

COUNCIL

Unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2022

Present: Vice-Chancellor, Ms Wendy Becker, Mr John Bowers (Teams), Professor Sir Rory Collins (Teams), Professor Patricia Daley, Sir Chris Deverell, Fra John Eidinow, Professor Fabian Essler, Professor Cécile Fabre, Mr Charles Harman, Professor Richard Hobbs, Mr Nicholas Kroll, Professor Aditi Lahiri, Professor Kia Nobre (Teams), Professor Diego Sánchez-Ancochea (Teams), Professor Alex Schekochihin, Professor Anne Trefethen, Head of the Mathematical, 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)¹.

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: Chair of Conference of Colleges (Baroness Jan Royall) and the Head of the Humanities Division (Professor Daniel Grimley).

Officers in attendance: Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)², Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation), the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Public Affairs and Communications, Head of GLAM, the Executive Officer (Policy and Governance) in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Head of Governance, the Assistant Registrar (Governance).

In Attendance:

Sir Paul Ruddock and Ms Sandra Robertson (item 3)
Nigel Portwood, Giles Spackman and Ewan McKendrick (items 4 and 5)
Professor Laura Van Broekhoven (item 11)

Michael-Akolade Avodeii (President Elect), Jade (VP Access and Education) and Shreya Dua (VP Graduates Elect)

Introductory matters: the Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting noting that this was the last meeting for the Oxford SU Sabbatical Officers Anvee Bhutani (SU President), Devika ((VP Graduates) and Safa Sadozai (VP Access and Academic Affairs).

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the new Oxford Student Union sabbatical officers to the meeting as observers.

The main themes of the meeting were: the annual report of the Investment Committee, the accounts of the Press, an update on USS pensions, the Oxford SU Impact Report, the annual report of the Head of GLAM and an update from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the Research Excellence Framework results. 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 conflict in relation to any item on the agenda. These would be noted in the footnotes of the minutes.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

(A) Unreserved

1. **Meeting held on 9 May 2022** (C(22)xxxvi-li)

(a) *Unreserved minutes*

The unreserved minutes were approved subject to proposed amendments from two members of Council.³

¹ Out for part of item 6 between 15:08 and 15:10

² Out for part of item 6 between 15:11 and 15:13

³ Council Secretariat to amend title of agenda item to improve transparency – note at 11 July 2022 meeting.

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(b) *Matters arising from the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2022 not otherwise on the agenda*

There were none.

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

Mr Charles Harman congratulated the Vice-Chancellor on her award in the Queen's Birthday Honours and thanked her on behalf of Council for her work at the University and her services to Higher Education in the UK over the past 14 years.

The Vice-Chancellor gave an oral report on the following items:

- The Staff Thankyou payment had been warmly received across the University. However it was recognised that the announcement had caused some difficulties for the less wealthy colleges who would not be able to afford to make similar payment to their staff. To date, 745 members of staff had diverted their payments into their pensions (625 USS, 110 OSPs, 10 other), 58 had waived it into the University hardship fund and 8 to college hardship funds.
- Council would be joined in Michaelmas Term by two new members elected by Congregation:
 - Professor Nandini Goptu, St Antony's
 - Professor Sir Charles Godfray, Balliol

The third vacancy had lapsed and Council would be updated at the July meeting.

- There were some positive indicators on the current funding status of the USS pension scheme. The deficit stood at £14 billion in March 2020, in February 2022 it was down to £2 billion, the scheme could well be sitting on a surplus today, even recent economic developments. This could have an impact on contribution rates. More information would be available from USS in early July.
- The Free Speech Bill was now being considered by the House of Lords. The amendment proposed by Jesse Norman had been withdrawn. A number of further amendments had been proposed by government, including a more proportionate reporting threshold of £75k, an exemption for countries listed in the Academic Technology Approval Scheme, an exemption for student fees and removal of the requirement to report on the last three years' activity. The University would continue to work towards a more proportionate approach, including a higher threshold and an exemption for spin outs and University Presses. We are working with colleagues in Cambridge and the Russell Group to coordinate lobbying activities.
- Council had previously heard of the tragic deaths of two staff members in cycling accidents. There was a high level of concern about cycle safety across the University and a number of action groups had been formed. The intention was to bring these together as a joint working group, with co-chairs from the University and the colleges. Further details would be brought back to Council at its next meeting. A letter had also been sent to Council about this issue.
- Nine honorands would be honoured at Encaenia this week.

