

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

At a meeting of the Council held
on Tuesday 2nd May 2023 at 2.00pm in the Audit Room

Present:	Provost	In Attendance:	Vice-Provost
	Professor Griffiths		Senior Tutor
	Professor Hall		First Bursar
	Professor Dunn		Domus Bursar
	Dr Dolan		
	Dr Taylor		
	Dr Adhikari		*Ms Olumide-Wahab
	Dr Good		*Mr Gasienica-Ciulacz
	*Ms Kadlecova		
	*Mr Erwig		*Open business

Apologies for Absence

Professor Sharman and Dr Taylor apologised for their absence. Professors Giannitsarou and Candea were on leave.

OPEN BUSINESS

167. **Declarations of Interest**

The student representatives declared an interest in Paper 175, and abstained from voting.

168. **Minutes of Open Business 7th March 2023**

Approved.

169. **Minutes of Open Business 23rd March 2023**

Approved. Professor Marston asked Council to note (paper 147, Council meeting dated 23rd March 2023, The Leys School Sesquicentenary Service) that amongst The Leys School/KC links is the fact that 'Daddy' Mann, KC Organist 1879–1929, also served as Director of Music at the Leys School from 1894–1922 and is commemorated there by a mosaic in the School chapel. The permission to hold the 2025 anniversary service in the Chapel is thus on a very good footing.

170. **Minutes of Open Business 25th April 2023**

Approved.

171. **Matters arising**

None.

172. **Council Timetable – Open Matters**

In agenda, with two papers delayed to Easter Term (Financial report on recordings and Honorary Rowe Librarian Report), these will be hastened.

173. Council Action List – Open Matters

A number of papers due in Easter, with two due to be reported on 2nd May (College Officers taking forward recommendations arising from Legacies Report, and a policy on the use of Hall – both will be reported during the term).

174. Oral reports

None.

Principal Items of Business

175. Rent Strike

In addition to the student representatives, a number of students representing the rent strikers attended by invitation and spoke to this paper (A. Hewett, M. Sultana-Feinstein, C. Bennett, A. Ilyas, M. Altinsoy, and Z. Farzanekhoo). The students made reference to the need to tie future accommodation charge increases to the year-on-year increase of Student Finance maximum loans and full bursary combined, or a percentage cap, whichever is the lower. They also asked for no accommodation charge increase for the FY 23/24, and that College commits to offering support/subsidies to students who are struggling financially. They finally asked that no disciplinary action be taken against those striking, including restrictions on accommodation, and those graduating in 2023. While the accommodation charge increase being challenged covers the next academic year, the students indicated they were taking action at this juncture and not waiting for Michaelmas Term, despite added pressures during the exam term. A number of testimonials from students were also presented. It was noted that financial pressures would lead to students not being able to engage in the social life of the College. Many students had hitherto been drawn to King's due to its positive attitude to those suffering financial hardship, yet this increase was felt to run against this approach, cutting against the College's emphasis on access and inclusivity.

There were concerns that many students would not take up residence in College accommodation with the likelihood of more students external to King's taking up the accommodation. The students felt the process of seeking additional funds to be demeaning and invasive – which was the cause of some deserving students not applying for funds. They asked that the students be able to focus on their studies and not finances, and that such an increase was the cause of anxiety amongst the student community.

The Senior Tutor asked for clarification of representation and was informed that those striking were drawn from across the community; she further sought evidence of affordability, showing how the combination of government and Cambridge bursary support meant that a student from the lowest income background who took a high band room on a long contract would still have £196 per week after paying the accommodation charge. The students offered to provide some case studies of student hardship to support their case that the accommodation charge increase would be unaffordable for some.

Council asked what level of consultation had been undertaken prior to Paper 77 being approved; it was apparent that approval was given without the wider student body being aware of the size of the increases, hence this approach for

fresh negotiations. The Financial Tutor was disappointed to read of student attitudes towards seeking grants, and asked whether there was a gap between perception and reality; the wording of the Graduate Handbook on this matter was drawn to his attention and he agreed that it was misleading and needed to be updated. The Provost thanked those who had contributed to the discussion to this point, and the students representing those striking left at 1455.

Council considered the proposed votes and felt 'discussions' to be a more appropriate characterisation of future dialogue than the term 'negotiations'. The Senior Tutor remarked that discussions specifically on the rate of accommodation charge increase (vote 'c' paper 175) should only be revisited at this time, if Council felt it was likely that a different figure would be agreed. She remarked that to agree to discussions on that figure, only for it to remain unchanged could be seen as disingenuous.

The Vice Provost noted that the benchmarking model in the original paper (paper 77 Council meeting 21st February) had existed for many years; and was agreed by other students in recent year. It was generally agreed, going forward, other models can be considered, but that would fall outside of this calculation, with the First Bursar commenting that if the policy requires review this will take time.

It was observed that each year a significant sum is distributed as grants, although the students again reiterated any grant should not be used to pay rent, with some funds also being required outside of term. Council further noted that there did appear to be a reluctance by some to engage with the process, and that the title 'hardship' was itself divisive.

Council agreed that the First Bursar, Senior Tutor and Financial Tutor would meet with the representatives of the student working group to discuss mechanisms appropriate and available to students to ensure affordability within the approved accommodation charge increase.

Other Items for Discussion

176. Eboracum Baroque Concert July 2023

The Domus Bursar asked Council to approve a request from the Director of Eboracum Baroque to hold a concert of baroque music in the Fellows' Garden on Friday 7th July 2023.

Council approved the concert by Eboracum Baroque in King's College Fellows' Garden on Friday 7th July, subject to detailed planning with the Domus Bursar, Head Gardener and Head Porter.

177. Purchase of dining chairs for Hall

The Domus Bursar informed Council that there was a pressing need to replace the dining chairs in Hall. While the existing stock had lasted a considerable length of time, they were in need of replacement. Tenders have been placed, with Pentagon offering 300 suitable chairs for £109k. The purchase will be capitalised, with depreciation spread over a number of years.

Council approved an initial purchase of 50 dining chairs for The Hall as a trial at the existing price. A report will be made on the outcome of the trial before additional chairs are considered.

(Post Meeting Note. The Head of Catering has asked for 40 chairs as this is the number required to satisfy the needs of High Table).

Business for Report

178. Minutes of Adornment Committee Meeting dated 1st March 2023

Noted.

179. Sustainability Committee Meeting dated 9th March 2023

Noted.

180. Rylands Art Prize 2023

Council noted the results of the 2023 Rylands Art Prize, judged this year by the Provost and his wife, the winners being

First prize:

- Teddy Graham for 'Skin'

Runners-up prizes:

- Euan Russell for 'Architectures for the in between,'
- Eden Hogston for 'Distorted by the Media',
- John Palmer for 'Instar'

181. Race for Life July 23

Council agreed that Cancer Research UK be given approval to plan for the Life Charity Event to proceed through King's College on Sunday, 2nd July 2023, subject to detailed agreement with the Domus Bursar, Head of Visitor Services, Head Porter and the Head Gardener.

182. Publication of Blake Facsimile

Council noted a request from the Folio Society to publish a facsimile edition of the King's copy of William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience.

183. Any Other Business

None.