

RCSA Open Meeting Minutes
7.30pm, 25 November 2007, Michaelmas Term
JCR

1. Apologies for absence or lateness

There were no apologies for absence or lateness. All the committee was present.

2. Announcement of the presence and purpose of guests

There were no guests.

3. Approval of the order of the agenda

Rebecca Campbell asked if the Ordinary Motion on the May Ball Contract could be moved to the beginning of the ordinary motions because she had a badminton commitment. There were no objections to this change.

4. Reading by the secretary on request by any Member, amendment if necessary and approval of the Minutes of any previous Open Meeting not yet accepted by an Open Meeting.

Tom Kelly (TK) said that the minutes from the previous Open & Budget Meeting (4/11/2007) had not been presented to the new committee. He said these minutes would be ready by the start of Lent. James Mott said the minutes from the Open Meeting on 14/10/2007 were also still outstanding.

5. Matters Arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. Reports from the Committee

There were no reports from the committee

7. Questions to the committee

There were no questions to the committee

8. Extraordinary motions

There were no extraordinary motions

9. Co-option of remaining Committee Officers

Tom Kelly (hereby know as TK) announced that a request had been made in advance of the meeting for copies of the manifestos to be circulated. There were no objections and candidates manifestos were distributed to those present.

a) Proposed co-option of Pete Cary (hereby known as PC) as Men's Officer

TK invited PC to speak about his candidacy.

PC said Men's Officer was an important position that was underrated, that he would be good at it, and encouraged everyone to co-opt him.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion supporting the co-option of PC as Men's Officer.

For: 53
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0

PC was duly elected Men's Officer.

b) Proposed co-option of Jasmine Lee (hereby known as JL) as Ethnic Minorities' Officer

TK invited JL to speak about her candidacy.

JL said that most of her ideas were outlined in her manifesto, that she was open to helping anyone who wanted to talk to her and had significant experience organising things in the past.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion supporting the co-option of JL as Ethnic Minorities' Officer.

For: 53
Against: 0
Abstentions: 0

JL was duly elected Ethnic Minorities Officer

c) Proposed co-option of Will Ratoff (hereby known as WR) as LBGT Officer

TK invited WR to speak about his candidacy.

WR said that he would be good at the job and was happy to answer any questions concerning his manifesto.

Jonny Young (hereby known as JY) asked WR if he thought his manifesto was offensive.

WR replied that he did not think so.

Adam Cole (hereby known as AC) said that the role of LBG is partly to show that one can be gay without being a raving queer. He asked whether the photo of WR brandishing a riding crop and brandishing a whip might put people off coming to speak to him.

WR replied that while some people might be put off, it would only be those who had no real experience with him who had formed an opinion purely based on his manifesto. People would have the opportunity to get to know him around college, from emails and the notice board, and most people who already know him consider him an approachable person, so the possibility raised by AC would be overcome.

James Mott (hereby known as JM) asked WR if he regretted his manifesto.

WR replied that he did not at all as the manifesto was clearly parody. It clearly showed that homophobia is disgusting and having such views is laughable. He added that a manifesto was not the only thing that should matter in getting voted onto the RCSA and that by getting to know him better, people would see that he is suitable for the job.

Adam Booth (hereby known as AB) said that as no incoming freshers would see the manifesto, everyone meeting him as the LBGT rep would realise he WR is a very nice person as everyone in the room already knew.

JM said that the manifesto was not a moot point. LBGT reps from previous years have shown that not everyone actually knows WR.

Sheena Reagan (hereby known as SR) asked why WR thought it was appropriate to bring comedy into the RCSA.

WR replied that while it was not the norm that does not make it inappropriate- parody is meant to deal with information that gets on people's nerves.

TK announced that there were three more minutes before the motion had to be put to a vote.

Chris Thistlewaite (hereby known as CT) asked if WR thought it was appropriate for an RCSA member to say things like "I'm willing to slaughter Liz Guild".

WR replied that once again, it was a parody, not a death threat.

Ben Henriques (hereby known as BH) asked what WR would do for the post and what he stood for.

WR replied that he has personal experience as he knows what it is like to be confused about sexuality and to come out in college and to parents. He added that he has talked extensively to LBGT people about issues, including people in CUSU.

Pete Wood (hereby known as PW) asked what WR had learnt from the manifesto, as he seemed to regret parts of it and stand up for others.

WR replied that he did not regret any of it but he probably would not do it again.

