

# Constitution of the Middle Common Room of St Edmund Hall

## 1 The Middle Common Room

- 1.1 The Society shall be called *the Middle Common Room of St Edmund Hall*, hereafter referred to as *the MCR*.
- 1.2 The dual objectives of the MCR shall be:
  - (a) to further the ethical and educational purposes of St Edmund Hall, hereafter, the 'College', by providing physical, intellectual, cultural, sporting, welfare, and social facilities and opportunities to its members, and
  - (b) to represent the views and interests of its members within and to the College, the University of Oxford, hereafter, the 'University', and to the world-at-large.
- 1.3 The MCR is committed to addressing discrimination and ensuring equality in all its activities, in accordance with the general law and relevant policies of the College and University.

## 2 Membership

### 2.1 Membership Rights and Fees

- 2.1.1 Pursuant to section 22(2)(c) of the Education Act 1994, each student has the right not to be a member of the MCR. Any student who chooses to exercise this right must inform the Treasurer in writing by the second week of Michaelmas term.
- 2.1.2 Students who exercise the right not to become members shall continue to have access to all services offered by the College to post-graduate students, including access to all MCR facilities owned and funded by the College.
- 2.1.3 All members shall be charged such fees for MCR membership as are fixed by the MCR in by-laws. Ordinary and Associate members will be charged MCR membership fees on their College battels. Guest members will be charged MCR membership fees by invoice for as long as their membership is maintained.

### 2.2 Ordinary Membership

Ordinary Membership in the MCR may be conferred upon:

- (a) members of the University pursuing a graduate course of study at the College;
  - (b) members of the University pursuing an undergraduate course of study at the College with senior status (as defined in the University Regulations for Senior Student Status) or reading for a second undergraduate degree; or
- 2.2.1 Ordinary members are entitled to:
    - (a) vote in MCR elections and at MCR meetings;
    - (b) use all MCR facilities and services; and
    - (c) attend all MCR events.
  - 2.2.3 Persons eligible for ordinary membership will automatically become members of the MCR upon attaining eligibility, unless they elect not to become members. The MCR shall advise each person eligible for ordinary membership of their right to opt out of

membership.

### **2.3 Associate Membership**

Associate Membership in the MCR may be conferred upon:

- (a) members of the University in their fourth year of studies, who are pursuing a full-time undergraduate course of study at the College that requires four years to complete, and (not including persons who have by reason of unsatisfactory progress in their undergraduate course been forced to remain in residence a fourth year); or
- (b) the President of the Junior Common Room during their time at the University,
- (c) Vice-President and Social Secretary of the Junior Common Room during their terms of office.

2.3.1 Associate members are entitled to:

- (a) vote in MCR NSE rep election and at MCR meetings;
- (b) use all MCR facilities and services; and
- (c) attend all MCR events.

2.3.2 Persons eligible for associate membership will automatically become members of the MCR upon attaining eligibility, unless they elect not to become members. The MCR shall advise each person eligible for associate membership of their right to opt out of membership.

### **2.4 Guest Membership**

Guest Membership may be conferred upon persons who, in the opinion of the MCR, would benefit from MCR membership. Persons eligible for Guest Membership include, but are not limited to:

- (a) spouses and partners of Ordinary Members; and
- (b) visiting graduates coming to Oxford to do work under the aegis of a Fellow of the College.

2.4.1 Ordinary members or Fellows may nominate a person for guest membership, who shall then be admitted to guest membership at the next MCR meeting in the absence of any objection to that person's membership. In the event of an objection the MCR is to vote on the membership as if the nomination was a motion for general MCR business in accordance with Section 6 of the Constitution.

2.4.2 Guest members are entitled to:

- (a) use all MCR facilities and services; and
- (b) attend all MCR events.

## **3 Legislation**

The MCR membership may pass legislation for the good governance of the MCR. There shall be three categories of legislation, in descending order of precedence:

- (a) Constitution;
- (b) Standing Orders; and

- (c) By-Laws.

### **3.1 Constitution**

- 3.1.1 The constitution and any amendments shall be subject to approval by the governing body of the College and shall be reviewed at intervals of not more than 5 years.
- 3.1.2 Any ordinary MCR member may propose an amendment to the Constitution in of the following ways:
  - (a) Any amendments to this Constitution which affects one quarter or fewer of its articles shall be proposed at one meeting and voted on at the next meeting. No proposed amendment shall be adopted unless by a two-thirds majority of the ordinary members present. In no case shall the two meetings occur less than seven days apart; or
  - (b) Any amendment to this Constitution affecting more than one quarter of its articles or effectively replaces the current Constitution shall be subject to a referendum by the entire voting body of the MCR and requires a two-thirds majority to pass. A motion to submit the amendment to a referendum must pass by a simple majority vote of a MCR meeting which triggers a referendum to be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders. In no case shall the meeting and referendum occur less than six days apart.

### **3.2 Standing Orders**

- 3.2.1 Standing Orders shall be passed to prescribe the procedures for matters set out in this Constitution.
- 3.2.2 Standing Orders may be amended or repealed by a simple majority vote at a meeting of the MCR.
- 3.2.3 Any ordinary MCR member is entitled to draft and propose a Standing Order or an amendment to a Standing Order. A Standing Order or amendment shall be proposed by motion and publicised in accordance with the Standing Orders for meetings.

