

MCR General Meeting Minutes
Week 7 Hilary Term 2018

Thomas Kittel serves as Independent Chair in place of absent Ryan Daniels. Quorum is met with 19 ordinary MCR members present.

Committee Reports

Kusal Lokuqe [President] - opened by mentioning that there will be a rent freeze for college postgraduate accommodation next year. New accommodation at Norham Gardens should be up and running soon, then 26 Norham should go under renovation afterwards. Teddy Hall Ball (Chroma) proposals have been accepted by governing body – the MCR will be used as a cloakroom and manned by officials at the door, the MCR computer room will be used as a medical station.

Oliver Woodhall [Vice-President] – reports from College Welfare Committee. Welfare Committee were keen to stress that support mechanisms are in place for those with anxiety over academic pressures. College Nurse is also freely available most weekdays for anyone with health/welfare issues. Students are encouraged to use these facilities at the earliest opportunity, should any problems arise.

Chenzi Xu [Treasurer] – apologies

Ronald Guthrie and Sian Brooke [Stewards] – congratulations to Sian for organising the 1950s party. The end of term is likely to be in 17 Norham (common room) as the Wolfson bop is on afterwards until the early hours. Stewards are also looking into the possibility of hosting an out-of-term party and a bar exchange with other colleges during the Easter holidays.

Tim Stoesser and Karen Gamero [Welfare] – apologies

Maren Fichter [IT] – guest membership review underway. Emails should have been sent to all those concerned.

Hannah Sharpe [NSE] – thank you to those who attended arty party. Ping-pong table has been broken – looking into solutions.

Frederik Sorensen [Sports] – apologies. Messaged to say that there are still safety issues with too much equipment at the Norham gym. One of the rowing machine is hopefully being moved to Boat Club. Another machine is also being moved to make space – tbc.

Theo Bruun [Charity Officer] – Proposed that if you want to plan a charity formal, we ought to elect a new charity officer by trinity so we can plan charities events more effectively.

Motion One: Guest Members

Joseph Kennerly (not in attendance) proposing **Raisha Sheikh** – Kusal (MCR President) vouches for both.

MCR verdict: Unanimous pass

(2) **Sarah Andrews** (not in attendance) proposing **Matthew Rodger** – Kusal (MCR President) vouches for both, and Ronald Guthrie (MCR Steward) vouches for Matthew. He is a “nice guy”, “Scottish” and “always pays for events he attends with Sarah”. No opposing votes.

MCR Verdict: Unanimous pass

(3) **Oliver Woodhall** proposing **Michael Schach** – Michael normally studies in Germany, but has a research position at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (OIES) – a friend, who is an alumnus of teddy hall, recommended him to Teddy Hall. Living in Teddy Hall accommodation.

Kusal – “how good are your baking skills?”

Michael – “the best in the world!”

MCR Verdict: Unanimous Pass

Motion Two: Charities for Charity Fund

(1) **Bone Cancer Research Trust** – proposed by **Edward Baker**; seconded by **Oliver Woodhall**

Description: Charity dedicated to funding research into treatments for bone cancer. Charity nominated in the memory of Matt Greenwood, a member of college who tragically passed away after suffering from bone cancer.

Requesting the full amount as Ed has raised money for the charity before.

(2) **Chhahari Nepal** – proposed by **Marc Rocher**. Spoken for by **Julia Camps** –

Description: “Chhahari Nepal is a small NGO in Kathmandu which aims to improve the situations in the country by providing resources to local people to develop themselves. Among others, they support a public school, a women school and an orphanage. The public teaching system in Nepal is usually unsupervised. Leading that children may finish their education without knowing how to read. Therefore, having an NGO that supervises a public school grants its students with the opportunity to join higher education institutions or to learn more qualified jobs that require basic levels knowledge. Many women in Nepal get married when are still children, thus, never finishing their education. This gap is the target of the women school, which focuses on teaching young women who never finished primary or secondary school education. Nepal has no explicit control of its population, therefore, orphans are very vulnerable since no one looks after them. The orphanages supported by this NGO are continuously inspected and controlled while they ensure that the children attend good schools and progress well in their studies.

