

**Paper 1**

**Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee Meeting  
held on Tuesday 16 September 2025 on Campus**

**Present:**

Alyson Tobin	Member, Board of Directors and Chair of Finance and Resources Committee
Howell Davies	Member, Board of Directors
Iain Reid	Member, Board of Directors
Colin Pritchard	Member, Board of Directors
Roddy Henry	Principal

**In attendance:**

Mary Slater	Director of Operations
Ingrid Earp	Board Secretary

**Apologies for absence:** George Currie, Support Staff Board Member

<b>Part A - Opening Business</b>	
1.	<b>Welcome, Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Chair)</b> Apologies for absence were received from George Currie, there were no declarations of interest.
2.	<b>Minute of Previous Meeting held on 27 May 2025 (Paper 1)</b> The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as accurate.
3.	<b>Matters Arising/Action and Decision (A&amp;D) Log (Paper 1a)</b> The application for Employment Allowance has been accepted so the NI contributions in the accounts have been reduced accordingly.
<b>Part B - Items for Decision</b>	
4	<b>Appointment of Vice Chair (Paper 2)</b> Committee agreed that Howell Davies would be appointed Vice Chair.  <b>Decision: F&amp;R01:B4 H Davies appointed as Vice Chair of F&amp;R Committee.</b>
5.	<b>Annual Committee Report to Board (Paper 3)</b>  <b>Action F&amp;R01:B5 Board Secretary to check papers on web site are up to date.</b>  <b>Decision F&amp;R01:B5 Committee recommended the Annual Committee Report to Board for approval.</b>
6.	<b>Working Off Campus Policy (Paper 4)</b> With increasing numbers of staff now working off campus the Senior Team had agreed that a Policy was needed to clarify the guidelines around this.

	<p>A Member asked if the Policy was intended for those working off campus on a regular basis or for those who were more likely to work off campus as a one-off. The Principal said it was intended for those were worked off campus on a more one-off basis with the default place of work for all staff being the College campus.</p> <p>Another Member asked about provision of equipment and other resources. The Committee was told that staff have to use their College laptop to work on away from campus but no other items of equipment or furniture such as specialist chairs are provided.</p> <p>A Member also asked about insurance and the College liability for employees having an accident when working off campus.</p> <p><b>Action F&amp;R01:B6 Dir of Ops to check employers liability for those working off campus.</b></p> <p><b>Decision F&amp;R01:B6 The Policy was approved subject to the action re liability.</b></p>
<p><b>Part C – Items for discussion</b></p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Budget Outturn 2024/25</b> (Paper 5)</p> <p>The Director of Operations noted that the external audit is now underway so no final financial statements are available as yet for 2024/25. The current forecast outturn is £88k higher than was forecast at the June Board meeting with international income increasing more than anticipated. To ensure more accurate reporting the Director of Operations is going to meet with the College management accountants to discuss capital expenditure, ie what is capitalised and how it is accounted for.</p> <p>Committee agreed that this is a positive outturn in a difficult financial climate for colleges and the reasons behind the surplus should be made clear.</p> <p>Members asked about timings re confirming income from Wisconsin and St Andrews, the Director of Operations noted that it is hard to get definitive numbers from them any way in advance although we do have a guaranteed minimum number that we know will be funded.</p> <p>Committee were satisfied with the forecast outturn as it stands.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Budget Update 2025/26</b> (Paper 6)</p> <p>The Director of Operations talked through the variances occurring against the approved budget. One is a fall in income associated with the HNC/QMU student funding as a result of a significant fall in the number of students on this course. There are also fewer residential students this year with only three at the time of writing. A Member asked how keen QMU are to maintain the agreement currently in place. The Principal said that discussions have been positive but there has been a fall in numbers of students applying for social sciences courses across the sector which is recognised by QMU. About 20 students are required to make the programme viable and there are currently seven on the course. The future of this course to be considered, along with others, at the upcoming Board Development and Planning Day, the College has to be able to deliver a financially sustainable curriculum going forward with currently a small number of students and a high delivery cost.</p> <p>The Principal said that the Forest College courses is showing an increase in demand along with other types of ‘therapeutic’ learning so there may be scope for the College in this area.</p>

