

## COUNCIL

### Unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2022

Present: Vice-Chancellor, Ms Wendy Becker, Mr John Bowers<sup>1</sup>, Professor Sir Rory Collins, Professor Patricia Daley, Sir Chris Deverell, Professor Fabian Essler (Teams), Professor Cécile Fabre (Teams), Mr Charles Harman, Professor Richard Hobbs, Mr Nicholas Kroll, Professor Aditi Lahiri, Professor Kia Nobre, Professor Diego Sánchez-Ancochea, Professor Alex Schekochihin, Professor Anne Trefethen, Chair of Conference of Colleges (Baroness Jan Royall), Head of the Humanities Division (Professor Daniel Grimley), Head of the Physical and Life Sciences Division (Professor Sam Howison), Head of the Medical Sciences Division (Professor Gavin Screenshot), Head of the Social Sciences Division (Professor Timothy Power), Senior Proctor (Professor Jane Mellor), Junior Proctor (Dr Linda Flores) Assessor (Dr Richard Earl).

Student Member Representatives and representative of the Early Career Research Staff: Anvee Bhutani (SU President), Devika Devika (VP Graduates), Safa Sadozai (VP Access and Academic Affairs) and Dr Hilary Wynne (Representative of the Early Career Staff)

Apologies: Fra' John Eidinow

Officers in attendance: Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation) Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Public Affairs and Communications, the Director of Legal Services and General Counsel, Head of GLAM, the Executive Officer (Policy and Governance) in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Head of Governance, the Assistant Registrar (Governance).

**Introductory matters:** the Vice Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting noting that this was the first meeting for:

The Senior Proctor Professor Jane Mellor, the Junior Proctor Dr Linda Flores and the Assessor Dr Richard Earl

The main themes were: a number of items from Finance Committee, including the OUP special transfer; reward and recognition; Council's effectiveness review and Silver Lessons Learned review; and the annual reports of the Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Innovation) and the Head of the Medical Sciences Division. There were also a number of important 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.

### ORDINARY BUSINESS

#### (A) Unreserved

CONFIDENTIAL 1. **Meeting held on 14 March 2022 (C(22)xix-xxxii) \***

(a) *Unreserved minutes*

The unreserved minutes were approved<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Items 3d – 24. Arrived 14:26

<sup>2</sup> Amended to show that Mr Charles Harman had attended in-person, not on Teams.

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(b) *Matters arising from the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2022 not otherwise on the agenda*

There were none.

CONFIDENTIAL 2. **The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (above the line) \*\***

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

- Sadly, there had been three student deaths in the past fortnight, all unrelated. There were no suspicious circumstances and all appear to have had longstanding health issues.
- On Covid, Silver had held its final meeting and had been disbanded, following the University's return to BCP-0. It was remarkable how quickly things were returning to normal. Before the pandemic, Council regularly met at OUP and would continue to do so.
- The Astrophoria Foundation Year had recently been launched, offering 50 places in 10 different colleges for entry in October 2023.
- On admissions, recently published figures showed that 21% of Oxford's 2021 intake came from disadvantaged, underrepresented backgrounds, an increase from 13% in 2017. In 2021, 68% came from state schools, up from 58% in 2017. The University had continued its progress in the proportion of UK undergraduates identifying as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), rising from 18% to 25% over the past five years.
- The University and the colleges were working together on a number of initiatives to respond to the situation in Ukraine:
  - Offering 20 fully funded places for Masters Students
  - Offering places for up to 20 undergraduates. The government had waived international tuition fees, and given equivalent access to the student loan system for British students.
  - A hardship fund had been created.
  - Working with CARA, with the British Academy Scheme and on our own initiatives in support of Ukrainian academics.
- An update on the REF:
  - Thanks were due to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and his team for the extensive work on this.
  - Universities were due to receive their individual results today, relative results the following day, with all results being made public on Thursday of this week.
  - The results would be reported to Council in due course.
  - It was proposed that one of the sessions at the next Away Day be devoted to research.
- AstraZeneca had now distributed almost 3 billion doses worldwide.
- In research news:
  - Oxford spin-out First Light Fusion had managed to achieve nuclear fusion with the promising projectile fusion technique.
  - The RECOVERY trial which had demonstrated the efficacy of Dexamethasone and Tocilizumab had now also demonstrated that the anti-inflammatory drug normally used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, Baricitinib, was also effective in reducing deaths in Covid patients.
- On Horizon, the situation remained unclear and the University continued to work with others in the Russell Group and the Learned Societies to develop an alternative plan.
- The Free Speech Bill was being carried forward into the next parliamentary session.
- Many other universities, including 16 of the 24 Russell Group members, were facing industrial action. In the most recent rounds of balloting in Oxford the UCU had failed to reach the threshold.
- In the local elections, Labour had retained control of the Council.

