

C O U N C I L

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10 February 2020

Present: Vice-Chancellor, Warden of New College, Principal of Somerville, Dame Kate Barker, Ms Boyt, Professor Sir Rory Collins¹, Professor Coulson, Sir Chris Deverell, Fra' John Eidinow, Professor Essler, Professor Hamerow, Mr Harman, Professor Hobbs, Professor Johnson, Mr Kroll, Professor Lahiri, Mr Ovenden, Professor Nobre, Professor Trefethen, Head of the Humanities Division (Professor O'Brien), Head of the Medical Sciences Division (Professor Screaton), Head of the MPLS Division (Professor Howison), Head of the Social Sciences Division (Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore), Senior Proctor (Professor Maiden), Junior Proctor (Professor Marnette)², Assessor (Professor Whyte).

Student Member Representatives and representative of the Early Career Research Staff: Anisha Faruk (President of Oxford SU); Ray Williams (Oxford SU VP Access and Academic Affairs); and Neil Misra (Oxford SU VP Graduates); Dr Gwilym Rowlands (Chair, Oxford Research Staff Society).

Apologies: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation).

Officers in attendance: the Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Director of Finance, the Director of Legal Services and General Counsel, the Director of Public Affairs, the Executive Officer (Policy and Governance) in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Director of Planning and Council Secretariat, the Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance), the Assistant Registrar (Governance).

In attendance: and the Chief Executive of the Press and Secretary to the Delegates, Nigel Portwood and the Group Finance Director, Giles Spackman (for item 5); Kirsty Allen, REF Programme Manager (for item 10).

Order of business: the order of business was as set out on the 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.

Introductory matters: the Vice-Chancellor welcomed Sir Chris Deverell to his first meeting as a new external member of Council.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that Dame Kate Barker, external member and chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, was to step down from Council at the end of Hilary term following her appointment as Chair of USS. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Dame Kate Barker for her work for the University, and asked members of Council to suggest people to herself or to the chair of the Nominations Committee as a possible successor to Dame Kate Barker or as someone who might fill the fifth external member position if approved by Her Majesty in Council.

The Vice-Chancellor congratulated two members of Council who had been named in the New Year Honours: Professor Sarah Whatmore who had been appointed DBE and Professor Aditi Lahiri who had been appointed CBE.

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Dr Gwilym Rowlands, chair of the Oxford Research Staff Society, to his first meeting, in attendance as the representative of the early career research staff (as set out in minute 15(a) below).

I. ORDINARY BUSINESS

(A) Unreserved

¹ For items 2-22.

² For items 5-27.

* 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.

1. **Unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2019** (C(19)lxxxviii-ci)

The minutes were approved.

2. **Unreserved matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2019 not otherwise on the agenda**

CONFIDENTIAL

(a) *Minute 9: Extension to the University's 100-year £750m bond. Summary of the completed bond tap* (C(20)02)**

Council **noted** the information provided in this paper and in the annexed report provided by JP Morgan which provides a summary of the completed bond tap.

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

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following matters:

- The background to the proposal to suspend section 17(1) of Statute IX, concerning the election of a Proctor, on which Council had voted by correspondence not to submit to Congregation.
- The preparations being put in place by the University in respect of Coronavirus. Bronze and silver teams had been established with their respective roles; the advice of the FCO and Public Health England were being followed; advice had been issued to students in China to return to the UK and to staff only to undertake essential travel to China; a website had been established, which had received a high number of views and lengthy stays on its pages suggesting a careful review of its contents; the University was working closely with the colleges.
- The UCU strike on the USS pension scheme, which would take place for 14 days in February and March, and which had been supported in the University by a ballot with a 50.6% turnout, just over the 50% threshold.
- The current position with regard to the recruitment of a new head of the MPLS Division.
- The prospects of resolutions to Congregation on the graduate application fee and divestment.
- The appointment of architects for the Humanities Centre on the ROQ site.

In discussion, the following points were among those made.

- The Registrar reported that communications on the USS strike were being sent out within the University; members of Council would receive copies the following day.
- Departments at Oxford were engaged in research and vaccine development in respect of the Coronavirus, but views were mixed as to the future course of the disease and the time required to produce an effective vaccine.
- Discussion should take place on the timetables required for Congregation business, which had precluded Council from discussing at this meeting the question of the suspension of a section of Statute IX.

