



Meeting Minutes

Monday 24th of January 2024

- Paula Teeuwen

Committee members present in person:

Sam Ryan, Co-president
Paula Teeuwen, Secretary
Samuel Stark, Treasurer
Jessica van de Grint, Food and Drink Officer
Keera (Keerthana) Bathula, Social Secretary
Aycha Ates-di-Adamo, Social Secretary
Tom Willis, Computer Officer
Tanja (Tatjana) Schmidt, Formal Hall Officer
Eddie Xiao, Education officer
Kim Ngan Luu Hoang, BAME Officer
Sohane Ines Mousseid Yahya, BAME Officer
Catherine Tan, Womens & Non-binary officer

Committee members present online:

Praharsh Babu, Co-president
William Lan, Welfare Officer
Yorgos Chatziavgerinos, LGBTQ+ Officer
Andrea Isabel Ramirez Hincapie, Green Officer
Robert Hao, Green Officer
Anna Dowd, Accommodation Officer

Start

Sam and Praharsh start the meeting at 18.35.
The agenda was sent out by Praharsh before the meeting.

General Estates Committee Meeting

Praharsh asks Anna to give an update on the GEC meeting that she attended. In the meeting it was discussed to keep the postgraduate section at South Green Lodge and to change a server box at the Vicarage. They did not talk about potentially increasing the amount of accommodation in the upcoming years. Lastly, they talked about wanting a representative for the bike group. **After the meeting Paula mentioned to be available as representative if necessary.

Worcester College Swap

Sam mentions that the master and the provost of our sister-college Worcester have talked about organising yearly swaps. He will communicate with our master on what our costs were last year and how to proceed (**Action**).

Education committee

Sam provides the attendees with an update on the education committee meeting. College is considering drastically increasing the intake of (G)EMBA students to college. College will have monetary benefit from this while not increasing the workload due to them using facilities only few times per year. It was estimated that 60% of all (G)EMBA students go to Catz already. The college is aware about welfare support that they might require. Sam also notes that as MCR we don't have to worry that this increased number could overpower our membership numbers, since they won't be here large part of the year. Jessica notes that it is a large number of students, and that we should have an idea of when they are here and when we can expect more people at events. Sam notes that last year they are less inclined to come to events regardless, due to busy schedules. Paula asks whether we as MCR get more money for the increased membership numbers. Sam notes that he will look into this and Praharsh asks Samuel to help find out whether we indeed get paid for them (**Action**). Samuel notes that he heard someone mention that they did indeed see MCR membership on their bill. Praharsh notes that we could think about adding something to our upcoming new constitution that includes the possibility for a limited membership type specifically for (G)EMBA students.

New Health Practitioner

Sam continues by noting that there is a new health practitioner starting who, besides his regular position as college nurse, also specialises in mental health. Jessica mentions that it may not be clear for some (including her) for what situations you can go to the nurse and when you should go to Mary or a regular GP. Praharsh replies that the nurse is available for all college members who have any health concerns, not just mental health (that his just his bonus experience). You could see him as a 'mini GP' where you can go to when you are unsure whether you should ask a GP. He can still direct you to a GP or alternative after.

Tutorial Meeting

Sam notes that the college student support fund is running out. This is the fund that includes a.o. support for intermitting students and the welfare taxi. There is a consensus that the welfare taxi should stay but that it is way too expensive. Sam notes that we should gauge what people think it is for, and whether they realise it is coming out of the student support fund (meant for students who need it e.g. hardship) (**Action**). Kim asks whether we have a breakdown of the spending of this fund, to which Sam replies that there will be more specifics in a next meeting.

Welfare activities

Sam, William, and Mary talked earlier today about the organisation of welfare activities for just postgraduate students. No specifics were given yet.

Constitutional changes

Praharsh notified the committee about the upcoming efforts of altering the constitution. Examples are to further clarify the committee roles, adding a code of conduct and adding a procedure for removing MCR committee members from their role. Paula and Keera offered to help out. Kim asks when the deadline is to finalise the changed constitution. Praharsh

replies that it will have to be voted on during an open meeting (Paula: and sent out 2 weeks before to members). We can plan to vote on it in a second open meeting at the end of term.

