

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

MINUTES

A Stated General Meeting of **GOVERNING BODY** was held on Wednesday 27th May 2020 at 2.00 p.m remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Present: The President, Professor C. J. K. Batty, Professor R. G. Compton, Professor S. J. Whittaker, Professor A. Grafen, Professor A. R. Weidberg, Professor A. J. Parker, Professor F. A. Armstrong, Professor S. Elston, Professor C. Whistler, Professor Z. Molnár, Professor M. Cannon, Professor K. Nation, Professor P. Maini, Professor C. A. Larrington, Professor D. Martin, Professor R. M. Harding, Professor N. P. Harberd, Professor A. Wright, Professor J. Schnell, Professor T. Burt de Perera, Ms. S. Layburn, Professor M. Omri, Professor H. Skoda, Professor N. Lübecker, Professor P. R. Hayes, Professor C. Newton, Professor G. Gottlob, Dr. G. Kantor, Professor B. Murnane, Professor J. Stanyek, Professor J. Bray, Professor J. J. Pandit, Professor Z. Olszewska, Professor I. Klinke, Professor L. Pratt, Professor C. Beem, Professor L. di Mare, Professor S. Kiefer, Professor N. Sugimura, Professor S. Toussaert, Professor R. Slater, Mr R. Crow, Professor S. White, Professor E. Greensmith, Professor B. McFarlane, Dr. M. Nicholls

Apologies: The Revd. Prof. W. Whyte, Professor A. Hills, Professor H. Bouman, Professor A. Starinets, Professor A. Russell, Professor R. Ekins, Professor Sir. R. Collins, Professor G. Rose

In attendance: Dr. S. Campbell, Mrs E. Marston, Ms. D. Cripps

ACTION**AGENDA 'B'**1. Minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of Governing Body held on 22nd April 2020 were **approved**.

In matters arising it was **agreed** that the new governance measures for Trinity Term were working well and did not require further review.

The President reported that the Conference of Colleges was meeting fortnightly and discussing a wide range of issues including undergraduate and graduate admissions and a pilot for a return to work in the University's laboratories. She updated the Governing Body on the potential impact of the pandemic on the University's resources.

2. Elections

The Vice-President (Academic) reported that she had conducted a 360° review of the Senior Tutor's progress to date.

Dr. M. Nicholls was elected a member of Governing Body, coterminous with his holding the post of Senior Tutor, with immediate effect.

Ms Jenny Richards was elected to a Supernumerary Teaching Fellowship in Physical Geography from 1 October 2020.

3. Educational Policy Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2020 were received.

The Governing Body **agreed** that the College should bid for association with the Regius Professorship of Mathematics.

VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)

4. Estates and Finance Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2020 were received.

The President detailed the College's planning for the Oxford North site over a number of years. It was a long-term investment both for the College and for the City and the project was now coming to fruition.

The Principal Bursar outlined the expressions of interest that had been received by TWO and the likely timeline for proposed development of each part of the site, including the provision of affordable housing, with final decisions expected in October 2020. He noted the likely financial position for the College, highlighting that Oxford North would make a positive contribution to the endowment in the next few years and beyond.

The Finance Bursar added her support to the plans.

The Governing Body **agreed** to:

- ask TWO to seek a sale of the freehold for the Canalside residential element to help fulfil commitments made to the City Council and to recover a large portion of the College's investment in the site;
- negotiate a commercial arrangement that would allow the College to retain an element of control in the long term, while maintaining flexibility to exit at different stages;
- continue discussions on a loan facility and upfront payments from developers;
- allocate [] to take the project through to the end of September 2020, subject to monthly authorisation by the agreement of three and the disagreement of none of the President, Principal Bursar, Finance Bursar and Acting Estates Bursar.

PRINCIPAL BURSAR

The Keeper of Bagley Woods reported that a fire in the woods had required fireofficers to attend. The Governing Body noted its thanks to the Fire Service and to staff.

The Principal Bursar reported on the College's position in relation to income from rents and dividends and the likely impact of the pandemic. He also updated the Governing Body on the number of staff currently on furlough. It was **agreed** to extend the College summer shutdown period by one week and to require the majority of staff to take annual leave during this period.

