

**National Centre for Circus Arts
Minutes – Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday 10 December 2024 5:45pm**

Meeting held at Coronet Street and via Teams

Chaired by: Alison King (AK)
In attendance: Brett Carron (BC)
Cameron Brookhouse (CB) [via Teams]
Diana Salazar (DS)
Darshak Shah (DSh) [via Teams]
Esther Wallington (EW)
Jack Horner (JH)
Mark Friend (MF)
Maureen Nicholas (MN) [via Teams]
Paul Steggall (PS)
Rachael Williams (RW)
Sean Lynskey (SL)
Dan Cowdrill (DC), CEO
Joe O'Neill (JO'N), COO
Glen Stewart (GS), Director of Learning & Engagement
Roxanne Ramnauth (RR), Head of Finance
Frances Keyton (FK), Office Manager & Clerk to the Board (Minutes)
Kate White (KW), Guest

1. Apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Stuart Smith, Nimisha Carver and William Underhill.
- 1.2. The meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1. There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting on 23 July 2024 were approved.

4. Action Tracker

- 4.1. AK will be sending out personal emails to trustees asking them to be Vice Chair in the new year. This will be a fixed year position.
- 4.2. DSh suggested that 10.7 should be an action, and 10.10 needs to be changed to 'subject to review by the Finance Committee and the auditors.'
- 4.3. All other actions were completed.

ACTION – FK to change minutes and bring to next meeting for approval.

5. Chair's update

- 5.1. AK congratulated DC on his first term as CEO, and the Senior Management Team as a whole.
- 5.2. AK offered gratitude on behalf of the board to KW for 17 years as CEO.
- 5.3. AK congratulated everyone involved in the recent scratch nights at the Spiegeltent Leicester Square.

- 5.4. AK introduced new trustee JH.
- 5.5. AK thanked all the trustees for another year of sterling service, especially during a tough period for the arts, charitable and subsidised sectors.

6. RAN Committee

- 6.1. The minutes of the meeting on 12 November 2024 were received.

7. Finance Committee

- 7.1. The minutes of the meeting on 19 November 2024 were received.
- 7.2. The budget for 24/25 was initially proposed to the FSC in July, and after some small additions made in November, has been approved.
- 7.3. There had been some discussion about the reserves policy wording, and the current wording is reflective of the policy as a conservative estimate.
- 7.4. The FSC will have a dedicated discussion with SMT to finalise the policy, encompassing the potential downsides and the upsides.

8. Audit Committee

- 8.1. The minutes of the meeting on 26 November 2024 and the annual accounts were received.
- 8.2. MF outlined how the audit focused on IT and internal communications. Next year the auditors will be looking at GDPR and safeguarding.
- 8.3. The board approved the annual accounts for approval on a basis of 'going concern'.
- 8.4. The committee thanked JO and RR for their work on such a clean audit process.
- 8.5. The board approved the 5-year forecast as a developing document.

9. Academic Board

- 9.1. The minutes of the Academic Board meeting on 2 December 2024 were received.
- 9.2. GS shared the news that 12 out of 17 students received 1st class degrees at the end of the 23-24 academic year.

10. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

- 10.1. The minutes of the meeting on 20 November 2024 were received.
- 10.2. AK is still looking for a new Chair to replace her.
- 10.3. There is still more work to be done on the effectiveness of the committee.
- 10.4. DC outlined his intention to make the EDI Committee more of a scrutiny committee, looking at what the organisation is currently doing and how it can improve.

11. Departmental Reports

- 11.1. Operations, Administration & Hires
 - 11.1.1. A question was raised about the recent staff turnover in the Operations department. JO confirmed that he feels the department will be in a stronger position from January onwards.
- 11.2. Internal Communications
 - 11.2.1. DC had met with all administrative staff members to get their thoughts on the organisation.
 - 11.2.2. DC expressed how it had been challenging to meet all the recent simultaneous deadlines which need board approval, and how perhaps changing the board meeting structure would ease this in the future.

12. Strategy Day

12.1. AK proposed Tuesday 4 February for a strategy afternoon before the next board meeting, from 2pm with refreshments provided.

13. Introduction of new trustee

13.1. JH introduced himself to the board, outlining his history of working in the circus and his passion for the sector.

14. Any other Business

14.1. DC proposed a restructure of board meetings for the academic year 25/26 and beyond, which would see the full board meetings roughly taking place in early October and then December, March and June.

