HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COLLEGE COUNCIL

CONFIRMED MINUTES

One hundred-and-fortieth meeting of College Council 14 October 2025

Council Room at 16.30

Present: Sir Laurie Bristow (Chair, President), Prof John Doorbar, Prof Sonia Ilie, Dr Aga Iwasiewicz-Wabnig, Dr Tori McKee (Senior Tutor), Prof Ajith Parlikad, Dr Guillermo Serrano Najera, Prof Nidhi Singal (Vice-President), Laurie Smith (Bursar), Dr Alexis Willett (Impact Director), Kerry Wilson (Development Director), Dr Nigel Yandell, Daniel Wolfe (MCR Treasurer), Alex Zimmerman (MCR President).

Apologies: Dr Bart de Nijs,

In Attendance: Sarah Langford (Head of Communications to item 40.13), Pat Dunne (Assistant Bursar to item 40.13), Theresa McKeon (Governance and Fellowships Officer to item 40.13), Dr Spencer Johnston (Deputy Senior Tutor, for item 40.6.1.), Katherine Springthorpe (Secretary).

OPEN BUSINESS

Preliminary Business

40.1. Introduction

40.1.1. Welcome and apologies

The President welcomed:

- Laurie Smith to his first meeting as newly appointed Bursar.
- Prof Sonia Ilie back as newly elected member.
- Theresa McKeon to observe open business as newly appointed Governance and Fellowships Officer.

40.1.2. Declarations of interests

There were none.

40.2. Minutes and Matters arising from Open Business of College Council, 24 June 2025

40.2.1. Approval of minutes (CC40 01)

Council approved the minutes as an accurate record.

40.2.2. College Council action list: Open Business (CC40 02)

The Secretary provided a brief update on outstanding actions:

- Acceptable Use of IT Policy – work in progress.
- College Members Code of Conduct – work in progress.
- Freedom of Speech Code of Practice – update would follow Prevent and FoS Committee meeting in November.
- Staff/Senior Member/Student Relationships Policy – item 40.10.

Prof Ilie asked about an outstanding action relating to the purchase of a concert-grade piano. The President noted that was in hand, but he was as keen for members to focus on the bigger picture development campaign as a priority.

40.2.3. Approval of starred items (***)

Council noted/approved the starred items without discussion.

40.2.4. ***Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

40.2.4.1. ***Matters dealt with via circulation

Council noted without discussion that the Environmental Policy and payment of the grants balance (totalling £313,073) to Chapter Zero Alliance had both been approved via circulation over the long vacation.

40.2.4.2. ***Annual Review of Council Terms of Reference (CC40 03)

Given revisions to Ordinances would mean significant changes to the role of Council in 2026, Council agreed to approve existing Terms of Reference without scrutiny.

Standing Items

40.3. President's Report

The President welcomed Council back following the long vacation. He extended particular thanks to the MCR representatives for their continued commitment.

Council noted the following key issues for the forthcoming year:

- **{REDACTED}**
- Financial planning – Council noted that the College was in good shape considering the headwinds, but couldn't afford to be complacent. The Bursarial items would underline the importance of making sure there was money available when it was required, and that the college's long term financial position was being proactively managed and improved. Key contributors would be the Development campaign and management of resources.
- Impact – Council noted that setting and achieving a high level of ambition for impact-related work was paramount. This work was being noticed across the university and beyond and would be critical to fundraising activity. A deep dive discussion at the 29 October Governing Body meeting was planned on this topic.
- Governance reform – Council noted that revised Statutes were with the Privy Council's Office and work was underway in parallel on revised Ordinances. This would bring better governance alongside better management of resources – including the demands

made on people's time. The change of trusteeship from GB to Council also raised questions about how best to set mutual expectations and commitments between the college and it's GB Fellows, and would also be the subject of discussion at Governing Body in due course.

40.4. MCR Business

The MCR President noted that it had been a very busy start to term, with the new cohort of students proving very invested. Events had been well-attended, were well within budget and the extended induction programme had generated positive feedback.

