

St. Catharine's College MCR Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 18 September, 2007

Present: Richard Jones (President), Amy Digout (Secretary), Tiffany Bogich (Treasurer), Rosie Fera (Welfare Officer), Martina Diep (External Officer), Dan Friess (Social Secretary), Dai Morgan (Sports and Societies Officer)

Apologies: Cameron Rye (Green Officer), Mark Hopkin (Computer Officer)

1. Previous Minutes

No changes were received for the proposed minutes circulated.

The parenting scheme has been set up, with 19 parents having 4-5 children each. A couple more people expressed interest in parenting after the allocation was completed, so Richard has people to go to if there are many additional students received from Heather in the coming weeks, or if any of the current parents have to drop out for some reason.

The dinner in the SCR and presentation to Dr Frasca-Spada took place and seemed to go well, with the evening being very enjoyable. Marina seemed pleased with the items chosen.

Manolo is now back and the purchase of a rug for the upper MCR is in action. Three watercolour paintings of college, which were painted by an artist in residence over the summer, are being framed with the intention of incorporating them in the final scheme of the upper MCR, along with other pictures such as the year photos we already have.

Mark has obtained and fitted the replacement woofer for the faulty speaker and the speakers in the MCR are now in full working order ready for the coming term.

Amy, Rosie, Martina and Richard sorted the MCR store cupboards last Saturday. A significant amount of junk and out-of-date consumables were disposed of. Bags of decorations were sorted by genre although the decorations therein were not examined individually. We appear to have lots of Christmas decorations, quite a lot of Halloween decorations, more lights than Oxford Street (which may or may not all work), and a small amount of leftover alcohol, along with various other items. The organisation of the cupboards has improved immensely and we should try to keep them in this good order.

Richard has investigated the possibility to put the timing of AHRC funding decisions to the GU as a student issue they should consider. There is definitely an issue here which has been affecting students, however the timing to raise this is not good, since the AHRC are likely to restructure their allocation process in the coming year anyway. It may be worth encouraging the GU to monitor the situation of any changes made, with the

aim of being able to provide students with the latest information when people come to them with advice. However, this does not need to be raised at a GU Council meeting.

2. Committee and Midsummer Dinner Photos for the MCR

MCR Committee and group photos from Midsummer Dinner have not yet been ordered. Richard said that Roy Hamans obtained the proofs after the event, and is likely still in possession of them. It would be nice if these photos were delivered and displayed in the MCR prior to Freshers' Week. How fast can this be done?

[action: Amy to email Roy about the photo proofs, and to go ahead with ordering photos.]

3. Formal Hall Officer Role

The role of formal hall officer has been left vacant due to John's departure from Cambridge. Someone will need to take on these duties until the by-election can be held later on in Michaelmas. Amy is doing the booking and seating plan for the parent and child formal, and volunteered to take on sign-ups for the next 5 or 6 formals. Dan suggested that committee members could take turns setting up pre-dinner drinks to lighten the load.

[action: Amy to email John regarding who needs to be contacted with numbers and names before each formal hall.]

Dan has talked to John about people from other colleges who expressed interest in organizing exchange formals. We have been invited to go to Emmanuel on the 19th of November, and we would invite them to join us also in the month of November. Dan wondered if we should ask another college to join us for Halloween, and Richard agreed, adding that only one college at a time should be invited to events.

[action: Dan to email dates for Emmanuel exchange once they have been confirmed.]

Richard said that Robinson had invited us to their Halloween event, and that he had heard that Newnham was also thinking of inviting us for an exchange this term. It was also mentioned the Caius may invite us in Lent term. Jesus and Sidney were also keen to organize exchanges. Dan thought that it would be nice if we invited Girton for an exchange, which had been discussed last year. Martina reminded us that this could be quite expensive compared to other colleges, at around £16. Richard asked how many exchanges we should aim for each term, and Dan suggested that 4 would be appropriate, one approximately every two weeks. Dai suggested that we also approach someone from Downing about organizing an exchange during Easter term, as they do not share the same regulations regarding guests and noise levels during the exam period as other colleges do. We could invite them first, in Lent term.

4. Freshers' Week

4.1 Bop at St. Edmund's College

St. Edmund's has invited us to their bop on the 6th of October, which could be combined with the Whichcote barbeque. Details are yet to be confirmed, but we must find out the price, dress code, time, etc. soon to finalize this event. Once confirmed, we can add the bop to the Freshers' Week programme.

