2018/4, were confirmed.

459 REAPPOINTMENT OF THE CHANCELLOR FOR A FURTHER PERIOD OF 5 YEARS

The Court noted Paper CT2018/5, on the reappointment of Dr Gavin Esler as Chancellor of the University of Kent for a further period of 5 years from 1 February 2019 to 31 January 2024, which had been approved by Senate and Council.

The Chair highlighted Dr Esler’s substantial contribution to the life of the University during his first period of office.
1. Presentation of the Annual Review

Professor Karen Cox, Vice-Chancellor and President, presented the Annual Review for 2017/2018, highlighting both the University’s activities and her outlook on future challenges.

i) Highlights and Achievements

The Vice-Chancellor introduced some of the University’s highlights and achievements from the 2017/2018 year, including the University’s successful bid to set up the first medical school in Kent, the Kent and Medway Medical School and that the University achieved accreditation from the government as an Academic Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security Research (ACE-CSR).

Other highlights were that, in 2018, the University won the Times Higher Education (THE) Award for outstanding support for students for the second year running, for its OPERA project to improve access to learning for all by implementing a range of accessibility initiatives. This followed the 2017 win for the acclaimed Student Success Project.

ii) Engagement and Impact

The University’s significant economic impact on the region was highlighted, with focus on the continued success of the Kent Law Clinic, with its national profile and impact on the local community, and the Kent Business Summits, held in 2018 and 2019, which brought together over 150 organisations and 300 participants to discuss key issues for the region.

iii) Outstanding Staff

The University’s outstanding members of staff were highlighted, including Professor Martin Warren in the School of Biosciences, whose research was honoured by Universities UK as one of the UK’s 100 Best Breakthroughs of the last century, for its significant impact on everyday lives.

Professor Nicola Shaughnessy, Professor of Performance and Director of Research in the School of Arts, was shortlisted for the Outstanding Supervisor of the Year award in the 2018 Times Higher Education (THE) Awards, for her support of a wide range of doctoral students, drawing upon her own experience in projects that used creative and practical approaches to engage with neurodiversity. Professor Shaughnessy was also named as the principal investigator for a new research project to investigate the experiences of autistic girls through drama, interactive media and participatory arts, with a £806,475 research grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

iv) Excellent Students

The annual Kent Student Awards were presented in June 2018 and notable successes were the Students of the Year, the prize jointly awarded to Lily Dedman, a second year undergraduate in the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, and Valiant Dorian, a third year undergraduate in the Kent Law School. Lily Dedman won for her work as Kent Union Women’s Officer and for organising a wide range of events, including the “Reclaim the Night March” and International Women’s Week. Valiant Dorian won for being a dedicated Kent Union LGBT+ Trans Officer,
helping with the University’s new Trans Policy and also organising a series of events.

The Kent Islamic Society was awarded Outstanding International/Multicultural Initiative of the Year as well as the additional honour of Group of the Year, for its work celebrating and supporting the diverse cultures at the University, fundraising for international charities and celebrating multiculturalism at the Cultural Food Fair.

v) Kent Union

Kent Union’s work on student welfare and student activities was highlighted, with over 2000 student volunteers logging over 91,000 volunteering hours, both on campus and in the local community. Kent Union coordinated the KSCV Scheme (Kent Student Certificate for Volunteering) which recognised the volunteering that students completed and supported them in their development of employability skills.

vi) 20 years in Europe

The Vice-Chancellor noted that, as the Brussels School of International Studies had been established in 1998, the University was celebrating “20 Years in Europe” throughout the 2018/2019 academic year, with a series of special events taking place alongside a review considering how best to make the most of the University’s European Centres.

vii) Building our Estate

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the latest building projects including the new Park Wood Student Hub, which opened in September 2018, and the new building for the School of Economics, due to open in September 2019.

