HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COLLEGE COUNCIL

MINUTES

One hundred-and-forty-third meeting of College Council 27 January 2026

Present: Sir Laurie Bristow (Chair, President), Zahra Grieve (MCR Vice President), Prof Sonia Ilie, Dr Tori McKee (Senior Tutor), Prof Ajith Parlikad, Dr Guillermo Serrano Najera, Laurie Smith (Bursar), Dr Alexis Willett (Impact Director), Kerry Wilson (Development Director), Daniel Wolffe (MCR President), Dr Nigel Yandell.

Apologies: Prof John Doorbar,. Dr Aga Iwasiewicz-Wabnig, Prof Nidhi Singal (Vice-President).

In Attendance: Pat Dunne (Assistant Bursar to item 43.16), Sarah Langford (Head of Communications to item 43.16), Katherine Springthorpe (Secretary).

OPEN BUSINESS

Preliminary Business

43.1. Introduction

43.1.1. Welcome and apologies

The President welcomed Dr Joe Ellis to his first meeting as Acting Senior Tutor, noting Dr Tori McKee would be on maternity leave until October. Welcome was also extended to Zahra Grieve as new MCR Vice President and the return of David Wolffe as the new MCR President.

43.1.2. Declarations of interests

There were none.

43.2. Minutes and Matters arising from Open Business of College Council, 18 November 2025 and 16 December 2025

43.2.1. Minutes (43CC 01 and 43CC 02)

Noting a small typo in the MCR President's name for correction, Council approved the Minutes of the previous two meetings as accurate records.

43.2.2. College Council action list: Open Business (43CC 03)

Council noted that action [34.2.2] on the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice had been brought to the meeting under item 43.10 and was now complete.

43.2.3. Approval of starred items (***)

Council approved the starred items without discussion.

43.2.4. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

There were none.

Standing Items

43.3. President's Report

The President's report was covered under item 43.9.

43.4. MCR Business

The MCR President and Vice President reported:

- A very busy first few weeks in office.
- Elections for communications and welfare secretaries would take place the following week.
- The June event now had a full committee and would be releasing tickets the following week.
- A new room booking system would be going live in the coming weeks and would be transformative to MCR.
- Sound system and sofa bench upgrades were due in the MCR common room.

The President gave a vote of thanks to the new MCR and June event committees.

43.5. Bursarial:

43.5.1. Bursar's Report (43CC 04)

Council received the Bursar's Report. The Bursar took the paper as read and highlighted:

- Fenner's kitchen refurbishment was running to time and budget.
- The College had implemented a supplement for lower salaried employees to ensure all staff were paid the real living wage. There was some discussion about becoming an affiliated Real Living Wage employer, with agreement that the Bursarial team would look into the matter.

43.5.2. Management Accounts: For information **(43CC 05)**

Council noted the Management Accounts without discussion and recommended it to Governing Body for approval.

43.5.3. Reforecast 2: For recommendation to GB **(43CC 06)**

Council received the Reforecast 2 for information and recommended it to Governing body for approval.

43.6. Tutorial and Admissions:

43.6.1. Division of Term Report (43CC 07)

Council noted an overall 3% increase to fulltime fee-paying students (730 students), with growth in both UG (+4%) and 1yr PG (+10%) student numbers and reduction in PG research numbers (-6%) which broadly tracked with numbers across the University. It was understood that the number of PhD applications varied year on year across Departments, but that all PG courses had seen an increase in applications when there was no application fee. However, that fee was being reintroduced.

It further showed 30% growth in parttime fee paying students (176) with a caveat that the timing of the data census likely created some double counting. The total (FT and PT) fee paying student numbers increased by 8% (906). It was noted that an additional metric to include in the Senior Tutors' report at the start of the academic year would be number of prospective students who put the college down as their first choice.

43.7. Development and Alumni Relations:

43.7.1. Development Director's Report (43CC 08)

Council received the Development and Alumni Relations Office Report. The Development Director took the paper as read and highlighted a number of areas of activity, including work ongoing to craft the narrative for the campaign and case for support which would come to Governing Body in March and preparing the legacy campaign. Council noted and endorsed a number of policies and guidance documents appended to the report, and that work was ongoing to redefine giving circles to align with the University.