The MCR Treasurer noted that the MCR had been dealing with an ongoing challenge around event attendance, with discrepancies between numbers of students signing up versus turning up to events. This had made event planning and delivery challenging. Students were therefore now being asked to make a minimum donation (£1) at sign up and this had both generated £400 in proceeds, as well as delivered much stronger attendance at events. This was warmly welcomed by Committee members, who were also reassured that the minimum donation amount was not felt to be having an exclusionary impact. The MCR President noted the main challenge remained reaching people with the right forms of communications; the main complaints about events tended to be from those who were unaware they were happening. The was acknowledged as a universal challenge.

The MCR President further noted that the addition of the pool table in the MCR clubroom had raised some unforeseen design questions, particularly around accessibility. It was noted that this would be picked up with the Senior Tutor at their regular catch up the following day.

40.5. Bursarial:

40.5.1. Bursar's Report (CC40 04)

The report was taken as read. The Bursar highlighted a number of points:

{REDACTED]

The Assistant Bursar noted a number of other updates, including to estates and facilities, the Valto contacts database implementation, IT security and AV upgrades.

A vote of thanks was given to accommodation and housekeeping staff for their hard work over the summer following a record-breaking number of commercial guest residences.

It was further noted that two accidents had occurred since the last report; neither were RIDDOR events.

40.5.2. Management Accounts 2024-25 (CC40 05)

Council received the Management Accounts 2024-25 which set out the 2024-25 year-end financial position against the re-forecast (RF3) exercise that took place in May 2025.

{REDACTED}

Council endorsed the Management Accounts 2024-25 and, subject to Finance Committee comments, recommended them to Governing Body for approval.

40.5.3. Restated Budget 2025-26 (RF1) (CC40 06)

Council received the Restated Budget 2025-26 (RF1) which now reflected greater accuracy around student numbers and the profile of those students admitted for 2025-26 than had been possible at the time of the Budget approval in May 2025.

{REDACTED}

Subject to any comments from Finance Committee (meeting 20 October), Council agreed to recommend to Governing Body that the 2025/26 Budget be restated in accordance with RF1, and for this to be used as the new reference point for future financial reporting.

40.6. Tutorial and Admissions

40.6.1. Admissions Report (CC40 07)

Council welcomed Dr Spencer Johnston (Deputy Senior Tutor, Admissions) and received the Admissions Report for the 2024-25 admissions cycle.

Dr Johnston took the paper as read but highlighted the following points:

- PG numbers were slightly higher than anticipated with a 5% higher conversion rate. This was in part because of changes in central University processes had meant a significantly later notification of automatic withdrawals – this had made it harder to firm up exact numbers until much later in the process. The increase in Master's conversion rates had also been anticipated because of uncertainties in US. The higher conversion rate had been experienced across the University.
- UG numbers had seen a 12% increase which was an encouraging trend.
- Graduate medicine applications had seen a significant drop in numbers due to increasing numbers of providers offering equivalent courses, with the Cambridge course renown for being academically challenging. **{REDACTED}**
- Overall, the team were pleased with the outcome of a challenging application round. It was hoped overall positive trends seen in this round would continue.

A request was made for the percentage of scholarship versus self-funded admissions to be provided in the next report. It was understood this information would be presented to Admissions Committee.

Another member raised concerns about the limited range of disciplines admitted to the Foundation Course (only Arts, Humanities and Social Science were admitted currently). It was understood this was a University decision, with no funding or appetite from the University to offer the course in STEM disciplines.

The President gave a vote of thanks to Dr Johnston and the Admissions team.

40.6.2. ***Expansion of Admissions Committee ToR (CC40 08)

Council approved the proposal to expand the terms of reference of the Admissions Committee to include Education within its remit without discussion. Council agreed to recommend to Governing Body that relevant Ordinances be revised to reflect this expanded remit. **ACTION: Katherine Springthorpe**

40.6.3. ***Safeguarding Lead's Annual Summary (CC40 09)

Council received the annual summary from the Safeguarding Lead, and noted it without discussion. The President gave a vote of thanks to the Safeguarding Lead.

