



RCSA Open Meeting Minutes

2pm, 9th October 2016, JCR



Agenda

1. Apologies for absence or lateness

Gabrielle McGuinness (CUSU welfare), Ed Butler Caddle (rugby)

2. Announcement of the presence and purpose of guests.

N/A

3. Approval of the presence and speaking rights of guests

N/A

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.

N/A

6. Matters arising from the minutes

N/A

7. Reports from the committee

Ben Morris (BM): Thanks to everyone who helped out with the bop yesterday, it all went really well.

Martha Krish (MK): And thanks to Ben and Will for organising all of it.

8. Questions to the Committee

Mark Driver (MD): When are the RCSA and May Ball president elections?

Kayani Kayani (KK): I need to call that but have been manic with Addenbrookes.

They should be three weeks from the beginning of term, so Tues 25th October, with hustings on Monday.

MK: College wants them to be as soon as possible but they can't be before that date so should be on the day.

MD: I think we should move them in the future to Easter term.

Natasha Robinson (NR): It would help the May Ball committee a lot to get everything going over summer.

KK: What about doing an election for May Ball next week? If we override the constitution?

MD: May Ball should be done earlier; the May Ball constitution is different from RCSA.

KK: We can get people to send out manifestoes tonight and have hustings on Tuesday?

MK: That's all a bit soon, people have just arrived and even if you're a second year that seems very early.

NR: A week would be good, there's more than one group running and we want to do a good presentation.

MK: Yes it wouldn't be fair if you've just been set work.

KK: I'll speak to Ian Rudy in the senior attorney office, and provisionally we'll say Thursday 20th for voting day, with hustings on the Wednesday 19th, and manifestoes in on Monday 17th.

MK: I won't be here there but I don't think that matters

MD: We should also get times for hustings for president, chair and RCSA elections, which should be week Tues 25th.

KK: week after for elections I'm not here, so will need a new chair?

MD: I can do it.

No objections to this

Karl Thompson (KT): On another note, the budget meeting will be on 30th October in the Umney Theatre for heads of societies to negotiate budget. I need from each of you how much money you want with spending receipts, and the deadline for this is the 23rd. We should have a committee meeting before this takes place.

9. Extraordinary Motions

N/A

10. Ordinary Motions

a) Boat Club reallocation

RCSA Notes:

1. The boat club has money left of 15-16 allocation.
2. They have used up their refit allocation already but have money left in other allocations.
3. 2 sets of their blades are badly worn and need their grips replacing.
4. No additional money is being asked for!

RCSA Believes:

1. The boat club should repair the blades and give them a new lease of life.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To reallocate £49.80 from British Rowing to Refits
2. To reallocate £80.02 from Cam Conservators to Refits
3. To reallocate £33.60 from Insurance to Refits
4. To reallocate £300.58 from Races to Refits

Proposer: Ben Gates (President)

Secunder: Oliver Tesh (Men's Captain)

FOR:

Oliver Tesh (OT): We're just moving cash from one part of budget to another, for refits for boats.

AGAINST:

N/A

QUESTIONS:

N/A

VOTE

For: 22

Against: 1

Abstentions: 2

This motion passes.

b) Standing Desks

RCSA Notes:

1. There are presently no standing desks in Robinson College library, yet many other libraries around the university have such facilities.

RCSA Believes:

1. Standing desks would provide an alternative working environment for the students of Robinson increasing the probability that they are able to find the optimal working environment and achieve maximum academic productivity.
2. Standing desks help to benefit posture and comfort when working, increasing the period of time that students are able to concentrate and work productively as well as protecting their physical health.
3. Exercise is a vital part of a healthy productive student lifestyle and that this can be jeopardised by spending long periods in the unnatural seated position provided by the conventional chair-desk set up which dramatically increases the risk of injury (via tightening and stiffening of the muscles/tendons/ligaments in restricted positions). Injury leads to lack of physical exercise which can inevitably lead to deterioration of physical and mental health and thus decrease in academic performance.
4. Standing desks are a long term investment relevant to all students and therefore a responsible use of college funds.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To supply the funds for (from the college reserves) the provision of two standing desks in the college library, as well as overseeing the planning and execution of the instalment.

Proposer: MacGregor Cox

Seconders: Paddy Roddy and Oliver Fox

FOR:

Cammy Mitchell (CM): I think it's a really good idea, nice break from sitting down, especially as desks are so low down. It's better for your back and general health.

