



Unreserved business minutes of College Council on 29 January 2025

Present:

Ex officio members	Master, Vice-Master, Senior Tutor, Bursar
Elected members	Professor Biagini, Dr Bordin, Professor Fruk, Dr Groom, Dr Harasimov, Mr Ireland, Dr Ranasinghe, Dr Sumnall, Dr Wilson-Lee
Student members	Ms Chen (MCR President), Ms Harrison (Student Representative), Mr Nicholas (JCR President), Ms Woods (JCR Vice-President)
In attendance	College Registrar (Council Secretary)

Introductory business

501 Apologies for absence

Ms Baskerville was on leave and apologies were received from Drs Eaton and Öner. The Master announced that Oliver Johnson had been elected JCR President from the start of February.

502 Approval of agenda

Approved.

503 Declaration of interests

None

504 Unreserved business minutes of 4 December 2024

(CC.2425/504)

Confirmed by circulation.

505 Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

(CC.2425/505)

Noted.

Decision items

506 10-year major works plan and budget (Bursar)

(CC.2425/506)

The Bursar reported that the plan would necessarily be a living document which would be adjusted as circumstances dictated, and that Council had previously approved doubling the annual major works budget to support essential maintenance of the fabric of the estate in the 2024-25 budget. The target plan was to continue to spend c.£1m per annum going forward on major works, subject to financial conditions allowing. The Buildings & Environment Committee would likely review the plan at most meetings and agree the detail of each project within the plan, referring to Finance & Needs and to Council as required.

On the recommendation of the Buildings & Environment and Finance & Needs Committees, Council **approved** the plan and budget, and requested that the Buildings & Environment Committee give further consideration to the timing and scope of accessibility works.

507 Amendment to Scott Morton Fund Regulations (Master) (CC.2425/507)

Council **approved** the amendments, made following discussions with the donor, to add a further purpose to provide support for any student from the United States accepted to Sidney to undertake PhD studies.

508 Personal Relationships Policy (Registrar) (CC.2425/508)

Council, noting that some concerns had been expressed at the previous meeting about an implied prohibition on residential Fellows supervising in their College accommodation, proposed that the existing wording be maintained but an additional clause be appended to 8.2.10 in the supplementary guidance: “For the avoidance of doubt, the present provision does not apply to the office section of residential Fellows’ rooms.” Additional queries were raised about disciplinary processes, and other provisions specific to University settings and circumstances, such as reference to research groups.

Subject to the above amendment, and noting that the policy could revert to Council at any time for further amendment if were found that other Colleges had adopted policies substantially different from the University policy, Council **approved** the Personal Relationships Policy.

509 Freedom of Information Act Compliance Report 2024 (Registrar) (CC.2425/509)

Council **noted** the annual report and **approved** publication of the 2024 disclosure log on the College website.

510 Flag Flying Schedule 2025 (Registrar) (CC.2425/510)

Council **approved** the 2025 schedule.

Discussion items

511 Inter-collegiate business and other relevant issues

Heads of House

- The Master noted three initiatives funded by Trinity College to support academic programmes. The Master suggested that the College should look to make use of these schemes, particularly how one initiative could be used to expand the widening participation programme.

512 Catering Deficit Fact Base (Bursar) (CC.2425/512)

The Bursar introduced the document for discussion, noting that:

- Whilst a highly valued facilitator of collegiate interaction, catering provision was not specifically core to the College’s charitable function;

- The current deficit was disproportionate and addressing it was a clear priority in the agreed Bursary team priorities;
- Further work was underway to analyse costs of internal and external events in more detail;
- Other than at Formal Halls, there had been a notable decrease in student use of College catering in recent years, and demand for increased investment in student self-catering facilities;
- The costs for Fellows' and non-academic staff meals were employment costs, recharged to the relevant budgets for the overall cost of Fellows and staff in accordance with policies previously agreed by the College. These costs were therefore not part of the Catering Department's deficit, but it was valuable for Council to receive details of all catering expenditure and measures of deficit;
- Options for deficit reduction, and potential financial and non-financial impacts, would be brought to a later Council meeting, following consideration by Catering & Accommodation Committee and, if appropriate, Finance & Needs Committee.

Council discussed possible reasons for the reduction in student attendance and whether student financial support grants could include meal vouchers to enable more students to dine in College. Additionally, questions were raised about student society dining arrangements, which was already due to be the subject of a future paper to Council.

Council **noted** the report.

513 Bursary Priorities 2024-25: progress update (Bursar)

(CC.2425/513)

The Bursar reported that:

- The majority of projects were on track, the new HR system had been implemented with planning underway to expand to include Payroll;
- Further resource was required to complete the move to a new intranet and review the website;
- Closure of the legacy 1975 Sidney Sussex Pension Scheme currently remained on track to be complete by the end of the academic year;
- Retendering of investment managers had been deferred due to the work required to complete the purchase of 20-22 Sidney Street but would be considered by Lent Term Investment Committee;
- The proposal for a Sidney app had been considered by IT Committee, which felt that the cost and effort outweighed the benefit.

Council **noted** the progress update, and that similar six-monthly updates were already received from the Development and Alumni Relations Office; the Senior Tutor was preparing a plan on behalf of his directorate, all as recommended by the Audit Committee to enable Council to scrutinise the work of Principal Officers.

514 JCR MT24 report and plans for LT25 (JCR President) (CC.2425/514)
Council **noted** the report, and asked that student participation rates in SSSU elections be appended to future reports to Council. **Action: JCR President**

515 MCR MT24 report and plans for LT25 (MCR President) (CC.2425/515)
Council **noted** the report.

516 May Week Event 2025 Update (JCR and MCR Presidents) (CC.2425/516)
Council **noted** the report, and that the theme of “Midsummer” had now been announced and tickets were now on sale.

Information items

517 Data Protection 2024 Annual Compliance Report and report of the Data Protection Officer (CC.2425/517)
Received.

518 Use of College Seal
Noted:

- 04/12/24 Deed of Covenant and Release relating to the Pavilion, Darwin Green

Reports from committees

519 Chapel & Music Committee 15 November 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/519)
Received.

520 Academic Committee 26 November 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/520)
Received.

521 Catering & Accommodation Committee 27 November 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/521)
Received.

522 Buildings & Environment Committee 28 November 2024 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/522)
Received.

Other business

523 Any other business
Council expressed its gratitude to Mr Nicholas for his contributions as a member of Council for nearly two years, first as JCR Vice-President and then as JCR President.

524 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 2pm in the William Mong Hall, followed by Governing Body.