40.6.4. ***Safeguarding Policy Review (CC40 10)

Council received a slightly revised Safeguarding Policy, with only small changes having been made. Council approved the revised Safeguarding Policy without discussion.

40.7. Development Director's Report (CC40 11)

Council received the Development Director's Report and the Development Director gave a brief summary. The President gave a vote of thanks to the Development Director and her team.

40.8. Impact Director and Head of Communications Report: For information **(CC40 12)**

Council received the Impact Director and Head of Communications Report.

The Impact Director summarised, focusing mainly on work planned for the coming year.

The update was welcomed, with a number of comments raised in relation to the IPIP pilot, particularly around the financial viability given only two of three regions had moved forward. However, Council was reassured to note that the programme was being run meticulously well, and was in fact highly likely to yield a surplus. There was also some discussion about the pilot's continuation and general acknowledgement of the need for a clear exit strategy for the College.

The Head of Communications provided a brief summary of the Communications update, highlighting achievements including a suite of Research stories being the culmination of two year's work, and the Global Impact video which would be shown at Governing Body on 29 October to highlight the ways the college was having a far-reaching impact and helping to change things for the public good.

The President gave a vote of thanks to the Impact Director and Head of Communications.

Strategic and Operational items

40.9. Co-Deans' Annual Report (CC40 13)

Council welcomed the Co-Deans' Annual Report 2024-25 authored by Prof Bill Irish and Dr Sheheryar Banuri.

The Senior Tutor highlighted that the number of investigations were considerably fewer than the previous year. It was noted that the newly appointed Co-Deans had nurtured a close relationship with the academic and tutorial teams, and it was felt this had helpfully contributed to a reduction in the number of formal issues raised.

The Co-Deans had raised a number of important points in their report, with a particular focus on improvements that could be made to the Grievance Procedure.

It was understood that the Education team were already in the process of updating this procedure, and were planning to align this closely with the university's latest student complaints process, as a helpful good practice model. Amongst a number of changes to the grievance procedure under consideration, the following were highlighted:

- Encouraging greater Tutor involvement both at the initial grievance meeting, as well as to stress test any appeal before it was made.
- Moving away from a panel approach for appeal to a pool of reviewers. A number of members felt there were merits in the panel approach and that this might warrant further discussion.
- Making the criteria for appeal sharper and making clearer that the role of the appeal panel/reviewer was **not** to retry the case. This would help to manage a student's expectations.
- Provision of training/guidance for appeal reviewers/panel.
- Imposing a statute of limitations of 20 days to raising a grievance, with some discretion to extend this, particularly around exam time.

- Closing the loop on appeals to ensure the tutorial team and Co-Deans were kept abreast of outcomes.

The revised Grievance Procedure would be brought back to Council for further discussion and approval in due course.

Council further noted that the Disciplinary and Sexual Harassment and Misconduct procedures were also being reviewed – mainly to reflect changes required to comply with the Office for Students E6 Condition which came into effect in August. These were also anticipated to come to Council for approval in Michaelmas Term.

The President gave a vote of thanks to the Co-Deans for their very helpful report, and the Senior Tutor for the helpful summary of work underway to update the relevant procedures.

40.10. Staff, Senior Member and Student Relationship Policy (CC40 14)

Council received the Staff, Senior Member and Student Relationship Policy. The Senior Tutor noted that this closely aligned with the University's policy, but had been adapted for the College context. This had not been without complication, given the layers of roles and senior membership that existed amongst those the policy needed to apply to.

A small amendment to the appended diagram was agreed to reflect that the relationship with U18 and Adults at Risk should only be prohibited for all categories of staff and senior members insofar as it related to students. **ACTION: Katherine Springthorpe.** Council approved the policy for publication and communication.

40.11.*CCE IKEA Foundation Final Report (CC40 15)**

Council received and approved the CCE IKEA Foundation Final Report without discussion.

40.12.*Boat Club Senior Treasurer's Annual Report (CC40 16)**

Council received the Boat Club Senior Treasurer's Annual Report without discussion. The President gave a vote of thanks to Professor Trotter for the helpful summary.

40.13. Any other Open Business: There was none.

Meetings 2025/26: 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