



SOMERVILLE

COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



Appointment of

Finance & Estates Bursar

March 2026

Saxton Bampfylde



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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the position of Finance & Estates Bursar at Somerville College. This is a pivotal role within our community, one with the potential to shape and secure Somerville's future for generations to come.

You will soon realise from these pages that Somerville is an extraordinary place. It has a tremendous and important history as one of the two first colleges to admit women to higher education at Oxford. From these progressive beginnings, Somerville soon became a byword for academic rigour and radical spirit. It inspired brilliant writers (Vera Brittain, Dorothy L Sayers, Iris Murdoch), supported ground-breaking scientists (Dorothy Hodgkin, still the only British woman to win a science Nobel), and guided the careers of political figures from all parties, including Margaret Thatcher, Shirley Williams and, beyond the UK, India's first prime minister, Indira Gandhi.

But Somerville is not defined by its past: it also has a fascinating and vibrant present. The college successfully went mixed in the 1990s, and is today known for being one of the friendliest and financially supportive of all the Oxford colleges. Most importantly, we are a true community. The current Fellowship is a diverse, open-minded and international body. Our students have bounced back from the depredations of Covid-19 to achieve phenomenal academic success. Our entire community from students and staff to our alumni is invested in the causes we support, from our support for widening access to our creation of new centres of research and scholarship, and our recognition as a College of Sanctuary.

These developments have been enabled at every turn by expert financial management and strong growth in Somerville's endowment. The next chapter in our history will undoubtedly bring yet more challenges for our community – most pressingly, the need to confront climate change and address growing vulnerabilities within the structure and financing of the tertiary education sector. As Bursar and a Fellow, you will be in the vanguard as we work to secure our academic standing and future growth.

It was a great privilege to be appointed as Principal last year and rejoin the college I attended as an undergraduate. I inherited a college in a very good place as a result of careful yet ambitious stewardship. I hope that, as you read on, you will be inspired to join myself and my colleagues in that valuable endeavour.

Catherine Royle

Principal



About Us

Somerville was founded to include the excluded. It was created for women when most universities still refused them entry, and for people of diverse beliefs when conformity was essential if you wanted to succeed.

Somerville is a college for all. It was founded in 1879 to provide an opportunity for women, who at that time were still excluded from membership of the University, to benefit from higher education in Oxford. The founders' insistence that students should be subjected to no religious tests or obligations set the ethos of cultural diversity and accessibility which has characterised the college to this day.

Our Aims

The college has been mixed since 1994, but its aims are still largely in keeping with those of the founders:

- To provide opportunities to pursue learning at the highest level to all those capable of making good use of them, recruited through an equitable process based on achievement and potential;
- To encourage the intellectual maturation of individual students by allowing them to engage their critical faculties and intellectual curiosity, develop their analytical skills, and articulate their views;
- To support the research of its Fellows and to foster disciplinary and inter-disciplinary diversity;
- To safeguard the security of the college's academic provision through increased endowment funds;
- To work wholeheartedly within the collegiate University;
- To be a good employer for all staff.



The People

The college community is made up of 44 Governing Body Fellows (of whom 38 are academic fellows engaged in research and teaching). In addition, there are 21 senior and 30 junior research fellows, 400 undergraduate and 180 postgraduate students, supported by numerous lecturers, administrators and support staff.

Our Growth

For the year ended 2025 the college's operational income was approximately £20.02 million. Income is derived from academic and college fees, commercial rentals, catering and conferencing operations (just over £9.11 million revenue), endowment income and capital gain on unrestricted investments (£7.43 million) and donations and legacies (£6.43 million). The college aims to at least break even each year on unrestricted funds.

College finances are sound and the endowment, which now stands at over £109 million, has grown very substantially in recent years. Careful financial management has enabled the college to continue to fulfil its core academic mission of teaching and research, as well as allocating money to areas of urgent need. Somerville has committed to keeping student rents and living costs as low as possible, to ensure students' time at Somerville remains as worry free as possible.

Somerville is able to house all of its undergraduates in-college for every single year of their degrees. That means the college is a true academic community, with students living here 24-7 and deriving exceptional benefits in terms of safety, value for money and student experience.