AGAINST:

N/A

QUESTIONS:

KT: Where would we put them?

MD: It's a good idea, but possibly better to go through library committee, and to have the RCSA raise it here.

MK: We would still need to take it to library committee even if they get money from reserves. We can't grant that permission.

MD: So we should change RCSA reserves resolve to mandate with library committee.

MK: I can bring up with Bill Nolan tomorrow. Can we change this without them being here?

MD: If it's a friendly change then we can just change it.

CM: I think it's friendly,

Matt Kite (MK): Yes it's the best possible outcome for their motion.

Rhys Goodall (RG): We need the permission first before they get money

KK: Shall we vote on the amendment to legitimise it?

VOTE

For: 20

Against: 0

Abstentions: 5

This motion is amended.

CM: We can have them by the flyers are on how to study.

Dexter Chua (DC): I don't think it's an RCSA issue.

MK: This is just making sure that the next academic officer is mandated too, if there's not another library committee meeting before Amy's term ends.

VOTE

For: 24

Against: 1

Abstentions: 1

This amended motion passes.

c) Brickhouse Theatre Company Capital Investment

RCSA Notes:

1. Brickhouse Theatre Company provides the opportunity for college members to take part in drama within the college.
1. Brickhouse was fairly inactive for a period of several years, with a recent resurgence in interest a couple of years ago.
2. 5 shows are in production this term, with the same number planned for next term.
3. BTC is currently in the process of investing in equipment for the auditorium.
4. BTC has already spent £1644 on new matting in 2014, and £210 on microphones for radio and recording in 2015.
5. BTC is looking at updating our lighting stock, with £1700 allocated for lighting investment (from philanthropic donations).
6. BTC are looking at purchasing more microphone headsets for use during plays (using some more of our own capital), since the hiring of headsets cost £228 for a week.

7. BTC are also looking at purchasing our own metrodecking, due to the limited stock available to rent from the ADC, and to decrease show operating costs in future years.
8. BTC is currently unable to fund all of this investment itself due to financial commitments for shows.
9. BTC operating costs for shows this term total around £2400.
10. BTC operating costs for the year are projected to be around £6000.
11. Historically BTC used to get funding every year through the RCSA to support operating costs (of about £3000 in 2004/5), however we are currently trying to cover those by ticket sales.
12. We have discussed with Bill McKim the use of metrodecking in shows as well as storage of any we purchase.

RCSA Believes:

1. Metrodecking would provide BTC greater flexibility in set design and staging, allowing more complex sets to be created.
2. Metrodecking represents a significant investment in the theatre, which should last for several years to decades.
3. As BTC continues to grow over the next few years, it will continue to expand its stock of metrodeck using money raised from shows to cover future investment.
4. Replacement of stock will also come out of money raised from ticket sales over future years, as part of long term investment planning.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allocate £9,578.49 from the reserves for the metrodecking described in the report.

Proposer: Sam Benson

Secunder: Rufus McAlister

FOR:

Sam Benson (SB): We are aware it's a lot of money but we think it's a worthy investment. Brickhouse is open to all Robinson students, and better facilities could provide more opportunities for students. Metrodeck will last decades and will mean we won't have to keep making big set designs for each show. It's safer and easier to use, and a lot better for the shows, starting with Joseph. It will provide somewhere for the band and dance group. It will look like a better theatre, to compete with ADC. We are funding our own operational costs, and haven't asked for RCSA money since 2004/5. This has all been covered in ticket sales which are expected to rise this year, so we're a financially efficient group.

AGAINST:

N/A

QUESTIONS:

CM: What is the metrodeck?

SB: It's basically like having another platform on stage which allows you to build up set and heights, giving somewhere to put the band and dance group, making it a more interesting space to use.

Matt Kite (MK): It can make more impressive sets and gets students more involved with design as it's safer and easier.

SB: Some of the money is to buy rails to make it safer.

MD: It also provides storage space. There are examples in the report. It can be stacked so shouldn't take up much space in the workshop. We won't be taking up more space than is needed.

DC: Do we have quotes from other companies as it's quite a large sum?

SB: No, but the man doing it fitted Fitz auditorium, and he's said he will come along and look at the auditorium before we decide whether to pay, and if there's a cheaper or easier option he'll tell us. He seems trusted and the customer service is good so if we're going to spend a lot of money, I'd rather it was with someone like this.

