Introduction to the role

For over 500 years, St John’s College has flourished as an independent and self-determining academic community, whose purposes are education, religion, learning and research, and which approaches its mission with an unwavering commitment to intellectual freedom and integrity. We are committed to sustaining and enhancing the College’s global renown for scholarship across a wide range of disciplines, and we aspire to be regarded as a beacon of academic excellence. St John’s is one of the largest and most widely known of the 31 constituent colleges in the University of Cambridge, which is consistently ranked amongst the top five universities in the world.

This is a friendly, warm, and welcoming place. The College is held in deep affection by its members, who include around 155 Fellows, about 550 undergraduate and 300+ postgraduate students, some 13,000 alumni worldwide, and by our 250 staff. Our community is a tolerant, inclusive, caring, respectful meritocracy, with genuine joie de vivre. We cherish the diversity of experience, culture, and perspective in members of the College, and the way this enriches our learning and our lives. We seek to balance how we fulfil our purposes today with our stewardship responsibilities for future generations in the College, and for the wellbeing of our planet.

We aim to create an exceptional collegiate experience, one which attracts the brightest minds and then makes it easy for students and Fellows to realise their academic ambitions here. We put living, working, eating, and socialising together at the heart of this. Our Domestic Bursar, as the college officer responsible for the operational services, infrastructure, buildings and functions of the College, has a critically important role in sustaining and enhancing these essential dimensions of college life. The role has an important part to play in the decision making of the College, working with other senior college officers, reporting to the elected College Council, and with Fellows and staff on committees for key activities. This includes participating in setting the strategic priorities and plans for the College, creating and implementing an operational programme and financial plan to address those priorities, and ensuring the College is a great place for our staff to work, with an enabling, collaborative and forward-looking culture. The regular schedule of building maintenance and rolling refurbishment falls within the Domestic Bursar’s remit and they will play an important part in supporting the strategic masterplan for the College estate, with close involvement in the scoping, design and operational delivery of major capital projects. (Responsibility for estate strategy and the masterplan sits with the Senior Bursar.)
Principal Responsibilities and Duties

**Job title:** Domestic Bursar

**Job purpose:** The role of the Domestic Bursar is to oversee, manage and develop the College’s operational estate and the provision of hospitality and other services throughout the College, in support of the fulfilment of its academic mission. The Domestic Bursar is the College’s senior responsible officer for Data Protection and leads on regulatory compliance.

The post combines the roles of Junior Bursar and Steward as defined by the College’s Statutes.

**Department:** Domestic Bursar’s Office.

**Responsible to:** The College Council, whose 13 members constitute the College’s charity trustees (The Senior and Domestic Bursars work together on matters of mutual interest but they operate independently, being separately responsible to the Council for the carrying out of their respective responsibilities).

**Managed by:** The Master.

**Responsible for:** In the region of 150 staff, in the Domestic Bursar’s Office (1.5 FTE), Accommodation and Bookings, Catering & Hospitality, Housekeeping, Gardens, IT, Maintenance, Portering, Compliance/Data Protection, the Sports Fields and Boat Club. *Staff headcount is indicative only.*

**Direct Reports:** 6 Heads of Departments (the Catering and Hospitality Manager, Head Porter, Head of Maintenance, Superintendent of Housekeeping, Head Gardener, Accommodation & Bookings Manager), and in addition the Head Groundsman, the College Boatman, the Compliance Officer and the direct support to the Domestic Bursar.

**Working with:** The Domestic Bursar works closely with the Master, President, Senior Bursar, Senior Tutor, the Head of Finance and the Head of Human Resources, and regularly with Dean of Chapel, Dean of Discipline, the Development Director, Tutor for Postgraduates, and the Senior Treasurer of the May Ball. Through Committees and day to day contact, they regularly work with Fellows in general, and on specific priorities. In addition, the role involves regular involvement with members of the student body, particularly elected representatives of the Junior Combination Room (undergraduates) and Samuel Butler Room (postgraduates) and with alumni of the College.
Main responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the post have been grouped below into four sections: team leadership; those related directly to the College operational estate; those related to hospitality and other services; and other responsibilities.

