

RCSA Open Meeting Minutes

Saturday November 29th – 7pm JCR



1) Apologies for absence or lateness

Apologies for absence were received from Robin Lawther (RL), who was at home.

2) Announcement of the presence and purpose of guests

Andy Aitken's sister was present. There were no objections.

3) Approval of the order of the agenda

Copies of the agenda were not available until half way through ordinary motion (c). John Crook (JC) read through the agenda to seek approval of the order. Tom Kelly (TK) asked that the motion regarding renewable policy be postponed until the list in the addendum was available for inspection. This was approved.

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.

Barnaby Mollett (BM) pointed out that Neeral Dodhia is referred to as DN instead of ND at some point in the minutes from November 9th. Following that amendment, the minutes were approved.

5) Matters Arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6) Reports from the Committee

a) Trunk Room

Rob Beagrie (RB) read a statement from RL which said that all the items currently in the trunk room had been tagged, and a new system of management was in place which should ensure that the room would be completely empty after January 22nd 2009.

7) Questions to the Committee

Ben Henriques (BH) asked if RL had liaised with the head porter and other appropriate senior college staff about the trunk room. Rahul Mansigani (RM) said that he had.

Dave Bewicke (DB) asked if there was any progress about having the modified version of Mrs. Robinson made the official college song. RM said he didn't feel it was appropriate to mention at JLC.

Tom Pugh (TP) asked whether, since John Crook's (JC) room had been described as palatial, he would allow it to be used for extra storage should the space in the trunk room run out? JC politely declined, pointing out there would be extra storage available in the form of a storage crate should it be required.

8) Co-Option of remaining non-executive officers

a) LBGT Officer

RM invited James Kemp (JK) to speak. JK said he wanted to have more events in college and to increase awareness that such events were occurring. He would also put up some times for people to come and talk to him if they had any issues. He hoped to be a very accessible LBGT officer.

RM asked what social events he would like to have. JK said maybe some swaps, and also "The Place" has a night on Tuesday we could organise something with. We could also have BBQs in the summer. He noted publicity for events was just as important as holding them, as they had had issues with attendance in the past.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion supporting the co-option of JK as LBGT officer.

For: 26
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

JK was duly elected LBGT officer.

9) Extraordinary Motions

a) Dinosaur impression

RCSA Notes:

1. It is important to ask the committee questions at Open Meetings, such that members' knowledge of RCSA business is kept up to date, thus adhering to 2 ii) of the constitution.
2. John Crook, RCSA Chair, can do a dinosaur impression.

RCSA Believes:

1. Such a dinosaur impression would be of social value to its members, adhering to part 2 i) of the RCSA constitution.

RCSA Resolves:

1. The RCSA Chair should be mandated to perform the task of 'a dinosaur impression' upon request of an RCSA member during the "Questions to the Committee" part of any Ordinary Open Meeting
2. Only one "dinosaur impression" will be permitted per open meeting, and this task will only be performed on the request of an RCSA member at the meeting.
3. This policy will be revoked at the end of John Crook's tenure as RCSA Chair, as no one will be quite as fine at "dinosaur impressions".
4. Given that today's 'questions to the committee' have past, for today only said task will be conducted automatically in 'Any other RCSA Business'.

BM introduced the motion. JC appeared confused and inquired of BM if he was serious. There were allegations of forgery of signatures, although no formal charges were brought.

DB said there was a very specific order to the agenda with little room for movement. Also he felt that it wasn't nice to mandate people to do things that are not part of the job that they had accepted.

TK proposed a procedural motion that the question not be put. He said it trivialised extraordinary motions and it was unbecoming of the chair, who should not address the Open Meeting except in his official capacity.

There were no speeches against.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion that extraordinary motion a) not be put.

For: 24
Against: 4
Abstain: 3

Extraordinary motion (a) was withdrawn.