JY said that the damage had already been done- there could be confused freshers who saw the manifesto that did not attend the OM and their own opportunity to discover themselves would be gone. He added that WR did not regret the manifesto even though he had upset many people, and that that was not appropriate in an LBGT officer.

TK said that the time allotted for discussion of this motion had passed but that if the meeting wanted, it could be extended rather than going straight to the vote. The motion

for extending the discussion time was proposed by JY. TK took an indicative vote and established that the discussion should continue.

Luke Snell (hereby known as LS) said that it was naïve for JY to say that the manifesto is irrevocable as it could be undone by WR's behaviour around college and by other pieces of paper.

Rebecca Campbell (hereby known as RC) said that she thought that LBGT is a very important position and so far only WR had run for it. She added that she doubted anyone else would stand for it, and if they did, that they would be as enthusiastic and committed as WR.

Brandon Green (hereby known as BR) said that the meeting should keep in mind when voting that those against WR's co-option were the ones that WR would be representing.

LS said that he did not think that BG knew much about what the LBGT people in college think and having spoken to them, many of them support WR.

AC said that LS was discounting the gays that have not come out, which is surely the point of the LBGT officer. He added that WR had mentioned new plans and he would like to hear about these new plans for the role.

WR replied that he never actually said he had new plans. The primary role would be the consultative one of lending a listening ear. In terms of organising things, WR said that the LBGT drinks at the beginning of the year are really important because it allows people to show that they're gay without having to say anything, it is just assumed, the same way people are assumed to be straight. He added that he would also like to increase opportunities for gay people to meet across Cambridge, possibly by arranging alternative meeting venues to Life.

JM proposed that the co-option be put to the vote. TK took an indicative vote which passed JM's procedural motion.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion supporting the co-option of WR as LBGT Officer

For: 39
Against: 7
Abstentions: 14

WR was duly elected LBGT Officer.

d) Proposed co-option of Barnaby Mollet (hereby known as BM) as Newsletter Editor

TK invited BM to speak about his candidacy.

BM said that he would be good at the job because he is a fun loving person. He said that he had been in touch with people who would like to write and he would let anyone who was interested write. He added that he is good at editing funny images and would stay within the boundaries of propriety.

Sam Goff (hereby known as SG) asked what was wrong with being inappropriate.

BM replied that he meant avoiding religious insensitivity

SG asked what was wrong with that?

BM replied that he would avoid the ethical debate.

BH asked how many issues of the Brick BM was planning to publish.

BM replied that as an economist, it would depend on demand. Three issues per year/1 per term sounded good for the time being.

Daniel Tse (hereby known as DT) asked how BM would control the quality of submissions.

BM replied that generally those that express interest in submitting articles are people who want to write about things that they are really interested in. BM said that while he would be happy to talk to them about it, he was happy to let anyone who expressed real interest write.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion supporting the co-option of BM as Newsletter Editor

For: 53

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

BM was duly elected Newsletter Editor.

10. Ordinary Motions

a) May Ball Contract

TK asked RC to introduce the motion.

RC said that the college makes the May Ball Committee sign a contract with them every year that says that the committee can't spend money that they do not have in the bank. It also says that the RCSA has to underwrite the ball- this means that if the May Ball committee do spend money that they don't have, the RCSA will pay for this, rather than the ball committee. She added that sometimes things happen that the May Ball committee cannot possibly budget for, and the individuals on the committee should not have to cover this. Without the contract, the college cannot have a ball this year. No individuals would be held accountable for this money. RC said that she did not want to spend money

that they did not have and that she would do her best to ensure that that would not happen.

AB asked whether the lower priced tickets would be retained as it was one of the big successes of the ball last year.

RC replied that it would be retained as college had already insisted on it.

BG proposed that the motion be put to the vote. TK took an indicative vote which passed the motion.

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (a).

For: 53

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Ordinary Motion (a) was duly passed.

b) Renewable Policy List

Iain Barr (hereby known as IB) proposed the motion. IB said that constitution states that any motion passed by the RCSA has to be renewed after three years otherwise they lapse. However, there is no list of motions that is more than three years old. So whilst the RCSA has considered the constitution, there is nothing to pass.

JM asked if the RCSA could use the policy on the website that goes back to November 2003

IB and TK confirmed that this wasn't as straightforward as it seemed and might take some time.