CONFIDENTIAL 3. **Annual Report of the Investment Committee** (C22)63**

Council:

- (i) **noted** the reports set out in sections (c) (d) (e) and (f) of the paper;
- (ii) **noted** Appendix I: Report from OUem to Council on performance, asset allocation and activity of the Capital Account as at 30 April 2022; and Appendix II: Presentation from OUem on performance, asset allocation and activity of the Oxford Endowment Fund as at 31 March 2022;

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- (iii) **noted** Appendix III: (a) Investment Committee's Report on ESG and Sustainability and (b) The OEF Performance, ESG and Stewardship Report 2021.

CONFIDENTIAL 4. **Report of the Chief Executive of the Press and the Chair of the Finance Committee of the Press**** (C(22)64)

Council considered the report and the presentation from the Chief Executive.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Chief Executive of the Press and Secretary to the Delegates, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, and the Group Finance Director for the performance of the Press during and following the pandemic.

5. **Report on the University's Finance Committee: review of the financial statements of Oxford University Press for the year ending 31 March 2022*** (C(22)65)

The discussion took place under item 4 above.

Council **noted** the draft financial statements of the Press for the year ending 31 March 2022 together with the report from the University's Finance Committee noting that the finalised accounts would be presented for noting at the following Council meeting.

6. **Annual Report of the Head of GLAM**

The Head of GLAM gave a presentation noting that it was a privilege to be responsible for the GLAM staff and the work that they did. He thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anne Trefethen, for her work in previous years.

The highlights of the presentation were:

- Recovery from the effects of the pandemic continued with readers back into libraries and visitors back to museums alongside schools work returning.
- GLAM was funded from a number of sources including donations (7%), an Arts Council England Grant (2%), Research England & UKRI grants (7%) and University Service funding (60%).
- Research – GLAM continued to be a partner in research across the University as well as conducted research itself. It provides support for research demonstrated by 14m journal downloads and 12m database searches conducted in 2021/22. New investment in infrastructure had created the Oxford Research Archive (ORA) which had had 3.7m downloads since it 'opened' for use. GLAM research spanned from Archaeology to Zoology and it made its biggest REF return in 2021 with 40 staff submitted to 8 REF Units of Assessment (UoA).
- Education and Teaching – Teaching with objects and generic teaching/training had re-commenced. There were c. 500 hours p.a. of teaching students by GLAM, with over 70 courses / programmes across the four Divisions and 29,000 attendees to Bodleian InfoSkills sessions.
- Public Engagement (with Research) – Exhibitions last year provided a shop window for the erudite research being done and visitor numbers were bouncing back.
- Collections – GLAM's collections are an intellectual and cultural asset for the University. The new GLAM Collections Teaching & Resource Centre (delivery date of April 2023 and would provide 4179m² of space) would provide a new space in which to house collections. The GLAM Collections Storage Facility, Swindon would also deliver improved standards for compliant storage facilities for collections. Collections were also being digitised to make them available on-line.
- Diversity and Equality – GLAM continued to be involved in award winning projects bringing the diverse knowledge of people settling in Oxford to the University museums. Decolonisation and work with countries of origin has continued. The 'Beyond the Binary' exhibition was shortlisted for the Vice-Chancellor's Diversity & Equality Awards 2022.
- A 'good' neighbour in the community – the GLAM School programme has established education for local schools with visits to all GLAM sites. There is community outreach and engagement including over 500 volunteers in the local community working with GLAM.

