

MCR General Meeting

Monday 13th November (6th week, Michaelmas Term)

Upper MCR, 8:00 pm

MINUTES

33 people

1. Committee Reports and Notices

President

- Proposal has been submitted to the Development Office. Decision on 20th November.
- There will be a careers/networking event in Hilary with 6 alumni (2 entrepreneurs, 2 from academia and 2 from industry). Format will be a networking symposium followed by a drinks reception and canapés. More information will be sent out soon.

Secretary

- College has approved for voting to take place online after the General Meetings. Eligible MCR members will have one week to vote for motions.
- Constitution has been updated to reflect these changes.

Sports

- Priyav sent an email today regarding the Blues rugby match.
- Varsity rugby match is on 7th December. 30 free tickets for the MCR is available – send Rob a message if you would like a ticket.

2. Hall Charge Motion

The MCR notes that:

- (1) Section 2.4 of the Graduate Handbook, on page 24, states the following:

Hall Charge

Dining in the Jesus College Hall is an integral part of College life and the College strongly encourages members to partake in this convivial tradition.

Hall charges apply to all students and are designed to encourage collegial behaviour. The charges are batted in the first week of each term.

Hall charges in 2017/18 are as follows:

Students living in College & Ship Street £73.49 per term

Students living in other accommodation £36.75 per term

- (2) The official explanation for the differential charge, received from the DACC (Ruedi Baumann) via email, is 'that those people who live some distance from the College are likely to find using these facilities less convenient'.
- (3) The DACC and the Estates Bursar (Stuart Woodward) have argued that any change to the current arrangement would have to be zero-sum, i.e. not increase the overall cost to the College of subsidising Hall.

The MCR believes that:

- (1) Students at Jesus are currently paying different charges for the same right to dine in Hall. This is unfair.
- (2) Graduate students living in College and Ship Street ('on-site') have access to kitchens: Hall is thus less convenient to them.
- (3) A student living in private accommodation close to College is likely to find Hall as convenient as someone living in college-owned accommodation.
- (4) The higher charge for on-site accommodation arguably conceals the actual cost of renting that accommodation.
- (5) The official explanation for the differential charge is at odds with the explanation for the Hall Charge as such given in the Handbook: College cannot intend to encourage those living on-site to attend Hall more strongly than those living off-site.

The MCR further believes that:

- (1) Fixed Hall charges are inherently paternalistic.
- (2) A refundable Hall charge, i.e. one where meals are credited against the Hall charge up to a certain amount, would achieve the same goal of encouraging Hall attendance in a fairer way.
- (3) The College's assertion that any change would have to be zero-sum is a deliberate obstruction. It pits on-site students against off-site students, and it is not a compelling argument for the current regime.

The MCR therefore resolves to:

- (1) Mandate the MCR Committee to discuss this issue with College, with a view to introducing a (partially) refundable Hall charge.
- (2) That failing, mandate the Committee to advocate a one-size-fits-all Hall charge.
- (3) That failing, mandate the Committee to advocate that Graduate students living on-site should pay the lower charge.

Proposed by: Daniel Schwennicke

Seconded by: Paweł Bednarek

Minutes

Would like a partially refundable hall charge, i.e. meals in hall are credited against the hall charge, instead of two different amounts. There is precedent in other colleges for this.

Q: Question about the three resolutions. 2nd resolution: will the hall charge be an average? Also, the order of the resolutions can be changed. 3rd resolution should go before the 2nd.

A: Any change has to be zero-sum for college. College could find the money elsewhere instead. The current regime is unfair and at the expense of people living onsite.

People living on Ship Street and using hall will overwhelmingly outnumber the people living off-site. Hall is also less convenient for people living in private accommodation.

Q: Agree that hall charge is ridiculous. Realistically, College will not get rid of or lower it or it may increase costs somewhere else since reducing it means less money is made for college. Perhaps they could include the hall charge in the meal prices so people who eat more pay more. Have they said that this is an option?

A: College likes the idea of hall charge as it encourages hall attendance.

Some JCR members living on site (e.g. first years) do not have access to a kitchen and have to eat in hall. JCR and MCR interests clash.

College has also started paying staff the living wage a few years ago and the hall charge is part of being able to do so.

College will go for 2nd resolution and they will not consider the 1st and 3rd as the 2nd is zero-sum.

Q: What about part time students (e.g. if they are living in London)? Also students studying different subjects may have different requirements that make it difficult for them to attend hall.

A: Not sure whether part time students are charged the hall charge and the amount.

Q: Is it possible to make a list of concerns and send it to the college?

A: This motion has to be passed in the general meeting first.

Amended motion

The MCR notes that:

(1) Section 2.4 of the Graduate Handbook, on page 24, states the following:

Hall Charge

Dining in the Jesus College Hall is an integral part of College life and the College strongly encourages members to partake in this convivial tradition.

Hall charges apply to all students and are designed to encourage collegial behaviour. The charges are batted in the first week of each term.

Hall charges in 2017/18 are as follows:

Students living in College & Ship Street £73.49 per term

Students living in other accommodation £36.75 per term

(2) The official explanation for the differential charge, received from the DACC (Ruedi Baumann) via email, is 'that those people who live some distance from the College are likely to find using these facilities less convenient'.

(3) The DACC and the Estates Bursar (Stuart Woodward) have argued that any change to the current arrangement would have to be zero-sum, i.e. not increase the overall cost to the College of subsidising Hall.

(4) Students are not told how the Hall charge is used by the College.

The MCR believes that:

- (1) Students at Jesus are currently paying different charges for the same right to dine in Hall, which is unfair.
- (2) Graduate students living in College and Ship Street ('on-site') have access to kitchens: Hall is thus less convenient to them.
- (3) More generally, whether Hall is more or less convenient to students depends on a variety of factors, including preferences and individual budgets. It is problematic to base the differential charge on an ill-defined notion of convenience.
- (4) The official explanation for the differential charge is at odds with the explanation for the Hall Charge as such given in the Handbook: College cannot intend to encourage those living on-site to attend Hall more strongly than those living off-site.
- (5) The higher charge for on-site accommodation arguably conceals the actual cost of renting that accommodation.

The MCR further believes that:

- (1) The idea that the fixed Hall charge encourages collegial behavior is vague. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, far from encouraging dining in Hall, some students actually find it more difficult to dine in Hall given that their budget has already been strained by the charge.
- (2) A (partially) refundable Hall charge, i.e. one where meals are credited against the Hall charge up to a certain amount, would achieve the same goal of encouraging Hall attendance in a more reliable and fair way.
- (3) Refundable Hall charges are workable: they are widely used at other colleges.
- (4) If it is accepted that any change would have to be zero-sum, a refundable Hall charge may rely on a slight increase in the price of meals. This would mean that those who use Hall more often would carry a greater share of the costs the charge is meant to cover, which seems appropriate and fairer than equating convenience with distance from the College.

The MCR therefore resolves to:

- (1) Mandate the MCR Committee to query the College on what costs exactly are covered by the Hall charge.
- (2) Mandate the MCR Committee to discuss this issue with College, with a view to introducing a (partially) refundable Hall charge.
- (3) That failing, mandate the Committee to advocate that Graduate students living on-site should pay the lower charge.

3. Equalities Officer Motion

The MCR notes that:

- (1) A Committee position is not currently available for specifically catering to Equality and Diversity within the MCR.
- (2) There lacks a representative for part-time students, numbers of which are scheduled to double according to the College Strategic Plan.

- (3) College is starting an Equalities and Diversity Committee – composed of the Academic Director, Human Resources Director, Welfare Director, and select Fellows – to discuss “a wide variety of equality and diversity issues relating to all areas of College” over one working-lunch per term.
- (4) Cultural/interfaith events and related meetings with College are voluntarily run by Welfare Reps whose roles are already extensive.

The MCR therefore resolves to:

- (1) Create a new Committee position called the Equalities Officer.
- (2) Assign this officer the tasks of:
 - 1) attending the College Equalities and Diversity Committee working-lunches,
 - 2) coordinate and liaise with College on cultural/interfaith events,
 - 3) represent part-time graduate students,
 - 4) be the first point of contact for any equalities and diversity-related questions and concerns from the MCR, and
 - 5) run relevant workshops and events to encourage and support equality and diversity.
- (3) Appropriately incorporate this new Committee position in our yearly MCR budget.

Proposed by: Di Hu

Seconded by: Christopher Gausden

Minutes

Q: Did College ask for this new position? Can they pay for it?

A: Yes, College did ask for a new committee position. Will enquire if they can provide extra funding.

Q: As the Equalities Officer represents part-time students, do they have to be a part-time student themselves?

A: No.

Q: If college is asking for this position, why does it have to be a motion?

A: Creating a new position is a constitutional change. This was a suggestion from College and the MCR is not forced to create a new position.

4. Board Games Motion

The MCR notes that:

- (1) Board games have been a popular source of entertainment for MCR members.
- (2) There has been interest from MCR members in expanding our game selection. Games such as Diplomacy, Taboo, Dominion and an expansion to Settlers of Catan have been specifically requested.
- (3) An expanded board game collection could serve as the basis for intercollegial gatherings. For instance, there has been some very preliminary discussion

between some Jesus MCR members and the Wolfson College board games society about organizing joint board game nights.

The MCR therefore resolves to:

- (1) Expand the board game collection by purchasing games such as the ones named above and others, at a cost of up to £250.

Proposed by: Katia Garcia

Seconded by: Zack Williams

Minutes

Currently, informal board game nights are organized (Wednesday nights). Would like to organize more weekly/biweekly board game nights and intercollegiate events.

Q: What board games do we have?

A: Catan, Game of Thrones, etc. The good ones are in upper MCR. Luke and Katia went to a board game shop in Cowley and got an expansive list of recommendations. Luke has multi-page list of board games.

Q: Last term, the MCR already spent £250 on board games. An extra £250 means spending £500 in total. This is the same amount as the entire sports budget for the year. We should consider other needs of MCR. Chris asked for £80 from College for decorating the MCR but College thought that that should come out of the MCR budget instead. If the MCR can spend £500 on board games, this may affect our ability to ask College for money. MCR budget has already been increased by 20-30% this year. Also, historically, board game events have been poorly attended (<10 people). While some people enjoy board games, not everyone in the MCR is interested and the amount of money not justifiable

A: The amount can be up to £250. More than half of people attending board games nights are freshers and there could be a demographic shift.

We should take inventory of what board games we already have. This would also help if anything goes missing.

Q: £250 makes a huge difference for Welfare, for example. £400 is spent from the Welfare budget for about a dozen events per term. Having an extra £250 would make a big difference. Some board games are expensive, looking at prices online, e.g. Dominion for £40. Could we get any discounts?

A: Thirsty Meeples sell board games for half the price.

Q: The yearly budget has already been assigned and is quite stretched. Does the MCR have a savings account we could use instead?

A: The savings account does not have a lot of money.

Q: Could organize a board games exchange with other colleges instead? Or the amount could be taken out from next year's budget since £250 has already been spent this year.

A: Wolfson is the main college that does board game nights. Priyav can help organize exchanges/intercollegiate events.

Q: Where does the money come from? Is there money for MCR motions or a motions budget?

A: No money for motions. Money comes from reserves. There is no motions budget as not all motions are financial motions. There may potentially be some money for this next year.

5. Hustings for First Year Rep

(1) Thao Dam

(2) Luke Lattanzi-Silveus and Katia Garcia

All three candidates are running as a team.

Thao: Would like to organize a Lunar New Year event. Organized the first one on campus previously. Would also like to help the Equalities Officer, if this becomes a committee position in the future.

Katia: Have already been putting together some events this term, e.g. a party in the Bunker, cemetery tour for Halloween. Would like a more formal capacity to organize events, e.g. get more access to be able to advertise events to the whole MCR. Some event suggestions: Natural History Museum day and picnic inside the museum, art gallery tours. Would like to be a part of the MCR committee.

Equalities Officer position may only be included next year. This takes time to be approved by College.

Q: What do the first year reps do?

A: Represent the freshers, helping out the social secs, organizing brunches.

Q: How long will each of you be here?

A: Luke is doing a DPhil. Thao and Katia: one year with potential extension.

Q: Specialty dishes for brunch?

A: Luke: crepes. Katia: pumpkin pie. Thao: granola and vegan muffins.

6. AOB

(1) Follow-up on Accommodation Motion passed on 6 June 2017

Raised the point with Ruedi Baumann (DACC) individually, as well as at a recent working-lunch with the Principal, Estates Bursar, and Academic Director on 19.10.17. College recognises the importance of the MCR Committee, and that

recruitment has been an issue for the past couple of years. However, space is a major premium in and near College, so the Accommodation Motion would not be feasible for the College as it stands now (this may change with the Northgate House, which is further down the line). They are opened to potentially supporting other ways of encouraging MCR Committee involvement, e.g. Ruedi proposed providing Committee members with a free meal per week – what are your thoughts? Any other ideas?

Accommodation Motion

The MCR notes that:

- (1) Committee Members are treated equivalent to the rest of the MCR with regards to balloting for College Accommodation.
- (2) Committee Members have frequent commitments in College for meetings, event planning, maintenance of MCR spaces, etc.
- (3) Committee Members who live away from College struggle, at varying degrees, in commuting to College for their Committee role.
- (4) Committee positions have, in recent years, been difficult to fill. An incentive can be helpful to motivate Committee involvement, and to show appreciation.

The MCR therefore resolves to:

- (1) Request that College provides In-College accommodation to MCR Committee Members (i.e. Ship Street Houses, and the future Northgate House).
- (2) Request for College to grant priority for Committee Members in selecting their College accommodation of choice, should they not wish to live in College.
- (3) In passing (1) and (2), award the MCR Committee for their contributions by easing their day-to-day commutes.

Proposed: Di Hu

Seconded: Caroline Nettekoven

Minutes

College does not think this is possible. Ruedi is supportive of giving the Committee some sort of reward such as a free meal a week or every other week.

College prizes are Amazon vouchers – this could be an option.

Free meals: Committee Members who live far away may not bother going.

Robert Quinlan suggested free Second Hall for Committee Members prior to termly Committee Meetings

Caroline Nettekoven suggested 1 annual free formal dinner at High Table with a special recognition at some point during the dinner made to the Committee.

- (2) Leftover funds from Somerville-Jesus Ball 2016
We as an MCR have £2,400 of leftover funds from this Ball that we may decide to donate to any charity/charities. Which one(s)?

Minutes

The money can only be spent on charity.

Not against constitution to spend on charities since it is not the MCR's money.

MCR Members can submit proposals and a vote can be carried out to determine where the money goes. Money can be split between several charities.

The money cannot be spent on anything else and can only go to charities.

Call for suggestions:

We welcome you to submit a 100-word max proposal on which charity we should support and why. The deadline is Saturday, 18 November. The MCR will then have the chance to vote on which 2 charities we will support with the £2,400 leftover funds (£1,200 per charity) from the Somerville-Jesus Ball.

See attached communication from Somerville