### **3.3 By-laws**

- 3.3.1 The By-Laws of the MCR shall be composed of motions for the ordinary business of the MCR as are made from time to time.
- 3.3.2 By-Laws may be amended or repealed by a simple majority vote at a meeting of the MCR.
- 3.3.3 Any MCR member is entitled to draft and propose a motion for a By-Law or an amendment to a By-Law. A motion shall be proposed by and publicised in accordance with the Standing Orders for meetings.

### **3.4 Legislation Records Management**

- 3.4.1 The records of the MCR Constitution, and such Standing Orders and By-Laws as are currently in force shall be maintained at all times.
- 3.4.2 The Vice-President has responsibility that all MCR legislation is maintained and up-to-date, and that all amendments are incorporated into the text of the relevant body of legislation as soon as practicable after the amendment has been made. A physical copy of all legislation is to be maintained.

- 3.4.3 All members of the governing body and the MCR shall have access to the current version of all MCR legislation. The current version of the constitution shall be posted on the MCR website at all times.

## **4 The Trustees**

### **4.1 Definition**

The trustees shall be entrusted with the executive authority of the MCR, and shall be directly responsible to the General Meeting. All Full MCR members shall be entitled to vote at their election

### **4.2 Duties**

The trustees are responsible for the day-to-day running and administration of the MCR. In fulfilling this role they must:

- Use reasonable care and skill, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the MCR is well-run and efficient.
- Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be a material risk to the MCR, or where they may be in breach of their duties.
- Ensure the solvency of the MCR.
- Use MCR assets reasonably and only in furtherance of the charity's purposes.
- Avoid activities, which would place the MCR's endowments, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
- Take special care when investing or borrowing funds (or delegating that activity).
- Meet at least once a term to discuss the general running of the MCR and whenever the current MCR affairs require their review.
- Veto any decisions made by the General Meeting or made through a referendum that is contrary to the Objects of the MCR as defined in Article A II (2.1); in consultation with the MCR Committee when required.
- Report to the General Meeting any decisions made previously by the General Meeting or through a referendum that have been identified as contrary to the Object of the MCR.

### **4.3. Liability**

The trustees will be responsible for the debts of the charity.

### **4.3 Composition**

Trusteeship will be held by the following posts, the duties of which are defined in section 5:

1. The MCR President
2. The MCR Vice-President
3. The MCR Stewards
4. The MCR Treasurer

### **4.4 Election**

The trustees shall be elected in accordance with item 7 of the MCR constitution.

### **4.5 Terms of Office**

The trustees shall hold office for one year from Sunday of the 9th Week of their term of election.

### **4.6 Impeachment**

Trustees may be dismissed for dereliction of duty or for having acted in a manner likely to bring the MCR into disrepute by:

1) Presidential Fiat, wherein The MCR President may dismiss a trustee with immediate effect; this dismissal will lapse unless confirmed by a two-thirds majority at the subsequent General Meeting, and Referendum held for that purpose.

2) No Confidence, wherein a General Meeting may request the resignation of a trustee by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting and enforce dismissal by a Referendum held for that purpose.

#### **4.7 Vacation of Post**

A trustee may voluntarily resign or automatically step down from their post should they graduate and cease to be registered as a student at The Hall, be sent down, be rusticated, self rusticate or take a leave of absence of more than eight weeks.

#### **4.8 Restrictions on Holding Trustee Positions**

No person may hold two trustee positions concurrently.

### **5 The Committee**

The officers of the MCR shall form the MCR Committee, chaired by the President. The Committee shall decide upon, plan and budget for activities and programs which further the purpose or interests of the MCR. Within this Committee, the President, Vice-President and Stewarding Team form the Executive. The Executive is empowered to make unforeseen, timely decisions on behalf of the MCR. A single organising member of the committee will be remunerated for any fee-paying event which they are required to attend. All serving members of the committee shall be remunerated in full for the Christmas and Trinity term dinners as long as they shall be held.

#### **5.1 President**

The President shall represent the MCR to the College, University and the world-at-large. The President shall be elected in accordance with 5 and hold office for one academic year beginning in 10th Week of Trinity term. The President's duties include:

- (a) Representing the interests of the MCR;
- (b) Attending, or appointing a delegate to attend, all College meetings relevant to the MCR, especially Governing Body. The president may also attend, or send delegates to, meetings with other University bodies and non-University organizations;
- (c) Negotiate on rents with the college on behalf of the MCR;
- (d) Notifying the membership of termly meetings in accordance with 6;
- (e) Reporting on presidential activities at termly meetings in accordance with 6;
- (f) Calling elections in accordance with 6;
- (g) Acting as signatory to MCR accounts;
- (h) Facilitating resolution of conflicts between members and the Committee in

accordance with 9; and

- (i) Assuming the responsibilities of the Vice-President in their absence.

## **5.2 Vice-President**

The Vice-President functions as the Secretary of the MCR as well as providing an individual to assume the role of the President in their absence. The Vice-President shall be elected in accordance with Standing Orders and shall hold office beginning 10th week of Trinity term for one academic year. The Vice-President's duties include:

- (a) Creating the agenda for General Meetings of the MCR;
- (b) Maintaining and updating the MCR Legislation;
- (c) Taking minutes of termly meetings;
- (d) Assuming the responsibilities of the President in their absence; and
- (e) Sending out weekly email digests of MCR member notices and advertisements;
- (f) Collecting the MCR post, and checking the suggestion box.

