HUGHES HALL
CAMBRIDGE

GOVERNING BODY

MINUTES

The one-hundredth and third meeting of Governing Body, 3 December 2025

Present: Sir Laurie Bristow (President, Chair), Prof Nidhi Singal (Vice-President), Dr Farah Ahmed (from 103.7.2.), Mr James Nicholson Bowers, Dr Jimmy Chan, Dr Othman Cole (from 103.7.1.), Dr Bart de Nijs, Prof Gishan Dissanaike, Prof John Doorbar, Dr Joe Ellis, Ms Emily Farnworth, Prof Markus Gehring (to 103.6.) Dr Alicia Gonzalez-Diaz, Prof Sara Hennessy, Dr Sarah Hoare, Dr Aga Iwasiewicz-Wabnig, Dr Florian Jaeckle, Dr Spencer Johnston, Dr Lois Kim, Dr Vasiliki Mavridou, Dr Tori McKee (Senior Tutor), Amy Mollett, Dr Tabitha Mwangi, Prof William Nuttall, Prof Ajith Parlikad, Prof Jonathan Powell, Dr Perla Pucci (from item 103.2.4), Dr Sally Raudon, Dr Corinne Roughley, Prof Ricardo Sabates, Prof Jorge Santos, Prof Kishore Sengupta, Dr Guillermo Serrano Nájera (from 103.7.1.), Prof Eugene Shwageraus, Prof Jeffrey Skopek (from 103.7.1.), Mr Laurie Smith, Dr Martin Steinfeld, Prof Andreas Stylianides, Prof Paul Tracey, Prof Caroline Trotter, Prof Suzanne Turner, Prof Harro van Asselt (to 103.6.), Prof Rupert Wegerif (from 103.7.1.), Dr Clive Wells, Dr Jessica White (from item 103.2.4), Dr Alexis Willett, Mrs Kerry Wilson, Dr Nigel Yandell, Dr Matteo Zallio.

In attendance: Michael Hewett (Partner at PEM Audit Ltd for items 103.7.1-103.7.6, which was taken first) Miss Katherine Springthorpe (Secretary to Governing Body).

On leave: Prof Michael Barrett.

Apologies: Mr William Charnley, Prof Tamsin Ford, Prof Emanuele Giovannetti, Prof Riikka Hofmann, Prof Sonia Ilie, Prof Bill Irish, Ms Jane Mann, Dr Gosia Marschall, Dr Kennedy Mbeva, Prof Neil Mercer (Senior Independent Fellow), Prof Ajith Parlikad, Prof Jorge Santos, Prof Andreas Stylianides, Prof Paul Tracey, Prof Lars Vinx, Dr Yi Wei, Dr Zhiwu Wei, Dr Emmanuela Wroth.

Absent: Ms Mahnaz Malik.

OPEN BUSINESS

Preliminary Business

103.1. Welcome and introduction

103.1.2. Declarations of interests (Open Business)

There were none.

103.2. Minutes and Matters arising from the Open Business of Governing Body, of 29 October 2025

103.2.1. Approval of minutes (103GB 01)

Governing Body approved the minutes as an accurate record.

103.2.2. Governing Body action list: Open Business

There were no outstanding items.

103.2.3. Starred items: Open Business

Governing Body noted the starred items (***) without discussion.

103.2.4. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

There were none.

Standing Items

103.3. President's report

Governing Body noted:

- The main item for discussion would be the audit and Recommended Cambridge College Accounts; a critical responsibility for Governing Body as the trustee body.
- Governing Body's engagement with governance reform and the deep dives on development and impact had been particularly instructive in thinking through how the College updated governance and improved delivery of the 2030 goals.
- The deep dive on the role of Governing Body after Statute and Ordinance reform would be delayed to allow focus on financial reporting at the December meeting. Members were invited to come to the February meeting with thoughts on how Governing Body ought to contribute to the college's purposes and to maximise the benefits of governance reform.
- The estates programme would get fully underway in 2026 with a degree of upheaval expected, as well as stretching 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.
- The estates work would be transformational, with Covent Garden Hall bringing a significant early improvement to facilities. Whilst there would be scope to contribute thinking to the overall design, planning restrictions and financial considerations were major constraining factors and the new buildings would not be able to do everything.
- The kitchen refurbishment would begin in earnest the following week. Members were reminded that this was essential work that would require a degree of patience and understanding from the College Community during the period of disruption.
- On development, the President and Development Director had had a successful visit to Hong Kong and Singapore as well as a joint event with Trinity last week. Work was underway to identify key relationships and mobilise support.
- Thanks were expressed for a very successful 2025, despite some significant headwinds.

