HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COLLEGE COUNCIL

CONFIRMED MINUTES

One hundred-and-thirty-ninth meeting of College Council 24 June 2025

Council Room at 16.30

Present: Sir Laurie Bristow (Chair, President), Prof Sonia Ilie (Acting Vice-President), Dr Bart de Nijs, Prof Bill Irish, Dr Tori McKee (Senior Tutor), Mr Jonathan Newby (Bursar), Prof Ajith Parlikad (from item 39.2.2.), Dr Guillermo Serrano Najera, Mrs Kerry Wilson (Development Director), Dr Nigel Yandell.

Apologies: Prof John Doorbar, Dr Aga Iwasiewicz-Wabnig, Sarah Langford (Head of Communications, Dr Alexis Willett (Impact Director), Daniel Wolfe (MCR Treasurer), Alex Zimmerman (MCR President).

In Attendance: Patrick Dunne (Assistant Bursar to item 39.13), Dr Joe Ellis (Deputy Senior Tutor, for item 39.7.1), Katherine Springthorpe (Secretary).

OPEN BUSINESS

39.1. Introduction

39.1.1. Welcome and apologies

Council noted that Dr Joe Ellis would join for items 39.7.1. and 39.16, which would be taken together.

39.1.2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

39.2. Minutes and Matters arising from Open Business of College Council, 3 June 2025

39.2.1. Approval of minutes (CC39 01)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

39.2.2. College Council action list: Open Business (CC39 02)

Council noted that a number of actions were addressed as items on the agenda. The main items rolling over to Michaelmas Term were the Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Staff/Student Relationship Policy.

39.2.3. Approval of starred items (***)

Council noted the starred items.

39.2.4. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

Standing Items

39.3. President's Report

The President raised a number of points, including:

- A vote of thanks to all for the progress made over the 2024-25 academic year.
- Confirmation that Governing Body had voted unanimously in favour of altering Statutes the previous week. Revised Statutes would now make their way to Privy Council for final approval. The timing for approval was uncertain, and Statutes would come into force one month after Privy Council ratification. If Privy Council responded quickly, there was a possibility that Statutes could take effect ahead of the Ordinance revisions (currently work in progress) being formally approved. Council noted that, if this were to be the case, Council as currently constituted would become the de facto Trustee Body, until it was possible to complete due process to elect a new Council body.
- The College Secretary would be taking ownership of the Strategic Plan going forward. It was hoped that a clearer connection could be made between Council's oversight and the Strategic Plan's delivery; it would be important for Council to make better use of the Plan to keep delivery on track.
- The management accounts set out elsewhere on the agenda indicated that the College's finances were in a much better position than they might otherwise have been, largely because of the discipline and careful work of the Bursar, Assistant Bursar and their team, and the tight oversight afforded by Council and Finance Committee. The President gave a vote of thanks to all involved.
- The MCR June Event had taken place the preceding weekend and had been a success. The President gave a vote of thanks to the MCR.
- Finally, noting that it would be his last Council meeting ahead of retirement, the President offered sincere thanks to the Bursar on behalf of Council.

39.4. MCR Business

Neither MCR representative were present to report. The President noted it had been another successful year for the MCR.

39.5. Bursarial:

39.5.1. Bursar's Report (CC39 03)

Council received and noted the Bursar's Report.

The Bursar reported that works to the back wall of the site to enhance security had now been completed, and the accessible entryway to Margaret Wileman Building was work in progress.

{REDACTED}

39.5.2. Management Accounts to 30 May 2025 (CC39 04)

Council received and noted the management accounts to 30 May 2025. The Assistant Bursar took Council through the dashboard.

{REDACTED}

39.5.3. ***Data Protection Annual Report (CC39 05)

Council received and noted the Data Protection Annual Report without discussion.

39.6. Tutorial and Admissions

39.6.1. Senior Tutor's Report (CC39 06)

Council received the Senior Tutor's Report.

The Senior Tutor reported that, whilst most exams had finished, the Tutorial team remained busy as results were now coming in. A full report on exam results and mitigations would be provided in MT.

Council noted some quantitative statistics had been provided around Pathways engagement and the Senior Tutor reported positively on the programme.

There was appetite from Council members to receive more detailed reports on Pathways on a more frequent basis, with a hope that some metrics might be developed to help Council gauge impact and return on investment.

