

MINUTES

GENERAL MEETING

ST. EDMUND HALL MCR

Wednesday, 3rd February 2016, 7:30 PM

Apologies:

Alice Bloch

Tonia Thomas

Benjamin Kelsey

Reports from MCR Committee Members

President (Pip Coore)

Attended the executive lunch meeting with college

- College is now under prevent legislation, which entails a host of obligations, particularly regarding room bookings, online behavior, data protection. This will involve changes in college's policies, and should also be reflected in the legislation/policies of Common Rooms

Attended GBPC

- College will now work with the MCR in improving first-aid kits in all graduate centers
- Working on a Porters' Dinner, to thank the members of the Porters Lodge; the JCR president has supported the idea, as has college
- The MCR and the JCR has agreed to organize a Staff drinks session, where students serve the servery staff.

VP

Nothing further to add to President's update

Treasurer

The MCR Bank balance stands at just over 12,000 £

Money has been received from the Amalgamated Funds to fund welfare activities

Stewards

Organized a very successful Welcome Back party

An alternate plan was organized at a Pub since college cancelled the usual Burns Formal; event was successful

The Pub Crawl was well attended

Some concerns regarding no-shows at the Magdalen Exchange Dinner

Linde Wester attended Domestic Committee, which addressed certain concerns over formal hall bookings (refer to discussion below)

Welfare

Cake Afternoons have been quite successful; there are baking slots still open for this term; this term Cake Afternoons will support the British Heart Foundation. Women's Representatives organized a women's film screening, which was well attended.

This term marks the first time college has flown rainbow flag to mark beginning of LGBT month

There are now 4 trained peer supporters in the MCR; Drop-in sessions on Tuesdays have been well attended; Welfare Officers working with College to overhaul how Peer Support is offered/publicized.

The Big Sister campaign has been launched to link MCR and JCR women

Academic Rep

Report provided below

IT

Fewer hits this month on MCR site

Activity on twitter less enthusiastic

Regularly maintaining notices and opportunities on MCR website, including the information publicized in the weekly MCR Notices emails.

All Committee emails come with keyword filtering instructions to block unwanted emails

NSE Rep

Working with College to ensure properly outfitted First Aid kits in NSE

New couches coming in soon for the NSE Common Room

Brunches well attended and within budget

Nominations for Guest Membership

The following individuals have been put forward as nominees for Guest Membership of the St. Edmund Hall MCR:

Elizabeth Goldblatt (nominated by Daniel Goldblatt)

Jonas Hasbach (nominated by Thomas Cosnahan)

Erin Huiting (nominated by Pip Coore)

Gabrielle Kanter (nominated by Pip Coore)

All nominations passed without objection

Motion to Name the MCR Punt

The Motion to name the MCR Punt "Mrs. Brown" passes unanimously, by 18 votes

AP: President to contact Jayne Taylor regarding painting the name on the MCR Punt

Motion to Name the MCR Utilities Cupboard “Julie’s Cupboard”

Friendly amendment accepted that the plaque to be placed on the utilities cupboard would read as follows:

“Julie’s Cupboard”
In honour of Julie McCann
MCR Butler 1995 - 2015

The votes were as follows:

Yes 13

No 3

Abstaining 3

AP: Stewards to speak to Jayne Taylor regarding placing Plaque on Utilities Cupboard

Motion to Purchase Vitro BTC Coffee Machine

Pip Coore, speaking on behalf of the motion, presented the features and advantages of the Coffee Machine to the General Meeting. It was clarified that College had presented this as a take-it-or-leave-it option; there was no scope for negotiating for a different model than the one specified.

It has been clarified that the online vote was offered, instead of the normal procedure of passing motions at GM by a simple majority, to ensure MCR members whom would be affected by the compulsory fee 5£ would be able to weigh in and the fee would not be imposed on members without their consent.

It was pointed out by Jessica Davidson that clarity was required as to who would maintain the machine. Pip Coore stated that the general responsibility for maintenance would be with College, however there were many specifics that would be ironed out once the decision to purchase and fit the machine was green-lit.

As the question was posed, it was clarified that under the current system, college pays for the filter coffee for the current coffee machine.

Alex Blakes spoke in favour of the purchase, adding that the same model is used at the medical school where it serves some 400 students and is very well received.

It was clarified that while the MCR does currently have funds in the bank account, it cannot initially fund the entire cost of the coffee machine. However in the future once the coffee machine is established the MCR would be prepared, and would like to, consider subsidising the coffee machine.

It was also further clarified that the compulsory fee of 5£ was a nominal amount; if it was realized in the future that there was a surplus of monies collected from the MCR under this head, the same monies would only be used towards providing amenities for the MCR and would not be channeled by College into any other expenses.

Many members pointed out that many members would not be able to make any use of this machine and thus did not want to pay more its use/maintenance.

Timo Haber, speaking in favour, pointed out that he felt it would incentivize further members entertaining guest after/before formals as they would have more options of what to offer.

The Vice-President would create an online poll to allow MCR members to vote on this issue. The motion would only pass if it received 51% of the votes cast. Polling would be open from 11:00 on Thursday 4th February to 11:00 on Friday 5th of February (the change of time was to accommodate the fact that the GM ran late and the poll could not be sent out as planned)

NOTE: The Poll was conducted and the results were as follows:

Total no. of votes polled: 99

Total valid votes: 85

Votes in favour of purchase: 24 (28%)

Votes against purchase: 62 (72%)

Result: Motion fails

AP: President to inform College that the Motion has failed

Motion to Provide Funding for 21CC Student Conference

Nick Harvey, speaking in favour of the motion, stated that the Conference will publicize the MCR's support through online media; there may also be scope for a discount for MCR members when buying tickets for the conference

College stated that they could not provide funding. Other sources have been approached, including the colleges of all members of the Conference Committee

Some members have expressed apprehension towards supporting outside events rather than events/activities that support the MCR experience within the College; there is also a concern that this would set a precedent towards supporting events that individual members are involved with, which would be myriad.

