



Meeting Minutes

Monday 17th of July 2023

- Paula Teeuwen

Committee members present in person:

Praharsh Babu, Co-president
Sam Ryan, Co-president
Paula Teeuwen, Secretary
Kim Ngan Luu Hoang, BME Officer
Yorgos Chatziavgerinos, LGBTQ+ Officer

Committee members present online:

William Lan, Welfare Officer
Tatjana Schmidt, Formal Hall Officer
Jessica van de Grint, Food and Drink Officer
Anna Dowd, Accommodation Officer
Tom Willis, Computer Officer

All current committee members are present.

18.07 Start

Praharsh (P) welcomes everyone and thanks everyone for making time during their holidays for the first meeting of the new MCR committee. He discusses the general idea for the meetings. An agenda will be sent out before a meeting and all members can add points to discuss. We will aim for 1 hr max per meeting. Paula will take minutes and Tom will put them on the website.

Hand-over

The hand-over documents are discussed. Unfortunately, last year the committee lost access to the drive which had all the hand-over documents on it. Sam (S) has an updated document for formal sec and will hand this over to Tatjana (T). The contents of a typical hand-over document are discussed. For example, such a document contains information on what kind of meetings should be had and when they are. Another example is mentioned where the food and hall officers tasks range further than just keeping the coffee machine working.

Action for all: By August, talk to former committee member about receiving hand-over documents and/or schedule a meeting to talk about hand-over.

Kim and Yorgos talk about the gender recognition fund and Yorgos will talk with old committee members about this.

Co-opting Committee Roles

The committee discusses how to fill the vacant roles. Currently vacant roles are:

- Treasurer
- Women & Non-Binary Officer
- Access Officer

- Social Secretaries (2x)
- Green Officer
- Educational Officer

P informs the committee on the possibility of co-opting people into vacant roles. This happened last year too, where new elections were held after freshers week. Later in the meeting during the discussion about the freshers week it is discussed how to make committee positions more interesting for students. Peter Wothers (financial tutor) has mentioned the desire to get MCR committee members to be involved with the college and receive more thanks for their work.

Action for all: Ask around with friends who are interested in filling any vacant roles.

If so, they could stand in the next election. S mentions that it is especially important to find two people for the social sec positions. Paula (PT) mentions the option to form a separate activity committee with 4-5 MCR members, which would take the load of the social secretaries. Everyone agrees that for freshers week only two people organising activities is not enough.

Freshers Week

Action for all: Ask around with friends who are interested in helping at the freshers week.

-- Tom (TW) enters the meeting

P mentions that last year we had a similar issue where there were no social secretaries before freshers week. It is concluded that for this year we should start organising and booking rooms early (by August), before the JCR books all the rooms.

K asks about what our budget is for freshers week. P and S discuss that there is no specific budget and that some activities are free and some cost a lot of money. P mentions that last year we had a budget of around 3000 pounds, of which the vast majority went to organising the family formal. P also mentions that we don't have a treasurer now. Although Livia is still helping, we do need to find someone else. PT asks whether we should start finding student who want to be mom/dad for freshers week. S introduces the problem where we won't know how many sign-ups there will be until very close to the start. P says that we could ask/send a form in August. A discussion follows about the idea that a free formal, like last year, will likely help with sign-ups, however we need to decide at a later time on whether it is worth the amount of money.

Jessica (J) asks about creating a MCR freshers group chat for students before they arrive in Cambridge (01-10) is discussed. P describes the issue of not knowing who will join before October 1st. A Facebook page may be better. J also mentions that the WhatsApp group chats should be monitored to prevent people from entering that don't belong in there.

This topic is further discussed later in the meeting.

Action for all: Come up with one idea for freshers week and add it to the google docs

Jessica made the docs already during the meeting.

Anna mentions organising a potential stock exchange night at the bar.

Bar

The committee talks about the current issues that the bar is facing regarding attendance. It was noted that students are not satisfied with the bar prizes and JCR members are bringing their own drinks to the JCR instead of using the bar. S discusses that the bar pays the students that work at the bar minimum wage for the entire time they are working (17.00/18.00 – 23.00), even when no one is using the bar. Lot of money is lost towards paying staff for waiting. The bar is discussing opening the bar later at 19.00-20.00.

The committee discusses the upcoming meeting with Rob the bar manager about how to get more usage out of the bar. Jessica, Sam, Tatjana and Anna are interested in joining this meeting.

Action for Praharsh: Send out the email to make this meeting happen.

S mentions that the bar increased their selection of ciders, which showed some positive results. Y introduces the idea to organise more intercollegiate activities. P mentions that booking the bar is not expensive, S even notes that for the college booking the bar is free with permission from the dean and the bar. In other cases, it depends on the ratio of Catz/other attendees.

Cost-of-living Survey

P gives an update about the cost-of-living survey results which he worked on with Tobia (last-years' accommodation officer). The results lead to a conclusion of an average spending of 14500 pounds on living, which was assumed to be wrong. They assume that several people were bad at estimating their costs and note that spending 16000 would be more reasonable based on necessary costs.

Action for Praharsh: Email the master to schedule a meeting about the results and reforming student support funds. Write a document on our recommendations.