Date of next Board meeting - Tuesday 4 February 2025

National Centre for Circus Arts
Minutes – Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday 4 February 2025, 6:30pm

Meeting held at Coronet Street and via Teams

Chaired by: Alison King (AK)
In attendance: Darshak Shah (DSh)
Sean Lynskey (SL)
Rachael Williams (RW)
Maureen Nicholas (MN)
Paul Steggall (PS) [until 7:30pm]
Diana Salazar (DS)
Mark Friend (MF) [via Teams, from 7pm]
Jack Horner (JH) [via Teams, from 6.45pm]
Esther Wallington (EW) [from 6:50pm]
William Underhill (WU) [via Teams]
Glen Stewart (GS), Head of Learning & Engagement
Dan Cowdrill (DC), CEO
Joe O'Neill (JO'N), COO
Frances Keyton (FK), Office Manager & Clerk to the Board (Minutes)

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies received from Nimisha Carver, Brett Carron, and Cameron Brookhouse.
- 1.2 The meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 23 July 2024 and 10 December 2024 were approved.

4. Action Tracker

- 4.1 All actions were completed.

5. Chair's update

- 5.1 Stuart Smith has stepped down as a trustee. The board extended their gratitude for his service.
- 5.2 Considering the recent recruitment of trustees, the sub-committees will be rearranged.
- 5.3 Tickets for the double bill BA2 & BA3 student productions are selling well. Performances are on the 13th, 14th and 15th February and trustees are encouraged to attend.

- 5.4 Several of the trustees had attended a strategy day before the board meeting, where some useful steps were taken.
- 5.5 Two sub-committees will be formed – an APP committee and a National Portfolio Organisation committee (focusing on the Arts Council bid).
- 5.6 AK praised SMT and Head of Finance for their work and noted the different and bold new leadership team.

6. Vice Chair Nomination

- 6.1 RW was appointed as Vice Chair.
- 6.2 RW will use her professional expertise to aid with the NPO application, ongoing financial stability, and Organisational Culture Change.

7. Risk Register

- 7.1 The Risk Register had been distributed to each of the sub-committees and was submitted to the full board for approval.
- 7.2 The Risk Register was approved.

8. RAN Committee

- 8.1 The minutes of the meeting on 27 January 2025 were received.

9. Audit Committee

- 9.1 The minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2025 were received.

10. Finance Committee

- 10.1 The minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2025 were received.

11. Academic Board

- 11.1 There had been no meeting since the last board meeting.

12. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

- 12.1 There had been no meeting since the last board meeting.

13. Departmental Reports

- 13.1 Operations, Administration & Hires
 - 13.1.1 The Natwest account switch is taking longer than planned but should be completed in the next few weeks.
- 13.2 Learning & Engagement
 - 13.2.1 Three staff members are leaving the organisation: two key Strand Managers and the Head of Academic Administration.
 - 13.2.2 A new online booking system for Open Training members has been launched. As it relies on honesty, we will review the system periodically.
- 13.3 CEO
 - 13.3.1 DC gave an overview of the strategy day which preceded the board meeting.
 - 13.3.2 SEER had given an overview of what we should be delivering for our APP.

- 13.3.3 The deadline for submitting the APP is the same time as the Arts Council deadline.
- 13.3.4 We are currently looking at a deficit of £180k per year for the next few years, so SMT are intending to make savings around our recreational programme offer, productions and staffing.

14. Any other Business

- 14.1 A student donations policy is being prepared after two considerable donations from current students.
- 14.2 It was agreed that the correct way forward was to maintain donor anonymity, while being transparent about the donation.
- 14.3 DS mentioned that the Royal College of Music had a similar situation and had created a rigid donor policy.
- 14.4 EW suggested looking at some of the US universities' student donation policies, where this is a regular occurrence.

ACTION – DC and WU to continue discussion of a suitable student donation policy.