viii) Challenges facing higher education

The Vice-Chancellor noted the many challenges currently facing higher education, including those around the demographic dip in the number of eighteen year olds in the UK, the increased competition arising from the removal of caps on student numbers for institutions, the future of post 18 education funding following the outcome of the Augar review, Brexit, which would affect the sector generally, but would also create specific difficulties for Kent due to the location of the University, the decline in the number of applications, costs, income and ensuring sustainability, and the increasing importance of profile, reputation and league table position.

ix) The refreshed University Strategy 2025

The Vice-Chancellor revealed that the work undertaken to refresh the University’s strategic priorities had been published, as Strategy 2025, and that the vision and ambition would be achieved by working through a series of actions and priorities including a consideration of the University’s portfolio, how it was delivered and to whom, more recognition and reward for teaching, an increased focus on improving the University’s research profile, a greater emphasis on the civic role, supporting regional agendas and building resources, and the establishment of two strategic projects, the Kent and Medway Medical School and the Institute for Creative and Cultural Industries.
x) **Strategic Projects**

The Vice-Chancellor mentioned the presentation on the Kent and Medway Medical School (see Minute 462 for more details) and the Institute for Creative and Cultural Industries, which would support the University’s ambition to be a key partner in Medway’s strategic repositioning as a creative city, and which correlated with the University’s existing National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England and the award of £4.3m to the University from the Cultural Development Fund (CDF), to contribute to the development of the Thames Estuary area as Europe’s largest creative corridor.

2. **Questions**

Professor Ted Parker, Emeritus Professor of Radio Communications, asked the Vice-Chancellor whether the University could make more of its successful alumni to publicise career paths and successful outcomes after University. The Vice-Chancellor responded by confirming the University’s good track record on employability and that the University was planning to use such key messages for promotion. The Vice-Chancellor also noted that there was a balance to be struck between the University preparing students for the workplace and a University education for the joy of it, and that the University was considering the different world of work in the future, with adjusted teaching methods and programmes.

Joanna Griffiths, an alumna of the University, had asked the Vice-Chancellor at the last meeting about her initial impressions of Kent and wondered whether her initial impressions had been confirmed. Ms Griffiths also asked if the University could make more use of the alumni community, to help with recruitment as well as careers advice. The Vice-Chancellor replied that the University should work more closely with its alumni networks around the world to support students and recruitment, and would encourage the Development Office to leverage that untapped resource. The Vice-Chancellor also said that her first impressions of the University had been correct on the whole and that there remained much work to do.

Dr Christopher Gay, former Council member, asked whether the economic benefits of the University were understood by citizens and questioned the effectiveness of the University’s Community Complaints Procedure. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University was aware of the challenges that having a large student population in Canterbury brought, took complaints very seriously, had strong relationships with Canterbury City Council and with local residents’ groups and had worked hard to establish better ways of working and dealing with issues when they were raised. The Vice-Chancellor stated the University was committed to working across the county and that regional engagement was a key point of its strategy.

Professor Shereen Hussein, Professor of Care and Health Policy and Evaluation, Personal Social Services Research Unit, asked the Vice-Chancellor whether the University could offer work experience to school students in years 9 and 10, as this could help with recruitment. The Vice-Chancellor responded by saying that the University had a good track record regarding engagement with Schools and that there were many partnership activities already being undertaken regarding raising aspiration and attainment.

Professor Alan Bull, Emeritus Professor of Microbial Biotechnology, asked whether the University had much contact with local Members of Parliament and expressed disappointment that no MPs were present. The Vice-Chancellor said that she had been very pleased with the engagement from local MPs, particularly with their support for the Medical School bid and felt that they were supportive.

Professor John Todd, Emeritus Professor of Mass Spectrometry, asked whether the University could further capitalise on its original collegiate structure. The Vice-
Chancellor replied to say that work was being carried out on how to re-engineer the collegiate model to utilise the elements of community, support and identity, but for a much larger student body which was not necessarily accommodated on campus.

3. Resolution

The Court resolved to receive and note the Annual Review for 2017/2018.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2018

1. Presentation of the Financial Statements

Bob Scruton, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, presented the Financial Statements for 2017/2018. Copies of Mr Scruton's slides for his presentation were tabled at the meeting.

