HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COLLEGE COUNCIL

CONFIRMED MINUTES

One hundred-and-thirty-eighth meeting of College Council 3 June 2025

Council Room at 16.30

Present: Sir Laurie Bristow (Chair, President), Dr Sonia Ilie (Acting Vice-President), Prof John Doorbar Dr Bart de Nijs, Dr Aga Iwasiewicz-Wabnig, Prof Bill Irish, Dr Tori McKee (Senior Tutor), Mr Jonathan Newby (Bursar), Prof Ajith Parlikad (from item 38.3.), Dr Guillermo Serrano Najera (from item 38.5), Mrs Kerry Wilson (Development Director), Dr Alexis Willett (Impact Director), Daniel Wolfe (MCR Treasurer, to item 38.16.), Dr Nigel Yandell, Alex Zimmerman (MCR President, to item 38.16.).

Apologies: Patrick Dunne (Assistant Bursar).

In attendance: Luke Ashby (to item 38.6) Dr Joe Ellis (Deputy Senior Tutor, for item 38.12.2.), Sarah Langford (Head of Communications, to item 38.16.), Katherine Springthorpe (Secretary).

OPEN BUSINESS

38.1. Introduction

38.1.1. Welcome and apologies

The Committee welcomed Luke Ashby (Finance Business Partner) for discussion of items 38.5. and 38.6. The Committee noted that Dr Joe Ellis would join for item 38.12.2.

38.1.2. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

38.2. Minutes and Matters arising from Open Business of College Council, 29 April 2025

38.2.1. Approval of minutes (CC38 01)

Council approved the minutes as an accurate record.

38.2.2. College Council action list: Open Business (CC38 02)

- **[CC30.5]: Strategic Plan**
  Council noted that an update would be provided at the final meeting by exception to highlight issues or risks.

- **[CC31.8] Environmental Policy**
  Council noted that comments on the revised policy had been made by Dr Iwasiewicz-Wabnig and this ought to reflected in the "update" column. The Bursar was yet to

incorporate this feedback but hoped to bring the policy to Council for review at its last meeting of the year.

The Secretary noted it was a busy time of year; it was hoped it would be possible to report some progress at the final meeting against some actions, but for now everything would roll over.

38.2.3. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

The Senior Tutor reported that the Staff/Student Relationship Policy was overdue. Work had begun to draft the College's policy based on the University's recent update, but this had proved a complex and sensitive area which necessitated further consideration. Owing to capacity issues during term-time, it had been necessary to delay this work to the summer. It would be brought to Council in MT25 **(Action: Senior Tutor and Secretary).**

Strategic and operational items

38.3. President's Report

The President confirmed that it was a very busy time of year and business as usual continued apace. Council noted that the main strategic focus for the meeting would be the College's finances.

38.4. MCR Business

Council noted that MCR activity had been relatively quiet owing to it being peak exam season. Of note was that the June Event had sold out, with a small margin of profit anticipated.

A vote of thanks was given by the President.

38.5. 2024-2025 Reforecast 3 (CC38 03)

Council received the Reforecast 3 report and welcomed Luke Ashby (Finance Business Partner) to the meeting for this and the following item.

A detailed account of the favourable and unfavourable changes to the yearend forecast position since RF2 was provided, together with an explanation for these changes. The overall picture indicated a breakeven position was likely, with the possibility of a modest surplus.

{REDACTED}

Council recommended Reforecast 3 to Governing Body for approval.

38.6. College Budget for 2025-2026 (CC38 04)

Council received the draft 2025-26 College Budget.

{REDACTED]

Council noted that Finance Committee had reviewed the Budget the previous day and had recommended it for adoption.

Council agreed to recommend the Budget to Governing Body at its meeting of 18 June.

Council gave a vote of thanks to all the Finance Team for their considerable efforts in preparing the 2025-26 Budget.

38.7. Report of Honorary Post-holder – Director of Music: For Information **(CC38 05)**

Council received the Director of Music's report.

Dr Yandell reported that Music at Hughes had continued on a positive track since the previous year, with concerts and events taking place both during and outside term. The Music Planning Group had continued to meet regularly to ensure that a range of interesting and well-supported events and concerts were organised well in advance, and to consider new ways to enhance the musical life of the college. The Acting Vice President reported that the feedback she had received about the College's programme of concerts and events had been universally positive.

Council noted the aspiration to purchase a concert-grade piano to ensure the College could continue to attract a world class calibre of musicians to perform. It was highlighted that the ability to charge for musical concerts and events was currently hampered by the limitations of the existing Steinway. It was understood that Dr Yandell had secured a Steinway on a short-term loan to help to ascertain the benefits of acquiring one on a permanent basis.

