

“Let’s stay in contact!”

.....is a well-used phrase of good intention which will carry greater significance as we emerge from the impact of the global pandemic. It will also have greater importance for the University of Aberdeen when directed towards students, staff, alumni, the wider community, our partners here and overseas, and all other stakeholders as we set off on our next journey. *“Staying in contact”* is also relevant in acknowledging and cherishing the ancient heritage of the University, supporting our ongoing activities and our future ambitions in pursuit of excellence across every aspect of the University’s being. Visible and regular communication, a willingness to listen blended with a togetherness created by collective understanding, ownership and a ‘can-do’ culture are essential ingredients for success within any organisation regardless of sector.

I’m George Yule, I was born and live in Aberdeen, but have travelled the World during a career that began with an engineering apprenticeship after leaving Aberdeen Grammar School in 1969 and which continues to the present day as Chairman of two local businesses and a non-executive Director of two international companies. I’ve experienced at first hand the highs and lows associated with overcoming hardship, being on the ‘front-line’ and facing up to various forms of challenge whilst demonstrating and delivering integrity and equality.

I’m married, with four boys and two girls in our immediate family, with my wider family of three brothers and their families also resident in Aberdeen. I’m proud of this region’s achievements over the centuries but also frustrated at times by its lack of drive to build upon an entrepreneurial spirit that is woven within the fabric of the NE of Scotland – and it is the latter which is the primary driver for my involvement with the University of Aberdeen.

I am on the Board of the UOA Development Trust, Chair the Business Advisory Forum within our Business School and was a University appointee as the 1st Chairman of Aberdeen Sports Village when the project started as a vision in 2007, so my association with the University of Aberdeen spans several years. It is no co-incidence these roles align with my main passions i.e., supporting people, lifelong learning, and sport. Although I do not have a university education, I fully endorse *“being the best you can be”* in every aspect of life as an individual, part of a cohort, group of colleagues/friends, an organisation or institution. My career has at times required me to confront and overcome a myriad of challenges (*in business and life*) and it is this experience and lessons learned that I bring to Court to ensure we deliver positive outcomes for University of Aberdeen and its stakeholders.

I’m told (*by others**) that my strengths include inspiring those I work alongside to **deliver** our objectives, and whereas the University has a well-earned reputation for teaching and research outputs, the visionary 2040 campaign will add value for the institution, provide benefit for all stakeholders, and further enhance the University’s sustainability, reputation, ranking and campus experience, resulting in positive experiences for students and staff whilst meeting future recruitment, widening access and financial KPI’s.

** includes e.g., Presidency of the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, Vice Chairman of Aberdeen FC, and AFC Community Trust (during the Kingsford Stadium campaign) and leadership of various industry, civic and 3rd sector organisations.*

The World, our society, and the needs of businesses in 2021 onwards have significantly changed because of COVID-19, and I believe the University’s 2040 targets will need to be revisited for appropriateness as our aims and objectives will not happen by listing their inclusion in “a promotional brochure or video” in a World which has changed so much, there will inevitably be hurdles to overcome but collectively and by working in unison we will succeed!

It would be inappropriate to guarantee 100% successful outcomes under my leadership (*ps: I’m unaware of anyone who can offer such assurances*) but what I will offer Court, the University, its Schools, our students and staff is a commitment and work ethic alongside a track record of leadership over two decades working

closely with others from various walks of life, and a 'can-do' mindset that I will promote across campus together with open access and an un-wavering determination to deliver positive results.

I retain an expansive network of professional contacts at all levels to be used 'ambassadorial-style' to promote the University of Aberdeen and to create connectivity and ongoing engagement at local, national, and international levels in accordance with our future institutional aspirations.

I'm less inclined to speak further about my past achievements, awards, roles, and profile as these are now consigned to history but if needed can be accessed at www.bgeconsultancy.co.uk

I recognise the importance of the University's heritage dating back to 1495 which will **always** be there, but I do firmly believe that our future focus must be to reconcile our teaching and research activities with the needs of 21st Century life and ensure we prepare our students for their own future with a higher education outcome of quality that combines intellect with access to best-in-class research and resources, ongoing support for their well-being (*i.e. be an 'ear or voice' where needed*), a sense of community togetherness and overall positive University of Aberdeen campus experience augmented by core personal values which are aligned with climate control, equality and an empathy for others less fortunate.

University Staff, particularly those in academic, research and professional services have an important part to play ensuring that we achieve all we set out to do, they need to be part of the journey too and we need to acknowledge their inputs, recognise their specific needs, and offer motivation, support and involvement in delivering our objectives.

Whether looking back at our ancient heritage, dealing with the present, or addressing our future needs and challenges, it will require an understanding of (not only) what we have or what's needed now...but also where we want the University to be positioned in a sustainable future....."**Let's stay in contact**"