Date of next Board meeting – Tuesday 20 May 2025

**National Centre for Circus Arts
Minutes - Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday 20 May 2025, 6.30 pm**

Meeting held at Coronet Street and via Teams

Chaired by: Alison King(AK) Chair
In Attendance: Brett Carron (BC) [via Teams]
Diana Salazar (DS) [via Teams]
Darshak Shah (DSh) [via Teams]
Esther Wallington (EW) [via Teams]
Jack Horner (JH)
Mark Friend (MF)
Maureen Nicholas (MN) [via Teams]
Nimisha Carver (NC) [via Teams]
Paul Steggall (PS) [via Teams]
William Underhill (WU)
Dan Cowdrill (DC), CEO
Joe O'Neill (JO) COO & Minute taker
Glen Stewart (GS) Head of Learning & Engagement

1. Apologies

- 1.1. Apologies received from Sean Lynskey, Rachael Williams, Frances Keyton (Office Manager & Clerk to the Board).
- 1.2. Not in attendance (no apologies received) Cameron Brookhouse.
- 1.3. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.
- 1.4. The Chair welcomed the trustees and others to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. No declarations of interest were made in relation to the agenda.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- 3.1. The meeting minutes held on 4 February 2025 were confirmed as a fair and accurate record of the meeting and approved.
Proposed: Mark Friend
Seconded: Jack Horner

4. Matters Arising & Action Tracker

- 4.1. The student donation policy, discussed under Matters Arising at the previous meeting, was addressed later in the agenda under Item 7.

5. Chair's Report

- 5.1. The Chair provided a verbal update covering the following:

- 5.2. We have secured a £60,000 core funding grant over two years from the Garfield Weston Foundation.
- 5.3. Student Productions & Fundraising Event are upcoming, Trustees were encouraged to attend and bring guests.
- 5.4. The chair shared their participation in Clore Leadership Programme, OfS Chairs Forum, and visit to Codarts (Rotterdam).
- 5.5. Acknowledged staff pressures during the redundancy process.
- 5.6. The chair announced that Glen Stewart would be leaving at the end of the term and thanked him on behalf of the board for his work and service to National Centre; thanks to Darshak Shah for his time, effort and diligence as Chair of the Finance Committee.
- 5.7. Trustees encouraged to priorities in-person attendance for Board meetings.

6. Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

- 6.1. The Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee was amended to clarify that the Finance Committee reviews the budget submitted by senior leadership and recommends it to the Board.
- 6.2. Changes to the Terms of Reference across all Board committees were approved, to include the change that 'Members may serve up to three terms.'

7. Policy Approvals

- 7.1. Student Donation Policy: Approved.
Proposed: Mark Friend
Seconded: William Underhill
- 7.2. Freedom of Speech Policy: The revised draft is to be circulated for email approval.

ACTION - DC to circulate the revised Freedom of Speech Policy for email approval.

8. Resources and Nominations Committee

- 8.1. The board received a verbal update from PS on the recent Resources and Nominations Committee meeting.
- 8.2. PS thanked DSh for his service and contributions as Chair of the FSC.
- 8.3. PS reported on a productive meeting with strong input from all committee members and DC.
- 8.4. Discussed evolving the staff survey, including frequency and timing. The impact of redundancies on survey results was considered and the committee agreed to proceed with the next survey in June.
- 8.5. Recruitment will focus on networks and personal connections. Trustees asked to consider who might be suitable in their networks.
- 8.6. PS thanked Frances for preparing the minutes.

9. Audit Committee

- 9.1. The board received a verbal update from WU on the recent Audit Committee meeting.
- 9.2. The committee recommended continuing with Buzzacott as external auditors, noting the challenge smaller organisations face in securing high-quality audit services. The board approved this recommendation.
- 9.3. A discussion was held on the Audit Committee's role in relation to the Access and Participation Plan (APP). It was confirmed that Audit provides oversight of process and compliance, not

content. Governance of the APP's substance sits with the APP Committee, which WU recommended should remain in place post-submission for ongoing oversight. The committee's assurance-focused remit was reiterated.

- 9.4. Clarification was sought on whether formal board delegation of APP approval is required. GS confirmed that OfS expectations centre on progress reporting rather than formal delegation. DC added that governance structures should remain proportionate to organisational scale. WU confirmed this aligns with the Audit Committee's current approach.
- 9.5. The importance of regular reporting was noted, and a suggestion was made to establish an annual APP update for the board.

