

Selwyn College Cambridge

Head of Communications

Candidate Information Pack





Suzanne Raine
Master-elect



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Bursar



Mike Nicholson
Development Director



Mike Sewell
Senior Tutor

Welcome message from the College

Hello!

Thank you for your interest in the position of Head of Communications at Selwyn College. I hope that this information pack will encourage your interest in the role.

We are creating this role following the retirement of our current Master who – as the ex-head of BBC TV News – has overseen college communications channels for over a decade. This role leads on communications strategy and supports delivery across the college. You will work with development, admissions, students and staff to support and evolve their engagement with those within and outside Selwyn that have an interest in what we do.

We are looking for a self-motivated individual with excellent technical and interpersonal skills. We want someone with proven ability in liaising with and influencing the wider institution around them. Colleges are complex, and very human, environments – so the ability to work with a wide range of stakeholders is key. Relationships range across College Officers, students, academics and department heads internally, through to peers in other colleges and external professional support.

This is an exciting time at Selwyn. In October 2025 we will welcome our new Master, and in the next couple of years we expect to appoint a new Development Director and Senior Tutor following retirements. We are looking for a strong communicator to support these senior roles, and help ensure consistency in the College's self-presentation.

Selwyn was founded in 1882, and today is a charity. Selwyn is home to over 400 undergraduates, with one of the highest proportions of state school entries in Cambridge. We also have over 290 full and part time postgraduate students from all over the world, over 60 academic Fellows, and a committed and friendly body of non-academic staff numbering around 130. We are proud of our diversity and welcome applications from those who may be under-represented in our community.

Since joining in 2022 I have found Selwyn to be a very warm and engaging community. We can promise you a friendly welcome. Please do contact me if you would like an informal conversation about the role.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Jennifer Phillips | Bursar
bursar@sel.cam.ac.uk

Key dates:

Application deadline:
Noon, Monday 23 June 2025

Interviews:
Wednesday 2 July 2025



About us

Selwyn College is one of the younger colleges within the University of Cambridge, having been established in 1882. It is home to students of all backgrounds from the UK and across the world, and we are proud of our diverse and inclusive academic community.

The college takes its name from George Augustus Selwyn, who was the first Bishop of New Zealand (1841-68) and later Bishop of Lichfield (1868-78), in whose memory the college was founded. The college opened at the start of the academic year in 1882 with just 28 undergraduates, the Master, the Tutor and one non-resident lecturer. At the time it was seen as out of the mainstream, being at least ten minutes' walk from King's College and the city centre. However, the Sidgwick site for humanities was later created right next door; and due to the steady growth and movement of the University into sites to the west of the city, Selwyn now stands at its geographical heart. A map of University locations, including Selwyn, can be found here: <https://www.sel.cam.ac.uk/l/27>

Our easily accessed location on Grange Road is only part of the college's attractions. Being slightly out of town allowed Selwyn to build steadily on its site – from the Old Court (1882-9) through to Cripps Court (1960's), Ann's Court (2009) and hostels in-between – so that it can accommodate all undergraduates and first year postgraduates within a single geographical community. Admitting only around 120 undergraduates and 100 postgraduates each year, this means that our students form a cohesive community, knowing many of their peers by name and most by sight. Extensive academic, pastoral, welfare and administrative support is all based at the College, and these teams of staff and academics help students feel at home here quickly.

Our academic results are excellent – the College ranked first amongst 29 undergraduate colleges in terms of the proportion achieving 'Good Honours' (firsts and upper seconds) in the University Tripos examinations in 2024. Our admissions outcomes have met or exceeded all OfS targets in terms of widening participation in higher education for the last 3 years. And we also encourage our students – and staff – to engage in college life in other ways, with a sportsground, boathouse, gym, two choirs, book clubs and many other activities bringing members together regularly.



What are we looking for in our Head of Communications?