I think that Chhahari Nepal should get the money because they will make more use of it due to the currency change, namely, 250 pounds is more than the monthly salary for a teacher in Nepal. Also, having contact with an NGO that really enjoys having volunteers can be a nice approach for the students of the hall to get an exceptional experience.”

Julia says that Chhahari Nepal is a small charity which takes care of social problems in a local way. Has been involved with fundraising for the charity and has been in contact with the charity for seven years. Has also travelled to Nepal – can vouch for the good work of the Charity.

Other two charities weren't represented at the GM.

Motion Three: Rowing Blades in the MCR

Proposed by Benjamin Evans.

Description: This Michaelmas the MCR it voted to donate £100 to the painting of a blade to go in the bar, however, when the three blades arrived maintenance determined that there wasn't enough space. They needed a quick decision and suggested putting one up in the JCR and one in the MCR - this seemed fair, given that each common room had agreed to pay for one (unfortunately no one was in either common room to provide a second opinion). There is also already a blade in the MCR.

The blade in the bar is the W1 - as it deserves pride of place and the MCR blade has a former MCR President on it (and the most MCR members). The JCR blade had the second most MCR members on it and also has the current MCR Vice President on it. The JCR decided that they do not want the blade - it is now in the maintenance workshops until a new place is found (this option wasn't given at the time of the blades arriving).

To add some extra decoration to the MCR it is proposed that: the blade already installed above the MCR map is kept in the MCR (it can be moved to a different location within the MCR if the MCR wants it to); the MCR adopts the matching second blade currently in storage on the adjacent wall to the MCR map wall above the sofa and charging points (just above the lights, in line with the cabling).

Discussion: Didn't realise the current blade would be put up so quickly and the other one is still up in the JCR. The JCR has voted to remove their blade from the wall. The 2017 blade looks the same as the 2016 one.

Kusal [President]– more blades would make the MCR a bit clustered. Ben will ask the maintenance team to move the existing blade down and put the 2017 blade above it to see how it looks.

An idea came from Ben that we could also put the 2017 one in place of the existing Hilarians blade. Or we could put the blade up in the NSE common room.

The MCR voted for the motion to be carried out in that order. Some concern was raised by Kusal that College would not be happy if we moved the Hilarians blade from the 1960s due to its age. However these concerns were dismissed by some members of the boat club, as older blades are piled up in the Boat Club.

In favour – 19. Against – 0 – abstentions – 1

MCR Verdict: Motion Pass

Motion Four: Waste from College Meals

Proposed by **Reza Khanzadeh**.

Description: Bringing to motion the issue of our cafeteria throwing away perfectly good food rather than donating it to a soup kitchen. The MCR believes that partnering with a local homeless shelter and entering into a non-liability contract is a relatively easy and simple process to ensure that (a) we're not irresponsibly wasting food and (b) those less fortunate than us are offered some sort of assistance.

Reza – to add to the motion – have spoken to people in the canteen about why they don't do it – because if people get sick from donated food then it reflects badly on the college. A non-liability contract could solve this.

Benjamin Evans – leftovers aren't donated. College subsidises food – donating food to charity would feed subsidy to charity.

Maren Fichter [IT+Environment] – have been talking to college about this for a year – food waste bins in NSE – review underway of how food waste is managed by college – motion for more veggie meals got prioritized over audit. – audit not happening – updates have not been forthcoming. Not aware of how much waste we produce.

Question from floor - Who is doing the audit? – Answer: College, but staffing issues within college mean the process has been lethargic.

Question from floor: Do any other colleges do anything similar? Answer: No other college does anything similar.

Michael Schach – ways to get around the liability issue exist.

Reza – a non-liability contract solves issues like this.

Bins and health and safety issues also weigh upon this motion.

Vote: In favour – 19 opposed – 0 abstentions – 0

MCR Verdict: Unanimous Pass

Motion Six: Making space in the MCR to accommodate for old MCR photos

Proposed by: MCR Committee.

