



*the* CAMBRIDGE  
UNION

## Appointment of Bursar

September 2020



Saxton Bampfylde



# Introduction from our Chair of Trustees

The Cambridge Union Society – founded in 1815 – is the oldest debating society in the world. It is the largest and best-known student society in Cambridge, and to this day it hosts debates, events and lectures, and draws in some of the most important and famous people in the world to be questioned and confronted by passionate students. The Union is committed to upholding the value of free speech, and is never shy when it comes to arguing with controversial figures. Over the past couple of years, the historic Union buildings, designed in Victorian times by Alfred Waterhouse, have been undergoing substantial renovation, and a public-facing café-bar is being created, to generate income for the Society in the future. The Society is run by students elected to the office, with a Board of Trustees gently overseeing the smooth and financially prudent operation of the organisation.

The Union is now looking to appoint a Bursar, the person who will be in charge of the day-to-day running of the Society, answerable to (and guiding) the Student Officers and reporting also to the Board of Trustees. One moment the Bursar will be welcoming and hosting a Prime Minister or movie star; the next, the Bursar will be making sure a broken-down boiler is repaired. It's one of the most exciting and varied jobs there is, and we are looking for someone who will be in command of the finances, will be developing the best rapport and relationship with Student Officers, will be a courteous host, will ensure the events and catering businesses are running well, and will not be afraid to get directly involved when it's needed.

We look forward to receiving your application.

**Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury**

Chair of Trustees







## Defending Free Speech Since 1815

From its small beginnings as a debating society, the Cambridge Union now has over 70,000 life members worldwide. The oldest debating society in the world, and the largest student society in Cambridge, the Union remains a unique forum for the free exchange of ideas and the art of public debate.

As a pre-eminent forum for free speech, the Cambridge Union has hosted a wide platform of speakers who shape the world we live in. We offer a space for members to engage with individuals from all walks of life, and both hear and challenge the views they present. The Union has continued to play host to great figures of national and international importance. Recent years have seen the Chief UN Weapons Inspector Hans Blix address the question of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the NATO Secretary General discuss international relations, Michael Moore argue against the Bush

regime, and the Dalai Lama speak for Tibetan independence. Union members have been witness to an address from President Reagan at the end of the Cold War, a visit from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, several speeches from Stephen Hawking, and a speech from Queen Noor of Jordan on the Middle East Peace Process.

The Union has come a long way from its old fashioned origins as a private members' club. With over half the student population of Cambridge holding life membership, the Society is now at the heart of the Cambridge experience. From social events and workshops, to debates and speaker events – the Union is a hub of student activity in a University with no centralised Student Union building.

Watch our film about Cambridge Union [here](#).



# An Educational Charity

Education is at the heart of the Union's charitable activities. The Cambridge Schools' Debating Competition, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2016, is the largest in the world with over 600 teams competing. Children between 15 and 18 across the country are coached by Cambridge students in public speaking, and many cite it as the main reason they gained enough confidence to apply to university. The Union also runs the International Competition for Young Debaters', for those between 13 and 15, to encourage younger students to try debating.

The Union provides free debating and Cambridge access workshops to local schools, and it also provides weekly workshops for all student members in Cambridge, at every level of ability, to train themselves in public speaking and learn how to competitively debate. It is this training that produced the top two debaters at the World University Debating Championships in 2015.

At University level, our International competitions are the most prestigious in the UK and some of the best-known in the world, with teams from Harvard to Malaysia attending, and our Women's Competition helps to redress the gender disparity across competitive debating.





# Leadership and Governance

The Cambridge Union is an organisation that was founded and is ran by students. Each term is planned and carried out by a mixture of officers and appointees, with support from the organisation's non-student staff and Trustees. The governance of the Cambridge Union is mandated by its Constitution.

The Standing Committee (or 'Voting Members') is the Union's primary managerial body of 13 members, which consists of the current President, the Vice President, and Officers, the President-Elect, Officers-Elect, and the Debating Officers. All Officers of the Union are elected by its membership on a termly basis, with the exception of the Vice President and two Debating Officers, who are appointed to serve on an annual basis.

In order to give our Officers enough time to plan their term, all of the termly officerships are elected a term in advance and serve for a term as Officers-Elect. This enables them to become familiar with their role, work with their immediate predecessor and to plan effectively for their own time in office. The President-Elect, flanked by two Officers-Elect, presides over the emergency debates that precede main debates. Officers-Elect are also entitled to vote on Union business.

The President, Vice President and Director of Debating are also Trustees of the Union and the President and Vice President are Directors of the Union trading enterprise, CUSL, for their term in office. The Director of Debating is not a director of the subsidiary company.

The relationship between the Vice President and the Bursar is important and grows throughout the year as they deal with everything from election malpractice to “locking down” the Union to secure it for a controversial speaker.

