



HARTPURY

Minutes of the Meetings of Hartpury University and Hartpury College Boards 10am Wednesday 24th September 2025 Graze 2 and Microsoft Teams

Members	University Board	College Board
Edward Keene	Present (Chair)	Present (Chair)
Alison Blackburn	Present (Co-opted Governor)	-
Patrick Brooke	-	Present
Robert Brooks	Present	-
Gareth Smith	Present (HE Student Governor)	-
Barbara Buck -	-	Present
Andy Collop (Professor)	Present (Vice-Chancellor)	Present (Executive Principal)
Alastair Grizzell	-	Present (Vice-Chair)
Ben Thomas	-	Present (FE Student Governor)
Mary Heslop	-	Present
Henry Hodgkins	Present	-
Thomas Legge	Present (HE Staff Governor)	-
Melissa Orritt	-	Present (FE Staff Governor)
William Marshall	Present	-
Chris Moody	Present	Present
Bill Meredith	-	Present
Lucie Hammond	Apologies	-
Ian Robinson (Professor)	Present (Vice-Chair)	-
Sue Blake	-	Present
Rose Stephenson	Apologies	-
Helen Wilkinson	-	Present
Fiona Reece	Present	-
In Attendance		
Mick Axtell	Present (Chief Operating Officer)	Present (Chief Operating Officer)
Rosie Scott-Ward	Present (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)	-
Gillian Steels	Present (Clerk to the Board)	Present (Clerk to the Board)
Claire Whitworth	-	Present (College Principal)
Lesley Worsfold	Present (Chief People Officer)	Present (Chief People Officer)
Raphaella Knight	-	Present (Deputy FE Student Governor)

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
01/09/25	Welcome	
	The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. The new student attendees introduced themselves.	
	Apologies and Confirmation of Quoracy Apologies as detailed above.	
	It was confirmed the meetings of the University Board and the College Board were quorate.	
	The Chair congratulated the Senior Team on achieving the Specialist University 2026 Award.	

<p>02/09/25</p>	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>The Clerk advised that members' interests would be taken as those disclosed in the Register of Members Interests.</p> <p>Standing Interests – Chair, Vice-Chancellor/Principal and Chris Moody members of both University and College Boards</p>	
<p>03/09/25</p>	<p>Safeguarding Annual Report, Policy and Briefing Presentation Including Update on Office for Students (OfS) Condition of Registration E6: Harassment and Sexual Misconduct</p>	
	<p>The Chief People Officer and the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing took the Boards through the key elements of the report which provided the Boards with an annual update of safeguarding activity giving assurance that Hartpury meet any regulatory and legislative requirements.</p> <p>The annual report outlined key safeguarding issues/highlights affecting Hartpury including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> November 2024 Ofsted's inspection of our residential provision, in accordance with the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) where Hartpury was graded 'Outstanding' across all judgement areas. This was a significant achievement for all involved and demonstrates the resilience of the team building back better to attain such a result after the disappointment of the 2022 inspection. <p>Increased need for student support and pressures on internal services which means staffing structures were kept under review and opportunities taken to ensure that structures reflected student demand for services. The additional Assistant Head of Safeguarding/DDSL (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) post had further enhanced the safeguarding provision positively impacting on the support that can be provided to students.</p> <p>Governors recognised again the significant work which had been undertaken in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), September 2025 were minimal. Statistics and referrals demonstrated an increase in wellbeing and safeguarding referrals. <p>It was noted that changes were awaited in relation to gender, incites national audit and further work concerning work relating to violence against women and girls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sexual Harassment & Misconduct Forum led the work on the new ongoing Office for Students condition of registration (E6) requiring universities and colleges to set out how they would continue to tackle harassment and sexual misconduct that affects their students came into effect on 1 August 2025. Hartpury's Suicide Prevention Strategy was reviewed by the Mental Health & Resilience Forum with external feedback sought from Papyrus (UK charity for the prevention of young suicide). <p>A governor requested that this be circulated to governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of the SOS-UK Drug and Alcohol Impact accreditation. This reflected a two-year commitment to fostering a safer, healthier campus 	

environment by promoting responsible alcohol consumption and adopting a harm reduction approach to drug use. The programme, led by Hartpury Students' Union in collaboration with staff and external partners, focused on understanding student needs and designing tailored initiatives to educate, support, and reduce harm.

