The 308th meeting of the General Council was held in the Linklater Rooms on 6 December 2017. The Convener of the Business Committee, Mr Nigel Lindsay, was in the Chair.

1. DRAFT MINUTES

The draft Minutes of the 307th Statutory Meeting were approved.

2. REPORT FROM THE CONVENER OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

2.1 The Convener of the Business Committee, Mr Nigel Lindsay, reported on the activities of the Business Committee during the past year.

2.2 The Convener updated the members on the question raised by Dr David Galloway at the last Statutory Meeting, in May. Dr Galloway was invited to attend the Committee meeting in June which was followed by an e-mail conversation involving Professor Mike Greaves. Professor Steve Heys, the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition, was invited to address the Business Committee at the September meeting.

2.3 The Principal gave his annual report at the September meeting which covered a breadth of topics, including: student numbers, internationalisation, Brexit, and the success of the University of Aberdeen Chamber Choir.

2.4 The Rector, Maggie Chapman, addressed the Committee in November. She spoke about her experience over the last three years and highlighted everything that makes the University unique.

2.5 Following the changes to the composition of Court, the Business Committee will have a Strategy Day in February. The purpose of the away day will be to define the role of the General Council and its Business Committee following the conclusion of the role of elected Assessors.

2.6 The Convener spoke about the process of appointing a new Principal. A number of Business Committee members met the recruitment consultants to share their thoughts on what qualities a suitable candidate should have.

3 PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR’S REPORT

3.1 The Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Ian Diamond, was unable to attend the meeting in person. His report was pre-recorded and played on the night.

3.2 The Principal gave the General Council his annual update. He began by mentioning winter graduation ceremonies and welcoming eight new honorary graduates to the Aberdeen family, including Professor Deborah Terry, Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Psychology of Curtin University. He highlighted the importance of strategic relationships with other universities and the University’s commitment to a global focus on increasing knowledge and understanding.

3.3 The Principal spoke about a number of challenges that the University is currently facing, in particular, issues related to Brexit:

- Lack of clarity on citizenship status of staff and their families and students coming from the EU countries;
- Lack of information on future fee requirements for students. The University of Aberdeen has the highest proportion of EU students in Scotland and so the implications for student numbers are significant.

3.4 The Principal talked about the University’s achievements and success stories:
• Teaching has gone to new highs and student satisfaction levels have increased;
• Student support has improved;
• Enhanced use of technology with more courses being offered online, including new programmes in public health and clinical nutrition;
• The Qatar campus was officially opened in October 2017 with over 100 students welcomed in the first cohort;
• Potential collaboration between the Medical School and a university in Sri Lanka;
• The University of Aberdeen Chamber Choir success;
• Annual Celebration of Carols which this year will take place both in Aberdeen and London and include the exclusive premier of The Three Ships, written by Sir Tony Robinson with music by Professor Paul Mealor;
• The University’s women’s powerlifting team finished fourth in July’s International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) World University Cup. Aberdeen graduate Zoey Clark also won silver as part of the 4x400m team at the World Championships in August. In addition, a second year engineering students, Kim Beattie won a GB silver medal in double mini trampoline at the FIG Trampoline Gymnastics World Championships in Sofia, Bulgaria.

4 CHOIR OF KING’S COLLEGE ABERDEEN

Professor David J Smith, Master of Chapel and Ceremonial Music, gave a presentation on the work of the Choir of King’s College, Aberdeen, and their most recent CD, Exiled: Music by Philips and Dering. The recording will raise money for research on ‘broken heart syndrome’, a condition where a person’s heart suffers physical symptoms similar to a heart attack as a result of intense emotional drama.

5 CHANGES TO THE COMPOSITION OF COURT

The University Secretary gave an update on the recent changes to the composition of Court.

6 NOTICE OF MOTION TO VARY STANDING ORDERS

Under the terms of Standing Order number 30, the Clerk and Registrar gave notice of proposal to amend Standing Order number 19 at the General Council meeting in May. At present the Standing Orders of the Business Committee make reference to the General Council Assessors, positions which no longer exist following amendments to the composition of the University Court. The new composition of Court provides that at least four independent members of Court shall be members of the General Council. The change to Standing Orders will seek to review the composition of the Business Committee. The current working of Standing Order 19 is as follows:

“19. The Business Committee shall consist of not more than twenty-seven members: The Principal, the four Assessors, and the Clerk of Council (if a member of the General Council), ex officio, with not more than twenty-one elected members.”

7 NOTICE OF FROM THE CLERK AND REGISTRAR

The Clerk and Registrar, as required by Standing Orders, advised the General Council that the current terms of office of nine members of the Business Committee would end on 30 September 2018. Nominations for the positions would close at noon on Friday 30 March. If more nominations were received than vacancies, an election would be held at the Summer Statutory Meeting.

8 NOTICE OF THE 309TH STATUTORY MEETING

The 309th Statutory meeting will be held on Saturday 26 May 2018, this being the weekend of the 2018 May Festival. The meeting will be timed to coincide with an event and further details will be announced once available.