

# COUNCIL MINUTES

At a meeting of the Council

held in the University on 17 February 2025

**Present**: Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Ms Nida Ambreen, Professor Edmund Burke, Professor Andrew Edwards, Professor Rhiannon T. Edwards, Dr Ama Eyo-Otung,Mr Eric Hepburn CBE, Dr Aled Llion Jones, Sir Paul Lambert, Ms Julie Perkins, Dr John T. Prabhakar, Mrs Emily Rees, Dr Ian Rees, Mr Gwion Rowlands, Mr Rheon Tomos, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor David Viner, Professor Tim Wheeler DL, Professor Jean White CBE and Ms Elin Wyn

**Apologies:** None received

**In attendance:** Professor Nicky Callow (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience), Professor Mike Larvin (Pro Vice-Chancellor / Head of College of Medicine & Health), Professor Morag McDonald (Pro Vice-Chancellor / Head of College of Science and Engineering), Professor Paul Spencer, (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)), Professor Enlli Thomas (Pro Vice-Chancellor / Head of College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science), Mr Michael Flanagan (Chief Transformation Officer), Mrs Tracy Hibbert (Chief People Officer), Mrs Gwenan Hine (University Secretary), Mrs Patricia Murchie (Chief Marketing Officer), Mr Martyn Riddleston (Chief Financial Officer) and Mr Mike Wilson (Chief Strategy and Planning Officer).

*The meeting was held in Reichel, Bangor University and through Teams.*

**24.39 CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Chair reminded members of Council, and those in attendance, of the strictly confidential nature of discussions taking place at the meeting.

It was noted that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of drafting the minutes. The recording would be destroyed once the minutes had been prepared.

**24.40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. Members were reminded that they should declare any personal, financial, or beneficial interest in any matter under consideration at this meeting prior to that matter being considered.

Dr Aled Llion Jones declared an interest in agendum item 24.25D.

* 1. **DEATHS**

1. The Chair referred to the recent death of Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, noting that his service as Chancellor of the University and as Chair of the University’s Council, left a lasting legacy. Lord Elis-Thomas graduated from Bangor University with a degree in Welsh, followed by a PhD in Welsh. He was also a lecturer in Drama before entering politics. In 2000, in recognition of his contribution to the University and to Wales he was made an Honorary Fellow of the University. In addition to his academic contributions, Lord Elis-Thomas was an active politician who made a significant contribution to Wales.

The Chair noted that it had been a pleasure to follow Lord Elis-Thomas as Chair of Council. He had always been an inspirational friend and supporter of the University. It was noted that the Chair would write to Lord Elis-Thomas’ widow to convey the University’s deepest sympathies.

1. In addition, the Chair referred to the deaths of:

* **Dave Lloyd,** Former lecturer in Mental Health Nursing, School of Health Sciences
* **Professor Ronald Brown,** Professor Emeritus and former Professor of Pure Mathematics
* **Elizabeth Susan Plumpton,** Former Technician in the School of Biological Sciences
* **Professor Andrew Radford**, Former Head of the Department of Linguistics
* **Stuart Stanton,** Honorary Associate and Alumnus in the School of History, Law and Social Sciences
* **Ronald George Tucker,** Alumnus
* **(John) Howard Riley,** Composer and Pianist, and Alumnus

Members fell silent in tribute to their memory.

**24.42 MINUTES**

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2024 were **confirmed.**

Council were advised that the notes of the Away Day held on 26 November 2024 were available within the AdminControl system. The Chair confirmed that the actions arising from the Away Day would be addressed during various agendum items.

1. An action log was provided noting progress on all outstanding Council actions. The Council noted the progress reports and completed actions. The latest update of the Council Workplan was **noted**.

**Executive Board Responsibilities and Organogram (Minute 23.83B)**

The Council **noted** the Executive Board Responsibilities document, and the Organogram.

**Encampment (minute 24.26)**

The Chief Operating Officer provided an update for members on issues relating to the encampment and student protests. **[Reserved business]**

**24.43 RISK MANAGEMENT**

1. Sir Paul Lambert introduced the item on risk management, noting that the Council regularly received the Corporate Risk Register as an appendix to the Audit & Risk Committee. However, it had been decided, to bring the Register as a separate agendum item in order that the Council could consider and be apprised on the highest level risks.
2. The Chief Strategy and Planning Officer introduced the Corporate Risk Radar, and the Strategic Risk Register. The Council were taken through the risks which were at the highest level. It was noted that the Audit & Risk Committee, at its next meeting, would commence its focus on two or three of the corporate risks beyond tolerance. The outcome of the deep dives would be shared with Council, through the Committee’s minutes.