Purpose of the role

The Head of Communications is integral to the college community, ensuring good news is shared effectively and that communication content and style supports our positive reputation both internally and to the outside world. The role is of critical support to the Master, Bursar, Senior and Admissions Tutors and Development Director in navigating communications decision making as opportunities and issues arise.

The role holds overall responsibility for social media channels and the website. It is supported by a full time role within Development focused on publications and alumni outreach, and by contributions from fellow and staff within Admissions and outreach teams. Engagement with wider college members will evolve from building relationships over time.

We hope to recruit:

- Someone with an excellent track record in similar communication roles, strong technical skills, and the ability to enthuse and engage.
- Someone with the skills to support the College's judgement around the 'right level, volume and tone' in communication across online platforms and in a wide range of situations across the breadth of college community life.
- Someone self-motivated, who can work collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders, anticipating and planning ahead in order to capture and convey busy college life to appropriate groups, internally and externally.
- To academics and students, to colleagues heading other departments and to professional advisors, you will need to evidence authority and accuracy in communications matters.



Specific Responsibilities

Promotion of the community

- Develop, in consultation with the Master and key College Officers, a co-ordinated College communication strategy that draws on past successes, uniting external and internal facing profiles. Implement this across print, online and other media.
- Seek out stories that support the public profile of the College, developing and creating content and images, and recognising their impact on development, admissions, recruitment and other income generating activities.
- Advise on effective responses to opportunities and issues as they arise, including taking agreed actions, such as developing and distributing responses, or evolving the subject positively.
- Act as the first point of contact for press enquiries, working with the Master and senior College Officers and the University Office of External Communications.
- Assist the Master and key College Officers as required in communicating effectively with their own internal audiences, maintaining a ‘weather eye’ on any gaps in communication across the community.
- Deliver guidelines and targeted coaching to support a consistent and high quality approach across the College, and to help students, staff and fellows understand what ‘good communication’ looks like.
- Work with departments to promote the activities of the college, including College open days, admissions and outreach events, alumni events, scholarly lectures and seminars and estate projects.
- Support students in navigating communications matters with the potential to impact on their welfare and college experience, on the advice of the Senior Tutor.

Digital communications

- Ensure that the College’s communications strategy operates across all channels effectively, extending a welcoming and engaging digital presence for alumni and applicants, as well as current members.

- Support and advise Fellows operating any form of satellite social media linked to wider collegiate activities, such as music.
- Work with staff and Fellows to ensure they are able to efficiently maintain their own sections of the website, developing and evolving best practice.
- Hold overall responsibility for the accuracy and currency of information on the website and inward facing intranet pages. The website is supported by our IT team.
- Work with IT and other departments to ensure the smooth operating of functionality embedded in the website, such as ticketing and/or payment solutions, and their compliance with data protection regulations.

College publications

- Have input to publications ranging from content creation to proof reading. Support branding consistency where appropriate across all published material, online and hard copy, from booklets to signage to website pages.
- Oversee and advise the development team’s Publications and Marketing Officer on the delivery of key publications to alumni, Fellows and others – the Annual Report and Magazine.
- Advise and support the Editor of the College Calendar, our archival record.
- Advise and support Admissions on the creation of prospectuses and guides for undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Within the main strategy, work with the Development Director to implement an effective blend of print and digital communications strategy towards alumni and supporters to increase engagement and personalise communications.