Leadership, management and team responsibilities

- Contribute to the College's overarching vision and long-term planning processes. Be a collegiate and engaged colleague alongside other senior college officers
- Lead and motivate the staff in the Domestic Bursar’s team, creating a strong sense of cohesion, shared purpose and collective responsibility for the College’s operational priorities and plans among their Heads of Department
- Ensure that the team is appropriately structured and staffed, is well-co-ordinated, and that procedures are appropriately consulted upon, approved, documented and kept up to date
- Develop and report against key performance indicators for the departments
- Undertake staff reviews, set individual objectives and promote personal and professional development

Budget

- Oversee the development of annual/3-year business plans and budget proposals for the departments for which they are responsible
- Ensure that expenditure is managed to budget
- Seek efficiency and effectiveness improvements in day-to-day operations
- Ensure that procurement is carried out effectively

Communications and external relations

- Proactively communicate with Fellows, students and staff, using the College’s formal and internal communications channels, and using other fora and direct communications as appropriate
- Foster and maintain professional links with counterparts in other colleges and the University and beyond as required

Committees

- The business of the College is often channelled through a system of committees which brings the Master and Fellows, College Officers and key members of staff together to set direction and policies, take oversight and review progress
- As the appropriate College Officer, play a lead role as the formal Secretary for several College Committees (setting the agenda, leading the business and confirming the minutes), including Buildings, Catering & Hospitality, Fellows Rooms, Gardens, Health & Safety, IT, Kitchen Consultative
- Be a member of several other College committees, including Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, Estates Strategy, Events, Finance, High Table and Wine, Human Resources, Prevent, Sustainability Forum, Records & Data, and Senior and Junior Members
- Represent the College or otherwise participate in relevant University or intercollegiate committees/networks fora
Operational estate

Strategic estate masterplan and major capital projects

- Contribute to the continued development and implementation of the College’s strategic estate masterplan. This includes input to the project scope and brief, ensuring consequential projects/changes are identified and planned for, and (usually) taking the lead on ensuring operational readiness of new developments
- Support the planning and delivery of major landscaping projects, ensuring engagement with the Head Gardener and that operational and maintenance implications are fully taken into account

Building and maintenance

- Maintain a detailed 10 year, fully costed, building and maintenance programme and financial plan (with an indicative look-ahead to potential projects on a 10 to 30-year timescale)
- Oversee the maintenance, repair and resilience of College facilities and infrastructure
- Oversee and coordinate the efficient planning and implementation of building and refurbishment projects

Environment, sustainability, and utilities

- Play a lead role in delivering the College’s climate crisis action plan, including supporting the energy transition project for the decarbonisation of its operational estate
- Work with Fellows, staff and students to improve the College’s environmental sustainability across operational functions and services
- Ensure utility supplies and waste management services are procured cost effectively and are closely monitored

Insurance

- Oversee insurance with respect to the College’s operational buildings and operations, in liaison with the Bursary

Gardens and sports facilities

- Ensure that the College’s gardens and grounds are maintained to a high standard and advise on potential improvements, and promote wide use and enjoyment by members of the College
- Take responsibility for the staff and facility aspects of the playing fields, the sports pavilion and other sports facilities, and the fitness centres (including health & safety)
- Take responsibility for the staff and facility aspects of the College boat house (including health & safety)
Hospitality and related services

Accommodation and bookings

- Oversee, make recommendations for and implement improvements for the efficient management and booking of College space and accommodation, including optimising use of space and residential accommodation
- Develop a strategy and methodology for pricing residential accommodation
- Working with the Senior Tutor and Tutor for Postgraduates, design and implement a fair and efficient process for the allocation of rooms to junior members
- Oversee the allocation of Fellows’ rooms in conjunction with the President/Fellows’ Rooms Committee
- Ensure that student accommodation complies with required Codes of Practice (ANUK)

Catering and hospitality

- Take responsibility for the strategy and overall management of the College’s retail catering and bar services, formal dining services and certain College events, and for conference, private dining and commercial activities, working within parameters set by the College Council and engaging closely with the Committees overseeing these areas of activity
- Co-ordinate with the President on arrangements for events and activities falling within their responsibility such as High Table and certain College events and special occasions
- Recommend and implement the strategy and methodology for catering products, services and prices, including discussion with student representatives

Housekeeping/cleaning

- Oversee the management of the cleaning and furnishing services for the operational estate
- Ensure the development and maintenance of a forward plan for furnishings expenditure

IT

- Oversee the College’s IT team and operations, including IT strategy, security and risk management, AV provision and projects

Security/Porters

- Oversee the operation of the Porters’ Lodges to ensure a safe and secure College environment through adequate security provision
- Ensure a comprehensive and robust system is in place for recording incidents (e.g. relating to Fire, Security, Health and Safety)

Tourism

- Oversee the implementation of the visitor and tourism policy, recommend a tourist charging regime, and deal with the external applications to use College facilities

May Ball

- Oversee the College aspects of the annual student-led May Ball, including facilities, insurance and health & safety aspects
**Risk and compliance**

**Safeguarding**

- Participate in the development and management of the College’s safeguarding policies and procedures

**Health & safety**

- Take overall responsibility for health & safety within the College, ensuring the College is compliant and adopts good practice, and act as the College’s principal Health & Safety Officer

**Risk management and business continuity**

- Maintain and communicate disaster and business continuity plans for the entire College, and ensure that there are robust systems in place to respond to and record events (e.g., security or environmental alerts)
- Be responsible for operational risk management in the Domestic Bursar’s departments (including the development and maintenance of operational risk registers)

**Compliance**

- Create and oversee a new compliance function for the College, including guiding the work and approach of the College’s Compliance Manager and regularly reviewing the College’s regulatory compliance
- Act as the lead officer on data protection, including the College’s adherence to GDPR and other relevant regulations, legislation and guidance

The above description is not exhaustive, and the Domestic Bursar would undertake other appropriate responsibilities if reasonable and asked to do so.
Person profile

Set out below are the qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge that are essential requirements for the role.

