

RCSA Open Meeting: Saturday 24th February **7pm JCR**

Chaired by Tom Kelly (RCSA Chair)

Minutes by Jasmine Lee (RCSA Ethnic minorities) on behalf of RCSA Secretary

1. Apologies for absence or lateness

There were apologies for absence from Chris Thistlethwaite (RCSA Treasurer) and ***** (RCSA LGBT officer) who had to attend events outside Cambridge. Rebecca Yeoh (RCSA secretary) and Daniel Tse (RCSA Overseas Officer) had long-standing commitments elsewhere. There was one apology for lateness from Shiana Balendra (RCSA Ents Officer).

2. Announcement of the presence and purpose of guests

There were no guests present.

3. Approval of the order of the agenda

There were no objections to the order of the agenda

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

There were no amendments. The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted.

5. Matters Arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes

6. Reports from the Committee

There were two reports from the committee:

- *Fourth year rents by RCSA President Iain Barr (hereby known as IB)*

IB reported that he had attended a discussion with the Financial Bursar in regard to the rent charges to next year's fourth year students. He stated that he had highlighted to the Financial Bursar that the current college bill for a standard room within college is above the money provided by student loans for living costs for current third year students. IB reported that the Financial Bursar had responded that there were no plans to change or consider changing the price of rooms currently and also said in response that college provides many hardship grants as a solution to this problem. IB stated that he would continue to work on this issue with college.

- *Election of the RCSA Catering and Amenities Officer by RCSA Chair Tom Kelly (hereby known as TK)*

TK informed the open meeting that since the last RCSA open meeting an election for the RCSA Catering and Amenities Officer had taken place and Rahul Mansigani (hereby known as RM) had been duly elected. TK then welcomed RM to the RCSA committee.

7. Questions to Committee

Bassment Refurbishment by RCSA Ents Officer Luke Snell (hereby known as LS)

IB inquired about the progress on the refurbishment of the bassment room which passed as a motion in a previous open meeting.

LS replied that progress was being made and a motion was expected to be put forward in a subsequent open meeting: possibly the next open meeting.

8. Extraordinary Motions

There were no extraordinary motions

9. Ordinary Motions

A RCSA Bank Accounts

TK invited RCSA Green Officer Pete Wood (hereby known as PW) to speak about the motion.

PW explained to the open meeting that interest rates from the current bank account with the Co-op were unacceptable and that customer service from the company was 'awful'.

PW also informed the open meeting that RCSA Treasurer Chris Thistlethwaite and himself had been investigating other possible options and proposed that the RCSA bank account be changed as stated in 'RCSA resolves' of the motion. PW said that Triodos had been found to be an ethically sound solution as well.

TK asked for questions and speeches from the floor.

Rob Ward (RW) asked if a higher rate of interest could be gained without the criteria of ethical banking.

PW responded 'not really'. He stated that Triodos is specifically aimed at clubs and charities and so this would maximise our interest so it was financially and ethically suitable.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 25

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Ordinary motion (A.) was duly passed.

B. Medical Resources Room

TK informed the open meeting that the motion required two-thirds support to pass and invited LS to speak about the motion.

LS explained to the open meeting that medical students of the college were very under-provided in comparison to other colleges in the university and consequently at a disadvantage. He stated that the passing of this motion would provide much-needed resources that would otherwise be unavailable to students.

LS also informed the open meeting that College was supportive of the motion as well as the college library. He pointed out that the investment would be small in terms of the return as the resources from the motion would last for a long time and be of benefit to a considerable number of students through the years.

Ben Henriques (hereby known as BH) wanted to know how the security would be enforced for the resources room.

LS answered that permission would be required for use of the room and that a system where permitted users were in possession of a badge or being on a list on top of a key signing out system for the key to the room.

James Mott (JM) asked if the room would be available for everyone.

LS stated it would be available for everyone who needed to use it and that everyone could apply for permission to use the room if they needed to use its facilities. TK said he would confirm any constitutional requirements on access to RCSA facilities and if they applied.

JM also wanted to know if it was a good use of money and the reasons why college weren't giving all the money.

LS said that college was funding half at the moment and the future funding would be by the college. He explained that college wanted to know that students were serious about the needs for the medics' resource room and that the passing of this motion would demonstrate this.

Lucas Fear-Segal wanted to know why everyone would not be allowed direct access to the room.

