HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COLLEGE COUNCIL

MINUTES

One hundred-and-forty-first meeting of College Council 18 November 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), Daniel Wolfe (MCR Treasurer), Alex Zimmerman (MCR President).

Apologies: Sarah Langford (Head of Communications), Dr Nigel Yandell.

In Attendance: Pat Dunne (Assistant Bursar to item 41.11), Katherine Springthorpe (Secretary).

OPEN BUSINESS

Preliminary Business

41.1. Introduction

41.1.1. Welcome and apologies

41.1.2. Declarations of interests

There were none.

41.2. Minutes and Matters arising from Open Business of College Council, 14 October 2025

41.2.1. Minutes (41CC 01)

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

41.2.2. College Council action list: Open Business (41CC 02)

Council noted there had been limited progress on the action list since the last meeting.

41.2.3. Approval of starred items (***)

Council approved the starred items without discussion.

41.2.4. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

Standing Items

41.3. President's Report

Council noted the following:

- Looking ahead, the estates programme would be transformational; but would also stretch the college's financial and operational management.

- The vital importance of accurate budget forecasting, profiling and financial discipline was underlined as the college moved into major capital expenditure.
- Progress on development work was noted, with a successful visit to Hong Kong and Singapore complete and a joint event with Trinity planned for the following week.
- A high-level summary of emerging themes from the Impact deep dive would be shared with Governing Body at the December meeting
- The deep dive on the future role of GB would be delayed to the following term to allow proper preparation and noting everyone's waning energy at the end of a very busy term.
- The next Governing Body would be the annual accounts and audit meeting – a preview of the RCCA had been provided to Council and had been considered in detail at Audit and Risk Committee. Final scrutiny and approval would fall to Governing Body.

41.4. MCR Business

Council noted:

- Hustings had taken place for new MCR committee candidates who would take over from the current representatives after the Christmas Vacation.
- Handover would take place before Christmas for reasons of practicality, and the current MCR would help new representatives during Lent Term to ensure a smooth transition. Representatives would take office at the start of Lent Term.
- Events had been well attended with the recent charity Formal having raised £700-£800 which would be match funded. The budget was on track, with only a small number of events remaining for Michaelmas Term.
- For the June event, the bank account had been switched to the same provider as MCR and there were now a number of approved signatories including staff members to support continuity of access. Work was underway to get a committee together for the June event. Limited interest had been generated thus far, but more communications were planned and the MCR President would keep Council updated.

Noting that term was ending and it may be the last opportunity for the MCR President and Treasurer to attend Council, the President extended a vote of thanks to both members and the wider MCR Committee for their excellent work during 2025.

41.5. Bursarial:

41.5.1. Bursar's Report (41CC 03)

Council received the Bursar's Report for information. The paper was taken as read, with the Bursar drawing attention specifically to the following items:

- The kitchen refurbishment was underway, with logistical plans for dining complete and communications due out in short order. There would be a level of disruption for all between 2 December and the end of February 2026.
- Initial feedback from Privy Council had been provided in relation to the Statutes, with that feedback currently under legal review.

41.5.2. Management Accounts: (41CC 04)

Council received the management accounts to 31 October 2025 with a lower deficit position projected against the recent Reforecast 1 noted.

Council noted the management accounts and recommended them to Governing Body for approval.

41.5.3. Recommended Cambridge College Accounts 2024-25 (41CC 05)

Council received the Hughes Hall Recommended Cambridge College Accounts for 2024-25. Council noted:

- A clean, unqualified audit.
- The £2m shift which had resulted from the transfer of CGI/CZA.
- Higher expenditure resulting largely from employer national insurance increases and the annual pay review.
- The reserves position was well within recommended margins but would need to be modelled going into the capital project.

The RCCA and related documents would be presented to Governing Body for approval at the 3 December meeting.