10. Finance Committee

- 10.1. The board received a verbal update from DSh on the recent Finance Committee meeting.
- 10.2. FSC meeting held with full attendance.
- 10.3. Q2 performance reviewed; some positive action already taken by SMT.
- 10.4. It was noted that student income projections have been revised downward in the five-year plan, with modest increases anticipated later. Trustees agreed this trend is significant and requires some consideration. A more detailed discussion, supported by background papers, will be scheduled for the September board meeting, which is already earmarked for strategic planning.
- 10.5. Trustees raised concerns about balancing the organisation's charitable aims with increasing reliance on commercial income. The wider pressures across the Higher Education sector were acknowledged as contributing factors.
- 10.6. The SMT confirmed that student numbers have plateaued in the last ten years, with Brexit being a major driver. This has caused offers to decline year-on-year, and dropout rates have increased due to reduced student readiness. Steps are being taken to address this through increased dropout provision and ongoing international marketing.
- 10.7. The board also discussed the cost of delivery per student, with concerns raised about long-term sustainability. It was reaffirmed that higher education remains a core part of the organisation's charitable purpose.
- 10.8. While the draft budget and five-year forecast will be presented in July, trustees emphasised the need for precise framing ahead of the September strategy meeting, including what "strategy" means and how trustees can contribute meaningfully.

ACTION - Provide a framework for strategic discussion on student recruitment for the September Board Meeting.

ACTION - Provide Quarterly Accounts with FSC minutes.

11. Academic Board

- 11.1. DS requested a review of the previous minutes due to clarity issues. This was acknowledged and confirmed support will be provided to improve future minutes.
- 11.2. GS provided an update on the APP overview of developing intervention strategies, including scholarships, national partnerships, and the HE-Assist programme to support CAT students through auditions. Financial modelling is the final step.
- 11.3. DS noted the plan supports both access and broader recruitment and retention goals.

- 11.4. Trustees are encouraged to review upcoming drafts of the APP before final submission. A clean draft will be circulated before the next Audit Committee, followed by a version for final feedback.
- 11.5. APP Committee confirmed preference for End of Day meetings, and APP Committee Members were confirmed as JH, MN, AK, SL, DS

ACTION - Review and update Academic Board Minutes

ACTION - Circulate the updated draft of the APP ahead of Audit Committee

12. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Committee

- 12.1. The board received a verbal update from DC and MN on the recent meeting of the APP Committee.
- 12.2. The committee will focus on aligning its efforts with the Access and Participation Plan (APP). Alice, Head of Learning Engagement, provided a clear and informative overview of the APP, laying the groundwork for deeper scrutiny of its aims in future meetings.
- 12.3. The committee began exploring ways to actively support the organisation, including student engagement in recruitment strategy.
- 12.4. JH highlighted the need to broaden the applicant pool to strengthen cohort diversity and performance potential, expressing strong support for this direction.
- 12.5. The chair concluded that having clear objectives and aligning the committee's work with organisational strategy and board priorities is a positive and important step.

13. Departmental Reports

- 13.1. JO provided an update on operational matters and confirmed that the quoted price for a key service contract is for three years.
- 13.2. MN queried review mechanisms—JO confirmed an annual review will be held with the account manager.
- 13.3. On cyber security, trustees were informed of ongoing improvements, including revised cloud access for trustees via Secure Network.
- 13.4. GS updated on Learning & Engagement team developments, noting strong performance from new hires and a solid HE team.
- 13.5. The recreational programme continues evolving, exploring new short courses.
- 13.6. The recent National Youth Circus event, which lasted two days and hosted 60 young people, was a great success.
- 13.7. MF praised the vibrancy and inclusivity of the Sensory Circus programme. Asked whether it is celebrated and whether it generates income. DC: Confirmed it is a celebrated, oversubscribed programme; fully funded with no surplus.
- 13.8. WU asked about leveraging the experience with John Fisher School. DC: Acknowledged value but noted funding challenges in replicating the partnership.
- 13.9. CEO updated the board and presented an overview of the revised staff structure.
- 13.10. DC shared updates from recent outward-facing engagements, including a productive visit to Bristol and Circomedia, and a meeting with Cirque Bijou (producers of the Roald Dahl project).
- 13.11. AK noted a renewed sense of energy from the Centre's increased external engagement.
- 13.12. DSh observed that peer organisations are facing greater challenges, providing helpful context for the Centre's position.

