

Sidney Sussex College

The Minutes of
COLLEGE COUNCIL
Held in the Old Library
on Wednesday 16 March 2022

In attendance:

Senior Members Present

The Master, Vice-Master, Senior Tutor, Bursar, Dr Bordin, Dr Fulda, Dr Garcia-Mayoral, Dr Groom, Dr Oner, Dr Ranasinghe, Prof Reynolds, Prof Sepulchre, Dr Stasch, Dr Sumnall

Student Members Present

Ms Dadiya, Ms Kazani, Mr Lu, Ms Mahmood

Also Present

Ms Harkin (College Registrar/Council Secretary)

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

1.1 Apologies for absence

Prof Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Dr Doran

1.2 Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved

1.3 Declaration of Interests

There was no declaration of interests apart from a general interest of those members of Council who are directly employed by the College in the HR policies.

1.4 Confirmation of the minutes of the unreserved business of the Meeting of Council on 23 February 2022 (CC.220316.1.4)

The minutes were confirmed.

- a) Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda
There were no other matters arising.

2. REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

2.1 Master's Business

- a) Intercollegiate business

Senior Tutors Committee had met since the last Council meeting and discussed three substantive topics:

- (i) A report from the senior PVC for Education that the Government had dropped its plans for post qualification admissions;
- (ii) The future format of UG admissions interviews and the question whether to continue online or not. One college is strongly in favour of reverting back to in person interviews so there is ongoing discussion to try to arrive at a consistent cross-colleges policy;
- (iii) Organ scholarship scheme – this scheme is felt to provide a slight advantage in terms of securing a place at Cambridge. It is being reviewed to see if a fairer process for all applicants can be established.

b) Communication

(i) Communication Priorities (CC.220316.2.1bi)

The paper set out proposed key communication priorities / themes for the College. It was noted that these should be augmented by making optimal use and promotion of Sidney's historical past.

Council approved the Communication Priorities.

(ii) Communications Working group (CC.220316.2.1bii)

It was proposed to establish a time limited working group to develop a communications framework, set targets, and make recommendations on a plan for implementation and ongoing governance. Council members were asked to review the draft Terms of Reference for the working group.

In discussion, it was explained that student representatives would be invited to attend meetings of the working group when agenda items were pertinent to them. It was suggested that it would be useful to add the Editor of the College Annual to the group. This suggestion was agreed and would be incorporated in the final Terms of Reference to be agreed at the first meeting of the working group.

c) ** HR Committee – amended Terms of Reference (CC.220316.2.1c)

Council approved the recommendation that the newly re-established HR Committee should report directly to Council.

d) **Flag flying policy (CC.220316.2.1d)

It was noted that the revised policy incorporated the requirement for planning consent from the City Council to be sought prior to flying certain types of flags. Council **approved** the policy.

A student representative enquired about the rationale for not allowing students to fly flags externally from their windows. It was explained that this was in order to comply with the referred to Government guidance on flag flying, and also for the purpose of good order and health and safety in College.

2.2 Senior Tutor's Business

a) Academic Reviews Report (UG) (CC.220316.2.2a)

The Senior Tutor outlined the undergraduate academic review process and set out the results/findings from the reviews carried out in 2021-22. The report had been discussed in Education and Pastoral Care Committee with a focus on exploring how to improve the process – for example, ensuring that students felt sufficiently free to express their views, and whether the right set of questions were being asked – for example, whether there was sufficient scope to identify wellbeing issues.

One Council Member noted a shift in emphasis in the report over time to a greater emphasis on the students' pastoral experience alongside the academic one and asked if, going forward, the balance of focus between academic performance and pastoral wellbeing could be considered when implementing the academic reviews. He felt that the questionnaire incorporated explicit and/or implicit expectations of the Directors of Studies' role in the absence of any guidance to Directors of Studies about the activities they should be engaged in.

Another member commented on the process for feedback to supervisors and communication with the Directors of Studies – it was felt that this feedback should be a matter of course, rather than provided only when there was a particular issue.

The Master suggested that these comments should be fed back to Education & Pastoral Committee.

b) **Safeguarding policy (CC.220316.2.2b) **Council approved** the policy.

c) PG funding proposal consultation – draft response (CC.220316.2.2c)

The Senior Tutor introduced draft responses to two University consultations on 'underwritten funding offers' and 'full funding packages'. Council had noted the questions at its previous meeting and members had been invited to offer feedback. The current drafts represented the view of the principal officers and Postgraduate Tutors, and had benefited from consultation with the MCR President.

The MCR President queried the position in relation to visa surcharges for international students within the full funding proposal. The Master explained that his understanding was that the proposed pooled fund would cover visa surcharges.

ACTION: Senior Tutor

2.3 Bursar's Business

a) Total Return – proposed mechanism (CC.220316.2.3a)

The Bursar explained that Total Return was a methodology for smoothing out fluctuations in returns from dividends and capital growth so that the College could achieve more predictability in terms of its budgets, as well as a fair apportionment between current and future beneficiaries. The proposal was that the approach be applied from 1 July 2022 to the Amalgamated Fund only. It would include a proposed spending rule of 3.2% of the weighted utilised value of the amalgamated fund over 12 quarter end valuations to the December preceding year end, based on the current portfolio and projected return and was consistent with the other Cambridge Colleges.