MK: There's also not a huge number of these companies in East Anglia, and the price difference between them is marginal.

Martha Krish (MK): Is there a warranty? How long should we expect it to last?

MD: It would be decades. We're looking for a capital investment, and are trying to build up capital stocks such that when we need to make other investments we can do so ourselves. But because we've had 8 years of not doing any shows we had no money coming in.

Matt Kite (MK): This is paying for rapid but sustainable expansion.

Martha Krish (MK): If we decided not to give you money, how long would it be until you could buy it yourself?

SB: I've been through our finances and we've had money for lighting investment, but we took a net profit of £1900 last year, so it would take us time to build up enough.

Martha Krish (MK): How much is in the reserves?

KT: £22,000

Martha Krish (MK): We'd be spending half but college would be happy with this.

SB: We will double number of shows we do this term alone and so are looking to make a lot of profit.

MD: On 29th January 2012, there was a similar motion for the bop room sound system, which allocated £5500 from the reserves to replace their sound system. And in the following year, on 12th November 2012 ents got an extra £2235 for new dj decks. This is another long term investment. I'm the only person who can remember when it was new.

BM: But everyone in college can go to the bop for free when people have to pay for theatre tickets.

SB: But you don't have to pay anything to put on a show, or be in a show. And this benefits the people in the show more than an audience.

BM: How many students take part in Brickhouse?

SB: Previous plays including The Rover all had many Robinson cast members. Even external shows like Vanessa and Gilbert and Sullivan productions, and backstage fire stewards are made up of Robinson students.

Will Scott (WS): But it's the same group of Robinson students

SB: We're trying to increase number of people who participate by doing this. If the facilities are lacking, it's hard to encourage people to join us instead of ADC.

BM: If it's the same 30 students year on year who use it is that worthwhile?

CM: Could we have discount tickets for Robinson students who buy tickets if the money is coming from the reserves?

SB: We'd have to look into that.

MD: There'd be an issue of validating tickets if it was through RCSA.

Martha Krish (MK): I think this is less about investing in a particular group of students, and more about investing in college culture, even if more people go to the bops than participate in Brickhouse. Lots of our motions are for small groups – how many use the drum kit we bought? It's about helping out students, and groups who are well organised and committed. Theatre always costs money but the RCSA should encourage groups of students to push themselves and develop things that put Robinson on the map, and this seems like a good thing to do.

BM: I do agree with this, and think it's a good idea, but this is the first planned motion for money from the reserves in first open meeting of the year.

Matt Kite (MK): We've had the reserves for two years, and any student could have put something forward in this time.

RG: I don't think comparing it to bop room speakers helps your cause. Brickhouse is not a direct subsidiary of the RCSA like the bops. It's an independent group.

Matt Kite (MK): Brickhouse is an RCSA society, which is open to everyone but gives priority to Robinson students.

RG: Brickhouse is registered with CUSU, whereas bops are not open to other colleges.

BM: I do support it but there could be other things to spend your money on.

DC: Can Brickhouse apply to Society Syndicate?

MD: We're asking from the reserves because we have philanthropic donations for lighting.

Martha Krish (MK): In terms of the history of reserves, say in 10 years if some other society wants a similar investment what do we do?

KK: The only reason the reserves are no longer replenished is because we amassed too much.

KT: There's nothing to say we won't build up the reserves again; they were only frozen because we accumulated £20,000.

KK: Having all this money endangers our status as a charity.

Martha Krish (MK): If reserves were depleted, we feel there would be opportunity to go to college for similar investments.

KK: Yes, it's only informally frozen, not in writing.

Matt Kite (MK): So we wouldn't be taking money from other people.

CM: Could we give a loan, and have Brickhouse pay back £5000?

KK: We can't turn a charity into a loan shark.

RG: If we put this on the budget report wouldn't college give it?

KT: No it goes through different group of people, as the budget meeting is for yearly spending. College want us to spend this money.

Martha Krish (MK): This is investment infrastructure.

BM: What other sources of external funding have you looked at?

SB: We've had anonymous donations but only to increase stocks. We've covered our own audio equipment. ADC hires out Metrodeck but only a tiny amount, to the point where it's not worth having. We haven't asked for money since 2005 when we asked for £3000.

