NORLAND

CONFIRMED Minutes of the Norland Board of Directors Meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2026 10.30-13.30 (Room 1 York Place/MS Teams)

Present:

Martin Clarke, Chair
Rosemary Heald, Vice Chair
Suresh Ariaratnam, Director
Mike Bray, Director (Teams)
Julie Davies, Director (Teams)
Kate Dicker, Director
Alex Fereday, Staff Member
Louise Gilbert, Director (Teams)
Ruth Guilfoyle, Director
Richard Maccabee, Director
Charlotte Stilwell, Director
Roberta Scutt, Director (Teams)
David Timms, Director
Elena Wilson, Student Member

In attendance:

Dr Janet Rose, Principal
Dr Rebecca Digby, Vice-Principal, Head of Learning, Teaching and Research
Mandy Edmond, Vice-Principal, Head of Enterprise and Strategic Partnerships
Rob Cole, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Finance, Facilities and IT
Emma Blythe, Senior Administrator

BOA250326.01 ***Welcome and Apologies***

Apologies were received from Tracey Worth.

BOA250326.02 ***Chair's Communications***

It was formally NOTED that the Board had decided to proceed with the ESP proposal discussed at Enterprise and Finance Committees and by email with all directors.

The Board APPROVED the decision to proceed with the Enterprise and Strategic Partnerships department (ESP) proposal.

The Chair noted that the papers were extensive but were very interesting, demonstrating that there were several exciting projects forthcoming. The Chair highlighted the importance of accurately recording the outcome of item BOA250326.04 Board Resolutions in the minutes.

BOA250326.03 ***New Declarations of Interest***

The Chair asked if anybody wished to make any new declarations of interest.

No new declarations of interest were made.

BOA250326.04 ***Board Resolutions***

The Board APPROVED the resolutions noted in the paper, namely 1. That the Chair was authorised to sign contracts on behalf of Norland. 2. That Norland had permission of the Board to pursue setting up an office in Saudi Arabia. 3. The results of the election of Chair, Vice Chair of Norland College and Board Representative to the Norland Foundation would be minuted each year although elections were every three years.

ACTION EBly – file the approved Board resolutions as appropriate.

BOA250326.05 ***Minutes of the previous meeting***

The Chair asked for any comments or amendments regarding the minutes of the previous meeting. No changes were requested.
The minutes of the previous meeting were APPROVED.

ACTION EBly – append the Chair's electronic signature to the minutes of the previous meeting and share on SharePoint as appropriate.

BOA250326.06 ***Action Status Report***

The Action Status Report was reviewed. It was NOTED that the paper requested from the Agency department may not be required much of the detail requested was already in the papers for this meeting.
The majority of directors were keen to have a session about the Norland accounts so the Chair requested Rob Cole and Emma Blythe to arrange this.

ACTION RC and EBly – arrange a session about the Norland accounts for Directors.

BOA250326.07 ***Risk Register***

The Board reviewed the risk register which had been updated by Rob Cole.

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]

The Board commented that the revamped Risk Register was clearer and the discussion that it had prompted had been more focused and specific.

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]

BOA250326.08 **Cyber Security/Artificial Intelligence**

This paper considered the benefits and challenges of AI and included context from JISC. Rob Cole was hoping to work with Systemagic to add their perspective. SLT were reviewing 'Manage, Protect, Respond' which is a safeguard when systems are compromised and Cyber Essentials, which many Higher Education Institutions use. It may

be helpful to have Cyber Essentials but the practicalities were being checked. The paper contained a table of the range of risks and how these were being managed.

It was NOTED that discussions were happening with Jisc (Joint Information Systems Committee) about the best way to conduct an independent review to gain a separate perspective from Systemagic. It was thought that it would be helpful for an annual review to take place.

An AI policy for staff was being considered. It was confirmed that other relevant IT policies were in place and that staff permissions were set to only allow access to required files/folders. It was confirmed that there were locked confidential waste boxes on each site and sensitive documents were kept in locked cupboards. Directors were welcomed to use Norland's confidential waste/shredding to dispose of Board and Committee documentation. There had recently been a stress test of the website, which had come back clean. Rob Cole had been exploring the free service offered by GCHQ, which was ongoing.

Regarding AI it was NOTED that part of one of the modules required students to assess AI to increase awareness of the pros and cons. It was NOTED that students were using AI to help them plan and structure their assignments, however they were also aware of the environmental impact, which was a concern for some. It was NOTED that AI tools could be helpful for SEND students, such as those who were dyslexic, however it could be difficult to find the balance of acceptable use.

BOA250326.09 ***ESP Update***

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]

ACTION ME – bring further details about the ESP strategy to the next meeting. Explain at the Board Away Day in April how the focus for the ESP department is being refined.

ACTION ME – consider establishing a Norland register of approved, legitimate partners.

BOA250326.10 ***Health and Safety Dashboard***

The report was presented and it was NOTED that there were no alarms.

BOA250326.11 ***Principal's Update***

Admissions were looking healthy. There had been 50 expressions of interest in the Masters, with 7 applications in progress already. The Learning Technologist had been appointed and was now in place on a fixed term contract.

It was noted that the Marketing Events, Design and Brand manager had handed in her notice. It would be sad to lose her but it was acknowledged that her new job was closer to her home, reducing commuting time and distance.

There would be an update at the Board Away Day in April about the progress of the Strategic Innovation Teams (SITs) particularly regarding student support and mental health. There may be some elements of SIT work to carry forward to ensure they are completed to the highest standard.

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]

There had been 4 withdrawals and 4 interruptions, and it was anticipated that these students would return.
There had been a valuable visit from the DfE Director for Education. This was a sign of Norland's repositioning in the Early Years sector.
[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]
There had been lots of positive visibility such as the Norland Graduate who was named graduate of the year by the ECSDN (Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network). It was noted that there was a lot in the press about graduates struggling to get jobs, however Norland continued to have a good job rate.
There had been a visit to the House of Lords to celebrate with Leiths the launch of their online training for primary schools.
It was NOTED that the OfS were due to issue a set of expectations about student support requirements. The Widening Participation strategy at Norland was being revisited.
[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]
There was a possibility that the Finance Team might move to York Place to make more rooms available for 1:1s with students, however these plans were at a very early stage.

It was noted that there was a word missing on p. 37 in the report from Student and Academic Services (SAS)– it should say '…numerous *meetings*.'
ACTION EBly – amend the missing word in the Principal's Update to say '… numerous meetings…' on p. 37.

There was a discussion about student resilience and preparing students for the demands of the role they will be undertaking as a sole charge Norland Nanny. The competencies are helpful here as students need to demonstrate competencies in their placements to pass the module.

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]

Another accommodation block was being sought as an alternative to Quasar. It was very difficult to find appropriate accommodation at a reasonable price. The new Renters Reform Act was affecting students because landlords were sometimes increasing the rents to account for the possibility that students may terminate their contract at the end of their course rather than pay until the end of the year.

BOA250326.12 ***Finance Committee Executive Summary***

This was a short summary, three of the main points were covered in the papers. Rob Cole and Alex Fereday review the maintenance plan weekly for regular monitoring.

BOA250326.13 ***FY26 Term 1 Management Accounts***

This had been reviewed in detail at the Finance Committee meeting.

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]

It was NOTED that the calculation before and after interest was incorrect in this paper.

ACTION RC – update the calculation before and after interest.

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]

It was NOTED that the Term 2 management accounts would be discussed at the June Finance Committee meeting.

The FY26 Term 1 Management Accounts were APPROVED.

BOA250326.14 ***Financial Regulations Procedures***

Rob Cole discussed the tracked changes, noting that this had been approved before but Rob Cole's predecessor did not complete the paperwork.

The Board APPROVED the Financial Regulations Procedures.

BOA250326.15 ***Financial Outlook: 3 year Financial Forecast***

[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]
Budget setting was taking place currently. The Term 2 accounts would be discussed at the Finance Committee in June.

BOA250326.16 ***Capital Works***

These were reviewed by the Finance Committee and consists of fitting air conditioning at Oldfield Park, York Place phases 2 and building a conservatory at Oldfield Park.
[REDACTED: Confidential and sensitive information]
Air Conditioning was due to be completed in August, subject to planning permission (outcome expected mid-April).
The planning permission was in place for the conservatory until 2027 but would need to be resubmitted thereafter. It was suggested that the conservatory work should be postponed until next summer.
York Place refurbishment works were scheduled to take place during August, September and October.

The Board AGREED that the conservatory build at Oldfield Park should be postponed until next summer.

BOA250326.17 ***Enterprise Committee Executive Summary***

The Chair of the Enterprise Committee reported that the meeting took place approximately 6 weeks ago and progress had been made since, as mentioned in the other papers. It was noted that the UK Birth Rate was improving until 2030.

BOA250326.18 ***Academic Board Executive Summary***

This report related to the October Academic Board. There had been an extensive policy review to incorporate the new Masters degree. The MA had been validated and an external examiner appointed. Work was being done to ensure that there was no excessive grade inflation. Allergy and intolerance management within Food and Nutrition and placements was being reviewed. The Nation Student Survey (NSS) was discussed. The NSS response rate was very good so far for this year and the Academic Board were looking forward to receiving the results in the summer.

The Board of Directors NOTED the Academic Board Executive Summary.

BOA250326.19 ***Student Rep Report on Student Experience***

Elena Wilson reported that everything was going very well. The Third-Year students were under a little stress due to deadlines but Student Support had been running 'stress buster lunches' and these were popular and helpful. Elena Wilson reported that there had been a very interesting guest lecture from a Norlander regarding Hypnobirthing.

BOA250326.20 ***SIT KPI Dashboard March 2026 Update***

All actions were either complete or underway. It was NOTED that anything outstanding would be finished as ACTIONS.

BOA250326.21 ***Compliance Dashboard***

A new version of the dashboard was in progress; all compliance matters were still being monitored in the meantime; everything was currently up to date.

BOA250326.22 ***Away Day Plan and Focus (Wednesday 29 April 2026)***

The ESP plans and direction of travel would be discussed as would Student Mental Health and the SITs.

BOA250326.23 ***Any Other Business***

The date of the Board Away Day was confirmed as being Wednesday 29 April, at Norland, York Place.

BOA250326.24 ***Date of Next Meeting***

Thursday 25 June 2026, 10.30-13.00 in **Clarke Hall, Oldfield Park.**



Signed 25 June 2026