Members welcomed the introduction of the Corporate Risk Radar, noting that it was an effective way of highlighting the highest level risks.

A discussion took place, and the following points were noted:

**[Reserved business]**

Members confirmed the importance of ensuring that the Council are sighted on the Risk Register, and particularly on the highest scoring risks. Thanks was extended to the Chief Strategy and Planning Officer, and the Senior Planning Officer for their work in preparing the reports.

**24.44 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Chief Operating Officer presented the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2023/24, and outlined recent matters discussed at the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee. It was noted that a new Health and Safety Policy, which reflected current legislation, has been approved, and deep dives into overseas travel, and the Prince Madog Research Vessel had been undertaken.

The performance highlights from the Annual Health and Safety Report were noted:

* There was a significant improvement in the number of staff completing the self-assessment and training for computer use, with performance now near target.
* There had been a reduction in the number of new staff completing the online Health and Safety Induction.
* The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that mandatory training was a key focus for the Executive Board. Following a question from the Chair, it was **agreed** that further consideration would be given to the sanctions should a member of staff not complete the mandatory training.
* **[Reserved business]**
* **[Reserved business]**

Following discussion, members welcomed confirmation that the Executive Board is sighted on the matters raised in the report.

It was **agreed** that the Chief Operating Officer would provide an update on Health and Safety induction at the next meeting. It was also **agreed** that the Chief Operating Officer would consider whether the Annual Health and Safety Report could be distributed wider amongst members of staff.

**24.45 INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Chief Strategy and Planning Officer presented the Integrated Performance Report Quarter 1 for information and assurance purposes.

It was noted that, in addition to the two Annual Integrated Performance Reports presented to the Council (2022/23 and 2023/24), regular quarterly reports are presented in order to provide an in-year position statement of the University’s performance.

It was noted that this was an interim Report based on the reporting period 1 August - 31 October 2024 (quarter 1) and focused on critical lead indicators that impact the longer-term performance addressed by annual metrics.

**[Reserved business]**

The Chair thanked the Chief Strategy and Planning Officer for his comprehensive report, and the Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 1 was **noted**.

**24.46 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

1. The Vice-Chancellor provided opening remarks on the financial challenges that the University, and the wider higher education sector was experiencing. It was noted that:

* A significant number of UK universities are under financial pressure and undertaking financial interventions.
* The application rate is falling, with Wales having the lowest application rate (32%) of the UK nations.

**[Reserved business]**

The Vice-Chancellor handed over to the Chief Financial Officer to take members through the financial update.

*Dr Ama Eyo joins the meeting*

1. **Finance Position Update**

The Chief Financial Officer presented his Finance Position Update and noted that the report outlined the actions proposed by the University in response to its current financial position, for presenting to the banks, MEDR and USS.

**[Reserved business]**

Members were informed that MEDR and Welsh Government have been briefed on the position, and communications to all staff and students would be sent on Wednesday morning, followed by an all staff meeting on Wednesday afternoon. The proposed timeline for taking these matters forward was noted, and the importance of ensuring that this was adhered to was emphasised.

The Chief Financial Officer was thanked for his comprehensive update.

**[Reserved business]**

Following discussion, the Council **acknowledged** the requirement for savings and noted that should there be a requirement to consider compulsory redundancies an Extraordinary Council meeting would be held to seek approval at that stage.

1. **Professional Services Redesign**

The Chief Operating Officer noted that, following his update at the Council Away Day in November, further options had been developed with regard to the redesign of Professional Services. Members were informed as to the direction of travel for Professional Services, and proposed structures were outlined.

**[Reserved business]**

The Chief Operating Officer was thanked for his update, and the changes outlined were welcomed.

1. **Academic Review**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Leadership) presented the Council with an update on the work being taken forward on the sustainability of academic schools.

**[Reserved business]**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that, during discussions with Heads of School, the need to ensure that appropriate wellbeing support for staff was available. The Chief People Officer confirmed that a number of initiatives were being taken forward, including additional iAct mental health support training, retirement support, CV writing support etc. In addition, each School and Professional Service would have the support of both Planning and Human Resources professionals to work alongside them as redesigns are taken forward.

Thanks was extended to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Chief Strategy and Planning Officer for their comprehensive report.

**24.47 ESTATES MATTERS**

1. **North Wales Medical School: Capital Programme Business Case**

**[Reserved business]**

Following consideration, the Council **approved** the submission of the Business Case to Welsh Government.

1. **Property Disposals**

The Chief Operating Officer advised Council that as part of the financial sustainability programme the University was undertaking a programme of estate rationalisation, leading to a probable disposal of some of its assets. In particular a discussion had taken place at the recent Finance Committee relating to three possible initial property disposals. It was confirmed that, following a request from the Finance Committee three valuations had been received for each property and these would be placed on the market shortly.

