

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2 November 2020

Present: Vice-Chancellor, Principal of Brasenose¹, Warden of New College, Ms Becker², Ms Boyt, Professor Sir Rory Collins, Professor Coulson, Sir Chris Deverell, Fra' John Eidinow, Professor Essler, Professor Hamerow, Mr Harman, Professor Hobbs, Professor Johnson, Mr Kroll, Professor Lahiri, Professor Nobre, Mr Ovenden, Professor Trefethen, Head of the Humanities Division (Professor O'Brien), Head of the Medical Sciences Division (Professor Screaton), Head of the MPLS Division (Professor Howison), Senior Proctor (Professor Horobin), Junior Proctor (Professor Johnston), Assessor (Dr Swift).

Student Member Representatives and representative of the Early Career Research Staff: Nikita Ma (President of Oxford SU), Tucker Drew (Oxford SU VP Access and Academic Affairs) and Lauren Bolz (Oxford SU VP Graduates); Dr Gwilym Rowlands (Chair, Oxford Research Staff Society).

Apologies: Head of the Social Sciences Division (Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore).

Officers in attendance: the Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)³, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Director of Finance, the Director of Legal Services and General Counsel, the Director of Public Affairs, the interim Head of Governance and Covid Planning⁴, the Executive Officer (Policy and Governance) in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Assistant Registrar (Governance), Dr Berry.

In attendance: the Director of Estates, Mr Paul Goffin (for item 13).

Order of business: items 15 was brought above the line and taken after item 12; item 16 was brought above the line and taken after item 24.

Declarations of interest: Council members were reminded to declare any interest that could give rise to a conflict in relation to any item on the agenda.

Introductory matters: the Vice-Chancellor welcomed Professor David Gann to his first meeting of Council as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs).

I. ORDINARY BUSINESS

(A) Unreserved

1. Meeting held on 2 September 2020 (C(20)xcv-c)

(a) Unreserved minutes

The minutes were approved, subject to one amendment.

(b) Matters arising from the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2020 not otherwise on the agenda

There were none.

2. Away Day held on 25 September 2020 (C(20)ciii-cxiv)

(a) Unreserved minutes

¹ For items 1-24.

² For items 1-24.

³ For items 1-24.

⁴ For items 1-24.

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The minutes were approved, subject to the amendment of one minute.

(b) Matters arising from the unreserved minutes of Away Day held on 25 September 2020 not otherwise on the agenda

There were none.

3. **Meeting held on 12 October 2020** (C(20)cxv-cxx)

(a) Unreserved minutes

The minutes were approved.

(b) Matters arising from the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2020 not otherwise on the agenda

Minute 3: USS consultation

The Vice-Chancellor reported that following Council's meeting, further revision by the USS Working Group and consultation with scheme members, the resulting draft response had been circulated to Council on 26 October (C(20)123) for approval by correspondence. Seven replies had been received, all in favour, and the response had therefore been approved and submitted.

CONFIDENTIAL 4. **The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (above the line)***

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following matters.

- Matriculation had taken place online.
- The centenary of the matriculation and graduation of women at the University had been celebrated by a webinar and the inauguration of the Hilary Rodham Clinton Chair in Women's History.
- Planning for Brexit had continued.
- The Wellcome Trust's funding strategy.
- The THE subject rankings for 2020, which placed nine subject areas at Oxford in the first four rankings world wide:

1: Clinical, Pre-Clinical and Health; Computer Science

2: Education; Engineering and Technology; Social Sciences

3: Law; Life Sciences

4: Arts and Humanities; Business and Economics.

The Vice-Chancellor commented that Stanford was the only University to have more than two subjects in the first ranking.

5. **Covid-19****

CONFIDENTIAL *(a) Introduction by the Vice-Chancellor*

The Vice-Chancellor provided an oral report.

CONFIDENTIAL *(b) Update on managing the pandemic*

Council received oral reports on the following:

(i) Incident Coordination Group (ICG)

(ii) Operation of the testing service

(iii) Student behaviour

(iv) Testing pilot

CONFIDENTIAL *(c) Covid-related costs – Silver's funding envelope and costs identified to date (C(20)125)*

Council **noted** the report.

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6. **The Duties and Liabilities of Council members as the charity trustees of the University** (C(20)126)

This item was taken together with item 7.

The Registrar drew attention to the papers, and highlighted a number of key points.

Council **noted** the information.

7. **The Charity Commission Guidance on Public Benefit – a Summary** (C(20)127)

This item was taken together with item 6.

Council **noted** the information.

CONFIDENTIAL 8. **Financial Statements 2019/20: progress update and material items** (C(20)128)**

Council **noted** the update and the material items.

9. **Sources of information for audit Representation letter to KPMG** (C(20)129)*

In response to the question put by the Director of Finance, Council **confirmed** that it was content with the evidence provided to it in the paper to support the approval of the management representation letter.

10. **Reports from the Finance Committee**

CONFIDENTIAL (a) *Life and Mind Building (LaMB) - proposed project transfer to L&G for funding and delivery: report from the extraordinary meeting held on 13 October 2020* (C(20)130)^{5**}

Council **noted** the report.

