

## **Sidney Sussex College**

The Minutes of  
**COLLEGE COUNCIL**  
Held in the Old Library  
on Wednesday 22 February 2023

### **In attendance:**

#### **Senior members:**

The Master, Acting Vice-Master, Senior Tutor, Bursar, Ms Baskerville, Dr Bordin, Dr Fulda, Professor Garcia-Mayoral, Dr Groom, Dr Ranasinghe, Professor Reynolds

#### **Student representatives:**

Ms Horvat-Menih (MCR President), Ms Lawson-Todd (JCR Vice-President), Ms Morgan (JCR President), Mr Robertson (Student Representative)

#### **Also present:**

Ms Adams (College Registrar / Council Secretary), Mr Mill (Acting Admissions Director, for Items 2.2a and 2.2b)

## **UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

### **1. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS**

#### **1.1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Professor Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Dr Öner and Dr Stasch.

#### **1.2 Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was **approved**, subject to:

- Item 2.3b (Updated CCTV Policy) being unstarred; and
- Item 3.1a (Muniments Committee minutes) being unstarred.

There were no objections to the proposal that Item 3.9a (Library Committee minutes) be starred.

#### **1.3 Declarations of Interests**

The following interests were declared:

Item 2.3a (Student Charges 2023-24: Finance and Needs Committee Recommendation): Ms Horvat-Menih, Ms Lawson-Todd, Ms Morgan and Mr Robertson as those who pay an accommodation charge, though none of the Student Members were affected by cohort pricing. Council **agreed** that they could remain in the meeting during an initial discussion but withdraw prior to any further discussion and any vote.

Item 2.6b (June Event Committee – update): The Master had a conflict as a likely recipient of free tickets, but Council **agreed** there was no requirement to withdraw.

**1.4 Confirmation of the minutes of the unreserved business of the Meeting of Council on 25 January 2023 (CC.2023.02.22.1.4)**  
The minutes were **confirmed**.

**a) Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

- i. Update on potential impact of UCU's industrial action (minute 2.2c)  
The Senior Tutor reported that industrial action had begun, including "actions short of strike". He had invited Directors of Studies to comment on any known impacts on their students' learning: no significant issues had been reported. Student Members reported that not much student concern had been expressed to them. UCU has announced a temporary suspension of industrial action to allow negotiations to take place. The situation would be kept under regular review, notably in respect of any possible disruptions to summative assessment.

There were no further matters arising.

**2. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

**2.1 Master's Business**

**a) Risk Register 2023: Review of Governance risk and University and Inter-collegiate relations risk (CC.2023.02.22.2.1a)**

Council discussed the two risks for which it was directly responsible and **approved** the two entries (CC.2023.02.22.2.1a.i and ii), including the updated risk scores. The Registrar was asked to cross-reference sub-risks and key controls.

**Action: Registrar**

**b) Meetings and Events on College Premises: Updates to Regulation G13 and new Code of Practice (CC.2023.02.22.2.1b)**

- i. Regulation G13: Meetings on College Premises Code of Practice, as amended (CC.2023.02.22.2.1b.i); and
- ii. the new Meetings and Events on College Premises Code of Practice (CC.2023.02.22.2.1b.ii).

Further to its discussion on 25 January 2023 about the forthcoming Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill, Council received updates to Regulation G13, proposed by the Statutes and Ordinances Committee to focus on student-led events only, and a new Code of Practice to be used for all other events. Council **approved** the update to Regulation G13 and the Code of Practice.

**c) College Calendar 2023-24 (CC.2023.02.22.2.1c)**

The Master outlined the process for finalising the College Calendar for the next academic year, and asked Council members to submit any comments to his PA. The Master's PA would then liaise with Committee Chairs and Secretaries to agree the proposed dates for all committee meetings.

**Action: Council Members/Master's PA**

**d) Research Fellowships Committee 2022-23 (CC.2023.02.22.2.1d)**

The Master presented the report on the most recent competition. Dr Fulda expressed concerns about the competition being held during the December admissions round when Fellows had limited availability.

The Research Fellowships Committee report was **noted**.

**e) Support for Students with Disabilities**

The Master drew attention to a recent *Varsity* article about accessibility issues. He reported that the Buildings & Environment Committee had already been scheduled to consider the recommendations from the AccessAble Review of College facilities and had agreed to establish an Accessibility Working Group to prioritise and cost accessibility improvement options for access to the College premises. He encouraged student members to raise any specific issues with their representatives on the Working Group.

The Senior Tutor reported that he had met student representatives and in addition to discussing practical issues relating to physical access and reasonable adjustments, had identified pastoral issues such as flexibility in choice of accommodation. Actions on the pastoral issues had been agreed, including improving information on the roles of Tutors and Directors of Studies, and reviewing the processes for implementing academic-related recommendations from Student Support Documents.

## **2.2 Senior Tutor's Business**

**a) Interim Admissions Report: 2023 Undergraduate Admissions Round (CC.2023.02.22.2.2.a)**

The Acting Admissions Director introduced the Report, specifically noting that no formal complaints had been received from applicants following the recent admissions round. In response to questions, he noted that:

- a University working group was reviewing alternatives to Cambridge University Press and Assessment providing admissions tests;

- there was insufficient information to draw any conclusions about the impact on admissions of larger Colleges' new widening participation initiatives;
- no clear preference as between online and in-person interviews had emerged from applicants identified as disadvantaged.