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1. Proposed board dates were presented, discussed, and approved, with an agreed-upon earlier start time of 5:30 p.m. for the 29 September 2025 meeting. The change to a Monday meeting was noted.
- 14.2. DC updated the board on a returning donor who wishes to make a further donation, with a request to support student teaching in a specific discipline
- 14.3. Some trustees supported accepting the donation. However, DS stated the importance of maintaining curricular independence from donor influence.
- 14.4. Trustees encouraged continued engagement with the donor, and they were interested in identifying other areas of potential support aligned with student benefit. DC stated that they would consider the request further and report back at the next meeting.

Date of next Board meeting - Tuesday 1 July 2025

**National Centre for Circus Arts
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday 1 July 2025, 6.30 pm**

Meeting held at Coronet Street and via Teams

Chaired by: Alison King (AK)
Attendance: Brett Carron (BC)
Diana Salazar (DS)
Darshak Shah (DSh)
Esther Wallington (EW)
Jack Horner (JH)
Maureen Nicholas (MN)
Nimisha Carver (NC)
Paul Steggall (PS)
Sean Lynskey (SL)
Dan Cowdrill (DC), CEO
Joe O'Neill (JO), COO & Minute taker
Glen Stewart (GS)

1. Apologies

- 1.1. Apologies received from Cameron Brookhouse, Mark Friend & William Underhill
- 1.2. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.
- 1.3. The Chair welcomed all present.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1. No declarations were made in relation to the agenda.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- 3.1. Brett Carron was excluded from the attendees and attended via Teams and will be corrected.
- 3.2. The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

Proposed: PS

Seconded: DSh

4. Matters Arising & Action Tracker

- 4.1. Reviewed and noted. All previous actions are marked as completed.

5. Resignation and Election of Board Members

- 5.1. Brett Carron, Mark Friend, Sean Lynskey, Diana Salazar and Esther Wallington completed their first terms and formally resigned.
- 5.2. Mark Friend, Sean Lynskey, Diana Salazar and Esther Wallington were re-elected for a further three-year term.
- 5.3. Brett Carron was re-elected for a one-year term.
- 5.4. Following discussion, the Board agreed that Cameron Brookhouse should remain a trustee despite recent absences.

- 5.5. Board composition and recruitment remains an ongoing item for the Resources and Nominations Committee.

ACTION: JO to update internal records as necessary following resignations and elections.

6. Chair's Update

- 6.1. The Chair delivered a verbal update.
- 6.2. Trustees were thanked for their support of the recent fundraising event; donations are close to the target.
- 6.3. The Chair noted completion of the redundancy process and thanked the SMT for its work.
- 6.4. Congratulations were recorded for students on their final performances.

7. Freedom of Speech Policy – Update and Ratification

- 7.1. Online provisions were added, as outlined in the briefing circulated by DC.
- 7.2. The Board ratified the revised policy.

8. Strategy Session – September Board Meeting

- 8.1. It was noted that the September Board meeting will begin at 5:30pm.
- 8.2. DC proposed key topics for strategic discussion: the future of Higher Education, the future of the building, staff retention, fundraising, and advocacy.
- 8.3. The Chair expressed particular interest in deeper discussion on fundraising and advocacy.
- 8.4. PS requested that student recruitment be included; DC confirmed this would be addressed under the future of Higher Education.
- 8.5. JH suggested including a focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), particularly regarding student demographics and recruitment sources.
- 8.6. DSh raised a point about the site's structure, referencing the three licence agreements that underpin it. He suggested there are different strategic options to consider.
- 8.7. RW endorsed the inclusion of Higher Education as a core topic.
- 8.8. Trustees agreed the overall mission of the organisation should underpin all strategic discussion.
- 8.9. It was proposed that student numbers become a standing item on future Board agendas.
- 8.10. Trustees agreed the strategy day should be framed by the mission of the National Centre.
- 8.11. DC provided further background on the current and potential future use of the building.
- 8.12. The Board discussed the importance of understanding student destinations and career outcomes.
- 8.13. The group also reflected on the context of London drama schools and comparable institutions.
- 8.14. DC informed the Board that a new alumni site is under development to improve engagement and track graduate progression.

ACTION – The Chair, Vice Chair and DC will refine final topics for the September meeting

ACTION – All trustees: submit additional questions for the strategy discussions by 31 July.