10) Ordinary Motions

a) CUSU Re-affiliation

RCSA Notes:

1. According to the constitution a list of organisations that the RCSA is affiliated with should be submitted yearly for approval. (Chapter VI: section 41).
2. The RCSA is currently affiliated to CUSU, for the cost of £2700 yearly.
3. That CUSU's support, in terms of welfare, representation at university level and running of campaigns would be unsustainable at a college level.

RCSA Believes:

1. That its affiliation to CUSU is of benefit to the college.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To stay affiliated to CUSU.

Proposed: Rahul Mansigani, 'Workers of the world, unite!'

Seconded: Rob Beagrie, 'See you later, affliator!'

JC read through each motion until item d) as there were no copies of the agenda available for inspection before this point.

RM introduced the motion, saying that we needed to be affiliated to CUSU. They provide an enormous amount of external support which we would be hard pressed to provide without them, for example, they provide the free condoms in fresher's packs.

There were no other speeches for or against, so JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 25

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinary motion (a) was duly passed.

b) Bar Closing Time

RCSA Notes

1. That if a conference is using the bar, at closing time the bar staff simply shut up the bar and leave, then the porters make sure the bar area is clear when they lock it at midnight.
2. That this is not the same procedure as when students are in residence.
3. Students often have some drink remaining when they are asked to leave the bar 20 minutes after closing time.

RCSA Believes

1. That it would be an improvement for the bar to operate as it does for conferences during term time.
2. That the bar staff might like to leave 20mins earlier.
3. That the wage bill for the bar staff could be reduced if the bar operates as outlined in RCSA Notes 1.
4. That the porters may need some gentle persuasion to take on this extra role.
5. That students are unlikely to trash the bar area just because the bar staff have gone home.

RCSA Resolves

1. To mandate the Catering & Amenities Officer, or another RCSA Committee member appointed by the President, to lobby all appropriate College staff to change the operating procedures of the bar so that students are allowed to remain in the bar area to finish their drinks after closing time.

Proposed: James Mott, slow drinker.

Seconded: Carlianne White, procrastinator.

JC noted the absence of either the proposer or seconder at the meeting. He asked the meeting whether there was anyone who wished to introduce the motion. There was not.

RB noted that the bar staff probably clean the bar after they close it, and they might be reluctant to leave without cleaning up.

BH said that if they didn't clean the bar for conferences, why do they need to for us? He also noted that Liz Guild was likely to say that this motion encouraged drinking, but we should argue it would discourage loitering (and therefore vomiting or rowdiness) on long court after the bar closed.

RM said the porters would be unlikely to support this. He also said that there might be noise issues, especially during exam terms.

TP said slower drinking would lead to less drunkenness. Also a more gradual exit from the bar might decrease the noise as compared to everyone leaving at once.

Amanda Myers (AM) asked if the jukebox would still be on. No one present knew.

BH proposed that the motion be amended to reflect this.

Lewis Hemens (LH) raised a point of information that since the control unit was behind the bar, staff would have to leave it on all night if they didn't turn it off when they left. He therefore felt it unlikely that the music would be left on.

BH proposed an amendment to the motion which would add that music in the bar be ended when the bar staff leave to RCSA Resolves.

The amendment was voted on and passed.

There were no more speeches for or against, so JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 22
Against: 0
Abstaining: 1

Ordinary Motion (b) was duly passed.

c) Café at Weekends

RCSA notes:

1. That the Red Brick Café has proved popular with college members and others since its opening at the beginning of this term.

RCSA believes:

1. The café would be equally popular on weekends, when students tend to be less busy and will have more time to use it.
2. That coffee is just the thing to get you through that essay.

RCSA resolves:

1. To support the opening, at least for a few hours, of the Red Brick Café on Saturdays.

Proposed: Rahul Mansigani, likes coffee in the morning
Seconded: Robin Lawther, prefers a "paaar shaar"

RM introduced the motion. He had discussed the idea during his hustings, where it had seemed popular. The café is a great place to hang out, and is a lot easier to get to than anywhere in town if you wanted a good coffee.