Our postgraduates have a choice of four very different types of graduate accommodation available and Somerville aims to expand this offer.

The College's estate is well maintained and in a sound condition, and there is a clear five-year capital expenditure plan. During Baroness Royall's principalship the college raised £20 million through a private bond issue in order to develop additional accommodation on its site and the adjacent Little Clarendon Street. The 140 additional rooms have allowed it to accommodate all undergraduate students onsite, which in turn has provided much needed additional accommodation for graduates.





Sustainability

With the climate crisis worsening, we are working hard to secure our ambition of achieving net-zero emissions as soon as possible.

Environmental Sustainability is embedded in our processes as a college, supported in our teaching and research, and integral to our community's commitment to social responsibility, and we are already making progress on multiple fronts.

The college has committed to achieving net-zero emissions as soon as possible across Somerville's infrastructure and processes, supported by its teaching and research. It is also doing important work across infrastructure adaptation, energy saving, travel and food.

Scholarships

Somerville has an engaged and generous alumni base, rooted in deep trust in the college to do the right thing for Somervillians. Somerville is proud to be among the top Oxford Colleges for the financial support it gives its students. The college's careful financial management has also enabled Somerville to fulfil its core academic mission of teaching and research. It has secured crucial funding to support the tutorial system and provided scholarships for the college's brightest students and future change-makers.

The [Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development](#) has 20 current scholarships supporting talented Indian scholars using cross-cutting interdisciplinary perspectives to transform sustainable development in India. 58 scholars are alumni of the Centre.

Somerville has also continued to expand its Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust scholarships, originally founded in 2013. The Trust creates scholarships which support some of the most promising students, who benefit from the unique education and intellectual environment that is offered by Somerville and Oxford. We now have 73 Thatcher Scholars, comprising 40 alumni and 33 current scholars.

150 years

In 2029 Somerville will celebrate its 150th anniversary. In anticipation of this milestone, the college has launched [RISE](#), the largest campaign in the college's history and a project tailor-made to secure Somerville's strategic objectives for the future.

Governance

The college is a self-governing educational charity incorporated by Royal Charter whose core purpose is research and education.

The Governing Body of Somerville College comprises the Principal and Fellows. It is constituted and regulated in accordance with the College Statute and By-Laws. The Governing Body has responsibility for the direction and management of the affairs of the college. Decisions are made in the context of intercollegiate policy agreed amongst the Conference of Colleges, and the overall structure and governance of the University.

[View our Governing Body Fellows](#)

Our Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for the ongoing strategic direction of the college, for its administration and for the management of its finances and assets. It meets regularly with the Principal in the chair and is advised by a range of committees, which include the Education, Finance and the Standing Committees.

Our Values

The college remains true to its founding principles. And its Fellowship is a liberal, progressive and inclusive Governing Body where the search for excellence, in the context of diversity and access, is at the core of all decision-making. The Fellowship governs by consensus; meetings are courteous and constructive. The values of the college resonate deeply with all members and are reflected in the engaged style of the Governing Body.

College Officers

The day to day running of the college is overseen by the College Officers, and the Principal.

The Treasurer and Domestic Bursar, Andrew Parker, has responsibility for finances, investment, HR, estates and maintenance, capital projects, health and safety, the lodge, house-keeping, bursary, the gardeners, catering and conferencing. This role will be amended and Andrew's successor will be supported by a Domestic Bursar (Head of Operations.)

The Senior Tutor, Steve Rayner, coordinates the provision of tuition and the employment of tutors. He also has oversight of inter-collegiate admissions as well as welfare and discipline.

Sarah Butler manages the college's excellent and extensive library and the college's IT services.

The Development Director, Sara Kalim, is responsible for developing strategies for attracting donations and legacies, and for working with the Development Board and other benefactors to secure the financial stability of Somerville's future.