BG said that there is a policy list that hasn't been updated since 1994 in the library

IB withdrew the motion to be re-opened after looking at the list

c) Affiliation to CUSU

IB proposed the motion. IB said that the RCSA has to confirm our affiliation to CUSU. He said that the JCR should continue being affiliated to them because they provide support at university level and at college level we cannot provide the same standard because of lack of funding and manpower.

Jim Arnold (hereby known as JA) asked what the nature of the support given by the CUSU is.

IB said that they provide literature for Freshers week and run Cindies.

BH said that the shadowing scheme that CUSU organises is very important for access

DT said that ICUSU gives lots of support for overseas students such as support for English writing and publishing an international Freshers guide.

Brandon asked whether this is the RCSA's only affiliation.

JM said that the RCSA is also affiliated to the Cambridge Living Wage Coalition. .

IB said that the living wage coalition no longer meaningfully exists

BH said that the RCSA should run another motion on it if the campaign was to come back

PW said that we should stay affiliated to CUSU because they do everything the JCR does but it is actually their full time jobs, which allows them to be far more effective than a JCR can be.

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (c).

For: 38

Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

Ordinary Motion (c) was duly passed.

d) £60 for present for JM

IB proposed the motion.

IB said that the Presidents of the RCSA work very hard, JM has done very well and the RCSA should give him something.

JY said that the Vice President should also get a present.

Pete Thompson (hereby known as PT) said that the Treasurer should get a present too.

IB said that traditionally, only the President gets a present.

CT proposed an amendment to the motion, dropping the amount from £60 to £50. He pointed out that if all ordinary motions passed as they stand, the Open Meeting would be £10 over budget.

IB accepted the amendment.

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (d).

For: 35

Against: 1

Abstention: 1

Ordinary Motion (d) was duly passed.

e) RCSA Reserves

IB proposed the motion

IB said that the RCSA does not have enough money to go around at budget meetings and more money could be made by putting the RCSA reserves in an account with higher interest rates, so the possibility of moving the money should be looked into by the Treasurer.

PT said that talking to banks is very annoying.

AB proposed amending the motion to include the green officer in the investigation so that the moral implications are taken into account.

TK took an indicative vote and the amendment to the motion was passed.

BG said that the RCSA should keep its eyes open to arms trade.

CT said that college uses Barclays Bank, and if it's a big issue, it should be brought to referendum.

BH asked if it need be a question of completely ethical or completely without an ethical dimension.

IB said that the motion has been left deliberately open so ideas can be brought back to an open meeting and ideas will be discussed then.

DT said that personally he would support a high interest account for financial reasons

AB asked whether the mandate would guarantee a result as this same mandate was made two years ago.

TK said that it did not.

CT said that as Treasurer he would ring banks over the holidays and report back to the OM

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (e)

For: 38

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Ordinary Motion (e) was duly passed.

f) Christmas Decorations

Motion proposed by LS

LS said that the decorations used last year have mostly gone missing and it would be nice to have some more for the Christmas bop on Friday. He asked that they be given the money for decorations otherwise the RCSA would lose it anyway.

BG proposed amending the motion to use the more secular name “holiday period decorations”

TK took an indicative vote and the amendment passed

JM asked if there was anywhere secure to store the decorations this time around

LS said that they did not have anywhere

IB said that they could use the RCSA office when it was ready

BG asked if the Cheese Society could use the decorations

LS said yes

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (f)

For: 37

Against: 0

Abstentions: 2

Ordinary Motion (f) was duly passed.

g) Rent increases

Motion proposed by IB.

IB proposed mandating himself to use freedom of information act to speak to domestic bursar and ask why the RCSA received no response last year when they asked about rent increases.

Thom Boyd (hereby known as TB) said that the request was never actually made

CT asked if it is actually possible for the RCSA to obtain this information, as the college could be classified as a company that can legally refuse the RCSA the information.

PT said that if the information is commercially sensitive, the organisation doesn't have to hand it out, so it's quite possible that they do not have to hand this information out.

AC said regardless of whether they are allowed to or not, pressure should be placed on them not to increase rents. He also reminded the meeting of the canteen boycotts six years ago in response to KFC increases.

CT said that college had previously said that they were not making enough from conferences so the increase in rent was meant to cover that.

PT said college is in the black.

Chris Hodge (hereby known as CH) asked what would be done with the information should college say that the rent was set arbitrarily

IB said that the RCSA would then take it from there

Andrew Kay (hereby known as AK) asked whether the rents, if successfully decreased, would affect present students who have fixed rents.

IB said that we would have to see.