4. **Financial update****

(a) *Quarter 1 financial forecast: report of the meeting of the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee held on 17 December 2019* (C(20)03)*

The Director of Finance explained the Q1 forecast position at year end for the divisions and services.

Council **noted** the report.

CONFIDENTIAL

5. **OUP Report to Council: strategy update** (C(20)04)**

Council **commented** on the report.

* 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.

CONFIDENTIAL 6. **EJRA: oral report on the outcome of an employment tribunal****

Council **noted** the report.

7. **Pension scheme updates**

CONFIDENTIAL (a) *Oxford Staff Pension Scheme***

Council **noted** the report.

CONFIDENTIAL (b) *Universities Superannuation Scheme***

Council **noted** the report and **agreed** how to proceed on a related matter.

8. **Report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 30 January 2020 (C(20)05)**

(a) *Gender Pay Gap report **

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and GLAM) reminded Council that it was a legal requirement for the University to report to the government its gender pay gap (GPG) based on the “snapshot date” of 31 March 2019. The following key points were highlighted:

- There had been no change in the median pay gap of 13.7%. This was lower than the national pay gap (17.3%) and lower than the HE gap (14.8%).
- The mean pay gap had dropped to 21.6% but remained higher than the HE mean gap (15.9%).
- The more detailed data provided in the report to Council showed the variation in the pay gap across different types of roles and across the divisions.
- Athena Swan was being used across the University to take forward the aims of increasing the number of women in senior roles.
- Personnel Committee had agreed a number of actions in relation to gender pay:
 - To work with the Medical Sciences Division to establish how the University can best support women in the NHS Clinical Excellence Award scheme.
 - To work with the divisions to ensure that there are effective plans in place at divisional level, given the variations across divisions.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- The more detailed data provided in the report to Council was welcomed and was very helpful in enabling Council to understand better the GPG. Identifying specific difficulties in specific divisions and departments would help in developing and implementing appropriate and effective solutions.
- The data showed a steady change in the right direction which was very welcome.
- It was suggested that analysis on age and gender might also be undertaken but this was not expected to have a significant impact on the GPG as a whole.
- It was confirmed that 31 July 2020 was the target date for increasing the proportion of female Statutory Professors to 20%, female Professors (statutory and titular combined) to 30% and Associate Professors to 35%. There was still some progress to be made on the target for female Professors (statutory and titular combined) (currently 24%) – work was underway to achieve consistency in recruitment and retention for posts at that level.
- The profile in the Social Sciences Division differed quite significantly from the other divisions. This was largely due to two outlier departments where the senior roles commanded much higher salaries (due to market forces) and very few women were employed in those particular roles. The Division also had a high number of joint appointments (Associate Professors with Tutorial Fellowships) which often presented difficulties for female staff in balancing University and college responsibilities in addition to family responsibilities.
- In relation to targets beyond 2020, it was confirmed that the Equality and Diversity Unit was considering aims and goals going forward, including further developments under Athena Swan, and these would be brought to Council in due course.

* 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.

- On the Clinical Excellence Awards, it was noted that 75% of the University staff eligible for these were male. These awards were made by the NHS for services to the NHS so the University had no control over this. However, the question was raised as to whether the University could do more to encourage female clinicians to put themselves forward and to help line managers to support them, and whether the University might consider exercising some leverage on the NHS in respect of the GPG in distribution of the awards.
- The important role of colleges in addressing the GPG was acknowledged.

On the narrative report (Annex G), two drafting points were raised:

- Under 'Key points' (p.65), for clarity, the fourth bullet-point might read: 'A greater proportion of women than men are in receipt of bonus payments.'
- Although positive progress had been made, in order to avoid appearing complacent, a sentence might be included to recognise that further progress needed to be made and to demonstrate the University's commitment to that.

Subject to the two drafting points above, Council **approved** the draft narrative on the University's gender pay gap report at Annex G of the report.

9. **Report of the meeting of the Personnel and Planning and Resource Allocation Committees held on 24 October 2019 and 17 December 2019 (C(20)06)**

(a) *Oxford Living Wage for University staff**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and GLAM) reminded Council that the Oxford Living Wage was set at 95% of the London Living Wage, the latter being set by the Real Living Wage Foundation. The difference between the two rates reflected a reduction for transport costs in Oxford. Council was being asked to approve the introduction of the Oxford Living Wage for University staff, not college staff, although it was understood that the issue was under consideration by Conference of Colleges and a number of colleges were in dialogue with the City Council about how it might work in the college setting. The additional costs involved in implementing the Oxford Living Wage for University staff had been included in University budgets and a communications plan was being developed to inform colleagues in due course, if approved by Council.

