

Sidney Sussex College

**Minutes of
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COLLEGE COUNCIL**

Held via Zoom on
Thursday 29 October 2020 at 10.15am

Senior Members Present

The Master, Senior Tutor, Bursar, Vice-Master, Dr Doran, Dr Fulda, Dr Fruk, Dr Garcia-Mayoral, Dr McTernan, Professor Reynolds, Dr Roberts, Dr Stasch

Student Members Present:

Mr Bryan, Mr Karsberg, Mr Mettry

Also Present:

Ms Harkin (College Registrar/Council Secretary)

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

1.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr Bordin, Dr Oner and Dr Seymour (on leave).

1.2 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved subject to an item of AOB being added:
'Delegated authority for rapid decisions relating to COVID'

1.3 Declaration of Interests

The student members present had a material interest in item 2.1.

**1.4 Confirmation of the minutes of the unreserved business of the
Meeting of Council on 14 October and 22 October 2020**

An amendment was requested to the minutes of the Meeting of Council on 22 October. It was agreed that an additional clause should be added to the fourth paragraph under 2.1 to reflect the fact that although there has generally been good support from the student body to date in respect of COVID-19 College rules, some staff had expressed concerns that they had, on occasions, witnessed students not adhering to them.

The minutes of the Meeting of Council on 14 October 2020 will be considered and approved at the next scheduled Council meeting on Wednesday 11 November 2020.

2. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

2.1 Visitors' Protocol

- a) Proposed Amendment
(enclosed)(CC.201022.2.1)
- b) College COVID situation report as at 28 October 2020

The Master explained that this second extraordinary Council meeting is to re-consider the proposal put forward by the Senior Tutor and Bursar to relax the restriction on inter-household visits to allow one guest per room in specific circumstances. The proposal was discussed at an extraordinary Council the previous week where Council had concluded that, whilst supportive of the proposal to relax the restriction, the trend of rising infections seen at that time meant that more data was required before this could be implemented.

Council Members were informed that Senior Officers of the College had been asked to attend a meeting of the University's COVID Incident Management Team (CIMT) on Wednesday 28 October, given the number of positive cases in College exceeding 10.

The Bursar explained that CIMT had reviewed the epidemiology curve which had been submitted, along with data on the location of the cases. The Bursar then presented this epidemiology curve to Council members and explained that CIMT confirmed that the College has experienced an outbreak which appears to be centred on an "illegal" party which took place in Sussex House at the beginning of term. CIMT confirmed that the actions taken by the College were appropriate, and in the light of current data, no further recommendations on additional precautions to be taken were made by CIMT.

Council were informed that there had been no positive cases of COVID, including through the asymptomatic testing pools, during the week beginning 26 October 2020, and the College was unaware of any students who were awaiting tests to be carried out. The asymptomatic screening programme was now testing every participating student every two weeks, and Sidney had a very high participation rate.

The Senior Tutor noted that the majority of student behaviour has been very supportive of the rules, but stated that Council needed to be aware that compliance had not been 100% and that there had been two incidences of parties within College grounds in the last week, one the facts of which were still being investigated and which could have implications for infection levels in the following couple of weeks

In discussion, a couple of Council Members expressed the opinion that they would be happier if the decision could be deferred to next week to see if the College could achieve a run of two weeks without any new COVID cases. Other Council Members felt they could now support the policy amendment on the basis of the new data, and because they felt the asymptomatic screening programme was being effective in helping manage outbreaks. The JCR president reminded Council Members that the amendment to the policy was only to allow one guest per room and this was still stricter than the national rules.

The Master confirmed that if the amendment was approved by Council, the policy would be reviewed again, and quickly, if needs be. It would be reviewed at the Council meeting on the 11 November but an interim Extraordinary Council meeting could be held if there was a significant spike in COVID case before that. The Senior Tutor agreed to make the daily situation report on COVID and self-isolation cases in College available to Council Members so that they could keep track of the data.

Following discussion, a vote was held on the proposed amendment with 14 Council members being in favour, and one against. Accordingly the Visitor Policy would be changed to reflect the new rule allowing 'one guest per room in specific circumstances'. The policy would be kept under review as infection rates developed in College and in the light of University and City tier status.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 Any Other Business

The Master explained that the College had been asked by the Office of Intercollegiate Services to provide assurance to the University that it had delegated authority in place to make a fast decision within a COVID context, if asked to do so by Public Health England or CIMT. Council agreed that this delegated authority be given to the Principal Officers.

3.2 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 2.00pm following Governing Body.