

C O U N C I L

Unreserved Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21 June 2021

Present: Vice-Chancellor¹, Ms Becker², Mr John Bowers³, Ms Boyt⁴, Professor Sir Rory Collins, Professor Coulson, Sir Chris Deverell, Fra' John Eidinow⁵, Professor Essler, Mr Harman⁶, Professor Hobbs, Professor Johnson, Mr Kroll, Professor Lahiri, Professor Nobre, Mr Ovenden, Professor Sánchez-Ancochea, Professor Trefethen, Mr Young, Head of the Humanities Division (Professor O'Brien), Head of the MPLS Division (Professor Howison)⁷, Head of the Medical Sciences Division (Professor Sreaton), Head of the Social Sciences Division (Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore), Senior Proctor⁸ (Ms Lucinda Rumsey), Junior Proctor (Dr David Johnson), Assessor (Dr Bettina Lange).

Student Member Representatives and representative of the Early Career Research Staff: Nikita Ma⁹ (President of Oxford SU), Tucker Drew¹⁰ (Oxford SU VP Access and Academic Affairs), Anvee Bhutani (President Elect), Dr Hilary Wynne¹¹ (Representative of the Early Career Research Staff).

Apologies: Lauren Bolz (Oxford SU VP Graduates), Devika Devika (VP Graduates Elect).

Officers in attendance: the Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Innovation)¹², Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), the interim Director of Finance, the Director of Legal Services and General Counsel¹³, the Director of Public Affairs, the interim Head of Governance and Covid Planning, the Executive Officer (Policy and Governance) in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Head of Governance Secretariat, the Assistant Registrar (Governance).

In attendance:

Sir Paul Ruddock and Ms Sandra Robertson (item 5)
Nigel Portwood, Giles Spackman, Ewan McKendrick (items 6 and 7)
Ms Liesl Elder (item 11)

Order of business: items 5, 6 and 7 were taken first, following those items the order of business was as set out on the agenda.

Introductory matters: the Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised that it was not possible, due to current government Covid guidance, to meet in person and that the meeting was therefore taking place on-line. She noted that the July Council meeting would also be held in this way.

¹ Items 1-25a and 26

² Items 1-8

³ Items 1-23

⁴ Items 1-23

⁵ Items 1-22 and 24-26

⁶ Items 1-25a and 26

⁷ Items 1-23 and 25-26

⁸ Items 1-24

⁹ Items 1 – 18 only

¹⁰ Items 1 – 18 only

¹¹ Items 1 – 18 only

¹² Items 1-8

¹³ Items 1-22 and 24-26

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

The Vice-Chancellor announced the outcome of the Trinity Term elections to Council noting that the three new members elected by Congregation to take up their positions in Michaelmas Term were Professor Cecile Fabre (All Souls), Professor Patricia Daley (Jesus) and Professor Alexander Schekochihin (Merton).

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the main items of business and concluded her introductory remarks by noting that the White Paper would be discussed at the July Council meeting.

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 are noted in the footnotes of the minutes of the meeting.

I. ORDINARY BUSINESS

(A) Unreserved

1. **Unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021** (C(21)xlii-xlv)

The minutes were approved.

2. **Unreserved matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021 not otherwise on the agenda**

There were none.

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

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following items in relation to Oxford colleagues and the institution as a whole:

- Public recognition for colleagues in the Queen's Birthday Honours list with nine individuals receiving awards for Covid related matters (1 DBE, 2 KBE, 3KB, 3 OBE) and five for non-Covid achievements (3 CBE, 1 MBE, 1 OBE).
- Oxford had been ranked as second in the latest QS World Rankings, rising from fifth with a 100 score for academic reputation, employer reputation and faculty student ratio. This is the highest place ever attained and the joint highest by any non-US institution since the current system of rankings was adopted in 2012. For comparison, the University was ranked number one in the world by the THE, with Cambridge placed third, and in the US News and World Report Oxford was fifth.
- The Pandemic Science Centre was launched on 28 May 2021, with a £500m fundraising target. The new centre will lead on global research collaboration and excellence, with the aim of building upon the collaborations developed during the pandemic between academia, industry and public health.
- The Vice-Chancellor had virtually attended the launch of the OSCAR-Prenetics Innovation Technology Centre for Advanced Molecular Diagnostics in Suzhou on the 21 June 2021. Amanda Solloway MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (BEIS) was present virtually and the British Ambassador had attended in person.
- The successful hosting of the G7 Health Ministers.
- The announcement on 17 May 2021 of the eight honorary degree recipients for 2021. The Encaenia ceremony would be held on 22 September 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.

- The examination season was nearly complete and there had been great success with the roll out of the new e-exams system.
- The appointment of Professor Linda Flores (Pembroke and Oriental Studies) as Proctor for 2022/23 on behalf of Harris Manchester College, which had been unable to make an election.
- The RECOVERY trial of Regeneron's monoclonal antibody combination reported on 16 June 2021 that it reduces the risk of death when given to patients hospitalised with severe Covid-19, where the individual has not had a natural antibody response of their own.
- Local MP, Annaliese Dodds had become the Chair of the Labour Party and was no longer Shadow Chancellor.

4. **Covid-19****

Council **noted** the oral updates given by the Vice-Chancellor.

CONFIDENTIAL 5. **Annual Report of the Investment Committee** (C(21)63)¹⁴**

Council **noted**:

- (i) the reports set out in sections (c) (d) (e) and (f) in the paper;
- (ii) Appendix I: Report from OUem to Council on performance, asset allocation and activity of the Capital Account as at 30 April 2021; and Appendix II: Presentation from OUem on performance, asset allocation and activity of the Oxford Endowment Fund as at 31 March 2021;
- (iii) Appendix IIIa: Investment Committee's Report on ESG and Sustainability; and
- (iv) Appendix IIIB; OUem's Report on ESG Risk Management to 31 December 2020.