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- Global Oxford – GLAM helps to highlight Oxford's role as a global university. Digitisation has enabled this with for example Digital Bodleian (2020-21) being viewed over 3m times and Oliver Twist (1839 edition) downloaded 29.6m times. 'Mystery at the Museum' with Steve Backshall had 121,000 views and over 16,000 people taking part.
- 'The Oxford-ness of Oxford' GLAM has been critical to the success of the University for over 400 years. It continues to collect, create and disseminate knowledge continuing a culture of excellence. An example of collecting for the future was given in 'Collecting Covid'.
- Resourcing, finding the right balance between digital and analogue, investment in infrastructure alongside skills to support digital collections, and developing shared services across six very different organisations were a challenge for GLAM.
- The future GLAM strategic framework will bring together institutional strategic priorities and consultation with Divisions and key committees will start in 2022/23.

The costs and funding of Open Access publication were discussed alongside the issue of compliance. It was not yet clear how long the block grant would continue. The extent to which digitisation of material had already occurred and future plans were raised. The Head of GLAM responded that it was currently a mixed economy with 132m pages already being openly available through the Google initiative (circa 3% of the collection). Some work had been completed through creation of a revenue stream and some from philanthropic donations.

7. **Report from the meeting of Finance Committee held on 13 June 2022****

RESTRICTED

(a) *Begbroke Science Park Phase 1 (C(22)66)*

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

Council took the actions set out in the report.

RESTRICTED

(b) *Network Rail Bridge (C(22)67)*

Council took the actions set out in the report.

8. **Research Excellence Framework****

The Vice-Chancellor introduced this item by thanking the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the team for the work done in preparation for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 and the on-going analysis.

The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) began his presentation by recapping on the methodology employed and how the overall quality profile was made up of 'Outputs' (60%), 'Environment' (15%) and 'Impact' (25%). He explained how the sub-profiles and number of people submitted was used by UKRI to award annual block funding (QR –quality related) of which there was currently £79.3m.

Council agreed that a further discussion at the Away Day in September would be useful.

RESTRICTED

9. **Report from the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee on 24 May 2022** (C(22)68)**

(a) *Recruitment Protocol and FTE Headcount Cap*

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) introduced this item. He reminded Council that the Recruitment freeze and Redeployment Protocol had been introduced as part of the Covid mitigations – as it had now served its purpose, it should be discontinued. It was proposed that the FTE headcount cap be maintained during 2022/23 but be discontinued from 2023/24, following implementation of the White Paper.

The following points were raised during discussion:

- Despite the headcount cap, between November 2020 and March 2022, staff numbers had increased by almost 300 in Divisions. It was therefore not clear what the cap had achieved.
- It was pointed out that this growth was, in part, exaggerated by the transfer of over 50FTE staff from trust funds to departmental accounts in one department. It was also pointed out that the cap had been introduced to instil a level of discipline and that it had worked to varying degrees

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as, although staff numbers had increased, departments and divisions had remained within approved budgets.

- It was agreed that the discipline of controlling headcount was extremely important but that a cap which could not be implemented was not helpful and created unnecessary work.
- Under the White Paper, control of staff numbers would revert wholly to the divisions, which would incentivise discipline. Removal of the cap was therefore entirely consistent with the introduction of the White Paper proposals. It was suggested that a transitional period might be helpful.

The University model was expansionary – if the volume of research and teaching increased, administrative support would inevitably need to increase.

Council:

- (i) **approved** the discontinuation of the Recruitment and Redeployment Protocol on recommendation of PRAC and Personnel Committee;
- (ii) **endorsed** the decision of PRAC that the FTE Headcount cap can be discontinued from 2023/24 under the White Paper, where the divisions and services will be accountable for their total cost base.