3. **Report from the meeting of Finance Committee held on 27 April 2022**

RESTRICTED

(a) *GLAM Collections Storage Facility (C22)45) \*\**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) introduced this item

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Council took the action set out in the paper.

RESTRICTED

(b) *Osney Power Station: Proposal to replace current gas boiler with a hybrid air source heat pump and electric boiler solution (C(22)46) \*\**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) introduced this item.

Council took the actions set out in the report.

RESTRICTED

(c) *Old Road Campus – B1 and B2 (C(22)47) \*\**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) noted that the Institute of Global Health project could now proceed, with detailed planning permission obtained and procurement ready to commence. The completion of the Global Health building would enable decanting from temporary buildings so that work could commence on the Pandemic Sciences building.

In discussion members noted the positive tenor of the paper, particularly in relation to the proposed future increase in investment in nursery facilities. The Vice-Chancellor noted that Professor Chris Conlon, as the senior responsible officer had approved the project to Gateway 0 and would at an appropriate time refer the internal space allocation to Congregation.

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

CONFIDENTIAL

(d) *OUP Special Transfer (C(22)48) \*\**

The Chief Financial Officer introduced this item setting out the key points for Council members' consideration.

Council took the actions set out in the report.

#### 4. **Annual Report of the Head of the Medical Sciences Division\*\***

The Head of the Medical Sciences Division provided an oral report highlighting the following:

##### *Awards and Honours*

- The University had recently received a Queen's Anniversary Prize for its rapid response to Covid-19. This award was a testament to the work of over 1000 individuals over the last two years.
- Professor Sarah Gilbert had been made a Royal Academy Honorary Fellow.
- Professors Irene Tracey, Richard Haynes and Lucy Fletcher had all received New Year's Honours.
- Professor Sir John Bell had been inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

##### *Financial sustainability*

- Departmental income had grown by 5% per year over the last 10 years, with direct research income growing by 6% per year. The intention was to maintain the upward trend.

##### *Research culture*

- A number of initiatives were underway to improve research culture, including the appointment of a Research Culture Facilitator and the establishment of a Research Staff Forum and the Research Culture Enhancement Fund.

##### *Developments in the Estate*

- An update was provided on a number of capital projects within the division.

##### *Global activity*

Highlights included:

- The Mahidol Oxford Research Programme (MORU) – a major malarial research centre in Thailand - was over 40 years old and employed around 800 people.

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- The global reach of the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU) was extensive
- The KEMRI|Wellcome Trust Research Programme (KWTRP) went from strength to strength.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- The division's success in attracting external research income was felt to be due to its outstanding team of scientists and the fact that, because the University was not a top-down institution, all those scientists had a stake in its success.
- It was agreed that data science was a potential growth area, allowing opportunities for career progression and development.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Head of the Medical Sciences Division for his uplifting presentation.

CONFIDENTIAL 5. **Report from the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee on 22 March 2022 (C(22)49) \*\***

(a) Q2 Forecast 2021/22

Council **noted** the report.

CONFIDENTIAL 6. **St. Cross Remedial Works (C(22)60) \*\***

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

7. **Annual report from the Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Innovation) \*\***

The Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) gave an oral report.

The Chair of the Research and Innovation Committee noted that:

- The Strategic Plan 2018-2024 set out our research commitments to promote and enable ambitious research of exceptional quality; invest in people to support them and their research environment; to change the world for the better;
- Since 2011/12 there had been an average growth rate of 5% per year alongside diversification of funding which included having the highest industrial research funding of any UK university;
- Oxford had the highest QR funding in the UK (£154m);
- IP have clear models now and industry funding is running at 105%;
- Slide 5 demonstrated the relative position of Oxford on the ISI 100 most cited researchers where it was clear that our position is steady, with other UK competitors decreasing.
- The Strategic Research Fund was established in 2020 and early investments had delivered at least a three times leverage to external funding, which was likely to grow significantly over time;
- Research culture was important and the new careers hub had six FTE roles to support post-docs and other staff. The concordat for the career development of researchers was key, alongside the development of research practice (using modern tools) to enable the production of reliable, reproducible and transparent research of the highest quality;
- In 2018/19 Oxford activities generated £15.7bn for the UK economy (Source: London Economics, 2021)
- The REF Project Board would meet on 10 May 2022 to look at lessons learned from the 2021 REF. There would be a need to develop mechanisms to improve support flexible growth in research activity because of its increasing complexity. Opportunities to work with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs) to find funding for the next set of 'big ideas', whilst exploiting international opportunities imaginatively and responsibly would be key.