The Bursar is invited to attend all Standing Committee meetings but is not a Voting Member. This lack of power to overtly influence key decisions is intentional and ensures that the Bursar is able to maintain neutrality with the Student Officers and the Trustees.







## Redevelopment of the Union

In 2018, an ambitious £10m joint development plan between the Cambridge Union and Trinity College commenced to refurbish the Grade II listed Cambridge Union site.

The restoration plan involved the removal of the 1930s concrete façade and the reintroduction of lost original Victorian features, such as the dormer windows lost in World War II, to restore some of the building's former character. New light and modern entrances on Round Church Street and Park Street will increase the Union's visibility to the public and hopefully encourage the general public into the newly refurbished 1815 wine bar and café. In addition, there will be a separate bar opened to members only.

The internal works will improve the capacity of the building to hold up to 450 people at a time for debates, as well as conferences and events. There will be greater accessibility and flexibility of use, including space to enable Footlights to use their original home once more. The development will also provide modern, purpose-built accommodation for postgraduate students close to Trinity College.





Architect's impression of the view from  
Round Church Street





# The Role of Bursar

The role of Bursar at the Union is unique in both the breadth of its activities and its positioning as a kind of ‘servant leader’ in a student-led organisation. It is vital that he or she accept that the Union is a student society run by students for students, supported by the Bursar and the staff. A successful Bursar will bring deep experience and wisdom to draw upon to steward and support inexperienced students in the running of the Union; he or she will act as a sounding board and a challenge to Student Officers’ aspirations, particularly with regard to the management of finances and ensuring that the activities of the Union remain safe and compliant with charity law.

The opening of the new centre presents an exceptional opportunity for the organisation and it will play a key role in generating income for the Union in the future. It is critical that the new Bursar will bring strong commercial and financial acumen and an entrepreneurial mindset to ensure that the development is a success and the opportunities it presents are maximised.

The Bursar is expected to have the qualities of leadership, adeptness in working with people, tact, flexibility and stamina to carry out the duties listed below to sustain the prestige and reputation of the Union and ensure that it is developed to be fit for future.

## The Bursar will:

- Work with the Board of Trustees and the Standing Committee in promoting and maintaining the strategic direction of the Society and furthering the Society’s charitable aims and objectives.
- Facilitate and support, in partnership with the Standing Committee, effective decision making about the activities and operations of the Union; support the Student Officers and provide guidance and challenge where appropriate.
- Oversee the safe management of the Union’s finances, investments and physical assets.
- With the Student Officers and Trustees, represent the Union in relations externally, and act as an effective ambassador for the Union.
- Direct the Union’s staff in order to ensure that the Union’s affairs are efficiently and economically managed.
- As a Director of the Union’s trading enterprise, CUSL, work with the Trustees, Standing Committee and the General Manager to manage the commercial aspects of the Union’s operations and develop new income streams.
- Take responsibility for managing direct reports and for ensuring the effective recruitment and management of the Union employees, including staff welfare, supervision, appraisals, training and development.
- Plan and manage events; meet and look after nationally and internationally famous and high profile people.
- Advise, plan and run the security arrangements of controversial or high profile speakers with international embassies, close protection teams and the police.
- Be willing to undertake evening and weekend commitments on a regular basis and be ‘on call’ to support the Student Officers outside of normal working hours if needed.



# The Person

## Experience and skills

It will be essential for the Bursar to bring the following:

- Demonstrated leadership and management abilities at an executive board level.
- Financial acumen, with a strong grasp of numbers and experience managing budgets.
- Experience of delivering profitable commercial enterprises and developing new income streams. A proven ability to make a substantive contribution to the financial success of an organisation.
- Ability to see the big picture and contribute at a strategic level on the one hand as well as the ability to focus in on operational detail on the other.
- Proven experience of managing, developing and coaching teams to reach their potential.
- Educated to a degree level
- A driving licence.

## Desirable experience includes:

- Experience overseeing a commercial enterprise such as a bar, restaurant or a conference centre.
- Experience of overseeing and managing security arrangements.
- Experience of care and maintenance of heritage listed buildings.
- Knowledge of legal matters pertinent to running a company/charity and drawing up contracts.
- Experience of leading or knowledge of technology change to help an organisation meet its strategic aims more effectively.

## Qualities

As important as experience, will be the personal qualities that the Bursar brings to be successful dealing with the wide ranging demands of the role. This person will:

- Have an enthusiasm for the student-led nature of the Union, and the low ego and willingness to meld one's years of experience with the decision-making of Student Officers.
- Have real humility, patience and a high level of emotional intelligence – this will be critical for stewarding the students.
- Have the stature, gravitas and personal style to liaise with high profile guests.
- Be a team player with ability to delegate and manage effectively whilst also recognising the need to provide direct input where necessary within a small team; no task should be beneath the Bursar.
- Bring strong diplomatic skills and the ability to work effectively with the Student Officers and Trustees.
- Have empathy for and enjoy working on a daily basis with the Student Officers and treating them with the same respect



as one would give to the experienced colleagues.