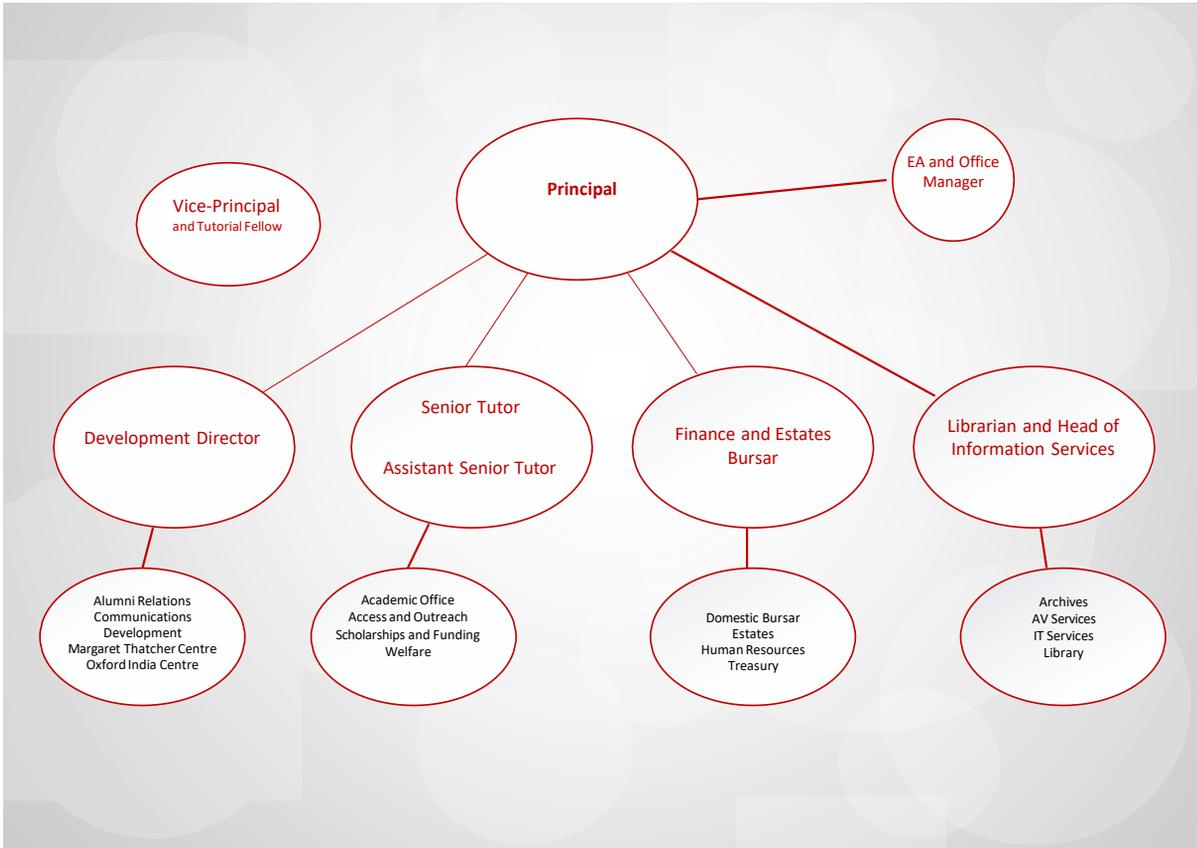


The Role

The Finance and Estates Bursar (referred to as 'Treasurer' in our [Statute](#)) is appointed as a Fellow and Trustee of the college. They are a senior member of the management team reporting to the Governing Body and the Principal. They are responsible to the Governing Body for the management and administration of all financial, estates, human resource and operational issues affecting the college (excluding IT, Library and Development) and for ensuring that there are excellent strategies, policies and processes and communication practices in place for these functions.

The post-holder must have significant experience at the most senior levels of financial and operational leadership. They must have a breadth of knowledge and experience commensurate with the main responsibilities in the role and be an adept communicator and negotiator with the ability to lead strategic decision-making across their areas. They must have excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to create and maintain professional, collaborative working relationships at all levels. They will lead, inspire and model the best practice across all the functions and people they are responsible for.