Council were assured that, as per Charity Commission requirements, appropriate and thorough paperwork would be provided when the University was in a position to request approval to sell.

1. **Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation / Friars School**

The Chief Operating Officer noted for the record that he had provided Council with an email update on the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, and Friars School matter, earlier in the month.

**[Reserved business]**

The update was **noted** for the record.

*Ms Sergine Monple, Interim Director of Global Engagement joined the meeting*

**24.48 GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**

1. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) provided the Council with an update on Global Engagement. **[Reserved business]**
2. A discussion took place, and the following key points were made:

**[Reserved business]**

The Chair thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and Ms Monple for the presentation and update.

*Ms Monple left the meeting.*

*Mr Tim McCann, Director of Campaigns and Brand Narrative, Mr Joe Brown, Designdough and Mrs Tracey Roberts, Head of Media and Communications joined the meeting.*

**24.49 BRAND NARRATIVE / COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

1. **Brand Narrative**

The Chief Marketing Officer introduced the update on brand narrative, noting that over the years the University’s brand has been eroded. As a consequence, it had been agreed to run a brand narrative project, with the assistance of an external brand and design agency – Designdough.

Mr McCann advised members that a new global, distinctive brand identity is required for the University, establishing it as a research-intensive institution that is embedded in its location, and honouring its unique Welsh culture and language. Mr Brown added that Designdough, working with the University’s brand team, had undertaken desk based research, competitor analyses and stakeholder engagement with staff, current and prospective students, members of Council and stakeholders to revisit the brand narrative.

A discussion took place, and the following points were made:

* The new brand narrative speaks to the unique identity of the University.
* Employability is one of the key narrative points, along with success.
* The University should celebrate its alumni.
* Research excellence, across all three Colleges, should be a strong thread.
* The University’s strength in sustainability is referenced.
* A Task and Finish Group is currently working on the final brand narratives, but in addition reviews at both the 6 and 12 month stage will be undertaken.
* The Students’ Union have been part of the consultation phase and are members of the Task and Finish Group.

Due to technical difficulties the full presentation was not delivered. However, it was **agreed** that one off briefing would be provided to Council, at a suitable time in the future.

1. **Communications Strategy**

Mrs Roberts presented the newly approved Communications Strategy, and the Chair of Council and Ms Wyn were thanked for their input into the drafting process. Members were informed that, in the current competitive and interconnected higher education landscape, a robust communications strategy is essential for the success and reputation of the University. It was noted that the aim of the Strategy is to ensure that all communication efforts are cohesive, purposeful, and aligned with the broader institutional goals, and that, at its core, the Strategy is designed to enhance how the University conveys its strengths and achievements, supporting its mission and vision. It was noted that an Implementation Plan will be developed, alongside the completed brand narrative.

It is important to emphasise that a Communications Strategy is a whole University responsibility, with marketing and communications key enablers in the success of the institution. It was noted that the Strategy works alongside the Marketing and Recruitment Strategy and feeds in to the KPIs within that document.

Ms Ambreen raised the challenge of ensuring that student communications always reflected the communications going to staff, and it would be useful to consider bringing both strands together. The Chief Marketing Officer noted that the member of staff responsible for student communications now worked more closely with the communications team, in order to ensure more synergy in the messaging.

It was noted that the Staff Bulletin is an important part of the suite of communication tools, receiving around 600-700 clicks per edition. It remained essential for all staff to feed good news through to the communications team, and this was a point which is now included in the managers training offered by the University.

It was noted that in other sectors monthly staff meetings were held to disseminate key messages, and to receive feedback. The Chief Marketing Officer advised that there were plans in place to ensure that meetings such as the Senior Leadership Group were used in this way going forward.

1. The Chair thanked all those who had presented and noted that the Council looked forward to receiving further updates on both aspects in the future.

*Mr McCann, Mr Brown, and Mrs Roberts left the meeting.*

**24.50 STUDENTS’ UNION REPORT**

The Chair of Council invited Ms Ambreen and Mr Rowlands to provide an update from the Students’ Union.

The key points included:

* Progress continues on the development of a new 5 year strategy for Undeb Bangor.
* A Students’ Union Governance Audit will be undertaken by the University’s internal auditors TIAA in February. The audit will assess reporting, assurance and alignment with the Students’ Union constitution. In addition, the Union’s Financial Audit will take place in February.
* A proposed model to move to charging students to join Undeb Bangor Clubs and Societies from September 2025 was presented to the Undeb Bangor Board of Trustees in January.
* A Welsh language student experience survey has been undertaken to gather insights into Welsh students’ experience.
* The Union’s Governance Sub-Committee is overseeing a review of UMCB governance and structure.