In discussion, the following points were raised.

- The Oxford Student Union was very supportive of the introduction of the Oxford Living Wage and thanked all those involved.
- It was confirmed that the Oxford Living Wage was not being introduced for employees of sub-contractors at this time. It was hoped that those sub-contractors who did pay it would experience the same benefits envisaged by the University i.e. improved motivation and retention, and that this would encourage others to introduce it.
- In due course, Personnel Committee would measure the benefits brought about by the introduction of the Oxford Living Wage and report back accordingly.

Council **approved** the introduction of the Oxford Living Wage for University staff with effect from 1 August 2020.

OPEN PAPER,
CONFIDENTIAL
DISCUSSION

10. **Update on Oxford's planning for the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (C(20)07)****

Council **noted**, and **commented** on:

- (i) the update on the Code of Practice; and
- (ii) the update on preparations for the REF submission and levels of preparedness of Unit of Assessments ("UoA").

11. **Annual report from the Chair of the Education Committee ***

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) gave the first of what were intended to be annual oral reports from the chairs of Council's principal committees. He outlined the following.

* 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.

- The scope of the education brief.
- The role of Education Committee and its subcommittees.
- The role of the Academic Administration Division, emphasising its student-facing elements.
- The current key challenges:
 - fair undergraduate access;
 - on course performance and attainment gaps;
 - graduate access and funding;
 - student mental health and wellbeing; and
 - digital education and inclusive teaching.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor explained that progress was being made ahead of target on fair access, and the attainment gaps for white and black students (although small numbers meant that progress was likely to be uneven year on year) and for students with no declared disability and those with.

- The key achievements, including:
 - the agreement of the Access and Participation Plan;
 - the number of offers made for Opportunity Oxford was 115, which was 55 above the target to date;
 - the development of the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy; and
 - the establishment of the graduate level UNIQ+ summer school.
- The current projects, especially Foundation Oxford and the discussions around changes to the assessment and classification of degrees which, if taken forward, had the potential to have a significant impact.

In the discussion, the following points were among those made.

- The increase in student numbers needed to be matched by a corresponding increase in student support services. As there was no direct link between increased fee income and increased funding for student services, annual bids had to be made for the necessary additional funds. It was important for AAD to be supported given the pressures its services were under.
- There had been a substantial increase in the number of students declaring mental health disabilities. That was common across the sector as a whole.
- Changes to teaching, assessment and classification looked as though they offered great potential benefits.

With these comments, Council **noted** the report.

12. **Report from the meetings of the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee held on 21 January 2020 and the Education Committee held on 30 January 2020 (C(20)08)**

(a) *Graduate Endowment Matched Scholarships***

Council:

- (i) **approved** the principles for the scheme; and
- (ii) **noted** the Divisional and pan-University priorities set out for match funded graduate scholarships.

13. **Report from the meetings of the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee held on 21 January 2020 and the Buildings and Estates Subcommittee held on 23 January 2020 (C(20)09)**

(a) *Oxford Zero Emission Zone – proposed response*

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) explained the proposal by the city and county councils to introduce a Zero Emission Red Zone in a small area of central Oxford to tackle poor air quality. It was acknowledged that the Red Zone on its own would not have a great impact; it was seen as a trial for the more extensive Green Zone which would have a significant impact

* 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.

both on air quality and on how the city operated in terms of travel in and around the central areas. The proposed response was to say that the University supported the introduction of the Red Zone subject to the Green Zone then being implemented; it did not support the Red Zone remaining if the plans for the Green Zone were abandoned. It was noted that there were no zero emission zones so far in the UK.

In discussion the following were among the points raised.

- The Chair of the Conference of Colleges explained that St Peter's College was the only college wholly within the Red Zone. It was in dialogue with the councils on the implications and found those discussions to be constructive.
- The plans should take account of the pollution caused by tourist coaches entering the ZEZ and often leaving their engines running; higher charges should be imposed on tourist coaches than those proposed for cars.
- The plans should take account of the needs of disabled people without Blue Badges, one example being blind students who used taxis to travel around central Oxford.

