

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

MINUTES

A Stated General Meeting of **GOVERNING BODY** was held on Wednesday 26th May 2021 at 2.00 p.m. remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Present: The President, Professor S. J. Whittaker, Professor A. R. Weidberg, Professor S. Elston, Professor C. Whistler, Professor Z. Molnár, Professor M. Cannon, Professor K. Nation, Professor C. A. Larrington, The Revd. Prof. W. Whyte, Professor D. Martin, Professor A. Hills, Professor R. M. Harding, Professor A. Wright, Professor A. Starinets, Professor J. Schnell, Professor T. Burt de Perera, Ms. S. Layburn, Professor H. Skoda, Professor N. Lübecker, Professor P. R. Hayes, Professor A. Russell, Professor C. Newton, Professor R. Ekins, Professor J. Obloj, Dr. G. Kantor, Professor B. Murnane, Professor J. Stanyek, Professor J. Bray, Professor K. Southwood, Professor Z. Olszewska, 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 E. Wonnacott, Dr. M. Nicholls, Professor N. Jones, Ms. Z. Hancock

Apologies: Professor P. Maini, Professor H. Bouman, Professor N. P. Harberd, Professor S. R. Myers, Professor G. Gottlob, Professor G. Rose, Professor B. McFarlane,

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

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

The minutes of the meeting of Governing Body held on 21st April 2021 were **approved**.

2. President's Update

The President reported that the *Financial Times* had criticised a number of colleges, including St John's, for not paying the Oxford Living Wage. The Principal Bursar would look into the matter and report back to Governing Body.

PRINCIPAL BURSAR

The University had recommended that everyone should complete two lateral flow tests per week and these were now available from the Lodge.

The President asked Tutors to consider requests for vacation residence carefully and to balance student needs with the needs of staff groups, bearing in mind that there would be little welfare support and no Junior Deans after the end of term, as well as the start of a number of College projects. The very last day for residence was Sunday of 10th Week (27th June).

The SCR/Staff vs MCR annual cricket match was being held on 2nd July. Potential team members were asked to contact Professor White or Professor McFarlane.

3. Educational Policy Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2021 were received.

The Governing Body **agreed** to the Humanities Division's request to buy out one hour of Professor Southwood's College teaching for the academic year 2021/22.

It was **agreed** to appoint to a six-hour Stipendiary Lectureship in Biology for the academic year 2021/22.

It was **agreed** to increase the undergraduate quota for Biomedical Sciences from two to three with effect from the 2021 admissions round.

It was **agreed** that the College would participate in the Academic Futures Programme, with an undertaking to finance either one full or two 50% scholarships, subject to discussion with the Development Office about fundraising possibilities.

It was also **agreed** that Dr Dejan Draschkow's appointment as a five-hour Stipendiary Lecturer in Psychology should be renewed for a further and final period of one year with effect from 1st October 2021.

The Senior Tutor reported that Dr Tidman would be leaving in January 2022 to take up a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship at Queen Mary University of London. It was **agreed** to appoint a replacement Supernumerary Teaching Fellow in French from 1st October 2021.

It was **agreed** to re-appoint Ms Annika Münster for a third and final year as the Lektorin in German from 1st October 2021 and to re-appoint Ms Andréa Rosinhas for a third and final year as the Lectrice in French from 1st October 2021.

VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)/SENIOR TUTOR

4. Promotion of the Arts Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 2021 were received.

5. General Purposes Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 2021 were received.

The Governing Body **elected** Professor A. Grafen and Professor F. Armstrong to Emeritus Research Fellowships for three years from 1st April 2021.

The President thanked Revd. Professor Whyte and the Working Group for their report on the Bainton Road Nursery. She especially noted the contribution of Mrs E. Reinhardt and Mr T. Verdon and thanked them for support they had given to the nursery. She also thanked all the Fellows who had served as Nursery Directors.

The Governing Body **agreed** the report's recommendations that:

- a) Bainton Road Nursery Ltd should be wound up and direct management and support of the nursery should be bought within College;
- b) legal advice should be sought to provide a basis on which the company could be wound up;
- c) a Nursery Committee should be established reporting to Domestic and Establishment Committee with the Principal Bursar as Chair;
- d) the College should undertake a general review of safeguarding;
- e) the Principal Bursar should be the Ofsted lead for the Nursery;
- f) clearer lines of management should be established;
- g) clearer accounting principles should be established;
- h) financial management, including payroll, should be undertaken by staff in the Bursary;
- i) HR matters should be supported by a designated member of College staff;
- j) the day-to-day maintenance of the building and its grounds should be managed by the College;
- k) the College should seek confirmation that any liability for the Nursery was being properly managed;

- l) the Nursery should explore some limited expansion for the under-twos;
- m) the Nursery should review its pricing structure;
- n) the College should allocate and seek further funding for student bursaries;
- o) the College should review its communications strategy in relation to the Nursery;
- p) both the Nursery and the College should develop closer links with other college nurseries.

PRINCIPAL BURSAR

It was **agreed** that the College would divest from tobacco, noting that the financial review process had already been concluded satisfactorily. It was also **agreed** that an ESG policy, considering best practice nationally and globally and involving relevant stakeholders, would be developed for review and approval by the Governing Body. This would be an umbrella policy covering all aspects of College activity.

PRINCIPAL BURSAR

The Senior Tutor had created a scheme to enable consideration to be given on a case-by-case basis to Junior Research Fellows and Supernumerary Teaching Fellows whose work had been impacted by Covid by offering them a new fixed-term contract at the end of their current contract.