103.3.1. In Memoriam

In memoriam
Sir Terence English KBE DL FRSCE FRCS FRCP, Honorary Fellow died on Monday 23 November 2025 aged 93 years.

103.4. Bursarial:

103.4.1. Management accounts to 31 Oct 2025 (103GB 02)

Governing Body received the management accounts to 31 October 2025, noting the improved end of year position projected against the recent Reforecast 1. Governing Body approved the Management Accounts.

103.4.2. Statutes and Ordinances Review

The Bursar provided a brief oral update on the status of Statute revisions with the Privy Council Office (PCO). Feedback had been received from the Charity Commission via the PCO which suggested that

the revised Statutes were not sufficient to affect the change of making Council the trustee body, with an indication that a change to the College's Charter might be necessary as well.

It was understood that this was a novel question which had not been put to other colleges having gone through equivalent processes in recent years. A legal view had been sought and on the basis that the Statute revisions were aligned with other Colleges whose statute changes had already established a clear precedent, it was hoped that only minor amends to Statutes would be required. The College's response to the PCO would be sent ahead of Christmas in the hope that the PCO would respond in January. Progress with ordinances continued in parallel, noting that residual Statute questions would need to be resolved before these could be brought to Governing Body for final approval.

103.5. Development Director's Report (103GB 03)

Governing Body received and noted the Development Director's Report. Amongst the points raised, the following were noted:

- The success of the recent visit to Hong Kong and Singapore where the early campaign propositions were helpfully beta tested.
- The Owl 2025 recent publication and distribution; several members shared very positive feedback and thanked the Development Office for all their work.
- High-level Alumni Survey findings summary were shared. Whilst it was recognised the response rate was relatively low and the survey had not been designed to gather granular detail, the results were felt to be helpful and encouraging. A desire for replicating the connectedness of law alumni in other subjects was expressed, with the EMBA being a cohort who might potentially benefit.

103.6. Impact Director's Report

103.6.1. Deep Dive Summary (103GB 04)

Governing Body received a high-level summary of the deep dive discussion on Impact that had taken place at the previous meeting. The Impact Director gave an overview of the headlines, with the following points noted:

- A range of views were expressed about college identity, particularly the college's USP; a fine balance was needed to ensure the college stood out sufficiently without it being seen as a significant outlier. Differentiators were felt to be structural (greater agility and infrastructure to subsume new ideas quickly), a propensity to be more external/outward facing than other Colleges, as well as in the language the college used to describe itself. Service and learning to serve were also felt to be a core part of the college's DNA, a characteristic that distinguished the college from many of its counterparts.
- Impact through students was a recurring theme; how the college empowered students and the ripple effect that had was evidently important to all.
- The role of the Bridge was also a key topic; with general agreement that it provided a helpful vehicle for a small number of practice-facing research translation activities or as a sandbox for interdisciplinary activities. A much stronger connection to the wider college was felt to be necessary.

The Impact Director thanked Governing Body for their engagement on the topic and confirmed further updates would follow in due course.

103.6.2. IPIP Beyond the Pilot (103GB 05)

On the recommendation of Council, Governing Body received a proposal to extend IPIP beyond the pilot stage, to allow the launch of Cohort 1 in spring 2026 and Cohort 2 in autumn 2026.

Whilst it was understood the pilot was still underway, work needed to commence quickly to recruit further participants for 2026 in order to sustain the momentum of the programme. The following were noted:

- The Impact Director confirmed that the direction of travel thus far had been very positive; the pilot was going very well, it was turning a clear profit, and participant feedback was good.
- Clear break points and the longer-term intentions beyond Cohort 2 were felt to require clarity, with a suggestion that scenario planning and introducing a risk register for the programme would be prudent.

Governing Body approved the extension of the programme beyond the pilot stage to allow the launch of Cohort 1 in spring 2026 and Cohort 2 in autumn 2026. There were six abstentions and no votes against. The Chair was clear the College was not committing to anything beyond this point.