Whilst there was support from members for Dr Yandell to explore the options and cost of acquiring something suitable on a permanent basis, he acknowledged this was in the context of the overall financial picture set out in discussion of the Budget.

Music practice areas for students were also discussed, with support from members for seeking ways to utilise the estates development project as an opportunity to enhance the College's limited provision in this area. Council welcomed Dr Yandell's intention to gather data around student bookings and frequency of practice, as well as motivations for use of the practice room to allow for more informed discussion and decision making around the current gap in provision and how best to address it.

The President gave a vote of thanks to Dr Yandell.

38.8. ***Visitor Policy (CC38 06)

Council received and approved the revised Visitor Policy without discussion.

38.9. Communications Annual Report & Social Media Summary (CC38 07)

Council received the Head of Communication's report.

Sarah Langford reported that 2024/25 had seen a consolidation of the previous years' achievements and an increase in ambition for the Communications team. A stable 1.5FTE resource supplemented by some of the Impact Director's time had provided greater resilience and capacity within the team, who were required to deliver on a wide range of responsibilities with a relatively modest budget.

Among several highlights outlined within the report, Council noted that digital assets and website development had remained a key strength, as core deliverables for the team.

Anecdotal feedback on these aspects continued to be extremely positive, with comments from student applicants, new senior members, and recent senior staff recruits testifying to the impact that the college's digital presence had in driving Hughes as a destination of choice. Tangible wins were evident in admissions: 2024/25 saw the highest numbers of UG applicants known, and PG applicants selecting Hughes as first choice had risen again to 23%.

Looking ahead, the team would explore opportunities to optimise and refresh the website, ensuring messaging was clearer and bolder, as well as focusing on delivering more in-house, self-generated content.

The President gave a vote of thanks to Sarah and her team.

38.10. Health and Safety Update (CC38 08)

Council received its annual Health and Safety Update report.

Council noted that the Health and Safety policy required formal review every three years and would be taken to Governing Body (as the trustee body) for approval in Michaelmas Term.

The Bursar reported that the year had marked a change in health and safety auditors, with the University's Health and Safety team having been appointed. The most recent audit had taken place in November 2024 with a rating of "Good" (c.80%) having been achieved. There were 17 areas identified with action required. A Health and Safety Group had been convened to develop a plan for and oversee implementation of those actions.

The report also highlighted two near misses, and eight accidents reported. None of the accidents were reportable under RIDDOR to the Health and Safety Executive.

Council discussed the near misses and noted that whilst no one had been hurt, one of them would have fallen under a RIDDOR had that not been the case. A proactive review of the College's estate had taken place in the light of that near miss, with no further action having been identified as a result.

The President gave a vote thanks to John Horwood (Head of Facilities), and all involved in managing Health and Safety within the College.

Standing items

38.11. Bursarial:

38.11.1. Bursar's Report (CC38 09) (including [Pavilion Project Update] and Statutes & Ordinances Project)

Council received the Bursar's Report.

Amongst several points raised, the following were noted:

- The new Committee Papers System (Athena) would be launching very soon, hopefully in time for the 18 June Governing Body meeting and certainly ahead of the next academic year.
- The timeline for Statutes approval remained; revisions were currently with the University. A special meeting had been called for Governing Body to formally vote on 18 June to allow the Statutes to be sent to Privy council for consideration over the summer.
- **{REDACTED}**

- A recent spate of bike thefts from the site had necessitated the erection of a security fence to the rear of the site.

38.11.2. Management Accounts to 30 April 2025 (CC38 10)

This item was taken ahead of item 38.5.

It was noted that the discussion relating to Reforecast 3 meant this item had been largely superseded.

{REDACTED}

38.12. Tutorial and Admissions

38.12.1. Senior Tutor's Report (CC38 11)

Council received the Senior Tutor's Report, noting the following points:

- The March admissions round had yielded a positive number of UG applicants. Discussion was ongoing around the potential increase to conversion rates for applicants considering recent changes to foreign policy and visa rules impacting US universities. There were concerns being voiced by some Departments around the potential for a surge in numbers of PGT students, however it was far too early to know if this would become a reality. Council noted the matter would be monitored closely and considered by Admissions Committee.
- There had been considerable interest and discussion at recent intercollegiate committee meetings around the Office for Students (OfS) E6 condition, which would come into force from August 2025. Whilst the College was not regulated by OfS, there had been strong encouragement from the University for Colleges to support its endeavours and preparations to meet the new condition. A small group of staff had been convened within the College to consider aspects affecting the college - as set out in the appendix within the paper - the most significant of which was in-person student training. The College had opted to continue to cover the necessary topics in existing student induction presentations rather than adopt a train-the-trainer model being delivered by the University. As well as being very resource-intensive, the latter was also felt to be unsuitable for the College's mature and postgraduate student community. The University had confirmed the College's approach would be compliant. Council noted other pockets of activity would be necessary in areas such as the student discipline policy and communications, but these would be relatively light touch.
- The declining number of postgraduate medic applicants had been discussed previously. The Senior Tutor noted that, though smaller, the field of applicants had been strong; it was hoped that the target intake of 8 students would be reached. Discussion around the general reduction in applications for the course was ongoing, with the Clinical School wishing to avoid a knee-jerk reaction. The decline in numbers was thought to be the result of other HEIs newly offering equivalent courses, combined with the University's course having a reputation for being very challenging.