CONFIDENTIAL (b) *Humanities ROQ project: report from the meeting held on 14 October 2020* (C(20)131)^{6**}

Council **took the actions** set out in the report.

11. **Congregation business**

CONFIDENTIAL (a) *Phasing-Out of the Graduate Application Fee* (C(20)132)**

Council:

- (i) **noted** the update provided on the outcome of the postal vote; and
- (ii) **agreed** the next steps set out in paragraphs 12-15 of the paper.

(b) *Question and Reply on the Crisis Management Framework (Supplementary Questions)* (C(20)133)*

The Registrar explained that Council was being asked to approve the replies to the supplementary questions which had been asked about the Crisis Management Framework. Those supplementary questions were a follow up to the reply given by Council in July and read out in Congregation on 13 October. There had been three supplementary questions which the draft replies addressed.

- The first reply, in response to a question about whether Congregation would be offered a resolution on the Crisis Management Framework, explained that neither the creation nor the revision of the framework required Congregation's approval, and that changes to the framework are made under the general delegation to the Vice-Chancellor.
- The second question, on the arrangements for the publication of the minutes of Silver and Bronze as each batch passes the four-month delay period, appeared to have been asked in

⁵ Professor Coulson and Professor Nobre declared conflicts of interests in this item.

⁶ The Head of the Humanities Division and Mr Ovenden declared conflicts of interests in this item

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response to a delay to the publication of the May minutes, and the reply explained the procedure that is in place.

- The third reply, on the circumstances in which Council would withdraw its delegation of powers under the Crisis Management Framework and inform Congregation that this has been done, clarified that there has been no delegation of powers under the Crisis Management Framework, and provided a reminder of where the delegations came from. It then explained that the meetings of Silver and Bronze would continue until Council determined that the crisis had ended.

The discussion focussed on whether the four months' delay period might be reduced. The purpose of a delay was to ensure that the crisis management groups and those advising those groups could discuss issues freely without the risk of immediate criticism or dissention. That there was a four month delay had not been raised as an issue in the supplementary questions. Nevertheless, now that the crisis had moved on, greater transparency might be beneficial and the delay period be reviewed. It was proposed, and agreed, that henceforth the delay period should be reduced from four months to two.

Council:

- (i) **considered**, as set out above, the supplementary questions received;
- (ii) **approved** the reply to those questions as set out in the paper for publication in the *Gazette*, subject to the addition of a statement that the delay period prior to publication would henceforth be reduced from four to two months; and
- (iii) **delegated** to the Registrar the approval of the consequent amendment to the draft reply.

CONFIDENTIAL 12. **Draft schedule for Council meetings during 2020/21** (C(20)134)**

Council **took the actions** set out in the report.

CONFIDENTIAL 13. **Presentation on building projects****

The Director of Estates gave a presentation on current and forthcoming building projects.

Items for approval or report without discussion ('below the line').

14. **The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (below the line)** (C(20)135)

Without discussion, Council **noted**:

- (i) Awards and Queen's Birthday Honours
- (ii) notice of appointments;
- (iii) the OfS publications; and
- (iv) the UUK Press Statements.

CONFIDENTIAL 15. **Financial Statements 2020/21: draft annual report text** (C(20)136)**

Council **noted** the draft non-financial sections of the annual report.

OPEN REPORT,
CONFIDENTIAL
DISCUSSION 16. **Annual reports of the five main committees of Council** (C(20)137)**

Council **noted** the annual reports of its main committees for 2019/20, which will be published on the oxonly pages of Council's website and **agreed** a further action arising from the discussion.

17. **Report of the meeting of Education Committee held on 17 July 2020** (C(20)138)

- (a) *Self-effectiveness review 2020*

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Without discussion, Council **noted** the report.

18. **Council's Standing Orders, 2020/21** (C(20)139)

Without discussion, Council **approved** its Standing Orders for 2020/21.

19. **Dates for Council meetings in 2021/22, and confirmation of the date of the Away Day in September 2021** (C(20)140)

Without discussion, Council **agreed**:

- (i) that the Away Day in the present academic year, 2020/21, should take place on Friday 24 September 2021, with a dinner held the night before, as set out in section (c) below; and
- (ii) to adopt the same schedule of meetings in 2021/22 as in the present academic year, as set out in section (d) below.

20. **Conflicts of interest** (C(20)141)

In accordance with the University's Conflict of Interest Policy, without discussion Council **noted** the information provided on the management of conflicts of interest in relation to Council business.

21. **Public Sector Equality Duty** (C(20)142)

Without discussion, Council **noted** the information in this paper and **agreed** to take the steps set out in the paper in exercising its remit.

22. **Unreserved report of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held by correspondence on 19 October 2020** (C(20)143)

(a) *Proposed amendments to legislation*

Without discussion, Council **approved** the following proposals:

- (i) *Proposed amendment to the regulations governing the membership of the Social Sciences Divisional Board* (GPC(20)76); and
- (ii) *Proposed amendment to the regulations relating to St Cross College* (GPC(20)77)

23. **Performance of the Oxford Endowment Fund** (C(20)144)*

Without discussion, Council **noted** the information.

24. **Any other unreserved business**

There was none.

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