Council **noted** the report and expressed its thanks to the Admissions Team and to the Tutorial Team for providing additional support.

**b) Interview Arrangements December 2023 and beyond (CC.2023.02.22.2.2b)**

The Acting Admissions Director reported that intercollegiate consensus on the interview format was unlikely, as other Colleges had already agreed opposed solutions. Council discussed the pros and cons of in-person and online interviews and acknowledged that there was no ideal format.

Council **agreed** to notify the Admissions Office that, to better achieve consistence of approach for applicants across the Collegiate University, the College would follow the majority view amongst the Colleges and subjects for the preferred interview format, including for international students. If required to express a preference, it would be for online interviews.

**Action: Acting Admissions Director**

**c) Pastoral Support Report (CC.2023.02.22.2.2c)**

The Senior Tutor drew attention to the direction of travel showing work undertaken in response to student concerns once issues had been raised. He reminded Council that the new Head of Student Wellbeing would join the College shortly and would review the strategic plan for student wellbeing.

Council **noted** the report and that certain personal information had been included in the version originally made available before a redacted copy had been published shortly thereafter. Any Council members who had downloaded the original copy should delete it.

**d) Student Financial Support Report (CC.2023.02.22.2.2d)**

The Senior Tutor drew attention to improvements to communication with students about accessing the financial support available, including support for students with disabilities, and the consequential increase in support accessed.

Council **noted** the report.

**e) CRAs and Visiting Scholars – request for nomination**

The Senior Tutor explained that there was one vacancy for a CRA / Visiting Scholar. An email would be circulated to the Fellowship asking for any nominations to be submitted for Council consideration.

**Action: Senior Tutor**

**2.3 Bursar's Business**

**a) Student Charges 2023-24: Finance and Needs Committee**

**Recommendation**

**(CC.2023.02.22.2.3a)**

The Bursar presented the Finance and Needs Committee's recommendations on student charges for 2023-24, drawing attention to the fact that the College's charitable objective to provide education is not compatible with provision of subsidized accommodation. She noted specifically increased energy costs, the rate of inflation, and the continuing accommodation accounts deficit. She noted that in order to mitigate the cost of living crisis for those less able to pay that a significant increase in targeted support had been approved by Finance and Needs Committee.

The JCR President presented SSSU's response to the recommendations, reporting student dissatisfaction. Student Members had analysed publicly available accommodation information from other Colleges and felt that occupancy charges were high at Sidney, relative to the facilities provided. The Student Members reported that students were grateful for the targeted financial support and occupancy charge rebate available to students but expressed concern for the quality of life for those students falling just below the qualifying threshold.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Sidney's median accommodation charge was 9% below the Cambridge College median;
- The College proposed to increase rent rebates for students in receipt of Cambridge Bursary Schemes (CBS), and to extend the provision of those rebates to students with financial constraints who were not CBS recipients;
- A restructure of the maintenance team had been proposed, to increase capacity to respond to requests;
- The cost of subsidising gym membership could be reviewed, though was unlikely to make a significant difference
- Calculating the rate of inflation using the January 2023 Consumer Price Inflation (Housing) (CPIH) figure of 7.9% rather than the 8.6% figure from November 2022 would result in a larger savings for students and would be closer to the SSSU proposal of 7%;

- Clear communication with current and prospective students about access to rent rebates and other available financial support would be prioritised;
- SSCSU had supported the introduction of cohort pricing in 2020, but current SSCSU members did not agree with its retention.

The Master thanked the Student Members for their analysis and report, and the Bursar offered support if students wished to adjust banding provided that the outcome remained cost neutral. The Student Members withdrew.

A short discussion followed in which the recommendations and the proposals from SSCSU and above points were considered. Council **agreed**

- i. that, exceptionally, the rate of inflation be calculated using the Consumer Price Inflation (Housing) (CPIH) from January 2023 rather than November 2022; this would reduce the rate of inflation from the 8.6% agreed by Finance & Needs Committee to 7.9%;
- ii. that the maximum rate of rent rebate would be set at inflation or at 5%, whichever was the higher for the year ahead; this would increase the level of rent rebate from 5% in 2022-23 to 7.9% in 2023-24;
- iii. that the decision on cohort pricing would be delegated to the Student Members to agree based on feedback from the student body on preferred option of either a) cohort pricing at 5% for one year; b) cohort pricing at 4% for three years; or c) eliminate cohort pricing in 2023-24 and adopt an extra 1.6% above inflation across all years.

**Action: Student Members**

**b) Updated CCTV Policy (CC.2023.02.22.2.3b)**

The Bursar presented the updated CCTV Policy. In response to a query about the inclusion of covert recording, the Registrar explained that the College was not permitted to make covert recording on its own but, as certain bodies could ask it to do so, a process for considering such requests was required. A member of Council asked to see a copy of the CCTV operating procedures.

