



RCSA Open Meeting Minutes

Sunday, 11th February
8pm
JCR



Agenda

1. Apologies for absence or lateness
N/A
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
N/A
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. Committee Reports and Resolutions
N/A
8. Questions to the Committee

Dimitri: Last year we had outdoor training equipment. It was removed during the summer and I would like it to be reinstalled.

James: There were health risks (among other problems) but I can try to get it back.

Maisie: We're already looking into it and want to introduce inductions.

James: There were lots of potential solutions and no one was complaining about the fact it wasn't being used, but since you raised it I will bring it up.

Jan: We should sell bike lights at the plodge.

James: That will be happening, hopefully in the next couple of weeks.

9. Extraordinary Motions
N/A
10. Ordinary Motions
 - A) Motion to allocate a budget to the Green Officer
 - B) Allocation of money to finance Open Mic Night
 - C) Motion to purchase a Cut-Sheet printer

- D) 4th Year Room Ballot Position
11. Students on matters concerning residence charges

Ordinary Motions

A) Motion to allocate a budget to the Green Officer

RCSA Notes:

1. That the Green Officer should be allocated a budget to enable them to run various events.

RCSA Believes:

1. A Green Officer budget would be useful for supporting sustainability within college and promoting green initiatives to the students (for example for purchasing the film, food and other things for the film screening on the 10th of March) and to increase the scope of future events led by the Green Officer.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To allocate £50 from the RCSA reserves for the Green Officer.

Proposed by: Alice Gilderdale

Seconder: Jessica Henderson

Tiara: Alice only wants a small amount of money so I can do it by discretion

AGAINST:

N/A

FOR:

N/A

Vote on motion:

For: 55

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

This motion passes.

B) Allocation of money to finance Open Mic Night

RCSA Notes:

1. That diversity in college is an issue that should be celebrated.

RCSA Believes:

1. That a £20 budget to cover expenses of such a presentation, namely an open mic night, is a fair and reasonable request for such an important issue in college.

RCSA Resolves:

1. That the sum of £20 be allocated to finance the aforementioned open mic night, in collaboration with Newnham College.

Proposed by: Teddy Mack

Seconder: George Speck

Tiara: I will transfer. As treasurer, I have discretion for anything up to £150

AGAINST:

N/A

FOR:

N/A

Vote on motion:

For: 55

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

This motion passes.

C) Motion to purchase a Cut-Sheet printer

RCSA Notes:

1. Architecture students have to spend an incredibly large amount of money on materials for printing and model making in order to do their degree.
2. A single print room in the Architecture Department is used by the entire faculty, which leads to a huge backlog of queueing in the run up towards the end of project deadlines, to the extent that the print room is kept open 24/7 in the week towards portfolio hand-ins to try to ensure everyone is able to print their work, although this is not always successful.

RCSA Believes:

1. A cut-sheet plotter printer (a large printer that can print various sizes from A1 to anything smaller) - specifically a Canon imagePROGRAF iPF670 - could be

purchased from the RCSA reserves for £1019 as well as the required ink cartridges for £291.94

2. People would use their own paper to use the printer and it would not only be used by architects would be beneficial to the entire college. The previous Ents team made use of the Architecture department printers in out of term time and any society, group or student would be able to use it, so its uses would be far-ranging.

3. The printer could be placed in the library, games room or IT room (discussions would of course need to be made with the IT department to connect the printer to the college system as well as the regular replacement of ink cartridges).

RCSA Resolves:

1. To transfer £1310.94 from the RCSA reserves in order to pay for the printer and the initial set of ink cartridges.

Proposed by: Michael Croghan

Secunder: Penny Brearley

Michael: We tried to get this through the committee last year. The architects have one print room to cater for 200 students' compulsory work during their degree, making it very difficult when deadlines are approaching. We want to purchase one of the types that we use, which costs £1000. It would have an academic function, but could also be used by the Ents team (like last year) and other societies (for posters, etc.). We proposed that it would come out of the reserves, but that might not be feasible, so it might have to go through college funding.

Valentine: I've been in touch with Martin Reavley, who has said that College should pay for it rather than the RCSA. You could accept an amendment, or we can still pass it without, but Reavley would probably not approve it.

