## Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Minute ref.</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Wellbeing:</strong> A report to Council at the meeting of 4 July 2024.</td>
<td>23/285</td>
<td>NB</td>
<td>Council 04 July 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Register: to schedule Strategy &amp; Governance Committee to receive the institutional risk register twice per year, for an indication of the direction of travel to be included on the register for risks outside of tolerance and report to ARCC on these risks and their return to appetite.</td>
<td>23/292</td>
<td>MW/AW</td>
<td>ARCC 7 February 2024, S&amp;G: 18 April 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Students: future developments will be reported within the development of RH2030s and to SER Committee.</td>
<td>23/322</td>
<td>ZK</td>
<td>To SER Noted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Committee structure: for further discussion by circulation with feedback to Council via Strategy &amp; Governance Committee.</td>
<td>23/332</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Recruitment: to provide information to members regarding the skills required and the process, and to review, and if possible, tighten the recruitment timescales.</td>
<td>23/336</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Group: Update Council about changes for the 2024/25 recruitment round.</td>
<td>23/216</td>
<td>TB</td>
<td>Verbal Update 22 February 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKVI: Report will be provided to Council. (Originally due from UKVI end September 2023 – University still waiting)</td>
<td>23/219</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankings and Reputation: The subject of February Council briefing, with Environmental Sustainability deferred to 16 May 2024.</td>
<td>23/220</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>5.15pm 22 February 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSS: SER then Council to receive an update on progress of the NSS.</td>
<td>23/234</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>16 May 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of Speech: The Chair of Council to formally write to the SU Board of Trustees, on confirmation of the OfS Condition of Registration for Freedom of Speech</td>
<td>23/100</td>
<td>DMH</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of Speech: Council to review the work being undertaken to ensure that real openness in debate is being supported and the Code of Practice and processes are in place and implemented.</td>
<td>23/102</td>
<td>JS/AB</td>
<td>Update 15 February 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matters Arising: Student Accommodation: A report of the strategy to address the short-term demand for student accommodation for 2024/25.</td>
<td>23/442</td>
<td>DW</td>
<td>23 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial Intelligence/AR/Immersive Technology: will form part of the discussion of the development of the new strategy at the November Strategy meeting.</td>
<td>23/689, 29/1279, 22/1239, 23/176</td>
<td>IS</td>
<td>22 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Development: A paper about commuter students and how the university could better meet their needs including the UG/PG split and any demographics specific to the commuter student group. (Pillar 1 update)</td>
<td>23/079</td>
<td>TB/ZK</td>
<td>23 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar 1 Update: include in the next annual Pillar 1 report the Pillar 4 projects which are symbiotic</td>
<td>23/113</td>
<td>TB</td>
<td>February 2024 (no further pillar reports)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action from current meeting**

**Action completed since last meeting:**

## Approvals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved at this meeting</th>
<th>Minute ref.</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPROVED the minutes of the meetings held on 5 October 2023 (M23/202-23/265)</td>
<td>23/270</td>
<td>11 November 2023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVED the going concern assessment and for the letter of representation to be approved by circulation between the Chairs of Audit Risk and Compliance (ARCC) and Finance Committees and the Chair of Council</td>
<td>23/293</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>11 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVED the revised 2023/24 budget recommended by Finance Committee</td>
<td>23/304</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>11 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREED the CFO to work with the Chair of Finance Committee to approve the detailed AFR workbook for submission to the OfS by the due date, 1 December 2023. Finance Committee would receive the final submission at its meeting in January 2024</td>
<td>23/308</td>
<td>MW/IW</td>
<td>11 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVED the basis for the AFR23 submission.</td>
<td>23/310</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>11 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVED the report of compliance with the Prevent Duty and AGREED signing of the accountability declaration.</td>
<td>23/317</td>
<td>NB</td>
<td>11 November 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVED a first Special Resolution to amend the Statutes that in accordance with section 7 of the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College Act 1985 Council agrees that the University Statutes be amended as outlined in the attached amended Statutes.</td>
<td>23/329</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>11 November 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Council
23 November 2023
09:30-11:45
Sandby Room, Cumberland Lodge