Ms Ambreen and Mr Rowlands also provided their comments on the discussions on a number of matters which had taken place **[Reserved business]**

Mr Rowlands also advised the Council that he had accepted a new professional opportunity

that will require him to step down from his position as UMCB President before the conclusion of his elected term, with his last day in the role being 11 of April. Mr Rowlands noted that his decision was not made lightly, as it has been a privilege to serve as UMCB President.

The Chair noted that it had been a pleasure to have Mr Rowlands as a member of Council over the last few months. It was no surprise that he had been offered the new role, as she had seen the maturity with which he had approached his time on Council. On behalf of the Council, the Chair wished Mr Rowlands well in this new role.

The Chair thanked Ms Ambreen and Mr Rowlands for their comprehensive report, noting the importance of ensuring that the Students’ Union remained plugged into the processes which were ongoing.

**24.51 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

1. The University Secretary presented the paper from the Appointment Panel, noting that a recruitment exercise had been undertaken to appoint two new Independent Members to replace Mr Devani and Mrs Perkins. Members were informed that pen portraits of both nominees were included in the paperwork submitted to the Council.

Members were informed that the Appointment Panel recommended that the Council appoint the following individuals as independent members of Council

* Judge Meleri Tudur, for an initial period of 4 years from 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2029.
* Mr Peter Waziri, for an initial period of 1 year from 1 May 2025 – 30 April 2026. **[Reserved business]**

1. Following consideration, the Council **agreed** to appoint Judge Meleri Tudur and Mr Peter Waziri as Independent Members of Council for the period of time noted above.
   1. **HONORARY DEGREES AND FELLOWSHIPS COMMITTEE**
2. The Chair of Council presented the report from the Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee meeting held on 3 February 2025 to consider the nominations for individuals to receive Honorary Degrees during the summer and winter 2025 graduation ceremonies. It was noted that the Committee considered the criteria set out in the relevant Ordinance and the list of degrees available.

Members were informed that the University received 42 nominations for Honorary Degrees for the July and December 2025 graduation ceremonies. In addition, it was noted that three individuals who had been agreed previously, remain on the list, with the Vice-Chancellor’s Office continuing to work to ensure they are able to attend appropriate ceremonies as commitments allow. It was noted that the Committee was submitting 17 individuals for approval by the Council for summer and winter 2025 ceremonies.

1. Following consideration, the Council **approved** the list of 17 individuals to receive Honorary Degrees during the summer and winter 2025 graduation ceremonies.
   1. **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr Eric Hepburn, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 3 February 2025 which were **noted**. Mr Hepburn reported that a number of recommendations from the minutes had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

In addition, the Council **approved** the Annual Reports and Financial Statements from the Menai Science Park Ltd and the North West Wales Management Development Centre Ltd.

**24.54 JOINT ENGAGEMENT FORUM**

The Report of the meeting of Joint Engagement Forum held on 10 February 2025 was **noted**. The Chair welcomed the continued positive engagement and contribution from the Campus Trades Unions, and the update provided on the Social Partnership pilot.

**24.55 WELSH LANGUAGE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

The Report of the meeting of the Welsh Language Affairs Committee held on 28 January 2025 was **noted**. Ms Wyn, as Chair of the Committee, welcomed the positive outcome from the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2023/24

The Council **noted** that the Committee would receive further information at its next meeting on the number of staff within each school who can teach through the medium of Welsh (minute 95).

**24.56 PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE**

The Report of the meeting of the People & Culture Committee held on 12 December 2024 was **noted**. Dr Ian Rees, Chair of the Committee, noted the discussion at the Committee in relation to the Voluntary Severance Policy (minute 111).

**24.57 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

Sir Paul Lambert, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee provided a verbal report from the Committee meeting held on 11 February 2025. It was noted that the meeting had originally been convened to sign off the Financial Statements. However, an update on progress was provided and a further meeting would be arranged in due course once the Statements were completed. In addition, the Committee discussed the Risk Register as outlined at the start of the Council meeting.

**24.58 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD / SENATE**

The Reports from the Executive Board and the Senate were **noted.**

**24.59 RETENTION REPORT**

As outlined earlier in the meeting, the Retention Report was **noted** for assurance purposes. The Council welcomed the progress outlined.

**24.60 SEALING**

The Council **ratified** the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 18.

**24.61 CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chair thanked all those present for an informative and productive meeting, with several key matters being considered and taken forward. Thanks, was also extended to the translation team for their assistance.

Members were reminded of the strictly confidential nature of discussions at the meeting.