

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

At a meeting of the Council held
on Tuesday 2 December 2025 at 14:00 in the Audit Room and Teams

Present:	Provost Professor Bullock Professor Foley Professor Giannitsarou Dr Good Professor Grosse Ruse- Khan Professor Hall Ms Headen Dr Knox (until 16:00) Dr Russell Dr Sarkovic Ms Sally* (KCGU President) Mr Teare* (KCSU Vice- President)	In Attendance:	Vice-Provost First Bursar Senior Tutor Domus Bursar Mr Ahmad* (KCGU Treasurer) Mr Warner* (KCSU President) Ms O'Callaghan* (KCSU Vice- President-elect) Registrar Co-Chairs of King's Affair – item 587 only Dean – items 591 and 595 only
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*Open Business

578. **Apologies for Absence**

None.

OPEN BUSINESS

579. **Declarations of Interest**

Mr Teare declared an interest in item 587 as Treasurer of King's Affair 2026.

580. **Minutes of Open Business 18 November 2025**

Approved.

581. **Matters arising**

None.

582. **Oral reports**

None.

583. **Council Timetable – Open Matters**

In the agenda: Termly Update, Development Report, and King's Affair Proposal.

Outstanding: College and Commercial Events and Room Bookings Policies, and Health & Safety Report, which would be discussed next term.

584. Council Action List – Open Matters

In the agenda, 'Spark' Summer School Incubator Pilot, Cambridge Shakespeare Festival, and King's Affair Proposal. Outstanding are:

- Revised Audit & Scrutiny terms of reference: First Bursar and Provost to take advice and then to be discussed at the first Lent Term Council,
- Outcomes of working group on accommodation management: postponed to Easter Term when new Deputy Domus Bursar will be in post,
- Outcomes of events and room bookings working groups: postponed to Easter Term when new Deputy Domus Bursar will be in post,
- Proposal for engaging with existing programmes to develop choral skills at schools: postponed to Lent Term when new Assistant Director of Music will be in post,
- Proposal for an organ competition or other ways of supporting young organists: postponed to Lent Term when new Assistant Director of Music will be in post, and
- Should Risk Register specifically address risks from pressures on HE sector: postponed to Lent Term.

585. Council Project List

Council discusses the list of critical projects and noted the Completed Projects:

- Indicators for academic outcomes
- Fellows' benefits flexibility
- Professionalise fabric conservation operations
- Celebrate and close King's Campaign: celebrated, but campaign not formally closed
- Strengthen Chapel Services team

Projects underway or ongoing are:

- Programme of research workshops & talks
- Responsible investment implementation
- Kinetics implementation
- Catering perception change
- Segregated mandate for Endowment
- Staff development package
- Strengthen appraisals process (ongoing from 2023)
- Leadership programme for Heads of Department
- New custodian for Endowment
- Implementation of compliance reporting system
- College Incident Management Plan
- College publications refresh

Postponed or deferred projects are:

- Booking system for Futures Tutor: requires IT support that is currently not available
- Admissions data consolidation: requires IT support that is currently not available

- Martyn's Law requirements: work will start after Michaelmas Term

Strategic

586. Termly Update

The First Bursar presented the termly update, which had been narrowed down to a financial update. In addition to the accustomed surplus/deficit forecast, a cashflow forecast was included, and it was intended that future termly updates would also include balance sheet reporting.

Council noted that the deficit in the budget had significantly increased in the forecast, excluding expected pressure for additional in-year spending. The main reason was a significant decrease in visitor income in the first quarter. Council noted that proposals for deficit reduction would be discussed in reserved business.

Council discussed whether the loss in visitor income was specific to King's, but all indicators showed that this was a broader trend, affecting all businesses in Cambridge and part of a wider downturn across the UK.

Routine

587. King's Affair Proposal

The co-chairs of King's Affair, Ms Kate Shortt and Ms Imogen Reid, attended for this item.

Council noted the provisional planning and progress being made towards King's Affair 2026. The proposal had been formulated as three Plans, contingent on the number of tickets sold. It was made clear that either condition to change from Plan A to Plan B or C was sufficient to do so. A full proposal would be brought to Council much earlier in Lent Term, so that ticket sales could begin earlier. The decision which plan to pursue would be taken after four weeks of sales.

Council expressed concern over the small percentage of King's members who attended last year and questioned the necessity of holding an event with 1,200 attendees, when the King's student population is only 780. The co-chairs assured Council that they were aware of the concern, and that they would focus on ticket sales to first year undergraduates as well as postgraduates, as these groups are historically less likely to attend.

Council discussed continued concerns about including all food and drink in the ticket price, and whether a pay-as-you-go approach would be more inclusive, about the committee's ability to prevent recurrence of damage to the fabric of the College and to ensure vendors were legally compliant and acting ethically. It was also noted that the proposed steep price rise might reduce the number of tickets sold.

Council agreed to approve the Launch Event on 21 February 2026, and to discuss approval for King's Affair 2026 during Lent Term 2026. Council also agreed that the 2026 event would not be able to go ahead if after four weeks of ticket sales fewer than 800 tickets in total had been sold, or fewer than 300 to King's members. An alternative event, organised by the KA committee, would be considered by Council.