M23/267 – 23/353

Minutes

Present:
Dame Margaret Hodge (Chair of Council) 
Ann Ewing (Vice Chair of Council) 
Dr Donna Brown 
Dame Sally Dicketts 
Professor Michael Farthing 
Sarah Honeycombe 
Hannah Hockin 
HHJ Khatun Sapnara 
Sarah King 
Gerry O’Hagan 
Nick Perryman (Vice Chair of Council) 
Professor Julie Sanders (Vice-Chancellor and Principal) 
Sharanya Sivarajah 
David Walker 
David Williams 
Balram Veliah 
Ian Wilson

Apologies:
Simon Davis 
Professor Bob Fitzgerald

In attendance:
Professor Tracy Bhamra 
Dr Nick Barratt 
Professor Mark Fellowes 
Professor Zainab Khan 
Mary White 
Wendy Spencer 
Andrew Boggs 
Pauline Martin 
Rikke Jensen
Provost and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) 
Executive Director of Student Journey 
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning & Resources) 
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience) 
Chief Financial Officer 
Secretariat Assistant (Secondary minutes) 
University Secretary 
Executive Officer for Council (Minutes) 
UCU (from 09.50am Item 8)

1. **WELCOME and APOLOGIES**

Members were welcomed to the meeting. The University Secretary NOTED that the Chair of Council commenced the second term of office on 22 November 2023 as agreed by Council and confirmed at the meeting on 16 February 2023 (ref 23/54). The second term of office will end on 31 July 2027.

NOTED apologies received from Professor Bob Fitzgerald due to teaching commitments abroad and from Simon Davis.
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
   There were none.  

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
   APPROVED the minutes of the meetings held on 5 October 2023 (M23/202-23/265)  

4. **MATTERS ARISING**
   NOTED matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the agenda.  
   - Minute Ref 23/219: The outstanding UKVI audit report had not yet been received.  

5. **REPORT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL**
   There were none.  

6. **UN-STARRING OF ITEMS**
   Item 19, addressing commuter students was unstarred for discussion.  

**MAJOR BUSINESS**

7. **VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL’S UPDATE**
   RECEIVED and NOTED the Vice-Chancellor and Principal’s report.  
   NOTED the Vice Chancellor attended the Magna Charta Observatory Conference on and took part in a ceremony in which Royal Holloway became a signatory of the Magna Charta, following Council’s approval of the application at its meeting in February 2023 (minute ref.23/62-63). The principles of the Magna Charta resonate strongly with our RH2030s strategic ambitions and the intention to be a university of social purpose.  
   NOTED the update on arrangements to support students and staff following the 7 October attacks in Israel, with awareness of our specific regulatory responsibilities under the Counter Terrorism Act and Prevent Duty and for promoting academic freedom with responsibility. The agreed university processes for impactful world events were mobilised and a Live Issues Group, with membership from across the University, meets twice each week. The Group is chaired by the University Secretary who is also a member of a UUK working group on campus issues and the Vice Chancellor and Principal attends regular UUK calls with fellow Vice Chancellors.  
   NOTED senior leadership developments and the imminent announcement of the appointment of Professor James Bennett as Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Creative Industries) reflecting our commitment to innovation and our strengths in the ever-evolving landscape of the creative industries.  

8. **STUDENT WELLBEING**
   RECEIVED and NOTED the report on the Mental Health Charter and wellbeing work, updated following review at the Strategy & Governance Committee meeting on 2 November 2023.  
   DISCUSSED whether there was currently sufficient resource and space to support students with declared disabilities including those who were neuro divergent.  
   NOTED that students had greater awareness of the support that was available, and data was being collected and monitored to identify trends and early responses. The use of building space was being reviewed and there was a commitment to being inclusive by design.
DISCUSSED the suicide prevention work and mental health charter aimed at ensuring an institution wide with the action plan expected to be completed by the end of 2023. A formal closure report of the student suicide review, where most actions were already closed, would be completed by March 2024.

09.50am Rikke Jensen, UCU observer, arrived

DISCUSSED concern for the additional training and responsibilities being placed on personal tutors, but the Mental Health Charter Framework would provide clarity on how, when and where to flag raise concerns and improve awareness of the help provided by Professional Service staff in supporting the students.