Rob Smith (RS) asked if the café was profitable? RM said that he had spoken to the bar staff on this point and they had said that it was profitable but were unable to tell him exact figures. BH said that he had also spoken to them and they thought it would be profitable so they had already decided to have a trial period of Saturday opening hours.

Tanuj Bhojwani (TB) asked why we were not also asking for the café to be opened on Sundays? RM replied that whilst we might well push for this in the future, for now we would take it one day at a time.

Tom Grimble (TG) asked how many hours we wanted the café to be open. RM said a few hours after brunch closed as that would likely be the most popular time.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 24
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Ordinary Motion (c) was duly passed.

d) Renewable Policy

RCSA Notes:

2. That all policies on the Renewable Policy List lapse after 3 years.
3. That a number of these policies are due to lapse during the forthcoming year

4. The constitutional requirement for such policies to be proposed for renewal at the first Open Meeting following the election of a new RCSA committee.

RCSA Believes:

1. That there are a number of such policies which we would not want to lapse.
2. That these policies continue to support the general aims and objects of the RCSA as set out by the constitution.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To renew the policy contained in the list in the addendum.
2. To expressly revoke any policy passed before 1st January 2006 and not contained within the renewable policy list.

Proposed: Rob Beagrie

Seconded: RCSA Executive

RB introduced the motion. He said that every time a motion was passed at Open Meeting, that motion became part of RCSA policy and would lapse after 3 years. The RCSA was constitutionally required to re-propose each motion that was due to lapse during their term at the first open meeting following their election. However, following the model of the previous committee, we felt that re-proposing an entire year's worth of motions in a single meeting was unfeasible and therefore we would only be renewing those motions which the previous committee had added to the renewable policy list and which were due to lapse this year. This amounted to three pieces of policy contained in the list in the addendum: that a modified version of "Mrs. Robinson" was the official RCSA song, that we were in favour of improved WiFi and that we should all come to open meetings and know what we are doing. He said that he had been over all the policy that wasn't on the list already and felt that nothing needed to be added. They were also renewing all of the relevant policies, so nothing was being removed.

Iain Barr (IB) spoke against the motion. He asked if the lyrics to the RCSA song still existed. TK said yes, they were in a folder in the library. IB asked if the song had ever been performed, as if not we should amend the motion to remove the song from RCSA policy until it had been performed. RB did not object to the amendment.

RM said that Brandon Green would be very upset, as he was the one who had written the lyrics. IB said he would be happy to consider re-approving the motion were Brandon Green to record a version of the song. LH said that policy wise, this was a reverse step. We should keep the song as the official song and attempt to find someone to perform it. JC ceded the chair to BM in order to suggest Daniel Tse. JC resumed the chair.

TP said that the panto was on next week and might provide the perfect venue for such a comedy performance. BM said that he didn't want to write it in.

IB asked if we could amend the motion so that the renewal of policy regarding the RCSA song be conditional on its performance. RM said this was impractical. IB withdrew the amendment.

TK asked if the older policies on the renewable policy list would still be active if the motion passed. RB responded that they would be.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 26

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinary Motion (d) was duly passed.

e) Bassment Bar

RCSA Notes:

1. That in the Party Room there exists a currently unused main bar facility which is far superior to the facilities used at the moment.
2. That the bar is currently unused, as the College has vowed "never again" to let Students use it following damage occurring during the 06/07 Ents term.
3. The current Ents Officers wish to produce a proposal, including a contract between the RCSA and College to underwrite any damage, to secure the reopening of the party room bar for Ents Committee use.
4. Should this motion be successful, there will be another motion proposed during Lent term to enter into a contract with College.

RCSA Believes:

1. That the bar facilities currently used during BOPs are inadequate.
2. That BOPs would be vastly improved were the main bar facility re-opened.
3. That every effort should be made to secure the re-opening of main bar facility in the Party Room.
4. That provided the Ents Committee can demonstrate that the bar facility will be used responsibly, the College has no reason to prevent it from doing so.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allow the Treasurer to use reserves to underwrite any damage to the party room bar during RCSA use up to a maximum of £2,000.
2. The terms of this underwriting will be formally set out in a contract between the RCSA and college, which will be submitted as a motion to the first Open Meeting in Lent Term 09.

Proposed: James Pacey, partial to a drink.

Seconded: Barnaby Mollett, impartial to a drink.

James Pacey (JP) introduced the motion. He said that the current facilities in the bassment aren't really adequate for neither bop attendees nor those working the bar. He would like to make a formal proposal to Nick Milne to agree to underwrite any damage that might occur should the bar be reopened. He asked for it to be noted that the motion would not be binding, and that there would be a further motion next term containing the actual contract.

TP asked if the bar was being used at all. JP said only conferences and external events were allowed to use it. IB raised a point of information that it had to be staffed by bar staff. Anyone who wanted to use it had to put down a deposit. The staff would then charge normal prices, i.e. the same as was charged in the main college bar. If the smaller bar did not make a profit over the evening, the deposit was retained and used to cover staff wages.

There were no more speeches for or against the motion, so JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 26

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinary Motion (e) was duly passed.

f) RCSA Charities Account

RCSA Notes

1. There is £1181.84 in the 'Charities Account' (as of the end of the 07/08 Academic Year).
2. The money is from student donations, paid alongside their college bills.
3. There is current RCSA policy on this account, an open meeting (12/10/08) held an indicative vote, with 16 votes in favour of the money being transferred to RAG and 13 against.
4. If the money was allocated, more members may be inclined to donate.
5. RAG claimed £100 at this year's Budget Meeting for 'General' expenditure.
6. It is not currently noted on College Bills that the contribution is to the RCSA Charities Account.

RCSA Discusses

1. The amount that should be allocated to RAG after this Open Meeting.

RCSA Believes

1. That some amount should be allocated to RAG after this open meeting.
2. That the RCSA treasurer should investigate the labelling of the donation tick box on future College Bills, and amend it to read 'RCSA Charities Account Donation'.

RCSA Resolves

1. To confirm that this account is the 'Charities Account'.
2. To allocate £_____ to RAG from the current balance of the 'Charities Account'.
3. To continue Resolves 1 on an annual basis.

Proposed: Barnaby Mollett, charity case.

Seconded: Tom Kelly, second hand.

BM introduced the motion. There was money in the charities account that had not been allocated. Current RCSA policy says that the treasurer should annually transfer money to RAG, but that this was negotiable in an open meeting. We just needed to decide how much was going to RAG this year

BH asked if this was the same money as was voted on a couple of open meetings ago. BM replied that it was. DB raised a point of information: that motion was withdrawn as it was felt that there was sufficient policy already in place. TK said he and BM wanted to confirm that this was the charities account that was specified in existing policy, as they did not feel that this was made clear enough.

TP asked what RAG did, specifically how they would spend this money. Emma Irving said that RAG had an annual vote on a long list of charities they passed the money to.

TK proposed to amend the motion to give £800 to RAG. This was the same amount that open meetings allocated to themselves last year, so although somewhat arbitrary it was also appropriate. TP asked if we were going to stipulate that the remaining £300 would go to RAG again, next year. BM said we would agree on this next year when the motion came up again.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 26

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Ordinary Motion (f) was duly passed.

g) Present for Iain Barr

RCSA Notes

1. The hard work put in by the ex-RCSA President over the past year.
2. That Iain's hair has been a source of inspiration to college members.
3. Last year a sum of £65 was allocated towards purchasing a gift for James Mott.

RCSA Believes:

1. Iain has done a top job for the RCSA over the past year. This work should be rewarded.
2. The tradition of buying presents for ex-Presidents is an awfully nice idea.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allocate monies from this open meeting to the sum of £40 towards purchasing a gift for Iain Barr.

Proposed: Rahul Mansigani, successor.

Seconded: Barnaby Mollett, admires blue hair.

RM introduced the motion. He said that he knows how much work being president is, and Iain deserved a reward. He was sorry we had to reduce the amount this year as there was now a chair *and* a president.

TK spoke for the motion. IB had been a successful president for the RCSA. He possessed just the right attributes including commitment, diplomacy, enthusiasm and the required amount of anger. Having had the pleasure of seeing lots of other JCR presidents at CUSU most weeks, who were often a bit rubbish, he could confirm that the RCSA had been very lucky to have Iain Barr. TK further confirmed that the allocation last year was amended to be £50 not £65.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 26
Against: 0
Abstain: 1

Ordinary Motion (g) was duly passed.

h) Present for Tom Kelly

RCSA Notes:

1. The hard work put in by the ex-RCSA Chair over the past year.
2. That no one else will ever learn the Constitution by heart.
3. Last year a sum of £65 was allocated towards purchasing a gift for James Mott.

RCSA Believes:

1. Tom has done a top job for the RCSA over the past year. This work should be rewarded.
2. The tradition of buying presents for ex-Chairs is an awfully nice idea.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allocate monies from this open meeting to the sum of £40 towards purchasing a gift for Tom Kelly.

Proposed: Rahul Mansigani, gift of the gab.

Seconded: Barnaby Mollett, present today.

RM introduced the motion, saying it was essentially the same principle as for motion (g). TK was an amazing chair. He knew things that no one else did or would ever need to.

IB wanted to repeat TK's speech about him. He noted that TK was an amazing chair given that he was also the first, noting that even having left his official duties, many in the meeting seemed to still be looking to him for clarification. BM said the budget meeting was mainly a success due to TK's help and excellent chairing. BH noted that they had represented the college at CUSU meetings, and having done that job before them they have phenomenal knowledge of how CUSU works.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 26
Against: 0
Abstain: 1

Ordinary Motion (h) was duly passed.

j) Robinson Puppy

RCSA notes:

1. When a new administration was elected in a certain country, one of the major issues following election is the choice of pet dog.
2. Robinson College, unlike some others, does not possess a college pet.

RCSA believes:

1. That it would be fitting to have a college mascot or pet of some form.
2. That it would be helpful not to have to clear up after it.

RCSA resolves:

1. To allocate £15 from this Open Meeting budget to purchase a stuffed toy, preferably of the same species that President-elect Obama has selected.
2. To hold a poll to decide the puppy's name.

Proposed: Rahul "loves puppies" Mansigani

Seconded: Amanda "me too!" Myers

RM introduced the motion. He said that an RCSA mascot might be fun, and he knew where we could buy academic gowns to put on a stuffed toy. He would be prepared to cover any extra cost himself should the money allocated at the open meeting not be sufficient.

TB asked who would decide on the puppy. RM said he would probably just get the cheapest one.

BH proposed that the motion be amended to make the dog the official RCSA mascot. RM accepted the amendment.

DB asked if we could remove the reference to Obama. It was proposed that the motion be amended to remove the end of Resolves 1 from the word "preferably". RM accepted the amendment.

Duncan Stibbard Hawkes (DSH) asked who would look after the dog? RM said it would remain in his room or the RCSA office.

DB asked if anyone could sign it out to use it. RM said yes, as long as there was someone in the RCSA office to sign it out.

JP proposed that the motion be amended to stipulate that the mascot's attendance at open meetings be compulsory. RM accepted the amendment.