4.2 Welcome Speeches

Richard suggested that once the Ramsden Room is free during the Welcome Drinks it could be used to make the welcome speeches. This would avoid crowding in the MCR and make the freshers better able to listen. He asked Dai if he would like to speak to the freshers at this time, and Dai said that he would like to briefly. Richard reminded us that the JCR also take such opportunities to introduce their committee and have its members talk about their roles. He thought that Amy could talk about the facilities available to graduates in the MCR, and encourage them to make use of these facilities. Amy should also say something about formal halls, and mention the dates of event formals scheduled throughout the year. Cameron may want to talk about his role and point out where students can find recycling facilities. Tiffany can mention the distribution of MCR keys. Dai suggested that the speeches be kept to a couple of minutes so as not to disrupt the flow of the event, which is ultimately quite a relaxed occasion. Richard said that Heather Green has asked that we remind the freshers to register with a GP and a dentist as soon as they are able to. He proposed that each committee member have few powerpoint slide, but the majority of those present thought that this may be too complicated and that freshers were likely to forget the dates mentioned. Dai recommended that we post dates outside the MCR, and that Mark remind all present that the information will all be available on the MCR website.

4.3 Pub Crawl Update

Dan gave us an update on behalf of Mark and himself. They have decided on a London Tube themed map of the locations we are to visit on the 3rd. Each person in attendance will receive a small map of the pub route. Forty-five minutes will be spent at each location, beginning at 8.00 in the Catz bar. Mark and Dan had discussed finishing the night at the Fountain because there is no charge for entry. While in the past it has been standard to end at Bellare, Dai agreed that it could be very busy and unpleasant, and Dan consented that it is also hard to keep a large group together in such a big venue. Dan thought that it may be a good idea to provide a contact number on the map, but it was agreed that it is impractical for any of the committee members to distribute their phone number to all of the attendees. In years past it has not been too difficult to keep the group together. Finally, Mark wanted to remind all participants to bring valid identification in case any of the pubs were to check the group.

4.4 Bowling Update

Bowling is proving a little hard to finalize since the management is currently refusing to validate the student offers that are displayed on their webpage. Richard wondered if we could go on the Monday night instead and move the Russell Street games night to Thursday. Dai thought that perhaps having bowling on the second night would discourage some freshers from attending other events, and it was largely agreed that this is an event best situated later in the week. Dai asked how many freshers we are expecting and Richard replied that he currently has 93 people allocated to parents. We should expect about a third to attend the bowling evening. Tiffany proposed that we push forward the time for the event to 4.00 to take advantage of their cheaper rates that run until 6.00, but others weren't sure that this would make for a very good turnout. Still, at £10 a head the freshers week budget cannot really bear such an expense if we are to expect 30 or so people to turn up. Amy asked for a reminder as to how many events the freshers would have to pay for themselves. While the majority of activities are covered by the MCR, there is still the parent and child formal, the pub crawl, and the St. Edmund's bop that will need to be paid for by each participant. Ultimately, Dan was in favour of speaking to the management of the bowling alley in person in an attempt to make them honour their student rate.

[action: Dan and Tiffany to visit the bowling alley to negotiate rates.]

Richard suggested that if bowling was not feasible we could send the freshers to society pub crawls that evening, or move the pub crawl to Thursday, but overall it did not seem like a good idea to not have any event scheduled for after the sports squash in college. Martina suggested we might take them to the Bingo hall, and was fairly certain that one can turn up and register as a member on the night they would like to play. Members may also bring guests.

4.5 Parent and Child Formal

Dai asked if we were expected to wear gowns to the parent and child formal, and Richard responded that parents must, but that children have been excused. Pre-dinner drinks and sherry will have to be purchased. It was agreed that it would be best to do this at the same time as the Welcome Drinks. Dai asked where the MCR has accounts, and which merchant may have the best prices. Richard said that there is an account set up at odd bins which allows purchases to be paid for later, but does not have any discount attached to it, but Dai will also look into prices at Majestic and the Cambridge Wine Merchant.

[action: Amy to send Dai an email regarding the amounts of port and sherry needed for the parent and child formal.]

[action: Dai to explore options for purchasing drinks.]

Dan thought that it might be worth asking the catering staff to serve the pre-dinner drinks at this formal as all committee members will be with their children. We are unsure

whether they will charge for this service. How much sherry and port we will need is also in question. Amy will get an estimate based on an attendance of around 100 people.

[action: Amy to email Rob.]

Amy is going to do the seating plan and place cards for this event, and Richard suggested finding cards independently of college because they can likely be done for cheaper. Amy wondered if we might be able to find cards that said “It’s a girl!” and “It’s a boy” at party mania.