A briefing on safeguarding was provided, highlighting its importance and the fact that it was everyone's responsibility. The wider training provided to all staff, and the actions taken to ensure its operation was understood through the issue of the policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education, newsletters, a quiz and annual appraisal process were outlined. It was confirmed that the updated Staff Code of Conduct would be issued to all staff, and that it was sent to all new starters.

**Clerk Oct
25**

The processes for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns were outlined. The key message emphasised to all staff was – “it could happen here”.

The types of abuse were outlined.

It was confirmed that Hartpury's approach to sexual harassment was zero tolerance, and that it was challenged and victims supported. The slight increase in referrals was highlighted and considered. The breaking down of figures into FE and HE to accommodate the different regulatory duties was welcomed.

The Board considered the position in relation to Staff student relationships, noting the variation at different ages and considered the rationale for this. The Chief People Officer confirmed that Staff relationships with under 18-year-old students were prohibited,, 18+ it had been agreed that this would be discouraged in all instances but only prohibited where the staff member was in a position of influence over the student. It was noted that OfS had recommended a ban in all instances and governors queried why the stance at Hartpury differed from this. This had been discussed, but following consideration by the Sexual Harassment & Misconduct Forum the current position had been agreed, in part to avoid pushing such relationships underground where they could not be monitored. It was noted that the position would be kept under review.

An initiative “Rethinking Masculinity” was outlined. This had been used through a small group within the football academy and had a positive impact it was now planned to take it through students in the rugby academy.

Governors queried the monitoring undertaken relating to online abuse. It was confirmed a firewall was in place at that a weekly report on inappropriate access requests was kept under review. IT was recognised that this was an important area to monitor.

Governors commented that the report was comprehensive and provided a good level of assurance on this important area. A governor highlighted the recent passing of the Hillsborough Law and the duty of candour requirements and the duty to disclose. It was confirmed that Hartpury was guided by its advisors in relation to ensuring it was disclosing as required when incidents occurred.

A governor queried if it was possible to benchmark our services and levels of referral with other institutions. The Head of Safeguarding advised that a national online survey of over 16's -18's was undertaken which could be used for comparator purposes every couple of years. This generally indicated Hartpury was broadly in line with the sector. Landex also shared good practice, which was helpful. The Chief People Officer advised there was currently no equivalent for HE students, but that this might come in the future.

	<p>The important and challenging role of staff in this area was recognised and commended. A governor queried the use of the word child, and it was confirmed this was the legal definition of under 18s as children.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Policy was considered and APPROVED.</p>	
<p>03/09/25</p>	<p>Minutes of the meetings</p> <p>The Minutes of the University Board and the College Board meetings held on the 9th July 2025 were agreed by the respective Boards to be true and accurate records.</p>	
<p>04/09/25</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>An action log had been provided updating on issues raised at previous meetings.</p> <p>Demographics – it was confirmed figures used factored in planned house building.</p> <p>Mapping to Industrial Strategy – confirmed ongoing. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised she had visited RAU and they were keen to share good practice and a joined-up approach relating to this and devolution.</p> <p>NSS Outcomes – the full detail would be considered at HE Quest in November</p> <p>Management Accounts – timely provision – confirmed work ongoing to improve.</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation – the next iteration would be considered by the Search & Governance Committee in October.</p> <p>The update was NOTED.</p>	
<p>06/09/25</p>	<p>Vice-Chair Appointment – University and College Board</p>	
	<p>It was noted that the Board considered Chair succession planning at the Board meeting in March 2025 and agreed a range of actions to support succession planning, including building experience of existing governors and exploring with existing governors’ willingness to be considered for other roles. The two current Vice-Chairs as part of this discussion indicated a willingness to stand down if this would support succession planning. These issues were further discussed at the Search and Governance Committee in June and then brought to the July Board. It had been considered that it would be helpful to transition to new Vice-Chairs in September 2025 to further build experience amongst ongoing governors, recognising that both current Vice-Chairs were coming to the end of their Terms of Office as governors in September 2026, and that this would support transition with the current Vice-Chairs potentially able to provide support and mentoring to incoming Vice-Chairs.</p> <p>Governors had therefore contacted to express an interest in the roles – as set out within the Chair and Vice-Chair appointment process.</p> <p>College Board Alastair Grizzell had expressed an interest.</p> <p>University Board Ian Robinson had expressed an interest.</p> <p>Both individuals left the room.</p> <p>The College Board considered the appointment of Alastair Grizzell, noting his current involvement on the Board, engagement with Hartpury and background.</p>	

Alastair Grizzell was APPOINTED Vice-Chair of the College Board from 30th September 2025 for a 2-year term of office, subject to continuing as a governor.