DB asked for the motion to be amended to include a sound thing that would play the official RCSA song. This amendment was not accepted.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 26

Against: 0

Abstaining: 0

Ordinary Motion (i) was duly passed.

j) CD Library

RCSA Notes:

1. The CD Library is a society of the RCSA but has not been active for over a year.

2. The library is above the music room.
3. The key is at the porters lodge but can only be signed out by Brandon Green.
4. The full list of CDs can be found at <http://www-stud.robinson.cam.ac.uk/cdlibrary/>

RCSA Believes:

1. The library is a very valuable resource and should be available to benefit all members of college rather than being left forgotten.
2. The library could be of use to the Ents Committee.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To ask for volunteers to investigate what would be involved in restarting the society and potentially set up a new committee.
2. To mandate a senior officer of the RCSA committee to inform the porters of the new person(s) who can sign out the key.

*Proposed: Tom Grimble, 'Thank You For The Music'
Seconded: Barnaby Mollett, 'Aye, Tunes!'*

TG said that there was a CD library, of which Brandon Green was the last president. He would be willing to start up a new committee to look after the CD library himself.

BH asked if Brandon still had the key. TG said no, it was at the lodge and could be not be removed. BM said that he had asked about the key and the porters had said they would let him have it. It could currently be signed out by Brandon or any senior RCSA officer.

DB spoke for the motion. He said it was a good idea as otherwise we were just sitting on a pile of old CDs for no reason.

JC invited the meeting to vote on the motion.

For: 26
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Ordinary Motion (j) was duly passed.

k) Bouncy Castle

RCSA Notes:

1. It does not currently own a bouncy castle.
2. Bouncy castles reduce stress.
3. There are blue brick bouncy castles on e-Bay for about £1300.
4. The Association has excess reserves.
5. Its aims: to provide facilities which are of recreational or social value to Members, and to advance the welfare of its Members.
6. A bouncy castle would be useful for Corruption and garden parties.

RCSA Believes:

1. Owning a bouncy castle would improve the welfare of its members, by reducing stress, especially during exam term.
2. The bouncy castle would be an excellent addition to the chill-out cafe.
3. A bouncy castle would provide a facility of lasting value to the RCSA, and therefore it would be appropriate to use reserves to purchase it.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allocate £1400 from Reserves to purchase a bouncy castle and necessary accessories, in line with the accompanying and constituting report in the addendum.
2. To mandate the RCSA Executive to carry out the purchase in Resolves 1.
3. To negotiate with College about the positioning, supervisor training, and safety/general arrangements for the bouncy castle.
4. To make the bouncy castle available to groups or associations of members in College for a nominal fee or deposit.

*Proposed: Iain Barr, came to get down.
Seconded: Dave Bewicke, jumped around.*

IB introduced the motion. He said that the RCSA has lots of reserves, that need to be spent. Provision of bouncy castles was brought up in hustings, where it had good support. He conceded that we would require some college approval, as well as some official procedure for signing it out, however the fact that the college had allowed bouncy castles at other events was indicative that they might not be entirely opposed.

LH asked what the cost of maintenance was, especially for “those energy things”. He asked if we knew how willing college was to let us erect said castle. IB said college might need persuading for any specific event. He also said that typical rental fees were about a few hundred pounds per day. This would have to cover staff costs, transport & maintenance etc. so maintenance shouldn't be prohibitive.

BM said that the report in the addendum stated that the ents account held £14,000. This fact was wrong as the ents account actually only held £1400. He also noted that no one had looked into whether college would let us use the castle, and he objected to the fact that the motion implied the castle would always be easily available to college members when this might not actually be the case.

TK said that the report mentioned a drop in VAT next week. He said that the treasurer should look into VAT exemption as we should be entitled to it, being a registered charity. TK also said that the executive should have given notice of this motion when it was received, 5 days before the open meeting, as it requires scrutiny from other RCSA members.

BH proposed an amendment to the motion so that Resolves 3 would read that IB would discuss the bouncy castle with college before we spend any money. IB accepted the amendment. RM said that there were already massive problems with storage, and asked where we would keep it. IB said there should be room in the theatre workshop.

BM proposed a procedural motion adjourning the motion until the next open meeting, with the intention that Iain would have spoken to college authorities about the practicalities by this time. The motion was accepted.

JC adjourned the meeting.