



Meeting Minutes

Monday 12th of February 2024

- Paula Teeuwen

Committee members present in person:

Praharsh Babu, Co-president
Sam Ryan, Co-president
Paula Teeuwen, Secretary
Samuel Stark, Treasurer
Tanja (Tatjana) Schmidt, Formal Hall Officer
Catherine Tan, Women & Non-binary officer
Jessica van de Grint, Food and Drink Officer
Eddie Xiao, Education officer
Robert Hao, Green Officer
Yorgos Chatziavgerinos, LGBTQ+ Officer
Keera (Keerthana) Bathula, Social Secretary
Sohane Ines Mousseid Yahya, BAME Officer

Committee members present online:

William Lan, Welfare Officer
Tom Willis, Computer Officer
Kim Ngan Luu Hoang, BAME Officer

Start

Praharsh opens the meeting at 18.40 and asks the members who will leave earlier if they want to add anything. Jessica replies that the committee sweaters have been ordered and thanks everyone who paid quickly. Some committee members are confused since they they expected the sweaters to be handed out during this meeting. This was not the case. Jessica ends her message with '*C'est ca*'.

Changing the swap system

Tanja discusses with the committee members whether we want to change the system currently used to sell tickets for formal swaps and whether we want to discuss this during an open meeting. Samuel replies that he does not like the idea to use a balloting system but acknowledges that the current system is also not the best. Tanja agrees and notes that with the current system often the same people get to go each time and there may be others who want to go but can't. For example, if someone has phone or internet problems they are disadvantaged. Samuel notes that a system outside of Upay would be needed if we want to change it. He draws a comparison with the system that Clare uses, which automatically assigns a waiting list based on who signs up first. Praharsh mentions that a system based on time could be unfair to people who can't leave lab or other places when the ballot opens.

Tanja is aware of this and notes that she is trying out setting different times for each swap. Praharsh continues by suggesting making a window of time for people to sign up and to use a balloting system., but only if it is not too much effort for Tanja. Tanja notes that she is afraid in that scenario to be accused of favouring her friends. Catharine adds that a randomizer-app can be used to pick people who get to go and that a screenshot can be sent to the people who signed up. Praharsh tells Tanja that she can investigate how to go about this but to not make it too hard for her. Samuel will investigate how he can charge people in such a system. Sam replies that he could ask college to bill the picked students directly. Tanja adds that she does indeed not want to run after money when people don't pay. Sam agrees and notes that such a balloting system won't work and will only cause us more work. Samuel replies to a question by Praharsh and notes that currently attendees pay on Upay, the money then goes to our college and then they pay the other college. Sometimes when there is a difference in the money we pay them directly, however that rarely happens. Tanja replies to questions by Jessica and Praharsh by noting that there is no way that we can control Upay and that google forms will still require her to keep track of who paid. Sam notes that there will always be some chasing if we change our current system. Tanja concludes by saying she will try a new system and will discuss the experience during the meeting after. Kim agrees that we she agrees with any system that makes work easier for Tanja.

Coffee machine

Praharsh asks Jessica about an update on the coffee machine. Jessica notes that it has been fixed already for about 1.5 week and it is still being maintained. She mentions her helpers who come in every day as well. She does not disclose who they are.

Tanja, Yorgos and Jessica leave the meeting at 18.50 to attend the LGBTQIA+ history formal

Freshers Week

Praharsh asks Keera to give an update on the Lent term Freshers week. Keera starts with mentioning that she noticed several activities where near to no-one showed up were highly requested by members earlier, such as Lola's night or the boardgame event where no one signed up for. Samuel brings up that this is what happened to Lola's night last year as well. He remarks that it seems that usually people only want to go to Lola's once and never again. Several committee members agree. Samuel continues with saying that a boardgame event is great indeed, but not during the day as many people can't make it. Sam agrees and notes that lent term Freshers week was done in full term. During Michaelmas Freshers week people didn't have courses or lab work yet. Keera continues the discussion with asking if there is a way to charge people before a more costly event. Sam and Samuel discuss that this costs a lot more effort on one side but allows for less effort in chasing people to pay. Samuel also notes that it is risky to let people sign-up and pay for a certain day and risk not being able to book the event on that day anymore after sign-up. Keera and Sam mention the option to temporarily book events or pay a cautionary deposit for certain venues. Samuel states that the board game evening, which got cancelled due to low sign-up numbers, is still pending. He explains that we can still reschedule the board game event to happen on a later time. Sam continues with noting that evenings should be fine, but that daytime or weekends may lead to low sign-ups. Keera continues that she is working on organising a pancake event, movie-night and BOP. She also wants to take down the Christmas decoration at one point, maybe by replacing the ornaments in the two trees with other decorations. Samuel reminds

her that she should quickly let him know about any reimbursements she still needs. Keera notes that her order of cookies and wine is still to be reimbursed. Samuel and Sam discuss the costs of the Freshers week and note that college will pay us back about 500 pounds as agreed (50% of budget). Samuel says to Sam that he can give him a breakdown of the costs if he or college needs this.

Action: Praharsh and Sam will talk about the college contribution during their next CCC meeting.