38.12.2. University Review of Teaching Update (CC38 12)

Council received an update report on the University's Review of Teaching. Council welcomed Dr Joe Ellis to the meeting to present the paper.

The Review - commissioned by the General Board and Colleges' Committee in December 2023 in response to a student proposal for a reading week, concerns over student and staff workload and the 'Justice 4 College Supervisors Campaign' – had now concluded, with formal recommendations recently published.

Council noted that the recommendations centred around three areas for improvement: systemic issues; methods to enhance excellence; and improving communication to students and staff. Whilst explicitly set out for undergraduate teaching, it was suggested they may inform taught postgraduate courses as well.

The Education team's view was that the issues identified throughout the review were important and represented a robust identification of areas of undergraduate education at Cambridge that required improvement. Whilst the recommendations were likely to have considerably less direct impact to the College than previously anticipated, recommendations 1, 5 & 6 did concern college supervisions and Directors of Study (DoS).

Given that different owners, timeframes and deliverables of recommendations were outlined, it was not yet clear whether all recommendations would be fully implemented. The Education team would be working over the summer to ensure the College remained ahead of the review's implementation.

It was understood there were no immediate resource implications foreseen for the college, although this would depend upon the implementation across the wider university and particularly the expectations of / impact to DoS, with some potential for unintended consequences arising which might warrant further consideration.

The President gave a vote of thanks to Dr Ellis.

38.13. Development Director

The Development Director gave a verbal update, noting:

- The College's 140th anniversary celebrations were ongoing and on track – they would culminate at the end of the following term with the Christmas concert.
- The team were focusing on planning, with feedback from the very positive and successful inaugural Giving Day being utilised to inform next steps.
- The wider context surrounding College development activity was also noteworthy; the University would be launching a big fundraising campaign in 2026-27, focusing on funding for scholarships and bursaries, with the potential to create some tensions with college development activities. Furthermore, the Gates Foundation would shortly be embarking on a significant fundraising venture.
- The Development Director and Senior Tutor were reviewing under-utilised prizes with a view to repurposing or expanding (with donor consent, where possible) in the cases where it was no longer possible to award them as originally intended.

38.14. Impact Director

The Impact Director gave a verbal update, noting:

- Work to operationalise the Bridge initiative previously discussed was moving forward at pace. An Advisory Group had been convened and would be meeting shortly. It was intended the initiative would be overseen in line with the refreshed Bridge governance arrangements as outlined in 38.14.1.

38.14.1. Bridge Governance Refresh (CC38 13)

Council received a paper proposing a refresh to Bridge governance arrangements.

The Impact Director reported that the proposal had been considered in some detail by Governance Committee, with feedback from that Committee having already been incorporated. As Bridge Committee was a standing committee of Council, the revised terms of reference (ToR) required Council approval.

The proposal was met with significant support from Council members. It was noted the expert and a specialist input that had been a feature and benefit of the Oversight Committees would be retained via informal advisory groups. It was suggested and agreed that provision for reserved business ought to be written into the revised ToR.

Council approved the revised ToR for the Bridge Committee and agreed the change to Ordinances to reflect this ought to go as a starred item to Governing Body for final approval.

38.15. ***Minutes of committees:

38.15.1. Unconfirmed minutes Estates Committee 14 May 2025 (CC38 14)

Council received and noted the Unconfirmed minutes of Estates Committee 14 May 2025 without discussion.

38.15.2. Unconfirmed minutes Prevent Committee 6 May 2025 (CC38 15)

Council received and noted the Unconfirmed minutes of prevent Committee 6 May 2025 without discussion.

38.16. Any other Open Business

There was no other Open Business.

Future meetings 2024/2025, **Tuesdays at 4:30pm**: 24 June 2025.

Meetings 2025/26: 14 October 2025, 18 November 2025, 16 December 2025, 27 January 2026, 24 February 2026, 24 March 2026, 28 April 2026, 02 June 2026, 23 June 2026.

End of Open Business KS.