

COUNCIL

Unreserved minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1 November 2021

Present: Vice-Chancellor, Mr John Bowers, Professor Sir Rory Collins, Professor Daley, Sir Chris Deverell, Fra' John Eidinow, Professor Essler, Professor Fabre, Mr Harman, Professor Hobbs¹, Mr Kroll, Professor Lahiri, Professor Nobre, Professor Sánchez-Ancochea, Professor Schekochihin, Professor Trefethen², Chair of Conference of Colleges (Baroness Jan Royall), Interim Head of the Humanities Division (Professor Grimley), Head of the MPLS Division (Professor Howison), Head of the Medical Sciences Division (Professor Screator), Head of the Social Sciences Division (Professor Power), Senior Proctor (Ms Lucinda Rumsey), Junior Proctor (Dr David Johnson), Assessor (Dr Bettina Lange).

Student Member Representatives and representative of the Early Career Research Staff: Anvee Bhutani (President), and Dr Hilary Wynne (Representative of the Early Career Research Staff)

Apologies: Ms Becker, Mrs Boyt, Devika (SU Graduates), Safa Sadozai (VP Access and Academic Affairs)

Officers in attendance: Registrar, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Legal Services and General Counsel, the Director of Public Affairs, the Head of Governance Secretariat, the Assistant Registrar (Governance).

In attendance:

Kirsten Gillingham (Items 6 and 7)

Ben Heath (Items 6 and 7)

Introductory matters: the Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the first in person Council meeting since March 2020.

The Vice Chancellor noted that this was the first meeting of Council for Baroness Jan Royall, Professor Dan Grimley, Professor Timothy Power, Professor Patricia Daley, Professor Cecile Fabre and Professor Alex Schekochihin. It was also the first Council meeting for the Chief Financial Officer, Simon Boddie.

This was the first Council meeting of the new academic year. The main items were: preparatory work on the financial statements and annual report which Council would be asked to approve at its next meeting; progress with the Finance White Paper; budget review; and the Investment Policy Statement. There were also a number of items on the reserved agenda.

Declarations of interest: Council members were reminded to declare any interest that could give rise to a conflict in relation to any item on the agenda. These would be noted in the footnotes of the minutes of the meeting.

I. ORDINARY BUSINESS

(A) Unreserved

CONFIDENTIAL 1. **Meeting held on 12 July 2021 (C(21)lxxv-xc)**

(a) *Unreserved minutes*

The minutes were approved.

¹ Declared conflict of interest item 8b a Director of Oxford University Property Development

² Items 1-11

* The confidential or restricted designation is removed from this version of the minutes.

** A brief note of the action taken by Council is included instead of a version of the minutes.

(b) *Matters arising from the unreserved minutes of 12 July 2021 not otherwise on the agenda*

There were none.

CONFIDENTIAL 2. **Away Day held on 24 September 2021** (C(21)xciii-ciii)

(a) *Unreserved minutes*

The minutes were approved.

(b) *Matters arising from the unreserved minutes of Away Day held on 24 September 2021 not otherwise on the agenda*

There were none.

CONFIDENTIAL 3. **The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (above the line)****

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following items of business:

Covid

- Council noted the oral update.

Race Equality Task Force

- The consultation had been launched. A race equality strategy would be brought to Council for consideration in Trinity Term 2022.
- Colleagues were asked to encourage a more diverse range of colleagues to stand for election, particularly those from groups where representation was lower.

Freedom of speech

- The Freedom of Speech bill was making its way through parliament.
- The importance of freedom of speech had been raised in the Vice-Chancellor's speech at the matriculation ceremony held at the beginning of term, so all new students were aware.
- Council was reminded that, at its meeting held in March 2020, it had agreed that a strong statement should be made to clarify the University's position that 'Any society that no-platforms an invited speaker will be denied access to University premises'.

Other issues

- The launch of the Hillary Rodham Clinton Chair of Women's History and the inaugural lecture by its first incumbent.
- The reputation of the University was currently very high, and this was being reflected in a number of conversations about significant gifts to the university with particular interest being paid to the new Pandemic Sciences Centre.
- The outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Positives included:
 - Annual R&D spending was set to rise to £20bn by 2024/25, representing an increase in public spending of over 35%. Of this, core funding for UKRI and the national academies would rise by £1.1bn per year by 2024/25 compared to 2021/22.
 - Government would increase funding in a "linear" fashion, front-loading R&D investment in 2022/23 and 2023/24, rather than back loading it to the end of the Parliament as had been trailed. The R&D settlement appeared to be "new" money.
 - The funding commitment to ARIA remained unchanged.
 - The full costs of meeting our Horizon Europe association would be met.
 - The continuation of the Turing scheme for an additional three years.
- The response to the Augar review was still awaited.
- The government's levelling up White Paper was expected soon.
- A new Higher Education White Paper was also anticipated.

* The confidential or restricted designation is removed from this version of the minutes.

** A brief note of the action taken by Council is included instead of a version of the minutes.

- A study carried out by London Economics – The Economic Impact of the University of Oxford³ - showed that the University contributed around £15.7 billion to the UK economy in 2018/19 and supported more than 28,000 full time jobs. The impact of the University's research and knowledge transfer activities was £7.9 billion. The report demonstrated the extraordinary impact of the University both regionally and nationally.

4. **The Duties and Liabilities of Council members as the charity trustees of the University** (C(21)103)

This item was taken together with item 5.

The Registrar gave a short presentation (available on the Council SharePoint site) and asked Council members to **consider** and **note** the information at Annex A in paper (C(21)103) as it related to being a University Trustee and being bound by University Statute and the general law when making decisions.

Council **noted** the information.

5. **The Charity Commission Guidance on Public Benefit – a Summary** (C(21)104)

This item was taken together with item 4.