## **5.3 Stewarding Team**

The Stewarding team shall consist of two officers to oversee the day-to-day operations of the MCR, look after the social interests of its members and liaise with the College, particularly where the Society's rooms or provisions for its members are concerned. The Stewarding team shall be elected in accordance with Standing Orders and hold office for one academic year beginning in 10th week of Trinity term. The Stewarding Team shall decide amongst themselves how to fulfil their duties, which include:

- (a) Creating events to include on the termcard and distributing the termcard before the start of each term;
- (b) Arranging external events with other colleges, such as exchange dinners;
- (c) Organising MCR Christmas Dinner, Hearne Dinner, and MCR Trinity Dinner;
- (d) Maintaining the cellar and port cupboard within the MCR, and making port/sherry and non-alcoholic beverages available before formal halls;
- (e) Reporting on their activities in accordance with Standing Orders;
- (f) Maintaining a list of College members to receive special invitations to events and ensuring invitations are delivered; and
- (g) Acting as a liaison between the MCR and the Colleges' Domestic Committee, with particular concern for College accommodation and food services.

## **5.4 Information Officer**

The Information Officer enhances communication within the MCR and assists the Treasurer. The Information Officer shall be elected in accordance with Standing Orders and hold office for one academic year beginning in 10th week of Trinity term. The Information Officer's duties include:

- (a) Maintaining the MCR website;
- (b) Creating new digital forums or services as desired by the MCR;

- (c) Representing the MCR's computer-related interests to the College and working with College IT Officer to meet the computing needs of the MCR; and
- (d) Assisting the Treasurer as requested by the Treasurer.

## **5.6 Welfare Team**

The Welfare Team shall consist of two officers who work to ensure the well-being of MCR members. Wherever possible, the MCR seeks diversity in the Welfare Team. The Welfare Team shall be elected in accordance with the Standing Orders, and operate/be trained in accordance with the University's Peer-Mentoring Scheme. The individual officers of the Welfare Team will hold office for one academic year beginning in 10th week of Trinity term. The officers of the Welfare Team shall decide amongst themselves how to fulfil their duties, which include:

- (a) Listening to the concerns of MCR members, and where requested or necessary, helping members access College, University and external resources;
- (b) Addressing and raising awareness of women's issues, men's issues, equality and LGBTQPIA issues, or approaching an MCR member to do so if more appropriate;
- (c) Planning welfare-oriented events for the term card;
- (d) Organizing an introductory session for incoming students in Michaelmas, and acting as an initial point of contact for members arriving in subsequent terms;
- (e) Working with the Stewards to address welfare-related issues in association with College accommodation and catering;
- (f) Implementing the welfare schemes (i.e. the bike scheme) of the MCR, as listed in the by-laws;
- (g) Representing the welfare interests of the MCR at the termly College Welfare;
- (h) Maintaining the hot drink supplies in the MCR;
- (i) Preparing an annual report summarising welfare issues arising and events organized, to be submitted to the MCR, Tutor for Graduate Students and JCR Welfare Representative; and
- (j) Maintaining a profile within the MCR.

## **5.7 Treasurer**

The Treasurer maintains and manages records and accounts for the MCR. The Treasurer shall be elected in accordance with Standing Orders and shall hold office beginning 10th week of Trinity term for one academic year. The Treasurer's duties include:

- (a) Maintaining the financial records for the MCR;
- (b) Acting as the main signatory for MCR accounts;
- (c) Providing access to MCR members, upon request, wishing to inspect MCR accounts;
- (d) Reporting on financial matters in accordance with Standing Orders;
- (e) Determining event financing with the Committee;
- (f) Budget for and oversee the maintenance, procedures for usage, storage and replacement of all MCR property in which the MCR has an interest, including any punt(s);

- (g) Maintaining newspaper and magazine subscriptions, and soliciting recommendations for the addition or cancellation of subscription from members when necessary; and
- (h) Delegating tasks to the Information Officer;
- (i) Reviewing the regular charitable donations and MCR subscriptions on a termly basis.

## 5.8 Norham Gardens Representative

The Norham Gardens Representative functions as the committee representative of the MCR members living in Norham Gardens (NSE) as well as providing social facilities and events at the Norham Gardens site. The Norham Gardens Representative shall be elected in accordance with Standing Orders and shall hold office for one academic year beginning in Michaelmas term. The Norham Gardens Representative's duties include:

- (a) Organising and running social events at NSE with assistance from the Stewards where necessary;
- (b) Helping at any welfare events run at NSE;
- (c) Represent the MCR members living at NSE to the MCR committee;
- (d) Communicate to the MCR committee any issue/requests regarding the NSE common room; and
- (e) Liaise with college staff to organise implementation of MCR policies and decisions regarding the NSE buildings;
- (f) Addressing and raising awareness on University's and /or College's Environmental Policies and liaising with St Edmund Hall Environmental Representative to implement Environmental related issues

## 5.9 Academic Representative

The Academic Representative represents the academic interests of the MCR. The office is a non-executive position that reports directly to the President. The Academic Representative shall be elected in accordance with Standing Orders and shall hold office for one academic year.

The Academic Representative's duties include:

- (a) Attending Academic Committee and Library Committee;
- (b) Discussing any graduate students' academic concerns that might arise with the Tutor for Graduates, and meeting with them on a regular basis;
- (c) Soliciting volunteers from the MCR for academic events at their own discretion, including the Termly Graduate Seminars;
- (d) Encouraging the academic participation of the graduate community in college;
- (e) Being involved in the formulation and implementation of Collegiate structures to ensure MCR academic community, such as disbursement of College funds for convening MCR/SCR seminars, and organising events jointly with the SCR;
- (f) Liaising with the JCR Academic Affairs Officer or Representative on academic matters and issues affecting MCR and JCR members.