Rosie reminded the committee that last year Marina had reminded her to invite the Graduate Tutors to the parent and child formal. She wondered if we should do the same this year. Dan pointed out that we would be seeing the Graduate Tutors in any case at Matriculation dinner, but did wonder if we should invite Heather Green to any of our events. He proposed the Whichcote barbeque.

4.6 Whichcote Barbeque

Rosie volunteered to do the shopping for our barbeque at Whichcote House. Mark has already purchased the coal that we will need, and there are extra bags in the MCR that were discovered when the MCR cupboards were cleaned out last week. Dan told Rosie that he had a standard barbeque shopping list that he has worked from in the past, and asked her to plan for about 40 people. Richard told us that he has invited a prospective graduate to the barbeque. The start time for the barbeque is 3.00, and Amy said that she and Mark would get the barbeque set up earlier in the day.

4.7 Punting

Martina and Rosie informed us that after 7.00 the price per punt at Scudamore’s is £8, quite a reasonable sum. Prior to 7.00 the price is only £4, but this would interfere with the dinner hour. Rosie said that we will need to show one piece of identification for every two punts that we hire. Dai asked that we remind freshers of the rules that Scudamore’s enforces to ensure that we will get our deposit back at the end of the evening.

Martina and Rosie had been thinking about a Venetian theme for this event, but are not sure that it will be easy to pull together the necessary resources. Thus far, there will be tea lights in the punts, and afterward there will be a movie shown in the MCR, most likely with wine and cheese. In case of rain we would likely just show the movie as punting in the rain is quite unpalatable. Finally, Richard asked if it would be a good idea to send out daily emails reminding all graduates of what event was to take place each evening, and it was agreed that this worked well last year.

5. MCR Evolution Event

Dan informed us that the GU event in Revolution on Pembroke Street has expanded in size. Our MCR was initially allotted 16 tickets out of the 500 they could

accommodate, but recently the GU have decided to rent out the whole venue, thereby increasing the maximum capacity to 900 graduates. The ticket allotment is thus likely to increase, and Richard asked how many we might like to have. Dan replied that we could likely sell 25 to 30 tickets, but that it would be unlikely to sell any greater number. Richard stated that this would likely be a well attended event, and that larger colleges were keen to increase their ticket allotment accordingly. He also said that the GU are thinking of making MCRs pay in advance for their tickets, but that this wasn't likely to be agreed upon by many MCR Presidents.

6. Matriculation Day Tour

Members present created a list of places that should be included on tours after Matriculation on the 8th. These locations included the music room and gym, which Dai showed to us, and the underground cycle park, computer rooms, chapel, college offices (accounts, Graduate Tutors, etc.), the shower room under the A and B staircases. The dark room was also discussed.

7. Other Business

Dai told us that the JCR sports site has been updated in terms of looks, but that information like names has been left untouched. He therefore emphasized that it will be important to keep our own site up to date.

Richard wanted to briefly address welfare issues, and informed us that there is a website that shows local GPs by postal code. He also told us that CUSU provide condoms in bulk for a price and pregnancy tests for free. Dan thought that there were still a large number of condoms left from last year, if we could only find them. Rape alarms were also discussed, as the GU has a store of these, and Martina reminded us that the MCR had bought a box of them a few years ago. More information can be obtained from the GU welfare officer Helen Cliffe. Richard thought that in general the MCR welfare page was up to date.

[action: Rosie to get more information from the GU.]

[action: Rosie to email Justin about aforementioned condoms.]

The MCR redecoration was discussed, and Dan informed us that a rug has been ordered for the upstairs room. It was pointed up that some of the photos need to go back up on the walls before freshers' week. In addition, three watercolours painted by a Catz artist in residence have been obtained by Manolo for display in the MCR. They are currently being framed and we do not know when they will be ready to be hung. Dan said that we will have to book a date with Phil Dean soon to hang photos. It is rumoured that Phil Dean has found a computer table that we may like to put in the bottom MCR, and also pointed out that though we have a new tap in the kitchen it seems to be quite wobbly.

Regarding the Welcome Drinks event, Martina notified us that she has had difficulty finding Polaroid film that is less than £90. Last year she was able to find a deal

which enabled the MCR to pay just £60, but thus far the best price she has come across is £35 for 40 pictures at Argos. It was agreed by all present that the pictures are a useful and enjoyable expense, having always been well received in the past.

It was decided that the MCR committee did not need to convene again until after freshers' week. The finalization of freshers' week plans will be made by the individuals charged with organizing events, and otherwise communications will be made by email.