Experience

• A degree or equivalent professional qualification
• Broad operational experience that encompasses overseeing a complex estate and relevant operational functions
• Experience of effectively leading and developing large multidisciplinary teams
• An understanding of leading in a complex and consensus-driven environment
• Experience of setting and managing large budgets
• Proven project and programme management skills
• Familiarity with environmental sustainability projects and approaches in relevant areas (desirable)

Skills and personal qualities

• A clear alignment with the aims, objectives and values of the College
• Personal integrity and transparency, capable of building trusted relationships founded on mutual respect and understanding with colleagues, staff and students
• Proven planning and strategic thinking skills, with well-honed commercial nous
• Strong analytical/problem solving skills, numerate, with a strong attention to detail
• Proactive in identifying areas for improvement and developing updated policies for the College
• Excellent organisational skills, prioritising and delegating effectively, combined with a flexible and adaptable approach
• Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including an ability to present information, analysis and arguments clearly, drawing out key issues and recommendations
• A clear team player and supportive colleague capable of inspiring and engaging colleagues across the College
Terms and conditions

Hours of the role
The College considers the post of Domestic Bursar to be full time.

Being a visible and active year-round presence in College is important to the individual’s success in the role. The role requires the flexibility and commitment appropriate to a senior post. Some evening and weekend work is expected.

Remuneration
The level of remuneration for the Domestic Bursar role will be discussed with the successful applicant and will be highly competitive. It is pensionable under the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).

Other terms
- The successful candidate will be elected to a Fellowship of the College which carries with it certain benefits (of a non-contractual nature).
- Annual paid leave is 30 days per annum in addition to English bank and public holidays, pro rata. The postholder may be required to work statutory holidays falling in Full Term and take a day-in-lieu.
- The postholder is expected to live within twenty miles of Cambridge.
- The College will provide assistance with relocation expenses to an appointee who is required to move home in order to take up the appointment, up to HMRC limits.
- The appointment will be subject to an initial probationary period of 12 months during which the appointment may be terminated by one month’s notice on either side. Following the completion of the probationary period, the period of notice will be three months to leave at the end of a University term or by 1 May to leave on 30 September.

Other benefits
The College offers a range of benefits to Fellows (which are non-contractual and subject to change):

- A study room in College.
- Assistance with housing:
  - Fellows who fulfil certain conditions about residence may be eligible for single residential accommodation (a ‘residential set’) within College which is provided free of rent though subject to the payment of a service charge to cover the provision of utilities and furniture (if this is provided no study room is provided in addition); or
  - a non-pensionable housing allowance payable for the first four years of the Fellowship only, to support rental of a property; or
  - participation in the College’s House Purchase Scheme which is a shared-ownership scheme to assist Fellows with the purchase of a property in the Cambridge region.
- Fellows are able to dine and lunch at the Fellows’ Table as often as desired, with ninety meals per quarter (either lunch or dinner) being at College expense. A personal guest may also be brought to dinner or lunch at the Fellow’s expense.
- Fellows can apply for Teaching and Research Grants to provide assistance with research activities, attending conferences and purchasing books.
- Fellows may obtain support in the purchase of computer equipment.
- Fellows may claim reimbursement of expenses of entertainment on behalf of the College up to an allowance limit.

In addition:
- Fellows are welcome to utilise the College sporting facilities and the Fitness Centre.
- Fellows may be able to gain a College nomination to the College Nursery.
St John’s College has retained Minerva (www.minervasearch.com) to advise on this appointment.

Please include in your application:

- A covering letter (up to two pages) outlining your reasons for wishing to take-on the role and your qualifications for doing so;
- A full Curriculum Vitae.

Applications should be sent to stjohns@minervasearch.com.

It is anticipated that interviews will be held in the week commencing 13th February 2023.

Potential applicants who would like to make an informal enquiry about the position should contact Minerva as follows:

Helen Higgins
helen@minervasearch.com
0203 793 6311

Information provided will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with the College’s Data Protection Policy, a copy of which may be obtained from the Data Protection, St John’s College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP.