

APPROVED
CIRCULATED

UNIVERSITY COURT
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9 May 2012
at 4.00pm in Room 7.B.14, Sighthill Campus

PRESENT: Ms M Ali (Court)(Convenor); Professor M Darlison (Biological Safety Officer); Mr M Mackay (UNISON); Mr G McCarra (Court); Mr R Mason (EIS/ULA); Ms M Philip (UNISON); Dr G Webber (University Safety Officer/University Secretary); Ms P Woodburn (Court); Mr R Wright (Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs M Cook (Director, Human Resources); Mr S Carberry (Project Manager, Merchiston Co-Location Project); Mr P Hughes (Director, Property & Facilities Services); Ms L Young (Head of Health & Safety); Mr J McDermott (Governance Officer)(Clerk).

APOLOGIES: Ms L Addison (Occupational Health Advisor, Santia plc); Professor J Ensor (Business School); Mr J Goodlet (Faculty of Engineering, Computing & Creative Industries); Dr M Sanderson (EIS/ULA); Professor Dame Joan Stringer (Principal & Vice-Chancellor); Mr T Zanelli (President NSA).

1. WELCOME

1.1 The Convenor welcomed all participants to the meeting, in particular Mr Carberry, who was in attendance on this occasion. The apologies were **noted**.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2012 (HS(11/12)17)

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) Traffic Management around Sighthill Campus (Minute 3 (b))

3.1 It was reported that following an objection to the published plans, the City Council had been compelled to give the matter further consideration and would do so at a meeting on 18 June. No further hold-up was anticipated and it was expected that the parking controls would be put in place soon thereafter. In the meantime it had been observed that the Police were taking a keen interest in parking in the area and had been taking action where necessary.

3.2 The Committee noted that everything possible was being done to alleviate the problem of inappropriate parking and looked forward to a positive report at the next meeting. It was further noted that the Director of Property & Facilities Services would monitor traffic flows once the road markings were in place and, if necessary, would explore further actions, including the possibility of introducing a one-way system for entry to and egress from the campus.

3.3 The report was **noted** and it was **agreed** that an update would be given to the next meeting.

b) Follow up on ceiling panels at Merchiston (Minute 4.4)

- 3.4 The Director of Property & Facilities Services gave an update on the issue as requested at the previous meeting. It was noted that as part of the Co-Location Project, a safer design of ceiling panel was being installed in the areas of the campus being refurbished. The remaining panels would be replaced with lightweight alternatives to reduce the risk of injury should they fall. This would be done in a rolling programme as resources permitted over an estimated two to three year period. Areas where problems had been experienced would be given priority in this work. It was further reported that the maintenance team would continue to monitor the panels and report or restore any that posed an evident risk.
- 3.5 The Committee **welcomed** the reassurance that the situation was being addressed.

c) Follow up on safety doors and the public address system at Merchiston (Minute 5.2)

- 3.6 It was reported that the problems reported to an earlier meeting were being investigated. As it appeared that the doors were subject to an intermittent fault, the position would continue to be monitored. It was **noted** that a further update would be given to the next meeting.

d) Possibility of introducing “community access defibrillators” (Minute 7.2)

- 3.7 It was noted that advice on the provision of defibrillators would be sought during the forthcoming tendering process for the University’s Occupational Health advisors. It was **noted** that an informed report would therefore be provided to the next meeting.

e) Post Incident Report (Minute 8.6)

- 3.8 It was **noted** that the NSA President had not raised any objection nor provided any addition to the list of risks and issues to be considered and monitored in the event of any future severe weather events (as discussed at the previous meeting). The list could therefore be adopted with confidence.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (HS(11/12)18)

- 4.1 Members were reminded that the preparation and scrutiny of the Annual Report was an important element of the Committee assisting the University Court to discharge its duties with regard to the health, safety and well-being of the University’s staff, students and visitors.
- 4.2 The key points of the Report were highlighted. It was noted that the University had once again been reaccredited for the Government-sponsored Healthy Working Lives Gold Award; that two internally developed and delivered training courses had been accredited by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH); and that a submission had been made to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for re-accreditation of the Gold Award (an outcome is expected in July 2012). The Committee expressed its appreciation of the significant effort and expertise that had contributed to all of these bids, which reflected the high standards of the University towards health and safety.
- 4.3 Members welcomed the Report, describing it as ‘excellent’. A number of points were made in discussion:
- the number of recorded incidents compared favourably with other institutions and was lower than the national average with respect to both staff and students;

- annual safety reports had been received from all schools, services and institutes and the Health & Safety team was in the process of following up on the required actions (with a focus on raising standards where necessary);
- overall it appeared that standards of compliance had been high;
- because the occupational health provision was primarily aimed at staff, along with certain aspects relating to nursing and midwifery students, there was no such provision for the overall student body;
- it was intended in the near future to prepare a programme of fire safety training for all staff;

4.7 With some minor amendment to format and page numbering, it was **agreed** to commend the Report to University Court. Thanks were offered to all staff involved in the preparation of the Report and its underlying activities.

5. ACCIDENT STATISTICS FOR JANUARY TO APRIL 2012 (HS(11/12)19)

5.1 The summary of accident statistics during the latest reporting period was reported. The background was explained to the incidents comprising the statistics and the actions taken. It was noted with regard to the fire incidents that training was to be provided to residents in student accommodation and that residents without training would be discouraged from tackling fires. Instruction on electrical appliance safety would also continue to be given.

5.2 An instance was discussed of an alarm not being re-set by the fire service at a student residence building following an unscheduled evacuation. It was noted that follow-up action had been taken with regard to this as well as regarding the students who had re-entered the building whilst the alarm was still sounding.

