

**Staff Consultative Committee- Summary of key points
Wednesday June 30th 2021 at 10am**

Location: Virtual meeting by MS Teams

Committee:

Philip Parker – Bursar (Chair)

Dr Harvey Burd – Tutorial Fellow in Engineering Science

Matthew Hill – Domestic Bursar

Lianne Smith – Library

Bekki Tordoff – IT

Omer Tariq – Lodge

Rob Walker – Workshop

Julia Dewar - HR Manager

Paula Bracher – HR Adviser

Sarah Blunt – HR Assistant (Minutes)

Welcome and Apologies

Julia Dewar

Dr Harvey Burd

For discussion

1. Update on College

The Norrington Table which compares the students' exam results between the colleges came out last week and Brasenose was 7th for the 2019/20 academic year. The students have done well which is a credit to the College and Tutors.

The upcoming building projects are being finalised, including the new build at Frewin (Project Copenhagen), which is being managed by the Domestic Bursar. The costs were higher than expected due to an increase in building costs.

Other up and coming projects include a new electric boiler in Staircase 3 in Old Quad, creation of a new student room in a loft space in St Cross, refurbishment of staircases in Frewin Hall, a replacement organ in the Chapel and refurbishment of the Chapel ceiling (funded by donation), and other refurbishments, including some of the meeting rooms. Some projects will be carried out in-house and some by contractors.

It was noted that these projects have been in the pipeline for a while. There were 5 other refurbishment projects due that have been referred.

The Domestic Bursar provided an update on Covid-19. The final restrictions that were due to be lifted on 21st June have been extended to at least 19th July. A contingency plan was put in place for the additional student residence in 9th week, and several events that were due to take place (e.g. JCR sports day) were cancelled because of the restrictions. There has been an increase in positive Covid-19 cases across the University, with 12 student cases and 45 students isolating currently in College. This is causing problems for conferences due in this weekend and impacting the Housekeeping team's ability to clean rooms. Across Oxford, there were 240 positive cases in the 14 days up to 27th June. Of these, 8 were staff, which have all been traced back to the community rather than the workplace. This implies that the covid-security measures in place in colleges are working. There are 5 people currently in hospital at the JR as of 28th, none of which are on ventilators. The Lodge has done great job of keeping all staff and students informed about those isolating. College will monitor Government announcements about further changes in restrictions.

2. DB restructure

The Domestic Bursar reported that an email with details of the restructure has been sent to all staff. Part of the restructure included the creation of a new Head of Hospitality role which takes on some of the Domestic Bursar's current responsibilities and alters reporting lines. The Head Chef, Steward and Accommodation Manager will now report into the Head of Hospitality. It has been announced that Norman Meyer (previously Conference and Events Manager) has taken on this role. The restructure also included the creation of a part-time Project Officer role, which James Hellyer (Accommodation Manager) will take on as a 2-year fixed-term contract from October. The Accommodation Manager role will be backfilled and recruitment for this will take place in the coming weeks. There have also been changes within the Lodge, where Omer will take on management responsibility of the Porters from September, and Andy will focus on security, fire safety and student welfare.

As well as the restructure, there have also been opportunities for internal promotion within College in the Workshop, where Ryan has been promoted to Small Projects Manager, and Mike given additional responsibility as Assistant Clerk of Works. In the Development office, George has been promoted to Annual Fund Officer after acting up in the role for the last 6 months, and Alice has been given additional responsibilities in the Finance team.

3. Environmental Strategy Steering Group

The Domestic Bursar provided an update on the Environmental Strategy Steering Group, which reconvened in March after a year. A further meeting was held in Trinity Term which focussed on implementing some quick wins to improve credentials ahead of Michaelmas Term. These include banning single use plastic, introducing a syrup-based system for soft drinks in the bar to reduce bottled drinks, and listing vegetarian meals as the default option. There will be some training in the summer to raise awareness of the changes around recycling etc.