Tiara: Taking money from the reserves would be a really bad long term strategy. We should exhaust the budget rather than using up the reserves.

Valentine: The problem for Reavley was that it's not RCSA business because it's not for academic concerns. The college happy to discuss it, so you could go through them then come back to the RCSA if necessary.

Mark: You could make an amendment so that, instead of asking for money this time, it would mandate the President and Academic Affairs officer to raise it with college - either college will offer to pay for it or, if nothing happens, you could come back to the RCSA for money.

Amendment: Mandate President and Academic Affairs officer to raise the issue with the college.

Tiara: If it is approved in an open meeting, the college should pass it.

Christopher Cheng: What about maintenance costs?

Michael: Ink cartridges would need to be purchased, but not many people would be using it so it shouldn't cost the college too much.

Valentine + Mark Driver: This would definitely be handled by college.

Amendment deemed to be friendly

AGAINST:

N/A

FOR:

N/A

Vote on amended motion:

For: 55

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

This motion passes.

D) 4th Year Room Ballot Position

RCSA Notes:

1. At present Natural Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering and Maths students who continue for a fourth year of study choose their rooms after current second year students.
2. It is already tough being a fourth year with the majority of your friends leaving after three years.
3. MML students who are in our year are currently at the top of the ballot, making it hard to arrange groups with both MML and non-MML students.

RCSA Believes:

1. That putting students returning for a fourth year above current second years in the room ballot would allow them to choose rooms closer to their few friends remaining in college.

2. That as there are relatively few returning fourth years this would have a negligible impact on current second years but would make a huge difference to the welfare of remaining fourth years.
3. That being in fourth year is already difficult enough with a high academic workload and a large number of friends and peers leaving, so anything that can be done to improve welfare would be hugely beneficial.
4. That it would be nice for groups of fourth years to be able to group together in staircases or houses and particularly to be able to coordinate with returning MML students.

RCSA Resolves:

1. To move students returning for a fourth year to above current second years in the room ballot.

Proposed by: Max Medhurst

Secunder: Matthew Spry

Max: There are 26 of us returning for 4th year and as it stands we will be placed below current 2nd years in the ballot. We want to group together and be able to coordinate with MML students - In the past, people have had to ask special permission to get placed with MML students. We will almost certainly be grouped together anyway, so it shouldn't have a big impact on current second years and anyone who wants a certain type of room should still be able to get it. In 4th year, slotting in after third years mean you can end up isolated from your few remaining friends. 4th year is tough and lots of people have already left, so it is a welfare issue. People who don't remain in the JCR go into the MCR ballot, which have rooms that are much nicer than the JCR rooms. It seems that if they get to move up we should be able to too.

Mark Driver: That's because they've graduated.

Question: What is the situation for maths students?

Anna: They are in JCR ballot, along with Natural Sciences, Engineering and Computer Science students.

James: I have had a meeting with Bill Nolan about this. We have already reserved 1 Sylvester Road for 4th years. If a 1st year were to argue in favour of this, it would be more valid because they would benefit from the whole new set of rules; you have already had the opportunity to be at the top of the ballot as incoming 3rd years and would benefit again if this motion were accepted. All third years have always had first choice on the rooms. I understand where you're coming from, and there is an argument for changing it in the future. However, Anna and I have been working on the ballot with the college and it is now 10 days before the ballot.

Anna: Bill Nolan has autonomy to tell me what to do. He will promote fairness and I understand why you think it's unfair on you, but it will have to go through him. Lots of people overestimate how much power we actually have, but it's not in our position to change how things are; we do what the college tells us we can do. Whatever we pass here might not be accepted by college.

James: Last year some maths students passed a motion a year in advance of the ballot.

Max: It's a fair point that we would benefit twice, but we think we're at a disadvantage and it should be changed. Even if it's not possible now it should be changed for next year. At some point there will need to be a transition period, but we think that's how it should be done.

James: Bill Nolan told us about the ten reserved rooms in 1 Sylvester Road but didn't say it was set in stone.

Max: Yes, it's a step in the right direction, but it's only 10 rooms. It is still an issue since there is a set distribution. It would be simpler and more straight forward to let us choose where we want to go, be it houses or staircase rooms.