Matriculation Photo

Y asks about whether we have a digital copy of the matriculation photo 2022-2023. P notes that the photographers have it. Y mentions that he would like to have it for the magazine (Y is post-graduate member for the alumni magazine). Last year they had the wrong MCR photo. The committee agrees that there were some disappointments with the company that took the picture. On top of that, they did not offer to buy a digital copy of the MCR on their website. If they don't want to sell the digital copy, we could scan in the printed one.

Action for Praharsh: Contact the company who took the picture.

Coffee Machine

Jessica discusses the procedure for fixing the coffee machine. She also discusses that since the key to the cupboard is available for everyone, the machine keeps breaking.

Action for Praharsh: Send the contact details of the former food & drink officer to Jessica and ask him to reach out.

The MCR room is currently only accessible to MCR committee members due to the renovation. This is useful to organise the summer formals. J mentions that she will make sure the coffee machine works for MCR committee members during the summer.

P and the committee discuss whether we want to buy a new coffee machine or keep this one (considering it often doesn't work). The committee agrees that if we treat it well (clean it often) and remove access to the cupboard to everyone, it may work better again. The lock will be put back on the cupboard to prevent MCR members to overfill it or accidentally break it in another way. A lock with a password could be a great option as mentioned by P.

Voting and decisions

The committee discusses how to plan committee meetings and the preference is give towards a regular day of the week that can be planned enough in advance to prevent many last-minute cancellations of committee members. The committee decides on Monday's 18.00-19.00 as the regular meeting time. The beginning of the week is usually less busy for students and Thursdays were not possible due to formals. The meeting plannings will be reviewed at the beginning of each term. The committee decides on two or three MCR

committee meetings and one open meeting per term. The number of committee members depends on how much needs to be discussed. For that reason, the scheduled meetings will be provisional and can be cancelled if nothing needs to be discussed.

Action for Praharsh and Sam: Decide on a provisional meeting schedule.

Action for Paula: Make an agenda in the drive well before a scheduled meeting for everyone to put points of discussion in.

Action for all: Add points of discussion to the agenda in the drive before a scheduled meeting.

The committee discusses a motion to amend the membership fees for associate members so that they are brought up to the same level as full members (£13/ term). Currently associate membership fees (e.g. for the French teachers or integrated masters) are cheaper (£10/ term), however they have the same rights. Everyone is in favour.

The committee discusses a motion to amend the constitution by adding a clause that allows the committee to impeach a committee member (to remove someone from their role). Everyone is in favour of the motion. A decision on the requirements of the clause will be decided in a later meeting (e.g. improper conduct, failure to perform duties, etc). Ideas were discussed where we could be to look at the constitution of other colleges (PT) or to ask law students (Y).

K asks about if the constitution contains any information on committee members that are absent for long periods of time or who drop their role without telling anyone. Everyone agrees that this is unacceptable. The committee agrees that committee members that want to drop their role should find a replacement and co-opt someone later.

Praharsh mentions that it is currently 19.00 and everyone who needs to leave is free to leave the meeting. Everyone stays in the meeting.

Mailboxes

The committee discusses the mailboxes and Tom (T) explains how to gain access to it (no password required). PT tries it however notes that it doesn't work yet.

Action for Tom: Send an email on behalf of everyone to gain access to mailboxes and notify everyone when it should work.

Action for all: Update profiles on the website.

Constitution change

Action for all (if interested): Read the constitutions, especially the description about their own role.

PT urges everyone to read it. If we want to change it we should know what is in it and if there are other things that may require changing. It can be a hassle to change these things. A.o. the governing body needs to agree and the MCR needs to accept it in an open meeting.

Catz community spirit award

Praharsh introduces the award and mentions that it hasn't been awarded for several years. The MCR members can nominate someone every term and the committee can approve it. A form can be used to nominate someone. The committee can then vote on who deserves it.

Action for Praharsh: Refresh the form.

Social media accounts

The committee discusses the social media accounts and decide that all committee members will get access to the socials. J will focus on the Facebook pages and PT will focus on the Instagram page. PT is keen on promoting events more using the socials.

Action for Jessica: Make all MCR committee members moderators on the MCR open Facebook page (everyone can join) and the regular one (not everyone can join).

Action for Sam: Make all MCR committee members admin for the current WhatsApp groups (MCR, freshers, PhD etc.).

Action for Yorgos: Ask Laurance and Ananya to make him admin for the LGBTQ+ group chat.

Communication between MCR committee

PT wants to vote on whether to use Facebook messenger or WhatsApp as a platform for to contact committee members in a group chat. P starts with describing why he prefers Facebook messenger. It is already set up and has always been used. WhatsApp web has some difficulties and Facebook messenger works better from the computer. PT describes how she rarely uses messenger and how it doesn't make a distinction between what is already read and what is new. Therefore, it is easy to miss things, which PT notes she has problems with for the rowing messenger chats. The committee agrees to not spam the messenger chat and only discuss important things to prevent missing important conversations. The committee, including PT, agree with using Facebook. PT mentions she wants to use what the majority wants to use and she will adjust. PT does express the desire to make a WhatsApp chat just for social and fun discussions that are not important. Everyone is fine with that.

Praharsh closes the meeting at 19.23.