With the addition of text to reflect the last two bullet points, Council **approved** the suggested University response in support of the ZEZ Red Zone consultation.

14. **Annual report of the Head of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division***

The Head of the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division explained that there had been significant changes in the division's management and administrative teams. He provided an oral report covering the following:

- Academic and Research, referring back to the earlier report on REF2020; identifying the need for the division to take a more strategic oversight of its involvement in four significant research institutes; the need to engage with the new government research funding landscape and the University's Strategic Research Fund; the need to develop more cross-departmental networks; and the division's enthusiastic participation in Opportunity Oxford which it saw as an evolution of its existing bridging scheme.
- Estate, particularly the new Doctoral Training Centre in Keble Road and the Chemistry:Parks College interface; the detailed design for the Life and Mind Building; the need to determine requirements for Information Sciences on the ROQ site; and the master-planning for the Keble Triangle.
- Human Resources, with the creation in the Division of an Associate Head for People, with a remit including the new Concordat for Research Staff and the integration of divisional and departmental HR teams; and
- Governance, including the planned merger of Plant Sciences and Zoology to form Biology; engagement with central planning for the development of the Begbroke Science Park, and the forthcoming review of Physics.

The Head of the MPLS Division then highlighted a number of impact studies that would be included in REF 2020.

Council **noted** the report.

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

15. **Matters arising from the minutes of the meetings held on 4 November and 2 December 2019**

(a) *Minute 14 of 4 November 2019: Council self-review of effectiveness: implementation of recommendation; and Minute of 2 December 2019: Legislative proposal to amend the College Contributions Scheme*

Council **noted** that the legislative proposals:

(i) regarding Statute VI, Council, to provide for an additional external member of Council, to increase the age limit for external members to 75, and to allow attendance at Council by a representative of the early career research staff; and

* 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.

(ii) regarding Statute XV, College Contributions Scheme, to provide a new statutory framework for the agreed new scheme;

had both been approved by Congregation in the absence of notices of opposition or amendment and had been forwarded for approval by Her Majesty in Council.

Council also **noted** that, as it had agreed and stated in the explanatory note to the legislative proposal to Statute VI, a representative of the early career research staff has been invited to attend Council in the meantime, pending the approval of the Statute and agreement on the means of selecting the representative. Dr Gwilym Rowlands, Department of Zoology, the chair of the Oxford Research Staff Society, has been proposed by Professor David Gavaghan, the Advocate for Research Staff, as the interim representative for the remainder of this academic year, and has been invited to attend from this meeting.

16. Decision by circulation

(a) Election of a Proctor 2021-22

Without discussion, Council **noted** that, by eleven votes to nine, it decided not to submit to Congregation the resolution circulated in paper (C(20)01) proposing the suspension of section 17(1) of Statute IX.

17. The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (below the line) (C(20)10)

Without discussion, Council **noted**:

- (i) the New Year's Honours List;
- (ii) an appointment to a statutory post;
- (iii) the OfS publications; and
- (iv) the UUK press statements.

CONFIDENTIAL **18. Report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 28 November 2019 (C(20)11)****

(a) Annual report on retirements

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

19. Report of the meetings of the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee held on 17 December 2019 and 21 January 2020 (C(20)12)

*(a) Report from the Strategic Plan Programme Board: MT 2019**

Without discussion, Council **noted** the progress report.

*(b) Report on Divisional Planning Submissions 2019**

Without discussion, Council **approved** the Divisional Plans submitted through the 2019/20 divisional planning round.

20. Unreserved report of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 16 December 2019 (C(20)13)

(a) Proposed amendments to legislation

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

- (i) *Amendment to Regulations for Staff Employment Review Panel and University Appeal Panel and constituting panels convened under Statute XII Parts B, D and H (GPC(19)115)*
- (ii) *Update to the Financial Regulations (GPC(19)116)*

21. Report from the Committee on Honorary Degrees (C(20)14)

* 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.

Ref No COU/1

Without discussion, Council **approved** the proposed changes to Annex E to its Standing Orders (shown as tracked changes in Annex A of the report).

22. **Any other unreserved business**

There was none.

NPB

G:\GOVERNANCE\Council\Meetings\2019-20\HT 2020\10 February 2020\minutes\10.02.20 Council web minutes.docx

* 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.