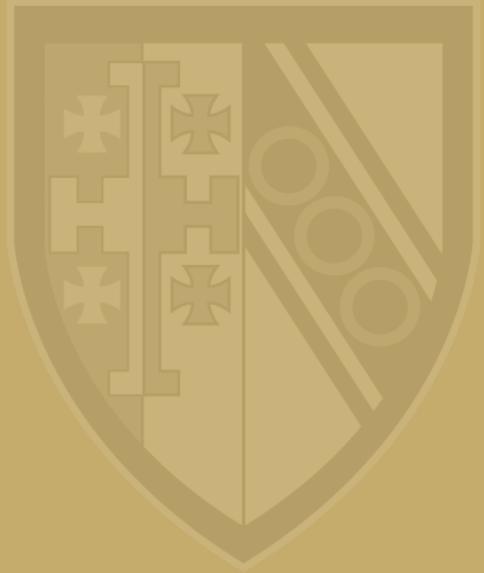
Using communications resources

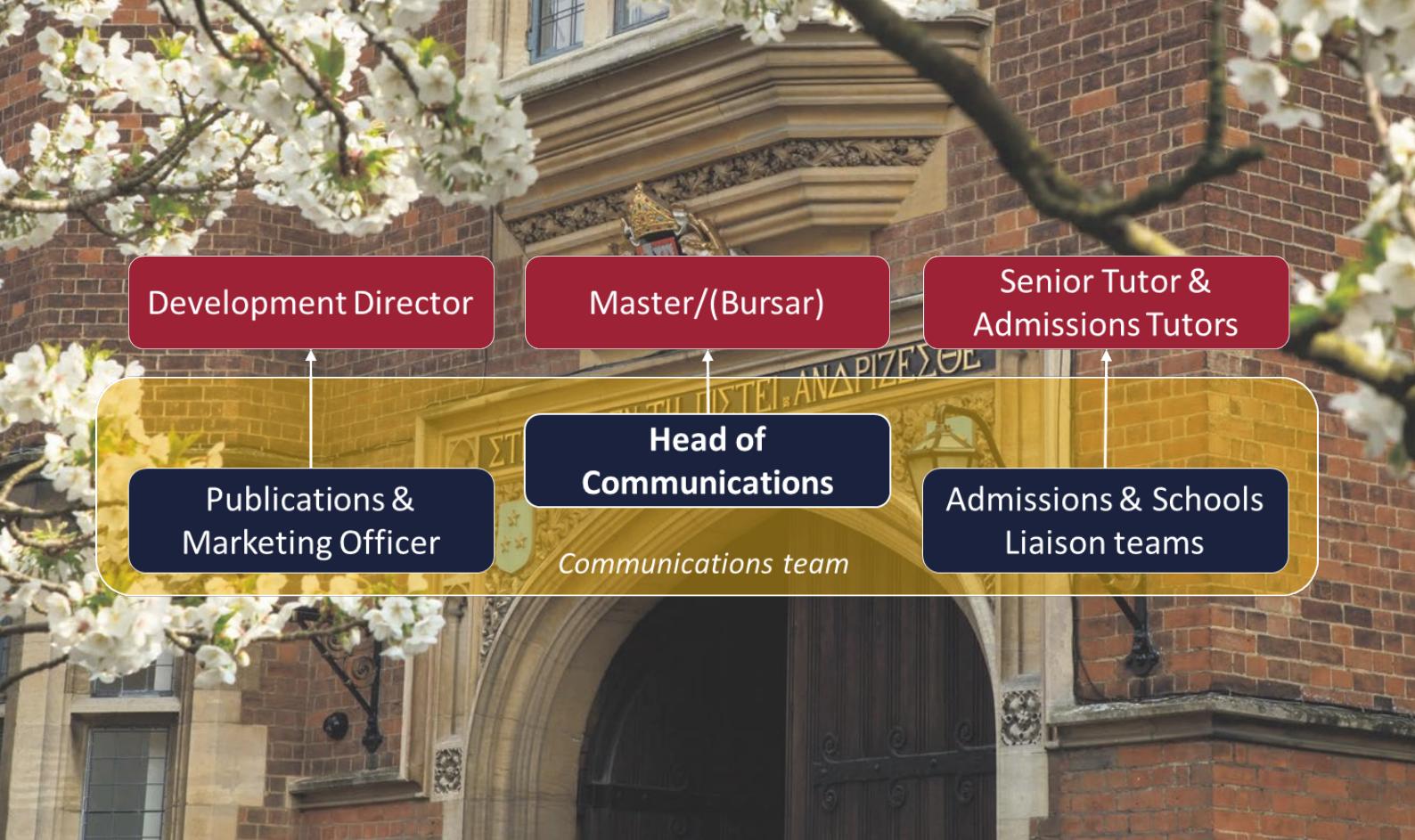
- Deliver communications activities within existing budgets. These are managed by the IT Manager for website matters and by development and admissions for published content and event marketing.

