



**CONFIRMED Minutes of the Norland Board of Directors Meeting  
held on Wednesday 20 October 2021, 10.30-13.00pm  
(Room 1, York Place with a remote link to Microsoft Teams)**

**Present:** Martin Clarke, Chair  
Rosemary Heald, Vice Chair  
Julie Davis, Director (Teams)  
Christopher Jerram, Director (Teams)  
Kriss Turner, Director (Teams)  
Kate Dicker, Director (Teams)  
Janet Rose, Principal

***In attendance:***

Elizabeth Harvey, Staff representative  
Nancy Tier, Student representative  
Mandy Donaldson, Vice Principal, Head of Quality & Standards & Registrar  
Alex Read, Vice Principal, Finance & Estates  
Julia Gaskell, Head of Consultancy, Agency, Alumni and Training.  
Emma Blythe, Senior Administrator

**BOA201021.1**

***Welcome and Apologies***

Apologies were received from Lucy Lovatt, Tracey Worth, Mike Bray, Roberta Edwards and David Timms.

The Chair introduced Nancy Tier as the new Student Representative and welcomed Elizabeth Harvey as the Staff Representative for this year.

**BOA201021.2**

***Chairman's Communications***

The Chair notified the Board that Lucy Lovatt wishes to resign from the Board and has given her 1 Year notice, effective from today.

The Chair informed the Board that Norland has 2 new potential Directors who will be interviewed soon – possibly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November but this is TBC.

**ACTION – AR** to update Companies House with Lucy Lovatt's resignation in October 2022.

The Chair informed the Board that Roberta Edwards has notified him of another person interested in being a director.

**ACTION – MC** to send the details to the Principal to arrange a first meeting before a potential interview.

The Chair congratulated all the staff at Norland for continuing to implement the highest standards of COVID-19 risk mitigations.

The Board needed to be mindful of inflation, which is forecast to go to 4.5% plus in the course of the next Academic Year. It might go down again after a spike but this is far from certain. The Chair noted that China and America are already in recession so it is possible that Britain will follow.

**BOA201021.3**

***New declarations of interest***

It was NOTED that there were no new declarations of interest.

**BOA201021.4**

***Minutes of previous meeting***

These were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**BOA201021.5**

***Action Status Report***

The Action status report was reviewed and it was NOTED that all actions had been completed.

The Principal summarised several points from the Action Status Report:

***Complaints Register*** – Norland has introduced a new system for dealing with complaints, and, in future, an annual report of complaints which will come to the June meeting of the Board. Norland has introduced a new Cause for Concern Procedure that will be used for all complaints from all stakeholders including staff, students, external stakeholders etc. This will differentiate between informal and formal complaints so that issues are dealt with at an appropriate level. The Cause for Concern Procedure is overseen by Mandy Donaldson, Stephanie Taylor and Julia Gaskell.

***IT Survey*** – Several directors have not yet completed the survey. Currently there is a split between those directors who would like to use their own devices and those who would like Norland to supply them with another device for accessing Board papers.

***Widening participation report***

This is in progress and will be reported to the Board in due course.

**ACTION – MD and EB** to liaise about this.

**BOA201021.6**

***Risk Register Summary***

The top risks with a Risk Factor of 15 or above are:

Risk 10 – Recruiting students. *[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]* there is optimism about student numbers for the coming academic year though it is still early in the recruitment process.

Risk 24 – COVID-19 . The country is still in a global pandemic so risk remains. *[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]*

Risk 34 – Fees. *[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]*

Risk 48 –Student information. A new Student Database is being installed. Once complete the risk significance will be reduced (expected go live date is January 2022).

Risk 51 – IT support. IT support is always a challenge for a small business such as Norland. There was discussion about the staff and student perspectives of IT support available.

From a **staff** point of view a full time IT Technician is available. Project work is outsourced to Systemagic, which provides flexibility as support/expertise from Systemagic can be upscaled or downscaled as required. The main challenge for IT is first thing in the morning, to ensure that all systems are working effectively.

From a **student** perspective IT support readily available on a 1:1 basis. The student representative confirmed that this service is working well. There are also new student IT surgeries once a week providing a drop-in IT support service, which is good for troubleshooting less urgent problems.

**ACTION – AR** to add reference to IT surgeries to the Risk 51as a further mitigation.

Risk 66 – Demographic changes. It was noted that the demographics at the student level are improving from 2020.

The Principal noted that Marketing is looking at the best ways to target independent schools and that school visits by students returning to their own school have now resumed following the easing of COVID restrictions.

It was suggested that the Principal might contact the Chair of the Headmasters Conference regarding opportunities to give presentations about Norland to other independent schools.

**ACTION – JR** to check the status of this with Dee Burn.

Risk 41 – Inflation. It was agreed to make sure that inflation is brought to the attention of the Board at each meeting by making it a risk with a Risk Significance of 15 or above.

**ACTION – AR** to ensure Risk 41 (inflation) has a Risk Significance of 15 or above.

## **BOA201021.7**

### **Compliance Dashboard**

The paper before the Board is the abridged version of a much larger document. This Dashboard notes anything with a deadline in the next 6 months. It was observed that the colour of item 25 is amber not red. Item 25 is amber because the final signoff is in November so this item is up to date but waiting for completion. Mandy Donaldson noted that Norland is compliant.