Plant-based SU motion

Praharsh and Andrea went to the SU meeting last Monday, where they discussed a motion to make the SU cafes (5 total) fully plant-based. Praharsh asks the committee how we want to vote as an MCR during the next meeting, support, no support or abstain? He summarizes that the points that are made is that it will be better for the environment. He notes that the motion has been changed and stripped back several times, resulting in the aim being lost. On top of that, there are some accessibility concerns such as allergies or dietary requirements that are not being taking into account. Praharsh and Andrea think they did not provide clear answer to those concerns and that there are not many benefits. Praharsh suggests that we as MCR either vote against or choose to abstain from voting. Samuel and Paula agree that they might have gotten more support if they want for vegetarian instead of plant-based. Sam notes that the university library is already plant-based and that West-Hub provides many options. He also notes that incentives to make more sustainable dishes cheaper may help. Kim thinks that we should abstain, since voting against might come across like we are not supporting a better planet. Sohane agrees and suggests that we could clarify this during a round of questions after voting. She explains to Paula that abstaining will make it clear that we don't want the motion to pass and that it does not mean we are indifferent of the sentiment. Praharsh continues the discussion by noting that most current vegan-alternatives are highly processed and not really healthy. A better focus for the SU could be to support more healthy vegan/veggie options instead of going fully plant-based and go for processed foods that could provide problems with allergies or dietary requirements. Sam agrees that the SU should maybe give more justification. Sohane adds that many vegan alternatives try to imitate pork, which people who don't eat meat won't eat anyway (e.g. religious reasons). Going fully vegetarian may be more feasible if they don't rely as much on fake meats. Eddie agrees that they should focus on making meals nutritionally adequate. Tom agrees by noting that he also doesn't feel strongly about the motion. Praharsh rounds up the discussion by saying that we should justify that we are not advocating for things to stay the same, but that we are advocating for choosing healthier options without restricting other people's diets. Sam and Samuel bring up the example of West Hub again and wonder what their prices are. They could give discounts for vegetarian options instead of penalizing less sustainable choices. Some committee members are happy with implementing '*Incentives* 😊'. Praharsh gives the example of 10p shopping bags. Praharsh asks everyone whether they are happy with abstaining. Everyone agrees. Paula notes that suggesting a fully vegetarian approach may also cause accessibility issues. She, Praharsh and Sohane further discuss religious or personal preferences people may have.

Wellbeing

William talks about his meeting last week about the neurodiversity celebration week that will start on the 11th of March. He and Mary were wondering whether anyone of the committee would like to be involved and help with coming up with activities. Keera, Catharine and Eddie are happy to help. He mentions that the real neurodivergence week is the week after and that the 11th of March is just for college. Eddie notes that in other years a seminar was held in celebration of this week, and mentions that a speaker who does research in this area will be presenting in February, rather than in the Neurodiversity Celebration Week. He also notes that the seminars are mostly advertised to postgraduates and fellows, but that we could engage everyone in college for this special event. Sam notes that last year the LGBTQ+ related seminar was also opened to the whole college and other colleges. Praharsh notes that we can indeed organise another panel discussion as an event open to everyone.

William continues saying that Mary was also thinking of organising a general wellbeing event for PhD students, such as a QA panel on 17th of March. Sohane and Sam mention they are happy to help, but that Sam will need to leave early due to organisation of a PhD/Medics Wine and Cheese event.

Housekeeping:

Sam mentions to the committee that he noticed something up with the housekeeping at postgraduate accommodation such as South Green Lodge and Russell Street. Currently cleaning staff only comes in to take bin bags out and clean the bathrooms. Keera mentions that she talked to her housekeeper, who said that two out of three cleaning staff had left and that there is too much work to do. Sam states that college should communicate this clearly to students. Praharsh asks to double check since they are usually good with communication, but Sam replies that there is no email. Praharsh notes that there is a high turn-over with staff lately. As an example, he notes that Martin is leaving as well. Later in the meeting he notes that Victoria also left, which could cause admin to be relatively slow to respond.

Action: Raise problems associated with high turn-over at CCC meeting and ask about an update on whether new people are hired or not.

Community spirit award

Praharsh notifies the committee that he will release the form to vote for the community spirit award this evening. He notes that two current committee members were nominated. They will not be allowed to vote due to the conflict of interest. Both give a thumbs up to Praharsh's question to include the nomination texts that were submitted in case of sensitivity issues. Praharsh urges everyone to only vote once for only two people. The voting will be anonymous.

The committee swoons over Kim's dog, which she shows through her computer camera.

Bike meeting

Tom informs the committee about the bike-committee meeting that he will attend on 21-02 and asks the committee whether they want him to bring up anything besides the bike-cull that will be done at one point. Praharsh wants him to mention the large number of bike-stands that are broken in the underground parking area. Edde adds that Mary informed him that we could do a cycling promotion event such as a maintenance workshop. Paula shows the committee the email from last year on 06-02 where Dr Bike did a bike maintenance workshop.

CCC meeting

Praharsh notifies the committee that he will attend the next CCC meeting with the JCR, MCR, Senior Tutor, Bursar and Dean next Thursday. He will write the motions to submit tomorrow and Kim offers to help out with the motion about providing part term students with cam cards without having to pick them up in person. Paula is wondering what they need them for and is confused at why the college is not just sending it to them. Sam replies that they need their card to identify themselves as students, not just for opening doors. Praharsh talks about his motion to have stethoscopes of medical students to be reimbursed. He also asks whether anyone wants to come along next Thursday in the Sidney Smith Room to raise issues or take out frustrations. He notes that we can add one more motion (or 'paper') and explains that these are questions that will definitely be answered during the meeting (as opposed to anything discussed during 'Any Other Business' at the end. Sam mentions that the money for freshers week will for example be discussed during this part of the meeting. Praharsh answers Catharine's question that these meetings are held once a term. Praharsh then mentions that the JCR will submit a motion to provide reimbursements for regular medical prescriptions such as inhalers, similar to what other colleges have. Sam adds that this motion is not rejected, but that there has been lots of discussion about until it got conditionally accepted but not officially accepted. Praharsh and Sam discuss the welfare budget issues and Sam informs the committee that there will be a breakdown of the costs discussed during the next meeting. Praharsh asks the committee whether there is anything else to be raised and asks committee to send this to him at the end of today the latest.

Praharsh ends the meeting at 19.50