Senior Management Team



Main Responsibilities

Strategy, planning, professional guidance

- Advise Governing Body and its committees, and where appropriate Remunerations Committee, on all financial, estate and personnel issues (e.g. fees and charges, major expenditure/building works, conditions of service, salaries and pension schemes), and to take a lead in strategic financial planning.
- Undertake a key role in governance, liaising with the Charity Commission, administering the updating of statutes and by-laws, and collaborating with external advisors and auditing bodies.
- Act as convenor of the college's Risk, Audit and Governance Committee.
- Manage the accounting, administration and control systems which provide the college with fully effective and compliant financial management.
- Oversee the effective creation, implementation and maintenance of purchasing policies and procedures.
- Assist in identifying major developments which will affect the strategic direction of the college and to give forward estimates of their financial implications.
- Work with the Principal and Development Director and with the Development Board in planning new and ongoing developments and fundraising initiatives for the college.
- Liaise with JCR (undergraduate) and MCR (post-graduate) representatives on student financial support, housing and facilities, and any other relevant matters, in collaboration with the Senior Tutor.
- Ensure advice is given to junior and senior student members of the college concerning their financial affairs, particularly to those in difficulty. In conjunction with other appropriate College Officers and committees, to determine the way in which available hardship funds may be used to alleviate such difficulties.
- Ensure that health and safety is well managed throughout college premises and the college policies and practices are compliant with relevant legislation.

Endowment Fund Management

- As the convenor of the college's Investment Committee, ensure efficient management of the college's investment portfolio through a discretionary mandate for the endowment fund and more direct involvement for other parts of the investment portfolio, such as property. Define targets for income and capital growth, in liaison with the appropriate college committees. Consult the college investment managers and consultants concerning investment policy and opportunities.
- Provide advice to Governing Body on the apportionment of income to individual funds and annual distribution to individual funds capital or income depending on need. Advising the relevant committees concerning appropriate use and current balances of income (and, if appropriate, capital) on the funds.
- Maintenance of annual trust fund accounts according to standard specifications and best practice.

Financial Management

Control the college's annual income/expenditure and be responsible for the college Accountant and their team who manage the following:

- Administration of graduate and undergraduate fees and charges, including the annual negotiation of rents with the officers of the Junior and Middle Common Rooms.
- Payroll, tax, NI and pensions and related payments including professional fees, contractors and consultant fees.
- Preparation of budgets/estimates of income and expenditure in liaison with Heads of Departments.
- Management accounts, balances, daily ledgers, cash flow.
- Preparation of the annual report and accounts according to Charity Commission specifications.
- Preparation of the annual report and accounts for the subsidiary trading company, Somerville College Trading Ltd, Somerville College Development Ltd, Margaret Thatcher Scholarship Trust.
- Preparation of longer-term financial plans as part of the college's longer-term strategy.
- Obtaining the most advantageous terms and conditions for the college's borrowing requirements.
- Managing the rentals, leases and tenancies of the commercial and private rental properties owned by the college. Conducting rent negotiations and manage all legal agreements relating to those properties, acting where necessary in consultation with the college's commercial and legal advisers.
- Ensuring college building and general insurance policies are fit-for-purpose and renewals and their related administration is well managed.
- Overseeing the management and administration relating to the college's valuable assets, such as works of art and musical instruments, including ensuring that these are well maintained, displayed, and used appropriately with the appropriate level of security and insurance applied to them.

ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance)

- To take the lead on sustainability initiatives and improvements, coordinating the college's approach to project planning and implementation in this area.
- Working with the Estates team to support the college's ambitions of achieving net zero by 2040 and transform buildings and infrastructure to match the college's sustainability aspirations.
- Work with the Development Director to plan funding for sustainability projects.
- Co-ordinate long-term planning for improving the sustainability across the college site, taking a piece-by-piece approach to infrastructure adaptation, energy saving, travel, and food.

Estates and Premises

To be responsible for the college's estates and premises, overseeing the work of the Head of Estates and their team who manage the day to day and longer-term maintenance of the college estate and grounds. The Estates team manage the following:

- Ensuring the management of maintenance and programme of works schedules and costs is well-run and communicated to appropriate college committees.
- Commissioning and overseeing all building works and repairs to the fabric of the college buildings and ensure that security issues are kept under review and addressed.
- Taking overall responsibility for all those working on the repair and maintenance of the buildings, including consultants and contractors.
- Ensuring that major building works and other estate related projects are properly coordinated and take responsibility for project control where appropriate, including preparing tenders for architects, overseeing designs and sourcing public funding where available.
- Management and maintenance of all college grounds, including gardens and outside properties.