The University Board considered the appointment of Ian Robinson, noting his current involvement on the Board, engagement with Hartpury and background.

Ian Robinson was APPOINTED Vice-Chair of the University Board from 30th September 2025 for a 2-year term of office, subject to continuing as a governor.

Thanks were formally recorded to Chris Moody and Barbara Buck for their contribution as Vice-Chairs.

Alastair Grizzell and Ian Robinson rejoined the meeting.

**07/09/25 KPIs – Confidential Commercial Sensitivity 3 years
KPI Update**

The Boards considered the latest KPI update.

The KPI Update was NOTED.

08/09/25 Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Update

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal provided a presentation which covered:

- External environment
- Devolution update
- Hartpury highlights & updates
- NSS, PTES & League Tables
- Key worries

External environment

(i) College

- New Ofsted inspection framework (from November 2025)
 - > 6,500 responses to consultation
 - 5-point grading scale 'exceptional', 'strong standard', 'expected standard', 'needs attention', & 'urgent improvement'
 - Contribution to skills graded on same 5-point scale
 - Max. number of grades reduced from 20 to 16 (3 per provision type)

Work was ongoing internally to be ready for the new framework. More detail to be provided to College Board and Fe QuEST.

- New FE Commissioner (from Jan 26, 3 years)
 - Ellen Thinnesen, Chief Executive of Education Partnerships Northeast (EPNE)
 - Nursing background, senior College posts & Principal at Sunderland College (2016)
 - One of FE Commissioner's national leaders of further education
- Curriculum & Assessment Review due this term

It was noted she was already a Deputy FE Commissioner. Information on her areas of focus were awaited.

- In-year growth
 - DfE anticipate making payments in Spring 26
 - Hope to use 100-student threshold & 50% rate (will adjust if costs too high)
 - Risks with Colleges!

Hartpury was awaiting more information on this in relation to its enrolment. In 2024/25 Hartpury had benefitted from in year growth payments.

- SEND reform
 - Growing costs & poor outcomes (£11.9bn high need, £2bn transport, £740m capital)
 - Possible legislation Oct 26 (Sept 27 implementation) – making mainstream schools more inclusive
 - EHCPs restricted or replaced?
 - New support & accountabilities?

Further information on the planned reform and implications for Hartpury was awaited.

(ii) University

- Post-16 Skills & HE White Paper
 - Due in the Autumn – timing unknown
 - Regional growth, skills, opportunity
 - Academic quality, civic engagement, efficiency
 - HE finance reform unlikely (indexed fees might be an option)
- First “Super-University”
 - Greenwich & Kent merging into London & South East University Group - Not financially driven?
 - 50,000 students & £600m income
 - Two university brands retained
 - One governing body & V-C (Prof. Jane Harrington)

Wider sector perspectives awaited. It was agreed it would be interesting to see how it would work in practice.

- TEF consultation released (102 pages)
 - Quality enhancement → regulation
 - Improvement → compliance

The detail within the consultation was currently being reviewed and Hartpury would contribute to the consultation. The implications of the proposed changes would need careful consideration. Indications were that the proposals would bring a significant change of approach.

(iii) Devolution Update

The Vice-Chancellor and Executive Principal outlined progress towards devolution which would significantly alter the councils governing Gloucestershire, after c 2028. At this point no option had been identified as a preferred option by the District and County Councils, options included potential configurations with other County Councils. The government’s preference was for a preferred option to be proposed by end of November 2025. Currently it was not clear that this would be achieved. It would impact on future funding, in particular it would be used to channel apprenticeship funding. Hartpury was engaging within the discussions and monitoring the position.

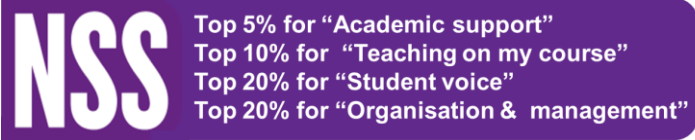

Hartpury Highlights & Updates

Heist Awards 2025

Gold - Best Undergraduate Student Recruitment Campaign
Gold - Best Brand / Reputation Campaign
Bronze - Best Prospective Student Journey

First Senior Women’s Football Team

Early season progressing well.

