

St. Catharine's College MCR Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 23 October, 2007

Present: Richard Jones (President), Amy Digout (Secretary), Mark Hopkin (Computer Officer), Dan Friess (Social Secretary), Dai Morgan (Sports and Societies Officer)

Apologies: Cameron Rye (Green Officer), Tiffany Bogich (Treasurer), Martina Diep (External Officer), Rosie Fera (Welfare Officer)

1. Halloween Formal

Dan updated us on the progress that has been made in organizing the Halloween formal. He has already had people asking him for details so it would be advisable to get an email out as soon as possible. Borrowing of the disco equipment has been arranged with the JCR, and it was agreed that having someone DJ would be preferable to a band for this event since it is coming up so quickly. Also, cheesy music is essential to any Halloween party. Dai offered to contribute some music for the occasion, and Dan said he would be happy to DJ and would welcome any assistance that is volunteered. Dan requested that the JCR leave their decorations up from their bop on the Friday night. He asked if there were Halloween decorations in the cupboard, and Richard and Amy attested to the fact that there are about two bin bags full of decorations from previous years. Dai asked if people were welcome to attend the bop if they had not been to dinner, and Dan answered that all members of the MCR would be able to attend. Dai suggested "your worst nightmare" as a diverse theme for the bop. This was agreeable to all present. **[action: Amy and Martina to purchase decorations for the tables and possibly extras for the bar.]**

Dan suggested that we offer a free drink to all those in costume, and also that we give out prizes for the best male and best female costumes. As usual, committee members should come into college at 2pm on Saturday to set up for the bop. There will not be a seating plan in the hall at this formal. Pre-dinner drinks will be served in the Ramsden Room. Dai suggested that we serve sparkling wine with red colouring (grenadine). A run to Tesco will need to be made. Richard told us that a late license has been secured until 12.00. Dan raised the issue of what to do after the bop, pointing out that we needed to establish a firm position about going back to the MCR. This would be feasible as long as people weren't offered a great number of drinks after the bop. Last year this seemed to work out well. Dan suggested that we wouldn't want people to stay too late in the MCR, but thought that it would be a nice gesture. Amy suggested that if people were talking about going out in town that we encourage it, and otherwise people would be welcome to come back to the MCR.

Richard informed us that the Dean has asked that we have someone on the door at the bop to keep members of other colleges or members of the JCR from entering, though Richard disagreed with this policy. Dai agreed that he had never been to an MCR bop that got out of control, and all agreed that we should play it by ear. Dan advised us to do

as much of the clean up on Saturday night after the event as possible, but said he would require some help on Sunday to move the DJ equipment.

[action: Dan to write an email announcing the event, Amy to send the email out and keep a list of those wishing to attend. This should go out tomorrow!]

2. Michaelmas Social Events

Dan was interested in scheduling some more events through the end of Michaelmas term, pointing out that there were plenty of exchange formals planned and that interest was high. This unfortunately excludes the Halloween formal at Robinson, which was cancelled due to low attendance. Richard said that he still had to email Newnham about attending our Christmas formal. He then pointed out that we need to take advantage of all the Thursday nights that we don't have formal halls planned, as a number of other colleges also have their dinners on Thursdays (Pembroke, for example). **[action: Dan to email a representative from Pembroke.]**

Dan was keen to organize a trip to the ADC to see the Panto "Once Upon a Time," which is an amalgamation of several fairy tales. Last year this was run by Paws and Claws, however this year no such event has been arranged. The show runs from 20 November to 1 December and places are beginning to fill up already. As Mondays tend to be quite quiet, the 26th November was suggested.

Also coming up is bonfire night. There will be fireworks on Midsummer Common on 5 November, and those wishing to attend will go over in a group to watch.

Aside from the aforementioned two events Dan was concerned that we are relying too much on dinners to fill up the social calendar, and asked if anyone had thought of other events we could run. Dai suggested that the table football tournament could be done this term. This was then scheduled for 21 November. He also asked if we could attend a movie premiere, and Dan said that he would keep his eye out for any big openings coming up. Dai thanked everyone who helped out at the rugby world cup final.

Richard wanted to talk briefly about the Christmas formal, which we must also start thinking about. Dan said that he would be happy to book the band as per Richard's request. We discussed Casa del Funk, Charlie and the Funk Factory, and Bijoumiyu. In the interest of trying something new, it was agreed that Dan should approach Bijoumiyu about bookings, as they have played some excellent shows recently, and are very good to dance to. Dai reminded us that the varsity rugby match is on the same night as the formal, but thought that the most people that we would lose to the match would be a dozen or so; certainly not enough to worry about changing the date of the formal.