Coffee machine

Jessica informs the attendees that the brewer of the coffee machine is broken over the Christmas break. This is due to no one's fault, but most likely due to active use and it being an old machine. No coffee can be obtained until the part is replaced by a technician, however the price is steep. When the technician stops by, this will include general maintenance of the machine. However, there may not be enough budget for this. The committee brainstorms about ways to fund this, such as adding a donation box, looking into sponsorship, talking to people in college, to host an activity to fundraise, to not buy extra coffee in summer when not many people use it or to look in our savings. Jessica does note that we are saving a lot of money by buying a less costly brand of coffee powder. Praharsh notes that the coffee machine impacts members a lot and we should definitely fix it asap and look into the budget later (**Action**). Jessica will contact the company to book the repair (**Action**).

-- 19.00 Sohane joins the meeting in person

MCR blankets / warming up students

Paula explains to the attendees that Kit, Samuel and her had the idea to look into providing MCR blankets in the lower room. This was based on the lower room being quite cold at times. Sam notes that it is better to look into what is causing this and to improve heating. Praharsh notes that he or Sam should ask college maintenance to look into the heating and the internet (**Action**). He mentions that we could also think about providing a portable heater on the short-term. Sam notes that this could add risks of accidentally leaving the heater on overnight and causing a fire hazard / burning of carpet. Paula notes that there are adapters you can include that turn off after a certain amount of time. Praharsh continues by noting that college is already using those in gyp rooms.

Sam: Heating in lower rooms, Kit/Sam/Paula had an idea to get MCR blankets.

Israel/Gaza statement

Praharsh notifies the attendees that he and Sam received an email from a student who was outraged about the fact that the MCR has not said anything about the Israel/Gaza conflict. The student notes that he had received harassment and thinks that college and mcr should have taken a stance in solidarity and that a fund should have been put in place. A reply was sent where, in summary, the horrible nature of the conflict was acknowledged and that support is available through college (i.e. contact Mary). The college and the MCR cannot make a fund in these situations. As an example, the fund for Ukraine was organised by the university as a whole. Praharsh would like to discuss with the attendees whether we should/should have made a statement on such a sensitive topic. Sohane notes that we should decide whether we make statements or take positions in conflict situations as a general rule. For example, if there is precedent for it (such as in the George Floyd situation, to which Praharsh replies that he doesn't remember there being a statement from us) then that is a decision. Overall, she notes that the MCR is not a place of politics. Sam notes that the master did give out a statement over email, including saying that there is support for students for any affected students, regardless of which party, which is in line with the college

and university. Tom notes that if we issue a statement that this will cause even more emails to be sent out by students. Kim agrees that the MCR should be apolitical and that it is the job of the liberation officers (e.g. Womens, LGBTQ, BAME) to make a noise when needed. Tanja remarks that there is also the question on what side should be taken in hugely divided issues? Sam notes that our side is to always support any student. Kim mentions that her and Sohane could say something as BAME officers. Praharsh mentions that he doesn't feel informed enough to make a statement on complex issues and have a risk of misrepresentation of issues. The committee concludes that the MCR will not make any political statements (while the liberation officers have more freedom) and that we will help any student as good as we can, regardless of political stance.

--The committee is having some technical difficulties with the teams ---

Community spirit awards

Praharsh informs the committee that he received three nominations for the Catz community spirit awards (the committee is not informed as to who those are). He does note that all nominations are either current or ex committee members and that he is aware of a potential conflict of interest. Praharsh also mentions that the awarding of the awards is already delayed a bit and that he is happy to set up a system for us to anonymously vote. He does need input from the attendees on how many we should award and what the nomination criteria are. Sam has the idea to make a google drive with the submitted info and to redact names or other sensitive information if needed. The committee talks about what number would be good to award per term. Paula notes that she is worried that if we award 3-5 this term that there will not be enough nominations / people left with extraordinary contributions to postgraduate life in Catz for next term. She notes that most MCR members are busy with their research or studies and only a small group of people are usually active in such things. People nominated in one term that didn't make it could be reconsidered the following term. We don't want this award-system to fizzle out next term due to no nominations. The committee reaches agreement of choosing two per term. Sam notes that he and Praharsh have a document with info on nomination criteria and that a summary will be sent to committee members (**Action**). Praharsh (or someone else) will make a voting system (including checking that there is no personal or sensitive information in there) (**Action**). After voting, the top two will be given the award for Michaelmas.