The College's Statutes and Ordinances give the College the power to implement Total Return as set out in Ordinance D, I (Investment and Expenditure Powers) but that any policy for the management of Total Return will need to be incorporated into that Ordinance and adopted by the Governing Body.

A query was raised about how often the spending rule would be reviewed. The Bursar explained that it would not be a percentage that would be expected to be changed annually, although the effects of total return would be monitored and if there a significant change in the market, then the spending rule would be reviewed by Investment Committee. The Master suggested that the question of an appropriate review period would be considered in writing the relevant Ordinance.

Council **approved** the adoption of Total Return and the associated recommended actions set out in the paper.

ACTION: Bursar

b) **Private undergraduate fees (CC.220316.2.3b)

Council **approved** the proposed annual fees for the 2022-23 private undergraduate cohort.

c) *Appeals and charitable donations (CC.220316.2.3c)

Council **approved** the proposed donations to Red Cross Ukraine and May Week Alternative.

2.4 Development Director's Business

There was no business.

2.5 Steward's Business

There was no business.

2.6 Student Business

There was no business.

3. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**3.1 Muniment Committee**

a) *Unreserved minutes of 24 January 2022 (CC.220316.3.1a)
Council **noted** the minutes.

3.2 Chapel Committee

Council **noted** the minutes of the 7 February 2022 meeting had not been received.

3.3 Library Committee

a) *Unreserved minutes of 16 February 2022 (CC.220316.3.3a)
Council **noted** the minutes.

3.4 IT Steering Group

a) *Unreserved minutes of 17 February 2022 (CC.220316.3.4a)
Council **noted** the minutes.

i)**Access Control Policy (CC.220316.3.4ai)

ii) **Backup Procedure (CC.220316.3.4aii)

iii) **Data Usage and Sharing Policy (CC.220316.3.4aiii)

iv)**IT Training Policy (CC.220316.3.4aiv)

v)**Records Management Policy (CC.220316.3.4av)

vi)**System Update Policy (CC.220316.3.4avi)

vii)**System User Control Policy (CC.220316.3.4avii)

Council **approved** the policies.

3.5 Wellbeing project governance board

a) *Unreserved minutes

i) 10 December 2021 (CC.220316.3.5ai)

Council **noted** the minutes.

ii) 28 February 2022 (CC.220316.3.5aii)

Council **noted** the minutes.

a)**Amended Terms of Reference (CC.220316.3.5aiia)

Council **approved** the amended Terms of Reference.

3.6 Environmental Sustainability Group

a) *Unreserved minutes of 1 March 2022 (CC.220316.3.6a)
Council **noted** the minutes.

3.7 Staff Liaison Committee

a) *Unreserved minutes of 3 March 2022 (CC.220316.3.7a)
Council **noted** the minutes.

3.8 Finance & Needs Committee

a) Unreserved minutes of 7 March 2022 (CC.220316.3.8a)
The Bursar drew attention to:

- 6b: The updated forecast at the end of quarter 2 predicts an operating deficit before major works, donations, and USS adjustment, of £1.25 million compared to the deficit forecast at Q1 of £1.5 million and the original budget deficit of £2.2 million. The key differences are driven by higher income across internal and external residence and catering, and commercial rental income. There are also savings as a result of carrying staffing vacancies which it has not been possible to fill. The Bursar flagged that inflation next year would be a significant issue affecting the College's finances.
- 11a: Finance & Needs Committee have agreed a proposal for rent rebates on vacation uplifts for Christmas and Easter vacation student charges.
- 13b: Finance & Needs Committee have approved funding for consultants needed to develop a long-term refurbishment programme for the College which would include a strategy to decarbonise the estate as much as possible.
- 14a: Finance & Needs Committee have approved the funding of a scoping and option appraisal to review the College Intranet/Sidnet and develop a technical solution for a successor system.

i)**Amended Expenses Procedure (CC.220316.3.8ai)

ii) **HR Policies for approval – summary (CC.220316.3.8aii)

iii) **Maternity Leave and Pay Policy (CC.220316.3.8aiii)

iv) **Paternity Leave and Pay Policy (CC.220316.3.8aiv)

v) **Adoption Leave and Pay Policy (CC.220316.3.8av)

vi) **Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy
(CC.220316.3.8avi)

vii) **Unpaid Parental Leave Policy (CC.220316.3.8avii)

viii)**Special Leave (was 'Other Entitlements to Time Off Policy
(CC.220316.3.8aviii)

ix)** Probation Policy (CC.220316.3.8aix)

x)**Performance Development Review (PDR) Procedure
(CC.220316.3.8ax)

xi)**On Call Working Policy (CC.220316.3.8axi)

Council **approved** the policies.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Any other business

There was no other business

4.2 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 04 May 2022 at 2.00pm in the William Mong Hall