10. **Oxford University Student Union's Annual Impact Report, 2021/22 (C22)69**

The President of the Oxford SU introduced this item, highlighting the following points:

- The Oxford SU had three strategic aims:
 - Common Rooms to feel supported and empowered by Oxford SU
 - To be the representative voice of the students of Oxford
 - To act as the nexus to bring people together
- During 21-22, work had been undertaken on five key policy areas (with examples):
 - Race-Equality – helping develop an EDI newsletter and working with Careers Service on their EDI Strategy
 - Mental Health & Wellbeing - leading conversations around welfare measures for suspended students and working with the Counselling Service
 - Sustainability – sitting on several sustainability subcommittees at both Conference and University levels
 - Access – introducing a new sub fusc scheme for students facing hardship, and updating the alternative prospectus
 - Sexual Violence - lobbying for an updated staff student relationship policy

Successes included:

- Key successes for each of the sabbatical officers were noted in the impact report.
- Freshers' and Hilary Term Fairs had been great successes. Freshers' Fair had been held in the University Parks for the first time and had a record number of visitors (c.9000) and stalls (441). Both first and second year UGs and PGs were invited to the event to make up for lost experiences last year. It was proposed to hold the event in the Parks again this MT. A Hilary Term Fair, to promote ongoing engagement with the SU had been attended by over 1000 students.
- On student-led campaigns, a larger number of students had been involved than in previous years, taking part in local and national demonstrations and protests.
- On student media, the student radio station, Oxide, had been revived and the student newspaper, The Oxford Student, had expanded its editorial team.
- Work continued on fundraising, the Target Schools access programme and RepComms.

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- The annual SU elections had seen the highest ever number of nominations (59 across all roles) with a high proportion having protected characteristics. A high number of votes were also cast.

Challenges included:

- Understanding Oxford SU's place within Oxford's eco-system
- Creating spaces to engage with common rooms
- Communicating with students to showcase impact and engagement
- Increasing engagement
- Ensuring representative nature of Sabbatical Officers

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Oxford SU for its work over the course of what had been a very busy year.

Council **noted the** Oxford SU's annual impact report.

CONFIDENTIAL 11. **Request from the National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria for the return of all materials taken as part of the actions in Benin City in 1897** (C(22)70)**

The Head of GLAM introduced this item noting that this request, for the transfer of legal title and return of 97 objects taken as part of the actions in Benin City in 1897, was the first request of its kind since Council approved the process in 2020. The proposal now before Council was the result of a long process of dialogue and consultation between institutions in the UK and Africa. Of the University's museums, the Pitt Rivers faced the most challenges in this area but was taking a careful, considered approach. A number of other institutions, including those in the UK and US, and some private collectors and small museums had already approved similar requests.

Council fully supported the recommendations. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- On the question of what precedents this might set, it was confirmed that a small number of further requests might be received and these would be considered under the same process.
- It was intended to make the Benin collection more accessible - a project was being funded which might include 3D scanning.
- The Oxford SU fully supported the recommendations and the commitment to EDI that they demonstrated. Associated communications should be clear and positive.

Council **approved** the request from the National Commission for Museums and Monuments of Nigeria for the transfer of legal title and return of the 97 objects taken as part of the actions in Benin City in 1897.

CONFIDENTIAL 12. **USS Update** (C(22)71)**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Digital) introduced this item by setting out the current position of the USS pension scheme.

- (i) Council **noted** the information in the paper and the adoption of the governance of any decision relating to USS as agreed in 2018.
- (ii) Council **agreed** that it would not be possible for the external group to meet and make a recommendation in time for the next Council meeting on 11 July 2022.
- (iii) Council **agreed** that the external group would meet before the next Council meeting, decide on what information they needed in order that they could provide an interim update to the 11 July 2022 Council meeting and then a full update to the first full meeting of Council in MT22.
- (iv) Council **noted** that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Digital) would provide an update to Council at the first meeting of MT22.

13. **Report of the meeting of the Safety Executive Group (SEG) held on 19 May 2022* (C(22)72)**

The Registrar introduced this item drawing Council's attention to the formation of SEG following the conclusion of the Health and Safety Review in 2021. SEG had commissioned a report on cycling safety and had become aware of a number of groups that had been established who were working

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towards a safer cycling environment both within and around Oxford city centre following the death of two colleagues. The summary paper will be considered by SEG at its next meeting.