## 6 Independent Chair

- 6.1 There shall be an Independent Chair of the MCR who is not a current member of the MCR Committee. At the first General Meeting of Michaelmas Term, the first order of business will be the nomination of an Independent Chair by the President and



new Independent Chair. The duties of the independent chair include:

- (a) chairing meetings;
- (b) ensuring the smooth and timely conduct of MCR business in a General Meeting;
- (c) interpreting the Constitution as needed;
- (d) chairing Electoral Tribunals; and
- (e) supervising elections.

## **7 Elections**

### **7.1 Supervision of Elections**

- 7.1.1 Elections shall be supervised by the Returning Officer.
- 7.1.2 The Returning Officer may not be an officer of the MCR or a candidate for election.
- 7.1.3 The Independent Chair shall normally serve as the Returning Officer. If the Independent

Chair is disqualified by 6.1.2 or is otherwise not available, the Returning Officer shall be appointed at a meeting of the MCR by simple majority vote.

7.1.4 The Returning Officer shall appoint Deputy Returning Officers as needed.

## **7.2 Calling Elections**

Elections shall be called by the President in accordance with dates set down by Standing Orders.

## **7.3 Nominations**

7.3.1 The Returning Officer shall publicise the elections and accept nominations as prescribed in the Standing Orders.

7.3.3 A nominated candidate:

- (a) must be an ordinary member of the MCR;
- (b) must be willing to accept their nomination; and
- (c) is not to simultaneously hold more than one post at a time.
- (d) may stand for a maximum of two positions, with the candidate nominated for each position by a different person.
- (e) standing for more than one post must indicate their binding order of preference of posts to the Returning Officer in advance of the vote count. Candidates standing for the position of 'President' amongst other posts must indicate a first preference for 'President'.

7.3.4 Candidates are not to be nominated on a slate, official or unofficial.

## **7.4 Campaigning and Hustings**

7.4.1 Campaigning may commence after nominations are announced by the Returning Officer.

7.4.2 Campaigning is to take place in accordance with the Standing Orders. Matters to be regulated by Standing Orders include:

- (a) The production and distribution of campaign literature;
- (b) The budget permitted for campaigns; and
- (c) The manner in which candidates may canvass support during the campaign.

7.4.3 No person may use bribery, coercion or intimidation in order to secure votes for a candidate.

7.4.4 Candidates may not be publicly endorsed or supported by other Candidates running for election, or from current or elect MCR Officers.

7.4.5 Hustings are to take place no fewer than 2 (two) days before the election, at a time determined by the Returning Officer. Hustings are to be chaired by the Returning Officer. Conduct of Hustings shall be in accordance with the Standing Orders.

## **7.5 The Ballot**

7.5.1 The ballot shall take place on the date called by the President.

7.5.2 Polling shall take place in the MCR and shall last for ten hours.

- 7.5.3 The ballot is to be made secure and supervised at all times by the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers.
- 7.5.4 Campaigning is not to take place in the MCR during polling. Candidates are not to be present in the MCR on the date of the election before the end of polling except in order to vote.
- 7.5.5 Each ordinary member of the MCR is entitled to vote in the elections. Each member shall have one vote.
- 7.5.6 An Electoral Roll shall be prepared listing each eligible voter.
- 7.5.7 Voting shall be by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote system set down in 7.6.

## **7.6 Single Transferable Vote**

- 7.6.1 The Single Transferable Voting System shall operate as follows:
  - (a) All candidates for a position will appear on the ballot so that voters may express their preferences for candidates in numerical order;
  - (b) Votes are cast by placing a '1' beside the name of the voter's preferred candidate, a '2' beside the next preferred candidate and so on until the voter no longer wishes to express a preference;
  - (c) Voters are to be permitted to express a preference to re-open nominations;
  - (d) After voting is complete, the Returning Officer is to calculate the quota for each position according to the following formula:
    - (i) the total number of votes cast (not including spoiled ballots), divided by one more than the number of officers to be elected, plus one vote.
    - (ii) The candidate who achieves the most first preference votes in excess of the quota will be elected.
    - (iii) If no candidate exceeds the quota on first preferences, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is excluded and the ballots are transferred to continuing candidates in accordance with the next available preferences on the ballots. This process is to continue until a candidate is elected.

## **7.7 The Count**

- 7.7.1 The Returning Officer shall count the votes immediately after the poll closes. Counting shall be supervised by a Deputy Returning Officer and an independent observer. The independent observer should be a member or employee of the College who is not a ordinary member of the MCR.
- 7.7.2 The ballot shall be accessed at the start of the count by the Returning Officer and witnessed by the Deputy Returning Officer and the independent observer.
- 7.7.3 Ballot papers shall be counted and checked against the number of people who signed the college list. If the divergence of the two figures is such that it could affect the outcome of the election, any candidate for an affected position may insist on a fresh election, with no new candidates.
- 7.7.4 Candidates elected to more than one post shall be considered to have been elected to the post specified by their indicated preference. For all other positions for which they were a candidate, their candidacy shall be removed from the ballot paper and the election recounted.
- 7.7.5 At the end of the count the ballot papers must be secured and replaced in the ballot box

by the Returning Officer, witnessed by the Deputy Returning Officer and the independent observer.