41.5.4. Annual report of Investments Committee 2024-25 (41CC 06)

The Development Director noted that donors who made permanent endowment gifts were likely to ask about how their investments were performing. **ACTION: Bursar and Assistant Bursar to produce a one-page crib sheet setting out how the College expects investments to perform and the draw down required over time to support ongoing discussions with donors.**

41.5.5. Student accommodation charges 2025-26 (41CC 07)

A paper was received setting out proposed revisions to student fees and charges relating to accommodation issues.

The paper generated considerable comment, with the broad view of Council being that further work was needed to better reflect the true cost of rectifying some of the infractions set out and a need to be able to demonstrate reasonableness and proportionality, and a greater degree of discretion in the charge levied depending on whether the issues were intentional or accidental. It was also suggested that in some instances, greater emphasis on preventative or early intervention might help to catch issues early and mitigate the need for a fee or charge to be levied at all.

The Bursar and Assistant Bursar agreed to convey the feedback to the relevant team and ensure these were incorporated.

41.6. Tutorial and Admissions

41.6.1. Senior Tutor's Report (41CC 08)

Council received the Senior Tutor's Report and the following points were noted:

- Final exam results confirmed final year students had performed incredibly well. Whilst the numbers were too small to draw clear trends, the upward trajectory was very positive. A question was raised about whether there was greater scope to communicate how brilliantly the students had done more widely. It was acknowledged that the results ought to be celebrated, but also a note of caution was made around making the narrative only about achieving top marks.
- Changes to induction had been made in response to the new Office for Student condition E6 around prevention and response to harassment and misconduct, which required in person training for student which colleges were best placed to deliver. Take up had been largely in line with other colleges and the central team hadn't yet sought final numbers. It was unclear how proactively the college needed to chase non-attenders but a mop up session could be put on to address this, if needed.
- The residential UG bridging programme had received positive feedback.
- Of particular note within the student survey results were PhD student experiences and requests for more inclusive food options and more non-drinking events – a trend that was understood to be evident across the collegiate university. It was suggested further discussion on this would be useful.

41.7. Development and Alumni Relations

41.7.1. Development Director's Report (41CC 09)

Council received an update from the Development Director. Amongst a number of points, raised the following were noted:

- The beta testing of the early case for support in Hong Kong and Singapore had gone well; the global impact video had set the scene and generally everything had landed very well. Whilst the college wasn't quite ready to share all the news, work was underway alongside the Project Board and the Communications consultants to synchronise messaging in the new year.
- The latest edition of the Owl was close to being launched and feedback was welcomed.
- The work relating to delivery of the large legacy donation was still in progress.

41.8. Impact

41.8.1. Impact - Proposed Department Name & Job Title Alignment (41CC 10)

A proposal to amend the Impact department name and Impact Director's job title was received.

Whilst there was recognition of the need to find a name which better reflected the increased breadth of work that the department undertook, there were a number of concerns around the use of the word "engagement", including a potential conflict with the remit of the Development and Alumni Relations Office. It was agreed that further consideration would be given to the proposal and it would be brought back in due course.

41.8.2. IPIP update: (41CC 11)

A proposal to move IPIP beyond the pilot into Cohort 1 and 2 in 2026 was received. Whilst the pilot had only launched in the summer, the lead in time to get new partners on board meant that work needed to start in earnest now if the programme was to continue.

Points raised included:

- Some caution around the longer-term ambition of the programme with some members noting the need to ensure clear break points existed at regular junctures to ensure that any expectation of housing the programme in the college in perpetuity was squarely avoided. It was understood that this conversation had been built in from the outset.
- A request for greater clarity around costs and return on investment was made. It was understood that no costs were incurred that weren't recoverable and - even with costs and overheads - the programme was still proving profitable.

Council agreed to recommend the proposal to continue IPIP into Cohort 1 and 2 in 2026 for Governing Body approval.

Strategic and Operational items

41.9. ***CCE Conduit Report (41CC 12)

Council approved the CCE Conduit Report without discussion.

41.10.*Minutes of committees**

41.10.1. Unconfirmed minutes of Finance Committee 20 October 2025 were noted without discussion.

41.11. Any other Open Business:

There was none.