The first meeting of SEG was co-chaired by Professor Martin Maiden and the Registrar. It had concentrated upon agreeing the principles under which it would operate so that culture change within the organisation could be realised; a three year plan and work with colleges would be central to achieving this. There was also discussion on the specific issue of asbestos management.

Council **noted** the report of the first meeting of the Safety Executive Group.

Items approved or reported without discussion ('below the line') are listed below.

14. Matter arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021

Minute 11: Prevent duty: accountability and data return to the Office for Students

At its meeting on 29 November 2021, Council **approved** the submission of to the OfS of an annual accountability statement and data return on its implementation of the Prevent duty. Following review of the information submitted, OfS had now confirmed that it did not have any further queries about the University's submission and no further action was required at this stage. Compliance judgements for this particular process were not being issued to every provider, enabling OfS to target engagement with providers where there was cause for concern.

15. Report of Chair's Action*

The Chair and Chief Financial Officer took action on behalf of the Council on 30 May 2022, using the **delegated authority** granted to them by Council at the 9 May 2022 (item 6), to **approve** "the final costs and release of funds at Gateway 2" for the St Cross remedial works.

16. Decision by circulation (C(22)62)

Council were asked to approve a 'Reply' to a question from Congregation, as set out in paper (C(22)62), by circulation on 30 May 2022. Five comments were received and a revised draft was circulated on 3 June 2022. Five approvals were received, there were no dissensions and it was therefore considered that the revised draft was 'final'. The 'Reply' was published in the Gazette on 9 June 2022. Congregation met on 14 June 2022. Seven supplementary questions were asked at the meeting and would be published in the Gazette. Council would be asked to consider replies at a later date.

17. The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (below the line) (C(22)73) AMENDED

Council **noted**:

- (i) the Queen's Birthday Honours list
- (ii) notice of appointments
- (iii) the OfS publications; and
- (iv) the UUK Press Statements.

18. Reports from the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee on 24 May 2022

(a) *Joint Resource Allocation Advisory Board report* (C(22)74)*

Without discussion Council::

- (i) **approved** the initial JRAM allocations for 2022/23;
- (ii) **approved** that the JRAM allocations of government funding for Overseas study programmes should be adjusted to take account of the UK's withdrawal from the Erasmus+ programme; and,
- (iii) **noted** the outcome of the adjusted JRAM allocations for 2021/22.

(b) *Space allocations* (C(22)75)*

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Without discussion Council:

1. *Tinbergen related renewals*

- (i) **approved** (for onward referral to Congregation for approval) the allocation of approximately 2,118 sqm net usable area NUA within New Radcliffe House (building number 553), to the Department of Experimental Psychology, for an ongoing period of approximately three years, from 26 June 2022 until 20 April 2025, or until completion of the Centre for Life and Mind Sciences, if sooner;
- (ii) **approved** (for onward referral to Congregation for approval) the allocation of approximately 703 sqm NUA within the Wytham Field Station (building number 267), to the Department of Zoology for a period of five years, from 13 March 2022 to 12 March 2027;

2. *Clinical Bio-manufacturing Facility (Old Road Campus)*

- (iii) **approved** the allocation of a site on the Churchill Hospital ~~Old Road Campus~~ allocation of approximately 1,612 sqm to Medical Sciences Division to be used to construct the expansion to the Clinical Bio-manufacturing Facility (building number 634).

RESTRICTED

(c) *Minor Capital Plan Business Case: Clinical Bio-manufacturing Facility*** (C(22)76)

Without discussion Council took the actions set out in the report.

(i)

19. **Unreserved report of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee on 26 May 2022**
(C(22)77)

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

- (a) Changes to the Faculty of Philosophy Regulations (GPC(22)58)
- (b) Changes to the membership of the Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee (ESSC) (GPC(22)59)
- (c) Changes to the Council Regulations 7 of 2002: Administration of the University's Intellectual Property Policy (GPC(22)60)

20. **Performance of the Oxford Endowment Fund*** (C(22)78)

Council **noted** the information.

21. **Any other unreserved business**

There was no other business.

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