- 7.7.6 The results of elections shall be publicised as soon as they are known.
- 7.7.7 The ballots must be kept inside the sealed ballot box until after the period during which an electoral tribunal may be called. After this time the Returning Officer must destroy the ballot papers.

## **7.8 Casual Vacancies and By-Elections**

- 7.8.1 If for any reason an MCR officer is unable to take up or continue in his or her term of office, the President shall call a by-election for the position as soon as possible.
- 7.8.2 The by-election shall take place in accordance with the provisions for elections in the Constitution and Standing Orders, along with any other Standing Orders prescribed for the timing and conduct of by-elections.
- 7.8.3 The elected candidate in a by-election for a casual vacancy shall take office immediately, and shall serve for the remainder of the term of office.

## **7.9 Electoral Tribunals**

- 7.9.1 Any allegations of irregularities or malpractice in the conduct of an election after nominations have opened may be made to the Returning Officer, no later than a week after the announcement of election results.
- 7.9.2 Upon receipt of an allegation, the Returning Officer shall convene an Electoral Tribunal to investigate and determine the validity of said allegation. A summary of the allegation shall be posted in the MCR at least 48 hours prior to the Tribunal.
- 7.9.3 The Electoral Tribunal shall be composed of the President, Vice-President, Returning Officer and the Tutor for Graduates or their designate. The Tribunal shall be chaired by the Returning Officer. In the event that any of the officers are:
  - (a) a candidate in the elections;
  - (b) the person making any allegations;
  - (c) the person against whom any allegations are made; or
  - (d) a person previously penalised by the Electoral Tribunal,the Tribunal shall appoint other members of the MCR to replace them on the tribunal.
- 7.9.4 The proceedings of a Tribunal shall be closed. However, the Tribunal may request that persons attend to give evidence if those persons are, in the opinion of the Tribunal, likely to be able to provide relevant information.
- 7.9.5 Anyone about whom any allegations have been made shall have the right to be present, to challenge any such allegations, to speak on their own behalf, and to produce witnesses and evidence.
- 7.9.6 The Tribunal shall write a report of their findings, to be posted in the MCR as soon as possible and reported to the next MCR General Meeting.
- 7.9.7 If the tribunal finds any allegations proven, it may:
  - (a) allow the result to stand;
  - (b) if an allegation is proved against the winning candidate, declare the second candidate elected. The second candidate shall be discovered by opening the

ballot box; the count shall then proceed in accordance with the procedure for the single transferable vote set down in 6.6;

(c) call a re-election, in which no new candidate may stand; and/or

(d) exclude a candidate from standing in future MCR elections.

7.9.8 At any time the Electoral Tribunal may dissolve itself and forward the allegation to the appropriate college authorities for consideration and decision. In this instance no findings will be reported.

## **8 General Meetings**

8.1 The formal business of the MCR is to be conducted at General Meetings (GM). Formal business includes:

(a) Motions to amend the Constitution;

(b) Motions to amend the Standing Orders and Regulations;

(c) Motions concerning MCR capital expenditures;

(d) Motions concerning general MCR matters;

(e) Presentation and approval of accounts;

(f) Presentation and discussion of MCR activities reports;

(g) Such other business as may be raised for discussion and approval at meetings.

8.2 There must be at least two meetings held in each term. The first meeting will be called in second week. The second meeting will be called in seventh week. The timing of meetings may be changed in unavoidable circumstances by majority vote of the MCR Committee.

8.3 The President may call additional meetings if required. If the meeting falls outside of term time, any motions shall be ratified by an online ballot, open to the whole MCR. Additional meetings shall be called no less than 3 days and no more than 10 days after a request for such a meeting has been made. The circumstances in which meetings may be called include:

(a) If the MCR Committee, by a majority vote, consider that urgent business requires resolution by meeting; or

(b) If the President receives a petition from 5 or more members of the MCR requesting that a particular item of business be dealt with.

8.4 Any member of the MCR shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at meetings, except where provided in this Constitution or by Standing Orders. Each voting member shall be entitled to one vote.

8.5 Meetings shall proceed with a quorum of **12 ordinary MCR members**.

8.6 Meetings shall be chaired by the Independent Chair. Should the Independent Chair not be available, a Chair shall be elected as prescribed by Standing Orders.

8.7 Motions shall be introduced, debated and voted on at meetings in accordance with procedures prescribed by Standing Orders.

8.8 Motions to amend Legislation shall be passed in accordance with Section 3 of the Constitution.

8.9 Motions for any other business shall be passed by a simple majority.

8.10 The Vice-President shall cause minutes of a meeting to be taken, which shall be tabled

and approved at the next meeting.

## **9 Finances**

### **9.1 Financial Systems**

- 9.1.1 The MCR, through the Treasurer, shall maintain such external banking facilities and internal accounting procedures as are necessary for the fiscally sound management of the MCR.
- 9.1.2 The MCR shall maintain at least one current and one savings account. Under no circumstances shall anyone seek or obtain credit facilities on behalf of the MCR, other than standard tradesmen accounts.
- 9.1.3 The financial institution used shall be chosen by the Treasurer and President.
- 9.1.4 The Treasurer shall serve as the main account signatory and the President shall serve as the secondary signatory. Under no circumstances should a signatory make a payment to themselves, their immediate family or partner, or to cash. In the event of an immediate family or partner relationship existing between the Treasurer and the President, an independent signatory shall be designated by the President from amongst the remaining Officers.