-- Praharsh leaves the meeting at 19.30

International Women's day

Catherine notes that she received the minutes of the meeting between the JCR Womens/NB officer and the College Wellness committee. She was supposed to go, however they forgot to send her the zoom link. In the minutes she read that they were planning a panel event on Women's Aid sometime between March 4-10. On top of that, a Tea@3 event on March 6th in collaboration with the Fem Soc will be organised. On top of that, there will be a library display again. They were also talking about organising self-defence classes, which she will receive more details on later. Lastly, she notes that there was nothing that needed to be done for now, but that a term-card will be made once things are more established. Sohane notes that it may also be nice to organise a women of colour event. Kim notes that not long

ago there was an offer for self-defence key-chains to be given out by the porters, as a reply to Catharines mentioning of them and a question on if there is budget for them.

Green officer update

Andrea and Robert note that they had a meeting with Jessica yesterday about the results of their survey. They note that there will be a pilot regarding the offering of reduced price on left-over boxes from the food that is served in the dining hall. A plan will be developed on how to distribute the left-overs. Robert also notes that there will be a Green formal organised next term, and that they will talk to Tanja about this. He also mentions that some companies have shown willingness to sponsor this. He continues about the organisation of taster sessions for plant-based menus. Jessica mentions the Catzfess posts about the small portions served in the dining hall and that catering is aware and working on it. Jessica notes that the man she talked to said that students can always ask for more, however of course she realises she should be careful about telling everyone to prevent misuse. On top of that, the catering should just give large enough portions without expecting students to ask for it, especially since they usually have enough left. Sam notes that a cause could be that there is new serving staff, who may not know yet what amounts are expected. Jessica continues with observin requests in the questionnaire for more different cuisines (as in different parts of the world) and more variation to be represented in the menus. The catering also acknowledges this and that for example at specific holidays the menu could be adjusted or catering could attend workshops. She concludes that of course there is a limit to this regarding budget.

MCR stash

Jessica notifies the attendees that she contacted two companies regarding MCR committee sweaters. One company had three similar looking sweaters between 30-38 pounds, with a one-off charge of 25 pounds per unique logo. The other company asked for 36 pounds, which includes embroidery. Jessica notes that she could approach more companies to compare since these prices are a bit steep. Sam asks if Jessica could provide us a document with each option outlined, to get the numbers clear (**Action**). Samuel notes he will send Jessica a summary of spending of last year to compare (**Action**).

Broken chair

Jessica notes that there is a chair back in the lower room on its side again (same chair that was broken before). She notes that if someone of the committee sees something like this happen, that they should really say something about this. Since the meeting is reaching its end, Sam notes that we can pick this up again next meeting. The presidents will talk about this, gather contact details for the company and bring Tobia back in (**Action**).

Peanut-free MCR

Aycha notes that several people in the MCR are dealing with peanut/nut allergies and that we should have a notice in the MCR or general email to urge people to not eat peanuts in the MCR. This is in line with the college regulation of excluding peanuts.

Notice board

Sam notes that he wants to discuss bringing back a notice board in the MCR next meeting (**Action**).

Freshers Week

The update on the re-freshers week given by Aycha and Keera will be picked up at the next meeting.

Plant-based SU

Our stance on the motion to make the SU fully plant-based (to be voted on Feb 5th), as introduced by Andrea, will be discussed at the next meeting, or outside a meeting if needed before that time.

The meeting is ended at 19.45