PRINCIPAL BURSAR

A revised proposal for the Library digitisation had been approved with a large proportion of the cost supported by a generous donation from a donor. The Governing Body thanked the Librarian for her work on the project.

FELLOW LIBRARIAN

The Governing Body **agreed** the revised cost schedule and the delay to the start of construction works for phase 3 of the Library refurbishment to April 2021.

PRINCIPAL BURSAR

The Finance Bursar briefed Governing Body on her current cashflow assumptions. The budgets for 2020/21 had been prepared on a ground-up basis and on the assumption that students would return to Oxford in October 2020. These budgets would be used to prepare forecasts for other possible scenarios.

FINANCE BURSAR

5. General Purposes Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 29th April and 13th May 2020 were received.

The recruitment process for the new Associate Professor in Philosophy was now in train.

The Governing Body **agreed** that the College should participate in a scheme (due to come into effect from 1st October 2020) that had been set up to enable colleges to refer all cases of student sexual misconduct, both inter- and intra-colleges, to the Proctor's Officer under the University's Code of Conduct. The College would contribute to the costs (at a sum to be determined).

The Senior Dean would liaise with Dr Doornik to ensure the necessary changes to the College's Harassment Policy were made and would review the scheme once it was in operation.

SENIOR DEAN

6. Bursarial Review

The President updated the Governing Body on the work of the Bursarial Review Panel. This had originally been envisaged as an interim review of progress in implementing the 2018 recommendations but, since the resignation of the current Principal Bursar, the remit had widened. She thanked the Panel for their work.

There had been notable progress with the appointment of an HR Manager and Financial Analyst; in addition an interim Home Bursar had been in post since July 2019.

Professor Whittaker reported in detail on the deliberations of the Panel. These had taken into account the clear changes in the scale of the College's operations and the external regulatory framework, and had led the panel to make significant recommendations for change.

The Governing Body **agreed** the following:

- a) The role of Principal Bursar should be a full-time professional post, open to both internal and external candidates, and with a recruitment process managed by highly experienced headhunters. The recruitment process should start as soon as possible but a short-term interim Principal Bursar would be required during 2020/21. An interim appointment could also cover the role of Estates Bursar on a temporary basis.
- b) A full-time professional Home Bursar, with primary responsibility for the operation, effective co-ordination and cost-effective management of domestic and non-academic services of the College should be appointed (or the Interim Home Bursar confirmed in post) as soon as possible.
- c) The governance arrangements overseeing the work of the Bursary should be revised and consolidated by:
 - i) creating a committee structure for the College's estates, investments and finance for the start of the academic year 2020/21 that would enable committee members to have oversight of the entire Bursary remit;
 - ii) setting up an Investment Advisory Group as envisaged by the 2018 Bursarial Review;
 - iii) appointing a trustee to oversee the Oxford North project.
 - iv) While the College should itself start work on these changes, it should be very much open to the views of the incoming Principal Bursar.
- d) A more general review of the College's governance (committee structures and officerships) should be undertaken in Michaelmas Term 2020.

- e) The HR team should be increased with the appointment of a Grade 5 HR Assistant to enable the HR Manager to make faster progress on updating the College's HR processes (including the creation of job descriptions and review of contracts).

The interim arrangements would be considered at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee.

PRESIDENT

The Governing Body thanked Professor Parker for his work in the role of Principal Bursar since 2009.

7. Annual Report of the Director of Development & Alumni Relations

The Director of Development and Alumni Relations reported on his team's activity in fundraising, stewardship and alumni relations. He noted that there was now a more structured programme in all areas of activity and that clear fundraising priorities were emerging, including the endowment of a scholarship to accompany the Hillary Rodham Clinton Chair in Women's History. There was more timely and more regular contact with donors and the alumni relations team had established very effective online events and communications, including talks from current Fellows which were proving very successful.

The President thanked the team for their work.

8. Promotion of the Arts Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2020 were received.

The Governing Body **agreed** to commission Timothy Newbery to conserve the frame of Allan Ramsay's portrait of George III [].

KEEPER OF THE PICTURES

BELOW THE LINE ITEMS – TO NOTE

9. Domestic Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2020 were received.

10. Chapel and Patronage Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2020 were received.

11. Conference of Colleges

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Conference of Colleges on 16th April 2020 were received.