### **9.2 Budgeting**

- 9.2.1 From time-to-time, in accordance with the Standing Orders, the Treasurer shall produce a budget for the expenditure of MCR income.
- 9.2.2 Budget items shall be separated into Events, General Operating and Capital Expenditure categories. Capital Renewal expenditures must comprise at least 5% of the total income budget.
- 9.2.3 Expenditure of Events budget shall be at the discretion of the Officers.
- 9.2.4 Expenditures of General Operating and Capital Expenditure funds shall be at the discretion of the MCR membership through by-law. In addition, the MCR Committee may spend up to £75 at a time from either of these funds.

### **9.3 MCR Property**

- 9.3.1 The MCR shall from time to time acquire property for the use and enjoyment of its members.
- 9.3.2 Purchase and replacement of property shall be from Capital Expenditure funds. Maintenance expenses shall be budgeted FOR and spent from General Operating funds.
- 9.3.3 Proposal for the purchase of MCR property shall be made by motion for a by-law.
- 9.3.4 A motion calling for the purchase of an item must include a maintenance scheme and projected costs. Non-committee MCR positions may be created for the maintenance and oversight of any item.
- 9.3.5 The MCR shall not dispose of any of its non-pecuniary property except by a two-thirds vote in a General Meeting. Upon dissolution of the MCR all of the MCR'S property shall vest in the College.

### **9.4 Financial Oversight**

- 9.4.1 From time-to-time, in accordance with the Standing Orders, the Treasurer shall prepare a summary of expenditures and the financial state of the MCR. This summary shall be provided to the Senior Treasurer of the Amalgamated Clubs, on behalf of the Governing Body, for review and approval.

- 9.4.2 MCR accounts and financial documents shall be available for inspection by any MCR member or College Official upon application to the Treasurer. A reasonable time of no more than 2 weeks shall be given to the Treasurer for the production of said accounts.
- 9.4.3 In the event of suspected financial malpractice, the MCR shall cause an audit of accounts to be preformed. The procedures for the calling of such an audit shall be given in the Standing Orders. In the event of confirmed financial malpractice, the MCR shall seek all possible MCR, College, University and Legal action possible against the person or persons responsible.
- 9.5 **Contingency Planning**
- 9.5.1 The MCR shall maintain a contingency fund of no less than £5000, inflation indexed by the UK CPI to 2005, for use in unexpected circumstances.
- 9.5.2 Procedures for the expenditure of contingency funds shall be given in the Standing Orders.
- 9.5.3 Any income remaining at the end of a fiscal year not designated for future capital renewal expenditure shall be rolled into the contingency fund.
- 9.5.4 In any year in which the starting balance of this fund is less than the level described in 8.4.1, a contribution from the annual income budget of no less than 10% of the total budget shall be made.

## **10 Grievances**

- 10.1 If a member of the MCR takes issue with the actions of a committee member they should:
- (a) talk to the committee member, explain their concerns and what actions they would like to see taken to remedy the situation. The committee member should respond within two weeks, giving their assessment of the situation and outlining what – if any – actions they will take;
  - (b) if the MCR member remains unsatisfied, they should write to the committee member and the President stating their concerns and what actions they would like to see taken in response to the problem. The President and committee member shall work together to address the grievance, agree upon a course of action and provide this in a written response to the MCR member;
  - (c) if the MCR member still remains unsatisfied with how their concern has been addressed they should, follow one of two courses of action:
    - i) write to the committee member, the President of the MCR and the Tutor for Graduates explaining their concerns, the courses of action proposed, why they see the problem as on-going, and how they would like to see their concerns addressed. A meeting may be held between all parties involved to discuss the issue. Recommendations made by the Tutor for Graduates shall be upheld, and the Tutor for Graduates shall determine the consequences for not complying with these recommendations;
    - ii) in cases of severe dereliction of duty, bring articles of impeachment against the officer(s) concerned. A petition outlining the case for impeachment with the signatures of five voting MCR members shall be delivered to the highest ranking officer not charged. A special meeting of impeachment shall be called, with the only item of business the bringing of impeachment charges, no less than 7 and no more than 21 days after the initial petition delivery. At this meeting, the charges outlined in the petition shall be read, and then the officer(s) charged shall have time to make a presentation on their own behalf and shall have the right to

appoint a personal representative for the duration of the impeachment proceedings. Speakers will then alternate in favour and against the motion of impeachment. When the speakers list is exhausted, or two-thirds of the members present move the question, the officer(s) charged shall have time to make a closing statement. A secret ballot shall then be held during the meeting, with the result counted by at least three MCR members, one of whom shall be chosen by the officer(s) charged. A two-thirds majority vote of those present in this quorate meeting shall be necessary to deprive someone of office. Removal by impeachment shall not prejudice a member's right to stand in future elections.

- 10.2 In cases where illegal activity is suspected, the MCR member should immediately write to the committee member and President, outlining the nature of the concern. The President should notify the Tutor for Graduate students immediately and the matter be pursued by the College. All members of the MCR (committee or otherwise) shall have equal access to the resources of the College under such circumstances.
- 10.3 MCR members may choose to involve additional committee members or personal advisors in the process if desired, or if a conflict of interest arises.