Mr Scruton thanked the University’s Finance and Estates departments and the Executive Group for their work during what had been a challenging year.

Mr Scruton drew attention to a satisfactory outcome for the University and a future that would present even more significant challenges. Mr Scruton highlighted the surplus of £3 million, which was broadly in line with expectations but £13 million lower than the previous year. Mr Scruton also noted that, whilst income had increased, general costs had also increased by £12 million and the adjusted EBITDA was £5 million less than at the same time in the previous year.

Regarding the balance sheet, Mr Scruton stated that cash flow had reduced slightly but cash reserves were still strong, with 93 days expenditure, an improvement and well above the baseline of 40 days. Mr Scruton noted that the University had drawn down the final tranche of the European Investment Bank loan to fund capital projects and that debt had increased to 41% of income (33% in 2017).

Mr Scruton confirmed that the capital expenditure had been £33.1 million, just less than in 2017 (£34.5 million), and that this had been spent on the new Economics Building, the refurbishment of Cornwallis, the Park Wood Student Hub and other improvements. He also confirmed the University’s plans to invest £162 million over the next five years, to include the completion of the building for the School of Economics, space for the Kent and Medway Medical School and further spending on facilities for Sciences and other academic facilities, but that this was subject to review depending on the financial position.

Regarding the University’s financial outlook, Mr Scruton confirmed that the University was expecting a deficit in 2018/2019 and that, with frozen student fees, student recruitment currently below targets and staff cost pressures, efficiency savings were being sought, as the strain of cost pressures against flat-lining income had become apparent. The budgeted capital expenditure for the year ahead was £42.1 million and there was a further planned reduction in cash reserves.

Mr Scruton confirmed the many challenges and risks to be faced currently and in the future:

- the intense competition for students, both home and overseas;
- the demographic reduction in the age group 18 to 24 providing a dip in the UK target market;
- cost pressures and the Augar (HE funding) review;
- the expansion of the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) into subject areas (variable fees);
- the Office for Students, whose transition ends in July 2019;
• the impact of Brexit (deal/no-deal?);
• greater compliance requiring increased resource;
• the tough research environment;
• pension scheme funding issues.

Mr Scruton reached the conclusion that the University had reported a sound financial performance in 2017/2018 with a robust balance sheet and cash reserves and that, although the University was well placed to respond to the challenges that it would certainly face, change would be required, with student experience being the key to future success.

2. Questions

Robin Lunn, an alumnus of the University, asked about the government response to the potential drop in student numbers and whether it was the government’s view that universities should use their reserves to tide them over. Mr Scruton responded that the government appeared to lack a clear policy, misunderstood the need for expenditure on the upkeep of university buildings and services and had not considered the funding gap. The government focus was entirely on the political impact of tuition fees.

Professor Ted Parker, Emeritus Professor of Radio Communications, asked a specific point about Mr Scruton’s presentation, regarding increased expenditure and the apparent inconsistency between the recorded surplus and level of net cashflow. Mr Scruton said that the surplus overall had gone down and that the reserves had gone up by the level of the surplus. He also stated that depreciation was a cost, but did not equate to money that had been spent, which had assisted with the cash flow.

Cllr. Jenny Samper, former Council member, asked about the student experience and investing in the future, whether the University planned to keep expanding and whether the Strategy 2025 had already been altered due to external influences. Mr Scruton confirmed that improving the student experience was a significant aim of the University and that he was not aware that any of the challenging events that had occurred would change the University’s Strategy.

Professor Ian Bruce, Emeritus Professor of Nanobiotechnology, asked about the fall in recruitment and how the University benchmarked itself against other institutions. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University benchmarked its performance against peer comparators, which were a cluster of institutions of similar age, size and shape to Kent and against some aspirational institutions. Regarding the applications, the Vice-Chancellor also said that the University was concentrating on conversion activity and tracking each application closely, with significant action already underway, and confirmed that there were also medium and long term plans to review the portfolio and diversify the student body.