9. RAN Committee

- 9.1. EW gave a verbal report (minutes of 3 June 2025 noted).
 - 9.2. RAN received an update on the redundancy process.
 - 9.3. A discussion was held around bringing potential trustee prospects to be identified at the fundraising event.
 - 9.4. Staff survey was discussed and will be issued by the end of July; timing and scope discussed
- No further actions arising.

10. Audit Committee

- 10.1. NC reported verbally (minutes of 17 June 2025 noted).
- 10.2. The committee confirmed that APP governance processes and financial regulations are on track.

ACTION – Audit Committee confirm the timeline for APP governance follow-up after submission.

11. APP and E6 Update

- 11.1. The updated APP timeline was reviewed, and the current draft was noted.
- 11.2. DC briefed the Board on progress with both the Access and Participation Plan (APP) and E6 submission. He asked the trustees to review the circulated timeline and raise any concerns they may have. The Board confirmed its preference for the Audit Committee to sign off on the Sexual Harassment Policy. The final draft of the APP will be circulated to the APP Committee during the week commencing 14 July and to the full Board the following week.
- 11.3. Trustees were invited to submit any outstanding feedback on the previous draft of the APP.
- 11.4. Revised versions of the Safeguarding Policy, Safe Touch and Personal Relationships Policy were presented. Minor updates to the Safeguarding Policy were explained, and no further comments were received.
- 11.5. The Board approved both the Safeguarding Policy, Safe Touch and Personal Relationships Policy.

ACTION – APP Committee review final APP draft and submit feedback by Monday, 21st July.

ACTION – All trustees review APP and submit comments by Saturday, 26th July.

ACTION – DC circulate final APP draft to APP Committee (w/c 14 July) and full Board (w/c 21 July).

ACTION – DC confirm implementation timeline and staff training schedule for all related policies.

12. Finance Committee

- 12.1. SL provided a verbal update; the minutes of the June 18, 2025, meeting were noted.
- 12.2. SL highlighted that the Q3 Management Accounts were more favourable than Q2, as set out in the papers circulated.
- 12.3. The committee reviewed the draft Five-Year Budget in full.
- 12.4. The committee considered upside and downside scenarios, now a regular feature of FSC papers.
- 12.5. The Financial Regulations were reviewed. The committee was satisfied with the current thresholds, but a general tidy-up and revision is being undertaken by SL and JO.
- 12.6. There was a focused discussion on staff remuneration and retention, with both the committee and the executive recognising it as a critical area for organisational sustainability.
- 12.7. The Chair attended the meeting and commented on the level of commitment from both executive and non-executive members. The committee was thanked for its rigour and diligence.

13. Draft Five-Year Budget

- 13.1. The Chair of the Finance Committee presented the draft Five-Year Budget to the Board. A discussion followed on the approach taken, including the rationale for using a five-year cycle and the budgeting process.
- 13.2. The Board approved the draft Five-Year Budget.

ACTION – All trustees: Review the draft budget and submit comments prior to final approval in September.

14. Academic Board

- 14.1. The revised minutes of 24 March 2025 were received.

15. EDI Committee

- 15.1. No meeting since the previous Board.

ACTION – JO to liaise with chairs of the EDI committee to schedule meetings for the 2025-26 academic year.

16. Departmental Reports

Operations & Hires

- 16.1. Trustees inquired about academic days lost to hiring; the SMT confirmed the limit and its impact on students.
- 16.2. Roundhouse collaboration highlighted as positive for students.
- 16.3. Initial discussion held on the use of AI.
- 16.4. Consultancy rate benchmarking discussed; a review was agreed.

Learning & Engagement

- 16.5. Degree team transition progressing well.
- 16.6. South Essex Gymnastics consultation to resume.
- 16.7. Comparative data for recreational programmes will be included in the next Board pack.

CEO Report

- 16.8. CAT funding has been renewed for one year at the previous levels; a sector-wide advocacy campaign has been noted.

ACTION – DC/JO/JH: benchmark industry consultancy rates and propose revisions.

17. Any Other Business

- 17.1. Trustees reminded to complete the OfS survey (link circulated with papers).
- 17.2. A previously restricted donation was accepted as unrestricted after donor agreement.
- 17.3. The Board endorsed the "Can't Buy My Silence" pledge in line with OfS regulations.

ACTION – All trustees: complete the OfS survey by Thursday, 31st July.

Date of next Board meeting - Monday 29 September 2025