4. Reduced operations over the Summer and furlough (kitchens closed)

The Bursar and Domestic Bursar reported that an email outlining the summer shutdown was sent to all staff. This mainly affects Domestic Bursary teams, many of whom will be placed on flexible furlough throughout the summer as the College works to minimise operations. Some conferences will be held over the summer but only if they are financially viable. Some teams will continue to work, including the Lodge and the Workshop who will be able to carry out work in student rooms and start on the building projects. The Library will be shut in August with an online system in place for students. It was noted that there are various different teams in College and whilst some staff will be furloughed, admin staff will continue to work, mainly from home. £170k is estimated to be claimed for furloughed staff during the shutdown. This is about half of the costs of furloughed staff, as all staff will remain on full pay,

It was confirmed that lunch provision for staff over the summer will continue until 6th August whilst conferences are held, and will be takeaway only with reduced options. Lunch will not be available for staff after 6th August as the kitchens will be closed and there will be fewer staff onsite. The Domestic Bursar will discuss possible options with the affected teams, which include snack provision and facilities for food to be stored and reheated.

5. Preparation for next term, including Hybrid working arrangements and staffing update

The Bursar reported that College is anticipating returning to normal and providing onsite services to students from Michaelmas Term, but that a flexible approach is needed to recognise that people may want to work from home from time to time, and that hybrid working arrangements may be possible.

6. Improving communications

Communication was raised as part of the staff engagement project which took place before the pandemic. There have been requests to return to the “lunch time briefings” which were held previously, which could be possible via MS Teams. It might be helpful for these not to be at lunchtimes. The briefings could be sent via email to all staff and put on the Brasenose forum for those with limited email access, but some opportunity to discuss and ask questions is also useful. A working group will be created over the summer to look at this in more detail and consider how better to communicate with staff. There was a suggestion to put the briefings on the staff website or intranet/SharePoint where there are mechanisms for making a central point for communications.

7. Annual Pay review

The Bursar confirmed that the pay review process is underway, and those who are not at the top of their grade will receive an incremental spine point increase. Because of the financial constraints this year, it is unlikely that discretionary pay increases will be granted. The inflationary cost of living increase which is aligned with the university was not increased last year, but is likely to be increased this year; we wait to hear what the national pay agreement is, which we expect the University to follow, as usual.

8. Plans for staff garden party

A suggestion of a staff garden party in the summer was raised. It was noted that the Principal is hosting a summer party on 8th July. The Domestic Bursar explained that another staff event may be considered before the start of term but this will depend on covid-restrictions.

9. Flu vaccine

The Bursar confirmed that despite some initial Issues with the Boots flu vaccination service last year, this has been renewed for this year and will be offered to all staff in the autumn.

10. Nursery place

The Bursar explained that in the past College has bought 3 priority slots, which can get employees higher up the list for a nursery place. Only 1 slot was taken up last year. College will continue to buy 2 more priority places and a reminder to staff will be sent for new applications.

11. Gifts and Tips (reminder)

Staff have been reminded to declare gifts and tips received over the amount of £25.

12. Staff parking

A question was raised over permission to park on Radcliffe Square. The Domestic Bursar explained that parking arrangements will revert back to the pre-pandemic arrangement from 5th July, where staff are only permitted to park on Radcliffe Square where there is a medical/mobility need and approval has been given by the Domestic Bursar. The code for the gates in the sports ground will be shared with all staff so they are able to access the car park if the gates are closed; booking will remain essential.

13. Ellis Whittam refresher (and any other) training

The HR Adviser reported that refresher training is done annually, and all staff have been emailed with their courses to complete – this will be sent again for those who did not receive this. There is an

opportunity for many staff to complete this whilst on furlough over the summer. It was recommended that managers and staff focus on the most relevant and priority training courses.

14. Accessibility

The Bursar explained that whilst the accessibility requirements on public sector bodies for webservices does not apply to the College, this is good practice. A paragraph on accessibility has been included in the Equality and Diversity policy. This affects how documents can be accessed and ensures that documents placed on the website are easily read by web browsers, to allow easier navigation for those who need it.

15. Share experience of lockdown/ arrangements from committee members, and suggestions

It was reported that it has been mostly positive, although there may be concern among staff due to rise in covid-19 cases, but that College can minimise the risk. It is reassuring to know that the 8 staff who have had positive results across the University haven't picked this up at work.

It was raised that student behaviour has been a recurring theme. College has told students what the Government guidelines are and some instances have been escalated to the Dean. It was also raised that staff are tired after a busy term, but it is hoped that staff are able to take some holiday in the coming months and re-charge before the start of next term.

The issue of rubbish left by students was also raised, which is impacting the Housekeeping team. Students have been reminded to use the bins and there are fortnightly meetings with the Domestic Bursar and the Domestic reps, with a suggestion of arranging a meeting directly with reps and the Housekeeping team.