



NWH Board of Management Meeting

Thurso/Hybrid via MS Teams (T)

26th March 2025 at 4.15pm

Chair – Derek Lewis

Board Members Present

Alex Macdonald, Independent Board Member
Carl Haberl, Teaching Staff Board Member (T)
Chris Alliston, Independent Board Member (T)
Derek Lewis, Chairman of the Board of Management UHI NWH
Diana Macleod, Support Staff Board Member
Ian MacEachern, Independent Board Member
Lydia Rohmer, Principal & Chief Executive UHI NWH
Michael Foxley, Independent Board Member
Neil Hope, Vice Chair & Independent Board Member
Rupert Marshall, Independent Board Member
Sarah Fraser, Independent Board Member
Shona MacDougall, Senior Independent Board Member
Struan Mackie, Independent Board Member
Willie Macdonald, Vice Chair & Independent Board Member

Also, in Attendance

Debbie Miller, ELT, Interim Vice Principal Strategic Development
Derek Bond, ELT, Interim Vice Principal – Resources & Enterprise (CFO)
Ellen Campbell, Secretary to the Board of Management
Keith Coyne, SFC (T)
Hannah Ritchie-Muir, ELT, Interim VP Academic
Helen Aird, Interim Head of Marketing & Communications

1. Establishment of quorum, welcome & apologies (Derek Lewis)

Apologies were received from Nicolas Kowalczyk, HISA Board Member.

2. Declarations of interest & connection (Derek Lewis)

Rupert Marshall & Michael Foxley were recognised as having a conflict of interest as they are also on the Board of Management for Cnoc Soilleir.

3. Starring (Derek Lewis)

Request to star Item 8, Marketing and communications strategy.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2024 (Derek Lewis)

Approved

5. Matters arising

None

6. Cnoc Soilleir

The Board were advised that Cnoc Soilleir (CS) Phase 2 was progressing well with the building works coming in on time and within budget. A benefits realisation meeting had taken place. Thanks were extended to the NWH team and Joe MacPhee for their assistance. The management agreement was going through the process of being revised and once drafted would be sent to CS for scrutiny.

Two archaeology staff had successfully secured funding in excess of £600k for their work on the Barra and Harris Unearthed project. A further £20k had been received from CNES which would benefit CS further.

Noted

7. * Financial Reports – Derek Bond (CFO)

7.1.1 Withheld – confidential item

7.2 Withheld – confidential item

7.3 External Audit

North Highland College accounts 2022/23

Approved

7.4 Withheld – confidential item

8. * Marketing and communications strategy – Helen Aird (HA)

The Board welcomed the high-level document presented by HA, commenting that the report was comprehensive and informative. There was work ongoing with brand awareness, digital updates throughout the college, curriculum and student experience data, focusing on KPIs and concentrating on quality over quantity. HA proposed to focus on the strategic management of the communications and marketing team. It was agreed that there would continue to be reliance on high level data produced by HA's team.

Approved

9. Fort William curtain wall replacement project – Derek Bond (CFO)

This project was presented to the Board as a necessary spend to address the issues of leaking windows and structural damage to the campus in Fort William. Part funding had been received from the SFC with a requirement that the funding be used before the end of April 2025.

Approved

10. * Estates Strategy Update – Derek Bond (CFO), verbal update

The strategy was ongoing with a lot of work already completed and had been viewed as a rough cut. There was discussion by the members of the multiple business engagement opportunities within the geographical area of NWH in the near future which could lead to funding opportunities for the college. A full strategy would be expected for June board.

Noted

11. *Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Reports – G Birnie, J Peteranna, R Bailey

The annual LAC reports were noted by the Board. Recommendations included that the Board members be more visible and drop into centres throughout the North, West & Hebrides as often as possible. The reports also highlighted the requirement for delivery at pace of more curriculum opportunities. Within the Outer Hebrides, there was concern that Barra & Uist may be left behind. The Chair and Board thanked the LAC Chairs for their input and acknowledged the valuable role that their committees carried out in ensuring the community voice was heard.

Noted

CA left the meeting at 1825.

12. * HISA Report

Noted

13. * Principal's Report – Lydia Rohmer (The Principal)

The Principal reported that there would be a visit to Stornoway campus by the Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes on 13th May 2025. The Nigg Skills Academy proposal was

currently with UHI for assessment. The Hydrogen skills development on Lewis had paved the way for the college to provide a PDA technician qualification in this field. Student recruitment figures were encouraging for the upcoming year. Student satisfaction survey participation was also on the increase. There had been a monthly “spotlight” communication throughout the college focussing on celebrating the achievements of staff and students. The Principal’s outlook report would be concentrated on today’s talking points with a report available in August for discussion at September 2025 Board.

Noted

14. Chair’s Report – Derek Lewis (The Chair)

The Chair reported that the UHI transformation was slow moving with little to update the Board on at this time. The ongoing local dispute by EIS-FELA was financially detrimental to the college and that staff still not being matched in was a concern. It was agreed that the situation could not continue.

Noted

15. Corporate Parenting Plan

Approved

16. Policies for approval

16.1 Health & Safety policy – Tracy Kerr

Approved

16.2 Fire Safety policy – Tracy Kerr

Approved

16.3 EDI policy

Approved

16.4 Policy approval process – Sophie Dunnett

Approved

17. Minutes from committees

Noted

18. Risk register

Noted

19. A.O.B.

None

Meeting closed at 18.55