The Principal notified the Board that after much internal discussion she recommends postponing Norland's application for indefinite DAPs to September 2022. This additional time will enable the rewriting of the Degree and Diploma courses to be completed ahead of the application for indefinite DAPs.

**BOA201021.8*****KPI Dashboard***

The full Enhancement Plans for each department are no longer brought to the Board. Instead they are made available in the additional papers and the Board is usually presented with a summary dashboard. However, in October there is usually very little to report because term is still new. There will be a KPI dashboard at the December, March and June Board meetings and a verbal report in October.

The Enhancement Plans are quite brief because it is the last year of the current strategic plans and the new strategic plan is in progress. Preliminary ideas for the new plan will be brought to the December Board for discussion followed by a Board away day next April as part of the development of the new strategic plan.

**ACTION – JR** to circulate a page of preliminary ideas with the papers for the December Board meeting.

**BOA201021.9*****Principal's Update***

The Principal highlighted the following from her report:

WhatUni graduate Outcomes award is a significant award because Norland was competing with all universities in the UK and it was voted for by students in all universities in the UK. There has been considerable media interest.

COVID-19. She reported that there have been only 3 positive cases at Norland and none of these were transmitted on site.

Students. There are 103 first years this year. There have been nice comments from the public about the new uniform. Some students have not had COVID-19 vaccinations yet. *[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]*

International students. The International Student Manager handles all applications. It is a lengthy and complex process requiring many checks. International students need to be fully informed about their rights etc before they commit to coming. Fines can be incurred if this is not done.

Staff – *[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]* There has been a little more staff attrition than normal but this is attributable to individual's personal circumstances usually related to COVID and not dissatisfaction with Norland.

Consultancy and Training. Opening up again post COVID-19 restrictions. Research is doing well and the new journal will be launched soon. The Agency is very busy again, it was noted that there are approximately 4 jobs available for each NQN.

New babysitting App and Jobshop – Both of these initiatives are being well received.

The Principal reported that Norland has been asked by the QAA to be an exemplar case study for student support.

**BOA201021.10**

***Report from the Finance Committee***

Alex Read reported in the absence of the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

The new Student Record System has been ordered.

The risk of price rises in Energy Contracts have currently been mitigated through forward supply contracts. *[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]*

Inflation was discussed at length. The risk of inflation has been added as an item to the Risk Register (Risk 41). College management is committed to meet the targets set in the updated 21/22 Out Turn.

The significant points of the third term Management Accounts together with the out turn for the year, a proposed Gift Aid payment, and Going concern scenario planning were drawn to the Board's attention. At present the year end accounts were being audited and all these matters will be the subject of discussion at the next Board meeting when the statutory accounts will be approved.

A Few small adjustments to the Finance Committee Terms of Reference had been suggested. These were approved.

*[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]*

Rosemary Heald noted that Finance Committee also discussed the Teachers' Pension Scheme and drew attention to the fact that whilst most independent schools are members about one third have either come out of TPS or are in consultation about coming out. It is possible to close entry to the TPS for new members and some schools are choosing a phased withdrawal.

The Board had previously agreed not to change any aspect of TPS membership but will continue to monitor the situation.

**BOA201021.11**

***Report from Academic Board***

The Principal highlighted that External advisers are now sitting on the programme committee which makes them better placed to advise than being on a separate committee.

Authorised absences by students are being monitored for the first time this year for Student Wellbeing. Analysis has revealed that some students are only showing nearer to 60% attendance due to authorised absences compared to the desirable level of 85%. Where identified, Norland is responding quickly to any issues.

The student representative commented that it is good that attendance is being monitored as it shows Norland's consideration for Student Wellbeing. The high expected attendance figure prepares students for the workplace.

**BOA201021.12**

***Prevent Risk Assessment Action Plan***

There have not been any significant changes or amendments to the plan. However, the last two Prevent lectures were cancelled by Prevent at the last minute but this is being followed up.

It was reported that The Office for Students is very satisfied with the plan and often hold up Norland's plan as an exemplar.

The Board APPROVED the Prevent Risk Assessment Action Plan.

**BOA201021.13**

***Board Terms of Reference***

After discussion the following alterations were agreed;

Paragraph 18. The wording should be changed to 'to propose variations or revoking of the articles of association'.

Paragraph 26. This should read 'to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.'

Paragraph 36. The paragraph should be added to the Finance Committee Terms of Reference as well.

**ACTION – EB** to update the Terms of Reference.

**BOA201021.14**

***Board Effectiveness Reviews***

A questionnaire will be sent out very shortly so that the results can be discussed at the forthcoming Nominations and Governance Committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, then at the December Board meeting.

An External Board Effectiveness Review will be discussed at Nominations and Governance Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

Mandy Donaldson noted that she has already had some preliminary discussions with a suitable external reviewer.

**ACTION – EB** to send a draft questionnaire to the Chair as soon as possible so that it can be sent to the Directors and the results analysed ahead of the Nominations and Governance Committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

**BOA201021.15**

***Any Other Business***

The staff representative thanked the Principal and the SLT for getting everyone through the previous academic year and noted that staff are enjoying the flexibility of being able to work from home 1 day a week in term time and 2 days a week out of term time (with flexibility depending on departmental requirements and business needs).

The Chair reiterated Elizabeth Harvey's vote of thanks to the Principal and the SLT. The Board concurred.

**BOA201021.16**

***Date of next meeting***

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 10.30am, Room 1 York Place, with a remote link via MS Teams.