

NB – Many points of order/information were made in this meeting, as were requests for proceedings which were found to be non-constitutionally sound (i.e. extraordinary motions suggested prior to a petition being ready etc.) For ease of reading anything that was immediately dismissed has been omitted from the minutes unless it had direct bearing on a motion or vote being discussed. Similarly there was a lot of talking over people which was impossible to minute. So I'm sorry for any omissions but it's an unfortunate side effect of such lively debate! – Alice

R.C.S.A. Open Meeting Minutes

Saturday 19th May: 6pm JCR

1. Apologies for absence or lateness.

Mimi and Mary send apologies

Absent without apologies: Hannah

2. Announcement of the presence and purpose of guests.

No guests.

3. Approval of the presence and speaking rights of guests.

Not necessary.

4. Approval of the order of the agenda.

Approved.

5. 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 Anelay (TA): Request the secretary read all of the last open meeting minutes.

Alice Udale-Smith (AUS) read all of the last minutes.

Minutes then passed.

6. Matters Arising from the minutes.

No matters arising.

7. Reports from the Committee.

Peter Judge (PJ): The budget for this open meeting is £340.

8. Questions to the Committee.

TA: Can I ask why there has been no reason given for the non-inclusion of the motion about umbrellas being used at the May Ball.

Harry Brunton (HB): I've been advised not to answer that question at this point.

Jimmy Campbell (JC): I'm not going to answer either sorry.

PJ: Not going to answer.

AUS: Not going to answer.

JC: You could ask the rest of the committee but they don't know so it would be pointless.

David Sparkhall (DS): Where is this advice coming from?

HB: I think you can guess who has been advising me.

9. Extraordinary Motions.

An extraordinary motion was submitted by Heather Holland (HH) which by this point in the meeting had the required number of signatures and took the form of the motion below:

This motion requires a two thirds majority to pass as it asking for financial assistance.

RCSA Notes:

- 1. Last year, during the Robinson May ball (hereafter referred to as the Ball), the weather was bad, and umbrellas were needed, however the Robinson May Ball Committee (hereafter referred to as the Ball committee) did not supply these to guests. In the ball's review, this was the only piece of negative feedback.*
- 2. Many other May balls provided their guests with umbrellas.*
- 3. It costs £1150 (incl. VAT) for 500 black umbrellas from Umbrella World and 500 umbrellas would be approximately 1 umbrella per 2.5 people.*
- 4. The Ball gets no funding from college (unlike some other balls) but is underwritten by the RCSA. Therefore the RCSA would be required to bail out the ball committee if everything went tits up.*
- 5. Last year the ball committee made a large loss.*
- 6. This year's committee froze the standard ticket price.*

RCSA Believes:

- 1. The Ball reflects Robinson and its students and for the ball to get glowing reviews reflects well on the college and visa versa.*
- 2. It is unfair for this year's Ball's guests to be expected to pay for umbrellas when they may not be used if weather is pleasant.*
- 3. The ball usually sells out before general release, and so the ball guests are college members or college member's guests, much like bops, and so the money would make a positive impact for many college members.*
- 4. Buying umbrellas for the ball is an investment as they can reused for futures. They may not be used every year, but are good to have as a back-up in case it does rain.*
- 5. It is nice to be dry during May Balls.*
- 6. The ball committee's dwindling reserves should be saved for emergency costs only.*

RCSA Resolves:

- 1. To allocate £340 to the ball committee from the open meeting budget to help cover costs of the umbrellas, and for the committee to pay the rest from this year's ticket sales.*
- 2. The ball committee shall store these umbrellas in its storage shed until a year when it rains where they can be used.*

Speaking for the motion - HH

The May Ball is enjoyed by a lot of Robinson members and the only negative feedback from last year's ball was that people didn't enjoy getting wet when it rained. As a result we're looking to buy some umbrellas which we can keep and reuse so will be a lasting investment for the college as a whole. Most of the guests at the Ball are either Robinson members or their guests so this money would primarily be going towards helping Robinson people and as such the RCSA should support this motion. The May Ball reserves are in a bad way financially after last year's committee made a loss so it's better to keep them for emergencies rather than spend them on umbrellas.

Speaking against the motion – Ewan McGregor (EM)

The May Ball is unlike all other societies in that it is a commercial venture run by using the ticket sales to pay for the night itself. It has separate revenue that far exceeds the revenue of the RCSA and if this was the primary failing of last year's ball it should have been brought at the budget meeting or earlier in the year. It's also an issue for the RCSA to fund something that benefits non-Robinson members as we don't have enough money to do that for everything we would like. The May Ball does have reserves of its own that are incidentally as big as those of the RCSA and it seems silly for the RCSA to pay for something that the May Ball should have budgeted for itself out of its ticket sales rather than risking run of short of money and asking the RCSA to help out.

Speaking in favour of the motion – Dan Green (DG)

If everything has to be primarily for members only benefit then we cannot justify a lot of things that the RCSA does, it would be good to have umbrellas, people who are getting wet will be bitchy and annoy other people so in Robinson students interests that everyone is dry.