	<p>The question was asked that if the College is showing a reduced income can the costs also be reduced? The Principal replied that this is also being looked at alongside everything else, noting that the College's biggest cost is staffing.</p> <p>It was noted that the pay award for support staff remains unsettled with a request sitting with Scottish Government to fund the shortfall between the offer currently on the table and the request to match the pay award teaching staff have received.</p> <p>Data Protection costs have increased as a result of the consultant stepping down and new, increased costs being incurred. However, the new advisor is proving to be very helpful with a number of improvements already put in place following the recent Data Protection Internal Audit.</p> <p>The Principal recognised the need to deliver a balanced budget for 2027/28.</p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Health and Safety Report</b> (Paper 7)</p> <p>The Director of Operations noted no increase in H&amp;S incidents and no RIDDOR report required. One of the internal audits this academic year will be on Estates Management and will include H&amp;S.</p> <p>It was noted that a number of people seem to be tripping and Committee were informed that the majority of these are Rural Skills students who tend to be outside much more.</p> <p>A Member asked about the College liability re members of the public walking in the grounds.</p> <p><b>Action F&amp;R01:C9 Dir of Ops to confirm where liability sits re public using the grounds.</b></p> <p><b>Decision F&amp;R01:C9 Committee recommended the H&amp;S Report for approval to Board.</b></p>
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Risk Register</b> (Paper 8)</p> <p>There have been no changes to the levels of risk since the June Board although some of the narrative has been changed in the light of discussions there. The Risk Register and the risk appetite of the Board will form part of the Board Development and Planning Day.</p> <p>A Member asked about the cyber security risk and whether this should be raised in the light of recent high profile cyber attacks. The Principal replied that this is currently being considered with the new IT Support member of staff making this a priority. The College does not currently have Cyber Essentials and cannot attain it largely because of the old phone system the College uses. The Principal said he was confident that the College's ability to recover from a cyber attack is as good as it can be.</p> <p>The Principal reported that the College had recently been subject to a phishing email with the email purporting to be from the Principal. Members of staff spotted this and no harm was caused. A Member asked if students get the same training as staff on this sort of thing, the Principal replied that, currently, they don't but it could be something that is included in their intro to the College IT when they join the College.</p> <p>A Member also asked about the plan should something significant happen. The Principal said that work is ongoing on this and will be part of the disaster recovery plan review which will be complete by Christmas.</p>

<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Director of Operations Report (Paper 9)</b></p> <p>The Director of Operations informed Committee that the Job Evaluation project for support staff is now beginning to move forward again with all job descriptions to be reviewed including posts that no longer exist from 2018. The timetable for completion is likely to be around two years. There are over 40 posts for the College to review.</p> <p>A Member asked if the members of staff who are noted as resigning in the Report are being replaced. The Director of Operations said that the classroom assistant would be, but the lecturer would not at the present time to enable a full review of the curriculum offer to take place.</p> <p>One group of Russian students did attend the College during the summer along with groups representing a large number of different nationalities.</p> <p>The collaboration with a particular wedding planner has been ended by agreement with both parties. Another collaboration is currently being sought with more of an emphasis on small weddings.</p> <p>A new website will be launched in October with the College only having the one overall website going forward.</p> <p>With regard to the hospitality consultancy recently carried a number of recommendations made in their report have now been instigated. In particular the Health and Safety ones were critical and have all now been implemented. Generally, the advice in the report was an opportunity to improve what the College is already offering yet provide it more efficiently. The Principal informed Committee that some investment was required in the dining room with a possible option to open to the public or perhaps outsource the activity completely. All options will be reviewed.</p> <p>A Member asked about the HMO licence fee.</p> <p><b>Action F&amp;R01:C11 Director of Operations to check what the HMO fee is and whether there are savings to be made with a longer licence.</b></p> <p>The new Education Projects Officer starts shortly with a view to raising the profile and associated income of the FOLA and AAA qualification.</p> <p>Committee noted that the Business Development area is not working as well as it should at present and an examination of this is currently taking place.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p><b>Committee Self-Evaluation (Paper 10)</b></p> <p>The Committee feedback was, on the whole, very positive and the response rate was high. It was agreed that the papers for the Committee are well-presented and received on time. A Member asked about statement 10 'The Committee has an adequate and clear role in the review and compliance with all relevant legal and regulatory matters pertinent to their business' and how the Members would know what they are required to comply with. Also, how is this communicated to Board? The communication comes from regular updates from the Board Secretary – reminders of Codes, OSCR guidelines for trustees, updates from the Standards Commission (should they be relevant) and so on.</p> <p><b>Action F&amp;R01:B12 Board Secretary to begin to pull together list of compliance requirements and detail how the Board will be assured of compliance.</b></p>

	Otherwise, Members agreed that it would be good to get to know each other better accepting that there are lots of competing demands on time and availability.
<b>Part D – For Information</b>	
	No items for information.
<b>Part E – Closing business</b>	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> There were no items of any other business.
<b>14.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting:</b> Tuesday 4 November 2025 at 10.00am