It was noted that this was not necessarily straightforward as the majority of costs related to staffing and previous attempts to generate quantitative evaluative data had failed despite best intentions. However, the Senior Tutor agreed to discuss the matter with her team and provide a more detailed report in MT. **ACTION: Senior Tutor.**

39.6.3. Evaluation of student investigations (CC39 07)

Council received and noted a paper on student investigations setting out the numbers of formal and informal cases investigated under harassment and other inappropriate relationships, academic misconduct, grievance and/or complaints procedures and OSCCA investigations. The Senior Tutor reported that the majority of cases had been dealt with informally and mostly in accordance with the wishes of the reporting individuals.

It was noted that there was some overlap with the Dean's casework and these cases had been excluded from the Report on the basis that they would feature in the Dean's Annual Report in MT.

The Senior Tutor reported that the processes and procedures which underpinned the investigations were working well. The main risks to the College related to the speed of OSCCA processes, with students often left without resolution for a considerable period of time. Monthly updates were now forthcoming from OSCCA which had improved the tutorial teams' ability to support students even though the timescales remained lengthy.

Council welcomed the report and made two suggestions for improvement of data quality for the next iteration: tracking the duration of formal reports, and inclusion of

year-on-year comparative data where possible to give a better indication of the overall trends.

39.7. Development Director

The Development Director gave a brief verbal update on activity in the Development team.

39.7.1. Research Fellowship (CC39 08)

Council welcomed Dr Joe Ellis (Deputy Senior Tutor) for discussion of this item, which was taken out of sequence after 39.13.

Council received a proposal for a newly funded fixed term Research Fellowship to be established, with funding being generously provided by the College's recently elected Honorary Fellow, former student and major donor.

The Development Director and Deputy Senior Tutor introduced the proposal, noting that whilst the post would be housed at Hughes Hall and formally managed by Dr Ellis as per the funder's wishes, the day-to-day supervision would be provided by an academic at the multidisciplinary Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence. That academic had taken the lead on developing the role description.

Council discussed the proposal with the following points noted:

- There was a need to move relatively quickly on advertising the post as the summer signalled optimal timing to attract prospective applicants.
- The multidisciplinary synergies and fit with the College were noted.
- Other than in the title, it was noted that there was little mention of climate in the job description. It was understood that this was likely to allow the direction of the research to be driven largely by the individual appointed. However, it was agreed that this would be fed back to the academic for consideration.
- The link with the Centre for Climate Engagement (CCE) was noted and welcomed, as well as the need for it to be clear a) this was not a CCE post, and b) that the role needed to be positioned and integrated more broadly into the College academic community.
- Some inconsistencies in language were highlighted (fellowship, associateship etc).
- Some concerns were raised about the length of the contract (18 months) being too short. Both in terms of what realistically could be achieved in such a short amount of time, as well as concerns about this post adding to the general precarity of fixed term roles in academia which in some ways ran contrary to the College's ethos. Whilst it was acknowledged the length of contract was suboptimal, members were reassured to learn that contracts of this length were commonplace enough to ensure a good selection of candidates, and that, if successful, the role could act as a platform for other external funding bids. There was some discussion about whether the job description could signal the potential continuance of the role, subject to further funding being secured. However, some members felt strongly that this would be misleading to candidates. It was suggested that looking to the sector for a form of words might be instructive.

- It was noted that the salary band was below the threshold for applicants requiring a visa, which meant that the selection pool would be restricted to UK based candidates only.

Subject to consideration of the points raised, Council approved the post for advertisement.

39.8. Impact Director

The Impact Director had sent her apologies.

Strategic and Operational items

39.9. Environmental Sustainability Policy (CC39 09)

Council received the Environmental Sustainability Policy. The Bursar introduced the Policy, confirming the intention for it to supersede the College's previous Carbon Reduction Policy which had become out of date and been too narrowly defined. The policy as presented set out the principles for the College's broader environmental approach beyond only degasification, to also include biodiversity, estates management, procurement, food waste, transportation and community engagement. It was noted that Governing Body Fellows Dr Aga Iwasiewicz-Wabnig and Emily Farnworth had provided helpful input and comment to inform the final draft as presented.