DISCUSSED the review of our GP services, quality of relationships with the NHS health providers and pressures on the NHS impacting the level of service.

DISCUSSED the lack of mandatory training for staff, flagged in the Risk Register, would be investigated as mental health and first aid training was available and possibly needed more clear communication to staff.

AGREED to report to Council at the meeting of 4 July 2024.

9. COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS

9.1 Remuneration Committee

NOTE D the annual report of the committee providing assurance that the committee has discharged its responsibilities as required by the CUC Higher Education Remuneration Code

9.2 Audit Risk & Compliance Committee

RECEIVED the annual report of the Committee’s work including the work of the internal and external auditors and the risk register.

NOTE D that the Committee had not yet signed off the financial statements for year ended 31 July 2023 as the external auditors work had not yet completed.

QUESTIONNED whether the internal audit findings reported from individual audit reviews, in relation to student recruitment strategy and compliance with the UUK Accommodation Code of Practice, were indicative of any issue with governance processes.

NOTE D that the flagging of issues in internal audit reports was a sign of good governance and was followed up by close monitoring and assurance provided by management and there had been a number of areas of closer monitoring:

- Student residences compliance works to comply with the UUK Accommodation Code of Practice. UUK have requested that the audit is repeated in 2023/24.
- international student recruitment had been an issue for the HE sector impacted by in year government changes to visa requirements and NHS surcharges and general cost-of-living increases.

DISCUSSED the eight risks outside of appetite, which needed review and prioritisation and demonstration of how these risks would be returned to within tolerance.

REQUIRED to schedule Strategy & Governance Committee to receive the institutional risk register twice per year, for an indication of the direction of travel to be included on the register for risks outside of tolerance and report to ARCC on these risks on their return to appetite.
NOTED the ARCC annual report and that the committee had concluded there was reasonable assurance that the University had an adequate and effective system of risk management governance and internal control.

10. **FINANCE**

10.1 RECEIVED the going concern assessment, key assumptions, key financial sustainability risks and mitigations noting the going concern concept and that the audit of the financial statements was not yet complete.

NOTED that variance on international student recruitment compared to the July budget had required proposal of a revised budget for approval at this meeting. The going concern assessment presented was evaluated on the basis of both the July approved budget and the revised budget.

DISCUSSED clearance on the loan covenants, the required monitoring of the income and expenditure budget and focus on cost reduction.

APPROVED the going concern assessment and for the letter of representation to be approved by circulation between the Chairs of Audit Risk and Compliance (ARCC) and Finance Committees and the Chair of Council.

10.2 RECEIVED the Financial Statements 2022/23 which were still subject to full audit clearance with two areas outstanding: the valuation of Rusham Park and USS provision.

DISCUSSED the process for Council approval of the final financial statements; for review by ARCC and then, with the Chair of Council's agreement, would be approved by circulation to the members of Council.

10.3 RECEIVED the proposal of a revised 2023/24 budget following the emergence of a number of risks since the approval of the budget in July 2023. The materialised risks included a shortfall in student recruitment, particularly international students, in addition to revenue expenditure required for a programme of essential estates compliance work.

NOTED the revised budget was for a deficit budget of £5.9m, compared to the budget surplus of £2.5m approved by Council and NOTED that clearance on the loan covenants would be closely monitored in addition to cost control.

DISCUSSED whether there were any alternatives to the proposed deficit budget, NOTING the mitigating actions already taken and effort by staff to cut costs where possible. The aim would still be to achieve break even at the year end.

DISCUSSED the steps being taken to improve the planning cycle over a three year period would change the culture and devolve responsibility for budgetary control, as discussed by Finance Committee and at the 22 November strategy meeting.

APPROVED the revised 2023/24 budget recommended by Finance Committee.

10.4 RECEIVED and NOTED the current year Financial Report.

10.5 RECEIVED a paper detailing the basis for the Annual Financial Return to the OfS, NOTING the OfS process of validation and verification of the AFR workbook, prior to final sign off of the return by the Vice Chancellor & Principal by 22 January 2024.

DISCUSSED that with the RH2030s strategy in development the forecast prepared for this submission was currently at a high level.