- Liaise with the University Office of External Communications and other Collegiate communication functions, both to disseminate news, and to support co-ordinated responses in difficult situations.
- Support College staff when requested to develop strong communication skills, learn from best practice and help them save time.
- Co-ordinate procurement and delivery of media assets – photography and film etc – for promotional purposes, working with external providers where necessary.
- Manage and update the digital image library, liaising with the archivist.

Other matters

- Attend the College's IT & Data, Development & Alumni and Access committees on request, providing quantitative and qualitative analytics to support decision making.
- Review responses to Freedom of Information requests and advise on any media implications.
- Be a member of the College's emergency response team.
- The post holder is expected to undertake other responsibilities from time to time as may reasonably be requested by the Master or other senior College Officer.
- Hours are expected to be flexible as necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the post and will routinely include evening and weekend presence, offset by reduced weekday working.





Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Skills and experience		
Meaningful experience in a similar role, managing effective communications activities including press releases, social media, internal communications, e-communications, broadcasting and exceptional presentation skills.	X	
Understanding the importance of communications in marketing and public relations.	X	
Excellent IT skills, with experience of HTML and content management systems such as Drupal or WordPress, as well as managing the full range of social media platforms.	X	
The ability to produce clear copy and take good quality photographs, with the correct register and visual impact.	X	
Experience of implementing and maintaining branding guidelines.	X	
Sound planning and organisational skills, including the ability to prioritise conflicting demands on time and resources.	X	
Experience in dealing with communications in pressurized situations.	X	
Numerate, and able to manage a budget.		X
Broad experience of design and video editing tools, and the management of live streaming technologies.		X
Previous experience in the charity or higher education sector		X
An understanding of the collegiate University and the admissions and alumni relations activities of a Cambridge college.		X
Experience of the relevant legislation relating to data protection, health and safety applicable in a small or medium sized enterprise.		X

Education		
Degree level qualification		X

Person Specification		
'Big picture' strategic understanding, alongside attention to detail	X	
Ability to use own initiative, work under pressure, and manage colleague's expectations.	X	
A team player, comfortable collaborating with colleagues and adept at building strong working relationships.	X	
A commitment to professional development	X	
High levels of personal integrity and professionalism	X	
Willingness to seek out improvements and embrace change	X	
Flexibility, enthusiasm, and a collaborative attitude	X	

How to apply

Please apply by submitting:

- a covering letter outlining your interest in and your suitability for this role
- a full CV
- a short application form (see job advert)

via email to recruitment@sel.cam.ac.uk.

The closing date for applications is **noon, Monday 23 June 2025**.

Interviews will be held on **Wednesday 2 July**.

Further information

If you would enjoy getting involved with the College and think you can add benefit to the role, further details are available below:

Job title: Head of Communications

Location: Selwyn College, Grange Road, CB3 9DQ. The post holder is expected to work onsite for the majority of their role.

Reports to: Master

Salary: In the region of £47k-51k, or pro rata equivalent. Spine point awarded will reflect experience. Secondment is a possibility.

Vacancy: Permanent, 0.6-0.8 FTE (1 FTE equates to 37.5 hours per week).

Hours are expected to be flexible as necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the post and will routinely include evening and weekend presence, offset by restricted weekday working.

A probationary period of six months applies during which the appointment may be terminated by one month's notice from either party.

Closing date: Noon on Monday 23 June, 2025

Other benefits

Annual leave: 33 days (including bank holidays)

Pension: Generous defined contribution scheme, with employer contributions up to 24% on a matched basis