# Standing Orders of the Middle Common Room of St Edmund Hall

## 1 Elections

### 1.1 Election Timing

- 1.1.1 Elections for President, Vice-President, Stewarding Team, Treasurer, Welfare Team and Information Officer shall be held in the first three weeks of Trinity full Term.
- 1.1.2 Elections for Norham Gardens Representative and the Academic Representative shall be held in Michaelmas Term.

### 1.2. Nominations

- 1.2.1. The Returning Officer (RO) shall publicise the elections and open nominations 14 (fourteen) days before the ballot.
- 1.2.2. Nominations must be proposed by an ordinary member of the MCR.
- 1.2.3. Nominations must not be proposed by the RO.
- 1.2.4 Nominations shall be submitted to the RO 7 (seven) days prior to the election. In exceptional circumstances, the RO may accept nominations at a later time. Under no circumstances will nominations be accepted after hustings has occurred.

### 1.3 Campaigning

- 1.3.1. Candidates may produce a manifesto. The manifesto shall be in black and white and printed on a single A4 sheet. Any reference to opponents must be strictly factual, as judged by the RO. The manifesto must be submitted to the Returning Officer before distribution. The RO shall display each manifesto in the MCR and on the MCR website.
- 1.3.2. Candidates may also produce an election poster, using illustrations and/or no more than fifteen words. The poster shall be black and white and printed on a single A4 sheet. The poster must be submitted to the Returning Officer for approval before distribution.
- 1.3.3. Candidates may display one copy of their election poster in the MCR. One copy may also be posted on each notice-board in NSE, provided that the candidate gains permission from the relevant College authorities.
- 1.3.4. Candidates accept responsibility for their election materials.
- 1.3.5 The Returning Officer may remove any non-compliant campaign materials.
- 1.3.6 A candidate may not spend an amount exceeding the MCR termly membership fee in campaigning.

### 1.4 Conduct of Hustings

- 1.4.1. The RO shall invite all candidates for a given position to make a speech of no more than 5 (five) minutes. The order of these speeches shall be determined by the drawing of lots.
- 1.4.2 The RO shall then invite question, directed to all candidates, from the floor. The RO shall ensure that the candidates have equal opportunity to answer questions first.
- 1.4.3. Candidates may ask questions of each other.
- 1.4.4. The RO may reject a question at any time. A simple majority vote overturns such a ruling.

1.4.5. The RO shall close a husting by calling for a one minute closing speech from each candidate.

## **2 MCR General Meetings**

### **2.1 Motions and Agenda**

- 2.1.1. Motions must be presented to the Vice-President three days before the date of the meeting. Motions, and the resulting meeting agenda, shall be displayed in the MCR two days prior to the meeting and distributed via the email server.
- 2.1.2. Motions must be proposed and seconded.
- 2.1.3. Emergency motions, owing to circumstances arising purely after the deadline for motions, may be presented to the Vice-President and the Independent Chair on the day of the GM.

### **2.2 Committee Reports and Attendance**

- 2.2.1. All elected members of the MCR Committee shall submit a report on their activities at the GM. If members of the Committee cannot attend the meeting, they shall submit a written report to be read at the meeting.
- 2.2.2. The President shall orally summarise the content of the reports at the beginning of the Meeting. Matters arising from the reports may be directed to the appropriate committee member(s) at this time. The reports and matters arising shall be reproduced in full in the minutes of the GM.
- 2.2.3. All elected members of the MCR Committee shall attend GMs or send their written apologies to the Independent Chair.
- 2.2.4. Draft minutes shall be posted in the MCR as soon as possible.

### **2.3 Procedure for MCR General Meetings**

- 2.3.1. General Meetings (GM) shall be impartially chaired by the Independent Chair (hereafter the Chair). In the absence of the Chair, an ad hoc Chair shall be voted from the members attending the GM, using a simple majority. Members of the MCR Committee shall not be eligible to chair the GM. The Chair must be willing to accept nomination to the post.
- 2.3.2. The Chair shall open the meeting by counting the members present and ensuring that quorum has been reached. No vote, except a motion to adjourn, may be held in the absence of quorum.
- 2.3.3. The Chair shall proceed according to the agenda. The Chair may make any procedural decision necessary for the smooth and timely running of the GM. The Chair's decision(s) may be overturned by a simple majority.
- 2.3.4. No member shall interrupt another member whilst speaking, except on a point of order, with a motion to debate or with a motion to vote.
- 2.3.5. A point of order may be raised at any time and shall be ruled upon by the Chair without debate or comment. A simple majority may overturn the Chair's decision.

