The College Council

Structure and Rôle

The College’s Charter requires the Council to “have the management of the College the administration of the property and income thereof … and exercise a general superintendence over the education and discipline in the College …” [Article 12]

The membership and role of the Council is laid down in the Charter [Article 11] and Statutes [Statute V]. The College is registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission and the members of the Council (including Junior Members for matters considered in Open Business) are also the College’s Trustees.

Procedures

Business

The Council is the executive body of the College and its duties and method of conducting business are laid down in the Statutes [Statutes I.7 and V] and in the Ordinances of the Council. In particular, the Council:

- appoints Lecturers, Tutors and other academic staff
- appoints salaried Officers of the College, with the exception of the Principal and Bursar who are appointed by the Governing Body
- elects Research Fellows, Bye-Fellows, Phyllis & Eileen Gibbs Travelling Research Fellows and Schoolteacher Fellows
- re-elects Fellows in Category D (who are first elected by the Governing Body)
- manages the College’s income, investment and expenditure
- reports on the financial state of the College and forwards the audited accounts to the Governing Body
- is responsible for disciplinary matters.

Open and Reserved Business

Most Council business is considered under “Open Business”, for which Junior Members are present. Open Business may be discussed in advance of the meeting when it will be considered, but supporting papers must be treated as confidential unless the Chairman has directed otherwise. Decisions made on Open Business may be discussed within the College and may be communicated to Open Meetings of the JCR/MCR and published in the JCR Newsletter after confirmation of the Minutes of that meeting [Statute I.7 and Council Ordinances IIIA, III, 2 & 3].

Matters relating to individuals, employment, duties and emoluments are considered under Reserved Business for which Senior Members only are present. Occasionally, other matters of sensitivity are dealt with under Reserved Business [Statute 1.7]. The Agenda for Reserved Business is circulated to the Junior Members of the Council but must be treated as
confidential. All Reserved Business is confidential; papers considered under Reserved Business may not be shown to individuals who are not members of the Council.

The Minutes of Open Business are distributed to all members of the Council. The Minutes of Reserved Business are distributed to Senior Members only. Minutes are approved at the next meeting of the Council, following which the substantive Minutes, excluding personal or commercially confidential details, are forwarded to members of the Governing Body. [Statute V: 13]. Decisions may also be made public in Newnham News.

Meetings

The Council normally meets four times a term (five times in the Easter Term) and once during the Long Vacation. The meetings are normally held on Friday afternoons, the dates for the following year being agreed at the first meeting of the Lent Term. Gowns are worn for Council meetings. The quorum is 7 for Open Business and 6 for Reserved Business [Statute V: 6].

Membership and Responsibilities

The Council comprises the Principal (Chairman), the Vice-Principal, the Senior Tutor, the Bursar, eight Senior Members elected by the Governing Body from among their number, one member of the MCR elected by the MCR, and two members of the JCR elected by the JCR [Statute V]. The College Secretary is the Secretary to the Council and is the person to whom members should forward their apologies if unable to attend a meeting, and to whom papers should be forwarded for inclusion on the Agenda. In addition to the College Secretary, the Domestic Bursar and the Development Director also attend meetings of the Council.

Senior Members on leave for more than one term cease to be members of the Council but may be eligible for re-election should a vacancy occur following their return from leave.

On election to the Council members receive information and guidance regarding the duties of Trustees, including guidance issued by the Charity Commission and the college’s code of practice relating to the registration of interests [Council Ordinances VI]. This information is also available to College members on the College intranet. It is a legal requirement that a charity’s purposes must be for the “public benefit”. As the College’s Trustees the Council may be required in certain circumstances to take account of the Charity Commission’s guidance on this which is also available on the College website: http://www.newn.cam.ac.uk/about/freedom-of-information/foi-pub-schemes-further-info/foi-docs/

The Council has adopted a Code of Practice on the management of potential conflicts of interest. Each Council and Council Committee meeting agenda will contain an early item “Declaration of Interests” which applies both to Junior and Senior Members. A Register of declared interests is maintained by the Bursar’s Secretary [Council Ordinances VI].

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