103.6.3. ***Strategic Plans 2025-26 from Bridge initiatives (available on Athena)

Governing Body was signposted to the 2025-26 strategic plans for Bridge initiatives for information.

Strategic and operational items

103.7. Annual report and accounts 2024-25 coversheet (103GB 06)

This item was taken out of sequence following item 103.3.1**.**

The Bursar welcomed Mr Hewett to the meeting.

103.7.1. PEM Audit Matters report to trustees for audit to 31 July 2025: For information (103GB 07)

Mr Hewett thanked the College's Finance Team, who had readily provided information and facilitated a smooth, clean audit process. He provided a brief overview of the Auditor's report to the Governing Body noting that the matters arising were minor. A few minor control points had been raised, and no adjustments to the financial statements had been identified during the audit.

Mr Hewett reviewed the headlines of the sets of the audited accounts (items 103.7.2. to 103.7.4).

103.7.2. Audited RCCA accounts of Hughes Hall: For approval (103GB 08)

Governing Body approved the RCCA accounts of Hughes Hall for 2024-25.

103.7.3. Audited accounts of Hughes Hall Limited: For approval (103GB 09)

Governing Body approved the accounts of Hughes Hall Limited for 2024-25.

103.7.4. Audited accounts of Hughes Hall Conference Company Limited: For approval (103GB 10)

Governing Body approved the accounts of Hughes Hall Conference Company Limited for 2024-25.

103.7.5. Letters of representation: For approval (103GB 11)

Governing Body approved the letters of representation.

103.7.6. Audited accounts Hughes Hall (Hong Kong) Limited: For information (103GB 12)

Governing Body received and noted the audited accounts of Hughes Hall (Hong Kong) Limited for 2024-25.

The Bursar thanked Mr Hewett and the PEM Team for a well-conducted audit process. He also expressed his gratitude to the Assistant Bursar and the Finance team for for their hard work throughout the year, which had resulted in a clean audit.

The President gave a vote of thanks to PEM, the Bursar and bursarial team.

103.7.7. Appointment of the auditors for 2026-27 (for audit of 2025-26 accounts): For approval (103GB 13)

The Bursar reported that the Audit and Risk Committee had reviewed the performance of the external auditors and recommended their reappointment for 2026-27. Governing Body approved the appointment of PEM Audit Limited as the College's audit partner for the financial year 1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026.

103.8. Retirement policy for GB Fellows: For approval **(103GB 14)**

Governing Body received a paper setting out a proposal from Fellowships Committee for the College to amend its current default retirement age for GB Fellows from 67 to 69, to align with the University's retirement policy for academic staff.

The paper generated considerable discussion and debate, with a number of fellows questioning the legalities of maintaining a default retirement age under the Equality Act 2010. Whilst there was recognition that a default age would bring a helpful degree of clarity, it was felt by many that the more important question to address was the assessment of a Fellow's willingness and ability to continue to contribute meaningfully to the life of the College, irrespective of age.

The President summarized that members' feedback indicated that there was no consensus in favour of an Employer Justified Retirement Age for GB Fellows. In the absence of an agreed EJRA, the question of a default retirement age fell away. Accordingly, Governing Body agreed not to take the matter to a vote and instead tasked Fellowships Committee with considering the cultural changes required to ensure the college achieved a Governing Body that individually and collectively contributed to the College, and to develop the policy and processes required to underpin this. **ACTION: Fellowships Committee.**

103.9. ***Cost of Fellows' research expenses programme, 2024-25 (103GB 15)

Governing Body received and noted a report on the Fellows' research expenses programme 2024-25 without discussion.

103.10. ***Prevent accountability and data return for the academic year 2024-25: For information **(103GB 16)**

Governing Body received and noted the Prevent accountability and data return for 2024-25, noting that the President had approved the return's submission under delegated authority to meet the deadline.

103.11. Any other Open Business
There was none.

End of Open Business KS.

Dates of meetings in 2025-26: 4 February 2026, 11 March 2026, 13 May 2026, 17 June 2026. **All on Wednesdays at 5:30pm (in person in the Pavilion Room)**

*** As agreed at Governing Body (GB54.6.1), starred (***) items on the agenda are items that the Chair considers to be straightforward and non-controversial so that they may be approved or noted without discussion. Members of GB can un-star an item by notifying the Secretary, in advance of the meeting, so that other members can be alerted that the item will be discussed.