5.3 It was noted that a RIDDOR report had been submitted with regard to one accident and that risk assessments had been conducted. Further training had been recommended for staff using kitchen equipment and the piece of equipment in question had now been withdrawn from use.

5.4 The paper was **noted**.

6. EMERGENCY EVACUATION REPORTS FOR JANUARY TO APRIL 2012 (HS(11/12)20)

6.1 The summary of emergency evacuation reports during the latest reporting period was discussed and noted. It was noted that the issues identified during each of the scheduled evacuations had been logged for action. In particular, it was noted that:

- work continued to try to address the 'bottlenecks' created at certain exit points at Sighthill and Craiglockhart;
- an issue with the two-way communication system at Sighthill had been addressed;
- learning points had been noted during an evacuation at Merchiston;
- a number of instances of poor practice had been identified at Livingston, with the external company responsible agreeing to rectify matters;
- training would continue to be provided to residents in student accommodation.

6.2 Details of the unscheduled evacuations were also reported. It was again **agreed** that future reports contain a guideline as to how long each evacuation should take.

6.3 The paper was **noted**.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTICES SUMMARY FOR JANUARY TO APRIL 2012
(HS(11/12)21)

- 7.1 The report was received and the background to each Notice was explained, along with the action taken to rectify matters and learn from the situation. It was reported that Notices resulting from actions of contractors were served upon the member of staff responsible for managing the contract. This ensured that appropriate monitoring would be conducted. In addition, whenever a Notice was issued, the recipient was expected to respond quickly.
- 7.2 The paper was **noted**.

8. CHANGES TO RIDDOR **(HS(11/12)22)**

- 8.1 The Committee received the paper from the UNISON representatives reporting concern at the recent UK-wide change in reporting requirements and requesting clarification of any changes to the University's practice. It was confirmed that there would be no change in practice and that all accidents would continue to be fully investigated – regardless of the statutory change.
- 8.2 The Committee **noted** the information; and further noted that there had been four RIDDOR reports in the last year, which was low in comparison to other institutions.

9. ASBESTOS IN THE WORKPLACE **(HS(11/12)23)**

- 9.1 The Committee received the paper from the UNISON representatives reporting the imminent re-launch of the Health & Safety Executive's [campaign on asbestos](#) and requesting clarification of the University's practice in screening staff at risk from exposure to asbestos. It was noted that incidences of asbestos-related illness often came to light many years after exposure to the substance.
- 9.2 It was reported that a policy review was currently underway, which was intended to take into account the requirements of the new legislation and would be complete in the next few weeks. The appropriate staff representatives would be asked to assist the review. Further, the annual cycle of refresher training for staff would include any consequential changes to the University's policy and practices.
- 9.3 In the meantime, the extant policy was explained where Edinburgh Napier staff were not expected or required to undertake any asbestos-related work, which would continue to be contracted as required to specialists. All such activity was closely monitored and asbestos registers were in place along with prohibition on drilling without prior checks. If any staff member reported concern that they had been exposed, they would be referred for screening.
- 9.4 The UNISON representatives requested that a more proactive approach be taken to the screening of staff, with a programme of annual screening put in place for all relevant staff. This would be informed by the compilation of a register of staff who had worked in 'at-risk' areas.
- 9.5 In order for the Committee to make an informed decision, it was **agreed** that a paper would be submitted to the next meeting, in which the Executive would respond to the UNISON proposal, including providing details of the current and proposed policy and practice. (Action: **PH**)

10. CONTROL OF CONTRACTORS

(HS(11/12)24)

- 10.1 The Committee received the paper from the UNISON representatives reporting concerns over a number of instances of poor practice by the contractors engaged in the refurbishment of Merchiston Campus. It was noted that Health & Safety notices had been served with respect to the more serious breaches of procedure. These would be considered at the next meeting as they had been served outwith the reporting period for this time.
- 10.2 It was reported that these poor practices had been clamped down on as soon as they had come to light and that the University Secretary, as project sponsor, had written to the company to raise the issue at the highest level. It was further reported that regular meetings with the contractors were held at local level at which safety issues were top of the agenda. This ensured that any issues are resolved as swiftly as possible.
- 10.3 It was suggested that communication to staff and students should be improved in order to ensure that all campus users would be aware of changes to the working locations, especially when that entailed changes to fire escape routes and other important matters. Dust control was also reported to be an issue.
- 10.4 The Committee **noted** the concerns raised in the paper and ensuing discussion. It was further **noted** that the Executive would continue to ensure that the contractors were clear as to the standards expected of them and would re-double the monitoring regime to ensure that these standards would be adhered to. (Action: **PH**)

11. ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(HS(11/12)25)

- 11.1 In common with all Committees of Court, the Committee conducted its self-evaluation of its effectiveness. The Clerk captured members' comments to prepare a response for the Convenor's approval prior to submission to the Chairman of Court. The final version is appended to the minutes.
- 11.2 The main points were **agreed** to be that: the terms of reference and constitution remained appropriate; the Committee had effectively fulfilled its remit over the past year, with further attention needing to be given to the monitoring and review of the promotion of the good health and well-being of its staff and students and that the Committee could usefully receive more regular reports from the Occupational Health Service (thus permitting greater scrutiny and the identification of areas of particular concern); the NSA would be reminded of the importance of a student voice on the Committee; other members with poor attendance records would also be reminded of their obligations. (Action: **JMcD**)

12. PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2012/13 SESSION

- 12.1 Members were asked to inform the Clerk within the week of any difficulties with the following dates:
- 31 October 2012**, Room 2/04, Craiglockhart;
06 February 2013, the Boardroom, Merchiston;
08 May 2013, Room 7.B.14, Sighthill.

Clerks note: No objections have been raised with the dates, and so they are confirmed and the above note venues have been booked (as at 1 July 2012).