Claire Horrocks (hereby known as CH) said that the RCSA should think about future years even if there is no immediate benefit

AC said at the time that the college fixed rents, the RCSA voiced their reservations, but college went ahead with the changes anyway

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (g)

For: 39

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Ordinary Motion (g) was duly passed

h) Formal Bookings

Motion proposed by JM

JM proposed that it would be nice to get a new system right and since the college has a list of preferred names, it should be used.

AB asked whether JM would be down as Motty.

JM replied that his preferred name of James Mott or Mott, James would be used

DT said that the preferred name did not mean a nickname as in his case, his preferred name is Daniel but it is not on his birth certificate, but he would like it to be used.

BH asked if people could get their names changed if they wanted.

T(h)om Boyd asked how quickly changes could be affected as some people liked taking letters in and out of names.

JL said that it should also be fixed so that if someone has the same surname as someone else, both surnames should be put down.

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (h)

For: 40

Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Ordinary Motion (h) was duly passed

i) Staircase kitchen bins

Motion proposed by Anna Waghorn (hereby known as AW)

AW proposed that as current bins in kitchens are unhygienic, less disgusting bins should be obtained. The new C&A Officer should be mandated to ask housekeeping to do this.

PT asked if the C&A officers were mandated to do this last year.

AW replied that they were right at the end of term and forgot. She added that a fresh face would be more effective.

David Bewicke (hereby known as DB) proposed amending the motion to mandate the previous C&A officers to do it.

TK took an indicative vote and the amendment was passed.

CH said that college is very unlikely to agree to lobbying from old C&A officers as they have asked for too many things.

JY said that as VP CH now has more power

AB said that as there is no C&A officer now and the issue is urgent, the motion should be passed quickly before a new officer comes in

TK pointed out that the Open Meeting couldn't just mandate random members to perform a task, but that because the former Catering & Amenities Officers were still on the RCSA executive the amended motion would still be valid.

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (i)

For: 35
Against: 2
Abstentions: 2

Ordinary Motion (i) was duly passed.

j) Trunk Room

Motion proposed by PW.

PW proposed that the trunk room should be cleared out as it is a mess.

JY said that this was done last year by the C&A officers, so maybe they should do it again this year.

AW said that they did it twice and the trunk room cannot just be emptied out

JY said but now it can

CH said that they don't want to do it again as the trunk room is very dusty

BH said that if the previous C&A officers are given too many duties they'll be less likely to get them done.

TB proposed amending the motion to mandating the Access Officer to clear out the trunk room.

PT said that the motion is very important and requires urgent attention as he would have to use the trunk room in 5 days. Since there was not C&A officer yet, the Access Officer should do it.

JM said that relevant people should be used and this was not an Access issue

PW accepted the amended motion mandating the Access and C&A Officers to attend to the Trunk Room.

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (j)

For: 36
Against: 0
Abstention: 3

Ordinary Motion (j) was duly passed

k) Bar Clock

Motion proposed by JM

JM proposed that someone email Sarah to ask that the bar clock be made accurate so that it does not close 20 minutes early.

CT said that the bar doesn't open early even though according to the clock it should.

DB said it might seem petty given that the RCSA was also asking about rents

JM said they should not be able to just turn around and say no- a sit in would be good.

BG said that it would be good practice for rent action.

AB asked if the proposal could be combined with extended bar hours

JM said that people being sick outside the bar doesn't help matters.

IB said Nick Milne is trying to keep the bar open late as it is doing very well.

PW said college was very happy that no one vommed up at bop on Saturday.

JM amended the motion to say that the email should be friendly and not mention a mandate.

TK asked the meeting to vote on Ordinary Motion (k)

For: 42

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Ordinary Motion (k) was duly passed.

11. Any Other RCSA Business

a) Access

BH said alternative prospectus is being rewritten and anyone interested in contributing should email him, he announced a forthcoming Access sub-committee meeting.

b) Ents committee

LS said anyone interested in serving on the Ents committee should speak to him

c) Green things

PW said he was going to see the domestic bursar the next day so anyway should come to him if they have anything to bring up

d) Pantomime

Elisabeth Wood (hereby known as EW) said everyone should go to the pantomime

e) Croquet team

BG said he should be told if anyone wanted stash

f) CD library

BG asked if anyone would like to take over the role of CD librarian.

g) Rag Pub Quiz

SB said that there would be a Rag Pub Quiz on Wednesday and people should come.

TK announced that hustings for the Catering & Amenities Officer election would take place later in the evening in the JCR. He thanked people for coming and closed the meeting.