The updated CCTV Policy was **approved** subject to there being no objection to the operating procedures.

**c) \*Data Protection**

The 2022 Compliance Report (CC.2023.02.22.2.3c.i) and the OIS Data Protection Officer's Annual Report: Accountability Profile 2022 (CC.2023.02.22.2.3c.ii) were **noted**.

**d) Charging for Alumni Accommodation and Dining**  
**(CC.2023.02.22.2.3d)**

The Bursar presented the charging convention, which would formalise existing procedures and charges to alumni for accommodation.

The updated charging convention was **approved**.

**2.4 Development Director's Business**

There was no business.

**2.5 Steward's Business**

There was no business.

**2.6 Student Business**

**a) \*CCTV in the College Bar – update** **(CC.2023.02.22.2.6a)**

The Bar Manager's email was **noted**.

**b) June Event Committee – update** **(CC.2023.02.22.2.6b)**

The JCR President presented the report, and updated Council that, as the Committee had received an acceptable quotation, cancellation insurance would be obtained. Council **confirmed** that it would welcome a further update on ticket sales at its next meeting and extended its thanks to the Committee for its work so far.

**3. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**3.1 Muniments Committee**

**a) Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 23 January 2023**  
**(CC.2023.02.22.3.1a)**

The Bursar drew attention to the Committee's proposal that the former squash court be used for additional storage. She argued that the trustees the proposal required a prior policy decision by the trustees about the scope for conservation and record retention, including archival storage on- and off-site, and disposals. Council noted the need for reviewing the College's holdings and its policy for adding to them, along with the likelihood that specialist assistance would be required to do this.

Council **noted** the minutes.

**i. Criteria for hanging portraits in College Hall**  
Council **approved** the criteria (appendix 1 to the minutes).

### 3.2 Health and Safety Committee

- a) **Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 24 January 2023**  
(CC.2023.02.22.3.2a)

Council **noted** the minutes, the progress of work to clear the Muniment Room for re-inspection by the Health & Safety Auditor, and continuing flagpole access issues.

- i. **\*\*Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference**  
(CC.2023.02.22.3.2a.i)

Council **approved** the Terms of Reference.

### 3.3 Music Committee

- a) **\*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 27 January 2023**  
(CC.2023.02.22.3.3a)

Council **noted** the minutes.

### 3.4 Finance and Needs Committee

- a) **\*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 30 January 2023**  
(CC.2023.02.22.3.4a)

Council **noted** the minutes.

- i. **\*\*Free Reserves Policy** (CC.2023.02.22.3.4a.i)  
Council **approved** the Free Reserves Policy.

### 3.5 Statutes and Ordinances Committee

- a) **\*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 31 January 2023**  
(GB.2023.02.22.3.2a)

Council **noted** the minutes.

### 3.6 Prevent Committee

- a) **\*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 2 February 2023**  
(CC.2023.02.22.3.6a)

Council **noted** the minutes.

### 3.7 Education and Pastoral Care Committee

- a) **\*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 6 February 2023**  
(CC.2023.02.22.3.7a)

Council **noted** the minutes.



### 3.8 Buildings and Environment Committee

a) **Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 27 January 2023**  
**(CC.2023.02.22.3.8a)**

The Bursar drew attention to the work undertaken to address accessibility issues based on the recommendations of the AccessAble review of College premises. An Accessibility Working Group had been established, including student membership, to identify priority work and to assess feasibility and costs to develop a schedule for consideration. Council asked the Working Group to consider making alterations to ensure at least one accessible supervision room and to review access to the College Bar. The Bursar emphasised the need to raise issues as soon as they became evident, to enable the College to act. Student representatives on the Working Group were encouraged to solicit feedback from the wider student body.

Council **noted** the minutes.

i. **\*\*Buildings and Environment Committee Terms of Reference** **(CC.2023.02.22.3.8a.i)**  
Council **approved** the Terms of Reference.

ii. **Consultation on potential future use of former squash court** **(CC.2023.02.22.3.8a.ii)**  
The Bursar explained that the Buildings and Environment Committee had proposed that a consultation be undertaken to identify potential future use.

Council discussed the difficulties of managing expectations of what was achievable and recognised that any work on the building would divert attention and resources from those accessibility improvements already identified as a priority. It was noted that the incoming Master had indicated an intention to support the development of a College-wide strategy which could support decision-making when faced with conflicting demands and limited resources.

Dr Fulda expressed disappointment that the building had been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. He noted that the Festival of Ideas team was in the process of analysing the responses received to its consultation which included ideas for options for the building.

Council **agreed** to ask the Buildings and Environment Committee to organise a College-wide consultation to identify which options were felt by College members to be a priority. The most popular options would be costed for further consideration. It was noted that the state of the College's free

reserves would mean that fundraising would likely be necessary.

**3.9 Library Committee**

- a) **\*Unreserved minutes of the meeting of 14 February 2023**  
**(CC.2023.02.22.3.9a)**

Council **noted** the minutes.

**4. OTHER BUSINESS**

**4.1 Any other business**

There was no further business.

**4.2 Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 15 March 2023 at 2pm in the William Mong Hall.