3. Electrics Testing Charges

Dai wanted to discuss the extra charges that had been added to our college bills this term for electrics testing. Quite a few people were shocked by this addition, and Dai thought that we should establish the facts on this issue so we could better inform any

members of the MCR who might ask about this charge. Dan cited an email from 12 June from the Junior Bursar who wrote that every five years a thorough safety check is performed throughout college. The aim of this risk assessment was to monitor electrical items on college property that are not owned by the college. A flat rate of £10 added to the bills of each MCR member was decided on in order to share the cost of the testing with the college and members of the JCR. The Junior Bursar did not ask for support or comment on this issue, merely informing the MCR presidents of the decision that had been made in instigating this new policy.

Roy wrote an email in reply questioning issues of safety and privacy in entering graduate residence rooms, and noted that he and Dan did not agree with the addition of this flat rate charge. Dan was concerned that the MCR was being asked to subsidize works on the island site, as has been done in the past (rent increases, for example). He asked the Junior Bursar if ALL college sites were included in the risk assessment, and wanted to know what percentage of the overall cost the graduates would be paying. He also wanted to be sure that graduates not living in college accommodation would not be charged. The Junior Bursar replied that the testing did indeed cover the entire college estate and would cost £9,000 in total, 10% of which the graduates would be paying for. With about 400 undergraduates in college accommodation this would mean that about £5,200 would be covered by student funds. He wrote that these charges would also cover the testing of any electrical items brought into the college after the period of initial testing. Dan thought it unlikely that this policy would actually be followed through. The Junior Bursar said that he would be happy to discuss any issues regarding privacy, etc., however on the whole his response to the presidents' concerns was quite vague.

Richard thought that the college should have explained these charges prior to the time in which students were moving into graduate residences, asserting that the college can't add new charges to college bills with no prior warning. If having this testing done is a condition of living in a college residence then students should be told before moving in. Mark thought that this should then be added to the tenancy agreement, and asked how it will work next year. The college consultative body and the MCR president should draw up a mechanism for introducing things like this, both in terms of procedure and also in more specific terms about this problem. Dai asked when the next meeting of the CCC is and Richard told him that it is on 8 November. This will be the next step in checking up on this issue.

Dai asked if in the future this risk assessment could be performed in house, but Dan said he suspected it had to be undertaken by an external auditor. Mark noticed that the technicians had missed some items in his room. Dan raised that Roy had questioned if students could be charged according to the number of items in their rooms, but this was thought too complicated.

4. Fish Cam

Dan again proposed setting up a webcam by the fish tank to monitor our underappreciated watery friends. Mark responded that he was happy to do this, and

asked whether anyone knew if the light on the tank was functional. He would need the light to work in order to see anything on the camera. He suggested that the camera be mounted at the back of the tank, looking through it toward the room. This way it is also less likely to be tampered with. Mark told us that any camera we would purchase would most likely include the software needed to hook it up to the computer. Then it would be a matter of making sure the computer remained on. Richard asked if there were any green concerns with running the computer full time, and Dai explained that most energy use comes from the monitor rather than the hard drive.

[action: Mark to look at the light on top of the tank and to investigate the cost of a webcam.]

5. TV Aerial/Booster System in Whichcote House and South Green Lodge

Dai raised the issue of Russell Street's recent upgrade to the aerial provisions, noting that there has been no equivalent service for Whichcote House or South Green Lodge. Mark said that in terms of Whichcote House, the large rooms in each flat have all the provisions necessary, while in the small rooms these are entirely absent. Dai asked if the MCR would be able to fund these works. Richard said that at Russell Street £576.93 was spent in total, shared 50/50 between the MCR and the college. He pointed out that in Whichcote House nothing can be done because the lease on the building runs out at the end of this year. Richard informed us that the College Consultative Committee would also be the body to deal with this issue, and Richard will be able to raise it at the next meeting. The main cost would be the installation of plugs, but there may be some way around this. Dai concluded that this was acceptable for the time being, saying he had just wanted to see if people had ideas about solving this problem.

6. Use of the MCR for non-MCR Activities

Dan and Dai both wanted to discuss the use of the MCR for supervisions and committees not directly related to the MCR. Richard was recently approached by the Mayball president who wanted to use the MCR for a meeting. Richard replied that he could not give such permission as the room is not available for booking. Supervisions have also been taking place in the MCR. Our greatest concern is that the MCR is not monopolized. Graduates are of course free to use the room at any time, but must not expect other members to tiptoe around groups who choose to meet there. Similar concerns were raised last year, and Dai noted that the email sent last year on this topic was sufficient to inform graduates of what was and was not appropriate use of the MCR. Dai said that it is empty a great part of the time, and thus should not be too exclusive, but also noted that there are peak times in which the room becomes quite busy such as before and after the lunch and dinner hours. It is in these times that it might not be a good idea for groups to convene in the MCR for supervisions, meetings, etc. Dan agreed that graduates were welcome to use the room, but that ALL members must be welcome at all times. It can be used, but not on a regular, bookable basis. This should be emphasized in the email.