MD: we've moved away from asking RCSA for operational costs like set and music, as this is now being covered from ticket sales.

SB: We've bought t-shirts for stewards, wireless mikes and dressing room shelves.

We've also spoken to college about long term changes to the dressing room so it's a theatre not just a conference centre, but this isn't feasible with our finances when we've been inactive for so long.

Martha Krish (MK): Brickhouse is more active due to certain group that is very passionate about this. How do we know that this will be used in 4 years' time? How do we know it'll keep going when you leave?

SB: You have to have involvement and passion to be President so there is definitely continuation in terms of committee positions.

Luke Dell (LD): We signed up a big tech team at Robinson freshers' fair.

Anthony Gray (AG): And the largest number of musicians we've ever had sign up.

SB: We've spent a lot on publicity which we'd never done before. We want to be the option open to everyone, when everyone says ADC is too cliquey.

MD: Getting societies reset up is really hard, but doing so could increase direct Robinson applicants. We'd be more likely to attract people interested in theatre who will go on to use it.

SB: I saw it when applying to Robinson but when I came it was only just starting up.

Martha Krish (MK): Investing in this kit will make it more likely that Brickhouse will still be going on, but it's always a risk that it won't.

Matt Kite (MK): It has a good resale value if that happens.

BM: Which other colleges have Metrodeck and what improvements have they seen?

SB: Other colleges use it for seating and storage too. The ADC uses it, and I've worked with it in previous plays at home. I have more faith in that than just people bringing in wooden blocks.

MD: Bill McKinn is happy with Metrodeck but would not have supported us making our own

SB: If you compare earlier plays with JCS – the small metrodeck platform looked really good and we now have photos good enough to advertise.

Bavni Tulsiani (BT): If the man comes back and tells us there's a better option would it go through as a new motion again?

RG: We should amend it to this being the maximum amount.

Martha Krish (MK): If this didn't pass would you ask for a smaller amount?

SB: No, the amount we've stated is the minimum we need.

LD: It's to do the width of the stage not just for Joseph.

MD: It can be in any configuration you want. Currently it's a 70 square metre stage but flat.

BM: Would you consider hiring out the staging to other colleges to get the money back?

SB: The money we make gets reinvested back in show. We spend £4000 on shows so we obviously want to increase money but not to a crazy amount that we can't reinvest.

We'd need to have a look at our constitution so I can't promise it. But I have no issue with renting some of it out, as long as it remains Robinson property.

VOTE

For: 20

Against: 0

Abstentions: 5

This motion passes.

d) Installation of fitness equipment

RCSA Notes:

1. That Robinson College (and the University in general) lacks equipment for street workout (a form of fitness which uses one's own bodyweight as resistance).

2. That there is a significantly large community (~50 members in the Facebook Group Cambridge Street Workout) who would benefit from having some equipment installed.
3. That street workout equipment is very cheap, requires minimal maintenance and lasts for many years.
4. That the installation of equipment in the alleyway next to the Umney steps has been approved by the Facilities Manager Mr Bill McKim in person.

RCSA Believes

1. That street workout is a growing movement worldwide and there is an increasing demand for some equipment in Cambridge.
2. That the installation of some equipment would automatically make Robinson College the central hub for all fitness enthusiasts across the University, both in the immediate future and for many years to come.
3. That the installed equipment will bring a new form of hip-hop culture into the College and therefore the University, which will no doubt increase the College's status and influence.

RCSA Resolves

1. That permission should be granted towards the installation of a wall-mounted pull-up bar and dip bars in the alleyway next to the Umney steps.
2. That £120 from the reserve funds should be used towards the installation. The total price for the equipment is £370 and the remainder will be borne by the Proposer.
3. That the Maintenance Department should help with the installation.

Proposer: Yikai Zhang

Secunder: Edward Butler-Caddle

FOR:

Yikai Zhang (YZ): I've been running an informal society with a friend from Hughes Hall and we've struggled to find some outdoor equipment, as the one from outside Kelsey Kerridge has been removed. I've found an alleyway next to the Umney steps with Bill McKinn where we could put a pull up bar on the walls that is structurally sound. It costs £370 in total, and is made by a professional. It has a guarantee of 25 or 30 years, but is expected to last a lot longer.