- Be open and supportive to new ideas as well as recurrent ones!
- Have sufficient gravitas and experience to be an effective sounding board; Student Officers are prepared to seek advice without feeling they have to take it.
- Commitment to diversity, inclusion and the role the Union can play in advancing education amongst students and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Passionate about upholding and advocating for freedom of speech and expression.
- Will bring energy, dynamism and a sense of humour!

## Terms of appointment

- The remuneration package will be agreed with the successful candidate.
- The Bursar will preferably live within Cambridge or within easy access of Cambridge.
- She or he will be prepared to work in the evenings around one night a week, or more if required, and occasionally at weekends.
- The Bursar will need to be prepared to receive texts or phone calls from Student Officers outside of normal working hours.

## How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Cambridge Union on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **FAKAUA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV, and cover letter (no longer than two A4 pages), outlining why you would like to join the Cambridge Union as Bursar.

The closing date for applications is **by Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020**.

Initial interviews with Saxton Bampfylde will take place in the weeks commencing 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Interviews with the Union are scheduled to take place during weeks commencing 9<sup>th</sup> November.

### GDPR personal data notice

*According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please **do not** include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.*



# Previous Speakers

**Politicians** Winston Churchill – Margaret Thatcher – John Major – The Dalai Lama – Ronald Reagan –

Theodore Roosevelt – Ted Heath – Pervez Musharraf – Lord Michael Howard\* –

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi – Boris Johnson – Ken Livingstone – Vince Cable\* – John Bercow – Julian

Huppert – Dominique Strauss-Kahn – Nigel Farage – Rev. Jesse Jackson – Lord Norman Lamont\* – Ken

Clarke\* – Jeremy Corbyn **Drama** Dame Judi Dench – Vanessa Redgrave – John Malkovich – Sir Ian

McKellen – Harrison Ford – Derek Jacobi – Bill Nighy – Roger Moore – Patrick Stewart – Clint Eastwood –

Rupert Everett – Hugh Bonneville – Lisa Kudrow – Brian Blessed – Zoe Wanamaker – Michael Winner – Lily

Cole – Tom Hollander – Dominic West – Alec Baldwin – Robert Downey Jr. **Comedians** Omid Djalili –

Dara O'Briain – Sue Perkins – Jo Brand – Stephen Fry – Al Murray – Bill Oddie – Tim Minchin – Armando

Ianucci – David Blaine – Rob Brydon – Ulrika Jonsson – Russell Brand – Tim Vine – Reginald D. Hunter –

Russell Kane – Simon Amstell – Ed Byrne **Journalism and Broadcasting** Jeremy Paxman –

Michael Parkinson – Alan Johnston – Sir Trevor MacDonald – Jeremy Webb – Peter Hitchens – Jerry

Springer – David Aaronovitch – Alan Rusbridger – Esther Rantzen – Alastair Cooke – Jill Abramsom – Jon

Snow **Sports** Lord Sebastian Coe – Fabio Capello – James Haskell – David Moyes – Sir Jackie Stewart –

Mark Cavendish – Max Mosley – Clarke Carlisle – Dwaine Chambers – Roy Hodgson **Music and**

**Dance** Brian May – Steven Sondheim – Kissy Sell-Out – Dame Kiri Te Kanawa – Bruce Dickinson –

Maestro Valery Gergiev – Diana Yukawa – Darcey Bussell – Frank Turner – Bonnie Tyler **Scientists**

**and Academics** Rowan Williams – Richard Dawkins – Professor A.C. Grayling – Peter Singer –

Professor Anthony Giddens – Germaine Greer – Professor Stephen Hawking – Sir Roger Penrose –

Baroness Susan Greenfield – Tim Hunt – Professor Lord Robert Winston – Professor Alison Richard –

Hermann Hauser – Ha Joon Chang – Buzz Aldrin Law Lord Philips – Justice Antonin Scalia – Lady Justice

Arden – Baroness Hale – Sir Brian Leveson **Charity and Activism** Dr Shirin Ebadi – Raheel Raza –

Shami Chakrabati – Jesse Jackson Moazzam Begg – Camila Batmanghelidjh – Ranulph Fiennes – Jimmy

Wales - David Bull - Pussy Riot – Laura Bates **Literary** Salman Rushdie – Bill Bryson – Douglas Adams –

Peter Hamilton – James Ellroy – Andy McNab – John Boyne – Neil Gaiman – Jeffrey Archer – Sir Quentin

Blake – Peter Hamilton – Michael Frayn **Business** Deborah Meaden – Terry Leahy – Willie Walsh –

Lord Alan Sugar – Lord Sainsbury – Lord Levy – Tony Hayward – Theo Paphitis

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