### **2.4 Debate of Motions**

- 2.4.1. The Chair shall read the motion aloud. If the motion contains a proposal to amend the Constitution, this should be made clear to the meeting.
- 2.4.2. The member proposing the motion shall make a brief speech in proposition of the motion.
- 2.4.3. The Chair shall invite short factual questions (SFQs) to the member or members proposing the motion. SFQs shall continue until there are no more questions, or until a motion to debate is passed, whichever happens first.
- 2.4.4. If a motion to debate is proposed, the Chair shall look for opposition to moving to debate. If there is none, debate shall begin.
- 2.4.5. If there is opposition to the move to debate, the member proposing the motion shall be asked why he/she wants to move to debate, and the opposer shall be asked why he/she opposes the motion. A vote on this issue shall follow; a simple majority passes the motion to debate.
- 2.4.6. The Chair shall invite a speech in opposition to the motion. If there is no opposition speech, the motion passes nem con, unless the motion contains a proposal to amend the Constitution, in which case a final vote shall be taken at this point regardless.
- 2.4.7. If there is an opposition speech, it shall be heard at this point.
- 2.4.8. The Chair shall open the debate to the floor, during which short points of information can be put by any member. Members shall speak as and when invited to do so by the Chair.
- 2.4.9. Germane amendments can be offered during the debate stage. If the proposer of the motion accepts the amendment, the amendment is classed as a friendly amendment and automatically becomes part of the original motion, with no debate.
- 2.4.10. If the proposer of the motion does not accept the amendment, then the amendment must be debated. The amendment procedure follows the same pattern as the main motion procedure, with a speech in proposition, SFQs (if any), debate (if required), and a vote (if required). A simple majority shall be sufficient to pass an amendment, at which point it becomes part of the original motion and debate shall continue on the main motion.
- 2.4.11. In no cases can third order amendments be offered.
- 2.4.12. The Chair shall take a final vote at such a time as there are no members wishing to make debate speeches, or when a motion to vote is passed, whichever is earlier.
- 2.4.13. If a motion to a vote is proposed, the Chair shall look for opposition to moving to a vote. If none arises, the final vote shall begin.
- 2.4.14. If there is opposition to the motion to vote, the member proposing the motion shall be asked why he/she want to move to a vote, and then the opposer shall be asked why he/she opposes the motion. A vote on this issue shall follow; a simple majority passes the motion to vote.
- 2.4.15. The Chair shall invite one minute summation speeches. The proposer of the motion must be favoured in the choice of a proposition summation speaker.
- 2.4.16. A motion to take the motion clause by clause may be proposed following the summation speeches. The Chair shall look for opposition to taking the motion clause by clause. If there is no opposition, the procedural motion is passed nem con. If there is opposition, the proposer of the procedural motion shall make a speech in favour of a clause-by-clause vote, and a speech against the motion should be invited. A vote on this issue shall follow, with a simple majority passing the procedural motion. If the procedural motion is passed, each clause of the motion shall be voted on one at a time. The Chair shall invite brief speeches proposing and opposing each subsequent clause prior to the vote.
- 2.4.17. A vote shall be taken, in which a simple majority shall be sufficient for the motion or clause to be accepted, unless otherwise dictated by the Constitution.

2.4.18. When satisfied that the GM's business is concluded, the Chair shall call the meeting to a close.

### **3 Finances and Audits**

#### **3.1 Budgeting and Reporting**

- 3.1.1. The Treasurer shall produce a termly budget of projected income and expenditures for approval by the MCR Committee. All by-law mandated expenses from General Operating or Capital must be incorporated into projected expenditures.
- 3.1.2. The Treasurer shall give a financial update as part of their report to each MCR GM.
- 3.1.3. The Treasurer shall produce a final report, including outstanding monies owed to or by the MCR, at the end of their term for the benefit of the incoming Treasurer.

#### **3.2. Audit of Accounts**

- 3.2.1. If anyone suspects that financial malpractice has occurred, they shall have the right and duty to bring an allegation to the Independent Chair.
- 3.2.2. Upon receipt of a credible allegation of financial malpractice, the Independent Chair shall convene and chair an ad hoc audit committee. The membership of this committee shall be selected by the Independent Chair from amongst non-officer ordinary MCR members in good standing. In no circumstances shall the person making an allegation serve on this committee.
- 3.2.3. The audit committee shall have access to any MCR records or member germane to the allegation.
- 3.2.4. A full report of the committee's findings shall be made to the following GM. In the case of a finding of significant malpractice, the audit committee shall have the right to begin impeachment proceedings against any involved officers.
- 3.2.5. If warranted, the audit committee shall have the right to request the appropriate college authorities to remove anyone as an account signatory.

#### **3.3. Contingency Fund Procedures**

- 3.3.1. The MCR contingency fund will only be used for unforeseen expenditures of more than £250.
- 3.3.2. In full term, a majority vote of the MCR committee shall be required to forward a motion to an MCR meeting authorising the expenditure of contingency funds. No motion to spend contingency funds shall be allowed in an MCR meeting without first being approved by the MCR committee.
- 3.3.3. Out of term, a two-thirds majority vote of the MCR committee shall be required to authorise the expenditure of contingency funds. This shall be approved in consultation with the Senior Treasurer of Amalgamated Clubs and reported to the next general meeting.
  - 1. A motion to spend contingency funds will be debated according to 2.4.

### **4 Referenda**

#### **4.1 Calling of Referenda**

- 4.1.1. A referendum may be held on any MCR motion with a simple majority vote in a GM, in addition to those referenda required by the Constitution.
- 4.1.2. A referendum must be called no less than 6 days and no more than 14 days after the passing of the motion calling for Referendum.

## **4.2 Referenda Procedures**

- 4.2.1. A referendum shall be treated as an Election, and subject to all relevant sections of Article 6 of the Constitution.
  - 1. A referendum shall consist of questions answerable with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.
- 4.2.3. Proponents and opponents of referenda shall have the right to prepare campaign materials, following the campaigning procedures applicable to candidates for MCR positions. Each side shall be determined to be a single candidate.
- 4.2.4. In the case where more than one group wishes to represent a specific viewpoint, the RO shall select the representative campaign material and scrutineer.

## **4.3 Passage and Resubmission**

- 4.3.1. A simple majority shall be required to pass any referendum that is not a constitutional amendment. As required by the constitution, a constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds majority.
- 4.3.2. Any motion that fails in referendum may not be resubmitted to the MCR for consideration until the following academic year.