LS implicated expense of models as the main reason. He replied that the models were expensive and restriction of access was to prevent theft of resources, which has already occurred previously in the library.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion

For: 26 (including one vote by proxy)

Against: 0

Abstentions: 6

Ordinary Motion (B.) is duly passed

C. 'Educational Outreach' & 'Access'

TK invited BH to speak about the motion.

BH said that people outside college were unaware what his role as access officer implied and that Educational Outreach was a more widely understood term which meant the same thing.

JM wanted to know why BH couldn't just say he was part of educational outreach to organisation outside college.

BH said it was more than just words and that educational outreach had more connotations than just being a title.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion.

Favour: 19

Against: 0

Abstentions: 5

Ordinary motion (C.) is duly passed

D. Fairtrade

TK invited PW to speak about the motion.

PW told the opening meeting that a survey covering half of college had been conducted and the results showed that college was generally in favour of fair trade.

PW pointed out that the college canteen only had GEObars as evidence of fair trade sales and that he had not seen them very much on sale. PW also wants to get fair trade standard for college in order to encourage college to sell more fair trade goods.

PW said the motion, if passed, would mean that the goods used in RCSA exec events would have to be fair-trade standard. He suggested that this would not be difficult because the price of fair-trade products, such as tea, was about the same price of other tea and that mainly tea would be the fair trade products that would have to be utilised in order to fulfil the criteria.

TK invited the floor to ask questions or make speeches for/against:

Lewis Hemens wanted to know if passing this motion would cost the RCSA anything.

PW stated that it would not. That fair-trade tea was about the same price of tetleys. The major change the RCSA would have to follow was that RCSA hoodies would also have to be fair trade but PW said these could still be made at talking tees (Cambridge personalised clothes retailer).

BH questioned as to whether the RCSA would have to use fair-trade items in Freshers week or not.

PW replied that he would like to try to do so as much as possible.

Sam Oxley wanted to know about the taste of fair trade tea in comparison with tea that had not been produced by fair trade.

PW stated that in the past fair trade tea had tasted rubbish but now it was much improved and the difference was negligible between the two.

JM wanted to know if using fair trade items would be financially viable

PW replied he was interested in seeing whether it could be financed through the RCSA budget

RW asked for clarification as to whether PW wanted to get rid of everything from the canteen that wasn't fair-trade.

PW said this was not the case and that it was difficult to substitute some items used by the canteen for fair trade products but stated that the canteen would have to try and sell a reasonable proportion of items that were fair trade.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion:

Favour: 17

Against: 0

Abstentions: 8

Ordinary motion (D.) is duly passed.

E. Written Reports from Officers

TK invited BH to talk about the motion

BH stated that RCSA members did a lot of work that wasn't recognised, giving the example of Lewis Hemens diligent work. He proposed that the motion was a good way to showcase the work done by the RCSA. He stated that it was also important that officers show work that they do to members of the RCSA. He stated that the reports would be in bullet points.

TK invited the floor to ask questions and make speeches for/against:

David Bewicke (hereby known as DB) wanted to know whether there were minutes for the RCSA executive meetings and whether these could be made public to the whole of the RCSA student body.

TK replied that there were minutes and that there was an explicit constitutional requirement for them to be circulated to the executive, although this didn't always happen (Open Meeting minutes, by contrast, must be available to all members)

Claire Horrocks (hereby known as CH) suggested that making the minutes public would deter executive members from making points they might do otherwise for fear of retaliation.

DB asked for an amendment to make executive meeting minutes public, arguing that the spirit of the motion was RCSA openness.

TK declined to permit the amendment on the basis it was beyond the spirit and scope of the original motion.

CH wanted to know about possible reprimands of not producing the reports.

BH responded that the point of the reports wasn't to punish RCSA members, but act as way of informing and showcasing work. He said that he didn't expect there to be reprimands and there would be no punishments.

Lucas questioned whether the reports would be optional to write and if it would just result in additional administration work to RCSA committee members.

BH replied they should write the reports but they wouldn't have to and that in the past there has been an option to submit no reports by RCSA committee members which has been done in the past.

CH: Suggested an alternative to post the work online so that it was informative, accessible and up to date.

BH suggested that it was a good idea but it would also be good to have reports about work over the entire year. He stated he didn't think the suggestion by CH was contrary or opposing to the original motion.