43.8. Impact

43.8.1. Impact and Communications Report (43CC 09)

Council received the Impact and Communications Report. The Impact Director took the paper as read and highlighted particularly work ongoing to design a process of annual review for Bridge initiatives which would come to Council for input in due course. The Head of Communications highlighted a number of campaigns, collaborations and digital assets planned. She also expressed a readiness to flex capacity to support the strategic priorities set out in 43.9.

43.9. Strategic Priorities update: (43CC 10)

This item was taken under item 43.3.

Council received a Strategic Priorities Update report. The President reported:

- 2026 would be a pivotal year for the College with the need to make rapid and substantial progress across estates development and renewal, the development campaign and governance reform. This would require delivering transformation for 2030 and beyond alongside business as usual.
- The Senior team had been on an awayday in late 2025 to identify transformation priorities and working methods to enable the team to achieve our ambitions. The outputs of this were the strategic priorities set out in the report together with a first iteration of 3-6 month success measures. It was intended that this be a living document which evolved, with major review anticipated at the end of the academic year to look ahead to the following.
- Achieving all this would require laser-like focus on what mattered most, underpinned by better governance and stronger delivery.
- Under governance reform, the College had the opportunity to achieve more efficient and better decision making which it would need to capitalise on and leverage to underpin transformational delivery.

The report was welcomed, with the following points noted:

- The process and outputs had been designed to challenge ourselves; a way of testing whether we were putting the resources and people behind the right things. As the work evolved, the intention was to use the priorities to support individual staff members to understand how the priorities related to their jobs with objective setting making clear what the college was prioritising and deprioritising.
- The document was intended primarily for internal purposes. It would be important that – particularly in this first iteration - it was possible to fail; achieving 80% of what was set out would be a good result. Thought was needed to consider whether and how this could underpin external communication, particularly in connection with the Development campaign.
- It was underlined that the next iteration of priorities/success measures needed to focus on mitigating the disruption to the student experience of the estate renewal work.

Strategic and Operational items

Deferred from 16 December 2025:

43.10. ***Prevent and Freedom of Speech (43CC 11)

Council received and approved the Prevent and Freedom of Speech update paper without discussion.

43.11. ***Whistleblowing policy (43CC 12)

Council received and approved the Whistleblowing policy without discussion.

43.12. ***Student Discipline policy (43CC 13)

Council received and approved the Student Discipline policy without discussion.

43.13. ***Harassment and Sexual Misconduct between students Policy (43CC 14)

Council received and approved the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct between students policy without discussion.

43.14. Student Grievance Policy (43CC 15)

Council received the revised Student Grievance Policy. The Acting Senior Tutor noted that the revisions followed from discussion about the Co-Deans' Annual Report 2024-25 received by Council on 14 October 2025. He noted a number of amendments had been made to reflect comments made by the Deans and in discussion including:

- Highlighting the informal resolution pathway to resolve cases before they reached the Dean.
- Clarifying the time limits and processing times within the procedure.
- Introducing a step in the process to allow the Vice President to adjudicate whether an appeal matched the threshold for appeal or not – to reduce the number of improper appeals reaching a Panel/reviewer.
- More references to encourage students to engage with support from their Tutor.
- Noting that the Dean would receive a copy of an appeal outcome.
- Workflows included to support student navigation of the procedure.

A key proposal to improve the efficiency of the procedure was to move away from a panel approach for appeal (3 GB fellows) to a single appeal reviewer. It was felt this would speed up the process considerably for students and was in keeping with University's processes which appeared to work well. Council debated the pros and cons of both approaches and agreed on balance that the single reviewer approach ought to be adopted.

Council approved the Student Grievance Policy with a single reviewer approach to appeal.

Minutes

43.15.*Minutes of committees**

Council noted the following minutes without discussion:

43.15.1. ***Confirmed Bridge Committee Minutes 16 October 2025 (43CC 16)
43.15.2. ***Unconfirmed Bridge Committee Minutes 4 Dec 2025 (43CC 17)

43.16. Any other Open Business

There was none.

Meetings 2026: 24 February 2026, 24 March 2026, 28 April 2026, 02 June 2026, 23 June 2026.