	<p>Rugby World Cup Hartpury former students' involvement had led to unprecedented coverage, maintaining and raising Hartpury's profile.</p>	
	<p>Horse Trials These had gone well, with significant work from staff to manage the shortage of rain to ensure the ground was fit. Martin Clunes, Chancellor had attended and presented prizes.</p>	
	<p>RDA Partnership -Equine-assisted activities for disabled people Hartpury continued to partner with RDA, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was now a Trustee.</p>	
	<p>RKE Conference This had gone well, with keynote speech from Prof. Keith Stokes (Bath).</p>	
	<p>Golf 1st Portuguese Open & Scottish Open 2nd Southwest Schools Championships 1st Junior & Senior, Devon County Championships</p>	
	<p>Apprenticeship Awards A very positive celebration, hosted by Hartpury.</p>	
	<p>Her Game Too Partnership - Equality in Sport An ongoing area of partnership for Hartpury.</p>	
	<p>Memorandum of Understanding with Sichuan Tourism University This would support opportunities for future exchanges and other links.</p>	
	<p>SMT & Exec Membership An update on membership and portfolios was highlighted.</p>	
	<p>NSS, PTES & League Tables Generally Hartpury had performed well:</p>	
	 <p>NSS Top 5% for "Academic support" Top 10% for "Teaching on my course" Top 20% for "Student voice" Top 20% for "Organisation & management"</p>	
	<p>Access to Learning Resources remained an issue. It was hoped that when the ULH was finished that this would make a significant improvement.</p>	
	 <p>POSTGRADUATE #7 Overall TAUGHT EXPERIENCE 100% Sports Management SURVEY 100% Vet Nursing</p>	
	<p>The League tables gave a more mixed picture, reflecting that resources were generally an element of these. Teaching Quality was generally strong. More work was ongoing to improve the results in the future, but it was recognised it would take time.</p>	
	<p>Times Specialist University of the Year – 2026 was agreed to be a significant</p>	

	achievement by the Board, particularly as Hartpury had only been a university since 2018.
	Concerns
	The Vice-Chancellor and Executive Principal outlined areas of concern and ongoing actions to respond to these.
	The Update was NOTED.
11/09/25	HE Report
	<p>The Deputy Vice-Chancellor highlighted the key aspects of her report.</p> <p>Student recruitment overall student recruitment is largely on target for next academic year. At this stage Agriculture numbers were the highest ever and animal, particularly canine, were doing well. International was below target. Additional support sessions had been put in place to ensure those who had enrolled felt supported. Equine continued to be an area of concern.</p> <p>Student retention continued to align to last year's strong performance, although we were focusing on the students at risk of not returning in September.</p> <p>Structural review had now entered the implementation phase. It would be fully in place for September 2026.</p> <p>Research and knowledge exchange update demonstrated the ongoing progress. REF planning was ongoing, although there were rumours that the national date for this would be delayed.</p> <p>Quality Assurance and Enhancement monitoring of the potential evolution of an integrated quality assessment exercise continued, whilst working on producing end of year data for 2024-25 was ongoing. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor flagged that Hartpury would need to ensure appropriate resources were in place to support the updated integrated quality assessment requirements once these were confirmed.</p>
	The HE Report was NOTED.
	The Board thanked the Team for their work.
12/09/25	FE Report
	<p>The College Principal drew out key aspects of her report.</p> <p>Policy / External Environment: <i>the external environment continued to evolve and the key areas of focus for us included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted update The new framework would launch in November. Skills would now be assessed against a 5-point scale. There would be more focus on inclusivity and leadership. Ensuring there was a clear understanding of each institution's context would be key. • T-Level update Feedback on challenges of the methodology processes for agriculture had been highlighted to the awarding body by Hartpury and another college with significant agriculture T'level provision. It was hoped some changes in process would be put in place. <p>Recruitment: overall numbers enrolled to date were strong and in line with our stretch target. Animal Management and Science T-Levels had recruited successfully in their</p>

first year. Agriculture T-Levels had seen a slight drop off in recruitment since last year due to students not meeting entry grades albeit, we have retained these students on lower-level courses. The financial implications would now be reviewed. Governors queried who set the requirements. The College Principal advised that the entry levels were set by Hartpury, based on guidance, to ensure students were able to achieve the course. It was confirmed Hartpury was committed to the T'level. Access to HE recruitment had been below target and would be reviewed. Admissions processes had worked effectively following changes from the previous year. There were currently 84 agriculture apprenticeships, and it was targeted for more

Continuous Improvement: we continued to drive forward further improvements as reflected throughout the report, focusing on our Quality Improvement Plan actions. Over the summer period, we had continued to drive forward with our 2030 Strategy, specifically further developing our proposal around potential off-site partnership provision.