AGAINST:

N/A

QUESTIONS:

SB: Would this block an access way for anyone who needs to use the lift? Would people in wheelchairs have to stop you using the equipment to access it?

KK: No it's a quiet, secluded alleyway.

MD: You should ask for the full £370 rather than paying for some yourself.

YZi: I had no idea there was so much money in the reserves.

Martha: I don't think we can give permission yet.

YZ: Bill needs to talk to the college steward but he supports it.

MD: We also need some rewording of resolves 1 and 2, and Ed should liaise with college for permission and installation.

KT: College would be happier with £300 than £100.

KK: So is this a friendly amendment?

DC: Would RCSA pay for its maintenance?

Yikai: It's galvanised so shouldn't need any.

DC: But who will be responsible for it?

MD: It will fall under gym equipment, and has a warranty of 25-30 years.

VOTE

For: 25

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

This motion passes.

e) Founding of a Robinson Squash team

RCSA Notes:

1. The college has no team to take part in university squash leagues. There is only enough good squash equipment for three players and minimal selection of balls.

RCSA Believes:

1. There is sufficient interest for taking part in a squash team and it would draw additional interest for amateur players having been no squash club at the societies fair.
2. This would give more people the opportunity to take part in competitive sport and represent their college.
3. Squash is one of the easiest sports to take part in at Robinson with courts and some equipment available free to use and nearby.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To found a squash club to play at the college with a team to take part in university squash leagues (which would cost £15 a term)
2. To purchase additional equipment (racquets and variety of ball types which could remain in the porters lodge for use by everyone else too) at a cost off approx. £100 to allow more players to take part.

Proposer: Bradley Sawyer

Secunder: Hearst Lam

FOR:

Bradley: At the moment, there isn't a way to get in touch with people to play squash together even if it's just recreationally. I want to set up a squash team so those who want to play together recreationally and in university leagues can benefit. The plodge only has a few bits of equipment, and new stuff should last quite a while.

AGAINST:

QUESTIONS:

MD: Technically there's already a squash society in the appendix of the RCSA constitution, but it dropped off as nobody was interested in organising it.

Martha Krish (MK): So it could go through budget meeting instead?

MD: You can put in costs for this year to cover it.

MK: So the budget meeting is in two weeks.

SB: Is there anything he can have if they need money in the next two weeks before the meeting?

RG: Ed can buy balls in the intermediary time.

BT: No he's spent all his budget. Do you have to be part of society to use equipment at the plodge?

MD: The captain can keep a set ready for matches then leave the rest in the plodge.

Did anyone ask for a squash budget last year?

KT: Yes – court fees £60, equipment £25 - £35 left – paid to Jack Sibley, the last sports and societies officer.

MK: Do you need anything before then?

Bradley: The league fee is recurring but once we have equipment we're good to play.

KT: So propose £45 for league fees at budget meeting.

Bradley: There's currently only 3 racquets, and you need 5 people for squash team. £100 would get me 4 or 5 racquets.

KK: We can make a friendly amendment and get this from the open meeting budget?

KT: Yes, just make sure you buy and claim the refund in the next two weeks.

VOTE

For: 25

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

This motion passes.

f) Proposal to reimburse the purchase of croquet mallets

RCSA Notes:

1. Croquet mallets needed to be purchased urgently in Easter Term 2016, since all remaining mallets were broken during the term.

RCSA Believes:

1. Croquet mallets were urgently needed because Easter Term is the only time students can use the croquet lawn. Therefore the mallets were purchased as soon as possible by the RCSA Sports and Societies Officer, so that students could make use of the facilities before the end of term. They were bought without prior approval from an open meeting, due to the exceptional circumstances.
2. The Sports and Societies Officer does not have a budget with which to purchase them.

RCSA Resolves:

1. The RCSA Sports and Societies Officer should be reimbursed the sum of £75 for the purchase of the croquet mallets.

Proposer: Edward Butler-Caddle

Secunder: Bavnisha Tulsiani

FOR:

BT: These were needed in exam term so Ed paid for them.

AGAINST:

N/A

QUESTIONS:

MD: But make sure it's from the open meeting budget, we need a friendly amendment.

RG: Ed only got two mallets, which is not enough to play.

MD: Do it at budget meeting?

RG: But it's not a yearly cost.

Matt Kite (MK): You can do it from the reserves.

VOTE

For: 24

Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

This motion passes.