People

To develop, nurture and when necessary, build strong high performing teams across college with an ethos of transparency, flexibility and accountability.

To oversee the work of the Head of HR and their team who are responsible for:

- Ensuring effective and efficient Human Resources management and services, across the whole employee life-cycle for academic and support employees and workers, including recruitment, appointments, performance management, policy review and development and legal compliance.
- Liaising with external legal advisors as needed to ensure policies and processes are legally compliant and adhere to best practice. Engaging legal counsel as needed in complex or sensitive cases.
- Taking a 'hands-on' approach as needed to managing employee performance issues,
- Identifying and maintaining the appropriate level of employee resources and presenting new staffing proposals when appropriate to Finance Committee, Standing Committee and Governing Body.
- Supporting managers with the management of their staff, providing advice and guidance as needed.

Operational departments

- To oversee the work of the Domestic Bursar (Head of Domestic Operations) who has responsibility for the efficient and effective running of the college's Domestic departments; Housekeeping and Accommodation, the Lodge, the Nursery, the Chapel, Catering and Conference. The Domestic Bursary is also responsible for health and safety and accommodation compliance.
- To collaborate with the Domestic Bursar in managing operational budgets and resources, ensuring that these dovetail with the college's overall strategy.

Leadership, management and college representation

- Provide strategic direction, leadership and management to all direct reports.
- Represent the college at Conference of Colleges and university-wide fora such as Estates Bursars' Committee, College Contributions Committee, sustainability groups, joint purchasing groups.
- Support the work of the Principal and the Development Director with alumni and fundraising projects.

General

- You will be expected to undertake any necessary training applicable to your role as well as training which applies to general college policies and processes such as health and safety training and data protection training.
- You will be required to familiarise yourself with and abide by college policies and processes applicable to your role.
- This is a senior role and as such may involve undertaking duties not listed above in order to fulfil the responsibilities of the post. The postholder will be expected to manage their own time and workload and take a flexible approach to their duties to ensure the role is carried out efficiently and effectively.



Person Specification

The successful candidate will have a broad range of skills, experience and qualifications, including:

ESSENTIAL

- Education to at least degree level, with intellectual confidence, strong analytical capability, and the ability to communicate fluently both orally and in writing. The capacity to present complex financial issues clearly, transparently and concisely to non-expert audiences.
- Demonstrable, successful experience of holding senior-level financial management responsibility, with strategic financial acumen and a proven ability to lead long-term financial planning in a complex organisation.
- The ability to operate confidently at both strategic and operational levels: shaping financial and estates strategy while ensuring effective delivery.
- Experience of enhancing financial reporting and management information, and introducing appropriate operational rigour and accountability frameworks in ways that support organisational culture.
- Proven effectiveness in leading teams, developing capability, and fostering a supportive, inclusive and high-performing working environment.
- High levels of emotional intelligence and political sensitivity, with the interpersonal skills to work within a consensus-driven, non-hierarchical academic community. A demonstrable commitment to collaboration, consultation and thoughtful stakeholder engagement.
- Gravitas and presence, with the credibility to represent the College internally and externally, and to work closely with Development colleagues to inspire confidence among donors and support the College's long-term ambitions.
- Project management experience, including oversight of significant capital or estates-related initiatives.
- Proficiency in standard IT-based financial, management and planning tools.
- Sympathy with the academic mission of the College, its pastoral responsibilities, and its commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion.
- Willingness to engage fully in College life, including attendance at selected events outside normal working hours.
- Eligibility to act as a charity trustee, with a clear understanding of the associated fiduciary duties and governance responsibilities.

DESIRABLE

- Possession of a relevant professional qualification, (e.g. a recognised CCAB accountancy qualification) or an equivalent business/financial qualification.
- Experience in, or strong understanding of, the charity and/or university sectors.



Terms of Appointment

A competitive salary will be offered for the position, along with a housing allowance.

Other benefits include full dining rights (all meals when college kitchens are open), membership of the Senior Common Room, on-site parking (subject to availability), subsidised Nursery provision as well as access to a range of college and university benefits and resources.



How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Somerville College on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at **roles.saxbam.com** using code **IPEAK**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 27th March 2026**.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

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.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



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