Speaking against the motion – JC

The reason Harry declared this motion invalid when it was submitted as an ordinary motion is because of an unfortunately worded email that was sent out to the college Rugby Club. Which I'll now read to anybody who hasn't seen it already:

Gents,

As those of you who have been around a while will know, RCRUFC has a very close relationship with our mayball committee whereby we do them a few favours in return for queue jump on mayball night. So, in line with tradition, Heather asked me today if we would do it again this year, so there are a few things we'll be doing as a club over the next few weeks.

The first is TOMORROW. They've asked us to turn up in force to the RCSA Open meeting - in the JCR at 7pm - to vote in favour of their motion to get some umbrellas. Shouldn't take long so there's absolutely no danger of it encroaching into the champions league final.

Then, they've asked us to help set up, which will involve some shifting of heavy things and generally being on hand on the afternoon of the mayball itself (Friday 15th of June) and on Wednesday 13th to help carry stuff into college. More details about where and when we'll be needed closer to the time but it would be great if we could all give up some time to help out.

See you all soon

MVG

Jonny

Unfortunately as I can see from your faces this raises serious questions about the validity of any vote on this motion as it effectively reads as if people are being offered queue jump for voting a certain way which is of course totally unacceptable based on the aims of the RCSA.

Point of Information from HH: She didn't know about the email until after it was sent.

JC: As Heather is my friend I told her that we were going to have to declare this motion invalid yesterday evening and then spent a lot of time discussing it with her until 3am. Around 2pm today another email was sent to the Rugby Club list apologising for the implications of the wording and stressing that queue jump was not being awarded in return for voting a certain way. However that in itself isn't enough as the email was still sent and a lot of people are only here as a result of that email. This motion is therefore just another attempt to push through a motion that simply shouldn't be being put as it isn't democratically sound for the people in the room now to vote on it having been offered an incentive to be here.

HB asked if there were any questions:

Rosalyn Old: What steps are you going to take to make sure the umbrellas are not lost and so you have to buy them all again next year?

HH: Everyone has to leave through the porters lodge so they wouldn't get stolen and most other may balls that have umbrellas don't have a big problem. Some would get broken but having them stolen wouldn't be a major problem.

EM: If you are having a 60% depletion of umbrellas surely you're going to need to budget for this again in the future so it's silly to ask for this small amount of money that won't make that much of a difference?

HH: We feel it's unfair to charge one year for something that we might not use if it's sunny and we don't have insurance that would cover losses but

RO: How much money does the ball receive from sponsorship?

HH: £300 from Lafayette, occasionally free food and stuff but no other money is received.

BP: Why are you bringing this so late in the year?

HH: I was advised not to bring it up in the budget meeting.

EM: If the umbrellas were the main focus then why didn't you budget for this properly rather than asking the RCSA for this money at the very end of the year and only a month before the ball?

HH: We were hoping to pay for them out of sponsorship or see if we had enough money left over before we asked the RCSA for money.

TA calls for a procedural motion to move to a vote:

TA: everyone in this room knows which way they are going to vote so rather than letting it get bitchier and stressful we should vote now to keep everyone friendly.

Tobias Paul: I've been waiting patiently for a chance to speak whilst everybody discusses the money side of this argument... There are some major problems with the legality of this motion and it's important these arguments are made before we agree to something potentially illegal which college council will have to veto anyway before we vote. We therefore should carry on the discussion so these arguments can be made.

Vote in favour of moving to a vote: 24

Vote against moving to a vote: 18

Procedural Motion passes and is put to a vote...

Tobias Paul (TP) calls for a procedural motion to defer the matter to Ents Officer

TP: There is a significant difficulty legally with this motion and it seems that the best way to resolve these problems is for Toby who is on both the RCSA and May Ball committees to liaise with RCSA exec, College and Mat Ball Committees to deal with these problems and try to reach an agreement rather than forcing it through now.

DG: I think it's a sensible suggestion in principle but it wouldn't be beneficial in practice as we wouldn't be able to allocate the money today and so would have to call another meeting to do that instead.

Vote in favour of putting the motion to the Ents Officer: 22

Vote against putting the motion to the Ents Officer: 26

Procedural motions falls.

TP calls for a Procedural Motion that this motion be taken in parts:

DG: requests that AUS reads the resolves again so we know what that would entail.

Votes in favour of taking the motion in parts: 8

Votes against taking the motion in parts: 39

Procedural motions falls.

The Extraordinary Motion is put to a vote:

Votes in favour of passing this motion: 25

Votes against passing the motion: 22

Abstentions: 0

This motion requires a 2/3rd majority to pass and so falls.

10. Ordinary motions.

There were no ordinary motions.

11. Any other RCSA business

HB: RCSA do some good things at times. The new constitution has recently been passed by you guys at referendum and a lot of work went into that. So I'd just like to thank everybody on the sub-committee for all their hard work, people like Jimmy, Bryn, Ewan, Ros, Peter, Dan, Alice, Alex Kennedy, Alex Brazier etc. There's one person in particular who spent a lot of time on this document though and that's Tobias so we've brought him a small present just to say thanks.

Present for Tobias presented to lots of applause.

BP: on a similar note, there was a new website designed for the room ballot this year which was very useful and the RCSA website has been updated as well. Great revamp with lots of new features and all done by Forbes who's not on the committee anymore so did this all voluntarily so we've brought him a present to say thank you as well.

Present for Forbes presented to more applause.

Time of end of meeting: 6:50pm