AGREED the CFO to work with the Chair of Finance Committee to approve the detailed AFR workbook for submission to the OfS by the due date, 1 December 2023. Finance Committee would receive the final submission at its meeting in January 2024.
DISCUSSED the challenge to develop a strategy that will deliver funds for reinvestment with the intention of achieving a return to a 6% annual surplus.

APPROVED the basis for the AFR23 submission.

11. COMPLIANCE
Ian Wilson left the meeting for 2 minutes during this item

RECEIVED the annual report of Prevent engagement and data return to provide assurance to Council of compliance with the Prevent Duty, as a statutory requirement. The annual accountability declaration would be completed by the Chair of Council for submission, with the data return, to the OfS.

NOTED the reminder re Prevent responsibilities from Robert Halfon in relation to freedom of speech. The University continued to review its processes in response to the revised Freedom of Speech legislation working with the Students’ Union.

NOTED that the risk associated with non-compliance with the Prevent Duty was considered within the institutional risk assessment and levels of risk are overseen by Executive Board.

NOTED training is provided for student facing staff in the academy and Professional Services including the Executive Board and a training session for Council was being scheduled for Autumn 2024.

DISCUSSED increased awareness of the potential for heightened concerns resulting from global issues. Working closely with RHSU, international students received an enhanced induction including addressing differences in culture.

APPROVED the report of compliance with the Prevent Duty and AGREED signing of the accountability declaration.

12. STRATEGY
12.1 RECEIVED a report on our growing number of Commuter Students (Pillar 1) which would be shared widely within the University to improve understanding and discussion on the rethink of our culture, pedagogy, and organisation with the aim of improving their experience and achievement to encourage and support this cohort.

11.00am Balram Veliath left the meeting

AGREED that the definition and image of Commuter students need to be more strongly defined and there would be further discussions about how to respond and improve our support for our students through timetabling, facilities, support for diverse groups of students, design of the student learning experience and extracurricular activities.

DISCUSSED that the circumstances of students were changing not only for commuter students but also for any student that needed to work part time alongside full-time study.

AGREED future developments will be reported within the development of RH2030s and to SER Committee.

11.24 Sarah Honeycombe left the meeting
12.2 RECEIVED the first annual Pillar 5 report of the progress to date of the three core projects of the People Strategy “Creating Value Through and For Our People:
- to become a values-led work organisation – updated at the Council Strategy meeting,
- development of a consistent workload model/approach,
- review of the Academic Promotion process.

NOTED that the second project, was proving challenging. The Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) slowed progress in the gaining an understanding of any workload models currently in use in the University and it was proving difficult to locate publicly available information on the policy and practices of other institutions.

NOTED the review of the Academic Promotion process was progressing well. The Steering group agreed actions for changes to the process for 2024 and some changes to be implemented in 2023 and three working groups continued to work on further major review work on; the decision making process; decision making reference materials and to ensure the clarity and transparency of the arrangements for promotion process and consistency in its operation.

11.26 Sarah Honeycombe returned to the meeting

13. SPECIAL RESOLUTION

23/327 NOTED the meeting remained quorate for the Special Resolution.

23/328 RECEIVED changes to Statutes to update nomenclature of some roles in the governance framework, now approved in principle by Privy Council.

23/329 APPROVED a first Special Resolution to amend the Statutes; that in accordance with section 7 of the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College Act 1985 Council agrees that the University Statutes be amended as outlined in the attached amended Statutes.

23/330 NOTED governing documents, at review, need to address the distinction between the University (Royal Holloway) and the University of London.

14. UNIVERSITY SECRETARY’S UPDATE

23/331 14.1 NOTED the verbal regulatory and legislative update:
- Guidance from Robert Halfon (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills, Further and Higher Education) to Universities that there was no change to the Prevent responsibility requirements and no requirement to report Prevent activities to the OfS under Condition 3(i).
- A letter to UKRI from Michelle Donelan, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee appointments.

23/332 14.2 DISCUSSED possible changes to the Council committee structure, for further discussion by circulation with feedback to Council via Strategy & Governance Committee.