The Governing Body thanked the Senior Tutor for his careful construction of this scheme. It **agreed** the scheme as follows:

- a) All Junior Research Fellows and Supernumerary Teaching Fellows would be invited to submit an application detailing any disruption to their research.
- b) Those whose work was found by the Panel to have been adversely affected by Covid-19 would be offered a fixed-term post as a St John's Research Associate for a period determined by the Panel according to the circumstances up to a maximum of six months' duration. This post would be offered as a special extra period for research in recognition of the disruption caused by the pandemic or lockdown rather than as either a continuation of an existing fellowship or an election to a new fellowship. Counsel's advice in respect of this change of status was noted.
- c) These new special research associateships would be on the same salary/benefits basis as each ECR's current employment. While we would want to offer JRFs continuity of tenure in their College accommodation and access to shared office space if possible, this would be a matter for the Bursary and would depend on availability.
- d) There would be scope for a further round of applications early next academic year, subject to the overall total limit of 6 months for any individual applicant. If this was the last opportunity to make such a case, the effects of the pandemic having subsided, this should be clearly stated at the time.
- e) HR/Bursary/legal advice would be sought to ensure that this was managed in such a way as to avoid the creation of any unfortunate precedent or claim to permanent employment. The terms in which this grant is expressed would be drawn up in letters to the ECRs approved by the College solicitor, given the complexity and novelty of the scheme described here.

SENIOR TUTOR

A group had met to consider a loan scheme to assist with the Immigration Health Surcharge (NHS Fee) and the Governing Body **agreed** that:

- a) the interest-free loan facility should be available to all current or prospective full-time

College-only employees (and not just ECRs);

- b) loans would be available to assist those employees or their dependents with payment of Immigration Health Surcharge costs and also UK visa fees, fees for ILR applications and/or fees for British citizenship applications up to a maximum total of £7.5k;
- c) loans would be paid back over a period of up to 24 months (or the end of the period of employment if shorter).

It was also **agreed** that the wider issues about the excessive costs required to work at Oxford from overseas should be discussed further. The President noted that a group was also meeting to consider issues relating to international students in order to continue to attract the very best applicants.

PRESIDENT

It was noted that any issues relating to freedom of speech should involve academic Fellows at an early stage.

PRESIDENT and PRINCIPAL BURSAR

6. Finance and Estates Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2021 were received.

The Governing Body **agreed** to consent to a land charge to facilitate the Rothschild loan to TWO, subject to confirmation of checking existing Collee loan facilities.

It was **agreed** to commit [] to [] to be drawn down over a period of time.

The budgets for 2021/22 were also **agreed**.

A proposal for the future of the Lamb & Flag had been received. It was **agreed** to authorise the President, Principal Bursar, Finance Bursar and Vice-President to proceed by agreement of three and disagreement of none.

PRINCIPAL BURSAR

7. Fellows' housing – update

The President reported that Remuneration Committee had been meeting regularly. The report was now being drafted and would be complete for the 9th Week meeting of Governing Body. The President and Principal Bursar had also met housed Fellows, either individually or in groups, and had a good appreciation of the range of relevant issues.

The President also reported that, with the Principal Bursar, she had met the Statutes Officer, Professor Craig and Professor McFarlane to look again at the advice received from Robert Ham QC on trustees' conflict of interest. She had also received some informal advice that had now been formalised. This was shared with Governing Body after the meeting.

The Principal Bursar summarised the proposed next steps: a 'Town Hall' meeting to enable all members of Governing Body to exchange views without risk of being conflicted ahead of the 9th Week Governing Body. At that meeting conflicted trustees would need to leave the meeting before the report was discussed and voted on by non-conflicted trustees. Voting on Remuneration Committee's recommendation would be done electronically, as for all Governing Body votes over the past fifteen months; the recommendations could be accepted or rejected and, if the latter, the reasons would need to be clearly set out. It was agreed that a 'Town Hall' meeting offered a useful opportunity for open discussion.

A number of further points were made in discussion. The Principal Bursar reiterated that, from the advice received, it was clear that conflicted Fellows could not vote either on the recommendations for the current scheme or for the future scheme. The provision of free housing was now treated by HMRC as a taxable benefit-in-kind, meaning that income tax was now

payable by employees who received such benefits in addition to their salary as part of their remuneration package. Remuneration Committee had followed both the normal language and structure of tax legislation by treating housing benefits as part of remuneration, and it was the conventional role of remuneration committees to consider all forms of remuneration.

8. Annual report of the Director of Development and Alumni Relations

The Director of Development and Alumni Relations reported on his team's activity in fundraising, stewardship and alumni relations. He noted that the alumni programme had thrived during the pandemic, with an ambitious series of lectures and excellent attendance. He thanked the Fellows who had participated. *TW* and *Benefactors* continued to be positively received and he also thanked Revd. Professor Whyte and Ms. Cripps for their work on these publications.

Fundraising had been difficult but, now that face-to-face meetings could start again, he was optimistic for the future.

He presented the new Case for Support which would be tailored to individual donors.

The Governing Body **approved** the plans for a donor plaque in the passageway between Canterbury and Front Quad.

9. Casberd Scholarships

The Governing Body **agreed** to elect Giacomo Bognolo and Ramarni Wilfred to Casberd Scholarships.

SENIOR TUTOR

BELOW THE LINE ITEMS – TO NOTE

10. Chapel and Patronage Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2021 were received.

11. McKendrick Governance Review

The Governing Body received Professor Kendrick's Governance Review.

12. Investment Advisory Group

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2021 were received.

13. Conference of Colleges

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Conference of Colleges on 18th March 2021 were received.