[action: Richard to compose and send out an email about appropriate use of the MCR.]

7. By-Elections

Richard asked for three returning officers to run the election. This would involve sending publicity (announcing the election, etc.), liaising with the GU representative to organize online booking, receiving applications, organizing hustings, assembling a document of manifestos, preparing the electoral roll, oversee the counting of votes, ensuring the election is carried out fairly, adjudicating in the case of problems, and writing a report to the governing body after the close of the election. Mark, Richard and Amy were selected to undertake these tasks.

[action: Mark, Richard and Amy to sort out the roles of the returning officer sub-committee.]

Richard said that in terms of timing the election we would have to allow for i) people to be nominated, ii) hustings to take place, and iii) voting. The week of 12 to 16 November was suggested, with voting taking place from the 14th to the 16th. The positions that are open are: Co-President, Treasurer, Entertainments Officer, Formal Hall Officer, Food and Drink Officer, Sports and Societies Officer, and Secretary. The possibility of opening a position for an Academic Affairs Officer was also discussed as the college was keen and the GU was surprised to find that we do not have one. Previously this role involved liaising with CamSIS, putting up academic posters, and helping with graduate seminars. Dai said that having an academic affairs contact would be beneficial, but on the whole felt that this responsibility should fall on the Graduate Tutors or the Welfare Officer. He asked if the position could be renamed the Academic and Welfare Officer because this position is largely about gathering information to be able to refer people to the proper resources. Overall it was agreed that the MCR should provide some support of this type because the GU and CUSU aren't necessarily going to be able to provide the assistance that some graduates need.

Dan said that at our Freshers' Week welcome drinks he was approached by the CUSU LGBT representative who was unhappy that we do not have an LGBT officer on our committee. We consider this area to be covered by our Welfare Officer and Dan asked if Rosie was in contact with any of these committees. This area could be more firmly set in the constitution's outline of the Welfare Officer's duties, but a separate position to field these concerns is not likely to be necessary. Richard suggested that links concerning LGBT issues could be added to the webpage.

[action: Rosie to forge links with LGBT officers and to investigate online resources that may be included on the welfare page.]

Richard addressed the issue of adding another events officer role. Dan expressed his displeasure at the separation of the Entertainments Officer and Social Secretary roles, which was undertaken a few years ago. Richard said that since the position of Entertainments Officer has been created it must be offered at the election unless a constitutional amendment is made. Dan will submit a motion at the next open meeting to remove Entertainments Officer in favour of adding another social secretary.

It was also noted that the constitution available online is not up-to-date with respect to the changes made at the Easter Term open meeting. These related to the inclusion of liaising with the GU as part of the External Officer's remit, and the specification of exactly how votes in elections would be counted (which is using the single transferable vote guidelines given in the University Statutes and Ordinances).

[action: Dan to amalgamate changes from the last open meeting.]

Dai informed us that the Sports and Societies Officer position would be vacant in the upcoming election, and asked if the committee thought it a useful role that was worth continuing. All present agreed that the role has fit in well on the committee and members would welcome the election of a new Sports and Societies Officer. Dai thought that having someone new in the position would open up new opportunities for graduates based on that person's interests, and said that he would be happy to write a piece for the constitution to set the duties of this role. Richard suggested that we leave the role quite open to allow for these diverse opportunities to emerge.

Richard briefly mentioned election rules, which he thought should be quite basic. We should ask people not to email the MCR mailing list, but other than that should not have any other rules because it becomes hard to enforce them. Candidates should also be aware of the Dean's notice regarding posters and door-to-door canvassing.

8. Open Meeting

Richard reminded us that motions must be submitted 10 days in advance of the meeting, and that we must finalize and post the agenda 7 days in advance. The meeting was set for Tuesday, 6 November and will feature the official opening of nominations for the election. Thus far, the agenda is as follows:

- Presentation of MCR accounts
- Constitutional Changes
- Opening of Nominations

There will be a committee meeting directly following the open meeting.

9. Other Business

Dan noted that the bench that was to be purchased for Brookside is still not to be seen.

Richard asked whether the committee would like to use forwarding mailing addresses according to our positions. Dan said that if we do use them they will need to be regularly updated. Stephanie Clarke is in charge of these and we suspect that Mark would not have access to make changes to positions. Mark said that he would prefer using forwarding addresses as he doesn't like putting personal information about committee members on the website.

Mark noted that the lip on the stairs to the lower MCR is still present, and Dai was able to answer to this, noting that Phil Dean thought that this would not result in anyone getting injured.

Dan asked if plants could be purchased for the MCR to complete redecoration works, while Mark noted that the pictures hanging in the lower MCR are very crooked and awkward in appearance.