3. Resolution

The Court resolved to receive and note the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2018.

462 PRESENTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KENT AND MEDWAY MEDICAL SCHOOL

1. Presentation

Professor Chris Holland, Professor of Medical Education and Dean of Kent and Medway Medical School, gave a presentation on the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS).
Professor Holland’s presentation included the following points;

a) that KMMS had passed Stage 3 of the GMC accreditation process, a significant milestone;

b) that there was a great deal of support in Kent and Medway for KMMS, for which he was very grateful;

c) that the vision for the School was to be a beacon for first-class medical education and research, and the first choice for all those aspiring to achieve excellence in person-centred medical care in the UK;

d) that KMMS had chosen to practise in specialities that would make a difference in Kent, such as primary care, mental health and acute medicine, and that would be complimentary to provision at neighbouring medical schools;

e) that KMMS would widen participation in medicine, address significant health inequalities in Kent and Medway, provide high-quality placements and have an innovative curriculum;

f) that the partnership between the University and Canterbury Christ Church University was synergistically excellent, as both had strengths in different areas;

g) that the School would draw on the University’s expertise in the Humanities and Social Sciences as well as in Sciences, to provide students with a unique experience;

h) that the School would use lessons learned from other joint ventures, using existing systems and processes and investment in buildings and infrastructure on both campuses;

i) that the programme would be innovative, starting with placements in General Practice and Community Care, with students encouraged to consider a GP career and with integrated placements in the third year, which would demonstrate the relationship between mind and body;

j) that the School aimed to remove differential attainment and the element of cultural capital from medical education.

2. Questions

Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce asked how the students would gain clinical experience of secondary care and Professor Holland responded to confirm that this would be via placements in GP practices and Kent and Medway hospitals.

Professor David Ormrod, Emeritus Professor of History, referred to the work of the Centre for the History of Medicine, Ethics and Medical Humanities within the School of History, and Professor Holland said that he already been in touch with Dr Julie Anderson, Faculty Director of Medical Humanities, about future projects.

Professor Adrian Podoleanu, Professor of Biomedical Optics, asked about new technologies developed outside HE which could speed up the process of clinical
training. Professor Holland agreed and said that KMMS students would be prepared for a future of rapid technological change, for instance, with more medical interactions being virtual and online.

Professor Alan Bull, Emeritus Professor of Microbial Biotechnology, asked about materials that Court members could use to communicate the excitement of KMMS to the community. Professor Holland responded that his slides were already on the Court meeting’s website; that further information about the building would be published; and that he was aware that communication and stakeholder engagement were vital.

The Chair thanked Professor Holland for his fascinating and inspirational talk.

**Note:** The KMMS website is now available:

https://www.kmms.ac.uk/kent-and-medway-medical-school.aspx

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### 463 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair asked whether there was any other business, as he had been informed that there was a question that a member of Court wished to raise, but nothing was forthcoming.

### 464 DATE OF THE COURT’S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN 2020

The Court noted that the proposed date for its next Annual General Meeting would be at the end of January 2020. 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
1.05.2019

**Attachment:** Annex A: Attendance and Apologies for the meeting

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Signed: ……………………………………………………………………… Date:……………………
UNIVERSITY OF KENT

COURT AGM: 26 JANUARY 2019

Present: Professor Karen Cox (Vice-Chancellor and President); Sir David Warren (Chair of the Council); Bob Scruton (Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee); Dr Keith Lampard (Secretary to the Council and the Court).