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It was noted in discussion that 'research funding' paid for the student research environment and library provision. This also extended to access to travel and consumables while graduate funding via scholarships was provided by using dividends from funds invested in our endowment.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation) noted that:

- Progress had been made in a number of areas over the past year including IDEA (Increasing Diversity in Enterprising Activities), which had created a community of over 1400, organised 10 events with about 500 attendees and provided micro-internships to approximately 25 students (to interview Oxford entrepreneurs and leaders for the Wonder Women series).
- The new equity sharing policy had been introduced, following approval by Council in July 2021, which had made it faster and easier for academics to establish themselves.
- In the past seven years of Oxford Science Enterprise (OSE) over 80 spin outs had been founded being worth approximately £2bn, across the four pillars of 'enabling healthier lives', 'protecting planet', 'feeding world' and 'accelerating change'.
- Slide 5 demonstrated the breadth and depth of OSE and the University working together.
- An integrated innovation communications team had been created which included PAD, OUI, OSE and Research Services.
- Colleges were getting involved with innovation.
- The ultimate goal was to make Oxford a world leading hub for innovation, enterprise, impact and leadership.
- Entrepreneurship support was key and in demand. Good links had been established with the Harwell and Fulham Clusters.

CONFIDENTIAL 8. **Reward and Recognition** (C(22)50) \* and \*\* (The discussion related to the proposal for a thank you payment).

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Digital) introduced this item, reminding Council that, at its meeting in November 2021, it had considered seven options relating to pay and reward and had agreed that four should be considered further. An update on progress on the options was provided as follows:

*Option 1: Develop a more proactive and leading programme on the development of Conditional Indexation and / USS Investment strategy*

Thanks were due to Fabian Essler who was leading a small working group within Oxford, comprising colleagues who were able to contribute to the mathematical financial modelling. Oxford was working with Cambridge and Imperial to take this work forward.

*Option 2: Change the rewards for University USS members through a direct DC top-up*

A simple quantitative model had been developed by Fabian Essler in conjunction with other members of the USS Pensions Working Group, and including the Head of the MPLS Division. If this option was to be pursued, the simplified model would be given to AON as the template for a full simulation. It was intended to bring a further update to Council's next meeting.

*Option 3: Create an Employee (ISA) saving scheme*

Unfortunately, further analysis of the creation of an ISA saving scheme to work as a vehicle for rewarding staff had shown that this was not feasible. This option would therefore not be pursued.

*Option 4: Take forward a piece of work the Pay and Conditions for APs*

As reported at the last Council meeting this option had been removed as a response to the USS changes but was being taken forward in collaboration with the Colleges. A strategic discussion was held at Personnel Committee on some of the potential options for restructuring AP roles and rewards. Re-thinking AP progression was a significant piece of work and would be brought back to Council in due course once all the detail had been worked through. .

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The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Digital) noted that, given the difficulties of the last two years, a number of universities had rewarded staff with additional one-off payments. It was proposed that a one off payment of £1,000 be made to all staff and hypothecated from royalties due from Astra Zeneca. For those staff who wished to use it immediately it could be given in cash and for those who wished to reinforce their pension pot it could be given in the form of a DC top up.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Council members were very supportive of the proposal, and thanked those involved in its development, agreeing that it was generous, progressive and universal. It tied in with other initiatives including the Oxford Living Wage and the furlough top-up, underlining the University's reputation as a good employer.
- It would be important to de-couple it from discussions around USS pensions, cost of living increases and inflation. There was some discussion about how to describe the payment and that some reference to the pandemic should be included, as the payment was recognising the hard work of staff during the last two difficult years.
- The proposal to allow staff to use the payment as a DC top-up had been suggested for tax efficiency reasons. Whilst it was agreed that the payment should not be linked to discussions around pensions, the DC top-up option could be made available, provided the communications were clear and unambiguous.
- The question was raised as to whether awarding a £1000 payment to all staff was the best option or whether there was any possibility of banding the payments or giving staff the option to make their payment available to others. Banding the payments had been considered but would be extremely complex. It would, however, be possible for staff to choose to donate their payment to the Staff Top-Up Fund.
- It was acknowledged that whilst the proposal was very welcome, it would cause difficulties in the colleges where those staff on joint appointments would receive the payment and college-only employees would not. In addition some colleges would not be able to afford to match it. It was agreed that the Chair of Conference should be given good notice of any public announcement on the payment.
- On the matter of communications, it was noted that a public announcement in the near future would be timely, coinciding with the return to BCP-0.
- In terms of who would receive the award, the simplest method was to take a census date and award the payment pro-rata to anyone with an employment contract on that date.
- The question was raised as to when Council would have an opportunity to discuss the governance of any decision relating to USS benefits as agreed in 2018. This item had been deferred from the February and March Council meetings. It was intended that this be on the Council agenda later this term.
- Consideration was given to the potential conflict of interest in Council approving this payment, given that many of its members were also University employees and would therefore receive the payment. It was noted that, in considering many issues, Council members had to act as trustees of the University rather than in a personal capacity and this was simply a further example.