PW proposed the amendment that on production of a report that a copy of the report is submitted to the chair to be kept as backup files.

BH accepted the amendment

RM wanted to know how the reports would be distributed

BH replied that the motion mandated the chair and president to do the reports so that the decision was theirs. However, he hoped they would be displayed on the JCR boards, via email and the internet.

JM proposed an amendment to RCSA Resolves 3, requiring the distribution of the reports.

BH accepted it

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion

For: 15

Against: 1

Abstentions: 6

Ordinary motion (E.) is duly passed.

E Fairtrade Society

This motion required a two-thirds majority

PW stated that he needs a society to group the people together who were keen to promote fair trade.

Barnaby Mollet (hereby known as BM) wanted to know for what other reason apart from grouping the people there was to form the society in particular what activities there would be.

PW replied there would be activities done by the fair-trade society.

RW wanted to know if the society would ask for money at the RCSA Budget meeting.

PW responded that he didn't know yet but he didn't think that whether or not a society asked for money was basis for passing or rejecting a society.

TK asked the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 18

Against: 0

Abstentions: 4

Ordinary Motion (F.) is duly passed

G Cheese Society & its Constitution

TK invited IB to speak about the motion.

IB stated that he had noticed that Cheese society was going against their constitution. IB stated that there had been no elections since the creation of Cheese society in 2006 when they were meant to have elections every 14 months. IB also informed the meeting that Cheese society had not had their AGM meeting this year at all.

TK opened the floor to questions and to make speeches for/against:
DB said that the reason for not holding an AGM yet was that "Brandon was really busy" currently.

IB wanted to know if there would be an AGM

NK stated there would be one next week and elections would not be corrupt but transparent, clear and fair.

DB stated that the seconder (PW) was actually avid member of the cheese society

PW said he feared for his life

TK stated that the last meeting was 26th October 2006 and that the RCSA 'annual' meant at most every fourteen months.

NK stated rounding down meant Cheese soc was abiding by this.

BH Expressed a view the arguments of both sides had been heard and that most of those present wanted to leave the issue and debate the last motion.

DB responded against this and proposed to carry on talking about it.

TK confirmed BH's right to make a speech in favour of the procedural motion.
BH said that it was all very funny but this was not a matter he felt needed more discussion by the open meeting and that nobody wanted to waste time discussing it further.

TK invited DB to respond

DB referred to the constitution and its relationship to the schedule.

TK said DB raised an interesting constitutional point. In the current Chair's view, the constitution was separate from the schedule and Cheese Soc should follow their own constitution. Nevertheless, the schedule could provide helpful, but not compulsory, definitions when these were not clear in the RCSA or Cheese Soc constitutions.

TK asked the meeting to vote on whether the motion should be taken straight to a vote, this clearly passed.

TK proceeded to ask the open meeting to vote on the ordinary motion.

For: 4

Against: 12

Abstention: 8

Ordinary motion (G.) failed

H. JCR Yeargroup Photo

TK invited Peter Cary (hereby known as PC) to speak about the motion

PC explained to the meeting that there every year matriculation photos were collected of RCSA student body and that there was no matriculation photo of the academic year starting in 2006. He proposed that it would be nice that as there was no matriculation photo to get a halfway hall photo of this year and put it up in the JCR.

TK opened the floor to questions and speeches for/against:

Jonny Young proposed purchase of the 2005 3rd year photo
PC replied he had no problems with this. He had stated for the matriculation year 2006 photo as it was the photo relevant to his year and so he had noticed it's absence.

IB called to amend the motion to the purchase of a board game called 'War on Terror'

PW was very excited about this.

TK rejected the amendment from the chair on the basis that it was again contrary to the spirit of the original motion.

JM wanted to know if the first year's (matriculation year 2007) photo was there and suggested that it was unfair to just have the two years above photos in the JCR.

PC accepted an amendment to allocate £100 from this open meeting to the general purpose of purchasing of year photos

TK invited the open meeting to vote on the motion

For: 25

Against: 0

Abstention: 1

Ordinary motion (H.) is duly passed.

10. Any other RCSA business

BH said the alternative prospectus was now available to viewing by college and he would welcome any comments on it.

TK informed the open meeting that CUSU election nominations were open, the elections would take place in Week 7.

TK called the meeting to a close.