The FE Report was NOTED.

The Board thanked the Team for their work.

13/09/25 Student & Staff Voice

Staff Governors

Uni Staff Governor – highlighted staff pride in the achievement of Specialist University of the Year. The campus was vibrant with the return of students. Staff were waiting for clarity on the new HE Structure. Staff were keen for ULH to be completed.

College Staff Governor - Catering was an area of interest. Feedback from students following return to campus was positive. The changes to the GCSE processing system had worked well and staff had been able to focus on CPD. Attention now was on retention.

12.30 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor left the meeting.

Student Governors

University Student Governor – planning to work alongside SU to understand a breadth of student views. There had been one meeting with freshers which had shown good engagement. International Students had fed back positively on their welcome at Hartpury. Off campus collaboration with the University of Gloucestershire was progressing.

College Student Governor – importance of catering being suitable for sports training highlighted. Positive feelings to date on return to college.

Governor Link Activity

It was noted that the link Governor schedule had been updated for 2025/26 and issued to staff and governors

It was noted that a number of governors had attended the Equine events over the summer and a number of governors had attended the Research Conference in July – with the programme and presentation shared with all governors.

The Chair continued his routine meetings with the Clerk and Vice-Chancellor over the summer.

A number of governors had indicated they would be attending the Graduation ceremonies.

It was noted that involvement in the link governor scheme helped to triangulate the information provided at the meetings.

09/09/25	Management Accounts –July 25	
	<p>It was noted that the operating surplus for the period was £3,171k, significantly ahead of the budgeted surplus of £488k. This favourable variance had been driven primarily by the recognition of key grants, including £500k from the Kildare Trust (P7) (February) and £250k from the Elizabeth Creek Trust (P10) (May). Additional grants, such as those awarded by HCUT (£340k) & the Garfield Weston trust (£250k), were fully recognised in P12 (July) once the relevant criteria were met. Alongside these grants, the surplus was further supported by amendments to course fees (placements) and slightly higher student numbers, which in turn boosted HE and FE income beyond budget expectations. It was highlighted that there were extra costs at the year-end relating to holiday pay accrual. Governors noted that some institutions changed their holiday year to avoid this issue. The Chief Operating Officer advised that the issue did not impact on the banking covenants, and that at this stage there were no plans to change the holiday year.</p> <p>The Month-end cash balances stood at £6,482k. The University retained access to a £1m overdraft facility, which had not been utilised during this fiscal year. The University remained in full compliance with its bank covenants and was forecasted to continue to do so. The OfS was formally notified that our year-end liquidity days were expected to fall below the minimum requirement of 30 days in November 2024, while final calculations were still pending, initial calculations indicate that our liquidity days as at the end of the year were above the 30-day threshold.</p> <p>Governors commented on the increased level of bad debt provision. It was noted that in part this was a change in methodology. It was confirmed that a more detailed report on debt would come to a meeting of SFR in 2026.</p> <p>It was confirmed that other queries by a governor on the Management Accounts had been responded to by the Director of Finance.</p>	<p>Feb/May 2026 COO</p>
	<p>The University Board and College Board NOTED the Management Accounts.</p> <p>12.40 Raffaella Knight and Ben Thomas left the meeting</p>	
10/09/25	Commercial Confidential Item– 3 years	
	12.55pm Alison Blackburn and Tom Legge left the meeting	
14/09/25	<p>Governance Update</p> <p>The report covered OfS Governance Changes and the report into the failings at Dundee University.</p> <p>Comparison information with Hartpury practice was provided for assurance.</p> <p>Governors reflected on how they could be assured at the processes in place at Hartpury. It was noted that recent finance training, the opportunity to review the Accounts with the external auditors, governor link activities, governor training and briefings, and governors ongoing challenge were key parts of this. It was noted that the report, plus any issues raised by governors would be considered in more detail by the Search and Governance Committees in October, with other additional assurance processes considered.</p>	<p>S&G Oct 2025</p>

	The Governance Update was NOTED.	
15/09/25	Application of Hartpury Seal* None.	
16/09/25	Any Other Business None	
	The meeting closed at 1pm	

APPROVED NOV 25