Council **agreed** to make a special one-off payment of £1000 to each member of staff (pro-rata). A number of options would be provided, including the possibility of using the payment as a DC top-up or the possibility of putting the payment into the Staff Top-Up Fund (hardship).

CONFIDENTIAL 9. **Council Effectiveness Review – 2021/22 Self Review (C(22)51)(C(22)31)** previously circulated) \*\*

The Registrar introduced this item reminding Council that the format and scope of the review had been agreed at the meeting on 14 March. Given that the last review was comprehensive, resulting in a full set of recommendations which had now, largely, been implemented, it had been agreed that this review be more 'light touch'.

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

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CONFIDENTIAL 10. **Proposal from Silver for Lessons Learned Review (C(22)52) \***

The Registrar introduced this item, noting the dissolution of Silver following the move to BCP-0 and the proposal to conduct a lessons learned review, to be co-chaired by the Head of the Social Sciences Division and the Master of University College.

During discussion, it was pointed out that some had viewed the Crisis Management Framework as too centralised and bureaucratic. Those views would be fed into the review.

Council:

**noted** the cessation of the use of the CMF, the dissolution of Silver and the return to 'business as usual' governance arrangements, and;

**approved** the purpose and scope of the "lessons learned" from the operation of the Crisis Management Framework (CMF).

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*Items for approval or report without discussion ('below the line') are listed below.*

11. **Decision by circulation**

Without discussion Council noted that it had **considered** the additional name proposed for the conferment of an honorary degree at Encaenia 2022 and had the opportunity to inform the Vice Chancellor of any concerns in regard to the name proposed by 19 April 2022. All responses received were positive and the proposal would therefore be put to Congregation on 17 May 2022.

12. **The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (below the line) (C(22)53)**

Without discussion Council **noted**:

- (i) the appointments to statutory posts;
- (ii) the OfS publications; and
- (iii) the UUK Press Statements.

CONFIDENTIAL 13. **Unreserved report from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's 10 March 2022 meeting (C(22)54) \*\***

Without discussion Council **noted** the confidential report.

CONFIDENTIAL 14. **Report on the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's decision to appoint PwC as the University's Internal Auditors (C(22)55) \***

Without discussion Council **noted** the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's decision to appoint PwC as the University's internal auditors.

15. **Unreserved report of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on 21 March 2022 and 3 May 2022 (C(22)56)**

CONFIDENTIAL (a) *Report of the Safety, Health and Environment Management Subcommittee (SHEMS) meeting held on 24 February 2022 \**

Without discussion Council:

- (i) **approved** the new policy statement on Fluorinated Gases and Ozone Depleting Substances, set out in the appendix to Annex A; and
- (ii) **noted** the issues discussed by SHEMS.

(b) *Proposed amendment to Statute VII and Council regulations to change the name of the Faculty of Oriental Studies*

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Without discussion Council **approved for onward submission to Congregation** the proposed changes to legislation to change the name of the Faculty of Oriental Studies to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (see Annex B).

(c) *Recognised Independent Centres: update on withdrawal of status and proposed disbandment of the Joint Committee for the Recognised Independent Centres (JCRIC)*

Without discussion Council:

- (i) **noted** that the status of 'Recognised Independent Centre' no longer existed; and
- (ii) **approved** that the Joint Committee for the Recognised Independent Centres be disbanded and the regulation change set out in Annex C made.

(d) *Proposed amendments to legislation*

Without discussion Council **approved** the following proposals:

- (i) *Changes in regulations for the Faculty of Law (GPC(22)33)*
- (ii) *Changes to the membership of the Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee (ESSC) (GPC(22)34)*
- (iii) *Changes to the Part 2 Council Regulations 2 of 2004: Clubs Committee (GPC(22)45)*

16. **Voting on Legislative Proposal: Statute X and Congregation Regulations 3 of 2002 – Establishment of the degree of Master in Science in Experimental Psychology, and the degree of Master in Science in Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics (C(22)57)** previously circulated as (C(22)19)

Without discussion it was **noted** that at Council's meeting on 7 February 2022 a query was raised on the drafting of the associated changes to legislation which required further consideration. Further discussion had taken place and the legislation amended accordingly.

Without discussion, Council **approved for submission to Congregation** the changes to legislation associated with the new Degree of Master in Science in Experimental Psychology and proposed new Degree of Master in Science in Psychology, Philosophy and Linguistics.

- CONFIDENTIAL 17. **Annual Report 2020/21 of the Committee to Review Donations and Research Funding C(22)58\***

Without discussion Council:

- (i) received the annual report of the Committee to Review Donations and Research Funding for 2020/21 (Annex A); and
- (ii) **noted** that the committee intends to publish on its website the report on the work of the committee for the wider University provided at Appendix VI of Annex A.

18. **Any other unreserved business**

There was no other business.

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