and those members who signed the Attendance Book:
Mike Angell; Emeritus Professor John Baldock; Professor John Batchelor; Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce; Dame Ursula Brennan; Emeritus Professor Ian Bruce; Emeritus Professor Alan Bull; Professor Mark Burchell; Emeritus Professor John Butler; Emeritus Professor Clive Church; Dr Richard Collier; Dr Harry Cragg; Jane Crudgington-Higham; Professor Philippe De Wilde; Emeritus Professor John Dore; Dr Alister Dunning; Robert Eager; Mark Ellis; Denise Everitt; Dr Christopher Gay; Professor Michael Geaves; Joanna Griffiths; Professor Christopher Holland; Stef Hrycyszyn; Professor Shereen Hussein; Emeritus Professor Richard Jones; Gareth Kingston; Sian Lewis-Anthony; Denis Linfoot; Kim Lowe; Robin Lunn; Gabriel MacGregor; Emeritus Professor Keith Mander; Dr Anthony Manning; Professor April McMahon; Emeritus Professor Sir David Melville; Andrew Newell; David Nightingale; Emeritus Professor David Ormrod; Jerry Park; Emeritus Professor Ted Parker; Brian Phillips; Professor Adrian Podoleanu; Mark Preston; Tony Quigley; Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura; Dr John Rennison; Emeritus Professor Philip Robinson; Professor Peter Rodgers; Adrian Roper; Cllr. Jennifer Samper; Revd Peter Sherred; Cllr Colin Spooner; Aaron Thompson; Emeritus Professor John Todd; Zoe Wood; Malcolm Woolley.

Members who submitted apologies:
Professor Paul Allain; Emeritus Professor Malcolm Andrews; Emeritus Professor Alan Armstrong; Professor Amalia Arvanti; Mary Ashton, High Sheriff of Kent; Dr Patricia Baker; Mary Berg; Dr James Bird; Emeritus Professor David Birmingham; Professor Howard Bowman; Emeritus Professor Heather Brown; Professor Peter Brown; Paul Carter; Professor David Chadwick; Emeritus Professor Alan Colchester; Emeritus Professor Alan Common; Martin Cook; Emeritus Professor Hugh Cunningham; The Viscount De L’Isle MBE; Professor Farzin Deravi; Neil Davies; Dr Keith Dimond; Emeritus Professor Grayson Ditchfield; Rosie Duffield MP; Emeritus Professor Rod Edmond; Emeritus Professor Roy Ellen; Dr Gavin Esler; Emeritus Professor Mary Evans; Chris D Everett; Professor Kenneth Fincham; Sir Roger Gale MP; Chloe Gallien; Emeritus Professor Robin Gill; Emeritus Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow; Damien Green MP; Professor Nick Grief; Emeritus Professor Chris Hale; Emeritus Professor Christopher Hann; Revd William Hornsby; Emeritus Professor James Hughes; Cllr. Steve Iles, Mayor of Medway; Cllr Alan Jarrett; Professor Simon Kirchin; Nick Kirton; Professor Stephane Launois; Craig MacKinlay MP; Professor Martin Mason; Dr Lex Mauger; Angela McNab; Professor Martin Michaelis; Emeritus Professor Byron Morgan; Robert Neill MP; Dr Donald Niblett; Dermot O’Brien; Dr Adrian Pabst; Emeritus Professor Jan Pahl; Stephen Phillpott; Emeritus Professor Gerald Rickayzen; Professor Martin Ridout; Emeritus Professor Brian Rutherford; Professor Derek Rutter; Professor Richard Sakwa; Margaret Scott-Knight; Professor John Shackell; Emeritus Professor John Sharp; Professor Sally Sheldon; Tara Sherjan; Dr Felicity Simpson; Professor Charlotte Sleigh; Emeritus Professor Mohamed Sobhy; Dr John Spence; Emeritus Professor John Strange; Juliet Thomas; Sir Crispin Tickell; Rt. Hon Tom Tugendhat MP; Professor Mick Tuite; Emeritus Professor Roger Vickerman; Professor Sarah Vickerstaff; Allison Wainman; Emeritus Professor Clive Wake; Peter Wales; Kay Webber; Professor Michael Went; Dr John Whyman; Professor David Wilkinson; Professor Toni Williams; Professor Jon Williamson; The Very Revd Dr Robert Willis; Professor Patricia Wilson; Helen Wood; Sir Robert Worcester.

In attendance: Jo Pearsall (Deputy Secretary of the Council)