James: I got a good room near all my friends, despite being in the middle of the ballot, and this is possible for most people.

Question: Thank this man [Max] for fighting for the few; it is not just them, but the next generation. Why block out rooms when we could just decide together what we want and choose?

James: With completely free choice, you could pick 26 rooms in the college not already reserved. If you went in houses, there would still be 49 rooms left, but if you took up college rooms people would have to end up going in houses. Not going in Sylvester would really reduce the choice that 3rd years have. At some point you should have free reign but that is the year when people graduate and should therefore have the most choice.

Question: Are the fresher rooms reserved before anyone chooses?

Anna: Yes, but if you require a certain room you can switch. Can't happen to everyone but would be possible if there was a good reason.

Comment: As a second year engineer I agree it is a bit of a welfare issue. My points have already been mentioned and I do think there would need to be a transition year. Everyone should have a point in their time at Robinson when they get 'first pick' but if you're 100th in your year in the ballot you won't get free choice and a lot of desirable rooms up are at stake.

Alex: It's not a lot of people, but generally 3rd years move into the houses.

Question: You could introduce it so that there would be a certain number of houses for each year ?

James: I've spoken to lots of people who find staircase rooms isolating and want to be in a house instead. Even if there are people ahead of you in the ballot, there are different things people want in their accommodation.

Anna: There have been some really good points and I understand why you think there should be a change at some point, but it is very close to the room ballot date and we have been working on this for a while - it is too short notice for this ballot.

Valentine: If the motion passes we could do it next year?

Anna: It would definitely be feasible for next year and should be considered but this ballot might not be the year to do it.

Question: Could you do the ballot next term?

Anna: The college determines when we carry out the ballot.

Mark Driver: What is the split of rooms like in the MCR ballot?

James: Bill says this year there will be fewer 3rd years staying on than usual. They are buying 2 Sylvester Road and planning on not using 3 SR.

Mark: Normally 3 SR was used as an overflow and we would use MRC rooms as overflow for undergrads, but a couple years ago it went the other way: the MCR took the top few rooms and the rest of 1 SR was reserved for 4th years only. They weren't part of the MCR but they got to know us anyway. That's why 1 SR has 10 rooms reserved for 4th years.

Also, I didn't find welfare to be a problem, but you're very lucky in Robinson that all accommodation is completely on site rather than far away, and that's why when you're balloting you're doing it in groups and shouldn't be completely isolated. Even where you do sit you still have very good choice.

Max: Not all 4th years want to live in a house. It's clear that people want different things in how rooms are selected. We want it to happen this year because it is a welfare issue and we want it sorted.

James: If it doesn't pass this year I will raise it.

Rudy: Last year we were 50th-54th in the ballot for our year and had to split between 2 staircases of the room type that we wanted.

James: That's not possible anywhere.

Rudy: If you believe in it we should still send a message so it get changes next year or the year after. Today is a good day to start this process

Question: Could we reserve a staircase for 3rd years?

Anna: Would need to speak to Bill. We could not reserve a whole staircase because there need to be freshers in each staircase, but we would be able to investigate options.

Tiara: I feel like the process of reserving is counterintuitive because you're reserving what we think second years really want but what third might not necessarily want.

James: It would obviously vary year on year. It seems like lots of you are passionate about this and I could look into reserving a staircase.

Mark: The reason part of a house reserved is because first years shouldn't be with grads, who share with 4th years instead.

Comment: There have been lots of points raised about a transition period. We could smooth that by stopping 4th years from picking rooms in particular houses. Houses have been a sticking point against this motion so focusing on that in the transition period could be beneficial.

Max: In summary, we think it's the right thing to do, we want it done as soon as possible. If we pass it and it can be raised with Bill that seems like the best thing to do.

AGAINST:

N/A

FOR:

N/A

Vote on motion:

For: 29 + 4 proxy = 33

Against: 23 + 7 proxy = 30

Abstentions: 5

This motion passes.

Mark: POI - This doesn't take effect until 48 hours later, during which time a petition could be signed. If it equalled the number of votes for the motion it would be put to a referendum.

Other RCSA Business

James: I have a meeting with the Bursar tomorrow about accommodation prices and will send an email afterwards.