CONFIDENTIAL 6. **Report from the Chief Executive of the Press and the Chair of the Finance Committee of the Press** (C(21)64)**

Council **considered** the report.

CONFIDENTIAL 7. **Report of the University's Finance Committee: review of the financial statements of Oxford University Press for the year ending 31 March 2021** (C(21)65)**

Council **noted** the financial statements of the Press for the year ending 31 March 2021 together with the report from the University's Finance Committee.

CONFIDENTIAL 8. **USS Update****

Council **noted** the verbal update given.

Council **noted** that the Working Group would circulate the response to the current consultation to Council prior to submission.

9. **Oxford University Student Union's Annual Impact Report, 2020/21 (C(21)66)**

Council **noted** Oxford SU's annual impact report attached at Annex A of the paper.

The President of Oxford SU presented the report, highlighting the following points.

- Ordinarily, the report would include a full team photo – this had not been possible this year as the whole team had not been together once during the whole of their term of office.

¹⁴ Professor Hobbs declared a conflict of interest for this item

* 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.

- Oxford SU was a charity – a recent change in the Articles of Association meant that Continuing Education students were now members of the SU.
- The report highlighted the SU's priority areas as mental health, race equality, sustainability, and access.
- 2020/21 had seen the biggest turn out ever in the Oxford SU Leadership Elections (62% increase in turnout) and the six elected sabbatical officers for 21/22 were BAME women.
- The SU had lobbied for better support for student mental health resulting in £400,000 extra invested by the University and Colleges in Mental Health at Oxford
- Highlights from the VP (Graduates)
- Highlights from the VP (Access and Academic Affairs)
- Highlights from the President

The President thanked the SU team and those within the University with whom the team had worked over the past year.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- A member of Council asked for more information on the proposed introduction of 'sensitivity readers' for student newspaper articles, which had been reported in the media that day. The Oxford SU President would forward on the motion that the SU Council had passed on this matter.
- The help and collaboration between the SU and the University over the last year was acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Oxford SU for its work over the course of what had been a very difficult year. Although the sabbatical officers had been unable to meet as a team, they had clearly functioned very effectively as a team. The officers were wished well for the year ahead.

CONFIDENTIAL 10. **University IT Strategic Implementation Plan****

Council **noted** the interim report and the Vice-Chancellor thanked Professor Coulson.

RESTRICTED 11. **Presentation of the new Draft Strategy for Development and External Affairs****
(C(21)67)

The Vice-Chancellor congratulated the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and External Affairs) and the Chief Development Officer on the performance of their team.

Council **approved** the draft Development Strategy.

12. **Unreserved report of the General Purposes Committee held on 1 June 2021**** (C(21)68)

CONFIDENTIAL (a) *Oxford Suzhou Centre for Advanced Research – collaboration agreement renewal*

Council **noted** the report and **approved** the actions set out in the report.

CONFIDENTIAL 13. **Annual report to Council of the Registrar****

The Registrar gave a presentation. The key points were:

- In April 2021 there were approximately 1500 FTE Professional Services staff and feedback received demonstrated effective working with divisions and departments.
- There continued to be areas of increased demand with a 6.7% growth in UG students and a 19% rise in PG students.
- A new directorate had been created to deal with the increase in demand for assurance and compliance.

* 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.

- 2021 and beyond the pandemic. 2021/22 would be a transitional period with a requirement to support inclusive digital teaching, New Ways of Working, the Estates Strategy consultation over the next year, as well as the need for IT investment.
- Investment in compliance and risk management would be required as government and the Office for Students (OfS) increased their requirements.
- Focus had shown its value as an enabler of change through its work on the pandemic and should be a core service to the University.
- A Professional Services Strategy would be developed. The strategy would have two key themes – Planning and People – with a rolling programme of service reviews.
- 'Investing in our People' would be key to ensuring the right skills and development opportunities could be provided. Council had commissioned the review in February 2021 but this had been delayed because of the pandemic.

Council were supportive of the need for appropriate resourcing of regulatory requirements.

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

14. Decision by circulation

- (a) *Final response to UUK. Approval of the final draft response to UUK on USS pension consultation*.*

Without discussion Council **noted** that an updated version of paper (C(21)49) had been circulated on 25 May 2021 for decision by circulation following endorsement at the 17 May 2021 Council meeting and incorporation of USS member comments received. Council noted that **3** replies approving the final draft were received, there were no dissensions. The final version had therefore been submitted to UUK on 26 May 2021 by the Head of Internal Communications.

15. The Vice-Chancellor's unreserved business (below the line) (C(21)69)

Without discussion Council **noted**:

- (i) the OfS publications; and
- (ii) UUK Press Statements.

16. Unreserved report of the General Purposes Committee held on 1 June 2021 (C(21)70)

- (a) *Legislation governing the Montague Burton Professorship in International Relations*

Without discussion Council **approved for submission to Congregation** the proposed changes to Part 6 of the Schedule to the Statutes, concerning the Montague Burton Professor of International Relations as set out in Annex A.

- (b) *Proposed amendments to legislation*

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

Amendment to Council Regulations 42 of 2002: Regulations for the Constitution, Duties, and Powers of The Rules Committee (GPC(21)57)

CONFIDENTIAL **17. Performance of the Oxford Endowment Fund (C(21)71)**

Without discussion Council **noted** the information.

18. Any other unreserved business

There was no other business.

* 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 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.