23/333 14.3 NOTED the update on recruitment for 2024/25 the “dual process” agreed by Strategy & Governance Committee and the intention to appoint new Council members by July 2024. Consideration would also be given to co-options onto Council Committees where permitted.
NOTED the skill areas required and members were invited to propose names of potential Council members from their personal networks which will progress alongside the open application process being run by Nu-Role.

NOTED that the process would be thorough and open and aimed at attracting the widest applicant pool to improve Council’s diversity, in all its aspects, including neurodiversity.

AGREED to provide information to members regarding the skills required and the process, and to review and, if possible, to tighten the recruitment timescales.

11.39 Balram Veliath returned to the meeting

STARRED ITEMS FOR REPORT AND FORMAL APPROVAL

15.* REPORTABLE EVENTS
Since the last meeting there were no reportable event notified to the OfS under condition 3(i).

16.* REPORT OF DECISIONS AGREED BY CIRCULATION
There were none.

17.* ACADEMIC BOARD
NOTED the annual report from Academic Board.

18.* MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT
APPROVED the annual Modern Slavery Statement.

19.* STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PLAN 2024/25
NOTED the update on student accommodation planning for 2024/25, unstared for discussion, and questioning:

- if our accommodation commitment to students might affect potential students including international students?
- How our accommodation offer compared to our others in the sector?
- If more programmes were being delivered in Central London would this affect demand for space in student halls?

DISCUSSED there had been no change to our offer of a guarantee of accommodation to first year students and, when there was availability, the offer of accommodation was extended to second and third year students. There was currently no issue anticipated for student accommodation in 2024/25. International student numbers for 2022/23 were lower than planned and with an increasing number of commuting students it was estimated that there was sufficient accommodation in our residences for the next two years. This included the potential of 212 rooms, currently not in use, which with appropriate costings and approval could be brought back in to use.

NOTED that no decision had been taken about central London expansion.

NOTED implementation of the Rent Reform Act could result in less private rented student accommodation in the area, but there were other options for provision to meet a range of accommodation needs.

20.* COUNCIL REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2023/24
NOTED the Register of Interests reported by Council Members for 2023/24 and any potential conflicts of interest which would be placed on the Council web page.

21.* COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
APPROVED Terms of Reference for the following Council Committees:
- People Committee: Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing.

22.* SEALING OF DOCUMENTS
NOTED the College seal has not been applied since 31 July 2023.

OTHER MATTERS

23. COMMITTEE REPORTS
NOTED there were no reports from the Chairs of Council Committees outside of the main Council business.

24. ANNOUNCEMENTS
None.

25. OTHER BUSINESS
There was none.

26. DATES OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETINGS
On Campus unless indicated otherwise:
- 22 February 2023, 15:00-17:00 and briefing session: Reputation and Rankings Briefing 17.15-16.30
- 16 May 2024, currently 17:00-19:00 and briefing session: Environmental Sustainability 15.00-16.30. NOTE this is a possible date for a half day Strategy session in addition to the Council meeting. If so it would start circa 10.00am to circa 500pm and the Environmental Sustainability briefing would be rescheduled to an MS Teams meeting on a new date tbc.
- 4 July 2024, 17:00-19:00 Briefing session tbc 15.00-16.30

THE EXHIBITION BOOK
The following minutes were in the Exhibition Book as a separate document and NOTED.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EB1</th>
<th>MINUTES OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minutes designated &quot;unsigned&quot; are those not yet signed off by the Committee but approved by the Committee Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students, Education and Research Committee 8 June 2023</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee 12 June 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee 15 June 2023</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategy &amp; Governance Committee 14 September 2023</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Finance Committee 14 September 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee 2 October 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students, Education and Research Committee 11 October 2023 (not yet available)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People, Staff Development, Reward and Wellbeing Committee 2 November 2023 (not yet available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy &amp; Governance Committee 2 November 2023 (not yet available)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB2</td>
<td>MINUTES OF ACADEMIC BOARD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Minutes of the meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 22 March 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 7 June 2023</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EB3</th>
<th>JNCC MEETING MINUTES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Minutes of the JNCC (UCU) meetings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 24 April 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 20 June 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Minutes of the JNCC (GMB and Unite) meetings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3 April 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 20 June 2023</td>
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Dame Margaret Hodge DBE MP
Chair of Council

Date 22 February 2024