Description: Old MCR photos from previous batches were taken down in the summer of 2016 to make way for the tv and utensils racks. The MCR Committee proposes to hang reinstate these photos in the MCR as it makes up a big part of the MCR history and shows how our community has evolved over time. The proposal is to make room for these photos by removing some of the artwork in the MCR. If the motion is passed, the MCR President will take the proposal for GPBC in Trinity term to seek approval from college

Kusal [President] brings an amendment to the motion, as something like this might hinder relationships between the MCR and college. If it passes we'll have a discussion with those previously involved in the artwork and decoration and consult them, before we take it to GCBC.

Sian [Steward]- these artwork aren't associated with college or done by college members

Kusal [President] - they are owned by college from their collection - a rotation system is in place. Photos will go where we can find space.

Question from floor: Why was the TV put up in place?

Kusal - a refurbishment committee made decisions

Question from floor: Can we get rid of the TV?

Sian and Kusal - Nah, would be problematic with college

Proposal from floor: Could do it as a timeline across the MCR wall.

About artwork - replacing it with teddy hall produced art would be a different issue requiring a different motion.

Question from floor: Any space in computer room for paintings?

Answer: No - noticeboard - paintings in MCR will go back to college collection.

Vote for those in favour of motion plus amendment (that those who did the previous MCR refurbishment would be consulted)

Vote results: In favour: 16; Against: 1; Abstentions: 2.

MCR Verdict: Motion Passes

Motion Six: Refunding compulsory charge for College meals

Proposed by: **Rebecca Smith**

Description: At the end of the Trinity term, at the start of the "long vacation," our accounts are wiped from funds that have been put in for dining purposes. This cannot be reclaimed, and there is little option to eat at college during the vacation period as the college rents the dining hall out for conferencing. For

many postgraduates, their life does not belong in college and they may not even live centrally in Oxford. As such, it can be difficult to dine at the college on a regular basis, or even 8 times a term. If the opportunity to purchase more expensive formal tickets does not arise, it can be difficult to spend all of this money and it seems unfair that college absorb this for unknown, and for unaccounted reasons.

The MCR believes that if the minimum amount of battels money allocated to the college for dining purposes is not spent by the end of Trinity term (at the start of the long vacation), then this money should be repaid to the student in full, without question, at the end of the academic year - e.g., student living out of college = £42 x 3 terms = £126 potential for return at the end of the academic year if no food purchased).

Discussion: Simon [MCR member]- we've had motion several times - was made clear that it was not possible.

Rebecca: - only on agenda once in last two years - person who was here last time could not speak for it. Doesn't want to subsidise those who eat in college

Kusal - definitely been raised in college before - at a JCR/MCR meeting - JCR has to pre-pay for every meal - colleges reasoning: if college has to function, they need a set level to cater for - in separate circumstances, (dietary, far away postgrads etc.) those who have submitted valid excuses have had their money refunded.

Theo Bruun - not unreasonable to bring this issue up. Same issue at old college - money needed for cashflow reasons - to run an effective kitchen -

Rebecca - highlighted the waste issue.

Discussion from floor: Pre paid meals do not subsidise meals - college budget does this mostly.

Benjamin Evans - lots of traction in college for this (espec with JCR) JCR pushing hard for this - if the MCR could support that could be beneficial.

Discussion from floor: Cash account - dinner account swapovers - college reluctant to dramatically change system. System may not be used in other colleges, but college believe it works well.

Mark Baker- idea: meal swap system between college members could be a reasonable solution.

Kusal - with the epos system that idea is not technologically capable

Simon - makes point about alumni contributions to funding meal subsidies.

Discussion from floor: Keith's [College Principal] argument goes that compulsory dinners encourage people to come into college.

Motion was amended so that this issue would be taken to college for discussion -

MCR Vote: In favour – 5; Against – 6; Abstentions - 3

MCR Verdict: Motion Fails

No other business.
Meeting adjourned.