



Wellbeing Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 1 September 2020, 10.30 a.m.
Meeting held remotely (via Teams Channel)

Minutes

Present:

Dr Andy Rice (Chair)
Jo de Bono
Caroline Stewart
Celia Burns (Secretary)

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2020 were approved for publication on the Committee website.

3. Situation Update

Committee members each gave a brief update on how they were doing in relation to the coronavirus situation.

4. Update on Action Items

i) Virtual Tea/Coffee Breaks

CS reported that one of the 20 available Educational Zoom accounts had been allocated to the Tea/Coffee Break group and had been set up by one of the regular meeting attendees.

ii) Wellbeing Clinic/Virtual 'Corridor'

JD confirmed that the Head of Department had mentioned the meeting slots at a Wednesday meeting and there had subsequently been two requests for a meeting slot, one of which she had passed to CS.

CS agreed to ask Prof Beresford, who would be chairing the next Wednesday meeting on 9 September, to remind meeting participants about this resource.

Action: CS

JD confirmed that she had arranged for a Wellbeing Committee email account (wellbeing-committee@cst.cam.ac.uk) to be set up so that any requests for meeting

slots could be monitored by other Committee members in the absence of CS or JD.
JD agreed to add the email address to the Wellbeing webpage.

Action: JD

iii) West Cambridge shared counsellor initiative

JD was going to produce a list of wellbeing contacts in the West Cambridge departments and their amenability to having a meeting to discuss the shared counsellor initiative. However, since the Shared Facilities Hub Advisory Board is now considering this initiative (see item 4 ix), it was felt that there is no longer a need for a list of departmental contacts.

iv) Central HR's Review of the Staff Review and Development (SRD) Process

Quo Pham, HR Manager, had shared the feedback from central HR's recent SRD review. Committee members agreed to review the feedback in advance of the next meeting.

Action: Committee members

v) SRD processes for academic-related staff and professional services staff

A report from Quo Pham, Human Resources Manager, is expected. See item 8 below. It was agreed that any reports the Committee is expecting would be reported under a separate agenda item, 'Expected Reports', rather than recurring under the 'Update on Action Items' agenda item.

vi) Avoidance of formal meetings over various periods during the summer

JD confirmed that the Head of Department had communicated the HoD Team's recommendation to avoid formal meetings during August and to continue to avoid formal meetings on Mondays and Fridays during September.

vii) Graduate Student Forum (GSF) - suggestions for wellbeing

CB confirmed that she had fed back to the GSF that the Committee thought their various suggestions were good and to ask that they explore ways to facilitate these initiatives. CB also confirmed that she had provided the GSF with the link to the existing wellbeing page and had invited any feedback on the page.

JD confirmed that the HoD had mentioned the AI Group's suggestion for 'swap' meetings at a Wednesday meeting.

viii) Research Staff Forum (RSF) – suggestions for wellbeing

CB confirmed that she had asked the RSF to discuss wellbeing at their next meeting and to provide some suggested issues for the Wellbeing Committee to consider.

ix) Counsellor for the West Cambridge site

JD plans to contact Daniella Manca, Secretary of the West Cambridge Advisory Board, in September for an update on this initiative once it has been considered by the Shared Facilities Hub Project Board.

Action: JD

x) *Staff survey about Department members' experience since lockdown*

The Committee had discussed the possibility of running a staff survey with the aim of understanding the diversity or similarity of experiences in the Department since lockdown and to consider what we can do with any issues of particular concern. AR reported that, regrettably, he had not had a chance to set up a document as planned of suggested survey questions for the Committee to review.

Action: AR

xi) *Delegation of issues to the Workload Committee*

The discussion about a survey had raised issues about workload and line management, and the Committee had agreed to invite the Workload Committee to consider these issues. AR reported that he had not yet convened the next Workload Committee meeting, though he was keen to do so. CS suggested that before he convenes the meeting, he might like to talk to the Head of Department who has recently been considering ideas about workload in general.

Action: AR

5. Graduate Student Forum (GSF) Wellbeing Report

This item has been moved to item 8, 'Expected Reports', below.

6. Research Staff Forum (RSF) Wellbeing Report

This item has been moved to item 8, 'Expected Reports', below.

7. Student Wellbeing Internal Audit—Executive Summary

Committee members agreed to discuss the Executive Summary at a future meeting, once circumstances are more normal.

8. Expected Reports

i) *SRD processes for academic-related staff and professional services staff*

Following the Committee's recommendation in June 2020 for the SRD processes for academic-related staff and professional services staff to be reviewed and re-implemented, Quo Pham had agreed to address this issue with central HR and come back to the Committee with further information in September 2020.

ii) *Research Staff Forum (RSF) – wellbeing-related suggestions*

The RSF has been asked to discuss wellbeing at their Michaelmas term meeting (date yet to be arranged) and provide some suggested issues for the Wellbeing Committee to consider.

iii) *Graduate Student Forum (GSF) Wellbeing Report*

A Wellbeing Report is expected after the GSF's next meeting which will take place in Michaelmas term, date yet to be arranged.

iv) *Research Staff Forum (RSF) Wellbeing Report*

A Wellbeing Report is expected after the RSF's next meeting which will take place in Michaelmas term, date yet to be arranged.

9. **Safe Space Circles - Returning to Work**

The Committee considered the *ourcambridge* team's Safe Space Circles Guidance (<https://www.ourcambridge.admin.cam.ac.uk/resources/safe-space-circles-returning-work>). CS reported that she had drawn the guidance to the attention of the HoD Team, who had subsequently asked the Wellbeing Committee to consider it.

It was noted that so far there had been no strong message from the University about returning to the workplace. In addition, most of the individuals who have already returned had opted to do so (rather than having been asked to) and presumably, therefore, do not have concerns about it. For the small number of support staff who had recently been asked to return to the workplace for short periods of time, it had been made clear to them that they did not have to return, but they had been happy to do so. It was felt, therefore, that the guidance might be more valuable to individuals who might in future be asked to return to the workplace, for example support staff from the beginning of the Michaelmas term.

It was also noted that it would be useful, particularly for support staff, to have clear messaging in terms of expectations relating to returning to the workplace, possibly from the beginning of Michaelmas term, especially in light of the Government's recent encouragement for a return to the workplace. CS noted that there would be a Crimson Team meeting on 2 September, after which there may be more information available, and she agreed to talk to the Head of Department about communicating information to the department. It was also noted that it might be useful to use the Crimson Team scenarios as a basis for the Department's own planning and communications.

Action: CS

The Committee's understanding is that everyone who has already returned to the workplace has opted to do so; and if that is not the case and individuals have concerns, they should talk to their manager or arrange a Virtual Corridor drop-in session to discuss the issue. In this regard, it was agreed that any future messaging about the Virtual Corridor drop-in sessions should include reference to the sessions being an opportunity to raise any potential concerns about returning to the workplace.

Action: CS/JD

The Committee agreed to review the Safe Space Circles Guidance again at the next meeting in the light of any concerns that might be raised in response to future department communication about returning to the workplace.

Action: Committee

10. **Discussion Item(s)**

The Committee agreed to leave discussion of more general wellbeing items until the COVID situation stabilises, and for now address the more pressing issues relevant to the COVID situation as they arise.

11. **Next Discussion Item(s)**

As for item 10 above, the Committee agreed to leave discussion of more general wellbeing items until the COVID situation stabilises, and for now address the more pressing issues relevant to the COVID situation as they arise.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting via Teams at 13.30 on Friday, 16 October 2020.