It was presented that members would gain the advantage of networking, supporting academia
The votes were as follows:

Yes 16

No 1

Abstaining 1

Motion passed to donate the amount requested, being 200£

AP: Treasurer to coordinate with Nick Harvey re: allocating funds

Motion to Support the Lincoln College Vacation Project (VacProj) 2016

Pip Coore speaking on behalf; representatives from the VacProj Committee were unable to attend to speak

Independent Chair ruled that as this is a motion to support a charity, it should be raised at the last GM of the term. Since there was no individual MCR member raising the motion at this meeting, it would not be voted on at this time.

AP: President to contact Lincoln College regarding MCR decision

OTHER BUSINESS

Item for Discussion: Formal Hall Booking

JCR has already voted agreeing to the following measures:

- Limit no of guests to 3
- Bookings to open only 3 weeks before dinner
- They are also open to increasing prices for guests

MCR has raised the following points in the discussion*:

- Negotiating with College
 - Jessica Davidson points out how the no. of places per dinner and no. of dinners per term are not transparent and possibly their could be pressure on college to make this information/decision-making clearer
- Controlling when bookings are opened
 - It was suggested to open dinner bookings 5-7 days before each dinner

- Clarified that opening booking 2 weeks before dinner was tried last year – even if it did not change no. of no-shows, it did, if nothing else give the advantage of people not booking too far in advance
- Pip Coore suggested that perhaps college could start by staggering the no. of guest spaces available, beginning with limited nos. and then opening more later, if the seats do not get booked
- Changing guest policies
 - It was suggested that the no. of guests members can bring should be limited
 - Some members objected towards increasing prices to wards guests, particularly because this would encourage those using bookings as a “cash-back” scheme
 - Some members objected to limiting no. of guests since this would limit the scope for members being able to share their experience with colleagues from their departments
 - Pip Coore suggested that members may be asked to name their guests and the guests could be asked to bring ID when checking in for dinner
 - Jeremy Miles added that he objected, on concerns of privacy, to giving guest information
- EPOS/Booking Limitations
 - Pip Coore suggested limiting the amount of dinner charge/limiting the amount of dinner charge that could be used towards formal dinners
 - Linde Wester pointed out that one option could be to limit the total no. of places that members could book for a term
 - Jessica Davidson and Tom Cosnahan added that more pressure should be put on college to exploit the features that EPOS may be able to offer, instead of limiting the options available to students; either more use should be made of the system or it should be abandoned, if it is indeed as limited as College has stated
 - Tom Cosnahan has suggested that it should be easier for members of College to transfer tickets that they cannot use
 - It was suggested that there should be cap on when transfers could take place; if the ticket is not transferred within 4 days of the meal, the amount would be forfeited.
- Penalties
 - Pip Coore suggested a penalty system for no-shows on formals (which could also be used for exchange dinners) – If members booked and did not attend 3 times that would limit how many they could book in the next term
 - Megan Sloan suggested that the penalty system could include impeding the defaulters’ ability to book further dinners; or to have to pay the non-subsidized cost of the dinner
 - Linde Wester pointed out that measures such as impeding booking ability and 3-strike penalties would be impossible to implement/involve manual checking by MCR or staff members, which would add undue pressure on them

**[The various points raised during the discussion have been grouped, based on similarity/kind if measure]*

Item for Discussion: Feedback from Academic Committee, including:
1) Consultation re: MCR views on nature and timing of Postgraduate Schools Dinner; and
2) Discussion re: Postgraduate College Grant.

[This motion was taken before the item regarding social media by discretion of the Independent Chair]

Treasurer clarified that fee paying members have access to the 350£ travel grant; However if you are outside fee liability, you are not eligible. This has always been the case. It is not a new change. It was recently clarified to students, which has prompted objections. Members decided no further discussion was necessary. Members should read the Academic Rep's report

Jessica Davidson pointed out that Trinity Dinner and Postgraduate Schools Dinner should not be combined; there is always limited space and trinity is very popular; also schools dinner is only open to finalists

Beatrice Tyrrell suggests making schools dinner seem more like a leavers dinner and making it more of a festive environment for those finishing their time at the Hall; possibly it would be better attended if it was promoted through the MCR

Pip Coore suggested a valedictorian-like element to promote the dinner

Jessica Davidson points out that one of the reasons that is less attended is that many on 9-month degrees have already left for home

It might serve better for it to be earlier during term

Perhaps it would be better to make graduation a bigger deal

Item for Discussion: MCR Guidelines on the Use of Social Media and other Online Services

Members echoed concerns that there needs to be a balance between members' freedom of speech and the concerns of protecting members from unwanted harassment

Tom Cosnahan raised concerns about over-regulation

Jeremy Miles suggested that if people post items that violate harassment guidelines, that administrators should dialogue with the alleged infringers, rather than directly removing posts

Timo Haber raises the point that if the space is regulated, that in turn could lead to users feeling like that it is not a safe space

Guidelines could be reviewed every year