588. Termly Development Report

Council noted the fundraising, events and activities carried out by the Development Office since the Head of Development's Easter Term & Long Vacation report. So far,

£2.7m had been raised in this financial year, and Council expressed its thanks to the Head of Development and her team.

589. 'Spark' Summer School Incubator Pilot

Council noted the report on SPARK 2025 and

Council agreed that the E-Lab should run a second iteration of the SPARK summer programme in 2026.

590. Cambridge Shakespeare Festival

Council discussed the further information requested at the previous meeting (see minute 558), which the Domus Bursar had gathered from both the Festival organisers and Equity. Council continued to express concerns about the new educational approach proposed. Details of the training scheme, such as a curriculum or details of the workshops and seminars proposed, had not been made available. Separately, Council considered whether it would be more beneficial to the College community to have the Fellows' garden available for different uses in the summer.

Council agreed

1. not to approve the staging of the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival in King's College from 13th July to 30th August 2026; and
2. to commission a communications strategy for this decision from the Head of Communications.

591. Shakespeare in the Chapel

The Dean attended for this item.

Council discussed this student proposal, which the Dean supported. As he would no longer be in post, the Chaplain and Chapel Manager had met with the organisers, and would ensure continuity in working with them. The performances would not disrupt any services or visitor access to the Chapel.

Council agreed that Hamlet could be staged in the Chapel for three nights from 18 to 20 March, subject to the continued oversight and approval by the Chapel Committee.

592. Use of Hall for a farewell for Stephen Cherry

Council agreed to permit use of the Hall, if necessary, from 4.30 to 6.00 p.m. on Sunday 25 January for a farewell for Stephen Cherry as Dean.

593. King's College School – Capital Works Update

Council noted the completion of all capital works at King's College School.

594. Gibbs Project Sub-Committee Membership

Council noted the membership of the Gibbs Project sub-committee of the Adornment Committee: Sebastian Ahnert, Marcus Boeick, Caroline Humphrey, Jean-Michel Massing, Angus Russell, Nicky Zeeman.

Compliance

595. Use of Chapel Policy

The Dean attended for this item and introduced this proposed new policy, intended to amalgamate a number of existing policies and practices, and to clarify matters.

Council discussed the proposed policy and noted that it did not resolve the question of how the Dean's work was under the supervision of Council and/or Governing Body, as it referenced neither the Chapel nor the Concerts Committee. This could be addressed by more regular reporting to the Committees, though this would always be retrospective. Council also noted that the table of responsibilities needed to express the Dean's role with regard to concerts in a more limited way, to make clear that the Dean worked together with the Director of Music in this as in other areas.

Council felt that it was beneficial to have this policy in place before the new Dean arrived, but that he should be given the opportunity to review it once he had settled into the role. Therefore,

Council agreed

1. to approve the new Use of Chapel policy, and
2. to request that it next be reviewed by the Chapel Committee and then Council in Easter Term 2026.

596. Gifts of £10,000 or more

Council agreed to accept gifts of over £10,000 received by the College between 10 May 2025 and 10 November 2025 as listed in the report from the Head of Development.

597. Driving and Use of Vehicles Policy

Council discussed the proposed new policy which is necessary for the College van's safe and compliant use. Council particularly discussed the exception to the policy that members of staff had requested for an annual bike ride by members of the College community as well as friends and family. Last year, this had taken place at a busy time and had necessitated the hire of a van by the College for operational needs. The high value of the bike ride to some members of the community was acknowledged.

It was made clear that the College wished to continue the practice of offering use of the College van to members of the College community, but that it was necessary to have a policy in place so this could be managed effectively against the College's operational priorities.

Council agreed

1. To approve the new Driving and Use of Vehicles Policy for the College,
2. Not to approve the exception to this Policy for the annual bike ride trip run by a member of King's College.

Council asked that the organisers of the bike ride are reminded that the Staff Consultative Group has a budget and they can seek to apply for financial support there. Students may also be supported through funds in tutorial for this opportunity, and that mixed trips of staff, students and Fellows needed to comply with the Staff and Students Relationships Policy.

598. Reporting Serious Incidents Policy

Council agreed to approve the College's Reporting Serious Incidents Policy

Minutes

599. Minutes of the Education Committee meeting on 6 November 2025

Noted, especially that the College Nurse provided a financial overview of how the Health and Wellbeing Service are spending through the WEL fund, that it was noted

that the Health and Wellbeing Service is now independent from Tutorial, that a review is required to look at the cost of what is delivered, clear pathways of care, and what potential alternatives might be, including further integration with Central University Services and other external partners. This would be undertaken and reported back upon in Lent Term.

600. Minutes of the Visitors' Committee meeting on 10 November 2025

Noted.

601. Minutes of the Catering Committee meeting on 11 November 2025

Noted, especially that there was nothing to draw to Council's attention as the Catering Committee reviewed the summer activities and the account for the year to date, without noting anything of concern. The Committee was also updated on forthcoming plans, including the bar refurbishment.

602. Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 14 November 2025

Noted.

603. Any Other Business

As this was his final meeting, Council thanked Mr Warner for his many thoughtful contributions and hard work.