Council discussed the policy, with the following points raised:

- Whilst the policy provided headlines around the behaviours required and focus areas the College would seek to progress, for it to have any meaningful impact it would need to be underpinned by an action plan, setting out in more detail how the College intended to meet the policy aims and how this would be measured. **[ACTION: Incoming Bursar]**
- The policy and plan would need to be underpinned with an appropriate methodology and analysis tool. There was some discussion about the Science Based Targets (SBT) initiative, with concerns this methodology was too heavy duty for an organisation of the College's size. Biodiversity Net Gain was also discussed as another potential measure, but with similar concerns. It was suggested that rather than adopting a single methodology wholesale, it might be more appropriate to find a specific metric for each area which could be clearly monitored and reported on.
- There were questions about whether the University's policy and plan provided a template that could be adopted, and whether it applied to the Colleges. The Bursar confirmed that the Colleges were not in the scope of the University's policy and - as the University was using SBT - it was unlikely to provide a helpful model for the College to adopt either. Whilst it would be important that the College's policy did not to contradict the University's, the College was free to adopt its own policies and plans to suit its context.
- A question about the inclusion of investments strategy within the policy was raised, and concerns about signing up to a net zero principle that couldn't realistically be achieved. Council discussed this carefully, concluding that the investments strategy ought to remain as a pillar of the College's approach to environmental sustainability, but with some minor modification to the language that struck a more realistic balance between aspiration and reality.

Council approved the policy, subject to small amendment to the language of section 11 Investments Strategy. It was agreed that the amended wording should come back to Council for information in due course [**ACTION: Bursar and Secretary].**

The President gave a vote of thanks to the Bursar, and to Dr Aga Iwasiewicz-Wabnig and Emily Farnworth for their input.

39.10. Strategic Plan update (CC39 10)

Council received and noted a brief update to the Strategic Plan without discussion.

39.11. Senior Members Code of Conduct (CC39 11)

Council received a draft Code of Conduct for Senior Members. The Acting Vice President introduced the paper.

Council was reminded of its decision in March 2025 that a Code of Conduct for **all** College members should be drafted. In the course of her work to take this forward, the Acting Vice President confirmed it had become clear that:

- A College Code of Conduct for Employees was already in place which was aligned to the University of Cambridge Code of Conduct for Employees, and formally reviewed annually.
- Expectations for students were currently contained within the Student Rules of Behaviour and policies around disciplinary procedures and harassment.
- The proposed Statutes were predicated on a code of conduct for Senior Members being in place.
- Rather than confusing matters by including employees and students in the scope where existing standards were already articulated, she had determined that the gap in current policy and ordinances related to Senior Members and that was therefore what the paper sought to address.

Council discussed the proposed Code of Conduct for Senior Members in detail and concluded that the expected standards of behaviour did not and should not vary significantly across students, employee and senior members. The complicating factor was not setting out the overarching expected standard (which was the same) but instead the necessity of having different ways of responding to breaches of that standard across different categories of people (staff, senior member, student etc), as appropriate. It was also felt that having different standards of behaviour for different parts of the College community did not fit well with the inclusive ethos of the College.

It was therefore still felt to be a realistic and worthwhile aspiration for a single, high-level, code of conduct to exist which applied to all – students, senior members, employees, workers, alumni and any combination of those together. Instead of seeking to adopt a procedure which could be applied to every category of member, the code of conduct should instead signpost to where the relevant procedures for breaches of that code could be found, depending on the circumstances.

Members saw the introduction of a whole community code of conduct as an excellent opportunity to reflect, underline and reinforce the central values of the College. One member suggested that engagement with the College's membership in the formulation and implementation of the code would help to reinforce it. This suggestion was welcomed, on the proviso that consultation be proportionate and timely.

It was noted that predicating a single code of conduct on the College's values would likely require some deviation from the staff code of conduct as currently set out which would essentially mean some inconsistencies between College and University employee codes of conduct. Whilst Council

agreed that the two needed to strongly align (as it was common for staff to be employed by both the University and College at the same time), as long as there was minimal deviation in the overarching standards and expectations, minor differences and inconsistencies to reflect its application in the College rather than University context were appropriate and unproblematic. It was agreed that using the staff code of conduct to form the basis of the overarching code would be a sensible starting point.

The President gave a vote of thanks to the Acting Vice President, and it was agreed that a whole community code of conduct should be brought back for Council review at the earliest opportunity in the new academic year. **[ACTION: Prof Sonia Ilie]**

39.12. ***Minutes of committees

Council received and noted the following sets of minutes without discussion:

39.12.1.*Unconfirmed minutes of CCE OSC 27 May 2025 (CC39 12).**

39.12.2. ***Unconfirmed minutes of Admissions Committee 10 June 2025 (CC39 13).

39.12.3. ***Unconfirmed minutes of Investments Committee (Open Business) 16 June 2025 (CC39 14).

39.13. Any other Open Business

There was no other Open Business.

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.