Council members were asked to **consider** and **note** the information at Annex A of the paper as it related to their being University Trustees, as well as including a definition of 'public benefit'.

Council **noted** the information.

CONFIDENTIAL 6. **Financial Statements 2020/21: progress update and material items** (C(21)105) **

Council **noted** the update and the material items.

7. **Sources of information for audit representation letter to KPMG** (C(21)106) *

In response to the question put by the Chief Financial Officer, Council **confirmed** that it was content with the evidence provided it to support the approval of the management representation letter.

8. **Report from the Finance Committee**

CONFIDENTIAL (a) *Le Gros Clark Gateway 1* (C(21)107) **

Council **took the actions** set out in the report.

CONFIDENTIAL (b) *Life and Mind Building (LaMB)* (C(21)108) **

Council **noted** the Chair's action that had been taken by the Vice-Chancellor on 6 October 2021 on behalf of the Finance Committee and Council.

CONFIDENTIAL 9. **Report from the meeting of the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) held on 12 October 2021** (C(21)109)

(a) *Budget 2021/22 – review* **

Council **took the actions** set out in the report

CONFIDENTIAL 10. **Finance White paper: Proof of Concept (POC)** (C(21)110) **

Council **took the actions** set out in the report.

³ <https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/Economic%20impact%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Oxford%202021.pdf>

* The confidential or restricted designation is removed from this version of the minutes.

** A brief note of the action taken by Council is included instead of a version of the minutes.

11. **Investment Policy Statement (C(21)111) ****

Council **approved** the Investment Policy Statement.

12. **USS Pensions Update**

The Vice Chancellor gave a brief oral update on USS pensions and decisions taken over the summer period noting that items 16 (a) and (b) had been approved during the Long Vacation.

It was **noted** that the Pro-Vice Chancellor (People and GLAM) would give a further update at the 29 November 2021 Council meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL 13. **Draft schedule for Council meetings during 2021/22 (C(21)112) ****

Council **took the actions** set out in the report.

CONFIDENTIAL 14. **Annual report from the Chair of the Personnel Committee**

This item was deferred to 29 November 2021 Council meeting.

Items for approval or report without discussion ('below the line')

CONFIDENTIAL 15. **Chair's Action ****

Council **noted** that Chair's action had been taken by the Vice-Chancellor on 3 August 2021 on behalf of the Finance Committee and Council.

16. **Decision by circulation**

(a) Approval of the draft response to short consultation on UUK proposal for USS

The Working Group draft response was circulated on 3 July for decision by circulation. Council **noted** that five replies approving the draft were received, one with suggested minor amendments - there were no dissensions. The draft version was therefore considered as final and submitted to UUK on 5 July 2021.

(b) Approval of the draft response to the UUK consultation (September)

The Working Group draft response was circulated on 17 September 2021 for decision by circulation. Council **noted** that six replies approving the draft were received – there were no dissensions. The draft version was therefore considered as final and submitted to UUK on 20 September 2021.

17. **The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (below the line) (C(21)115)**

Without discussion, Council **noted**:

- (i) the notice of appointments;
- (ii) the OfS publications; and
- (iii) the UUK Press Statements.

CONFIDENTIAL 18. **Financial Statements 2021/22: draft annual report text (C(21)116) ****

Without discussion, Council **noted** the draft non-financial sections of the annual report.

19. **Proposal to clarify the qualifications and increase the threshold for granting Associate status (C(21)117)**

Without discussion, Council **endorsed** the proposal to simplify the qualifications and increase the threshold for Associate status (for Alumni) from four days to 12 weeks to take effect at the start of Michaelmas Term 2021.

* The confidential or restricted designation is removed from this version of the minutes.

** A brief note of the action taken by Council is included instead of a version of the minutes.

OPEN REPORT

20. **Annual reports of the five main committees of Council (C(21)118)**

Without discussion, Council **noted** the annual reports of its main committees for 2020/21, which will be published on the oxonly pages of Council's website.

21. **Council's Standing Orders, 2021/22 (C(21)119)**

Without discussion, Council **approved** its Standing Orders for 2021/22.

22. **Dates for Council meetings in 2022/23, and confirmation of the date of the Away Day in September 2022 (C(21)120)**

Without discussion Council:

- (i) **agreed** that the Away Day in the present academic year, 2021/22, should take place on Friday 23 September 2022, with a dinner held the night before, as set out in section (c) of the paper; and
- (ii) **agreed** to confirm the meeting schedule for 2021/22 and 2022/23 as set out in sections (d) and (e) of the paper.

23. **Conflicts of interest (C(21)121)**

In accordance with the University's Conflict of Interest Policy, Council **noted** the information provided on the management of conflicts of interest in relation to Council business.

24. **Public Sector Equality Duty (C(21)122)**

Without discussion, Council **noted** the information in this paper and to **take the steps** set out in the paper in exercising its remit.

25. **Unreserved report of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held by correspondence on 18 October 2021 (C(21)123)**

Without discussion, Council **approved** the following proposal

- (i) *Proposed change to the membership of the Committee for the Ruskin School of Art*

Without discussion, Council **approved** the following proposal:

to make amendments to the membership of the Committee for the Ruskin School of Art to remove references to the Ruskin Master of Drawing, to make all permanent Professors and Associate Professors members of the committee and to increase the student membership.

In addition it was **noted** that, GPC would make the necessary changes to the regulations (as set out in Annex A to GPC(21)100) on behalf of Council.

CONFIDENTIAL

26. **Performance of the Oxford Endowment Fund (C(21)124)**

Without discussion Council **noted** the information.

27. **Any other unreserved business**

There was none.

LM/SC

* The confidential or restricted designation is removed from this version of the minutes.

** A brief note of the action taken by Council is included instead of a version of the minutes.